CONNECTING
WOMEN

National and International Networks
during the Long Nineteenth Century

EDITED BY

Barton C. Hacker, Joanne Paisana,
Margarida Esteves Pereira, Jaime Costa,
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A Smithsonian Contribution to Knowledge

Smithsonian
Scholarly Press

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DEDICATION

*This book is dedicated to the memory of Margaret Simmons Vining
(1933–2018), curator emerita of armed forces history at the
Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History.
She was a woman of grace, character, and learning
whose memory we treasure.*

CONTENTS

PART TWO: LITERARY NETWORKS

INTRODUCTION

Joanne Paisana and Barton C. Hacker

The genesis of *Connecting Women: National and International Networks during the Long Nineteenth Century* was the second conference of the Intercontinental Cross-Currents Network, titled "The Dynamics of Power: Inclusion and Exclusion in Women's Networks during the Long Nineteenth Century," convened at the University of Minho in Braga, Portugal, 3–5 November 2016.[1] The conference was organized by the Institute of Arts and Humanities' Centre for Humanistic Studies and the Department of English and North American Studies. A diverse group of international participants from different disciplinary backgrounds joined together to investigate mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion within transatlantic women's networks that were forged during the period between 1789 and 1939, roughly the so-called long nineteenth century.

According to Benedetto Vecchi, the forces of globalization show us the "seemingly random, haphazard and utterly unpredictable shifts and drifts" that threaten our everyday existence in ways we cannot control, today's networks, connections or relationships often being flimsy and really nothing like those of former times.[2] Some things do not change, however, for women still strive for gender equality and even basic human rights, and these are easier to achieve collectively. In the nineteenth century, webs of many kinds proliferated in the Atlantic World, and networks made up mainly of women, as supporters and activists, were no exception to this generalized occurrence. But networks are/were sites of exclusion as well as inclusion, and it is not always easy to gain access. Indeed, most goal-oriented networks, particularly those with social and political agendas, are personal, national, or transnational in nature, and they often exclude those who do not share the goal. Even sections of those who actually do share a goal may

be selective; for example, White, American, middle-class women have openly excluded Black women in the past. Such activist networks and their influences are the main focus of part one, Activist Networks.

The first chapter of *Connecting Women*, "Bridging the Ocean: Technological Change and Women's Transatlantic Activism," deals with the effects on female activists of transformative technological advances in transatlantic communication and travel that allowed them to support one another. Such innovations as the telegraph, transatlantic cables, and steam-powered printing presses promoted the freer exchange of ideas. Steam-powered trains and ships facilitated long-distance face-to-face relations among activists, ultimately enabling the formation of what have come to be called international nongovernmental organizations. These transformations allowed women to grasp opportunities to increase their campaigning effectiveness and to extend their reform activism internationally. Women's rights addressed at international congresses during this era centered on four major topics: political rights, sexual and marital rights, education for equality, and increased opportunities for working women. Campaigning for female enfranchisement is just one example, albeit the most striking one, of this campaigning. Barton Hacker and Margaret Vining suggest that Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony's founding of the International Council of Women in 1888 demonstrated that middle- and upper-class female activists took advantage of the new technologies not only to address their own concerns but to promote the rights of all women, nationally and internationally, demonstrating an inclusive spirit.

The empowerment of women through the female networks of the friendly society movement in Victorian and Edwardian Britain is the focus of Joanne Paisana's chapter "Female Friendly Societies in Nineteenth-Century Britain." Mutual aid-type organizations of a very diverse nature may have begun many centuries ago in many different countries, but they came to prominence in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, precursors of modern state intervention schemes. According to the Royal Commission Appointed to Inquire into Friendly and Benefit Building Societies, by 1872 there were estimated to be in Britain 32,000 societies with 4 million members crisscrossing the country. These were either trade related, specific to a particular location, or gender specific. Some affiliated friendly societies, that is, societies with numerous branches, operated as international networks. Such formalized local and affiliated mutual support groups were important to working women. Although the structures differed regarding leadership, membership criteria, and benefits available, local and affiliated female friendly societies undoubtedly enabled women to connect with each other in uncertain and precarious economic times.

Sirpa Salenius, in chapter 3, "Interracial Networks of Transatlantic Activism: Sarah Parker Remond Reassessing Black Womanhood," describes transatlantic "bridges of collaboration" and "webs of alliances" in reference to the interracial, intercultural, and transnational reform movements and activism of the nineteenth century that battled to overthrow patriarchy and slavery. Formally organized women's associations, especially interracial ones, were not free from cultural blinders, often discriminating on a racial, class, educational, and even religious basis. Sarah Parker Remond exemplifies the African American aspect of transatlantic networks promoting abolitionism and solidarity among people of color. Remond strove to demolish negative stereotypes of Black life and culture by working in the Black emancipation, women's rights, education, political, and artistic fields. Of the many women who crossed the Atlantic to lecture in Britain on social issues, few were Black. Remond joined international networks of women activists, becoming a member of the London Emancipation Committee and then an active member in the Executive Committee of the Ladies' London Emancipation Society. Salenius is able to show how important transatlantic women's rights networks were for supporting and empowering (Black) activists, in particular for creating a counternarrative to dominant notions of race in an effort to subvert the patriarchal and White supremacist society of her homeland.

In chapter 4, "Women in Italian and Italian American Organized Crime Networks in the Long Nineteenth Century," Laura Heitz examines female agency in Italian and Italian American criminal networks in the long nineteenth century. She warns that there is no homogeneity with regard to female involvement in Italian crime networks; the Sicilian Mafia, for instance, excluded women as official members, whereas its Neapolitan counterpart allowed them secondary roles. The pragmatic need was to substitute women for men who were temporarily absent because of imprisonment. Heitz describes the almost schizophrenic position of women, where their femininity could be exploited by male clan members to gain benefits from the legal system while at the same time the upper hierarchy of the Mafia could keep a patriarchal system in place that denied women both autonomy and equality. The Italian diaspora poses the question of whether the Italian emigrants took their cultural heritage and thus the structure of the Camorra crime network across the Atlantic. Ethnicity and one's region of origin became irrelevant as Italian American criminals forged a new identity in their adopted homeland. Much more research is required in order to fully appreciate this subject.

A major unintended result of American colonial policy in the Philippines around 1900 was spawning a powerful network of Philippine female franchise

advocates. Kate Lacson, in "In Her Image: The *Manileña* Suffragist and Her Story in Early Twentieth-Century Periodicals," the final chapter in part one, explores how the extension of education opportunities and easier access to the public sphere resulting from North American influence eventually improved the position of Filipina women largely, but not solely, through the creation of the "*Manileña* suffragist," so labeled because the battle for suffrage was centered in Manila, the capital of the Philippines. Charting the sinuous road to gaining suffrage, Lacson uses the medium of the periodical to tell the story of the *Manileña*. She closely analyzes both written text and visual images, examining the various (male) representations of the Filipina suffrage activist and noting how prejudicial stereotypes of the modern woman were used against them and how a traditional, maternal woman was promoted instead to the general readership. The Philippines became the first country in Southeast Asia to grant women suffrage, on 7 December 1933.

The chapters in part two, Literary Networks, examine the diverse literary networks that women writers enjoyed, abided, or disdained during the long nineteenth century. Starting with the differences and similarities of three well-known, independent, expatriate American literary women, Alice Cheylan's "A Common Cause and Parallel Networks: Edith Wharton, Gertrude Stein, and Amy Lowell in World War I" considers why they never formed a female network or even a close connection, but rather worked in "parallel networks." Edith Wharton, Gertrude Stein, and Amy Lowell were all prominent writers and poets, born on America's Eastern Seaboard to affluent parents between 1862 and 1874, and were travelers to Europe while young and impressionable; they shared common interests—a love of good food and entertaining, gardening, and dogs. The three women all found themselves in England during the summer of 1914, when Lowell joined Herbert Hoover's committee to help stranded Americans in London. Edith Wharton spent the first few war months in England but then returned to France, helping the war effort by working in charities, as well as setting up American Hostels for Refugees to help lodge the Belgian refugees fleeing to Paris. Gertrude Stein also returned to France quite soon after the outbreak of war and joined the American Fund for French Wounded. Although they were part of a number of European and American networks, Cheylan wonders why these three women were never brought together by common friends, for all three held literary salons at their homes and thus mixed with the literary elite of the time, all had a head for business and used their position and finances to help young writers, all three had active participation in World War I in common, and all wrote about their experiences. Their different writing styles, religious prejudices, and sexual

orientations are proffered as probable explanations and may suggest how, in their case, exclusion from formal networks was more evident than inclusion.

Following Cheylan, in "Wayward Girls and Wonder Women: Utopian Dreams and Dystopian Nightmares," Elizabeth Russell examines female inclusion and exclusion from society through the prism of utopia and dystopia. For Russell, waywardness means self-determination and disregard for societal norms, and she begins by applying this concept to Mary Wollstonecraft. Russell next explores the gender politics of the Victorian era through Virginia Woolf's eyes before moving on to Mary Wollstonecraft's daughter, Mary Shelley, famous for *Frankenstein* but also author of a little-known futuristic novel, *The Last Man* (1826). Both reflect a male-dominated world, reminding the reader that one person's utopia may be another person's dystopia. Moving on to more extreme forms of utopia and dystopia, Russell examines the Scottish radical feminist and abolitionist Frances Wright (1795–1852), who founded the experimental utopian community Nashoba in Tennessee. Wright campaigned for women's rights, which included a demand for women's access to birth control, the promotion of sexual liberation, the abolition of slavery and marriage, and the advocacy of women's property rights. These positions made her many enemies, as did her campaigning on American platforms for a country where mixed races could marry and live in harmony. Russell then examines the works of a number of female writers of role-reversal utopias, showing how notions of masculinity and femininity were depicted in a world of power politics and inclusion and exclusion.

Paula Guimarães, in "Poetry as Inclusion and Exclusion: The Dynamics of Victorian Women Poets' Social, Political, and Artistic Networks," addresses the ways in which inclusion and exclusion and power dynamics within both emerging and well-established social, political, and artistic networks of women were negotiated by some major British women poets. They are Felicia Hemans and Letitia E. Landon in the early nineteenth century; Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Christina Rossetti in midcentury; and Augusta Webster, Mathilde Blind, and Amy Levy in the late nineteenth century. Poetry was inherently networked, requiring different geographical, transnational, and social agents that varied over the course of the century. One notable aspect of changing times was the establishment of women as editors of magazines and gift books.

Inês Tadeu uses the Salem witch hunt of 1692 to examine the figure of woman as witch in its original context and in that of nineteenth-century America. Concerned with transcultural memory, "The Salem Witches (Re)created as Nineteenth-Century Romantic Heroines" examines how two little-known American female writers, Caroline Rosina Derby and Constance Goddard

Du Bois, transformed two women convicted as witches, Martha Corey and Rebecca Nurse, into innocent victims and Romantic heroines. Derby and Du Bois were trying to break molds constructed largely by men, often through historical novels, to contain the cultural memory of American women.

Chapter 10, "Choosing to Be Artists: Women's Networks in Evelyn Scott's *Escapade*," examines choice (choosing to be an artist) when (not) being part of a woman's network and also concerns the memoir/autobiography of a Southern woman, Evelyn Scott. The book deals with the seven years Scott and her older husband spent living in poverty after eloping to Brazil and relates the difficulties she found in accessing her own female agency there. Khristeena Lute shows how Scott, who in her teens had been involved in the various social networks that her privileged class and education had made available to her, was deeply unhappy in Brazil because the ultimately oppressive Southern patriarchy and gender oppression she wanted to leave behind were replaced in Brazil by even worse repression. Never learning Portuguese, financially precarious, and facing the even tighter Brazilian gender restraints she encountered, Scott could not relate effectively to women of varied origins and, as an outsider, often found herself excluded. Her creative life and happiness rekindled only after she returned home and once again received the support of women's networks. The external validation of her artistic identity helped other women to see themselves as artists, blazing a trail for the next generation of women writers.

The dynamics of power unleashed through the shaping of cultural histories by writing national history as memoir concerns Julia Nitz in the final chapter, "Transatlantic Cultural Autobiographies: The Relational Selves of Mary Russell Mitford and Rebecca Harding Davis." Through an examination of the self-effacing autobiographies by English writer Mary Russell Mitford and American writer Rebecca Harding Davis, Nitz illuminates the nineteenth-century transatlantic tradition of writing about other people, places, and literature that allowed female authors to write themselves into collective memory and into the literary community. She illustrates how Davis and Mitford were able to mark their own place in their nation's history while obliterating or marginalizing others. Mitford and Davis were from similar sociocultural backgrounds, though opposite sides of the Atlantic. Long-lived, White, middle class, well educated, and pioneers of realist writing, they were admired by their contemporaries. Although based in the domestic sphere, they incorporate the public one through their depictions of domestic encounters with visitors or through epistolary and other writing, thereby managing to engage with important issues through their stories and, in effect, circumscribing somewhat biased gender restrictions to write a collective cultural

history of their time. Mitford set out to rewrite English literary history, whereas Davis sought to explain what an American is by extending the concept to women.

The contributors to *Connecting Women*, by revealing some of the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion within transatlantic women's networks forged during the period 1789 to 1939, have highlighted the importance, especially for women, of connecting with other women writers and activists. In a digital world where networking has taken on a whole new meaning, the nineteenth-century women represented here show how they also knew how to take advantage of and benefit from people and places far away, and if they were not able to do so as effectively as they would have liked, they certainly realized what they were missing.

Notes

1.   The network's first international conference, "Intercontinental Crosscurrents: Women's (Net-)Works across Europe and the Americas (1776–1939)," was held in Wittenberg, Germany, 5–7 December 2013. Participants examined a wide variety of transatlantic women's networks and their relation to numerous transatlantic themes, including the history of ideas, the migration of texts, identity formation, literary production and reception, feminism and emancipation, immigration, and social reform. The network Intercontinental Cross-Currents, whose objective is to connect researchers interested in intercontinental women studies, was created at this conference. A selection of the papers presented was published in 2016: Julia Nitz, Sandra H. Petrulionis, and Theresa Schön, eds., *Intercontinental Crosscurrents: Women's Networks across Europe and the Americas* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2016).

2.   Zygmunt Bauman, *Identity: Conversations with Benedetto Vecchi* (Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press, 2004), 93.

PART ONE:
ACTIVIST NETWORKS

1

BRIDGING THE OCEAN

Technological Change and Women's Transatlantic Activism

Barton C. Hacker and Margaret Vining

Abstract. The rise of women's transatlantic reform activism from the mid-nineteenth century through World War I coincided with transformative changes in communication and transportation. By increasing the speed and reliability of communication and travel, new technologies allowed activists to exchange ideas more freely, as well as to establish face-to-face relations among themselves. But other technologies were just as important. As printing technology continuously improved over the course of the century, the popular press expanded, enabling wider circulation of feminist pamphlets, magazines, and books, greatly aided by the 1874 founding of the Universal Postal Union. Telegraph, and later telephone, allied with steam-powered railroads to tie together reform communities on either side of the Atlantic. The development of wire services expanded news coverage and contributed to a distinct decrease in the bias of local news, especially political news. Combined with the greater mobility inherent in steam-powered transport, these new technologies allowed women to achieve increased agency. Although not all women could participate directly in the technologically-driven changes, we will examine ways that many well-to-do reform-minded women grasped opportunities offered by new technologies to extend their reform activism internationally, thereby facilitating the move of all women from the private to the public arena.

he rise of women's nineteenth-century transatlantic activism coincided with transformative changes in transatlantic transportation and communication. Individually and interactively, these new technologies greatly facilitated the dissemination of information and ideas over great distances, fostered the proliferation of international organizations, increased the number and frequency of international congresses, and promoted face-to-face relations among far-flung activists. Some women grasped opportunities offered by new technologies to extend their reform activism internationally; technology eased the transition from the domestic to the public sphere for a relatively few privileged reform-minded women. But they never ignored their less fortunate sisters who could not afford to participate directly. Late nineteenth-century women's international congresses not only promoted the rights of privileged women but also consistently addressed the needs and concerns of working women as well as poor women and children. Drawing on the publications of women's international congresses as well as the secondary literature, we suggest that middle- and upper-class female activists took advantage of the new technologies not only to address their own concerns but to promote the rights of all women.

The Shrinking Victorian World

During the middle and late nineteenth century, newer means of travel and communication transformed the ways people interacted with their neighbors, their compatriots, and the world. This all had to do with time. Steam railroads and steamships drastically reduced transit times and, in due course, greatly increased the safety and comfort of travelers. Land journeys that once took days could then be completed in hours, and sea crossings once measured in weeks or months could then take days. Perhaps even more important, steam allowed travel to be scheduled by reducing or mitigating the inevitable contingencies that plagued other means of travel.[1] Many writers have noted, in one way or another, what Peter Hugill termed the "shrinking Victorian world."[2] Others have referred to the first globalization.[3] Either term suggests the technological underpinnings of all these changes were not static structures; rather, they were dynamic systems that continued to improve markedly over the course of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth.

The conversion of oceangoing ships from sail to steam began in the mid-nineteenth century. For several decades, ships retained masts and sails against engine failure or shortage of fuel, even as wooden hulls gave way to iron. Early steam propulsion systems drove paired paddle wheels mounted amidships on

deep-draft oceangoing ships. Initially, transatlantic steamships had little advantage over sailing ships in transit time, at least in fair weather. Elizabeth Cady Stanton accompanied her new husband, Henry Stanton, who was a delegate to the 1840 World Anti-Slavery Convention in London. They and their companions spent 18 days at sea on a sailing ship en route to England. That was the same number of days for the return trip on the paddle wheeler SS *Sirius*, the first steamship in regular scheduled transatlantic service.[4] Lucretia Mott, one of six American women chosen as delegates to the same conference, spent three weeks at sea on the way in a sailing packet. Both women commented in their diaries on the opportunity the voyage presented to read about and discuss with fellow travelers such topics as slavery, theology, and politics.[5] This kind of interaction among passengers on the earliest transatlantic steamers (as well as the sailing packets they were replacing) played a significant role in shaping antislavery ideology and strategy.[6]

Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott became fast friends in London, a friendship cemented by the refusal of the organizers of the 1840 conference to allow the seating of women delegates.[7] That experience led directly to their decision to organize the 1848 convention in Seneca Falls, New York, which has since become widely regarded as the origin of the women's rights movement.[8] Numerous women's rights conferences followed in the next two decades, and the movement spread beyond the borders of the United States. Although women worked locally, they were well aware of events elsewhere. Transatlantic travelers played a part, but the journey was still time-consuming and difficult in the mid-nineteenth century. Women continued to share their views and activities primarily through printed material and letters, the availability of which began to grow exponentially as steam power transformed both printing and postal services.[9]

Although the new modes of transportation proved indispensable in fostering the face-to-face meetings that established networks of friendship and alliance across the ocean, new modes of communication helped maintain and expand these networks. The electromagnetic telegraph introduced in 1837 marked the first major divorce between communication and transportation. Messages could now be exchanged without being physically carried.[10] The telegraph soon achieved commercial success. By 1860 fifty thousand miles of telegraph wire linked every major American city east of the Mississippi.[11] In particular, the wires spread along the expanding railroad network. Telegraph lines everywhere followed the railroads, making feasible the growth of an ever-larger and more complex rail network.[12] The telegraph ushered in a new age as the rest of the world followed the American example.[13]

When telegraphy crossed the oceans, its social and economic impact multiplied.[14] The laying of the transatlantic cable is an oft-told story of a decade of repeated failures crowned by success in 1866.[15] Wiring the world was a long-term project that had its critics, but the new means of communication promoted a vastly accelerated exchange of ideas and information.[16] None of this escaped the notice of contemporary observers, as books like George Dodd's 1867 *Railways, Steamers and Telegraphs* make clear.[17] Even more telling is the way this recognition permeated Victorian fiction—and thus the consciousness of at least the reading public, which grew with the increased access to printed materials.[18] To an ever-growing extent, steam powered the transformation.

Steam power not only revolutionized manufacturing and transportation; it also transformed printing and the exchange of information. Newspapers were the first to benefit; the *London Times* in 1814 introduced steam-powered presses, which sharply reduced production time. The introduction of the rotary press in 1843 produced still greater efficiencies.[19] Telegraph and cable combined with faster and more reliable mail service to transform the collection and distribution of news, with important implications for the ways people learned about the wider world.[20] The development of wire services expanded news coverage and contributed to a distinct decrease in the bias of local news, especially political news. Newspapers also opened a new window on the world to women.[21] Steam-powered rotary presses lowered printing costs, and steam-powered trains and ships allowed books, magazines, and a wide variety of other printed materials to be widely and cheaply distributed,[22] which made them available to women of all classes. Still other innovations transformed printing technology in the last half of the nineteenth century. New techniques for reproducing images—first through mechanized wood engraving, then by photomechanical means, ultimately in color—fostered an explosion of popular illustrated periodicals.[23] These changes too had important social implications.[24] Among the most significant was the proliferation of women's magazines, many addressed to women's rights.[25] As the suffrage movement grew, it inspired a literature of its own.[26]

An important ancillary effect of the new transportation and communication technologies was the acceleration and regularization of postal services. Recognizing the value of faster and more predictable transatlantic mail delivery, governments subsidized steamship lines with mail contracts to do the job.[27] Telecommunications allied with speedier and more reliable mail delivery via steam-powered trains and ships, both domestically and internationally, had far-reaching social implications.[28] For women, mail had always been an important way to maintain personal connections with distant friends and relatives.[29] But the speedy,

regular mail service available in the late nineteenth century proved an indispensable means of fostering feminist networks.[30]

Steam-powered railroads and telegraph lines helped knit together reform communities on either side of the Atlantic and stimulate, in the half century before World War I, the formation of what have come to be called international nongovernmental organizations.[31] Women played especially important roles in the Salvation Army and the International Red Cross and its affiliated national societies.[32] Advances in marine technology played an even larger role in fostering the growth of such organizations. In the decades after the introduction of paddle wheelers, steamships metamorphosed into far more commodious, safe, and comfortable ocean liners, sometimes referred to as floating palaces. They were at least floating first-class hotels.[33] Screw propulsion rapidly replaced paddlewheels after 1850. Screw-propelled ships with iron hulls (rather than wooden) and ever more efficient steam engines grew larger, faster, and more luxurious in the later nineteenth century. The New York–Liverpool run, which an 1840 paddle wheeler required at least two and a half weeks to complete, could be made in as little as 4 days by a 1914 ocean liner with screws driven by steam turbines, though the normal transit was more like 9 or 10 days.[34] The late nineteenth-century ocean liner was indeed a "triumph of technology," as John H. White Jr. termed it.[35] Greater spaciousness and elegance notwithstanding, ocean liners still challenged Victorian ideals of separate spheres while they continued to provide those middle- and upper-class women who could afford them opportunities to read, reflect, converse, and learn as they voyaged to and from international congresses.[36]

An International Women's Movement

The rise of the so-called Atlantic ferry—the regular North Atlantic steamship routes established in the late nineteenth century—coincided with an explosion of international meetings and conferences of all kinds, especially when steamship companies offered attendees special rates.[37] Well-to-do women's participation in international congresses was especially significant in furthering the cause of social welfare, often with a tinge of morality.[38] Women acted independently to promote social welfare as well. British reformer Josephine Butler in 1875 founded the International Abolitionist Federation to combat prostitution and trafficking in women and children.[39] Frances E. Willard's Woman's Christian Temperance Union in the United States went worldwide in 1883 (becoming the World Woman's Christian Temperance Union).[40] It provided a model for such organizations as the World Young Women's Christian Association and

the International Council of Nurses.[41] The reform orchestrated by middle- and upper-class women disproportionately addressed the concerns of lower-class women, who quite obviously needed all the help they could get.

Perhaps the most striking late nineteenth-century consequence for women's international activism fostered by ease of transport and communication was the efflorescence of middle- and upper-class women organizing for women's rights and woman suffrage. Paris hosted the first international women's rights convention in 1878, following with a second a decade later and still a third in 1900. All three were part of international expositions. Women's rights addressed at these congresses (as they were at other women's congresses) centered on four major topics: political rights, sexual and marital rights, education for equality, and the rights of working women.[42] Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony founded the International Council of Women in 1888 when they invited international representatives to attend the U.S. National Woman's Suffrage Association meeting in Washington, D.C. Despite the suffrage organization backing, the invitation went to every kind of women's group, ranging from literary clubs to moral purity associations. The council comprised delegates from national women's councils, just then beginning to unite the activities of local and regional women's clubs. Arguably the most conservative of the major women's international organizations, the ICW studiously avoided as too controversial any position on woman suffrage, at least initially. In its attempt to address every conceivable woman's issue, including antisuffragism, the ICW dissatisfied many. As Dora B. Montefiore observed, "there is a lack of directness and concentration in the work of the National Councils; and too little zeal in attacking directly the cause of women's backwardness and want of protection in the community."[43]

Cooperating with other women's organizations, the ICW convened its first international congress in May 1893 as part of the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The weeklong World's Congress of Representative Women held 81 sessions in the exposition's Women's Building that attracted 150,000 people. They listened to some 500 women from 27 countries speak on such topics as religion, philanthropy, social reform, art, music, literature, and education.[44] The 1899 International Congress of Women convened in London was the first to be organized independently by the International Council of Women. It brought together 2,500 delegates representing 17 countries and Britain's Australian, New Zealand, South African, and Canadian colonies. Four hundred speakers addressed varied aspects of women in education, in the professions, in politics, in industrial life, and in social life. The published proceedings comprised seven volumes.[45] At its next congress, in Berlin in 1904, the ICW overcame its reluctance to engage

the suffrage issue, at least in part. It endorsed the International Woman Suffrage Alliance, established two years earlier at a conference in Washington, D.C. For the next two decades members of the alliance worked tirelessly to promote woman suffrage.[46]

The movement for woman suffrage played a large part in turn-of-the-century women's organizations in Europe as well as in the United States. Regional and local, as well as national and international, suffrage associations influenced profoundly the way women viewed their place in society and the activities in which they engaged.[47] Winning the vote had become the central goal of the international women's movement by the turn of the twentieth century, but efforts to ameliorate or eliminate the scourge of war also attracted the support of many, if not most, feminists. These goals were perfectly compatible until the outbreak of World War I in 1914, when some women's top priority then became stopping the bloodshed as soon as possible.[48] That effort led to the great International Congress of Women for Permanent Peace in the Netherlands, at The Hague.

In the spring of 1915, Emily Balch sailed on the Holland America Line's SS *Noordam* with 42 other American delegates to attend the international women's congress at The Hague.[49] Shipboard activities recalled the transatlantic passages of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott three-quarters of a century earlier, though the 1915 travelers enjoyed far higher levels of comfort and safety. Smooth sailing, Balch wrote, "made it possible for . . . [us] to meet and study and deliberate together during the voyage." We heard "a brief course of lectures on peace questions," then considered "the preliminary programme submitted to us by the committee at The Hague who were arranging the Congress. Some days we met morning, afternoon, and evening and we added largely to the contents of the programme as sent to us."[50] The women's peace movement could do little to halt the juggernaut of war.[51] Its major long-term result was the establishment of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.[52]

Most women's loyalty and patriotism led them to support their own nations' war efforts. With the notable exception of Alice Paul's National Woman's Party in the United States, major woman's suffrage leaders on both sides of the Atlantic decided to suspend their campaigns for the duration of the war.[53] Military-style uniforms, whether those of the armed forces or of civilian agencies, allowed many suffragists to display their willingness to serve and to stake at least a forceful symbolic claim to full citizenship. Working-class women also donned uniforms in such jobs as factory worker, police officer, tram conductor, and mail carrier. Tens of thousands of women across the social spectrum served in uniform as civilian volunteers for an enormous variety of relief and welfare organizations.[54]

One such volunteer was Lucy Minnigerode (or Minnegerode). Her transatlantic crossing in 1915, the same year that Emily Balch sought peace at The Hague, was only the first step in an epic journey as a Red Cross nurse. After landing in England, her unit's members proceeded by rail to London, then Dundee, Scotland. There they "embarked on a very small steamer for Goteborg, Sweden," a taxing two-day journey in heavy seas. Then followed an overnight train to Stockholm, where they boarded "a special ship to take us to Rauma, . . . a small town on the coast of Finland." Another overnight train brought them to Petrograd and the final stage of their journey, four days on the rails to Kiev, where they established their hospital.[55] Such a journey would once have taken months, but in 1915 it was a matter of little more than three weeks.

Thousands of women also for the first time became members of the uniformed forces. Julia C. Stimson headed the U.S. Army Nurse Corps in World War I. In a series of long and detailed letters, she kept her family informed of her passage in May 1917 from New York to Liverpool on the SS *St. Paul*, an ocean liner leased by the U.S. Navy as a troop ship. Discussions about the work to be done certainly occupied some time on the 10-day passage from New York to Liverpool. But Stimson took advantage of the time at sea to engage her nurses in physical training and drill them in "military formations so that we can march in decency and order when we have to."[56]

Women and the New Technology

Although innovations in communication and transport were hardly gender specific, they had a much greater impact on women's activism than is usually acknowledged. The new technologies of communication offered women access to new sources of information and means of exchanging ideas previously not readily available to them. Combined with the greater mobility inherent in steampowered transport, the new technologies helped ease middle- and upper-class women's transition from the domestic to the public sphere in the later nineteenth century. The proliferation of international women's organizations and their remarkable success reflect women's eager and effective acceptance of the challenge. And the higher-class women who chiefly participated in these efforts consistently championed the cause of their working-class sisters.

Notes

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FEMALE FRIENDLY SOCIETIES IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY BRITAIN

Joanne Paisana

Abstract. Friendly societies in the long nineteenth century were an important part of the lives of many of the British working and middle classes. The affiliated societies were true networks that crisscrossed Britain, supporting members even as they moved from place to place. In the days before National Insurance, when state aid was regulated by a punitive poor law, friendly societies provided nonstate welfare to members in times of need, be it sickness, unemployment, bereavement, or childbirth, in the form of mutual aid. According to the Royal Commission Appointed to Inquire into Friendly and Benefit Building Societies (1871–1874), by 1872 there were estimated to be in Britain 32,000 societies with 4 million members. These numbers indicate the importance of the network. The societies were either trade related, specific to a particular location, or gender specific. Despite a dearth of information on friendly societies in general and on female membership in particular, it is apparent that there were far fewer female than male members of friendly societies, and there is evidence that women were actually excluded from joining certain friendly societies, often because of the frequency with which they claimed benefits after childbirth. Setting up separate female societies was one way of surmounting this exclusion. Focus will be given to the following British female friendly societies: the Lincoln Female Friendly Society, the United Sisters' Friendly Society, Suffolk Unity, and the United Order of Female Rechabites, with special attention to the ways these women's networks made mutual and self-help possible for contributing women, proving the importance of being connected.

In the days before National Insurance and state help from the cradle to the grave, when men and women often relied on each other for assistance, local/independent and affiliated friendly societies were an important part of the lives of many in the British working and middle classes, the latter being true networks with branches that crisscrossed Britain. The friendly societies of the nineteenth century were mostly made up of men (organizers and members), but women were also involved. It is the aim of this chapter to highlight the nature of three different mutual assistance initiatives connected with friendly societies established by women and for women during the long nineteenth century, showing the importance of inclusion in times of need. The following friendly societies will be analyzed: the local Lincoln Female Friendly Society, the affiliated United Sisters' Friendly Society, and the temperance-affiliated society, the United Order of Female Rechabites.

The Elizabethan Poor Law Act of 1601 specified that each parish should take responsibility for the old and the sick, including so-called idiots and lunatics, and provide work for the poor. With time, attitudes toward the poor crystallized in many people's minds with their categorization into the "deserving" and the "undeserving." With the passing of the New Poor Law in 1834, Boards of Guardians considered applications for poor relief based on the principle of "less eligibility" vis-*à*-vis someone working for a wage, and awards were notoriously meagre and stigmatizing. Thereafter, mutual support through friendly society membership grew in popularity among the working class, as Jane Rendall states regarding the rules and regulations for the Irvine & Halfway Female Friendly Society thus:

> No one gives or receives money as charity, but as a just compensation
> for what she has given, or is subjected to give, to others in distress, and
> thus the members mutually, and in a most friendly manner, contribute
> to each other's support, and thereby promote each other's happiness.[1]

Popularity was not confined to the working class, however. The *Stamford Mercury* of 1 July 1842 regarded friendly societies as "rational necessities of the times" and addressed the aspect of mutuality and self-help and the "honourable movement of the subordinate classes to keep themselves from becoming a burthen on the poor-rate and public and private charity," stating the hope that the wealthier classes would promote the societies "to the utmost . . . for an inculcation

of the spirit of self-dependence, the fraternal feeling and the knowledge of the value of money" were bound to improve character and interclass relations. The anticipated decrease in the poor rates levied on the wealthy was expected to override their suspicions of the societies.[2]

Friendly societies sought to insure members against loss of wages caused by sickness during the working period of their lives. Other benefits were also available, such as insurance payable on death. Each member made a small monthly contribution of about one shilling. Apart from the financial aspect there was also a social one, for societies would provide regular convivial occasions of a private and public nature. The private opportunities for such conviviality centered on the small circle of members (with or without patrons from the upper classes) and were a welcome complement to the formal business of the society meetings. The fact that most societies met in the local inn was an incentive to social interaction, although this encouragement to unnecessary spending on drink was frowned upon by government officials and patrons. The local pub was more often than not the only place available for society meetings, however, and the quasi-obligatory drinks were considered payment for the use of the premises. In addition to which, the landlord was often the only other person besides the secretary entrusted with a key to the box holding the society's funds. This was a great responsibility. In addition to the private meetings, the social aspect was also fostered through the public spectacle of annual parades with banners and regalia, church services, tea parties, and annual dinners, although flags, ribbons, and other trinkets were considered by some as wasteful adjuncts to a society's functioning. The visual display engendered the recognition of the wider community, usually women and children. As Rex Russell points out, the friendly society's annual feast and parade often marked the most important day in the year for the working people of a village.[3]

Female Agency

More than 30 years ago, the British historian Olwen Hufton outlined her commitment to writing a gendered dimension of the past (in draft at the time as "Women in European Society, 1500–1800"), acknowledging that different sets of women had influenced historical events. She concluded that writing history without reference to gender would lead to distortion.[4] Furthermore, she claimed that women's contribution to societal development had always existed; it was simply consciously or unconsciously disregarded until women themselves placed it at the fore. Indeed, such important works as Jane Rendall's *Women in an Industrializing Society: England* and Linda Colley's *The Ordeal of Elizabeth Marsh* testify to the

importance of counteracting the gender-biased historical narrative described by Hufton, in the name of historical accuracy if nothing else.[5]

The relative lack of attention to female involvement in friendly societies up to the death of Queen Victoria is understandable as there was a preponderance of male as opposed to mixed or female friendly societies. Female friendly societies were simply less numerous and less visible than male ones. It has been more than 50 years since P. H. J. H. Gosden's seminal work *The Friendly Societies in England* was published and 45 years since his *Self-Help: Voluntary Associations in Nineteenth-Century Britain*.[6] Both of these important early books contain only a very short reference to women's involvement in the movement: "The typical local friendly society did not admit women to membership."[7] Backing up Gosden, Rex Russell's detailed work on friendly societies in the specific localities of Caistor, Binbrook, and Brigg ends by stating,

> there is much to discover about the Friendly Society movement in the villages and market towns of Lindsey in the nineteenth century. What was the total local membership at different dates? What percentage of the male adult population belonged to a friendly society? *How many friendly societies for women existed?*[8]

Christopher Prom's 2010 article "Friendly Society Discipline and Charity in Late Victorian and Edwardian England" hardly considers the role of women in the friendly society movement, although he acknowledges that

> the respectability fomented by friendly society charities was certainly gendered, in that women (particularly widows of deceased members) played a subordinate and dependent role in the system, even if the evidence suggests that friendly societies' treatment of women was not particularly oppressive.[9]

Simon Cordery reappraised the movement in 2003 in light of the numerous methodological and topical revolutions in British social history. In *British Friendly Societies, 1750–1914*, he makes a comprehensive analysis of them, looking into the origins, operations, social significance, and, ultimately, decline and demise of the movement.[10] Acknowledging the rise of women and gender historians and the subsequent research into the gendered nature of work and politics, Cordery calls attention to the attempts to recast what is known of friendly societies by such scholars as Dot Jones in "Self-Help in Nineteenth Century Wales: The Rise and Fall of the Female Friendly Society."[11]

Until the passage of the Married Women's Property Acts of 1870 and 1882, on marriage the wife's property and finances were transferred to the husband. Domestic money, increasingly derived from a woman's working wages, legally belonged to him. A wealthy woman, on marrying, would lose control of her wealth but would (presumably) be looked after by her spouse, but how could other women secure and maintain financial stability? What about the prudent and thrifty working wife who wanted to save for the proverbial rainy day? If she had a sufficiently steady income, then she could join a local female friendly society or, from midcentury, the female branch of one of the large affiliated friendly society orders. However, according to Gosden, a big obstacle that women faced regarding friendly society subscription was that although they often earned wages outside the home, they were not generally the main breadwinners of families, so it was the husband who would seek insurance against sickness and/or death. Moreover, Gosden states that female friendly societies could thrive only where there was a good deal of regular employment for the husbands since if he became unemployed, the wife's wages would tide the family over, and friendly society subscriptions would lapse.

Considering the case of women and friendly society membership, Gosden states that the Royal Commission on Friendly Societies of 1871–1874, set up in the wake of the revelations of various abuses that led to falling public confidence in their sustainability (incompetence, lack of foresight, and inaccuracy of statistics), concluded there were 8 million people dependent on them for sickness and death benefits at the time and there were 11 million pounds in funds available. According to an editorial in the *Huddersfield Daily Chronicle* on 8 May 1874, the collectors were particularly subject to abusing the system by commanding high wages and emoluments ("in one instance as large a sum as £700 was given for the fee simple of the post of collector").[12] They also exercised power through instructing members how to vote. Also, contributions were not regularly collected, leading to the member temporarily losing his rights and the collector benefitting from fees paid for lapses and reentrance. In addition, there was the temptation

> of providing greater benefits than can possibly accrue under a sound system of management, by which the whole concern is ultimately brought to grief and the contributors obliged to suffer the loss of their savings, and probably deterred from again investing any part of their earnings in any society.[13]

The editorial also refers to a number of swindles that were detected only when the manager and funds disappeared.

The Royal Commission on Friendly Societies found that female friendly societies did not form a distinct homogeneous class of their own but could be divided into as many distinct classes as the friendly societies for males (female burial clubs, female village societies, etc.). The commission found against female friendly societies and ruled that the best provision for a working-class woman was the man's club, which should include a medical subscription for the whole family. Sir George Young's recommendation was quoted: "In conclusion, if the absolute prohibition of any sort of club is defensible, that of women's clubs meeting in public houses has most to be said for it."[14] The commission ignored the temperance friendly societies as well as the fact that most of the men's friendly societies also met in public houses and were even more susceptible to wasting money on drink. It seems the commission was using a double moral standard. In light of this prejudice, the survival of a female friendly society at Barwick between 1778 and 1901, for example, was a remarkable achievement.[15]

The Lincoln Female Friendly Society

When discussing formal, localized systems of female self- and mutual help in the form of female friendly societies in Britain, I believe the archival information uncovered about the long-forgotten Lincoln Female Friendly Society is important, especially for the light it sheds on subsequent gender and class relations. The local society was run by affluent ladies with social standing for the relief of needy women and deserving members of the lower orders, and it reveals an interesting mix of charity and self-help. According to a report in the *Stamford Mercury* of 29 October 1819, the society had been established in 1808, at a time when various other female friendly societies were operating around the country and when the dispensation of charity was controlled by the upper classes or those with money (whether through poor relief or other philanthropic means). The date of the society's closure could not be determined by me.

Caroline Massingberd[16] founded the society and was patroness and president until 1817, when, upon her resignation, a Miss Ellison took over.[17] An annually elected committee of ladies managed the society. In 1819, an aristocrat, Lady Sarah Robinson, became an honorary member with an annual contribution to society funds of two guineas. In this year there were 114 ordinary (poor) members and between 70 and 80 honorary members. The two-to-one proportion of ordinary to honorary members was thought appropriate to maintain solvency. The honorary members contributed 12 shillings each per year, but the amount of individual contributions paid by ordinary members is not known. There were

two funds, one consisting of the monthly contributions and fines of the ordinary members plus one-third part of the contributions of the honorary members.[18] The second fund (Ladies Fund) was formed by the remaining two-thirds of the contributions of the honorary members and was in a state of accumulation until it amounted to £300. It then became permanent, and interest from its bank deposit was used for the relief of those poorer members "as appear to the committee of ladies to be the most deserving and in the greatest need."[19] Anyone shown to be immoral, wasteful, or otherwise undeserving in the committee's eyes would not receive help, a discriminatory strategy echoed later in Edwin Chadwick's 1834 New Poor Law. In 1819, nine needy members were elected by the ladies' committee to receive two shillings per week. The Lincoln Female Friendly Society was thought to be more useful and stable because of the support of the Ladies Fund:

> For if, when the greater part of the poor members are become old and are receiving relief, their own fund should be greatly reduced or even exhausted, the ladies fund will remain and be applicable to the relief of such members as may then need and deserve it.[20]

Unfortunately, this belief in the sustainability of the fund was to prove wishful thinking (see below). Notwithstanding the generous financial contributions made, according to the ladies and as reported in the *Stamford Mercury,* there was a "higher and more beneficial species of charity," the time and personal attention expended by women on the lower orders, which would "most effectually advance the immediate objects of the institution, and in no small degree promote the happiness of society at large."[21] The *Stamford Mercury* reporter highlighted a note of self-interest on the ladies' part, for by the promotion of general happiness benefits would accrue to all, including themselves.

In 1820, the committee of the honorary members of the Lincoln Female Friendly Society awarded one shilling (s.) per week from the interest of money in the Ladies Fund to 12 of the poor members. They thus elected to award a lower amount to a higher number of people vis-*à*-vis the previous year, and the outgoing was also less overall (12s./week as opposed to 18s./week in 1819). An Abstract of Accounts for 8 June 1835–23 May 1836 showed that there were 38 honorary members (all female) and seven annual subscribers with total subscriptions of £14 8s. Total receipts were £359 15s. 3d. (pence). Payments made included £90 to sick members, £26 for five funerals, and £22 4s. to pensioners at two shillings each per week. The number of poor members being helped had significantly risen from

the 1820 figure. The Honorary Members Fund had paid out £36 12s. to 15 aged members at one shilling each per week and had £379 19s. 9d. cash in hand.[22]

Mrs. R. Ellison was a mere annual subscriber during 1835–1836 (£1 1s.) and 1838–1839 (£3), but for 1845–1846 she was recorded in the accounts as president of the Lincoln Female Friendly Society. This woman could have been Elizabeth (d. 1873, aged 77), member of the former president Miss Ellison's extended family and wife of the benefactor Richard Ellison, who was, among other things, initially the treasurer of the new Lincoln Poor Law Union, established in 1836. He later resigned in protest against the use of force against paupers.[23] The Lincoln County Council's history of the Lincoln-based Ellison family is strong on biographical information on the male Ellisons and extremely weak on the female ones, so little is known of Elizabeth, but it would be reasonable to assume that given her husband's apparent social conscience, Elizabeth would be likely to take on the office of president of the society, apparently vacant in 1838–1839, according to the accounts for that year. Female agency is strong but circumscribed by social class.

An important year for the Lincoln Female Friendly Society was 1845. The society was said to be suffering the effects of an aged membership and dwindling contributions. Payments for funerals, sick benefits, and pensions to the "very aged females" outstripped income, so that "contributions from the affluent" were being solicited.[24] The accounts for 27 May 1844–12 May 1845 show total receipts of £483 6s. 11d. (including £38 17s. subscriptions from the 37 honorary members and £18 17s. 6d. monthly contributions). This amount is about £123 more than in 1836–1836. Outgoings included £16 5s. cash to sick members and £52 18s. to pensioners at two shillings each per week. A letter from the clerk to the society accompanied the accounts, stating the resolution adopted at the Annual General Meeting on 12 May 1845 to solicit the ladies of Lincoln who were not subscribers to the society to become so because of the "decrease in funds of this Institution, and the great age of the Benefit members." Thus, given the apparent constant number of honorary members, it was the apparent inability to recruit young, paying members that caused the difficulties of the society. According to the Rev. Frome Wilkinson, given that the Divisional Court of Queen's Bench had decided that "natural decay" is not "sickness," the common practice of extending sick pay in old age to avoid causing destitution and recourse to poor rates, in the absence of a separate benefit for old age and sufficient younger contributors paying the correct amount of contributions, could very well result in the insolvency of a friendly society.[25] The Lincoln Female Friendly Society clerk's appeal garnered some success the next year, 1847, for it was reported that the wife of the Archdeacon of Lincoln (Mrs. Bonney) had become a subscriber at £1 per annum.[26]

With the expansion of mutual assistance in varied forms and the growth of the affiliated friendly society orders after the 1850s, the outdated Lincoln Female Friendly Society was probably condemned to eventually close, as the aforementioned clerk's letter implies.

Affiliated Friendly Societies

Owing greatly to the punitive 1834 New Poor Law and a subsequent quasi-criminalization of poverty, the period 1834–1875 was marked by the growth of non-stigmatizing mutual assistance. Friendly societies had started locally, that is, as individual societies serving a particular locality or, more exceptionally, a particular trade, in the latter part of the eighteenth century. These societies were susceptible to membership variance due to trade swings and other economic factors. Affiliated orders, those with a central headquarters that presided over the activities of numerous widespread branches, were increasingly popular, not least because they provided for help outside the claimant's initial locale of residence (allowing tramping). The Independent Order of Oddfellows Manchester Unity Friendly Society (the Oddfellows),[27] the Ancient Order of Foresters Friendly Society (the Foresters), and the total abstinence society, the Independent Order of Rechabites (see below), are notable examples of affiliated orders. According to official statistics in 1892, at the time there were 11,242 affiliated societies (mainly Oddfellows and Foresters branches) and 3,717 independent friendly societies in England.[28] The organization of these orders was top-down with a board of directors at headquarters and district societies made up of representatives from local lodges or "tents." The grassroots membership was mainly the working class. The wide geographical scope of the affiliated orders did not guarantee gender parity, however, for as Ruby Hunt states in her description of friendly societies in and around Pinchbeck, although the District Rules of 1902 of the Pinchbeck Lodge of the Oddfellows stated that a male or female could be admitted for sickness or funeral benefits, "females did not attend Lodge Meetings and it was not until 1956, 118 years after its formation, that the Pinchbeck Lodge initiated its first lady member – Miss Jean Russell."[29] Hunt adds that Miss Russell achieved the highest office by becoming the lodge's noble grand in 1962. Women Foresters were permitted to join their order in 1892.[30]

The United Sisters' Friendly Society, Suffolk Unity

The Rev. John Frome Wilkinson, in his comprehensive book *The Friendly Society Movement* (1886), dedicates a few pages to the relationship between

women and friendly societies. He begins by refuting the fact that women were entirely neglected, for he states that wives, daughters, and near female members of male friendly societies received medical relief and often had access to orphan and widows' funds when necessary. However, he recognizes that the scale of relief was inadequate: "Where were the friendly and benefit institutions for women, similar to those vast agencies [for men]? Have they not equal rights with men to these high privileges?"[31] Believing women, indeed, had an equal right to financial help as men, Wilkinson founded the United Sisters' Friendly Society in 1885 (with the motto Unity in Strength), which he modeled on the Oddfellows and the Foresters, he being an honorary member of the Foresters and a financial member of the Oddfellows. The aim was to encourage women all over the country to open affiliated branches, providing a network of mutually supporting members. Wilkinson quoted the high court ranger of the Ancient Order of Foresters, T. Ballan Stead, Esq., of Leeds, editor of the journal *Friendly Societies*, who thanked Wilkinson for his courage in starting a female society and showed great empathy for the plight of working women in need:

> Why should not women have their benefit societies as well as men? Are they not subject to ailments the same as men? Is not a money allowance to them, when sick, as useful as when their husbands are 'on the box'? Many a poor woman has, literally, to drag herself through her work, when almost unable to do so. We have grown accustomed to see men lay by when ill; but women seem bound to hold on to their domestic labours until they really drop off from exhaustion. The money benefit to a sick woman could be employed to obtain household help at a time when a few weeks' rest would have a wonderfully recuperative effect. At present, many a poor woman goes to an untimely grave, solely through the impossibility of her getting rest from her daily work. The Friendly Societies' Amalgamated Medical Associations have done a great work in placing the best of medicine and skilled attendance at the disposal of the wives and children of the members. Mr. Wilkinson's organisation would add to these benefits the pecuniary ones so beneficial to male members.[32]

Stead went on to reveal the main reason for the big, affiliated orders not letting women join together with men, and their "grave objection" was a practical one. Such a practice would "utterly overthrow the actuarial calculations upon which the society's tables had been based." The so-called "ebbing and flowing proportion of females, with an average sickness unlike that of males at similar

ages, and a different duration of life, would prove such a disturbing element to financial efficiency."[33] In other words, women's benefit needs were harder to predict than men's and would expose the society to insolvency. On the other hand, according to Stead, separate tables for females within a male society would merely constitute a society within a society, creating added and unnecessary difficulties, for example, when home visitation was required to ascertain the veracity of sick claims.[34] Local friendly societies for women were said to be precarious and failing, "Palliatives at the best, heavily handicapped with the [actuarial] errors of the past, made in the dubious light that preceded the rise of the new science of vital statistics, they have failed in their mission."[35] Besides, an affiliated society with branches nationwide provided better social support and allowed women to move from place to place, without becoming dependent upon the good will of strangers for advice or protection.

The United Sisters' Friendly Society allowed women on sick benefits to do light unpaid domestic chores that would not hinder recovery, recognizing the fact that women were the keepers of the home and this status should be protected if possible. Any branch officer in direct communication with benefit members such as those who collected contributions and visited the sick must be female, but regarding the financial and other management of the branches, there was ambiguity. Women were not excluded from management roles, but most committee members were required to have some knowledge of the working of a friendly society. This requirement meant most members would probably be men, although women had begun to gain experience in municipal offices from the passing of the Municipal Franchise Act in 1869, and women had been working in the charity field in an amateur and professional capacity for many years prior to 1885. According to the head of the Foresters, the pooling of resources was preferred, and the church and upper-class women should get involved with running the societies:

> It is our earnest hope that, in the majority of instances, amalgamated committees will be formed of officers and members of affiliated or other societies located in the place, who, with the assistance of the clergy, ministers of religion, and (especially) ladies interested in the welfare of their less well-provided-for sisters, will promote the object we have in view.[36]

Two branches of the United Sisters' Friendly Society had opened in the first six months after inauguration, and Stead believed that others were likely to follow in various parts of the country: "In the near future it will undoubtedly spread

far and wide, teaching women lessons of self-respect, forethought, and thrift, and proving among them the power of union and the blessedness of bearing one another's burdens."[37] Wilkinson considered that there were enough working women with the means of joining the United Sisters' Friendly Society, for the census returns of 1881 showed that there were 1,545,000 domestic servants, 1,578,000 industrial workers, 196,000 professional women, 64,000 women engaged in agricultural labor, and 19,000 in commercial occupations in England. He adds to this point by stating that an increasing number of professions and paid jobs were available to women and that women outnumbered men in England by 948,000. Without husbands to support them, many of these unmarried women would have to earn their own living and thus be exposed to the vicissitudes of employment precariousness. Also, the male-female wage differential was expected to continue to diminish, leaving more well-paid women able to insure themselves against misfortune.

The *Cambrian News and Welsh Farmer's Gazette* (*CNWFG*) of 26 June 1885 published a lengthy article titled "A Friendly Society for Women," which aimed to encourage women to join the United Sisters' Friendly Society, claiming like Wilkinson and Stead that they deserved equal sick and funeral benefits to men.[38] The *CNWFG* published Wilkinson's tables showing that for a payment of 1s. 9d. per month, a 25-year-old working woman could secure six shillings per week during sickness up to the age of 65, and four shillings weekly after that age, together with a payment of £4 at death.

> That the working women of the country should be left unsupplied with the means of providing for sickness and old age has been one of the defects of the existing friendly societies. In this, as in many other matters relating to women, imaginary difficulties are created, but it is not likely that in practical working any real difficulty would be experienced. There is a provision, for instance, that the allowance in sickness shall not be "granted to any sister during the first month, next immediately after child birth."[39]

Assistance immediately after having a baby was negated. Thus, when it could have made a real difference to women, the United Sisters' Friendly Society fell short. Not all friendly societies were of the same mind regarding pre- and postnatal assistance. An article in the *Chester Chronicle* of 22 March 1805 titled "Female Friendly Societies: Admirable Institutions!" states that the Wiltshire Society, since its inception in 1793, had supported the pregnant wives of members. As the cost of care was prohibitively expensive (a fortnight's wages) and recourse to the parish would be needed after birth, the society paid 7s. 6d. for any child

born in wedlock, whether born alive or dead, and a further 7s. 6d. after a fortnight to cover the cost of a midwife and nurse. According to the rules of the Wiltshire Female Friendly Society, therefore, although the unique position of women was recognized vis-à-vis childbirth, illegitimacy was penalized by the denial of benefits to unmarried women, thus negating aid to those mothers who were probably most in need. It is not known whether an additional contribution was required in order to receive this very discriminatory benefit.

The *CNWFG* stated that the general spread of the female tents and lodges of the Independent Order of Rechabites (see below) and the Sons of Temperance was considered to have been hampered by "their restricted character and peculiar [temperance] obligations incumbent upon members, however good in themselves."[40] In other words, temperance did not appeal to all women. The newspaper, ignorant of Stead's aforementioned arguments concerning the dangers of women joining the Foresters and other affiliated friendly societies, could offer no explanation for the restriction on female membership by the Oddfellows and Foresters, and in the absence of any plausible argument it was thought wiser to remedy the defect by the formation of an identical society for women "than to strive for years to change the attitude of Foresters and Oddfellows, and perhaps fail in the end."[41]

The following comment by G. E. Mattingly in a letter to the *Englishwomen's Review of Social and Industrial Questions* of 1886 is telling. It shows that even in the late Victorian period, with the arrival of the New Woman and the highlighting of other important female social concerns, the redolence of paternalism lingered on even in ideas about female friendly societies:

> Much may be done . . . in this direction by women who are anxious to help their poorer sisters; the promotion of social intercourse among the members, the formation of a library for their use, occasional entertainments by friends, annual teas, would all be calculated to foster friendly and sympathetic feelings among the sisters, and to induce others to join the society, and share its benefits.[42]

An estimated half a million women were volunteer workers in charitable organizations in 1893, and around 20,000 women were paid officials.[43]

The United Order of Female Rechabites

The history of female Rechabites is interesting for its unfulfilled promise. The temperance aspect of the Independent Order of Rechabites (IOR) was appreciated by the archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Temple, who in 1909 regarded

the order as "the best of all Friendly Societies and the best of all Temperance Societies."[44] On the seventy-fifth anniversary of this friendly society in 1909, the society was said to rank third in the friendly society movement in point of numbers, with a membership of half a million, there being one Rechabite in every one hundred members of the population.

It is illuminating to look at Richardson Campbell's *Rechabite History* (1911) in order to see how the male–female dynamic was manifest in a society that has survived to this day. Currently named Healthy Investment,[45] the object of the IOR was to take the friendly society movement away from the pub in the name of moral and social advancement. When first formed in 1835, the order was intended only for males, but within a year of its foundation separate female tents, districts, and an executive committee were set up around the country for females older than 12 years. In 1838, at the first annual movable conference of the United Order of Female Rechabites (UOFR), female tent officers were designated as follows: senior matron, junior matron, past senior matron, secretary, treasurer, stewardesses, levite, and guardians. Despite the female positions in the UOFR, the order was nevertheless ultimately under male auspices at the time. The first high chief ruler or head of the separate UOFR was a man, the Reverend John Holt, concomitantly the treasurer of the male IOR, appointed in 1840. It appears that there never was a female high officer and that all the higher elected officers of the executive committee were male, meaning the women of this order were active only in lower management.

The first annual moveable conference of the UOFR was held in the British Schoolroom, Hanley, Staffordshire, on 11 August 1838, at which delegates from the various female tents were present, reporting on the pleasing prospect of "extensive and rapid" progress for the following year.[46] A code of general rules with tables of fines attached was approved as the General Laws of the UOFR. In 1840, well before the establishment of the United Sisters' Friendly Society, organized as a separate order with 141 tents in 22 districts, the UOFR was earnestly recommended by the subcommittee for the Female Order at the general IOR annual moveable conference meeting at Chester:

> We earnestly recommend the Order to our brethren as worthy of their most strenuous support, as capable of giving a strong impulse to the temperance movement, and in its intimate connection with our own valuable institution, of exhibiting to the world an organization in favour of virtue which the powers of vice [alcohol abuse] shall never be able to dissolve.[47]

In 1843, 70 new female tents and five new districts had been opened, making a total of 360 tents and 45 districts. Some of the tent names are evocative: Maria Edgeworth, Rose Without a Thorn, Sisters of Charity, United Sisters (nine separate tents), Gladys, Protector of Virtue, etc. The annual moveable conference agreed to meet only every three years, a schedule that may have been an omen of early deterioration. In 1850, at the conference in Liverpool, the attendance was small despite there still being 45 active districts. There was an "Enrollment Crisis."[48] The executive was moved to Manchester with the appointment of Manchester members as officers, this being a portent for future amalgamation. The rules of the Birth Fund were published in this year of 1850. One halfpenny per week bought one share, and ten shillings were paid out per share (maximum of four shares) on the birth of a child to a married woman. It would be interesting to discover if this fund led the tents to insolvency or whether the rate was set at the correct amount. As aforementioned, friendly societies were wary of insuring women for births. Faulty actuarial tables were a source of much heartache for those in the insurance business until the late Victorian period, for if set incorrectly, they could precipitate the insolvency of a society. At least childbirth was regarded as worthy of support by the Female Order of the UOFR, unlike the Lincoln Female Friendly Society or the United Sisters' Friendly Society.

It was reported at the 1856 annual conference in Douglas, Isle of Man, that some female districts had been dissolved, "and the chief cause attributed was want of confidence and a governing body," while in other districts there were female tents "but to make them answer the design of their establishment, a proper system of government was felt to be wanting."[49] The existing female tents were financially healthy, but the recommendation was given "that both the male and female portions of our honorable Order be united in one bond of union."[50] Thus, from 6 August 1856, the UOFR and the IOR were united with male and female tents in the same adult district, making a society within a society, something the high court ranger of the Ancient Order of Foresters, T. Ballan Stead, had remarked earlier was not advisable.

The Report to the Seventeenth Movable Conference in Chester, 1857, on the Female Order by the Board of Directors states that the correspondence from the various districts showed the Female Order to be in "utter disorganization, the cause of which is at present unexplained."[51] Clearly, the model of separate male and female tents "in one bond of union" under the same male officers had not proven successful. No more mention is made of females in the conference reports until 1871 when women and children are linked together in the juvenile and female tents section. There is a plea to establish more female tents "wherever

practicable," but the board lamented the lack of "champions" for this.[52] The 7 lines afforded to juveniles and females in the approximately 214-line report indicate their relatively low significance to the organization as a whole.

In the following report of 1873, there are separate sections for juveniles and females, and thereafter juveniles receive much more attention. It is noted that several additional female tents were opened during 1871–1873 and that a code of general rules had been issued for the guidance of those wishing to set up a tent. There is no further mention of females until Sister Lady Henry Somerset[53] and Sister Miss G. E. F. Morgan appear as district representatives to the 1889 moveable conference, Nottingham, Somerset representing the Hereford and Radnor District and Morgan representing the Brecknockshire District. A full-page photograph of the two women shows them looking somber and assertive. There were 104 representatives in all for 69 districts. This was the first time in the history of the order that women were present as representatives, which reflects the increasing capability and visibility of women in the public sphere in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

Conclusion

The ephemeral nature of rule books and the like makes it difficult to find details of early friendly societies. However, local newspapers, excellent sources of information, can now often be examined online, improving accessibility to vital information. Archives remain important sources of information for friendly societies and often need to be consulted in situ. Before the state took on a regulatory role and erected the twentieth-century welfare structure we are familiar with today, employed women were either unprotected financially or left to set up their own friendly societies or to be covered by their husbands' contributions in theirs. This chapter has highlighted the fact that mutual assistance through friendly society membership was not only the preserve of the men.

Lincoln was found to have had a female friendly society presence from 1808, under the auspices of esteemed patrons (honorary members), but it suffered financially from being unable to supplement its aging, paying poor members with new, young ones. This top-down model of assistance became unworkable and increasingly out of step with the changing nature of self-help, but the female network that was created at the time was important. The temperance friendly society of the Rechabites recognized female agency one year after its founding in 1836, but the separate Female Order was placed under male leadership, apart from the local tents, and ultimately did not flourish in that state. Amalgamation was the solution found. Notwithstanding the Independent Order of Rechabites

experience, the separate female friendly society model in the form of the United Sisters' Friendly Society, the ultimate success or demise of which is unknown to me, was a late nineteenth-century attempt to fill the gap for female assistance at a time when joint male-female societies were considered problematic. Although local and affiliated female friendly societies undoubtedly enabled women to connect with each other in uncertain and precarious times, more research is needed to obtain a clearer picture of the female friendly societies in general.

Notes

1.   Jane Rendall, The Principle of Mutual Support: Female Friendly Societies in Scotland c. 1789–1830, Women's History Scotland, 27 September 2016, power point slide 10, http://womenshistoryscotland.org/tag/friendly-societies (accessed 23 March 2019).

2.   Anonymous, The Lincoln Courts of Foresters, *Stamford Mercury*, 1 July 1842, 3.

3.   Rex Russell, *Three Lincolnshire Labourers' Movements: Protest and Incendiarism 1830–1858* (Barton on Humber: Workers' Educational Association, Barton on Humber Branch, 1994), 69.

4.   Olwen Hufton, What Is Women's History? *History Today* 35, no. 6 (June 1985): 38–48. The book Hufton was writing at the time was ultimately published as *The Prospect before Her: A History of Women in Western Europe*. Vol. 1, *1500–1800*. (London: HarperCollins, 1995).

5.   Jane Rendall, *Women in an Industrializing Society: England, 1750–1800* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990); Linda Colley, *The Ordeal of Elizabeth Marsh: A Woman in World History* (London: HarperCollins, 2007).

6.   P. H. J. H. Gosden, *The Friendly Societies in England, 1815–1875* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1961); Gosden, *Self-Help: Voluntary Associations in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1973).

7.   Gosden, *Self-Help*, 26.

8.   Rex Russell, *Friendly Societies in the Caistor, Binbrook and Brigg Areas in the Nineteenth Century* (Nettleton: Nettleton Branch of the Workers' Educational Association, 1975), 17 (emphasis mine).

9.   Christopher Prom, Friendly Society Discipline and Charity in Late Victorian and Edwardian England, *Historian* 72, no. 4 (Winter 2010): 904.

10.   Reliable overviews of friendly societies are Gosden, *Friendly Societies in England*, and Simon Cordery, *British Friendly Societies, 1750–1914* (New York: Palgrave, 2003).

11.   Dot Jones, Self-Help in Nineteenth Century Wales: The Rise and Fall of the Female Friendly Society, *Llafur the Journal of the Society for the Study of Welsh Labour History* 4, no. 1 (1984): 14–26.

12.   Anonymous, The Daily Chronicle, *Huddersfield Daily Chronicle*, 8 May 1874, 2.

13.   Anonymous, The Daily Chronicle, 2.

14.   Gosden, *Friendly Societies in England*, 62.

15.   For more information on the Barwick Female Friendly Society (1778–1901), see *Barwicker*, no. 7, http://www.barwickinelmethistoricalsociety.com/0754.html (accessed 25 March

2019). There are many dispersed accounts of individual, local female friendly societies like that of the Southill Female Friendly Society, which existed between 1844 and 1948. See also Daniel Weinbren, The Fraternity of Female Friendly Societies, in *Gender and Fraternal Orders in Europe, 1300–2000*, ed. M'aire Fedelma Cross (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 200–222.

16.   Caroline Massingberd (1746–1833) was probably the unmarried daughter of the wealthy W. Massingberd of Gunby Park. She had varied philanthropic interests; for example, with her sister she set up an infant school in Lincoln in 1829, she left a legacy to the Lincoln Dispensary, and she donated to the Lincoln Lunatic Asylum. See John Bibby, Appendix 4: An Ellison Family History, in *Executive Report on the Boultham Park Conservation Plan* (Lincoln, U.K.: Lincoln City Council, 18 February 2013), 1–19. Information supplied by Alison Hewson, Democratic Services Officer, City of Lincoln Council.

17.   Miss Ellison could have been the unmarried Harriet Ellison (d. 1830). Her father Richard (d. 1797), owner of large estates, had greatly increased the family fortunes in Lincoln. With partners he established the first bank, later the National Westminster Bank, among other trade-related enterprises. Harriet Ellison lived in the exclusive Minster Yard, Lincoln (Bibby, An Ellison Family History).

18.   New "improved" rules were introduced around October 1819 (Anonymous, Lincoln, *Stamford Mercury*, 29 October 1819, 3). Unfortunately, they have not been located by me. Fines would typically be levied for misconduct of various kinds. For fines in a male friendly society see article 25 of the Gainsborough Friendly Society's *The Article, Rules and Regulations of the Friendly Society, Established at Gainsborough in the County of Lincoln, for the Relief and Maintenance of the Several Members Thereof, in Old Age, Sickness and Infirmity, and of the Widows and Children of Deceased Members* (Gainsborough: Henry Mozley, 1810), Local Collection No. 368.3638, Gainsborough Public Library, where fines were levied for swearing and gambling (two pence fine), being drunk while at the meeting (six pence fine), and ignoring three warnings to come to order (one shilling or expulsion).

19.   Anonymous, Lincoln, 3.

20.   Anonymous, Lincoln, 3.

21.   Anonymous, Lincoln, 3.

22.   Lincoln Female Friendly Society, Abstract of the Accounts of the Lincoln Female Friendly Society, 8 June 1835–23 May 1836, Lin. 367 / U.P. 443, Lincoln County Library, Lincoln, U.K.

23.   He was an acknowledged patron of the arts and the first to support Millais. "A generous supporter of all good causes, Richard founded a school at Scothern in 1837. . . . He died on 20 Nov. 1859, leaving about £350,000, about £10,000 of which he left to various charities immediately, with several similar legacies to be paid annually" (Bibby, An Ellison Family History, 9).

24.   Anonymous, Lincoln Female Friendly Society, *Lincolnshire Chronicle,* 4 December 1846, 5.

25.   John Frome Wilkinson, *The Friendly Society Movement. Its Origin, Rise, and Growth. Its Social, Moral, and Educational Influences. The Affiliated Orders* (London: Longmans, Green, 1886), 726–727.

26.   Anonymous, The Lady of the Archdeacon of Lincoln, *Lincolnshire Chronicle*, 18 June 1847, 3.

27.   Established in 1810 when it split from the parent body, the Grand United Order of Oddfellows. The Oddfellows Manchester Unity is one of the oldest U.K. friendly societies with 314,000 members in 2018, according to their website https://www.oddfellows.co.uk/about/ (accessed 15 May 2018). The Ancient Order of Foresters was established in 1834 and is now called the Foresters Friendly Society (https://www.forestersfriendlysociety.co.uk/; accessed 10 May 2018).

28.   John Frome Wilkinson, Friendly Society Finance, *Economic Journal* 2, no. 8 (December 1892): 721–727.

29.   Ruby Hunt, Friendly Societies in and around Pinchbeck, *Lincolnshire Life* 20, no. 9 (December 1980): 35.

30.   Prom, Friendly Society Discipline and Charity, 173.

31.   Wilkinson, *Friendly Society Movement*, 195.

32.   T. Ballan Stead, quoted in Wilkinson, *Friendly Society Movement*, 196.

33.   Wilkinson, *Friendly Society Movement*, 196.

34.   The United Sisters' Friendly Society instituted separate sickness, annuity, and funeral funds to guard against insolvency, and the society's tables were drawn up by Mr. R. Watson, actuary to the Manchester Unity and public valuer, who was also the society's actuary and valuer.

35.   Stead, quoted in Wilkinson, *Friendly Society Movement*, 197.

36.   Stead, quoted in Wilkinson, *Friendly Society Movement*, 197.

37.   Stead quoted in Wilkinson, *Friendly Society Movement*, 199.

38.   Anonymous, A Friendly Society for Women, *Cambrian News and Merionethshire Standard*, 26 June 1885, http://newspapers.library.wales/view/3416615/3416619 (accessed 12 May 2018).

39.   Anonymous, Friendly Society for Women, 4.

40.   Anonymous, Friendly Society for Women, 4.

41.   Anonymous, Friendly Society for Women, 4.

42.   G. E. Mattingly, quoted in Wilkinson, *Friendly Society Movement*, 199–200.

43.   Maureen Keane, *Ishbel: Lady Aberdeen in Ireland* (Newtownards, Northern Ireland: Colourpoint Books, 1999), 27.

44.   Richardson Campbell, *Rechabite History: A Record of the Origin, Rise, and Progress of the Independent Order of Rechabites Salford Unity, from Its Institution on August 25th, 1835, to the Present Time* (Manchester: Board of Directors of the Order, 1911), 444.

45.   See the Healthy Investment website, https://www.healthyinvestment.co.uk/ (accessed 12 May 2018).

46.   Campbell, *Rechabite History*, 219.

47.   Campbell, *Rechabite History*, 220.

48.   Campbell, *Rechabite History*, 223.

49.   Campbell, *Rechabite History*, 217.

50.   Campbell, *Rechabite History*, 218.

51.   Campbell, *Rechabite History*, 235.

52.   Campbell, *Rechabite History*, 288.

53.   Somerset was a close friend of the American activist Frances E. Willard, and they worked in Britain and the United States to correlate the temperance movement with other reforms, such as the enfranchisement of women, the labor movement, and the social purity movement, all of which are inextricably intertwined with the temperance reform itself. Somerset was an active president for a separate female temperance organization, the British Woman's Temperance Association, founded in 1876. She also presided over the World's Woman's Christian Temperance Union from 1898 to 1906. For more on Somerset see Olwen C. Niessen, *Aristocracy, Temperance and Social Reform: The Life of Lady Henry Somerset* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2007).

3

INTERRACIAL NETWORKS OF TRANSATLANTIC ACTIVISM

Sarah Parker Remond Reassessing Black Womanhood

Sirpa Salenius

Abstract. In the nineteenth century, the transatlantic world was animated by an exchange of ideas, texts, and information that circulated between the United States and Europe. Likewise, abolitionists, social reformers, and educators crossed the ocean, contributing to the building of bridges of collaboration established around different reform movements and activism. They formed extensive webs of alliances, some of which were interracial, intercultural, and transnational. For the few African Americans who joined the transatlantic networks, crossing the ocean often led to liminal experiences of self-definition. This chapter, based on archival research, focuses on one inspirational figure: Dr. Sarah Parker Remond, who was a Black transatlantic protofeminist. After lecturing in the United States with Susan B. Anthony and Abby Kelley Foster, Remond moved to England, where she spoke in front of large audiences, raising awareness of the condition of enslaved people and promoting women's emancipation. She joined international networks of women activists, becoming a member of the London Emancipation Committee, then an active member in the executive committee of the Ladies' London Emancipation Society; as she joined some of the most powerful radical London activists, Remond reassessed her identity as an intellectual leader, thus providing a new model of Black womanhood. Remond, moreover, recognized the existing connections between education and power, between knowledge and political, economic, and social advancement. She continued her studies, first in London, then in Florence, Italy, where she

graduated from one of the most prestigious medical schools of Europe, the Santa Maria Nuova hospital school. She rejected the deeply rooted demeaning ideas concerning Black womanhood and created a counternarrative to dominant notions of Blackness. Sarah Parker Remond showed how empowerment and positive images of Black women emerge in the context of lived experience.

A fter the initial break from Europe, the United States reconnected to its European roots through complex transatlantic interaction, which was particularly dynamic in the nineteenth century. It consisted not only of a circulation of ideas, texts, and information between the United States and Europe but also of abolitionists, social reformers, and educators crossing the ocean to build collaboration networks around reform movements and activism. Such flow of people, texts, and information overlapped with women's progression from domesticity into organized benevolent work that allowed them to form communities around shared struggles, in particular against slavery and patriarchy. Women became active participants in transatlantic networks in which they contested existing power structures.[1] Together with other socially marginalized groups, or what Shirley Ardener has labeled "muted groups," they became "cumulatively powerful . . . in bringing about social change."[2] Unfortunately, many formally organized women's associations, in particular those that were interracial, were charged with rivalry and discrimination stemming both from racial and class difference. In addition, religious difference (Catholic, Protestant, Jewish) could also create tension between women in both the United States and Europe. Often, then, women's public life of activism was interconnected to their private life as they engaged in negotiating social and political advancement. An egalitarian atmosphere was more readily achieved in informal networks of camaraderie in which uniting factors included cultural, political, and/or intellectual pursuits. For the few African Americans who joined nineteenth-century transatlantic networks, race equality seemed more pronounced in European activist and intellectual circles than in formally organized American interracial societies. Indeed, for them, crossing the ocean often led to liminal experiences of self-fashioning. This chapter, based on archival research, focuses on one inspirational nineteenth-century figure, Dr. Sarah Parker Remond. She first connected with women's networks formally organized in the United States around abolitionism; subsequently, in Europe she

joined other women in their efforts to campaign against slavery and promote women's rights, for instance, in such cities as London and Dublin, where she joined hands with such prominent Irish feminists as Frances Power Cobbe, and in Italy she networked with cultivated intellectual women who shared her same interests, which included Italy's unity, women's emancipation, and artistic expressions such as theater and music. Through formal and informal women's networks Remond's new conceptualizations of Black womanhood became visibly validated.

Sarah Remond Networking in the United States

Sarah Remond was a Black protofeminist who participated in transatlantic, and transnational, movements promoting social justice. Scholars have suggested that transnational history, one which Remond also helped shape, was "established as a specific and complex perspective in gender history and beyond, that blends existing forms of comparison with the history of bi- and multilateral connections—such as travelling and border-crossing migrations, exchanges, information flows and transfers, mutual perceptions and interactions."[3] The transatlantic women's alliances and networks, in which discourses of race, gender, and class intersected, posed "an epistemological challenge with their tendency to merge rather than accentuate cultural difference."[4] Such empowering environments that promoted acceptance allowed the marginalized to contest persistent demeaning stereotypes. "Challenging these controlling images," notes the feminist critic Patricia Hill Collins, "has long been a core theme in Black feminist thought."[5] Remond was among those African Americans who contributed in substituting negative images constructed of Black womanhood with positive ones. One way for her to create empowering images of Black women was to assume leadership roles in organizations and engage in networking with women in both the United States and Europe, both within societies and in her private life.

Remond first started collaborating with women together with her family members in her native Salem: her mother, Nancy Lenox, was a baker and a founding member of the Salem Female Anti-Slavery Society, established in 1834. Likewise, Remond's sisters were all professionals and active in antislavery societies: Susan was a fancy cake maker whose premises became a venue for her clients to discuss race and gender politics; her other sister, Cecelia, a hairdresser and manufacturer of wigs, worked together with another sister, Caroline Remond Putnam, also a hairdresser. Yet another sister, Maritcha Juan, ran a Ladies Hair Work Salon. All of them were active in formally organized associations, in particular those founded and led by such African American women as their mother.

Remond's father, John, was from Curacao, probably of Dutch origins. He was well known in Salem for his catering business, and he was a member of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society. His son, Charles Lenox, was particularly noteworthy for being a famous abolitionist lecturer and one of the first African Americans to connect American abolitionists with Europeans.

Charles Lenox Remond, who in the United States was active in operating the Underground Railroad, had attended the first World Anti-Slavery Convention in London in 1840 before spending six months in Ireland. He was instrumental in introducing many who traveled after him to local activists, thus facilitating organization of their lecture tours. Irish activist Richard Davis Webb, a Dublin Quaker printer, not only hosted the Black speakers but also used his own network of connections to arrange their speaking engagements. Charles Lenox, for instance, gave lectures in Dublin, Limerick, and Belfast, where meeting halls were packed. At the end of his tour in Ireland, 60,000 Irish men, among them the Irish political leader Daniel O'Connell, signed an address that asked Irish Americans to support the antislavery struggle.[6] The "Address from the People of Ireland to Their Countrymen and Countrywomen in America," which urged Irish Americans to "love liberty—hate slavery—cling by the abolitionists" and to consider Black Americans their equals, was, unfortunately, not very enthusiastically received.[7]

When Sarah Remond started her public career as a lecturer, she initially toured with her brother, Charles. Like so many others residing in the Northern Black communities of freeborn African Americans, Remond was trained and educated to a great extent at home, where her parents instructed her to read newspapers and defend herself against discrimination. Nazera Sadiq Wright points out how "networks that include parents, extended family members, community members, and the reading public . . . often nurture and shape the growth of black girls."[8] This seems to have been the case for Remond and her sisters. In many ways Remond's life apparently resembled that of White middle-class women in that she read the same books they did, including the works of Lord Byron, Margaret Fuller, and many others. Moreover, she attended lectures and theater performances, visited museums, and spent her evenings with her family listening to music or playing social games. The dramatic difference was her political awareness stemming from discrimination to which she referred in her autobiographical essay as "the scorn and contempt, which met us on every hand when face to face with the world, where we met a community who hated all who were identified with an enslaved race."[9] Another equally striking difference, also related to bigotry, concerned "the absence of access to public schools for black children," which

made such publications as Black newspapers even more important, according to Wright, as they "likely contributed significantly to the acquisition of and desire for literacy."[10] Sarah Remond was among those Black girls who had developed early in life such yearning for information and education, which made her an avid reader.

Yet another significant difference between Black and White women, according to Hazel V. Carby, was connected to nineteenth-century conceptualizations of womanhood that pertained exclusively to White middle- and upper-class women who formed a contrast to the many, more independent, self-reliant African American women. Black women, Carby notes, "had to confront the dominant domestic ideologies and literary conventions of womanhood, which excluded them from the definition of 'woman.'"[11] Sojourner Truth's famous speech "Ain't I a Woman," delivered at the Women's Rights Convention of 1851, brought attention to all women's entitlement for increased rights, while it simultaneously rendered Truth herself a symbol of the strong Black woman. Nineteenth-century activists, Martha S. Jones suggests, "self-consciously wrestled with" the meaning of Black womanhood in the "contested space" of Black public culture, which encompassed such social and intellectual communities as "churches, political organizations, secret societies, literary clubs, and antislavery societies."[12] The clubs and societies provided opportunities for learning but also for networking with others within these supportive communities. Many of these communal sites were interrelated, as were questions raised by concerned African Americans related to education, segregation, citizenship, temperance, abolitionism, and so forth; many Black women, like other activists, campaigned for multiple issues in several organizations simultaneously. And yet, White women could also be fierce and independent, thus deviating from the confining, idealized image of the submissive True Woman, especially activists who at times were vilified and attacked both verbally and physically without entirely being denied their gender identity. If women, for the most part, were expected to remain in their domestic sphere as obedient wives and mothers, in many instances more progressively thinking women contested such patriarchal expectations. Abby Kelley Foster and Susan B. Anthony were among such radical White leaders of abolitionism and women's rights with whom Remond toured at the beginning of her lecturing career, in 1856.

Supportive action between White and Black women, however, often failed to become a lived experience because of differences in women's backgrounds (race, class, education). Indeed, according to Carby, Anthony and another pioneer activist, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "acceded to racist, exclusionary practices in order to court potential white female supporters in the Southern states."[13] Likewise, Mia

Bay observes how "throughout the century, the female antislavery societies, suffrage organizations, and temperance clubs organized by white women frequently excluded black members; and the rights and reforms that white feminists sought on behalf of their gender were often envisioned as pertaining to Anglo-Saxon women only."[14] As a testimony of the discriminatory attitudes, Bay mentions a former Quaker, Sarah Mapps Douglass, who commented on her reception among Philadelphia Quakers thus: "I believe they despise us for our color"; at their meetings the Quakers, she continued, "relegated black people to a separate bench."[15] Evidently, segregation prevailed among Black and White women despite their common goals in achieving equality and eradicating social injustice.

Often, White women were reluctant to extend the same privileges to their Black colleagues, who were "branded immoral, unwomanly, and naturally lewd, largely as a result of conditions in which they were forced to live."[16] Moreover, repeatedly, Black women's skills were devalued, and their presence was overshadowed by White women. For instance, as late as 1904, a White woman, May Wright Sewall, was highly praised at the National Council of Women's conference in Berlin not only for her language skills but also for her manner, dress, and speaking skills; however, it was the African American Mary Church Terrell who addressed her audience there in both French and German.[17] Thus, Black women organized their own associations, such as the Salem Female Anti-Slavery Society, which, however, became biracial soon after it was established. Black women also assumed leadership positions in other "female literary and benevolent organizations."[18] Remond herself brought attention to the existing racism in a lecture she delivered in England in 1861: "The American people have never recognized the black man as a brother, nor the black woman as a sister."[19] Although this statement seems to rely on a hegemonic construction of homogenized groups of "White" and "Black" men and women and, thus, as a generalization should be contested, here, however, Remond's reference to Black women denotes alliance and solidarity; she was "politicizing their identities and fostering coalitional possibilities."[20] She used the concept of Black women to create a sense of group identity to render these women collectively more powerful. The discrimination of Black women was truly problematic because they were targets of biased attitudes and treatment not only by White women but also by Black men who favored race emancipation over women's rights.

Remond was fortunate to have a supportive family that included her brother Charles, who recognized the importance of increased rights for women. When first touring with him during 1856–1858, at the start of her public career as an abolitionist lecturer, Remond immediately proved to be "quite a pleasing

speaker," as the Unitarian minister Samuel J. May noted; she was also noteworthy because a young Black woman on the platform addressing large audiences was a novelty.[21] Such observations attest to Remond's courage in assuming the responsibilities of a progressive, Black female pioneer.

Remond's Self-Fashioning in Europe

In 1858, Remond left the United States to continue her freshly started vocation in England, where she campaigned against slavery and promoted women's rights. Other African Americans, both freeborn and fugitive slaves, had already traveled to Great Britain before her or were touring there around the same time. These included the former slave Olaudah Equiano, also known as Gustavus Vassa, who was a sailor and hairdresser and whose eight-month antislavery speaking tour, with stops in Dublin, Cork, and Belfast, took place as early as 1791–1792. Also formerly enslaved in New York, the abolitionist doctor James McCune Smith, who received his medical degree from the University of Glasgow, visited Ireland in the 1830s; after him came the fugitive slave Moses Roper and such prominent abolitionist speakers as Remond's brother Charles and fugitive slaves and authors William Wells Brown, Henry "Box" Brown, William Craft, and Frederick Douglass in the 1840s and 1850s. Among the few African American women to visit England were the escaped slaves Ellen Craft and Harriet Jacobs in the 1850s and, some decades later, the antilynching advocate Ida B. Wells in the 1890s. In Europe, these African Americans entered a different racial matrix, a structure in which "the nature of their own racialization and their relation to other races inevitably altered."[22] For the first time, they came close to being acknowledged as U.S. citizens as they carried official documents attesting to their citizenship. (African Americans at the time were not officially recognized as citizens and thus could not have passports.) Letters of introduction served as important networking tools as these women connected with a circle of socially prominent activists, many of whom were White, who shared the same collective goals: abolitionism of slavery and emancipation of women. In Europe, Black Americans were able to reexamine their identities and challenge the belief in their incapacity for self-governance.

At times, the African American visitors gave occasional lectures or even organized entire tours together, thus joining forces in their campaign to gain support for the fight against slavery. Although it seems that for the most part Sarah Remond toured by herself, both she and Douglass gave a talk at the Leeds Young Men's Anti-Slavery Society's annual meeting, where Douglass's speech focused

on John Brown and the Harper's Ferry raid. The *Leeds Times*, dated 24 December 1859, reported on the event but failed to mention the topic of Remond's talk; perhaps it also addressed John Brown.[23] At least once Remond also delivered a lecture at the same event where William Craft spoke.[24] It was rather common, instead, for William Wells Brown to appear together with William and Ellen Craft. The Brown-Craft team had engagements in both small towns and big cities alike, and it was one of the most popular performances of the decade.[25]

Likewise, Sarah Remond was a popular and sought-after speaker. Her career as a lecturer in the international circuit had a brilliant start immediately upon her arrival in England. She had an intense program of engagements during which she addressed crowded audiences in Liverpool and Warrington, where an antislavery society was established as a result of her powerful talks.[26] Newspapers applauded her as "one of the best female lecturers," praising her skills in delivering her talks but also her intelligence, appearance, and manners.[27] It was in England where she truly seems to have been accepted as a sister on equal terms with her White collaborators. Remond testified to her feeling of acceptance, stating that she had been "received here as a sister by white women": "I have received a sympathy I never was offered before."[28] In addition to Liverpool and Warrington, she spoke in front of enthusiastic audiences at fully packed lecture halls in Manchester, Leeds, Bristol, and London before touring in Scotland and Ireland during 1859 and 1860.

Often, women formed the majority in her audience. For instance, in October 1860, the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society invited her to give a lecture on American slavery at the Brighton Street chapel, which "was crowded to the door by a most respectable audience, chiefly composed of females," as local newspapers reported. She was received with "loud and prolonged applause" when she started her talk in which she argued that "the American republic was essentially a despotism, and not only the black but the white races were the victims of the institution of slavery." She brought up the suffering of enslaved women, who she pointed out were "forced into immorality, and corrupted by the system of slavery."[29] In another talk given at a meeting of the Dublin Ladies' Anti-Slavery Association, she also drew "a fearful picture of the sufferings of helpless women in slavery."[30] She talked about the Fugitive Slave Law and predicted the possibility of Civil War: "Unless something were done speedily, a state of things would ensue between the Northern and Southern States of which a civil war would be the result." Her lecture was hailed as "able and instructive."[31]

According to newspaper reports, the warm and cordial welcome with which Remond had been received in every city and town she visited formed a

dramatic contrast to the discrimination she had experienced in her native country; her time in England, newspapers reported, "had been happiness to her, for she had felt none of that objection to her which existed in the United States because of her race."[32] Newspapers tamed her radicalism by focusing on descriptions of her ladylike clothing, appearance, manners, and eloquent talks. She was repeatedly referred to as an accomplished American "lady of colour,"[33] newspapers noted how she expressed herself "in well chosen and good language,"[34] and her appearance was observed to be "remarkably feminine and graceful, coupled with a quiet, dignified manner, a well-toned voice, and pleasing style of enunciation."[35] In other words, she was defined in positive terms, and her presence on the platform, according to newspapers, was pleasant and womanly. It was essential to underscore the propriety and acceptability of unconventional women who ventured outside their domestic walls. As Mia Bay observes, "The elusive privileges of true womanhood were accorded only to women who maintained a 'ladylike' decorum at a time when it was considered unseemly for women to enter the public sphere."[36] Newspapers both in Great Britain and the United States domesticated Remond when defining her in terms that foregrounded her female attributes, rhetorical skills, and social acceptability, which helped Remond rearticulate an identity that promoted new expressions of Black womanhood. In describing the Black woman, the newspapers underscored respectability that formed a counter-narrative to caricatures that circulated of both free and enslaved Black women. It could be argued that these newspapers wrote Sarah Remond into the *White* cult of true womanhood.[37]

The identity politics Remond embraced rested "upon a recursive relationship between individual and social structures, as well as among individuals as an existing collective or a collective that must be brought into being because they share similar social locations within power relations."[38] In such relationships, Remond's collective self intersected with British and Black women through acts of transnational solidarity. Released from oppression and racial tensions, Remond assumed an empowered identity as she renegotiated female power relations.

Remond used various means of self-fashioning as she joined other like-minded women in formal networks, to which the progressive Peter Alfred Taylor (member of Parliament) and his radical wife Clementia (Mentia) introduced her. At the time, from December 1861 until October 1864, Remond was boarding with the Taylors at their Aubrey House, a venue for fervent activism. She first became a member of the London Emancipation Committee, then was promoted into the executive committee of the Ladies' London Emancipation Society, which was founded in 1863. In the radical circles of such a pivotal capital as London,

Remond thus assumed a prominent role as one of the leading figures in activism. Women's social movements, as Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge suggest, "developed systematic understandings of oppression and also focused on personal life experiences that privileged an individual and collective identity politics."[39] In London, Remond had an opportunity to reveal her potential as an intellectual leader. In the United States, it would have been more problematic for her to assume such responsibilities and leadership roles. The ties with other socially prominent women, a prominence often due to their race, were valuable for Remond, as for other African Americans. These ties increased the women's sense of acceptability while demonstrating to the world Black women's capabilities, allowing them to claim a position in existing social and political power structures.

Women, hence, were networking with others as they were determined to proceed with bringing about change in the condition of enslaved Americans as well as women at large. As Clare Midgley notes, "drawing on anti-slavery for its ideological approach, the developing feminist movement made use of the networks of female abolitionists in creating its own network and leadership."[40] Together with Mentia Taylor, Remond was involved in founding the Ladies' London Emancipation Society, which, like the American Anti-Slavery Society led by William Lloyd Garrison, argued that slavery was an issue especially concerning women. Remond was also active in recruiting members and making the society's activities known to others. For instance, she contacted Esther Sturge, who was based in London, about the "Female Emancipation Society" in April 1863, asking her to aid it.[41] Sturge's network of transatlantic women included such American Garrisonians as Maria Weston Chapman.

In addition to Mentia Taylor, with whom Remond formed a work relationship within the formally organized associations and a close friendship that influenced her social life, other women within her network included the other executive committee members of the Ladies' London Emancipation Society who came from England and Ireland: Miss Cobbe, Miss Estlin, Mrs. Manning, and Mrs. Harriet Martineau. Remond was the only American member of the committee. She connected with these women who were also active in other forums promoting social change.

One of them worth mentioning in particular was Frances Power Cobbe, who originally was from Dublin, where Remond met her when attending the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science (NAPSS) meeting in August 1861. The *New York Times* reported that at the convening, Remond gave a paper on American slavery and "its influence on Great Britain."[42] The NAPSS was a gathering of early feminists involved in issues ranging from women's education to medical

reform and improved conditions for workhouse girls.[43] A large number of women read their own papers, which received opposition from some more traditionally thinking women, such as a certain Margaret Gatty, who wrote to her daughters,

> It gives me a creepy-crawly sensation, to imagine a woman facing a court full of gentlemen and ladies, and giving them the benefit of her opinions! . . . To hear a woman hold forth in public, except when she is acting, and so not supposed to be herself, is like listening to bells rung backwards.[44]

Cobbe was one of the women involved in several philanthropic organizations campaigning for various causes simultaneously. She was a suffragist and political journalist dedicated to workhouse reform and campaigning for increased opportunities for women in higher education. She published her social commentaries and political dispatches in such prominent papers as the London *Echo*, *Fraser's Magazine*, and the *Cornhill*; she was a *Daily News* correspondent in Rome and Florence, and she made some "anticipations of psycho-analytic theory" and on dream analysis.[45] She was particularly well known for her commitment to animal rights, which was her concern even when she traveled abroad. For instance, in 1860 she joined others in Italy to protest against cruel vivisections carried out by a German professor established in Florence.[46] Together with Cobbe, Remond officially started promoting women's rights and addressing such topics as temperance.

In her autobiography, published in 1894, Cobbe provides a testimony of the ways in which various forms of activism intersected, as did the social backgrounds, age, nationality, and race of those who participated in promoting social justice. During a reception in which many prominent activists were present, including Remond, one of them, Mary Carpenter, an author of *Juvenile Delinquents*, observed that "it is a thousand pities that everybody will not join and give the whole of their minds to the great cause of the age, because, if they would, we should carry it undoubtedly."[47] The quote indicates that the "great cause" was different for all those present, many of whom campaigned against slavery and for increased rights for women: for Peter Taylor it was the Parliamentary reform, for Remond the abolition of slavery, for another it was woman's suffrage, for Carpenter herself the Industrial Schools Bill. Although they all had perhaps one issue that was more important than others, many of these women worked to change society on many levels.

Remond and Cobbe met again in Bristol, where the abolitionist Estlin family also resided. Although Mary Estlin was based in Bristol, she had been involved in founding the Manchester Anti-Slavery League, and her husband's name often

appeared in the *Liberator*.[48] The Italian nationalist Giuseppe Mazzini, a friend of both Cobbe and Remond, wrote in January 1865 that "Miss Remond is in Bristol," later observing that still in February she had not returned to London yet.[49] It seems that she was staying in Bristol as Cobbe's guest. The two had other collaborators and friends in common, for instance, Elisabeth Jesser Reid, the founder of the Bedford College in London in which Remond enrolled to continue her studies. Cobbe also befriended Reid, who was a feminist, philanthropist, and abolitionist and another progressive woman well connected to London activist circles.

Remond, who recognized that education led to economic and social power, continued her studies in London at the nonsectarian Bedford College. It had emerged from Queen's College for Women, which had opened its doors to young girls in 1848.[50] The courses Remond attended dealt with history, literature, elocution, and languages (French and Latin). She then changed the course of her studies, enrolling at London University College to be trained as a nurse. The university's department of midwifery, of which nuns were in charge, was linked to the All Saints University College Hospital where Remond completed her studies.

After the Civil War, Remond's goal of African American emancipation and equality had been, at least theoretically, accomplished. She started to dedicate more time to realizing her personal ambitions, moving to Florence in 1866 to study at one of the most prestigious medical schools of Europe. She was not the first African American woman to study medicine: Sarah Mapps Douglass had enrolled in the Female Medical College of Pennsylvania in 1852. Also an advocate for women's rights, Douglass taught physiology and hygiene.[51] Another Black woman, Rebecca Lee Crumpler, became a medical doctor when she graduated from the New England Female Medical College in 1864.[52] What was remarkable in Remond's studies, however, was that she conducted them abroad and in a foreign language, Italian.

When she traveled to Italy, Remond had already been introduced to Italy's political and cultural realities through several sources, friends, and acquaintances. She had read such influential works as Elizabeth Barrett Browning's "Casa Guidi Windows," which discusses Italy's unification movement. Her friends included Mazzini, who provided her letters of introduction when she decided to move to Florence. Moreover, Cobbe was well connected with many progressive women in Italy, among them the American sculptress Harriet Hosmer and actress Charlotte Cushman, whose social circles in Rome included the African American sculptress Edmonia Lewis. Many of them knew the Greek author, political activist, and hostess of an intellectual salon in Florence Margherita Mignaty, with whom Remond, her sister Caroline, and her sister's son, Edmund Putnam, became close friends.

After her graduation from the medical school in 1868, Remond, it seems, not only had "good professional prospects" but belonged "among the best people in Florence," many of whom were women, social and political activists, artists, and writers, representing various nationalities—Italian, American, and many other foreign nations.[53] Her international, interracial network in Italy included the American art critic James Jackson Jarves and his wife; she also met the poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow as well as the Italian poet Francesco Dall'Ongaro. Remond's language skills enabled her to enter the polyglot cosmopolitan circles in Florence and Rome, where some of the most famous composers of the time performed at her musical soirées to racially mixed audiences. In Rome, where her nephew and his wife, Gertie, were running a hotel at Palazzo Moroni, right next to St. Peter's, she had the pleasure of lunching with Frederick Douglass, with whom she had lectured in England.

The politics that Remond advocated included freedom, race equality, women's emancipation, and resistance to prejudice. Through her actions, she became one of the pioneers in transatlantic activism, international political reform, and opening new professional avenues for women and African Americans. She created new possibilities for individual self-fashioning and expressions of collective Black womanhood. Sarah Remond's successful (re)negotiation of Black identity within the concept of respectability made the acceptable (White) womanhood hers: she transformed a White, mainstream society's gaze from its mainly demeaning conceptualizations into positive validation. Her participation in international interracial networks and upper class social circles as well as her access to rights and privileges commonly associated with Whites validated her reassessment of Black womanhood.

Notes

1.   On the technological underpinning of such circulation, see Barton C. Hacker and Margaret Vining, Bridging the Ocean: Technological Change and Women's Transatlantic Activism, this volume.

2.   Deborah Fahy Bryceson, Introduction: The Artistry of Social Life, in *Identity and Networks: Fashioning Gender and Ethnicity across Cultures*, ed. Deborah Fahy Bryceson, Judith Okely, and Jonathan Webber (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007), 3.

3.   Oliver Janz and Daniel Schönpflug, Introduction, in *Gender History in a Transnational Perspective: Networks, Biographies, Gender Orders*, ed. Oliver Janz and Daniel Schönpflug (New York: Berghahn, 2014), 2.

4.   Bryceson, Introduction, 11.

5.   Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 76.

6.   Nini Rodgers, *Ireland, Slavery and Anti-slavery: 1612–1865* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 274.

7.   Peter O'Neill and David Lloyd, eds., *The Black and Green Atlantic: Cross-Currents of the African and Irish Diasporas* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 174.

8.   Nazera Sadiq Wright, *Black Girlhood in the Nineteenth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2016), 2.

9.   Sarah P. Remond, Sarah P. Remond, in *Our Exemplars, Poor and Rich; Biographical Sketches of Men and Women Who Have, by Extraordinary Use of Their Opportunities, Benefited Their Fellow-Creatures*, ed. Matthew Davenport Hill (London: Cassell, Petter, and Galpin, 1861), 277.

10.   Wright, *Black Girlhood*, 9.

11.   Hazel V. Carby, *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of Afro-American Woman Novelist* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 6; this work contains further information about the exclusion of Black women from the nineteenth-century cult of the true woman.

12.   Martha S. Jones, *All Bound Up Together: The Woman Question in African American Public Culture, 1830–1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 4, 9.

13.   Carby, *Reconstructing Womanhood*, 68.

14.   Mia Bay, The Battle for Womanhood Is the Battle for Race: Black Women and Nineteenth-Century Racial Thought, in *Toward an Intellectual History of Black Women*, ed. Mia Bay, Farah J. Griffin, Martha S. Jones, and Barbara D. Savage (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 77.

15.   Bay, Battle for Womanhood, 79.

16.   Bay, "The Battle for Womanhood," 77.

17.   Karen Offen, "Understanding International Feminisms as 'Transnational'—An Anachronism? May Wright Sewall and the Creation of the International Council of Women, 1889–1904," in Janz and Schönpflug, eds., *Gender History in a Transnational Perspective*, 36.

18.   Bay, "The Battle for Womanhood," 78.

19.   Quoted in Anon., "American Slavery: Lecture by a Lady," *Paisley Herald and Renfrewshire Advertiser* (12 January 1861), 2.

20.   For more information about such use of homogenized identity, see Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge, *Intersectionality* (Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press, 2016), 72.

21.   Lillie Buffum Chace Wyman and Arthur Crawford Wyman, *Elizabeth Buffum Chace, 1806–1899: Her Life and Its Environment* (Boston: W. B. Clark, 1914), 1:196.

22.   David Lloyd, Black Irish, Irish Whiteness and Atlantic State Formation, in O'Neill and Lloyd, *The Black and Green Atlantic*, 17.

23.   Anonymous, Mr Frederick Douglass on the Harper's Ferry Insurrection, *Leeds Times*, 24 December 1859, 3.

24.   See Anonymous, American Slavery, *Essex Standard*, 5 August 1859, 2.

25.   See, for instance, Barbara McCaskill, Introduction, in *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom: The Escape of William and Ellen Craft from Slavery* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1999), xv; R. J. M. Blackett, *Building an Antislavery Wall: Black Americans in the Atlantic Abolitionist Movement 1830–1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), 124.

26.   Anonymous, Anti-slavery Movement in England, *Derbyshire Times and Chesterfield Herald*, 19 February 1859, 2.

27. Anonymous, Lecture on American Slavery by a Colored Lady, *Warrington Times*, 29 January 1859, reprinted in *Liberator*, 11 March 1859, 37.

28. Anonymous, The Lecture at the Lion Hotel, *Warrington Times*, reprinted in *Liberator*, 11 March 1859, 1.

29. Anonymous, Lecture on American Slavery, *Caledonian Mercury*, 6 October 1860, 2.

30. Anonymous, A Lady Lecturer on Slavery, *Freeman's Journal*, 26 March 1859.

31. Anonymous, Lecture on American Slavery.

32. Quoted in Audrey A. Fisch, *American Slaves in Victorian England: Abolitionist Politics in Popular Literature and Culture* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 123n22.

33. See, e.g., Anonymous, The Aristocracy of Colour, *Liverpool Mercury*, 10 January 1860, 4.

34. See, e.g., Anonymous, Lecture on Slavery, *Yorkshire Gazette*, 8 October 1859, 10.

35. Anonymous, A Lady Lecturer on Slavery.

36. Bay, Battle for Womanhood, 88.

37. Barbara Welter, The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820–1860. *American Quarterly* 18, no. 2, part 1 (Summer 1966): 151–174.

38. Collins and Bilge, *Intersectionality*, 135.

39. Collins and Bilge, *Intersectionality*, 74.

40. Clare Midgley, *Women Against Slavery: The British Campaign, 1780–1870* (London: Routledge, 1995), 173.

41. Esther Sturge to Caroline Weston, 13 August 1863, https://archive.org/details/lettertodear63stur (accessed 12 May 2016).

42. Anonymous, Two Days Later from Europe, *New York Times*, 3 September 1861, 5.

43. F. K. Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 178.

44. Quoted in Sally Mitchell, *Frances Power Cobbe: Victorian Feminist, Journalist, Reformer* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2004), 118.

45. Giuliana Artom Treves, *Anglo-Fiorentini di cento anni fa* (Florence: Sansoni, 1982), 303; Mitchell, *Frances Power Cobbe*, 2, 4, 116.

46. Mary Somerville, *Personal Recollections, from Early Life to Old Age, of Mary Somerville with Selections from Her Correspondence by Her Daughter Martha Somerville* (London: John Murray, 1874), 306.

47. Frances Cobbe, *Life of Frances Power Cobbe by Herself* (New York: Houghton, Mifflin, 1894), 1:283.

48. Midgley, *Women Against Slavery*, 133.

49. Giuseppe Mazzini, *Edizione nazionale di scritti editi ed inediti di Giuseppe Mazzini* (Imola: Cooperativa tipografico-editrice Paolo Galeati, 1939), 80:13, 76.

50. Cecillie Swaisland, The Women's Movement: The Formative Years, 1850–1930, in Bryceson et al., *Identity and Networks*, 139.

51. Jones, *All Bound Up Together*, 110.

52. Bay, Battle for Womanhood, 82.

53. Anonymous, Personal, *Harper's Bazaar* 2, no. 35 (28 August 1869): 547.

WOMEN IN ITALIAN AND ITALIAN AMERICAN ORGANIZED CRIME NETWORKS IN THE LONG NINETEENTH CENTURY

Laura-Isabella Heitz

Abstract. In the last few decades, there has been a great increase in interest in female criminal offenders within Italian crime networks. Women who had lived their entire lives within the criminal sphere did not suddenly become involved in criminal activity of Mafia clans in the mid-twentieth century; they always constituted a vital part of the organization's structure. It has emerged that the initial exclusion of women from active agency in organized crime later enabled them to take over substitutional functions, especially within the crime networks of the Neapolitan Camorra. The interdependence of female and male agents within the Camorra's network is crucial to understanding how substitutive engagement ensures the maintenance of power. The emergence of female offenders among twentieth-century Camorra women who started to build empires of their own (e.g., Anna Mazza in the 1960s) is induced by an ever-present involvement of women in the clans' affairs, dating back to the late nineteenth century. In the late nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries, a great number of Italian immigrants, especially poor peasants from the southern regions, emigrated to the Americas. The question is whether the Italian immigrants took their cultural heritage and therefore also the structure of the Camorra crime network with them and subsequently implemented them into criminal activity in the United States. This chapter analyzes how far the structure of Italian crime networks, particularly the

Camorra's structural organization, which depended highly on systematic inclusion and exclusion of substitutive female agents, was brought to the New World by Italian immigrants. The main focus lies on an investigative analysis of the current research in the field and will give an impulse to possible further research projects.

<center>⌣</center>

This chapter examines the relationship between Italian crime networks and female involvement in Italian (mainly Neapolitan) crime in the long nineteenth century and Italian American crime structures and female involvement in the Italian American Mafia around the same time period. The focus lies on the question of whether the implementation of traditional systematic structures and inherent mechanisms of female engagement in the Italian *mafie* can be applied to their American equivalent. Another aspect of this chapter is the current state of research in the field on female agents in Italian American crime at the turn of the century.

The investigative journalist Roberto Saviano, who published several articles and essays on crime in Naples, describes the Camorra audaciously as a matriarchy rather than a patriarchy, labeling women the "personification of power."[1] Indeed, as early as 1863, the French Swiss writer Marc Monnier published a study on the Neapolitan Camorra in which he identifies substitutionary female criminal agents who had temporarily assumed vacant roles during times when their husbands were incarcerated. This system of substitutionary power shifting was key to maintaining accumulated power dynamics and territorial hegemony.[2] One of the oldest studies, conducted by Cesare Lombroso and Guglielmo Ferrero in the nineteenth century, shows that in the past female criminals played a part in everyday structures within Italian criminal networks, which encouraged early scholars to initiate research into the female criminal.[3] Lombroso and Ferrero "suggested that criminal women are abnormal and that the female anatomy is inferior to their male counterparts."[4] The chance of female involvement in crime networks was, in fact, considered as early as the nineteenth century, as various court judgments indicate.[5] Over time, the fascination with female offenders helped to establish different ideas about, and approaches to, women and criminality, which will be considered briefly in this paper. Particularly with regard to more recent events in the criminal world,

Felia Allum and Jana Arsovska point out that different theories focus especially on the explanation for female involvement in organized criminal structures.[6] Two main approaches can be outlined. On the one hand, scholars have taken an emancipatory approach to examine an increase in the occasions available to female offenders to partake in criminal activities. On the other hand, researchers have found indications that suggest a connection between the amount of exercised violence and female criminals in managerial roles.[7] To this end, Valeria Pizzini-Gambetta argues that a true matriarchy would exist only if women were capable of exercising violence without delegating it.[8]

Over time, the spectrum of established theories (which are often taken into account when it comes to the analysis of women's roles, particularly within Italian Mafia organizations) was broadened. Allum and Arsovska show how two main factions can be identified. According to the first idea, women assume an "ambiguous but participant role"[9] that acknowledges the important part that women play within the workings of the organization. Renate Siebert defines Mafia as "a secret society which by definition excludes women."[10] Despite this notion, the authors refer to Siebert's theory because it is predicated on the idea of a "dual existence" of Cosa Nostra women who are involved in the Mafia; this duality was exploited by men to support the syndicate and helps stabilize it.[11] In contrast, the second approach denies active participation because women, particularly in the context of the Sicilian Mafia, could not become official members of the clan.[12] As stated above, this definition is not applicable to the Neapolitan system. The precursor of the Camorra included women in their circle, as did the early Camorra.[13]

Giovanni Fiandaca, assessing women in the various (and mainly Italian) Mafia organizations, asserts that "the cultural codes of established Italian Mafias (Sicilian Mafia, 'Ndrangetha, Camorra, etc.) show a traditional male chauvinist imprint and, as such, theoretically give little autonomous space to women."[14] For instance, in the case of the Calabrian 'Ndrangheta, Ombretta Ingrascì discovered that women gained equality within the criminal *work space* but not so much within the private circle that revolves around the family. She concluded that increasing numbers of female criminal agents are "the result of a pseudo-emancipation rather than true liberation," where true liberation would have meant leaving the syndicate for good, a view that opposes the general understanding of emancipation as achieving more power.[15] Alessandra Dino, however, disputes the assumption of a binary system of victim and perpetrator as it only substantiates a prevalent stereotype.[16] In the same regard, Marina Graziosi points out that the underrepresentation of female criminals seen purely in connection with the passive and subordinate role of women runs the risk of equating crime with emancipation.[17]

When we look at the assignment of roles within the various Mafias, Dino argues that ascribing only substitutionary roles to women blurs the fact that female agents were actively engaged in criminal organizations.[18] Discourses like these negate and, most importantly, challenge the traditional notion that portrays women as incapable of acting violently. Such misconceptions, Graziosi argues, were often based on prejudicial ideas about a natural female subordination and passivity.[19]

Female Engagement in Italian Crime Networks

In the Italian context, as early as the mid-1800s, scholars like Cesare Lombroso and Guglielmo Ferrero observed women who took on managerial roles, there having been quasi-systematic inclusion and exclusion of women in the precursory criminal networks of the Camorra. The substitutionary role that was allotted to women in the nineteenth century paved the way for modern women's involvement in the system. Testimonies by Italian state witnesses often suggest that female Camorra members obtain crucial positions that are basically acquired by birth: "you might be the daughter of . . . , the wife of . . . but after a while you can do it alone, especially when the men are in prison. Why is it that the Camorra is still so strong with all those leaders in prison?"[20] This cycle of participation can also be applied to Camorra women in the nineteenth century. In comparison to other crime networks in Italy like the Calabrian 'Ndrangheta or the Sicilian Cosa Nostra, the Neapolitan Camorra women have always played a more visible role. This role sometimes meant acting autonomously in the predominantly male realm of violent crime, usury, and money laundering.[21]

The more contemporary understanding of the Italian Mafias resembles the model of entrepreneurial systems; the systems are more homogeneous than ever but are still not all identical as there are still great differences in structure, values, and visibility of characters.[22] So when it comes down to defining the Neapolitan Camorra, one often comes across the idea of an enterprise with many associates on different levels. The subdivision of associates is a guarantee of maintaining power that has already been accumulated or of gaining even more power: today, on the lower rung of a clan's hierarchy and during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, power was mostly defined as power over local territory and social control.[23] Today, the Camorra trades in narco-trafficking, the fashion industry, the electrical equipment market, the building industry, and the hospitality and foods sector. Even though the Camorra has become a global player, the network has not shifted from a local to an exclusively global interest. Brutality and violent crimes

are still a major problem in Naples's districts, the so-called *quartieri*. Just recently, Roberto Saviano reported on the status quo in Naples's streets where budding *camorristi* have started conquering the districts.[24] Considering Camorra's past, Marcella Marmo, a professor at the University of Naples, claims that the Camorra did not receive the attention that the Sicilian Mafia attracted, and during the nineteenth century it had not discovered entrepreneurship. Nonetheless, Marmo says that the history of the Camorra is a strong, powerful story that is closely connected to a political order and social control determined by powerful male individuals (so-called *guappi*—the term derives from a Spanish criminal brotherhood). She also hints at other interpretations that see the historical Camorra as a very modern, entrepreneurial and adjustable system where crime is understood as an entrepreneurial activity with all its risks and profits.[25]

Prior to the first Italian war of independence and unification in 1861, the Italian peninsula was a very troubled and fragmented place; one of several dominions was the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, with twin capitals in Naples and Palermo. Under Bourbon rule, Naples was divided into 12 districts that could be seen as a reflection of the fragmentation of the peninsula and hence contributed to the federal organization's structure that characterizes the Camorra still today.[26] When the Camorra came into being in Naples's prisons in the early to mid-nineteenth century, prisoners of conscience and more dangerous imprisoned *camorristi* became acquainted because of a ritual practice that was performed in order to welcome new inmates for a pseudoreligious reason—a welcoming ceremony that was not performed out of kindness but was rather a systematically shifty way to con people out of their money. The Camorra brought their system of extortion from prison into the streets of Naples, where the term Camorra became a synonym for both the organization and their extortionate practices. Men and women engaged in any kind of profitable business from gambling to the grocery trade.[27] Scholars, however, offer opposing interpretations of Camorra's nineteenth-century structure of the 1800s: some think the structure of the network resembles the modern structure of the Cosa Nostra, with only one boss, the *capo dei capi* (boss of all bosses).[28] Others consider the extortion business as the "lowest common denominator" of the different Camorra gangs.[29] What has to be underlined, though, is the difference between the city gangs and the groups that work in the more rural, peripheral areas of Naples.[30]

As Letizia Paoli argues, the Sicilian Mafia in Italy has never employed women as objects of sexual exploitation and prostitution, whereas Nelli and Paoli show how this kind of business was organized by Italian American Mafia groups.[31] Women who ran brothels usually worked independently but might have been

associated through marriage.[32] This difference is vital as it shows how traditional values and codes change with generations and different environments.[33] Hence, female involvement in criminal structures varies and depends on the environment wherein the specific network operates. In this sense, Smith's study is unique as she throws light on crime networks in Chicago while explicitly excluding push factors such as conjugal and romantic relationships. Many unknown women she touches upon had been important figures in the city's crime cycle before marrying men who also played crucial roles in illicit businesses. In Victoria Moresco's case, the woman's career was furthered by her connection with crime bosses, but after their separation Moresco was not able to retain her position.[34]

As mentioned, the Camorra originated in the jails of Naples, but if we dig just a little bit deeper into history and go back to the 1400s, we will find a Spanish precursor of the Neapolitan criminal community, the so-called Confraternita della Guardugna, an alliance of brigands. What is so special about this alliance is that women have always been seen as part of a *brotherhood* that struck roots in Naples under Spanish rule. But the fact that women were accepted as a part of this special network does not mean that they were considered equals: they worked for the crime networks as receivers of stolen goods, though under better conditions than other women who were being sexually exploited by the brotherhood.[35]

The fact that the Spanish brotherhood allowed women to be a part of it is a very crucial point that has to be stressed. When we are now looking at the contemporary members and agents of the Camorra in Italy, one could assume that there is a tradition of female agents within predominantly male territory that seems to be inherent in this specific network. Within the last two to three decades many arrests have included women who were in managerial positions and who have been convicted on the basis of their criminal activities. In 2013 alone, there were five convictions of women involved in illegal activities of the Camorra.[36]

During the last two decades, the number of scholars who have focused their research on the role of women in the Camorra has increased. This increase has partly to do with the ratification in 1991 of a regulation that made it possible to be protected under a witness protection program for the first time ever in Italy. Another cause for the increased interest in women in the Italian Mafias is general social changes that have led to more Italian women being independent from their husbands and therefore being perceived as individuals.[37] Additionally, ideas that are connected with second-wave feminism have been applied to this research field and have caused the widespread assumption that women in the Mafias, including the Neapolitan Camorra, underwent a sort of emancipation, which was soon re-

placed by the term *pseudo-emancipation* as it was assumed that even though there had been female participation in economic spheres of the clans, the woman as an individual had not liberated herself from violence, illegality, etc.[38]

In one of his articles about the urban structure of Naples, Leandro Sgueglia points out how capable the Camorra has been in ruling over local territory and social dynamics.[39] In the same article he also stresses that the Neapolitan woman per se is a central part of the culture, which could explain why she has always played a role in supposedly male-only terrain like criminality and violence. He claims,

> *[La donna] assume una centralità che contrasta con la tenace sopravvivenza di una cultura patriarcale. Oltre ad essere colei che tradizionalmente dà cura ed è il cuore delle reti familiari, la donna assume ruoli determinanti e specifici […] nelle dimensioni relazionali e . . . economiche.*[40]

> [The woman assumes a centrality that contrasts with the tenacious survival of a patriarchal culture. In addition to her traditional role of caring for and being the centerpiece of the family network, the woman assumes decisive and specific roles in the relational and economic dimensions.]

The seemingly omnipresent Neapolitan woman is also described in one of the most important historical reports of the Neapolitan Camorra. In 1863, Monnier, a former university professor who lived in Naples, reported that wives of imprisoned *camorristi* helped their husbands collect the money they earned through extortion. They also went from door to door threatening people on their husband's behalf:

> *[Le donne] sapevano che un giorno o l'altro i mariti sa-rebbero usciti di prigione, col bastone in mano avrebber chiesto conto ai recalcitranti de' debiti da questi non pagati. D'altra parte la moglie di un camorrista era di per sè medesima una potenza, e i fanciulli che avea dato alla luce si facevano fin dalla culla rispettare.*[41]

> [The women knew that one day or another their husbands would leave prison, with a stick held in their hand they would have made the reluctant debtor responsible for his outstanding debts. On the other hand, the wife of a *camorrista* herself was a powerful individual and the children she gave birth to knew how to command someone's respect from the bassinet.]

Monnier is not the only source who gives early evidence of women being active in the clan's activities. Antonella Migliaccio and Iolanda Napolitano took a closer look at police reports of two women in late nineteenth-century Naples. Both present cases where women who were somehow related to criminals or born into districts that were known for their brutality and criminal energy filled important positions in the power structure of the Camorra, so they were known to the police. Both Sofia Prota and Mariantonia Merolla had a criminal record. In particular, Morella engaged in work areas that were considered typically female like usury and prostitution.[42] Still today, women in Mafia organizations are mainly in charge of the financial sector of their business.[43] Monnier's report and also the cases presented by Migliaccio and Napolitano show how Camorra women were included in the clan in order to maintain accumulated power.[44] Inclusion and exclusion, being part of a binary system, oppose each other, but in the case of the Neapolitan Camorra these two terms walk hand in hand. The system of inclusion and exclusion of women in order to keep illegal activities going while male actors are temporarily confined was, and today still is, the key ingredient in the Mafia's retention of power. What modern Camorra women achieved in terms of the creation of an empire or network could be interpreted as a female response to former male-dominated networks. But the inclusion of women, as shown by Monnier, takes place at a time when the power structure is at risk because of the temporary exclusion of a male agent. Women become rather what Felia Allum calls "a reserve army," called upon and available when necessary, particularly when the main leaders are away. They behave like their "professional counterparts."[45] It seems like their roles are nothing more than a substitution of the main, male roles, but recalling the initial quote of the state witness, the question of where the Camorra would be without female help is, especially when it comes to the evolution of the Camorra women in the twentieth century, more pertinent than ever.

There is a great ambiguity in the role of Camorra women: on the one hand, women stand in for their men when the latter are unable to run the business; thus, women take risks and engage in dangerous activities. On the other hand, there is still a very traditional understanding of the female gender role—the protection of women and the belief that women are responsible for the community, family, and education of the children.[46] This traditional understanding of gender not only structured everyday life; it was also exploited by the criminal networks because women were, and still are, well aware of how to "perform respectable femininity" because it "was a key strategy for keeping out of trouble."[47] This concept of keep-

ing out of trouble was of great use for female offenders and was even supported by the Italian legal system: Clare Longrigg reported that a common perception in court rooms was that women were too stupid to be affiliated with money laundering and other financial activities.[48] Another example of exploited femininity can be found in several cases where in order to escape the police, members of crime networks disguised themselves as women.[49] This instance exemplifies that the exclusion of the female agents, even if only pretended, is crucial to maintaining a system based on certain power structures. As women were not usually associated with crimes of this nature, deception is a handy tool for misleading authority.

The alternation of inclusion and exclusion in organized crime, especially in the case of the Neapolitan Camorra, has been challenged in cases like Anna Mazza's and Immacolata Capone's. According to Saviano, Capone was well known because she created a female empire, allotting female agents to traditionally male tasks such as bodyguard duties. Capone was assassinated in 2004.[50] Another example that shows how women stand in for their absent men is the case of Rosetta Cutolo, sister of the leader of the Nuova Camorra Organizzata. Whenever her brother was arrested, several times since the 1960s, she became his "deputy and alter ego" and managed the clan's activities. Her active participation was always denied by her brother and others.[51]

Female Engagement in Italian American Crime Networks

Despite the examples that have been presented to explain the interaction of inclusion and exclusion, there is still a lack of meaningful empirical data to get what Felia Allum calls a "good sense of the full extent of [women's] involvement" in criminal activities.[52]

Many of the consulted studies have shown a great emphasis on female agents within the Italian, hence European, corpus. This, however, does not mean that female Italian American crime agents did not receive any attention at all. To put this idea of systematic inclusion and exclusion in a transatlantic perspective, immigration from Italy to the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries becomes an important target of investigation and examination. To find out whether southern Italian structural elements were brought to the United States with Italian immigration and whether women played any role in Italian American organized crime whatsoever, a great corpus of publications on organized crime and especially Italian American organizations has been evaluated. Strikingly, only a few of the sources explicitly mention female involvement in criminal activities perpetrated by Italian American criminal organizations,

especially when the time frame under question—the long nineteenth century—is considered. In order to extend the earlier research, Giovanni Fiandaca published a collection of new approaches to the subject matter of female involvement in criminal networks, for "the subject has been studied very little, especially outside Italy."[53] When one looks at Italian American crime networks, the first problem one encounters is the incoherent usage of terminology. In Italy, there is the habit of speaking of three main crime associations that can be assigned to a specific Italian region and include different clans; in the United States other terms are used, like *organized crime*, *Mafia*, *gang crimes*, *Camorra*, *La Cosa Nostra*, and *Black Hand.* They are often used inconsistently and sometimes even synonymously. Eric Martone, for example, uses *Mafia* as a synonym for *Cosa Nostra*.[54] In terms of usage of terminology, Nelli argues that in 1904 the term *Mafia* was replaced by *Black Hand*; at least, that was what the Italian press in the United States claimed.[55] As Klaus von Lampe points out,

> Exploring the concept of organized crime, especially its historical dimension, provides an insight into the breadth and the depth as well as into the inconsistencies and contradictions of the meanings attached to the term "organized crime" and alerts us to some of the social and political factors that may play a role in shaping perceptions of organized crime.[56]

When looking closer at how crime is understood with regard to the Italian Mafia in the United States, many problems emerge. What is more, to find out more about female involvement in the North American crime networks context, we must broaden the research from a purely regional viewpoint toward organized crime in general. In the context of Chicago´s organized crime, next to the Outfit, the Forty-Two Gang also plays a significant role. In 2010, Robert M. Lombardo took a closer look at unpublished material collected by John Landesco in which female participation attracts attention. Lombardo introduces the so-called Gun Girl, the Italian girl Agnes R. From a very early age she deliberately pursued a criminal career and later found her way into the Forty-Two Gang, for which she transported illicit goods or worked as camouflage. According to Lombardo, Landesco's findings portray female involvement in criminal activities not as a substitution or "auxiliary member" but as a challenging exception to the rule that sees women "in their affiliation with the male gang."[57] As this term often works as the umbrella term to fit the differences and inconsistencies within the field, it is far more likely to meet the research objective when we consider women involved in Italian American organized crime in general.

Jay Albanese's assessment clearly shows that within the field of criminology, scholars hold diverse opinions, particularly when it comes to the idea of "exclusive membership."[58] This discovery is significant, as it allows scope for interpretation of women's participation in the system. Klaus von Lampe underscores the idea of incoherency of definitional elements of organized crime by showing that with social changes also come changes in definition and perception of criminal networks. These social changes, consequently, lead to an ever-changing understanding of organized crime. According to von Lampe, there are six different stages that show how the term *organized crime* was modified according to the knowledge structure in the United States.[59] Understanding the conceptualization of organized crime today means taking into account that "organized crime is heterogeneous and contradictory."[60] This heterogeneity underlines the difficulty of identifying supposedly similar criminal groups such as the Italian (American) Mafia. In his study on North American organized crime, Albanese adds that organized crime is defined by what kind of market the group operates in or its composition. Another component in his theoretical argument is the importance of place, which comes into play as the regional environment (criminal history, economic situation, etc.) of the respective criminal group that determines its field of activity.[61] This argument corresponds to the knowledge we have on Italian Mafia groups that are region specific. Women's involvement is therefore very much dependent on the structures and peculiarities of the Mafia group to which they are (actively or passively) a part.[62]

In the context of the Chicago Outfit, Humbert S. Nelli came to an important conclusion: regional affiliation (Sicilian descent) of the members was not a decisive criterion; ethnicity and allegiance to the network were more important. This change came mainly because with leaving the homeland, Italian immigrants lost their strong connection to their birth region and built a new sense of belonging in the United States. Sharing their (criminal) traditions and embracing their shared nationality, Italian Americans created a new sense of identity that excluded non-Italians.[63] With this new understanding of group identity, one might expect that what most likely had happened was a comingling of ideas and values that might have contributed to a different understanding of female involvement in criminal and prior immoral activities such as prostitution.[64] Additionally, when the Prohibition era started, ethnicity became just as irrelevant as regionality.[65]

In the United States, the public discourse around organized crime has always been heavily influenced by criminal networks with connection to the Italian American mob.[66] However, as Clare Longrigg points out, organized criminality has always played a vital role in the development of the United States and should not be

connected exclusively to Italian immigration: "it is the story of immigrant communities staking their claim to the new territories." In her contribution to *Women and the Mafia*, Longrigg argues that the part women played within Italian American criminal organizations was comparable to the role their Italian counterparts in Italy had played. Longrigg asserts that the Italian American Mafia was often referred to as La Cosa Nostra, even though, she concludes, the term was disputable.[67] This declaration sets a particularly significant challenge: when the role of women in the Italian American Mafia really was comparable to that of their Italian counterpart and the Italian counterpart was the Sicilian Mafia, then what happened to women who were part of criminal activities but who had not been considered as such since they were not a part of La Cosa Nostra but rather of another Italian American organized criminal group? In her dissertation, Christina Smith sheds light on an important number of those women, and her results are clear: women who were involved in organized crime in Chicago before Prohibition started "were structurally similar to the majority of their men counterparts."[68]

Anita Lavorgna, Robert Lombardo, and Anna Sergi explain that finding a generally accepted definition of what organized crime—Italian American crime and Mafia—actually means is impeded by a strong inconsistency in usage of terminology between institutional bodies, countries, and the media. Whereas in Europe, in particular Italy, the term *Mafia* is used as an umbrella term for organized crime in general, in the American context the term is used to describe Italian American crime specifically. Generally speaking, in contrast to the popular Italian way of identifying a Mafia organization by its name, for example, Camorra, Cosa Nostra, 'Ndrangheta, Sacra Corona Unita, in the United States there is not such a clear differentiation between regional affiliations (Neapolitan, etc.). At least since the 1960s, however, academic and governmental institutions have distinguished between Italian American organized crime and the Mafia groups of Sicilian origin.[69] Nonetheless, what gives way to a wide scope of interpretation is the fact that this differentiation has only been active since the mid-twentieth century. Hence, Italian American organized crime could include other Italian Mafias such as the Neapolitan Camorra and the Calabrian 'Ndrangheta. The difficulty that by now should be very clear is to find a way to make two different but somewhat similar understandings of Italian Mafia networks comparable. As the affiliation to a certain Italian region no longer seems to be of interest, it is clear that women's inclusion and/or exclusion in and from Neapolitan crime networks is not easily comparable and transferrable to the American context.

Although Arthur Lurigio and John Binder claim that the representatives of "traditional Italian-American Organized Crime (TIAOC) shared with their

Mafia counterparts some elements (e.g., Old World values and organizational structure) but never attempted to replicate the [Sicilian] Mafia in all its aspects,"[70] the questions remain: where can we find Neapolitan *camorristi*, and where do women find their place?

In 2009, David Critchley published a reference work about the origins of the Italian American Mafia in New York. He dedicated a chapter to the Neapolitan *camorristi* who, compared to their Sicilian counterparts, formed a minority only in New York City.[71] Critchley's discovery correlates with the general notion that the majority of the scholarly sources consulted to write this chapter share, namely, that mainly Sicilian immigrants engaged in Italian American crime (inter alia Lurigio and Binder, Longrigg, and Pizzini-Gambetta). Again, this shows that the image of the Italian American Mafia is often distorted by media conceptualizations and (semi)fictional interpretations of the phenomenon.[72] As the topic is so appealing to a broader audience, Letizia Paoli observes, countless books and films have been published around this theme, "some . . . so successful that they have profoundly shaped a general understanding of the mafia in the United States and elsewhere."[73]

In his article on Italians and crime in Chicago, Humbert Nelli notes that crimes committed by Italians in the United States prior to the Prohibition era were immediately associated with the Black Hand or the Mafia.[74] When a police officer was killed in New Orleans in 1890, "the police arrested hundreds of Italians for the crime."[75] With the incident and the subsequent media frenzy, the term *Mafia* found its way into a nationwide assumption that immigrants from southern Italy were connected with the Mafia, which would manifest itself wherever Italians had settled down.[76] This misconception led to the common notion that portrayed Italian Americans as criminals who operated according to their "old world techniques" even though, Nelli argues, immigrants have to make do with the new territorial conditions they find in their new domicile.[77]

Roberto Saviano notes that in the Neapolitan context the cultural perception of women is marked by an extremely high appreciation of a woman's beauty.[78] If Nelli's evaluation holds true and immigrants adjusted their criminal behavior to the changing circumstances in the new country, then women, who might have been esteemed more highly in Neapolitan culture and who derived their power out of this estimation, might have suffered a loss in achievable power due to the cultural role of women assigned by those in the new country. These observations were originally made by John Landesco, who came to this conclusion after he had observed Italian immigrants in Chicago and other North American cities.[79] The media plays an important role in the social perception of criminals. In the 1940s,

much attention was drawn to Virginia Hill, an infamous figure connected to the Italian American organized crime scene whom the media portrayed as a celebrity. The way the public perceived her life and death, Clare Longrigg concludes, tells "much about the American [romanticizing] attitude toward organized crime."[80]

The majority of works by leading scholars in the field show little interest in female criminal agents as active constituents of crime groups, but attention has been paid to women in transnational and transatlantic organized crime in regard to their celebrity-like status. As Valeria Pizzini-Gambetta argues, even though Fiandaca's collection promises an overview of studies of women in organized crime structures all over the world, its main emphasis is on Italian Mafias.[81] It was conspicuous to see that the majority of publications that deal with women in organized crime focus on Italian and Russian groups. When it comes to the United States, there are numerous publications concerned with the Italian American mob; however, surprisingly, women seem to attract little attention from academic researchers.

In 2007, Pizzini-Gambetta published a review article, "Mafia Women in Brooklyn," in which she tried to profile three Italian American women and one Russian Greek Mafia woman. Assessing the four biographies of Brooklyn women born shortly before World War II or during the decade after the war, her study does not fit into the time frame of this paper, nor does it portray women in the American Camorra. Nevertheless, her results should be taken into account, for Pizzini-Gambetta portrays notions of womanhood and different levels of involvement and knowledge about illicit activities. To a certain extent, the four women seem to be caught in a far-reaching return to old-world values because the profile Pizini-Gambetta draws is very similar to the image of the Sicilian Mafia woman.[82] She concludes that the scholarly value of the primary material is debatable because of "the heavy editing," the underlying desire to publish a book that is commercially successful, and, most importantly, the selective choice of information.[83]

In Nelli's article of 1969, one single female name is mentioned, namely, Victoria Moresco, wife of Italian American gangster boss Jim Colosimo. Together they established several businesses in Chicago, illicit as well as legal ones.[84] This example strengthens Longrigg's understanding of women's roles within Italian and Italian American criminal networks: it was simply illogical to think that women did not know about their husbands' criminal activities as the territorial power of Mafia networks relies highly on (involuntary) complicity by their family members.[85] Additionally, Renate Siebert argues that the image of the passive mother figure who was "substantially hidden from the criminal act perpetrated by their men" did not correspond with reality.[86] What is more, many women themselves were actively involved in the same kind of businesses as their men. As a

matter of fact, prior to marrying Colosimo, Victoria Moresco had been a leading brothel keeper in Chicago.[87] Later, Colosimo's business properties were signed over to his wife.[88] Victoria Moresco, despite being an interesting subject for deeper investigation on women within Italian American crime networks in the early twentieth century, has not yet been examined in detail.

In her 2015 dissertation, Christina Smith sheds light on women who were involved in Chicago's crime scene in the early twentieth century. "Combining social network analysis and historical research methods to examine the case of organized crime in Chicago uncover[s] a group of women who make up a substantial portion of [the city's criminal network.]"[89] Further, she argues that the specific structure of the Chicago crime network offered women chances to connect with male criminals and illicit business.[90] What stands in contrast to the generally accepted definition of female involvement in Italy is the fact that in the case of the Chicago Outfit, Smith found out that only in 10 of almost 50 cases were relationships between criminal men and women of familial nature.[91] Especially against the background of the latter being the number one reason in Italy for women to pursue a criminal career, Lo Verso and Di Maria describe the strong intertwining of (Sicilian) birth family and criminal family, with women playing important roles in both as those types of family are synchronized.[92] The authors emphasize again how female agents in the Camorra have always played a more visible, even open role that, in relation to what Smith said about female criminals in Chicago, is similar to that of their American Italian counterpart. The notion of there being an openness and availability of female criminals in the American context seems to be exceptionally pervasive and almost offensive, especially in contrast to the ambivalent Sicilian narrative of women being an institution of power, an embodiment of honor as well as simultaneously being subordinate to men.[93] Clare Longrigg's argument that the ambivalence, in the American case, often equated with the "Madonna-Whore-dichotomy"[94] adds perfectly to the subordination-godliness complementarity Lo Verso and Di Maria drew: the mother as the sacred center of the preservation of (criminal) traditions.[95] Suggesting links for further research projects, Lo Verso and Di Maria reflect,

> The Italio-American mafia seems to be more legible through its visible criminal history and the cinema (something that has only recently begun to happen in Italy). Women in Italy have started to "Americanize," that is, they have become sexually, economically, and often openly visible, no longer marginal. The evolution of the selection process for membership is also important. In the beginning members had to be Italians, but business pragmatism has prevailed. With respect to the

current discussion, it would be very interesting to investigate the role of immigration and immigrants.[96]

Even though in the last few decades a great number of studies in the research field of Italian American organized crime have been published, the role of female criminal agents in the Italian American context needs to be broadened and investigated more deeply. Comparing Italian and Italian American cases of female involvement in crime networks, several similarities are noticeable; however, concluding from the literature available on the topic, there is not one definite answer to the question of whether the implementation of traditional systematic structures and inherent mechanisms of female engagement in the Italian *mafie* can be applied to their American equivalent. To answer this question, case studies need to be conducted. Also, the likelihood of the existence of networks we do not know about yet is high, so research on women in organized crime is not yet exhausted.[97]

Notes

1.   Roberto Saviano, Il matriarcato, Nazione Indiana, 14 May 2005, https://www.nazioneindiana.com/2005/05/14/il-matriarcato/ (accessed 30 March 2018).

2.   Marc Monnier, *La Camorra: Notizie storiche*, 3rd ed. (Florence: G. Barbèra, 1863), 49, 105–106.

3.   Cesare Lombroso and Guglielmo Ferrero, *The Female Offender* (New York: D. Appleton, 1895).

4.   Jana Arsovska and Felia Allum, Introduction: Women and Transnational Organized Crime, *Trends in Organized Crime* 17, no. 1 (June 2014): 1.

5.   Giovanni Fiandaca, Introduction, in *Women and the Mafia: Female Roles in Organized Crime Structures*, ed. Giovanni Fiandaca (New York: Springer, 2007), 2.

6.   Arsovska and Allum, Introduction, 4.

7.   Arsovska and Allum, Introduction, 4.

8.   Valeria Pizzini-Gambetta, Women in *Gomorrah*, *Global Crime* 10, no. 3 (August 2009): 270.

9.   Arsovska and Allum, Introduction, 5.

10.   Arsovska and Allum, Introduction, 5.

11.   Arsovska and Allum, Introduction, 5; see also Baris Cayli, Codes of Commitment to Crime and Resistance: Determining Social and Cultural Factors over the Behaviors of Italian Mafia Women, *Deviant Behavior* 37, no. 1 (2016): 1–15; Anna M. Zaccaria, L'emergenza rosa. Dati e suggestioni sulle donne di Camorra, *Meridiana*, no. 67 (2010): 155–173.

12.   Arsovska and Allum, Introduction, 5.

13.   See Monnier, *La Camorra.*

14.   Fiandaca, Introduction, 2.

15.   Ombretta Ingrascì, Women in the 'Ndrangheta: The Serraino-Di Giovine Case, in Fiandaca, *Women and the Mafia*, 52; Arsovska and Allum, Introduction, 6.

16.   Alessandra Dino, Women and Mafia, *Narcomafie*, no. 1 (2004), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265004562 (accessed 14 January 2018).

17. Marina Graziosi, Women, the Mafia and Legal Safeguards, *Forum on Crime and Society* 1, no. 2 (December 2001): 131.

18. Dino, Women and Mafia.

19. Graziosi, Women, the Mafia and Legal Safeguards, 131.

20. Arsovska and Allum, Introduction, 1.

21. See Antonella Migliaccio and Iolanda Napolitano, Donne violente e donne criminali a Napoli nelle fonti di polizia giudiziaria (1888–94), *Meridiana*, no. 67, "Donne di Mafia" [Mafia Women] (2010): 95–112.

22. Marcella Marmo, Ordine e disordine: La camorra napoletana dell'Ottocento, *Meridiana*, no. 7–8 (September 1989–January 1990): 157–190.

23. Attilio Scaglione, Cosa Nostra and Camorra: Illegal Activities and Organisational Structures, *Global Crime* 17, no. 1 (February 2016): 69, 67.

24. Roberto Saviano, Das Faszinosum der Mafia—und die Verachtung: Roberto Saviano im Gespräch mit Britta Bürger, 13 March 2018, *Deutschlandfunk Kulture*, podcast transcript, http://www.deutschlandfunkkultur.de/autor-roberto-saviano-das-faszinosumder-mafia-und-die.970.de.html?dram%3Aarticle_id=412858 (accessed 31 March 2018).

25. Marmo, Ordine e disordine,157–158.

26. See Marmo, Ordine e disordine, 189; Antonella Migliaccio, Sulle tracce della camorra: le prime apparizioni, Cultera del legalità e bilblioteca digitale sulla Cammora, Dipartmenti di Studi Umanistica, Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II, http://www.bibliocamorra.altervista.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=51&Itemid=3 (accessed 14 March 2018).

27. Migliaccio, Sulle tracce della camorra.

28. See Gigi Di Fiore, *Potere camorrista: Quattro secoli di Malanapoli* (Naples: Guida, 1993), 55–56. Cosa Nostra refers to the original Sicilian Mafia, not to be confused with La Cosa Nostra in the American context.

29. Marmo, Ordine e disordine, 189.

30. Scaglione, Cosa Nostra and Camorra, 68.

31. Letizia Paoli, *Mafia Brotherhoods: Organized Crime, Italian Style* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Paoli, The Pledge to Secrecy: Culture, Structure and Action of Mafia Associations (Ph.D. diss., European University Institute, Florence, 1997); Humbert S. Nelli, Italians and Crime in Chicago: The Formative Years, 1890–1920, *American Journal of Sociology* 74, no. 4 (January 1969): 373–391.

32. Christina M. Smith, The Shifting Structure of Chicago's Organized Crime Network and the Women It Left Behind (Ph.D. diss., University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 2015), 129, 58.

33. Mariantonia Merolla, an accomplice to a nineteenth-century *camorristi* in Naples, however, worked in the prostitution business; see Migliaccio and Napolitano, Donne violente e donne criminali, 111.

34. See Smith, Shifting Structure, 105.

35. Di Fiore, *Potere camorrista*, 35.

36. Arsovska and Allum, Introduction, 2.

37. Clare Longrigg, *Patinnen: Die Frauen der Mafia* (Munich: Karl Blessing Verlag, 1998), 18; Dino, Women and Mafia.

38. Ombretta Ingrascì, Women in the 'Ndrangheta, 52.

39.   Leandro Sgueglia, Una comunità rionale di Napoli: Donne ed uomini tra subalternità e soggettività, *La Camera Blu: Rivista di Studi di Genere*, no. 6 (2012): 26.

40.   40. Sgueglia, Una comunità rionale di Napoli, 35 (my translation).

41.   Dina Siegel, Women in Transnational Organized Crime, *Trends in Organized Crime* 17, no. 1–2 (June 2014), 54; Monnier, *La Camorra*, 105–106 (my translation).

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63.   Nelli, Italians and Crime in Chicago, 387.

64.   Paoli, *Mafia Brotherhoods*, describes prostitution as something the Italian Mafia clan did not engage in.

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74.   Nelli, Italians and Crime in Chicago, 373.

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92.   Di Maria and Lo Verso, Women in Mafia Organizations, 89, 98.

93.   See Di Maria and Lo Verso, Women in Mafia Organizations, 89–90, 95–96, for Sicilian understandings of femininity.

94.   Longrigg, Women in Organized Crime, 238.

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5

IN HER IMAGE

The *Manileña* Suffragist and Her Story in Early Twentieth-Century Periodicals

Katherine G. Lacson

Abstract. American colonization of the Philippines brought modern Western ideas and systems and inculcated this sensibility into society through education and the entrance of a dizzying array of cultural products ready for public consumption that were disseminated through various media, the periodical being the most powerful one. These changes opened up various opportunities for the Filipina. As the years progressed, more and more Filipinas gained access to higher education and entered public life through work in various establishments in the community. It was only a matter of time before the increasing visibility of women in public life would usher in the demand for the right to vote. Manila was the center of the battle for suffrage, and the *Manileña* suffragists became the leaders of this fight for the right to enfranchisement. Utilizing the power of the periodicals, this chapter relates the story of the *Manileña* as she fought for the right to gain the ballot. The various networks and issues faced through each epoch are discussed. The different visual representations in the periodicals of the *Manileña* suffragist, as she eventually became the inadvertent pinup image of the Filipina suffragist in the process, are examined.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the Philippines experienced the passing of the colonizer's baton from Spain to America. American colonial policy opened up various educational opportunities for the Filipina and gave her a more unobstructed platform to carry on with her alternative activities in the public sphere on a much wider scale. The increasing activities of women in public life ushered in the demand for the right to vote. This chapter retells the story of women's suffrage in the Philippines by looking at the text and iconography that can be found in newspapers and magazines. It will discuss the networks and the issues women's suffrage faced over time. It will also examine the evolution of the various representations in the periodicals of the *Manileña* suffragist, as she found herself as both leader and spokesperson, inadvertently becoming the encapsulated representation of the Filipina suffragist.

The Story of Philippine Woman Suffrage in Periodicals

The story of Philippine woman suffrage has been written time and again by several historians, but as of the moment, the history of Philippine woman suffrage has yet to be told through the lens of the periodical. Utilizing grounded theory and the convenience sampling method, the corpus of this study was harvested through historical archival research. It consists of newspaper and magazine articles, photos, print ads, editorial cartoons, and illustrations from 1898 to 1938 that were available in Manila. Using this source, one may posit that the campaign for suffrage was akin to a long-drawn theatrical play divided into three acts. The first act of this so-called play, from 1907 to 1919, was when Filipinas forayed into the political public sphere and the first murmurings of a bill in the Philippine Assembly found its way into periodicals debated by mostly men. The second act, from 1921 to 1933, was when women finally found their stride as they slowly learned various ways to promote and push for suffrage, ending with a nail-biting third act from 1934 to 1937, when women climbed their way from a major disappointment with the loss of a right they had already received to a glorious win that was to be punctuated by women being finally given the right to the ballot.

Act One: A New Hope for Women, 1907–1919

As early as 1907, Filemon Sotto of Cebu had introduced a bill on woman suffrage at the Philippine Assembly, but the first articles on the topic found in the corpus of this study came out only in 1912. That was the year that American suffragists Carrie Chapman Catt and Aletta Jacobs visited the Philippines; the paltry sup-

port they received from one women's association created "by the most aristocratic ladies of Manila society" was used as evidence of the main indifference of women to issues of feminism and suffrage.[1] According to Mary Grace Ampil Tirona, this group, the Society for the Advancement of Women (later to become the Manila Woman's Club), was assembled somewhat reluctantly by Filipino and resident American ladies so as not to disappoint the visitors. This initial reticence would slowly change into passionate activism throughout the fight for suffrage.[2]

European and American articles that discussed women's suffrage were also republished in the Philippine periodicals. Their content and ideas were utilized in preceding articles written after Melencio Severino proposed a bill for woman's suffrage in 1912. One may posit that several Filipino women such as Pilar Hidalgo might have been indirectly influenced by the articles they had read in the periodicals with content that supported modern ideas from the West. However, most of the articles before 1915 were against the woman gaining the right to the ballot.

The first articles that dealt head-on with the issue of women's suffrage in the Philippines appeared in 1918. Interestingly enough, Tarrosa Subido cited in *The Feminist Movement in the Philippines* that this was also the period that the beginnings of a concerted effort for woman suffrage began with a handful of *Manileñas*. Most of these articles posed the question of woman suffrage in relation to the Philippines. "Is Woman Suffrage in the Philippines Desirable?"[3] in 1918 is a good example of articles that were being churned out by the *Philippines Free Press* and other periodicals.

As the articles came out in the periodicals, three consecutive bills on women's suffrage followed one after the other from 1916 to 1918.[4] Legislative indifference and the lack of concerted effort and support from women appeared to be the most significant factors. Although these bills failed, they did awaken women to the need for concerted action for suffrage.[5]

At the onset of the fight for the right to vote, articles and editorials claimed that many women were still not in favor of suffrage. A 1919 *Philippines Free Press* editorial showed that the Cebu Woman's Club, girls from the university Centro Escolar de Señoritas, and 16 out of 17 towns in Laguna were in complete accord that they did not want women's suffrage. The cartoon accompanying it showed an old lady suffragist sitting on a flight of stairs wondering why she was given the cold shoulder by women's clubs and girls from various colleges and universities when she had such a "cordial reception in the Senate."[6] This sentiment was also featured in another 1919 article in the *Philippines Free Press*. It narrated the lukewarm reception the early prosuffragists received while trying to convince the college girls of the University of the Philippines to join the fight for the ballot.[7]

On the other hand, the periodicals featured the ongoing debates at schools that would otherwise have been left undocumented.[8] It was in these types of forums that women slowly changed the minds of people as they defended and gave intelligent arguments to support their stand. At a time when women were not yet as aware and as supportive of the right to vote as in later decades, these mini-battlefields of discussion in the public sphere increased the awareness of others for the cause.

The 1919 prosuffrage rally at the Malacañang Palace attended by feminists of the time and their friends, such as Senate President Manuel L. Quezon at the invitation of First Lady Elizabeth Wentworth Harrison,[9] could be seen as a tipping point in the reportage on the issue of suffrage. It was at this rally that Senate President Quezon came out to categorically support women's suffrage. This rally can be posited as one of the possible factors for the introduction of several prosuffrage bills that mushroomed in the Senate that year.

Several bills were presented in 1919, but only one passed. The bill sponsored by Senator Pedro Ma. Sison, staunchly supported by Senator Rafael Palma, was the first ever passed by the Senate. But sadly the women had to contend with a predominantly antisuffrage lower house.[10]

Hand in hand with these historical events, reportage of certain events in the legislature seeped into the pages of newspapers. By 1919, a barrage of articles, op-ed pieces, contributions, editorials, and cartoons came to the fore. Periodicals such as the *Philippines Free Press* were "in a general way"[11] for suffrage very early on. However, entrenched traditional ideas on women created a somewhat confused rhetoric as periodicals found themselves supporting suffrage on the one hand while denigrating women on the other.[12]

The bills for woman suffrage from 1907 until 1919 may have been defeated, but they opened up the importance of the topic and slowly awakened women to begin a concerted effort to get the right to vote.

Act Two: The Filipina Strikes Back, 1920–1933

The fight for suffrage as written in the periodicals from the 1920s to the 1930s showcased the protracted war that weaved in and out of public consciousness. In 1920 the Manila Women's Club invited all the provincial women's clubs to a general convention at the capital to discuss important matters affecting women and children. This event was the first of its kind in the Philippines, where the formation of a League of Women Suffragettes was created, and a petition for the approval of woman suffrage was forwarded to the Philippine House of Represen-

tatives. By 1921 they organized themselves as one league known as the National Federation of Women's Clubs.[13] The federation voiced its feminist sentiments through its official organ, the *Women's Outlook*, edited by Trinidad Fernandez Legarda (English section) and Pura V. Kalaw (Spanish section). Dr. Maria Paz Mendoza-Guazon, the first Filipina to receive a medical degree from the University of the Philippines, organized various women's groups such as the Liga Nacional de Damas Filipinas (National League of Filipino Women) in 1922 and the short-lived Women's Citizens League in 1928, which would then be replaced by the Philippine Association of University Women, composed of college graduates from the original league to campaign for women's right to vote.[14]

The number of articles written from 1918 to 1930 was almost equally divided between those in favor and those opposed, possibly showing the equally divided opinion of the House and the Senate and the general public. The suffragists were very methodical in their strategy to convince those who were not in favor of woman suffrage to change their minds. As written in an article in the *Tribune*,

> to convince those who are not in favor of woman suffrage that the Filipino woman desires the right to vote, the woman's association resolved to enlist the support and cooperation of all the women's organizations and associations. The university co-eds will be approached first, convinced and enlisted; then the members of women's clubs and federations will be asked to help; and thirdly, the women workers in factories and business establishments and the general mass of provincial women will be asked to join them.[15]

The year 1931 may be considered a watershed moment for women's suffrage in relation to its storytelling in the periodicals; different women's organizations were finally able to win over the press to their side. This watershed moment was evident in the increase of articles that favored the women's right to the ballot—21 of 25 were prosuffrage. A lot of them could even be found on the front pages, and two out of the four articles written by women, specifically Trinidad Legarda's "Philippine Women and the Vote" and Encarnacion Alzona's "Women Suffrage in the Philippines," were published during this specific year.[16] In the last few months of 1931, the press became the outlet for public opinion about woman suffrage as public hearings commenced in the House of Representatives.

Suffragists were aware of the irony that they would be fighting in an arena known as a men's club and had to gain representation in a place where they were not even represented. On the first day of the 1931 public hearing, 300 women,

including mothers and school girls, filled the session hall to capacity. Concepcion Felix Rodriguez, speaking for the affirmative side, pointed out that there were 358 women's clubs in the archipelago fighting for the enfranchisement of women. A *Graphic* article portrayed the women as heroines and Rep. Perfecto Laguio as the villain of the piece—he argued that women were uninformed and likely to remain so; they scanned only the newspaper society pages and had no interest in suffrage.[17]

Members of the House who were either antisuffrage or unsure of their stand on the proposition jockeyed to derail or kill the bill. They introduced bills that supposedly were meant to frazzle and frighten the women to back out. One of these laws was a proposed bill in 1926 requiring women to pay the *cedula* tax just like men.[18] This issue was to crop up again later in the 1937 plebiscite for women's suffrage. In 1931, a bill liberalizing divorce in the Philippines was passed in the House with the suffrage measure. Although the bill had yet to reach the Senate, Sen. Benigno Aquino, in collaboration with Sen. Antonio Belo, also drafted an amendment to the divorce law. Included in the said amendments was making the continuous separation of husband and wife for a period of seven years a justifiable cause for divorce. The antisuffrage members of the legislature believed that a more liberal divorce law was a natural consequence of asking for women's suffrage.[19] But it was the House Rules Committee, composed in 1931 of professed antisuffragists, that postponed a vote on the woman suffrage bill. The committee had the power not to place the measure on the House calendar until "all other important measures pending before that body have been discussed and closed."[20]

However, all of these moves backfired as the delaying tactics gave the women time to change public perception. Articles in favor of suffrage grew exponentially while antisuffrage articles began to lose ground and decrease in number and power. These articles also reflected a changing mood in the House as the suffragists advanced clever argument after clever argument, which made the House members feel "that the Filipino woman is ready to exercise her right as a part of the country's citizenry," and they were able to convince many representatives who had not as yet defined their stand on the measure.[21] Because of this change in support, the Bonifacio-Perez-Varona woman suffrage bill was unanimously passed with the Cabahug amendment (allowing women to hold elective office), giving women full suffrage with a probationary period ending 31 December 1937 and including two consecutive elections. Two years later the Senate passed the woman suffrage bill. On 7 December 1933, Gov.-Gen. Frank Murphy signed the bill into law—completing the victory of women's suffrage.[22] The Philippines became the first country in Southeast Asia to grant women's suffrage. Governor-General Murphy handed the signed copy of the bill to Sofia R. De Veyra in the presence

of the leading feminists in the Philippines; it was a historic moment in the story of woman suffrage, as it unfolded in the periodicals. Sadly, this was not the end of the battle, as the right would soon be taken from women once again.

Act Three: Return of Women's Suffrage, 1934–1937

The woman suffrage bill was finally passed on 7 December 1933, but because of the alleged lack of time for preparations to register women voters in the 1934 elections, it was decided that the enfranchisement of women was to take place in 1935.[23] All was well until the question concerning the independence of the Philippines literally changed the rules of the game. In 1934, Manuel L. Quezon was able to secure the Tydings-McDuffie Act from Washington D.C., which officially established the process and the procedural framework for the Philippines to finally become an independent country after a 10-year transition period. Included in this process was the creation of the Constitution of the Commonwealth. The new laws written within this new commonwealth constitution would supersede all other laws that came before it. The creation of the new commonwealth constitution became a problem for the woman suffrage act since most of the Constitutional Convention delegates who were crafting the new laws were well-known antisuffragists.[24]

The woman suffrage law that was enacted in 1933 was to take effect by 1 January 1935, which meant that women could not even be elected as delegates to the convention. A coordinated effort headed by Pilar Hidalgo Lim and Josefa Llanes Escoda ensued, but the antisuffrage sentiment was strong among the members of the convention. The most that the suffragists could get was a provision stating that women's suffrage could be granted when and if 300,000 women voted in favor of it at a special plebiscite.[25] But before this vote could even happen, the women had to prove their loyalty to the country with the plebiscite for the constitution on 14 May 1935. Since the constitution was yet to be ratified, the women's suffrage law was in effect by the time of the plebiscite, giving the women the same voting powers as men. The issue of Philippine independence ended up putting women in a very absurd situation, which was captured by the *Philippines Free Press*:

> Unfair as the provision is to any man who is opposed to the constitution but desires independence, it is doubly unfair to the women, who may: 1. Vote for a constitution which takes away their hard-won right to suffrage, or: 2. Vote against the independence of their country.[26]

Facing an impossible scenario, the women leaders throughout the entire archipelago worked on convincing their fellow women to register for the plebiscite ratifying the constitution. This plebiscite proved to be a preparatory class for the Filipina in the workings of the political world. The National Federation of Women's Clubs launched an intensive campaign to ensure an affirmative vote for the constitution plebiscite. [27] On the day of the plebiscite, the Filipina was able to vote for the first time, and the periodicals were able to capture this momentous occasion—1,213,046, or 96.43%, of the voters unanimously ratified the 1935 Philippine Constitution.

Sadly, the country's win was a loss for women, for the ratification of the 1935 Philippine Constitution nullified the special law granting women the right to vote. After the ratification, conflicting legal views came out concerning the right of the women to vote in the 1935 election for the president, the vice-president of the commonwealth, and the members of the National Assembly. There were those such as Sen. Elpidio Quirino, secretary of finance, who believed that women were qualified to vote. But there were those who maintained that since the constitution was ratified, it was now considered in effect, especially for the commonwealth election, since the rules in the constitution concerning the qualifications of those who could run were to be used. Lamberto Siguion Reyna, who was the technical adviser to the Department of the Interior, stated, "If the constitution is now in effect, then it follows that the provision regarding women suffrage is also in force and nullifies, in effect the special law granting the women the right of suffrage. If this is true, the women, who are now registered voters, cannot vote in the coming election. The same is true, in the case of illiterate voters who enjoy only property qualification; they will be discarded from the list of voters because the constitution does not recognize any more property qualification."[28]

The names of women were stricken off the list of voters for the 17 September 1935 commonwealth elections. Sofia de Veyra and the other suffragists were surprised and disappointed as they received this news through the press. Women denounced this act and claimed that the usual backstairs methods in the legislature were the reason for the abrogation of a right that was already theirs. They were relegated to their former position as inhabitants instead of citizens and were even classed with illiterates. The *Sunday Tribune* and *Philippine Magazine* interviewed prominent suffragists in Manila concerning this political bombshell. They were able to get a dozen of these women leaders to speak up about the political injustice.[29]

Women had to wait at the periphery of the political public sphere for another year for the National Assembly to pass the woman suffrage plebiscite

bill that was signed by President Manuel L. Quezon on 30 September 1936, which became known as Commonwealth Act No. 34. It prescribed a simple and convenient method of registering women voters.[30]

After much debate and delay for almost two decades, it was now in the hands of women to decide their fate. The amount of 150,000 pesos was appropriated to defray the expenses of the plebiscite. The dates of 10 and 17 April were set as registration days, and the Plebiscite Day was set for 30 April 1937. The leaders of the movement, such as Pilar Hidalgo Lim, the president of the National Federation of Women's Clubs, believed that the quota of 300,000 required to give the women the right of suffrage would be reached.

Even though the women leaders seemed confident of victory, they left nothing to chance. Weeks before the plebiscite day, various women's clubs concentrated effort on awareness and propaganda seeking new converts to the suffrage cause, by press, radio, posters, student rallies, house-to-house appeals, speaking tours, distribution of sample ballots, and informative lectures, redoubling every effort on the registration days of 10 and 17 April. Philippine feminists mobilized the General Council of Women and its provincial branches to sign up women's voters to meet the quota. In the screaming posters being distributed throughout the country, splashed over the head of a fretful and frantic woman with arms outstretched is "Vote 'Yes.'"[31] They covered the entire country, a remarkable feat given the fragmented geography and primitive modes of transportation at the time. They even formed the Junior Federation of Women's Clubs, which took care of the children when their mothers went to vote on the day of the plebiscite. These clubs covered everything from providing food to transportation services so that women could go out and vote. Suffragists even received support from the newly organized Filipino Editors and Publishers' Union in their bid for suffrage, an organization that signified their intention to help the various women's clubs in the country in the nationwide drive to get the necessary yes votes in the 1937 plebiscite on the women's suffrage issue.[32]

Despite the intensive recruiting campaign by the women, the first registration day was a major disappointment, with partial reports from the Department of Interior showing fewer than 50,000 women registered in 13 provinces.[33] The suffragists cited several reasons for this in the information that they gave to the Department of Interior. Their main complaint was the open campaign against woman suffrage conducted by men. They were also hampered by organized opposition on the part of the Anti-Woman Suffrage League, a group composed of professionals and student leaders, whose main argument against woman suffrage was that it would break up the home and undermine every fine virtue of a woman.

These obstructive activities did not stop the suffragists from their recruitment campaign, which seemed to silence the movements of Anti-Woman Suffrage League's activities in the news.[34] The other reasons for the poor showing were that many women were afraid to approach the precincts where all the inspectors were men, and it did not help that the voting booths were prematurely closed before the deadline on the first day.[35]

The other challenges that the campaign faced were the indifference of some women on the issue, the fear of the possible imposition of *cedula* taxes, and the legislature's push for liberalizing divorce if women were emancipated by the vote. Anatolia Litonjua, in her article in *Graphic*, stated that it "is not due to lack of civil consciousness but to the lack of knowledge of the real situation."[36] An information drive was conducted to counteract these issues.

Because of the poor showing on the first day of registration, the suffragists doubled their efforts to make sure they reached the quota. Results of the second day of registration indicated that the registration campaign was carried to a very successful finish, as unofficial reports from the provinces were very strong and showed that the Manila numbers had more than doubled the total of 9,000 registrants on the first registration day. This good news allowed the women leaders to breathe easily and relax a bit. It was reported in *Graphic* that most of the suffragists were to be found "lolling the evening away in movie houses in the city," enjoying their very much well-earned reward after an intensive campaign.[37]

But before they could even prepare for the day of the plebiscite, the suffragists heard that the Department of Finance was considering imposing the *cedula* tax on enfranchised women. This report was alarming, especially since this was one of the main fears of women if they were given the right to suffrage. Pilar Hidalgo Lim and Josefa Llanes Escoda clarified the matter with Secretary of Finance Antonio de las Alas and were able to come out of said meeting with a written statement from Secretary de las Alas that the department was "not considering any plan to impose the *cedula* on women once they are granted the right to vote."[38] With this last obstacle down, suffragists were now able to focus on making sure that every woman who registered would turn out on the day of the plebiscite and vote yes.

On plebiscite day, members of different women's organizations undertook various tasks to ensure that women went out to vote. Repeating their activities during the constitution plebiscite, they provided transportation even to the extent of lending their own cars to those women who needed to reach the precincts. Women also babysat for mothers and served meals to out-of-town voters.[39] After decades of lobbying and fighting, women were able to register almost 500,000

women, of whom an overwhelming majority of 447,725 voted yes. Warm congratulations came from various parts of society; others questioned how women would use this newly acquired privilege. Journalist Federico Mangahas, for instance, was known for his ambivalence toward women's increasing role in the public sphere and was a defender of the bastion of manhood.[40] Mangahas's point of view had been used in the press by journalists before him and has been reiterated and repurposed by journalists who came after him. Although this was and is still happening, women continued to find ways to keep on disproving this premise as they pushed the limits through the evolution of their roles in society.

The new election law extending the right to vote to both male and female citizens, 21 years of age, who could read and write, unless otherwise disqualified by law, was signed by President Manuel L. Quezon on 15 September 1937.[41] The momentum from this long, drawn-out campaign for woman suffrage became a precedent for other struggles to follow, such as repealing provisions in the Civil Code that were clearly discriminatory or oppressive to women and children and getting women themselves to run for public office.[42] The passage of the woman suffrage law opened the gates for women in the Philippines to have a right to cast the ballot and eventually be on the ballot, as they became candidates for elective and appointive positions in the public political sphere. In the November 1937 elections, months after the woman suffrage law was passed, Carmen Planas, a 23-year-old third-year law student, was voted in as a councilwoman in the city of Manila, garnering the highest votes out of 10 ten male candidates and giving her the distinction of being the first woman to be elected to the city council. More than 800 women won elective positions as mayors, members of the provincial board, councilors, and other positions. Only a few women were elected to public office, but it was a propitious beginning for them, taking their rightful place, which they had done so many centuries earlier, before the Spanish colonizers took it away.

The Manileña Suffragist

If the campaign for suffrage was a nationwide fight, then what was the *Manileña*'s role in the whole struggle? Was the *Manileña* a crucial cog for the success of the passage of the suffrage bill? It was a given that women of the nation all fought in their own way, whether for or against suffrage. This fight for suffrage was very visible in the various articles in periodicals from 1912 to 1938, but it is important to note that the main arena for the battle was in the capital, where all the hearings were done and where almost all of the press could be found. As pointed out by Ines Villa, a prominent *Manileña* suffragist,

it certainly is not correct to say that the movement for the recognition of women's rights is limited to Manila. It extends to virtually all the provinces, only the women there have no means of expression. And why should not women enter their fight on the city when the legislature and now the constitutional assembly are here? The facilities for expressing themselves are also here.[43]

Seen in this light, the *Manileña* became the implicit spokesperson of fellow Filipinas through the twists and turns of the battle. The first supporters whom Carrie Chapman Catt and Aletta Jacobs received when they visited the Philippines in 1912 came from the "most aristocratic ladies of Manila society."[44] Even though these ladies of Manila society were hesitant to show their support and paltry as it may have been, it proved that at the forefront of the fight were women coming mainly from the upper class of the capital's society. The girls from Manila high school and universities debating the issue were the first featured in the periodicals during the campaign for suffrage, and they were very much visible during the discussions in the legislature.[45] During the 1931 hearing of the Gallego and Bonifacio bills, the *Manileña* was again front and center as the Federation of Women's Clubs of the Philippines, headed by Pilar Hidalgo Lim, rallied women all over the Philippines.[46] It was the *Manileña* who led the fight for the inclusion of women's right to vote and hold elective office in the commonwealth constitution and was even denigrated in an interview by antisuffragist and constitutional convention president Senator Claro M. Recto, who stated that "it seems to me that the so-called militant movement of Filipino woman is confined only to a certain section in Manila."[47]

Manila was the center of the suffrage battle, and it was only natural that the generals of the so-called battle would be where the fight was. Therefore, the *Manileña*, whether intentional or not, was often used as the stereotype or the caricature of what a suffragist or a suffragette looked like. The descriptions and renditions of the image of the suffragist were captured in various ways in the press, as will be tackled in the next section.

The Manileña as the Image of the Filipina Suffragist

The battle for the right of woman suffrage was a national issue brought forth by women all over the archipelago, but the center of all the major twists and turns in this story was in Manila. In this light, one could surmise that the ideas, the description, and the visual representations in periodicals concerning the suffragist were based on those women who were very visible in the public eye, the *Manileña* suffragist.

So what was this common image of the *Manileña* suffragist? The suffragist was depicted as a matronly woman, with her hair in a bun, usually wearing the Filipino *mestiza* dress. Suffragists were even termed *panuelo* activists by Mary Grace Ampil Tirona because of their chosen attire.[48] This image of the *Manileña* suffragists went through various depictions that were utilized positively and negatively in the media. The periodicals proved to be both their friend and enemy in the fight.

Even though she was depicted wearing the formal Filipiniana outfit, the image was of a new modern woman—educated, active, independent, unretiring, strong, and confident yet still able to remain elegant—feminine daughters and mothers of Manila society. As shown by this description, the suffragist clung to the Filipina dress while lobbying for suffrage not to keep the tradition but as a political strategy since lobbying for suffrage seemed less modern if they were attired in the traditional Filipiniana costume. As Mina Roces observes,

> historically, the politics of dress as expressed in terms of a Filipino dress/Western dress binary had gendered implications. Women as "bearers of tradition" wore national dress while men wore the western suit and jacket, reflecting the gendered power relationship in the society. Because of the stark visual contrast between these two types of dress, these visual markers became politically potent. Women in the Philippines, from suffragists to powerful women, have used clothing and stereotypes associated with particular forms of dress as part of political strategy and empowerment.[49]

These ideas of the ideal modern *Manileña* suffragist were contrasted with the so-called traditional Filipina image. The negative connotations of the image of the matronly educated suffragist were from the ridiculous to the repulsive. The tactic of using ridicule to put down the suffragist was certainly not new. As pointed out by Rafael Palma in his speech, ridicule was a powerful tool used by antisuffragists against women who were fighting for suffrage.[50]

The best way to counteract the image of the modern intelligent suffragist was to use the prejudices of traditional society against her. An intelligent and confident woman was considered anathema to the essence of her femininity. This negative portrayal of the suffragist was used not only in the Philippines but in other countries. As Catherine Gourley observes, "portraying suffragists as ugly women was common. In some images, they were withered and thin and had Adam's apples protruding in their throat. In others, they were old and angry."[51]

A good example of this portrayal was an editorial accompanied by a cartoon, in which the president of the Senate, Manuel L. Quezon, was shown gallantly leading a suffragist to be presented to his colleagues in the Senate, very much like a bride being led to the altar. The caricature of the suffragist in the cartoon, according to the writer, was a lady who was hardly what one could call "a thing of beauty and a joy."[52] Another editorial cartoon portrayed the suffragist as an old and angry woman holding a club while she tried to fight for her right to suffrage in the commonwealth constitution.[53] This unflattering image of the suffragist who was unappealing, unfeminine, and even repulsive was a favorite image used by antisuffragists in their defense of the status quo. They repeatedly stated that women would lose their natural loveliness and ideal purity once they were given the ballot. Those women who were fighting for suffrage were even described as "cackling like peacocks" for suffrage.[54]

Another image of the suffragist was that of the co-ed. This should have been a relatively positive personification of the new, modern woman fighting the cause against the old guards, but that was not to be the case because despite their being portrayed as beautiful, feminine women, they were also considered too modern and a complete negation of the traditional Filipina. The extreme representation of this was the flapper. The images of the co-ed and the flapper were the favorite ones used by Laguio and his cohorts in the legislature when they were pointing out the absurdity of woman suffrage. Despite this image of the co-ed, that of the matronly suffragist proved to be the most effective antisuffrage representation.

Interestingly, no images depicting women from the lower classes were to be found. They might have been the women referred to during the period of recruitment for the plebiscite registration. They could have been those who were aided by the women leaders either through the provision of nannies for their babies or free transportation so that they could vote, but one can only make an intelligent guess based on the articles. So if one were to look at the suffrage movement solely via the text and images in the periodicals, then one would conclude that the suffrage movement in the Philippines was driven by women in the middle and upper classes of society, especially those from Manila.[55]

Suffragist versus Antisuffragist

During the fight for woman suffrage in the Philippines, not all men were antisuffrage, and not all women were for suffrage. Many men like Rafael Palma, Manuel Roxas, and writers in the press fought tooth and nail for women to get the vote,

in the same way that there were women who spoke out against woman suffrage. *Manileña* suffragists at the forefront of the fight, such as Trinidad Legarda, were very much aware of this.[56]

The image of an antisuffrage woman was not as visible in the periodicals because the major players who were usually featured were either the *Manileña* suffragists or the men who were against them. There appeared to be no such thing as an image of the antisuffragist, no caricature specifically drawn to represent her. However, if one were to look closely and read between the lines and images in the periodicals, one could see that there was actually an image war that was being waged, where the women who were not in favor of suffrage were actually pitted against the modern *Manileña* suffragist. These women inadvertently became the image of what an antisuffragist was. The first antisuffragist image, then, was that of the educated *Manileña* prosuffragist versus the educated *Manileña* antisuffragist.

Many articles pointed out the remarkable qualities of the educated *Manileña* suffragist.[57] This positive portrayal was counteracted by articles using the same image of the educated *Manileña* suffragist but decrying the fight for suffrage. College co-ed Josefa Gonzales of Holy Ghost College spoke against suffrage during the 1931 public hearing in the legislature, stating that "I believe, our men have a better idea of women than we have of ourselves,"[58] while the very well respected Flora Ylagan surprised many by her antisuffrage stance, stating that "I am afraid that women will have to sacrifice their finer feeling and instincts if they have to have a hand in the dirty mess that is politics. Personally, I am not willing to pay the price. Call it cowardice, if you please but there it is."[59]

Women who were lawyers and who held doctorates were featured in various articles in which they were asked their stand on the subject of suffrage. The writers were usually surprised to discover that these brilliant women were against suffrage. Estela Romualdez, the secretary to Justice Romualdez and the assistant treasurer of the National Federation of Women's Clubs, spoke against suffrage. She was quoted as saying that "lack of political aspirations made women especially valuable for reform and philanthropic endeavors."[60] The third Filipino woman to obtain the much-coveted degree of doctor of philosophy, Maria Lanzar, was featured in *Graphic* on 11 August 1928. When she was asked about her stand on suffrage, she answered,

> The bulk of our women who would be affected by the bill, I dare say, are not anywhere ready for an intelligent exercise of suffrage. . . . That is how I look at the situation, and please, don't forget that this is only a mere woman's opinion.[61]

Teela San Andres, who was the first Filipina to receive the highest grade in the Supreme Court's examinations for entrance to the bar, was asked about her stand on divorce and suffrage. She answered that she was against both: "As to suffrage, I think women ought not to be granted suffrage. . . . Woman suffrage will destroy the social structure of the family which we women are bound to maintain."[62]

In the articles cited, the image of an educated *Manileña* against her peers was tactically used to show that within the numbers of educated women, the opinion was very much divided. In a way, the superior intellectual achievements of those antisuffragist *Manileñas* featured were emphasized to denigrate the supposedly educated stance of the *Manileña* prosuffragist.

The second antisuffragist image pitted the modern *Manileña* against the traditional provincial lass. The *Manileña* was interested in suffrage, whereas her provincial counterpart did not want to engage in politics. As pointed out in an editorial in the *Philippines Free Press,* "some of her militant sisters in Manila are up in arms, but the average Filipina in the provinces doesn't seem to give a hoot one way or the other."[63] Several articles featured beautiful, educated women from the provinces who clearly were against women getting the vote. In a *Graphic* article, Amparo M. Neri, who was the Miss Misamis 1926 beauty pageant winner and an alumna of Philippine Women's University and St. Scholastica College, stated unequivocally that woman suffrage can be equated to divorce and flapperism, which very much went against the grain of the traditional customs that she very much supported.[64] Her photo accompanied the article, encapsulating the tenets and ideals of the traditional Filipino woman. She was beautiful and graceful and a lady who believed that women had more important roles to play in the home and not in the political public sphere.

Another beautiful, provincial young woman named Remedios M. Melencio was also interviewed in an article concerning her stand on the issue of suffrage. Melencio was a student at Assumption College and a cousin of a well-known oppositionist to suffrage, Jose P. Melencio. The article stated that her family and all the women in her home were very happy with the failure of suffrage in the legislature. She believed that there were no great reforms that could be gained from giving women the ballot and that the possible price to pay if they did gain this right might be detrimental to the home.[65] Again, accompanying her utterances concerning suffrage was not just a picture of her but also a very vivid description of her face in the photo. The writer described her positively: "Miss Melencio's face has one of the chief elements of beauty in a woman, in that it has an oval or egg-shaped appearance on account of the full, smooth contour between ear and chin." The article used the idea that Melencio espoused and represented what a traditional woman looked like and aspired to be.

Looking at these articles, we can see that these beautiful provincial lasses were not very much different from their *Manileña* cohorts. They were well-educated Filipinas coming from well-respected middle- and upper-class families, and the only difference that made the provincial lass more feminine, virtuous, and beautiful was her antisuffrage stand. The provincial lass who held on to traditional ideals of a Filipina became the spokesperson for the women who did not want the vote, becoming the perfect antithesis to those who did, which in this case was the modern *Manileña* prosuffragist.

The Silent "Lethargic" Majority?

The issue of suffrage all seemed very black-and-white in the periodicals. The lines between those who were for and against suffrage seemed to be very clearcut, and the images that were created were unequivocally defined. These polarized definitions and representations did not necessarily represent the whole breadth of those who were included in the discussion on the issue of woman suffrage. Here lies the problem when it comes to representation and image. However much one tries, one can never fully represent an idea in just one image since visual representation of an idea will always be based on a perceived reality. The writer's or the artist's personal prejudices filter this perceived reality hand in hand with society's perceived reality. Therefore, the visual and mental representation of the *Manileña* suffragist fall into stereotypical traps that define, yet in a way cage, the idea. Many other ideas and images fall by the wayside and are left invisible. As pointed out, the images were supposedly based on women either from Manila or from the provinces, educated, and coming from middle-class and upper-class families. But no representation of the everyday woman who might or might not be educated, a woman coming from the lower classes, or a woman from the younger generation was fully portrayed or fully narrated. That is why Lydia Villanueva-Arguilla's article in *Graphic* was so important—it revealed a slice of life of an everyday *Manileña* on the issue of suffrage.[66]

Arguilla's article, in its own simple way, was able to capture a moment and the experience of the silent, lethargic majority of women who were the ones who actually voted to ensure that the 300,000-vote requirement was reached. The article showed the *Manileña* who considered herself in favor of suffrage but did not necessarily relate or equate herself to the image of the suffragist in the periodicals. She was the everyday woman, not necessarily even middle class, who rode the autobus and voted for the suffrage bill but was never really represented in the discussions and images or photographed in the periodicals. The experience and thoughts of the *Manileña* writer who

could not relate to the suffragists in the news, even though she admired the energy and passion they had for their cause, are discussed. This image of a passive prosuffragist was not captured by any artist or article except for Villanueva-Arguilla's. In the same way that there was no image of a possible passive antisuffragist, how much more is this limited representation so for those who were neither for nor against suffrage? Maybe the silent majority, whether pro- or antisuffrage, preferred to be invisible in the public sphere while there were others who were just apathetic. Maybe this was the reason that they remained unrepresented and somewhat unimportant in the discussions in the periodicals. Another possible reason might be that those in the press were not very interested in the supposedly lackluster and lukewarm opinions of these women, even though they were the silent majority, because they would not sell papers or because it was hard to capture an image of those who did not speak up. In the image-making process of who was and was not a suffragist, many other experiences of women remained invisible and fell into the cracks.

The Final Count

The story of suffrage in the Philippines can be understood as defining the image of the suffragist and the *Manileña* in periodicals. The collision of modern and traditional ideas redefined the image and position of the *Manileña* as her influence was transformed and expanded. The periodicals were helpful in offering another perspective that revealed complicated nuances.

The ideas and images of the *Manileña* suffragist rapidly evolved during this time. From what was classically described as gentle and feminine, a woman who kept the home safe and kept her opinions to herself, she became one who learned to assert her rights. However, the right to vote did not necessarily mean that she gained full strength in the political sphere or that she was able to lose some of her responsibilities in the private sphere. The expansion of her influence in the public sphere gained her the vote but still kept her on the periphery in many aspects of national affairs. Simultaneously, the granting of the vote increased expectations of women on the home front as the ideals of motherhood became even more emphasized. More than ever, they were expected to manage the home effectively. A woman remained very much answerable to the beck and call of the man of the house. The expectations and limitations, which impeded her in her full participation in the political public sphere, would also affect her forays into the economic, social, and cultural public sphere. However, the *Manileña* was up for the challenge as she found opportunities to push her agenda forward and increased her influence in various other spheres one step at a time.

Notes

1. Rafael Corpus, Sufragismo, *Renacimiento Filipino* 3, no. 104 (28 August 1912): 245–246. On Carrie Chapman Catt, see *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, s.v. Carrie Chapman Catt, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Carrie-Chapman-Catt (accessed 16 July 2016).

2. Mary Grace Ampil Tirona, Panuelo Activism, in *Women's Role in Philippine History: Selected Essays*, 2nd ed. (Quezon City: University of the Philippines, Center for Women's Studies, 1996), 117–118; Tarrosa Subido, *The Feminist Movement in the Philippines, 1905–1955: A Golden Book to Commemorate the Golden Jubilee of the Feminist Movement in the Philippines* (Manila: National Federation of Women's Clubs of the Philippines, 1955), 8–9.

3. Zacarias Tagamolila, Is Woman Suffrage in the Philippines Desirable, *Philippines Free Press* 12, no. 46 (16 November 1918): 2, 7.

4. Subido, *Feminist Movement in the Philippines*, 21.

5. Subido, *Feminist Movement in the Philippines*, 31.

6. Anonymous, It's a Cold, Cold World, *Philippines Free Press* 13, no. 50 (13 December 1919): 1.

7. Anonymous, Talk Suffrage at University, *Philippines Free Press* 13, no. 51 (20 December 1919): 8.

8. Anonymous, Woman Suffrage Wins in Debate, *Philippines Herald* (Manila), 9 September 1920, 4.

9. Anonymous, First Lady of the Land Leads Suffrage Movement, *Citizen* 2, no. 27 (6 November 1919): 3.

10. Subido, *Feminist Movement in the Philippines*, 31; Belinda A. Aquino, Filipino Women and Political Engagement, in *More Pinay Than We Admit: The Social Construction of the Filipina*, ed. Maria Luisa Camagay (Quezon City: Vibal Foundation, 2010), 20.

11. Anonymous, The New Era, *Philippines Free Press* 13, no. 47 (22 November 1919): 1.

12. Jose Morente, Filipino in America Protests against His People Acquiescing in Woman's Suffrage and Prohibition from False Sense of Loyalty, *Philippines Free Press* 13, no. 47 (22 November 1919): 2.

13. Aquino, Filipino Women and Political Engagement, 20–21.

14. Anonymous, Dr. Maria Paz Mendoza-Guazon, *Graphic* 2, no. 46 (11 May 1929): 12–13; Subido, *Feminist Movement in the Philippines*, 31–32.

15. Anonymous, University Women Not Only after Right to Vote but to Hold Office, *Tribune* (Manila), 18 July 1931, 1.

16. Most of the articles that were available were either written by men or were being discussed by men, whether they were for or against suffrage. Of 64 suffrage articles published from 1898 to 1938, only 7 were clearly written by women, 4 prosuffrage and 3 antisuffrage. The prosuffrage articles were Josepha Abiertas, Elective Franchise for Filipino Women, *Woman's Journal* 1, no. 1 (April 1920): 3–4; Maud Parker, A Stirring Message from Maud Parker, *Philippines Free Press* 17, no. 6 (10 February 1923): 4, 13; Trinidad F. Legarda, Philippine Women and the Vote, *Philippine Magazine* 28, no. 4 (September 1931): 163–165, 196–200; and Encarnacion Alzona, Woman Suffrage in the Philippines, *Graphic* 5, no. 11 (2 September 1931): 1, 56. Antisuffrage articles were Luz Martinez, El Sufragio Femenino en Filipinas, *Philippines Free Press* 13, no. 15 (12

April 1919): 27, 30, 35; Remedios Melencio, She Is Not One of the "Militants," *Philippines Free Press* 16, no. 6 (11 February 1922): 7; and Amparo Neri, Woman Suffrage Synonym of Divorce and Flapperism, *Graphic* 1, no. 27 (31 December 1927): 12.

17.   Anonymous, Suffragists on the Warpath, *Graphic* 5, no. 12 (9 September 1931): 2–3, 55.

18.   Anonymous, Do You Favor or Oppose Woman Suffrage? *Philippines Free Press* 20, no. 36 (4 September 1926): 36–37.

19.   Anonymous, Jockeying, *Sunday Tribune Magazine*, 4 October 1931, 8, 21.

20.   Anonymous, Suffrage Bill to Be Delayed, *Tribune* (Manila), 15 September 1931, 2.

21.   Anonymous, Suffrage Bill Passage Seen, *Tribune* (Manila), 16 October 1931, 1, 3; Eugenio E. Santos, Consensus Favors Grant of Vote to Women, *Sunday Tribune* (Manila), 13 September 1931, 2.

22.   Subido, *Feminist Movement in the Philippines*, 32–33.

23.   Aquino, Filipino Women and Political Engagement, 21.

24.   Anonymous, Convention Gets Declaration of Principles, *Philippines Free Press* 38, no. 35 (1 September 1934): 33.

25.   Henry S. Totanes, ed., *Kasaysayan: The Story of the Filipino People*, vol. 10, *A Timeline of Philippine History* (Manila: Asia Publishing, 1998), 165; Subido, *Feminist Movement in the Philippines*, 35.

26.   Anonymous, Next Comes the Plebiscite, *Philippines Free Press* 32, no. 5 (11 May 1935): 6.

27.   Anonymous, "Yes" or "No," *Sunday Tribune Magazine* 11, no. 6 (12 May 1935): 2.

28.   Anonymous, Women May Vote in Next Elections, *Sunday Tribune* (Manila), 16 June 1935, 3.

29.   Anonymous, Faith Not Kept, *Sunday Tribune* (Manila), 30 June 1935, 18; Anonymous, The 200,000 Disenfranchised, *Philippine Magazine* 32, no. 9 (1 September 1935): 429.

30.   Subido, *Feminist Movement in the Philippines*, 37; Anonymous, A Call to Arms, *Woman's World* 4, no. 1 (1 September 1936): 32.

31.   Anatolia Litonjua, The Ladies Are Optimistic, *Graphic* 10, no. 43 (8 April 1937): 32.

32.   Anonymous, Filipino Editors and Publishers Union Favors Woman Suffrage, *Woman's Welfare Magazine* 1, no. 1 (December 1936): 36.

33.   Anonymous, Few Women Register, *Graphic* 10, no. 44 (15 April 1937): 8.

34.   Litonjua, The Ladies Are Optimistic, 32.

35.   Anonymous, Few Women Register, 8.

36.   Litonjua, The Ladies Are Optimistic, 32.

37.   Anonymous, Suffragettes See Sure Success, *Graphic* 10, no. 45 (22 April 1937): 3.

38.   Anonymous, Rumor about *Cedula* for Women Spiked, *Graphic* 10, no. 49 (29 April 1937): 33.

39.   Subido, *Feminist Movement in the Philippines*, 41–42.

40.   Federico Mangahas, The Women Are Coming, *Promenade* 1, no. 1 (1 August 1937): 32–34.

41.   Subido, *Feminist Movement in the Philippines*, 41–42.

42.   Aquino, Filipino Women and Political Engagement, 22.

43.   Anonymous, Women Rap Anti-suffrage Movement, *Philippines Free Press* 28, no. 34 (25 August 1934): 27.

44.   Corpus, Sufragismo, 245–246.

45.   Anonymous, Talk Suffrage at University, *Philippines Free Press* 13, no. 51 (20 December 1919): 8; Anonymous, Do You Favor or Oppose Woman Suffrage?, 36–37.

46.   Anonymous, Suffrage Bill's Approval Urged, *Tribune* (Manila), 6 October 1931, 2.

47.   Anonymous, Now What?, *Graphic* 10, no. 47 (6 May 1937): 2.

48.   Anonymous, The Mestiza, *Philippine Yearbook*, November 1936; Tirona, Panuelo Activism, 117–118.

49.   Mina Roces, Women, Citizenship and the Politics of Dress in Twentieth Century Philippines, *NIASnytt Asia Insights*, no. 1 (March 2004): 8–9.

50.   Rafael Palma, God Made Woman as Perfect as Man, *Citizen* 2, no. 33 (18 December 1919): 6, 10, 12.

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52.   Anonymous, The "New Era," *Philippines Free Press* 13, no. 47 (22 November 1919): 1.

53.   Anonymous, Ladies Not Admitted, *Philippines Free Press* 28, no. 37 (15 September 1934): 1.

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56.   Legarda, Philippine Women and the Vote.

57.   Eugenio E. Santos, Battle over Suffrage Looms in House, *Sunday Tribune* (Manila), 23 August 1931, 9.

58.   Anonymous, Suffrage Is Forthcoming for Women, *Tribune* (Manila), 9 August 1931, 1.

59.   Anonymous, College Girls, Marriage, and the Vote, *Sunday Tribune* (Manila), 9 December 34, 11.

60.   Anonymous, Philippine Campaign for Woman's Rights Begun, *Philippines Free Press* 18, no. 8 (23 February 1924): 2.

61.   M. San Martin, The Time Is Not Yet, *Graphic* 2, no. 7 (11 August 1928): 8, 33.

62.   Wenceslao P. Vinzons, Women and the Law, *Philippines Free Press* 29, no. 40 (18 October 1930): 68.

63.   Anonymous, Ladies Not Admitted, *Philippines Free Press* 28, no. 37 (15 September 1934): 1.

64.   Neri, Woman Suffrage Synonym of Divorce and Flapperism.

65.   Melencio, She Is Not One of the "Militants."

66.   Lydia Villanueva-Arguilla, Yours If You Want It, *Graphic* 10, no. 44 (15 April 1937): 25, 53.

PART TWO:
LITERARY NETWORKS

6

A COMMON CAUSE AND PARALLEL NETWORKS

Edith Wharton, Gertrude Stein, and Amy Lowell in World War I

Alice Bailey Cheylan

Abstract. Edith Wharton, Amy Lowell, and Gertrude Stein were among the many American writers who were drawn to the thriving artistic scene spreading across Europe in the years leading up to World War I. The three women had similar backgrounds and much in common. They were prolific writers, tireless travelers, fervent gardeners, entertainers, epicureans, dog lovers, and automobile drivers. When war broke out, they turned their creative efforts to helping the Allies. Yet they worked separately. Despite all their common ground and experiences, they had strong personal differences regarding their writing styles, social circles, religious affiliations, and sexual orientations. Wharton's upper-class New York background and strict Protestant education are reflected in her writing. Although Amy Lowell was from an upper-class Protestant family in Boston, her sexual preference was for women and her taste in literature was more modern than Wharton's. Gertrude Stein's Jewish upbringing, overt lesbianism, and innovative experimental writing set her even further apart from her two contemporaries.

A t the turn of the twentieth century it was not uncommon for American writers to cross the Atlantic to meet their European counterparts and participate in the thriving creativity and exchanges among young artists whose

new ideas were sweeping the whole continent. Edith Wharton, Gertrude Stein, and Amy Lowell were three such novelists, essayists, and poets who found themselves caught up in the intellectual upheaval of prewar England and France. When war broke out, their creative energy turned naturally toward the war effort. Each contributed in her own way to support the Allies: Edith Wharton joined the French Red Cross helping refugees; Gertrude Stein became an ambulance driver for French hospitals; and Amy Lowell joined a committee in London to help orient American travelers in need of assistance. It is noteworthy that although these three women had so much in common—as writers, American expatriates, and self-sufficient women—they worked in parallel but never together. Despite their common cause and literary renown, they were not involved in any network and remained steadfastly independent. This short study examines the common interests of Wharton, Stein, and Lowell, their involvement in the war effort, and the influence of their war experiences on their subsequent work, as well as exploring why a network among these expatriate women writers did not form to link them together. Although such a connection would seem a natural result of their common goals and could only have facilitated their efforts, it never materialized. A comparison of their different writing styles and of the social, sexual, and religious orientations of these three women offers possible insights as into why this network never developed.

Similar Backgrounds and Early Experiences

From the outset, Edith Wharton, Amy Lowell, and Gertrude Stein had much in common. The three American women were prominent writers and poets who marked their era in the latter half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. All three were born to affluent families in the nineteenth century on the East Coast of the United States. Wharton was born in 1862 into the prominent Jones family in New York City. Twelve years later in 1874 Stein was born into a well-off Jewish family in Allegany, Pennsylvania, and Lowell was born the same week into the very wealthy Lowell family in Brookline, Massachusetts. Lowell's two brothers were the astronomer Percival Lowell and Abbott Lawrence Lowell, the long-time president of Harvard University (1909–1933). All three women traveled at a young age with their families to Europe. When Wharton was four years old, her family began a six-year sojourn, first in France, later in Italy. Amy Lowell was eight years old in the summer of 1882 when she toured Scotland, England, France, Belgium, Holland, Italy, Germany, Norway, Denmark, and Sweden with her family. Gertrude Stein's family moved to Vienna shortly after her

birth, staying there for three years before moving to Paris for a year and then back to the United States. Both Wharton and Lowell began writing when they were very young. As a child, Wharton would make up stories, write plays, and compose poems. Her parents had her first collection of poetry, *Verses*,[1] published in Newport in 1878. Two years later her poems "Wants," "A Failure," "Patience," "Areopagus," and "The Parting Day"[2] were being published in the *Atlantic Monthly*. Lowell was encouraged by her family to keep a travel journal on her trips. It was at that time that she began to write her *Dream Drops; or, Stories from Fairy Land by a Dreamer.*[3] Stein, on the contrary, was not an early writer. She did not discover her creative talent until much later, after she dropped out of Johns Hopkins Medical School.

Dog Lovers, Epicureans, Entertainers, and Gardeners

Not only did the three women share similar backgrounds and early experiences, they also shared common interests. They were fervent dog lovers, epicureans of good food, entertainers, and gardeners and remained so all their lives. Lowell's seven Scottish sheepdogs greeted visitors on their arrival at Sevenels, her home, and were often invited into the dining room and library. Whether the visitors were dog lovers or not did not matter to Lowell. Her good friend, Jean Starr Untermeyer, described them as she remembered, "arranged in a circle at a respectful distance from the dining room table, or guzzling their food from gray enamel pans at the hearth in the library—they suggested caricatures of nodding English judges in dirty wigs, rather than ferocious animals."[4]

Stein also had a succession of dogs. Polybe, a Mallorca hound, accompanied Stein and her companion, Alice B. Toklas, during their stay in Mallorca. Described as welcoming everyone and faithful to none, Polybe was left behind when Stein and Toklas returned to France.[5] In *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, Stein explains that Basket, her white poodle, was responsible for her ideas on sentences and paragraphs:

> Basket although now he is a large, unwieldy white poodle, still will get up on Gertrude's lap and stay there. She says that listening to the rhythm of his water drinking made her recognise the difference between sentences and paragraphs, that paragraphs are emotional and sentences are not.[6]

Basket was later immortalized in a well-known photo by Man Ray. The importance of dogs in Stein's life is also revealed by her famous assertion "I am I because my little dog knows me even if the little dog is a big one."[7] Basket I was

succeeded by Basket II, succeeded by Basket III, who were themselves succeeded by two Chihuahuas, Byron and Pépé. Edith Wharton was also a dog lover all her life. Ellen Girardeau Kempler describes the endless succession of Wharton's dogs, which might be considered the surrogate children in Edith Wharton's loveless and childless marriage with Teddy Wharton.[8] Many of Wharton's dogs were buried in the same graveyard at The Mount, where she could see them from her window while writing and where their graves can actually be visited today. When Lowell felt that she could no longer take care of her seven sheepdogs, she had them put to sleep so they would not suffer from her absence. When Stein's dogs died, she would replace them with a dog of the same name.

All three writers were accomplished social hostesses with a great interest in food and culinary art. What is noteworthy is how this appreciation of food carries over into their writing. In Stein's *Tender Buttons*, her description of food is very similar to her writing style. In what appears as a stream of consciousness narrative, she describes all the variations offered by simple ingredients:

> Lovely snipe and tender turn, excellent vapor and slender butter, all the splinter and the trunk, all the poisonous darkening drunk, all the joy in weak success, all the joyful tenderness, all the section and the tea, all the stouter symmetry. Around the size that is small, inside the stern that is the middle, besides the remains that are praying, inside the between that is turning, all the region is measuring and melting is exaggerating. Rectangular ribbon does not mean that there is no eruption it means that if there is no place to hold there is no place to spread. Kindness is not earnest, it is not assiduous it is not revered. Room to comb chickens and feathers and ripe purple, room to curve single plates and large sets and second silver, room to send everything away, room to save heat and distemper, room to search a light that is simpler, all room has no shadow.[9]

Stein's ingredients are assembled like words to make a creation.

Amy Lowell was not so much a good cook as an excellent hostess who took great care in choosing menus for her guests. She entertained her friends lavishly with delicious dinners at Sevenels. S. Foster Damon, Lowell's biographer, describes a typical meal at Sevenels with "oysters, soup, fish, meat, salad, dessert, and fruit accompanied (until Prohibition) with the appropriate wines," followed by peppermints and ginger in the library.[10] Sarah Parker cites "the baked white cakes" of "Interlude" and the "honey, wine and baked bread" of "A Decade" in her attempt to "examine closely the connections between food, appetite and eroticism

in Lowell's poetic work—looking at how Lowell frequently uses food imagery as a metaphor for sexual pleasure, and appetite as a metaphor for desire."[11]

Edith Wharton also used food as a metaphor. Cecilia Macheski studied the metaphoric value of food in *Hudson River Bracketed* and *The Gods Arrive*.[12] The two novels relate the journey of Vance Weston from his beginnings as a struggling young writer to his later success as a novelist. He partakes in numerous picnics and simple meals before experiencing a spiritual epiphany, allowing him to appreciate a fairy banquet.[13] Wharton considered the two novels some of her best work, whereas numerous critics did not. In his 1971 book *Edith Wharton: A Woman in Her Time*, Louis Auchincloss remarks that in *Hudson River Bracketed*, Wharton writes of the details of a middle western life that she had never seen and the result is "as bad as might be expected."[14] He refers to *The Gods Arrive* as a sequel that "should never have been written."[15] Hermione Lee softens the blow by explaining that Wharton injects her feelings and experiences less effectively than in her prior novels but adds that "the two books were poorly received and are not much read now: their weaknesses are obvious."[16]

All three women were avid gardeners. Their approaches to gardening were very similar to their respective writing styles. Wharton's gardens were well organized with great attention to detail, Lowell's gardens were colorful with flowers planted freely, and Stein's garden was practical, a kitchen garden devoted to vegetables.

Wharton was passionate about both gardening and home decoration and was also very well published on the subject. Her first book, *The Decoration of Houses*,[17] published in 1898, was a study in American design and of the European influence that was transformed in a different landscape. Wharton's taste in gardening as seen in the creation of her Land's End garden between 1893 and 1898 and her garden at her estate in western Massachusetts, The Mount, created between 1902 and 1908, reveals how she tried to adopt the European model to the American setting—just as she did in her stories and novels. After Wharton moved to France, she continued remodeling the houses she bought at St. Brice and then Hyères, creating gardens that would beautifully blend in with the local landscape. In the introduction to her book *Italian Villas and Their Gardens*, published in 1905, Wharton praised Italian gardens:

> In the blending of different elements, the subtle transition from the
> fixed and formal lines of art to the shifting and irregular lines of nature,
> and lastly in the essential convenience and livableness of the garden,
> lies the fundamental secret of the old garden-magic.[18]

Wharton's garden evolved to fit the changing landscape just as her novels revealed the changing social world of late nineteenth-century New York.

Stein's garden was a kitchen garden with vegetables and herbs to be used to create culinary delights, just as in her writing she used words and repetition to create poems and stories. She wrote that "a vegetable garden in the beginning looks so promising and then after all little by little it grows nothing but vegetables, nothing, nothing but vegetables."[19] What is important, of course, is what can be created with these vegetables. Neil Schmitz explored the many facets of "the greenery" of Gertrude Stein's thought, which

> is spatially distributed, a matter of instances, of recollection, and everywhere interrupted by other concerns, but it constitutes all the same the age-old greenery of garden verse, establishes a pastoral context. At times the garden in *Stanzas in Meditation* looks like a Chinese garden, full of precepts. Then again it looks like a Persian garden, with its allegorical cuckoo. Often it resembles Emerson's Concord, that small comfortable space, the convenient site of his transcendental botanizing.[20]

Stein's writing is thus like a garden of words eternally transforming in a limited space, which can be perceived from a variety of perspectives.

Amy Lowell's love of gardens is also evident in her literature, with numerous poems describing gardens. In her poems "The Garden by Moonlight," "In a Garden," "The Little Garden," "Madonna of the Evening Flowers," and "A Roxbury Garden" the gardens are studded with flowers and plants reminiscent of the images in free verse.[21] "Patterns," one of her most famous poems, compares the pattern of a conventional garden to a woman's life:

> I walk down the garden paths,
> And all the daffodils
> Are blowing, and the bright blue squills.
> I walk down the patterned garden paths
> In my stiff, brocaded gown.
> With my powdered hair and jewelled fan,
> I too am a rare
> Pattern. As I wander down
> The garden paths.[22]

The woman is like a beautiful flower in the garden, but she is imprisoned in a set space and uncomfortable in her brocaded gown.

The War Effort

The three women were to continue to have similar experiences after they all found themselves in England during the summer of 1914.

When Amy Lowell sailed to London in June 1914 to meet with Ezra Pound and the Imagist poets, she took "her maroon automobile, and one of her two chauffeurs with his maroon livery."[23] Having her car allowed freedom of movement and a certain prestige. When the war broke out in August, her first reaction was to rapidly ship her car back to the United States before it could be commissioned. She was able to ship the car more easily than book a return ticket for herself and her entourage. With time on her hands, she joined Herbert Hoover's committee to help stranded Americans in London. After donating $10,000 to the committee, she helped direct Americans to the proper offices to ask for assistance and repatriation. She finally managed to book a passage home at the end of August. Lowell was not idle during this time in London, and she wrote several poems describing the general atmosphere and the war. Notably, she wrote "The Allies," a polyphonic prose poem comparing the lines of soldiers leaving London for the war of wars as a writhing worm that becomes a serpent fighting the flaring red-eyed eagle to achieve peace.[24] Although she returned to the United States for the remainder of the war, she did continue to support the European writers whom she had met and was instrumental in making their work known across the Atlantic. She also continued her own writing, publishing her poetry in *Men, Women and Ghosts* in 1916, *Tendencies in Modern Poetry* in 1917, three anthologies of Imagist poets in 1915, 1916, and 1917, and her collection of poems *Can Grande's Castle* in 1918.[25]

Edith Wharton was also in London during the summer of 1914. Despite difficulties in crossing the Channel after war was declared, Wharton maintained her original plans to spend time in England, renting an estate called Stocks between Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire, where she stayed for around a month before realizing that her real desire was to return to France. Unlike Lowell, Edith Wharton used her car during the war. It had already served her for three motor tours of France, which she described in *A Motor-Flight through France*, first published in 1908.[26] When the war broke out, she kept her car and used it to help the Allied forces. Wharton set up a sewing workshop, employing many young women to sew clothes for soldiers and others in need. She later became instrumental in numerous charities, notably setting up the American Hostels for Refugees to help lodge the Belgian refugees fleeing to Paris. She made numerous trips to the front using her car, baptized "Her" by author Henry James, to deliver supplies.

These trips also resulted in numerous articles published in *Scribner's Magazine* that served to alert American readers to the necessity of engaging in the war. Ultimately, in March 1916, Wharton was granted the honorary distinction of Chévalier de l'Ordre National de la Légion d'Honneur in recognition of her involvement in the war effort.

The war also affected Edith Wharton's writing. Her subject and focus changed from New York society to wartime France. She began to write war stories and articles in a definite attempt to draw the Americans into the war and support the flagging morale of the French. Her short collections of essays, *Fighting France, from Dunkerque to Belfort*, published in 1915, and *French Ways and Their Meanings*, which appeared in 1919, were attempts to analyze and explain the cultural differences of the French to Americans.[27] Although her writing during the war years was prolific, it was later heavily criticized as a form of war propaganda, too emotional and not as objectively realistic as her earlier work. Her novels *The Marne*, published in 1918, and *A Son at the Front*, written during the war and finally published in 1923, were indeed written with and for a cause, but it is difficult to blame a writer or anyone else for that matter for having been influenced by his or her surroundings.[28] In addition, Wharton wrote several poems during the war: "The Great Blue Tent," "The Hymn of the Lusitania," and "With the Tide," among others.[29] Hermione Lee remarks that Edith Wharton's war work was "competitive"; she did not identify with the other "benevolent ladies" who volunteered their time and services to help the war effort.[30]

Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas were also in London during that famous summer. They were not thinking about saving their car, but rather of acquiring one. They had left for London on 5 July 1914 to meet with John Lane, who published *Three Lives* in 1915.[31] Caught in the turmoil of wartime Britain a few weeks later, they were unable to return immediately to Paris. When they were finally able to return in October 1914, Gertrude Stein decided to learn how to drive and acquired a Ford truck affectionately called "Auntie" after her Aunt Pauline, "who always behaved admirably in emergencies and behaved fairly well most times if she was properly flattered."[32] Stein and Toklas joined the American Fund for French Wounded and drove through southern France to Perpignan, delivering medical supplies to the hospitals caring for wounded soldiers before going to Nîmes, where they continued to visit wounded soldiers. A description of Stein's wartime experiences can be found in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*. Describing their visits to the small villages around Nîmes, Stein reveals the influence of the war on her work in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*: "It was during these long trips that she began writing a great deal again. The landscape, the strange life stimulated her. It was then that she began

to love the valley of the Rhône, the landscape that of all landscapes means the most to her."[33] In her poem "The Work," published in the *American Fund for the French Wounded Bulletin* in 1919, Stein describes this wartime experience, her encounters with French soldiers, and the contradiction between their fighting and appreciating yellow irises and fishing.[34] After the armistice, Stein and Toklas went to Alsace to help the American Fund for French Wounded distribute clothes and blankets to the Alsatian refugees returning home. Stein and Toklas were both awarded the Médaille de la Reconnaissance Française by the French government in 1922 for their work.

Noel Sloboda remarks that World War I served as a coda in both Wharton's *A Backward Glance* and Stein's *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, where both writers underline the aftereffects of the war after describing their visits to the western front:[35]

> Like the majority of those who set down first-hand accounts of war, they explain how it transformed them, creating conversion narratives. Both describe how they were changed from artists into unofficial ambassadors to France long before the AEF (American Expeditionary Force) arrived there.[36]

Parisian Friends and Social Circles

There were several well-known salons patronized by Americans in Paris during the early years of the twentieth century. Both Wharton and Stein held literary salons at their homes, surrounding themselves with artists and intellectuals, as did Lowell on her return to Massachusetts. They all had a head for business and used their social skills and money to help young writers. Although they must have had many friends and acquaintances in common, none of them succeeded in bringing any of the three women together.

At her salon, Wharton brought together the Parisian intellectual elite who were already well known: Paul Bourget, Anna de Noailles, André Maurois, Paul Valéry, André Gide, Rainer Maria Rilke, Auguste Rodin, and Jean Cocteau were frequent guests at her apartment on rue de Varenne in the Faubourg Saint-Germain.

After her arrival in Paris in 1907, Gertrude Stein quickly became part of the artistic and cultural fervor that made Paris the avant-garde. At her home on the rue de Fleurus, less than a mile from Wharton's apartment on the rue de Varenne, she entertained the "lost generation" of American expatriate writers: Ezra Pound, Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, James Joyce, John Dos Passos, and E. E.

Cummings, as well as their European counterparts Guillaume Apollinaire, Pablo Picasso, Juan Gris, Georges Braque, Fernand Léger, Henri Matisse, Robert Delaunay, Alfred Stieglitz, Percy Wyndham Lewis, Francis Picabia, and Marcel Duchamp. Although both women knew Jean Cocteau, only Stein attended his gatherings of artists, poets, and musicians, where he invited such poets as René Crevel and Georges Hugnet and the musicians Allen Tanner and Virgil Thomson.[37]

Amy Lowell continued the Lowell family tradition of philanthropy, using her connections to help publish the works of young, little-known poets. Her role was important in introducing European writers in the United States. When she traveled to England in the summer of 1914, she continued her networking. Through her connections with Ezra Pound, H.D., Richard Aldington, and John Gould Fletcher, whom she had met in 1913, she met D. H. Lawrence and his wife Frieda, Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, Allen Upward, and John Cournos. In 1913, equipped with a letter of introduction from Josephine Peabody, Lowell was invited to lunch at the home of Thomas Hardy, with whom she was to keep up a lifetime correspondence.[38]

Differences in Literary Taste and Style

It is very surprising that with so many things in common, the three women did not meet and join forces. Yet there is no evidence that they ever met. Several explanations for this absence of any form of coalition could be advanced. First, although they were all passionate about literature and new forms of writing, they had very different writing styles. Amy Lowell was very interested in polyphonic prose and free verse, following on the footsteps of Paul Fort and the French symbolists. She was attracted by the new literary movements of the early twentieth century—imagism in particular. Gertrude Stein went one step further—rejecting such former literary rules as punctuation, rhyme, and linear writing—and embracing automatic stream of consciousness expression in both prose and poetry (perhaps as a result of her earlier experiences in psychology with William James). Ten years older than Amy Lowell and Gertrude Stein, Edith Wharton was an innovator following on her friend and mentor Henry James's literary footsteps, attempting to describe objectively the psychology of her characters and their era, whether in late nineteenth-century New York or early twentieth-century Paris. Stein and Lowell both appreciated Henry James's work and knew him as a fellow American living in Europe. Stein maintained that her own writing had not been influenced by Henry James, but she was well aware of his writing and appreciated it. Yet there is no evidence that their mutual admiration of James brought them closer together.

There are numerous other examples of common friends between the three women. When *The Great Gatsby* was first published, F. Scott Fitzgerald sent copies to Edith Wharton and Gertrude Stein as well as to T. S. Eliot, the literary icons of the time, all of whom praised the book.[39] Donald Evans, poet and publisher, appreciated both Stein and Lowell's writing. He was the original publisher of Stein's *Tender Buttons* and also exchanged poetry with Lowell.[40] Yet there is no evidence that he tried to convince the writers who had so much in common to meet. Wharton was a friend of another American expatriate novelist, Louis Bromfield, who was in turn a friend of Gertrude Stein. Despite their common interest in literature and gardening, there is no evidence that Bromfield introduced the two writers to each other.

André Gide became a friend of Wharton at the beginning of the war when they both worked for the Foyer Franco-Belge. They shared literary ideas and correspondence. Although Wharton appreciated Gide, Gertrude Stein was less enthusiastic about him: "Andre Gide turned up while we were at the Villa Curonia. It was a rather dull evening."[41] According to Lowell's biographer, S. Foster Damon, after a lecture she gave at the Harvard Poetry Society on 25 February 1916, E. E. Cummings, who had attended Gertrude Stein's Parisian circle, asked her what she thought of Stein. Lowell replied by asking him if he liked Stein's work. When he replied yes, she replied that she did not.[42] Jean Cocteau was a frequent guest at Stein's apartment and also a member of Wharton's social circle, yet there is no evidence that he tried to bring the two women together.

For Wharton, Stein's group belonged to the jazz era, and for her this was not a compliment. In 1928, she wrote a letter to Sinclair Lewis, who was already acquainted with Gertrude Stein and her circle of friends at the rue de Fleurus, advising him to avoid this new generation of writers:

> I hope your Americans in Europe . . . will really be in Europe and
> not in little continental Americas like the café du Dôme and kindred
> haunts. Do let them forget America for a while and become aware of
> Europe, for current fiction has had too many of the other kind lately,
> and it would be an exciting change to have young American [*sic*] in
> Paris become even faintly aware that he was not in Broadway.[43]

Differences in Social, Sexual, and Religious Orientations

The differences in their literary taste may explain the fact that they were not in contact, but there may also be a less palatable explanation based on their religious

and sexual affiliations. Edith Wharton was a member of the New York upper class, protestant, and heterosexual. Amy Lowell was also a member of upper-class protestant New England, but her sexual orientation, although never overtly acknowledged, was homosexual. Gertrude Stein was Jewish and overtly homo-sexual, a sexual orientation that may have made her unacceptable to Wharton as well as to Lowell. According to Hermione Lee, Wharton "wrote off" lesbians such as Gertrude Stein, Natalie Barney, and Elsie de Wolfe.[44] Francine Prose confirms Wharton's dislike of lesbians, relating that the novelist had many gay men as friends but that she strongly disapproved of lesbian relationships in Paris, Gertrude Stein being an example. Amy Lowell would not have fared better in Wharton's view.

Wharton was also, unfortunately, known for her anti-Semitism, which may have been another reason that she shunned Stein. Francine Prose refers to two ex-amples of Wharton's anti-Semitism. She is reported to have responded to a charity solicitation, "I'm not much interested in traveling scholarships for women . . . they'd much better stay home and mind the baby. Still less am I interested in scholarships for female Yids." She is also known to have remarked on her deathbed that she "hated the Jews because of the Crucifixion." Telling a friend about a newspaper crime story involving a certain Rachel Gobsweib, she writes, "Her name alone makes the nature of her offence sufficiently clear."[45] Although not as verbose as Wharton on the subject, Lowell is also known to have made anti-Semitic remarks. Carl Rollyson maintains that anti-Semitism was widespread and generally accepted among the modernists such as Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, and Ernest Hemingway. Lowell com-plained to Richard Aldington that "every worst Jew poet in the country is calling himself an Imagist."[46] Lowell also supported her brother's controversial position that the proportion of Jews admitted to Harvard University should be limited. In a letter dated 20 July 1922 to her Jewish friend Louis Untermeyer, she wrote,

> You must not confuse my brother's point of view with that of the extrem-
> ists. He likes the Jews himself personally, as I do, but he feels very strong-
> ly that there should not be segregations of Americans into various racial
> strains. He is much averse to keeping Jews out of college clubs and much
> averse to their forming Jew clubs on their own. He thinks they should
> all mix together and have no distinction, and I cannot think of anything
> that he would decry more than a Jewish college or anything which tends
> to increase segregation. I know that he thinks this because he told me so
> himself, but I would rather you did not quote him because I make a rule
> of never quoting anything he says to anybody.[47]

Carl Rollyson suggests that Lowell's objection to Gertrude Stein was not based on anti-Semitism, but rather on antilesbianism. He points out the importance of convention to Lowell.[48] She was an eccentric who respected certain rules. The fact that Amy Lowell never made any effort to meet Gertrude Stein may have been based on their different attitudes toward conventions. While Stein made no attempt to hide her sexual orientation and lived openly with Alice B. Toklas in Paris, Amy Lowell did not assume her lesbianism openly and referred to her lover, Ada Russell, only as her "companion." Edith Wharton's adherence to convention and tradition prevented her from accepting lesbianism or anything connected to it. Lee points out that Wharton's rejection of the Bloomsbury group might have been because she identified it with lesbianism—"one of the things she did not like."[49] Like Lowell, she did not flaunt her private life. Her unhappy marriage with Teddy Wharton and later love affair with Morton Fullerton were kept private.

Conclusion

Whether because of personal ambition and a keen sense of competitiveness or because of social, sexual, or religious prejudices, three very intelligent, creative American women writers did not develop any kind of exchange of ideas, despite living in close proximity as expatriates in World War I era Paris. Edith Wharton did not wish to frequent such cigar-smoking eccentrics as Stein and Lowell. Neither Stein's religion nor sexual orientation was accepted by Wharton's elite circle of friends, and Stein was far from giving in to such prejudices. Amy Lowell was a Boston Brahmin who shared Wharton's anti-Semitism but not her antilesbianism. They were all highly influential within their own spheres, but unfortunately, they belonged to parallel networks that, sadly, never overlapped.

Notes

1.   Edith Jones, *Verses* (Newport, R.I.: C. E. Hammett Jr., 1878).

2.   Edith Jones, Wants, *Atlantic Monthly* 45, no. 271 (May 1880): 599; Jones, A Failure, *Atlantic Monthly* 45, no. 270 (April 1880): 464–465; Jones, Patience, *Atlantic Monthly* 45, no. 270 (April 1880): 548–549; Jones, The Parting Day, *Atlantic Monthly* 45, no. 270 (April 1880): 548–549.

3.   Amy Lowell. *Dream Drops; or, Stories from Fairy Land* (Boston: Cupples & Hurd, 1887).

4.   Carl Rollyson, *Amy Lowell Anew: A Biography* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013), 105.

5.   Gertrude Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1933), 114–115.

6.   Stein, *Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, 173.

7.   Gertrude Stein, *The Geographical History of America; or, The Relation of Human Nature to the Human Mind* (New York: Random House, 1936), 76.

8.   Ellen Girardeau Kempler, The Dogs Who Haunt Edith Wharton's Home, *The Airship* (blog), http://airshipdaily.com/blog/10272014-edith-whartonghost-dog (accessed 28 February 2018).

9.   Gertrude Stein, *Tender Buttons* (New York: Claire Marie, 1914), 35.

10.   S. Foster Damon, *Amy Lowell: A Chronicle* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1935), 265.

11.   Sarah Parker, Amy Lowell's Appetites: Food, Consumption and Homoerotic Desire in Amy Lowell's Poetry, in *Fat Sex: New Directions in Theory and Activism*, ed. Helen Hester and Caroline Walters (London: Routledge, 2016), 162.

12.   Edith Wharton, *Hudson River Bracketed* (New York: D. Appleton, 1929); Wharton, *The Gods Arrive* (New York: D. Appleton, 1932).

13.   Cecilia Macheski, In the Lands of Garlic and Queer Bearded Sea-Things: Appetites and AlluN`sions in the Fiction of Edith Wharton, in *Cooking by the Book: Food in Literature and Culture*, ed. Mary Anne Schofield (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1989).

14.   Louis Auchincloss, *Edith Wharton: A Woman in Her Time* (New York: Viking, 1971), 39.

15.   Auchincloss, *Edith Wharton*, 40.

16.   Hermione Lee, *Edith Wharton* (New York: Vintage Books, 2007), 685.

17.   Edith Wharton, *The Decoration of Houses* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1897).

18.   Edith Wharton, *Italian Villas and Their Gardens* (New York: Century, 1905), 6–7.

19.   Gertrude Stein, *Wars I Have Seen* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1945), 25.

20.   Neil Schmitz, The Difference of Her Likeness: Gertrude Stein's *Stanzas in Meditation*, in *Gertrude Stein and the Making of Literature*, ed. Shirley Neuman and Ira B. Nadel (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988), 143.

21.   Amy Lowell, The Garden by Moonlight, in *Pictures of the Floating World* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1919), 54–55; Lowell, In a Garden, in *Sword Blades and Poppy Seeds* (New York: Macmillan, 1914), 244–245; Lowell, The Little Garden, in *A Dome of Many-Coloured Glass* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1912), 87; Lowell, Madonna of the Evening Flowers, in *Pictures of the Floating World*, 45–46; Lowell, A Roxbury Garden, in *Men, Women and Ghosts* (New York: Macmillan, 1916), 122–144.

22.   Amy Lowell, Patterns, in *The Little Review*, ed. Margaret C. Anderson (Chicago: Margaret C. Anderson, 1915), 6–8.

23.   Damon, *Amy Lowell*, 226.

24.   Amy Lowell, The Allies, in *Men, Women and Ghosts*, 225–227.

25.   Lowell, *Men, Women and Ghosts*; Lowell, *Tendencies in Modern Poetry* (New York: Macmillan, 1917); Lowell, *Some Imagist Poets: An Anthology* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1915); Lowell, *Some Imagist Poets: An Annual Anthology* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1916); Lowell, *Some Imagist Poets: An Annual Anthology* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1917); Lowell, *Can Grande's Castle* (New York: Macmillan, 1918).

26.   Edith Wharton, *A Motor-Flight through France* (London: Macmillan, 1908).

27.   Edith Wharton, *Fighting France, from Dunkerque to Belfort* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915); Wharton, *French Ways and Their Meanings* (London: Macmillan, 1919).

28.   Edith Wharton, *The Marne* (New York: D. Appleton, 1918); Wharton, *A Son at the Front* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923).

29.   Edith Wharton, The Great Blue Tent, *New York Times*, 25 August 1915, 10; Wharton, The Hymn of the Lusitania, *New York Herald*, 7 May 1915, 1; Wharton, With the Tide, *Saturday Evening Post*, 29 March 1919, 8.

30.   Hermione Lee, *Edith Wharton* (New York: Vintage Books, 2007), 464.

31.   Gertrude Stein, *Three Lives: Stories of the Good Anna, Melanctha, and the Gentle Lena* (New York: John Lane, 1915).

32.   Stein, *Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, 187.

33.   Stein, *Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, 201.

34.   Gertrude Stein, The Work, *American Fund for the French Wounded Bulletin*, 1919, reprinted in *Bee Time Vine and Other Pieces, 1913–1927* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1953), 189–194.

35.   Edith Wharton, *A Backward Glance* (New York: Appleton-Century, 1934); Stein, *Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*.

36.   Noel Sloboda, *The Making of Americans in Paris: The Autobiographies of Edith Wharton and Gertrude Stein* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008), 10.

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7

WAYWARD GIRLS AND WONDER WOMEN

Utopian Dreams and Dystopian Nightmares

Elizabeth Russell

Abstract. This chapter is based on the utopian dreams and dystopian nightmares that many women in the nineteenth century in Britain imagined, wrote, published—or even tried to put into practice. Utopia and its opposite, dystopia, begin when the author asks, What if? All visions of other worlds start off with an analysis of the present: How can our world become a much better place, and also how might our world become worse? Utopia is not utopian for everyone: The good place and a so-called perfect society are complicated issues when it comes to democracy and free will. In this respect, most utopian visions written by men in the nineteenth century leave their women readers in a state of despair, for their role in the fictional society does not differ much from that of the patriarchal reality. This reaction does not mean that there were no women's utopian visions to inspire the women readers. There were! I could often only find a single, printed copy in the British Library in London when I did my research for my Ph.D. in the 1980s. Classified as "rare books," they were not photocopiable. Today, many of these works have been republished, are widely available, and have helped readers to enter a consciousness-raising process in which their own ideologies are challenged. Utopia is no longer defined as a perfect place but as a better place; utopia is no longer one place, but many places. The title of this chapter refers to those nineteenth century *wayward* and *wonder* women writers who challenged the current ideologies of their time and offered alternative visions of utopia, some of which were controversial, dangerous, or simply outrageous. Rather than offering

a list of names and utopias and dystopias, I will try and map out some of the main issues that became stumbling blocks for women in the nineteenth century in their struggle for independence. Some of these issues had a marked influence on the inclusion and exclusion from all society or part of that society.

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Wayward Girls and Wonder Women: Mary Wollstonecraft

Sara Ahmed argues that emotions are said to move in two directions, "inside out" and "outside in." In her "model of sociality of emotions," however, she explains that emotions are not something that we have, or own, but that we use. Emotions can produce and create identities, surfaces, objects, boundaries, and bodies. Emotions are not contagious, she insists, in the sense that sadness and happiness will affect individuals in the same way. Emotions move, and as they move from objects, surfaces, and boundaries, they "become sticky."[1] This stickiness becomes articulated in language, in words that cling or stick together. For example, dystopia, which is a "bad" place, produces emotions through words that stick together like fear, horror, terrorism, censorship, persecution, violence. These sticky words produce the emotions that conjure up dystopia. Thus, women who write dystopias might look upon their world in terms of sticky negativities, whereas women who write utopias might see the world and the future in a better light.

The word *wayward* in the title is partly in homage to Angela Carter's *Wayward Girls and Wicked Women* but also because waywardness means deciding for oneself and mapping a route that is not designed by societal norms.[2] Wonder women, on the other hand, outdo themselves; they become superheroines. It is true that the nineteenth century is exceptional for the ways in which the status quo was challenged and changed through self-willed thoughts and actions. Mary Wollstonecraft was an important trailblazer for the nineteenth century, although she died in 1797, three years before its beginning. She died at the age of 38, ten days after giving birth to her second daughter. Her death created such a loss in the lives of her husband, William Godwin, and her two daughters that, had she lived longer, her life and work might have been acknowledged in a more generous manner in the nineteenth century.

Wollstonecraft had once written to her sister that she "was not born to tread the beaten track."[3] Ruled by her political beliefs and by her passions, her

life and her writing were *utopian* in the best sense of the word. She aimed high, first to challenge Edmund Burke's scathing critique of the revolutionary events in France by writing her *Vindication of the Rights of Men* (1790).[4] Then she attempted to influence the writing of the new constitution in France when she dedicated her following book, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), to Monsieur de Talleyrand, responsible for the constitution of the new republic in France.[5]

Her interest in politics began at an early age, and indeed, there are many excellent biographies of Wollstonecraft in print that detail the different aspects of her life.[6] One of the episodes to illustrate how passionate Wollstonecraft was involves the Swiss painter Henry Fuseli, who arrived and settled in England in 1779. He painted the very famous *Nightmare* in 1782, which reveals the terrifying world of the human psyche. Because both Wollstonecraft and Fuseli moved socially in the same group of intellects and revolutionaries, they met and became close friends. Fuseli painted her portrait, and although they became close intellectually, the relationship appears to have been entirely platonic. When Wollstonecraft suggested that she, Fuseli, and his wife might all three live together, Fuseli felt obliged to end the relationship quickly. Fuseli, Wollstonecraft, and her editor, Joseph Johnson, had talked about going to Paris to witness the revolution firsthand, but eventually, she left Britain and arrived in Paris alone. Fuseli later said, "I hate clever women. They are only troublesome."[7] Troublesome, indeed, for the *status quo*.

Wollstonecraft is often claimed to be the mother of feminism and her husband, William Godwin, the father of anarchism, so how might history have changed if she had lived on in the nineteenth century? After her death, Godwin wrote her life story in homage to her, but unfortunately, the public was horrified by all the details he included about her intensely passionate and personal relationships, thereby causing a scandal in British society.[8] The result was that her political and educational texts became considered dangerous reading for daughters, sisters, and wives. Horace Walpole denounced Wollstonecraft as "a hyena in petticoats" and warned his fellow citizens:

> For Mary verily would wear the breeches—
> God help poor silly men from such usurping b——s.[9]

Mary died in 1797 but gave life to her second daughter, Mary, who bore one of the most famous names in the literature of England: Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin Shelley.

William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft both believed in progress through education and in the possibility of a future perfect society if the social conditions were favorable. Their utopianism was challenged by Thomas Malthus, who foresaw that if the population grew, then food resources would diminish, and the results would cause disease, war, vice, and violence.[10] Malthus's *Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798) brought about a debate between the two men, which developed through an exchange of letters.[11] In short, Malthus and Godwin had different opinions about population growth. Whereas Malthus was in favor of controlling the birth rate, Godwin was not; he believed that reason and moral restraint would rule over sexual desire. Moreover, Godwin was very much against marriage as an institution, although his relationship with Wollstonecraft changed his views when they fell in love.

Population growth became a political issue when, in 1801, Britain carried out its first official census. Five decades later, the 1850 census revealed that women outnumbered men by 400,000. Most of these women were unmarried, and the situation provoked a general social panic on what became known as "the surplus woman problem." Although the debates on the subject were complex and, indeed, were mostly carried out by men, they ironically seemed to help the cause of women's suffrage, women's access to higher education, and women's rights.[12] The Factory Acts in 1850 limited the number of working hours of women and children. In addition, very gradually, other laws came into force: The Matrimonial Causes Act required that divorce, which formerly had gone through the church, become in 1857 a matter for the civil courts. Divorce was still a very remote possibility for women, however. The question remains as to why a population with more women than men was considered to be a problem and what was done to solve this perceived problem.

Apart from the uneven sex ratio, the arrival of the nineteenth century brought about a change in the weather—metaphorically speaking, that is. This change, according to Virginia Woolf's novel *Orlando*, signaled the social changes that were about to occur. The great dark cloud that hung over the whole of Britain was blown away by strong winds, and the sun came out. Thus begins chapter 5 of *Orlando* (1928). There was "damp" everywhere, Woolf writes, which crept into every household and into every person's mind and body. The life of the average woman "was a succession of childbirths. She married at nineteen and had fifteen or eighteen children by the time she was thirty; for twins abounded."[13] And it was not only the population within Britain that grew; the British overseas territories expanded at the same rate,

and this, according to Woolf, had an influence on the language of bureaucracy: in this way, the British Empire came into existence; and thus—for there is no stopping damp; it gets into the inkpot as it gets into the woodwork—sentences swelled, adjectives multiplied, lyrics became epics, and little trifles that had been essays a column long were now encyclopedias in 10 or 20 volumes.[14]

The English language spread overseas to the colonies and became the administrative and legal framework imposed upon, or extended to, the colonized peoples. The change in the weather also influenced Orlando's emotions, most especially as regards the gendered self. In the nineteenth century, Orlando is a man who feels he is a woman. As s/he moves between sexes, clothes, personalities, fact, and fiction, the gender politics of the nineteenth century unfold to reveal to Orlando that if s/he wishes to be accepted into Victorian society, s/he must marry and have a child. Orlando is a writer, poet, dreamer, philosopher, and utopian. How can a manly woman or womanly man coexist in a nation with polarized gender identities? Manly men and womanly women. Women, ladies, and females. Masters and mistresses. The intersex, the androgynous were considered abject by government institutions and difficult to control. These various gendered roles were fully explored in the utopian dreams and dystopian nightmares written in English and, if fortunate, published!

Wayward Girls and Wonder Women: Mary Shelley

Mary Wollstonecraft's daughter, Mary Shelley, is famous for having written *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus* (1818) 200 years ago, but her dystopian novel, *The Last Man* (1826), is not so well known. The tale is narrated by a man, Lionel Verney, who is the last survivor on earth after every single human being has died from the plague.[15] The year is 2073, and England has become a republic. The last king has abdicated "in compliance with the gentle forces of his subjects,"[16] but Parliament is still ruled only by men who belong to three different factions: the aristocrats, the democrats, and the royalists, each desiring to reinstate power in accordance with their politics. Disaster strikes in the form of the plague, and the arrogance of the belief "though the individual is destroyed, man continues for ever"[17] is shaken to its foundations. The "PLAGUE" is capitalized when it is first named in Shelley's novel,[18] and its gender moves from *it* to *she*.

Originating in Constantinople, *she*—the "Queen of the World"[19]—is the great leveler of patriarchal structures, and as her shadow descends on all the countries of the world, cities, towns, and villages become empty shells. Dead and decaying bodies pollute the water and foul the air. In this chaos, Mary Shelley allows the

Irish a degree of revenge on their English oppressors. The Irish invade England, plundering and killing as they travel toward London. They come face to face with the Parliamentary army and are ready to fight to the end when Raymond, the lord protector of England, rides between the opposing forces and urges them to throw down their weapons and embrace each other. His words move the men emotionally, and they willingly declare a truce. Raymond then proposes a new utopian society in England. The main objective is to join forces against the plague, make plans to abolish poverty, and set up a project for the construction of a new city. One of Raymond's pet schemes is to build a public national art gallery; at this point in the novel, a young Greek woman called Evadne (who disguises herself as a man) sends him her sketches, which were the production of the "deepest and most *unutterable* emotions of her soul."[20] Evadne creates not from inspiration, but from emotions that could not be uttered in language but could be sketched on paper.

The fact that Mary Shelley includes a woman architect in her dystopia is astonishing, considering that women were not accepted in universities in Britain until the mid-nineteenth century.[21] Evadne crosses many boundaries and frontiers; she cross-dresses as a man in order to have her work as an architect recognized and eventually to fight on the battlefields against the Turks who have invaded her homeland, Greece. Evadne is in love with Raymond, but he deserts her and, like her, dies on the battlefields.

The plague is implacable, and its powers extend to all corners of the earth, following the very paths of the empire. Before death comes to the people, however, small glimpses of a utopia appear because class, race, and gender discriminations disappear in a world with no future. Social institutions are leveled to the ground, education, politics, health, and religions. Lionel Verney is the only man left alive in the novel, and he wanders alone in the wide world, eventually deciding to write his story for posterity—but for whom to read? The novel ends with the words "THE END" in capital letters, assuming that the end can come only once. If the Bible claims that in the beginning was the word, Mary Shelley's futuristic novel foresees the end of history, the end of humanity and, with it, the end of language. No words, only silence, the unutterable language of the apocalypse.

One disparaging review of *The Last Man*, published in 1835 in *The Literary Gazette*, asks, "Why not *the last woman*? She would have known better how to paint her distress at having nobody left to talk to."[22] Mary Shelley's dystopian view of a world at its end mirrored her own life story, one that is so well known that it hardly needs repeating here. The deaths of her mother, her children except one, the suicides of her sister Fanny and Percy Shelley's first wife, Harriet, and then the death by drowning of her husband, Percy Shelley himself: all these

deaths left her alone in a wide, wide world. In her journal, Mary Shelley wrote, "The last man! Yes I may well describe that solitary being's feelings, feeling myself as the last relic of a beloved race, my companions extinct before me."[23] The main protagonists in the novel are mostly portraits of those she had known in happier days: Raymond was Lord Byron, and Lionel Verney embodied traits of both herself and Shelley. She was a woman writer surrounded by very famous men of British Romanticism, a movement that, historically speaking, is considered to be a "masculine phenomenon."[24] Its masculinity was defined according to the precepts of masculine empowerment, supported and inspired by female muses, "mother nature," or the angelic women who saw their men as poetic geniuses. Although both Dorothy Richardson and Mary Shelley seemed to fit into these categories, feminist readings and interpretations of their work have permitted very different criteria to be established. Take, for instance, the following quotes on the process of creative inspiration as detailed in *The Last Man*:

> She sought to improve her understanding; mechanically her heart and dispositions became soft and gentle under this benign discipline. After awhile she discovered, that amidst all her newly acquired knowledge, her own character, which formerly she fancied that she thoroughly understood, became the first in rank among the terrae incognitae, the pathless wilds of a country that had no chart. Erringly and strangely she began the task of self-examination with self-condemnation. And then again she became aware of her own excellencies, and began to balance with juster scales the shades of good and evil.[25]

In another passage from the same novel, the "masculine" process of inspiration and gendering depicts the same creative objectives but from the male perspective. Note that the passage above describes a downward direction into the depths of self, a descent into a nowhere land, uncharted and unknown. The recognition of "her" excellence is possible only by first effacing and abnegating her self. The passage below is quite different. It describes a male process of creativity, rising and overreaching through self-assertion, confident that "he" possesses a gift for all "mankind":

> As my authorship increased, I acquired new sympathies and pleasures. . . . Suddenly I became as it were the father of all mankind. Posterity became my heirs. My thoughts were gems to enrich the treasure house of man's intellectual possessions; each sentiment was a precious gift I bestowed on them.[26]

Mary Shelley's description of the male poet reflects the Freudian theories represented in Harold Bloom's *The Anxiety of Influence*, within the context of Romantic literature, most especially poetry. Bloom envisaged the young poet anxiously struggling to achieve a place for himself in the literary heritage of strong poets, similar to the son struggling under, and attempting to overcome, the influence of the father whose genius had won him a place in the literary canon. In order to become a genius in his own right, the son has to seduce the Muse (the male source of inspiration) away from the father, or rather from the father poets whose genius has rewarded them with an honored place in the patriarchal heritage. Bloom writes of the son, "His word is not his own word only, and his Muse has whored with many before him."[27] The quote is of interest at this point not only because of the inherent sexism in Bloom's male-oriented theory, which Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar challenged in their *Madwoman in the Attic*,[28] but it also points to a "world of words" created by men who listen to men, write for men, and read men.

Perhaps it is in this context that *Frankenstein* can be read today. His dream reveals the following: "A new species would bless me as its creator and source; many happy and excellent natures would owe their being to me. No father could claim the gratitude of his child so completely as I should deserve theirs."[29] Apart from creating life from death, he would be the father of a race of men, and he alone would have the power to pro/create. It then becomes clearer why he tore apart his second creature with such violence: she, the new Eve, would take over his pro/creative powers. Kenneth Branagh's film version, *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* (1994), offers a similar reading. In the film, after the Creature kills Elizabeth on their wedding night, Dr. Frankenstein reanimates her, but her beauty has gone. Her face is disfigured and mirrors the Creature's own face. In the novel, the Creature had asked Frankenstein to create a mate for him as "hideous" as himself;[30] Branagh's recreated Elizabeth is claimed by both Frankenstein (her creator) and the Creature (who desires her as a partner). Instead of choosing either of the men or becoming the wife of one or partner of the other, she chooses herself and sets herself alight, rather than continue in a patriarchal partnership. If read in this manner, *Frankenstein* and *The Last Man* illustrate Mary Shelley's imagined utopia to be in the unwritten pages coming after the end of the world.

The man-made world constructed and formulated an intellectual and scientific discourse that objectified and categorized women as dolls, angels, witches, bitches, puppets, prostitutes, a long list that defined them according to the patriarchal experiences of "reading" women as texts. Feminine virtue or female vice. Friedrich Nietzsche's opinion was that truth and reality are nothing more than fictions because they are both created from desire and then externalized or ex-

pressed in language. Therefore, woman also is a fiction and a projection of male desire. "Supposing truth to be a woman—what?" he asks in his 1885 preface to *Beyond Good and Evil*.[31] If language is understood as a masculine construct, it then follows that woman is likewise a male fantasy. It is in their utopias and dystopias that nineteenth-century women challenged such theories and claimed an island of their own, an imaginary utopia located nowhere and rooted in the dystopian worlds of their "here and now." It is important, at this point, to remember that one person's utopia may be another person's dystopia. It all depends on who writes for whom and how it is read.

American Intentional Utopias: Nashoba

Throughout the nineteenth century, women in Europe and America organized themselves into various political movements, at all social levels. The oceans between the continents witnessed a coming and going of women who decided to leave Europe and participate in the founding of the numerous intentional communities, especially those situated in the Americas. Land was bought, or appropriated, by many of the volunteers who were seeking adventure, escaping from financial difficulties, or wished to put their utopian ideals into practice. One of the most notable was Nashoba, an experimental community in Tennessee, founded by the Scottish radical feminist and abolitionist Frances Wright (1795–1852).[32] Through buying enslaved people and then freeing them to be citizens in her new community, she was confident they would have the opportunity to become self-supporting. Wright had already visited Robert Owen's New Harmony community in Indiana in 1824; she was a close friend of Jeremy Bentham and, through him, of General Lafayette, the French hero of the American Revolution. Her campaign for women's rights, which included her demand for women's access to birth control, sexual liberation, the abolition of slavery and marriage, and women's property rights, earned her the name of "the Great Red Harlot."

Indeed, women's pleasure in sexuality was considered an absolute taboo that, if freely expressed, could enable the state to deny women all their other civil rights. The reasons for this control of women's sexuality had been voiced years before by the Scottish Enlightenment philosopher David Hume, who understood that in the British system of primogeniture, female chastity was the foundation of patrilineal inheritance and stability.[33] It was impossible for a man to prove his wife's child to be his own unless his wife was chaste. If she committed adultery, any child she might bear out of wedlock would be illegitimate and would have no claims to the family name or property of the husband. Thus it was that Frances

Wright's views on sexual freedom meant that rather than being acclaimed for her work in civil rights, her liberal ideas on the unfair laws of legitimacy were unfairly discriminated against.

Nashoba as a utopian community failed not only because the land it was built upon was swampy and difficult to farm but also because of the problems arising among the citizens of the colony. Wright had invested money and energy into her dream, and during a visit back to Europe, she contacted Mary Shelley: "If you possess the opinions of your father and the generous feelings of your mother, I feel that I could travel far to see you." And she did.[34] She spent a week with Mary in 1827 but could not convince her to join or donate to her venture. Back in America, she eventually took on a role as writer and lecturer, touring the country and introducing ideas that to some were utopian and courageous but to others were scandalous and outrageous. Her views on a future society where mixed races could marry and live in harmony was the last straw, and from 1833 to 1836, although her lectures were still attended by thousands, they often ended in riots. Wright's name became linked to all that was immoral and threatening to antebellum American society, which was fast becoming immersed in a moral crusade that gave rise to "The Cult of True Womanhood."[35]

Feminine Virtue

A similar crusade of feminine virtue was being promoted in Britain through the publication of Coventry Patmore's long poem *Angel in the House*, where both ideals represented virtue, submission, purity, and patience.[36] Patmore's poem sold 250,000 copies and was further celebrated by John Ruskin in "Of Queen's Gardens."[37] Many years later, the Angel's influence was still very powerful when Virginia Woolf wrote at her desk. She describes how she had to kill the phantom of the Angel who stood behind her, looking over her shoulder and criticizing her every turn of phrase. The Angel spoke to her as she wrote: "Never let anybody guess that you have a mind of your own."[38] Ruskin made the Angel his own. She is the ideal woman who creates a utopian home wherever she goes. Even if she is outside at night, with the stars shining above her head, she radiates peace and order. Ruskin does lead women out of the home and into the context of state politics. However, rather than making them spokeswomen, he accuses them of being guilty of all the wars that are fought: "There is not a war in the world, no, nor an injustice, but you women are answerable for it; not in that you have provoked, but in that you have not hindered."[39] Men, Ruskin admits, are prone to fight; women's responsibility is to stop them from doing so. The asexual or sexless Angel became

the appointed missionary of the British Empire, as an ideal to prevent women from falling into the trap of the devious New Woman, who was considered a gender traitor who would bring degeneration to the race.

Similar to Ruskin's ideal of true womanhood, in France also, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon's *La pornocratie* warned men against such women who had betrayed their true nature; he then extrapolated this idea to national politics.[40] Bram Dijkstra encapsulated Proudhon's thesis so: "A nation, after having risen with virile energy, can become effeminate and even collapse."[41] The two gender extremes stood their ground: The sexually virile fatherland to its other, the pure and chaste m/otherland. The defamiliarization process in various role-reversal utopias where women rule over men rather than having equal rights with men is illustrated in Anne Denton Cridge's short satirical story "Man's Rights; or, How Would You Like It?" (1870).[42] On the basis of a visit to Mars, in five dreams, it is women who are the wage earners while men are responsible for the housework. The men are "unsexed"; they keep up with the fashion, have no access to education or the professions, and have to rely on their wives giving them part of their wages. In one of the lectures to promote men's rights, a woman speaker points out,

> Look at his angular, long form; look at his hairy face. Is he not in his outward structure and appearance more allied to the lower animals? Look at him, and do you not at once think of the monkey? [Hear, hear!] Now turn to woman. Look at her! Does not Nature delight in curves as in lines of beauty?[43]

An added point of interest is when the lecturer explains to the audience that women have a better command of language and that Nature intends them to be orators. The men are confined to their domestic duties in the home, a sphere that is "the quiet, the silent, the unobtrusive; [it] is one of the silent influences, not public and demonstrative like that of woman."[44] If men could only imagine living in a society totally controlled by women, then surely they would help to promote women's suffrage. If men's bodies were compared to those of primates, surely they would reconsider the discriminating theories that existed in the belief of the Great Chain of Being and also in the racial categories of human beings that promoted the convictions of male superiority and female backwardness. This Great Chain of Being was first assumed to be "natural" and God-given, establishing a hierarchy of God at the top and the various animals, fish, and insects at the bottom. Later, it was changed through the theories of Darwinian evolution, meaning that the categories were no longer fixed but changed through evolution in the survival of the fittest. It is true that much of the art and literature of the nineteenth century can

be read in the light of Victorian jingoism, which promoted British imperialism over peoples of colonized races through racist songs and poems. However, in the utopian fiction of many women there was an equal interest in the promotion of a politically ambivalent cultural production that challenged these disturbing views.

Fictional Utopias: Catherine Spence's Handfasted

One of the most interesting utopias of a woman who left for the colonies is *Handfasted* by Catherine Helen Spence (1825–1910). Spence was born in Melrose, Scotland, but emigrated to Australia with her family in 1839. "Eager to develop a perfect society" in the land of her adoption, she soon began to write political articles and fiction for journals.[45] In 1859 she read John Stuart Mill's advocacy of Thomas Hare's system of proportional representation, or, as she called it, effective voting. Her autobiography lists the various lectures she gave in her travels (more than 100 in the United States) and describes her meeting with George Eliot (whose real name was Mary Ann Evans) in 1865. The interview was not a success, but Spence's disappointment was appeased many years later by a letter from the English writer, apologizing for the "blundering and infelicitous" reception she had given Spence and thanking her also for praising Eliot in a review of her work.[46] Helen Spence became the first woman to be appointed to the Board of Advice with the Australian Education Department. Moreover, at age 67, she was the first woman candidate in Australia to run in the elections.

In 1878 the *Sydney Mail* of Australia organized a literary competition, which Spence entered with a manuscript titled *Handfasted*, a term that in Scotland was accepted as a probationary marriage of one year and one day, after which the couple could either remain together or separate. The contract was closed on the couple joining hands and then living together. This custom was practiced in Scotland in the past, from the twelfth to the seventeenth century, and in other European countries, but the judge of the Australian competition considered that her novel was "calculated to loosen the marriage tie—it was too Socialistic, and consequently dangerous."[47] The novel was given to the State Library of South Australia in 1922 and remained there, ignored, until rescued and edited by Helen Thomson. It was published by Penguin in 1984.[48]

Spence's novel *Handfasted* describes Columba, a fictional utopian community, where movement is free, so long as it is within the settlement. The two dissidents in the community are Liliard, who wishes to leave in search of experience and knowledge, and Ninian, who is of "Indian"/Scottish descent and desires material wealth (he is eventually expelled from the settlement as a thief). Columba's

politics are based on applying what is good for the community rather than for the individual. The government censures literature, and it is only the privileged few who are taught to read and write. Others in the community are taught a system of knotting in their crochet work, which permits them to record incidents and remember stories. Liliard becomes an expert in these skills, and she crochets knots into the garments she makes for her handfasted partner: knots that convey her dreams and longings for the "Otherworld."

The strict Calvinism of Spence's childhood in Scotland is replaced by her new religion, Unitarianism, which is incorporated into the utopia. The handfasting marriage, which lasts for a year and a day, allows either partner to be "courted" during that time but prohibits the courting to be done secretly. Partners who are still undecided at the end of their term are permitted to repeat the handfasting ceremony up to three times. Not everyone in Columba is "naturally constant,"[49] and thus, it is possible to find citizens who have experienced more than one ceremony. The main advantage of this contract in the utopia is that there is no prostitution; if a child is born within the handfasting period, the child becomes the mother's responsibility for the first year, and then the partner who did not break the contract can claim the child legally. Orphans and unwanted children become what Spence calls "God's Bairns," and they are the privileged ones to learn reading and writing skills in preparation for government posts such as teachers, doctors, and ministers. What Spence does not do is eliminate the gender boundaries between the conventional public and private areas of government and home. The novel's emphasis is more on the societal norms but not on the lifestyles, that is, the gendered responsibilities of housework. The revolutionary aspect of her utopian community is the marriage contract itself, and indeed, the cost of a marriage contract in Britain was high and not an option for those who were at the very bottom of the social scale.

Fictional Utopias: Elizabeth T. Corbett's "My Visit to Utopia"

Elizabeth T. Corbett's "My Visit to Utopia," first published in 1869, is a brief critique of the True Woman, made clear through another role-reversal society, where the main protagonist is a "'model husband."[50] If he becomes a "grumbler," his wife can plead for divorce or have him sent to the House of Correction for Bachelors to be cured. Corbett is referring here to the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which in 1865 abolished slavery, and to the Fourteenth Amendment, which guaranteed "individual" rights but did not include women's rights (irrespective of her race) within marriage. "The Declaration of Sentiments," signed in 1848 by 100 women at the first U.S. woman's rights convention in

Seneca Falls, New York, continued to be ignored. Human rights issues that were promoted between Europe and its colonies and ex-colonies around the world encountered many problems, but women's utopian writing and essays on women's rights crossed all boundaries. Ideas were exchanged, and in many cases, men supported them also. For example, in Britain, Harriet Taylor's essay in the *Westminster Review*, "The Enfranchisement of Women" (1851), which demanded more legal and political power for women, was published under John Stuart Mill's name.[51] The essay later influenced his own work, *The Subjection of Women*.[52] Harriet Taylor was married but had a relationship with Mill that lasted more than 20 years. On the death of Taylor's husband, she and Mill married, and together they wrote *On Liberty,* published under Mill's name one year after Harriet's death.[53] As a Liberal member of the British Parliament, Mill spoke in support of women's suffrage. In 1866 he acted on behalf of two women's rights activists (Elizabeth Garrett Anderson and Emily Davies) and presented a mass petition signed by 100 people in favor of women's suffrage. Although the outcome was negative, the suffrage movement grew in power and activity.

Fictional Utopias and the Mistress Morality

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, Friedrich Nietzsche's ideas on the "Übermensch," a concept that was translated into English as the "Overman" or the "Superman," crossed over to Britain and inspired some women writers to invent a female figure with similar powers: the power to recognize weakness and to overcome it. Nietzsche's oft-quoted phrase from *Ecce Homo*—"Hear me! For I am such and such a person. Above all, do not mistake me for someone else"—is as confusing and contradictory as his views on women. If he declares himself to be "such and such a person," how is this to be understood with the second half of the sentence? Opinions on Nietzsche's opinions vary. Is his writing misogynist? Or is it open to feminist interpretations, which many women philosophers found positive in the twentieth century, especially the French feminist philosophers, such as Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva, and Hélène Cixous. Nietzsche's philosophy arrived in nineteenth-century Britain through catch phrases that stuck together, such as God is dead, the Slave Race and the Master Race, the Will to Power, and the Overman. Although he never visited Britain, he apparently read some British and American authors and was—to some extent—influenced by his mother and sister's reading of women and feminism.[54] Indeed, catch phrases can become dangerous when taken out of context, and this was the case of Nietzsche, whose ideas were appropriated by various ideologies, feminism, anarchism, Nazism, each

of them using his philosophical thought for their own cause. Nietzsche's work is full of contradictions, and if a list of quotes on women were to be taken out of his writing, he could easily be classified as a misogynist. It was the French feminists, such as Luce Irigaray, who read him and saw that his writing on women could be taken as positive.[55] Her work *Marine Lover of Friedrich Nietzsche* (published in France in 1980) agrees with Nietzsche that woman does not exist in the Symbolic Order—the patriarchal order of society that discriminates women. On the basis of Lacanian philosophy, Irigaray's writing is difficult to follow as it is poetic and based on metaphors related to the sea. The sea, which is constantly changing and cannot be controlled, is a no-man's land. Water and all that flows are related to the feminine, Irigaray writes. The same ideas became expressed in "l'écriture féminine," as Hélène Cixous's essay "The Laugh of the Medusa" (1976) suggests, where writing became gendered feminine because it refused to become controlled in its syntax and vocabulary.[56]

If all of reality and truth are fictions, as Nietzsche posits, and can be expressed only in language, it is language alone that defines reality and truth. Beyond language, there is nothing. Woman cannot exist as "such and such." She is defined as a reflection of male desire. In a similar fashion, the psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud also defined woman's sexuality as an unknown territory, as a "dark continent" for psychology.[57]

In *The Question of Lay Analysis*, Freud wrote, "We know less about the sexual life of little girls than of boys. But we need not feel ashamed of this distinction; after all, the sexual life of adult women is a 'dark continent' for psychology."[58] Nietzsche's works propounded a Master Morality whose "will to power" displaced reason and proclaimed the advent of the Overman or Superman (a translation from the German, *der Übermensch*). The will to power was similar to the Darwinian "struggle for survival," with which Nietzsche was acquainted. But who was the Overman? He was a man who was self-assertive, a leader who could look into the abyss, recognize his failings, and overcome them. He belonged to (but went beyond) the Master Race. Britain welcomed Nietzsche's theories because of the nation's fascination with power and imperial achievements. Images of beautiful, blue-eyed, blond, godlike males emerged in art and flourished in a society in search of evolutionary transcendence. Simultaneously, the rise of the women's movement inspired hatred in many men and fear in others. The "Angel in the House" was juxtaposed to the archetypal "femme fatale," the dangerous woman who seduces men and makes them her victims. Nietzsche made it clear that the following beings could not aspire to the Master Morality because they side with the decadent forces:

Freedom means that the manly instincts which delight in war and victory dominate over other instincts, for example, over those of "pleasure." The human being who has become free—and how much more the spirit who has become free—spits on the contemptible type of well-being dreamed of by shopkeepers, Christians, cows, females, Englishmen, and other democrats. The free man is a warrior.[59]

Nietzsche's and Darwin's ideas spread like wildfire throughout Europe. As mentioned above, Britain was especially anxious at the rising population evidenced in the 1851 census that showed that there were approximately 400,000 more women than men and that 42% of women between the ages of 20 and 40 were unmarried and therefore defined as "surplus," according to the press.[60] The government looked into ways of dealing with the "surplus of women," which became a major concern, and theory after theory was consulted, especially those propounded by the eugenics movement. Sir Francis Galton (Darwin's half cousin) proposed an enforcement of "judicious marriages during consecutive generations," especially among the poor.[61] Karl Pearson, statistician and eugenicist, felt that if Britain was to maintain its status as a superpower, it was necessary for the "higher races" to supplant the "lower races" if civilization was to progress. An added problem was the spreading of syphilis, which was infecting not only the men in the army and navy (the backbone of the Empire) but also their families and friends. The three Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864 permitted the police to arrest suspected prostitutes and force them into having a physical examination and medical treatment. Again, the women were the source of the problem rather than the men. Women joined forces either for or against these measures, recognizing their sisters either as fallen women who should be spurned or as victims of social injustice.

Fictional Utopias: Elizabeth Burgoyne Corbett's New Amazonia: A Foretaste of the Future

Elizabeth Burgoyne Corbett's *New Amazonia: A Foretaste of the Future* (1889)[62] was published under her married name, Mrs. George Corbett.[63] Her introduction begins by distinguishing three types of females: ladies, women, and slaves, all of them members of British civilization, which is "Corrupt, Degraded, Rotten to the core," and she offers herself to reverse the situation. She enforces uniformity on the inhabitants of her utopian community. Her pen is ruthless and dictatorial, emphasizing words such as "military," "discipline," "supervision," "physical weakness," "elimination," "punishment," "violence," "prohibition," "censorship," "compulsory," and "self-extinction."[64] These sticky words are found in abundance

in her dystopian utopia that, ironically, is based on state socialism and is governed by women. The novel, based on a dream in which an English woman visits the utopian New Amazonia (once called Ireland), appropriates many aspects of the science of eugenics, neo-Malthusianism, together with a misinterpretation of Nietzsche's theories on the Master Race. Disease is prevented by means of blood transfusions, old age is postponed by injecting patients with the nerves of young and vigorous animals, and celibacy is enforced for those who remain unmarried. The novel is set in the year 2472 and explains that years before, in 2239, a potion by the name of Schlafstrank[65] was invented by Ada of Garretville that is then administered to all those whose existence might corrupt the Super Race: all those born illegitimately and with disabilities and mental health problems and the very old. Punishable crimes include giving birth to more than four children, committing adultery, and smuggling.

These Amazons are members of a Mistress Morality who amaze, confuse, and bewilder the reader. Corbett ingeniously solves the problem of surplus women and, with it, the Irish Problem. This solution is undertaken by the British government by shipping the surplus women over to Ireland with a 50 million pound grant so that they can set up their own utopian society. The story begins six centuries after this settlement, and the Amazons have grown to a height of seven feet, whereas the men's growth has been stunted to five feet, three inches. The men exist only for procreation purposes. The women's bodies are athletic; they are educated to ride, shoot, swim, drive, and engage in all sports of great physical exertion.

Fictional Utopias: Manly Men and Womanly Women

In 1895 the English translation of Max Nordau's monumental *Degeneration* appeared, which diagnosed as degenerate not only criminals, anarchists, lunatics, and prostitutes but also the majority of writers and artists of the day, especially those who transgressed gender boundaries.[66] Feminist utopian writers propounded a Mistress Morality based on free will and the right to choose their own destiny. This destiny is described in women-only utopias or in role-reversal societies. In 1848, Edward Kent, the governor of the U.S. state of Maine, published "The Vision of Bangor in the Twentieth Century," a misogynist satire that foresees the city of Bangor in 1978 as a successful utopia where the city streets are lined with banks, shops, and insurance offices and where women are kept in their place.[67] In that same year, Jane Sophia Appleton (1816–1884), also from Bangor, published "Sequel to the 'Vision of Bangor in the Twentieth Century,'" inspired by French philosopher Charles Fourier's utopian socialism.[68] In spite of the fact that

Appleton's utopia was published in the same year as the "Declaration of the Sentiments" at Seneca Falls, Appleton's fictional women do not participate in state politics because they still had bad memories of the past when they were obliged to do so. At that time, the men had contracted a disease called "money leprosy," which covered their bodies with copper-colored blotches in the shape of dollar coins and contaminated their blood. This leprosy affected love, religion, work, play, and even their language, which became reduced to a continuous muttering of the following words: "dollars," "interest," "stock," "dividends." When the men eventually recovered from their disease, "order and beauty were restored to society, and *men became men again*."[69]

What "men" means in that telling phrase is eventually explained: men as manly, masculine males. The story ends when the woman narrator comes across what she sees as a "grotesque object" one evening at a social gathering and cannot decide what the individual is: "Is he a man? And if not, to what title *can* he lay claim?"[70] Dressed extravagantly and wearing frills and jewelry, he probably "must *pass* for a man" but is recognized as being "one of the *exquisites* of the day." Could this be the Dandy's first appearance in utopian fiction by women? Sexual borders were polarized in both the United States and Britain in the nineteenth century because of the conservatism of state apparatuses such as the church, medical institutions, education, and the law. As previously mentioned, gay men and lesbian women were forced to identify with officially recognized categories of truly male and truly female binaries, irrespective of what they felt their identities to be. Thus, in women-only utopias, such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland*,[71] where procreation is through parthenogenesis, contemporary readers and critics have claimed that in spite of there being an absence of sexual desire among the all-white women, the text might be read within a framework of queer theory.[72]

Fictional Utopias: Rokeya Shekhawat Hossein's "Sultana's Dream"

One last short role-reversal utopia, Rokeya Shekhawat Hossein's "Sultana's Dream," is important as it gives evidence to a similar state of affairs in India.[73] Hossein (1880–1932) was a Muslim Indian born in Bengal, raised in purdah, and married at the age of 16 to a much older man who encouraged her writing. She was a feminist and well-known author who supported the movement of Muslim women campaigning for rights to an education. After her husband's death in 1909, she opened a school in Bihar. Hossein's utopia begins with a dream that takes Sultana to Ladyland, where she sees crowds of women but not a single man. Her guide tells her that they are in *Zenana*, a secluded place within the home traditionally reserved for

women members of the household. Ruled by a queen interested in science, Ladyland has installed solar heating for cooking; pipes collect water from the atmosphere to irrigate crops and gardens and for showers and running water within the home. Storms and heavy rain no longer flooded the land. Education became compulsory for all girls, and two universities were built for them.

The men in the country had been so engaged in increasing their military power that they did not realize that women were taking over the country. Role reversal utopias often explain how to get from here (patriarchy) to there. What should be done with the male citizens: should they be sent into exile? Hossein's men are sent into the *Mardana* (part of the house only for men), but how willing were they to go? The explanation is that some refugees from a neighboring country escape to Ladyland, and the queen grants them protection and political asylum. This infuriates the king of that country, and he declares war on Ladyland. The queen's men go to war, and almost all of them are killed; those who survive then retire to the *Mardana*, and Ladyland is "free of crime and sin." The enemy troops are then chased off by 2,000 ladies from one of the universities, not violently, but by directing concentrated sunlight and heat upon them.[74]

Conclusion

Night dreams are born from our own individual experience and appear to us as woven texts that are mostly incomprehensible. Social dreaming is radically different. It involves being awake and alert to the problems of the here and now. Social dreaming is political and, like the spider's web, is held together by the thinnest of threads. The dream extends from the center outward: from the *I* to the *we*. Today, in the twenty-first century, utopia and dystopia have become very popular in film and fiction. Dreams and nightmares reach audiences of all ages and all cultures and ask us to stop, compare, and act. The nineteenth century was, indeed, long and complicated, and one of the passages that has remained with me ever since first reading it is by Christine Battersby:

> Men would not have needed to make silence a virtue for women unless women talked—and unless men were afraid that women would be heard. Men would not have insisted that creativity is a male prerogative unless women created—and unless men were afraid that women's creations would be taken seriously.[75]

Utopian and dystopian fiction has become a space where women and men can imagine worlds elsewhere or worlds to come. By concentrating on problems

of the present, utopian fiction can motivate social change. Indeed, utopianism is a world phenomenon and is essential for the improvement of lives everywhere. The nature of utopia is inherently contradictory, however, and can easily become transformed into dangerous and nightmarish societies.

Notes

1.   Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 11.

2.   Angela Carter, ed., *Wayward Girls and Wicked Women: An Anthology of Stories* (London: Virago, 1986).

3.   Quoted in Barbara H. Solomon and Paula S. Berggren, eds., *A Mary Wollstonecraft Reader* (New York: New American Library, 1984), 10.

4.   Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Men, in a Letter to the Right Honourable Edmund Burke; Occasioned by His Reflections on the Revolution in France*, 2nd ed. (London: J. Johnson, 1790).

5.   Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman: With Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects*, 2nd ed. (London: J. Johnson, 1792).

6.   The most recent and complete biography is Charlotte Gordon's *Romantic Outlaws: The Extraordinary Lives of Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Shelley* (London: Random House, 2015).

7.   Wikipedia, s.v. Henry Fuseli, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Fuseli (accessed 11 January 2018).

8.   William Godwin, *Memoirs of the Author of "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman"* (London: J. Johnson and G. G. and J. Robinson, 1798).

9.   Horace Walpole, The Vision of Liberty, *Anti-Jacobin Review* (1801), reprinted in A. E. Rodway, ed., *Godwin and the Age of Transition* (London: George G. Harrap, 1952), 218.

10.   Thomas Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population, as It Affects the Future Improvement of Society* (London: J. Johnson, 1798).

11.   W. Petersen, The Malthus-Godwin Debate, Then and Now, *Demography* 8, no. 1 (February 1971): 13–26.

12.   Judith Worsnop, A Reevaluation of "the Problem of Surplus Women" in 19th-Century England: The Case of the 1851 Census, *Women's Studies International Forum* 13, no. 1–2 (1990): 21–31.

13.   Virginia Woolf, *Orlando: A Biography* (London: Hogarth Press, 1928; repr., London: Virago Press, 1993): 147. Citations refer to the Virago edition.

14.   Woolf, *Orlando*, 147–148.

15.   Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, *The Last Man*, 3 vols. (London: Henry Colburn, 1826; repr., Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965). Citations refer to the University of Nebraska Press edition.

16.   Shelley, *The Last Man*, 13.

17.   Shelley, *The Last Man*, 167.

18.   Shelley, *The Last Man*, 127.

19. Shelley, *The Last Man,* 252.

20. Shelley, *The Last Man*, 83 (my emphasis).

21. Higher education was closed to women up to the late 1840s when Queen's College and Bedford College were founded. They were followed by Girton College in Cambridge in 1869, but male colleagues deeply resented female competitors, and it was not until 1875 that a parliamentary act enabled universities to admit women to membership and degrees, but only if the universities chose! The universities of Oxford and Cambridge did not choose to do so until 1920 and 1948, respectively.

22. See Morton D. Paley, *The Last Man*: Apocalypse Without Millennium, in *The Other Mary Shelley: Beyond Frankenstein*, ed. Audrey A. Fisch, Anne K. Mellor, and Esther H. Schor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 108.

23. See Paula R. Feldman and Diana Scott-Kilvert, eds., *The Journals of Mary Shelley, 1814–1844*, vol. 2, *1844* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 476–477. The entry was dated in May 1824, when she had begun to write her novel.

24. See Marlon B. Ross, Romantic Quest and Conquest: Troping Masculine Power in the Crisis of Poetic Identity, in *Romanticism and Feminism*, ed. Anne K. Mellor (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 29.

25. Shelley, *The Last Man*, 114.

26. Shelley, *The Last Man*, 113.

27. Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 61.

28. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1979).

29. Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*, 3 vols. (London: Lackington, Hughes, Harding, Mayor & Jones, 1818; repr., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 54. Citations refer to the Oxford University Press edition.

30. Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 145.

31. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, trans. Helen Zimmern (New York: Boni & Liveright, 1885; repr., London: Penguin Books, 1973), 13. Citations refer to the Penguin edition.

32. For an excellent article on Frances Wright, see Kimberly Nichols, The Red Harlot of Liberty: The Rise and Fall of Frances Wright, in *Newtopia Magazine*, 15 May 2013, https://newtopiamagazine.wordpress.com/2013/05/15/the-red-harlot-of-liberty-the-rise-andfall-of-frances-wright/#comment-18033 (accessed 11 January 2018).

33. Christine Battersby, *Gender and Genius: Towards a Feminist Aesthetics* (London: Women's Press, 1989), 82.

34. Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, Letter to Frances Wright, 12 September 1827, in *Selected Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*, ed. Betty T. Bennet (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 391.

35. Barbara Welter, The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820–1860, *American Quarterly* 18, no. 2, part 1 (Summer 1966): 151–174.

36. Coventry Patmore, *The Angel in the House*, 2 vols. (London: J. W. Parker, 1854–1856).

37. John Ruskin, Of Queens' Gardens, in *Sesame and Lilies: Two Lectures* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1865), reprinted in *Sesame and Lilies: Three Lectures* (London: George Allen & Sons, 1894), 110–180. Citations refer to the 1865 edition.

38. Virginia Woolf, Professions for Women, in *The Death of the Moth and Other Essays*, ed. Leonard Woolf (London: Hogarth Press, 1942), reprinted in Michèle Barrett, ed., *Women and Writing* (London: Women's Press, 1979), 59.

39. Ruskin, Of Queens' Gardens, 171.

40. Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *Pornocratie; ou, les femmes dans les temps modernes* (1858; repr., Paris: A. Lecroix, 1875).

41. Bram Dijkstra, *The Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-siècle Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 211.

42. Anne Denton Cridge, Man's Rights; or, How Would You Like It? (1870), in *Daring to Dream: Utopian Stories by United States Women, 1836–1919*, ed. Carol Farley Kessler (London: Pandora Books, 1984), 74–94. Cridge's satire includes only three of the five dreams she wrote.

43. Cridge, Man's Rights, 93.

44. Cridge, Man's Rights, 94.

45. Catherine Helen Spence, *Autobiography* (Adelaide: W. K. Thomas, 1910; repr., Adelaide: Libraries Board of South Australia, 1975), 26. Citations refer to the Libraries Board edition.

46. Spence, *Autobiography*, 41–43.

47. Quoted in Jeanne F. Young, *Catherine Helen Spence: A Study and an Appreciation* (Melbourne: Lothian, 1937), 68. It is strange that neither Spence nor Young, her friend and biographer, gave much importance to this novel. Spence dedicated only two lines to it and Young one paragraph.

48. Catherine Helen Spence, *Handfasted*, ed. Helen Thomason (Ringwood, Vic.: Penguin Books, 1984)

49. Spence, *Handfasted*, 44.

50. Elizabeth T. Corbett, My Visit to Utopia (1869), in Kessler, *Daring to Dream*, 65–73.

51. Harriett Taylor, The Enfranchisement of Women, *Westminster and Foreign Quarterly Review* (July 1851), reprinted in Jo Ellen Jacobs, ed., *The Complete Works of Harriet Taylor Mill* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 51–73.

52. John Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Women* (London: Longmans, Green, Reader & Dyer, 1869).

53. John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (London: John W. Parker & Son, 1859).

54. Martine Prange, Review of Thomas H. Brobjer, *Nietzsche and the "English": The Influence of British and American Thought on His Philosophy*, *Agonist* 2, no. 2 (July 2009): 76–84.

55. Luce Irigaray, *Marine Lover of Friedrich Nietzsche*, trans. Gillian C. Gill (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991).

56. Hélène Cixous, *The Laugh of the Medusa*, trans. Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen. *Signs*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (Summer, 1976), 875–893. [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press Stable] http://www.jstor.org/stable/3173239 (accessed 28 May 2018).

57.   Sigmund Freud, *The Question of Lay Analysis*, trans. A. P. Maerker-Branden from the 1926 German ed. (New York: Brentano, 1927). See Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks, The Primitive as Analyst: Postcolonial Feminism's Access to Psychoanalysis, *Cultural Critique*, no. 28 (Autumn 1994): 175–218.

58.   Freud, *The Question of Lay Analysis*, 212.

59.   Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols / The Anti-Christ* (London: Penguin Books, 1988), 92.

60.   John Plunkett, ed., *Victorian Literature: A Sourcebook* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 71. See also Worsnop, Reevaluation of "the Problem of Surplus Women," 21–31.

61.   See Lewis Wolpert, The Medawar Lecture 1998. Is Science Dangerous?, *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London, Series B, Biological Sciences* 360, no. 1458 (29 June 2005): 1253–1258.

62.   Part of this section has been published before. See Elizabeth Russell, The Emergence of the Victorian Amazon, in *Studia patriciae shaw oblata*, vol. 3, ed. Santiago González y Fernández-Corugedo, María Socorro Suarez, and Juan E Tazón (Oviedo: Universidad de Oviedo, 1991), 357–366.

63.   Mrs. George [Elizabeth Bourgoyne] Corbett, *New Amazonia: A Foretaste of the Future* (London: Tower, 1889; British Library digitized [Kindle] edition, 1994).

64.   Writers of utopias are often guilty of offering one set of values (their own) and will implement their ideas accordingly. In *Utopie et violence* (Paris: M. Rivière, 1978), Julien Freund argues against utopianism and suggests that it is closely associated with terrorism because both the utopian writer and the terrorist wish to create a new type of human being. Further, the utopian writer claims that by removing all corruption from society, human nature will be free to flourish. The key word here is "corruption" and the utopian writer's definition of the same.

65.   The German *Schlafstrank* is a misspelling and is the name given to an active euthanasian potion. The fact that Corbett chose a German-sounding name for the elixir of death is an uncanny example of what the future would bring.

66.   Max Nordau, *Degeneration*, translated from the German by Howard Fertig (London: Heinemann, 1895; repr., Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993).

67.   Edward Kent, A Vision of Bangor in the Twentieth Century, in *Voices from the Kenduskeag*, ed. Jane Sophia Appleton and Cornelia C. Barrett (Bangor, Maine: D. Bugbee, 1848), 61–74.

68.   The complete utopia contains only 22 pages, 18 of which were republished in Kessler, *Daring to Dream*, 50–64.

69.   Jane Sophia Appleton, Sequel to "The Vision of Bangor in the Twentieth Century," in Kessler, *Daring to Dream*, 61 (my emphasis).

70.   Appleton, Sequel to "The Vision of Bangor," 64.

71.   Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Herland, *Forerunner*, 1915, republished as *Herland* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979).

72.   Val Gough, Lesbians and Virgins. The New Motherhood in Herland, in *Anticipations: Essays on Early Science Fiction and Its Precursors*, ed. David Seed (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1995), 195–215.

73.   Rokeya Shekhawat Hossain, Sultana's Dream, *Indian Ladies' Magazine*, 1905, https://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/sultana/dream/dream.html (accessed 4 November 2017).

74.   For further information on the author and her dream story, see Michelle Murphy, Sultana's Dream, Histories of the Future, http://histscifi.com/essays/murphy/sultanas-dream (accessed 3 Feb. 2018)

75.   Battersby, *Gender and Genius*, 160.

8

POETRY AS INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION

The Dynamics of Victorian Women Poets' Social, Political, and Artistic Networks

Paula Alexandra Guimarães

Abstract. This study will address the ways in which some major Victorian women poets, writing between the 1820s and the 1890s in Britain, experienced and negotiated different forms of inclusion and exclusion within both emerging and well-established social, political, and artistic networks or communities of women. It will show how those dynamics of power were variously manifested and played out in their respective poetical works, exhibiting a sophisticated intellectual awareness at a time of almost exclusive male dominance. After a brief analysis of the earlier poets Felicia Hemans and Letitia Elizabeth Landon, this study will focus on an exploration of mid-Victorian poets such as Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Christina Rossetti and their respective poetry. The first two women created a niche and support structure for the writing, publication, and dissemination of women's poetry in a decisive historical context (the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars). This study will then analyze Browning's spiritualism and her role in the formation of salons for the political campaigns of Italy (national unification) and the United States (abolition of slavery). It will also refer to Rossetti's social and religious initiatives within the "Anglican sisterhood" solidarity group (around "fallen women") and the eventual artistic creation of a "feminine Pre-Raphaelitism." To conclude, there will be an overview of some later poets' feminist and artistic networks, namely, those of Augusta Webster, Mathilde Blind, and Amy Levy, both in the larger context of the struggles for female suffrage and higher education and in the creation of alternative artistic circles and selves, within the

male-dominated Decadent and Aesthetic movements. This study will show how women's political and artistic networking was connected and how this connection evolved in the particular context of women's poetry in the nineteenth century, during the 1820s–1830s, the 1840s–1860s, and the 1870s–1890s. It thus aims to suggest that the formation and constitution of these different groups, and respective poetic movements, some of which were more exclusive and others more inclusive, resulted both from and in a specific feminine dynamics of power.

In her article "From Nation to Network," Caroline Levine proposes a reorientation of literary studies around a new form, the network rather than the nation, because "the network allows us to understand vital aspects of literary history that the nation obscures."[1] She suggests that the networks that operated across the span and the space of Victorian Britain should be more noticed and that we "should replace our organic model of national belonging with the crisscrossing form of the network" because, Levine claims, it "invites our attention to patterns of circulation rather than rootedness, zigzagging movements rather than stable foundations."[2] But she also states that, in practice, many networks are limited: "Exclusive clubs purposefully limit their membership, and a literary salon might well exclude as often as it includes."[3] One of the major purposes of this chapter is to use these two ideas—networking and inclusivity/exclusivity—as an analytic framework for the joint contribution of Victorian women poets and their work.

In her turn, Alison Chapman considers the term "network" (based in Bruno Latour's actor-network theory[4]) to be especially important for poetry studies: "as a noun it traces poets and poems and influences within an interconnected web; as a verb it connotes dynamism, change, agency, and performativity." She criticizes the habit of viewing Victorian poets in isolation from their original print contexts. She argues that "poetry must instead be conceived within its complex networks of print, politics, and sociability" and that "Victorian print culture rendered poetry as inherently networked," with different agents "involved in the circulation, reception, and consumption of a poem," suggesting that this network "was also geographical, transnational, and social."[5]

Early, mid-, and late Victorian women poets experienced and negotiated different forms of inclusion and exclusion in their lives and careers, both within

emerging groups and in well-established social, political, and artistic networks or communities. This essay aims to show and explore how the political and artistic networking of poets as different as Felicia Hemans or Letitia Elizabeth Landon, Elizabeth Barrett Browning or Christina Rossetti, and Augusta Webster, Mathilde Blind, or Amy Levy evolved in the particular context of women's poetry writing and publication in the century. It also discusses whether the formation and constitution of these different groups (some more restrictive and some more inclusive) resulted from, or in, a specific feminine dynamics of power in the period.

The Romantic Networks of Hemans and Landon

In his recent article on "The Poetics of Sisterly Celebrity," Páraic Finerty writes of a "regendering of poetry" in the early decades of the century, one that "coincided with the emergence of celebrity culture, when new forms of mass-media" disseminated. He explains that suddenly "women seemed predisposed to excel as poets," a role that had always been "the province of classically educated men," as poetry had become "increasingly linked to sentiment, interiority and the individual expression" and, particularly, with "the domestic, the private and the feminine."[6] In addition, he argues that it was "gift books in the 1820s and 1830s that made British women poets such as Felicia Hemans and Letitia E. Landon not merely public poets but literary celebrities akin to Byron and Wordsworth."[7] The purpose of Finerty's essay is to examine how early nineteenth-century U.S. print culture's celebration of these poets "mediated the emerging fame of their American counterparts, by centering on one gift book—*The Ladies' Wreath*" (1837, 1839), edited by Sarah Josepha Hale.[8] He claims that Hale's gift book "locates British and American women poets and readers within a transatlantic poetic sisterhood."[9]

This research cannot hide the fact, however, that in the early and mid-nineteenth century, the profession of writing was still an extremely tough career for women, whether English or American, especially if they happened to be poets. Faced with the predominant and unfair competition of male poets, journalists, and writers and denied the conventional networking spaces available to men operating in the public sphere, women writers felt the great need to create alternative networks to ensure their professional success and livelihood. Thus, at least initially, these women were, for the most part, dependent on more either enlightened or profit-seeking male editors, who saw an increasing public demand for these poets' type of sentimental writing.

For example, *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, whose periodical voice employed a complex network of layered identities, both domestic and national, not just praised Hemans's and Landon's work but actively supported women poets. Though a liberal and a republican by education, with a dissenting background, Felicia Hemans's patriotic and domestic poetics seemed to work quite well within this discursive network and, as it seems, on both sides of the Atlantic. In fact, the development of what we have come to term the "poetess tradition," as Tricia Lootens has observed, owes a lot to nineteenth-century transatlantic culture, or "the transatlantic interfusion of national, colonial, and imperial poetries."[10] Yet Hemans's poetry both furthers and complicates *Blackwood*'s layered identity through its focus on folk customs, domesticity, patriotic duty, and mourning.

Felicia Hemans's "The Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers in New England," the most popular of poems on the migration of the British to the American continent, has mostly served to "spiritualize" and "memorialize" the colonial origins of the United States.[11] Yet, as Lootens proposes, it is also a "gendered patriotic work" as the Pilgrim mothers take center stage in it, helping the poetess "to perform her patriotic role of pointing to heaven as the nation's ultimate home ground."[12] For Lootens, Hemans's poem suggests that the heavenly project "had clearly transatlantic national implications," in that it now "comprised a transnational spiritual family."[13]

> They shook the depths of the desert gloom
>   With their hymns of lofty cheer.
> Amidst the storm they sang,
>   And the stars heard and the sea![14]

As if to confirm this symbolic relevance, Susan Wolfson, the editor of the poet's complete works, states that this busy mother of five boys was one of the best-selling poets of her century and one of the first women to make a living by writing (nationalistic) verse.[15] Gary Kelly, in his turn, is careful to note that even if Hemans's initial *Tales and Historic Scenes*[16] "present [national] conflicts," they do so from a specific Romantic feminist viewpoint, "showing the deaths of individuals, communities, nations, and empires in the cycles of 'masculine' history."[17] Her major work, *Records of Woman* (1828), develops the form and themes of those earlier attempts, showing the costs of this history (made of conflict, war, and destruction) to individuals, especially wives and mothers, and emphasizing the heroism and sacrifice of women in the face of patriarchal records.[18] That poetic chronicle, as Wolfson has remarked, "was meant to elaborate a general plight of gender—of, in effect, 'wrongs' that were readable as transnational, trans-cultural, trans-historical."[19]

Hemans rapidly turned into an icon of success—one born of industry and facility, business acumen, and alertness to the literary market, as well as talent. Adept in a range of genres and verse forms, literate, imaginative, and intellectually curious, she fashioned popular themes with a transhistorical, international range of subjects, drawing on literatures past and present, English and Continental. Her books were cherished gifts and prizes; many poems were public favorites, memorized and anthologized, illustrated and set to music. "Casabianca" ("The boy stood on the burning deck") became a standard at recitals; Americans took "The Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers" ("The breaking waves dashed high") to heart, while "The Homes of England" and "England's Dead" became virtual national anthems for the British.[20]

Significantly, in her tribute poem "Stanzas on the Death of Mrs. Hemans" (1835), another poet, named Letitia Landon, praises her work and draws a connection between the two of them as writers. She suggests that Hemans's work is memorable and that, through poetry, she has earned a place in history to be remembered. The poem creates a bond between Landon and Hemans—that she has another female poet to look up to and follow in her footsteps; that, despite their differences, they both seem to focus on the central idea of finding a place for women within history; and that, by being women writers and writing poetry, they share a deeper connection:

> So thou from common thoughts and things
>   Didst call a charmed song,
> Which on a sweet and swelling tide
>   Bore the full soul along.
> . . . .
> With what still hours of calm delight
>   Thy songs and image blend;
> I cannot choose but think thou wert
>   An old familiar friend.[21]

When Landon came to the attention of the editor of the *Literary Gazette*, William Jerdan, she was only 14 or 15 years old but already quite bookish. After the death of her father, Landon was led to assume financial obligations for her surviving relations, and she earned money by her prolific writing, which was done both on assignment and independently; indeed, she always had an ability to judge what stylistic, generic, and thematic features were popular at the time. Known as L.E.L., Landon herself wrote hundreds of poems, mostly about art, contributing

repeatedly to literary annuals (like *The Keepsake* and *The Amulet*) and gift books that emerged in the 1820s. Unlike other poets, however, she became the editor of two such annuals herself, most notably *Fisher's Drawing Room Scrap-Book*; Landon exerted virtually full editorial control over it, and she regularly composed poems for it as well (these were referred to on the title pages as "poetical illustrations" to accompany engraved pictures that she herself selected).[22]

Landon insistently wrote that her personal aspirations involved not love but fame, even though one of her speakers, "Erinna," in *The Golden Violet* had apparently voiced the loss of that illusion.[23] Landon enables her conventional readership to (mis)recognize the artificial conventions of sentimentality, even to enjoy those conventions, and certainly to buy them while her poetry simultaneously mocks, parodies, and bitterly criticizes those sentimental illusions. Among the poets of her time to recognize and admire her were Elizabeth Barrett Browning (EBB), who wrote "L.E.L.'s Last Question" in homage, and Christina Rossetti, who herself published a tribute poem titled "L.E.L." in 1866.[24] These later poets, in turn, seemed to recognize in Landon's precursor voice (and that of Hemans) a connection that would last for generations to come.

A group in a particularly unique position to create an opening for women writers was precisely the one constituted by female author-editors of feminine magazines. As Angela Leighton and Margaret Reynolds remark in their groundbreaking anthology, "many women predominated as editors of the annuals," and such was the case of *The Keepsake* (1828–1857), *Finden's Tableaux* (1835–1841), and *Fisher's Drawing Room Scrap-Book* (1832–1839).[25] For Leighton and Reynolds, these magazines "created a forum which helped to establish and professionalize the work of women writers, particularly the poets." For them, the annuals were of immense significance in both professional and financial terms because, for the first time for women, "they provided a reliable source of income, a practical working world, a professional status, and a framework of supportive literary friendships," and it was the poetry, particularly the women's poetry, that made those volumes so popular.[26] Although considered for the most part trivial, sentimental, and effeminate and often offered as social gifts and remembrancers, these annuals and albums promoted, in fact, a visually heightened poetry (not just elaborately decorated but also ekphrastic), and they were sometimes politically critical (as with Landon's slavery poem, "The African," of 1832) or even challenged gender stereotypes (as with EBB's "The Romaunt of the Page" of 1839).[27]

In his work on the rise of women's poetry, Marlon Ross refers to the recovery of a cultural space for a "feminist poetics of affection," which could express "a community of shared desire" based on sympathy and community, as opposed

to "the solitary quest and conquest" of the male Romantics.[28] Ross shows how, namely, the work of Hemans and Landon completed the project of earlier "blue-stocking" poets in locating a cultural space outside masculinity. Indeed, for many women of the Victorian period, the poetry published in periodicals represented a network of influence that provided them with "models" for performing femininity. Some established later writers, such as the Brontës and Elizabeth Barrett herself, would come to recognize the role that these models played in the creation of their own famous female characters (such as Jane Eyre and Aurora Leigh).[29]

Although the instructional or didactic nature of the writing in women's periodicals has been duly noticed by the critical community, we still need to acknowledge the ways that, namely, memorial poetry published in women's magazines presented guidance to readers through the lives of both the deceased women subjects and the living memorial poets. By placing these poems within the larger scholarly discussion about instruction offered through women's periodicals, we can examine the relevance of women's memorial poetry as a key site for the development of the identities of Victorian women.[30]

The Mid-Victorian Networks of Barrett Browning and Rossetti

On the other hand, the important social networks linking nineteenth-century spiritualism and feminism have been well documented by the critics. For example, Ann Braude shows the overlapping principles between the two movements, especially how women functioned as voices (or mediums) for underrepresented people, whether they were living women struggling for their rights or deceased spirits confronting the afterlife.[31] The role of periodicals, in this context, was in connecting members of the spiritualist community, who were often isolated and in need of solidarity, with others who shared their beliefs. Alex Owen gives a brief overview of the important British spiritualist newspapers and periodicals and how they became an apparatus for expressing the key principles of spiritualism, which included improving the rights of women because of their central role in spiritualist communication with the deceased.[32]

Elizabeth Barrett Browning's notorious esoteric interests and actual participation in spiritualist séances have been, in this context, seen as going hand in hand with her clearly interventionist role as a major figure in the formation of salons for the political campaigns of Italy and the United States.[33] For her, it was really a question of using her own voice as a medium for a political end, but she also combined this immediate purpose with a more personal intention. In the meetings connected with the struggle for Italian national unification and the

transatlantic abolitionist networks, the poet could simultaneously take advantage of communicating with her dead loved ones and exploring a mediumistic voice in her writing. And, as will be seen in the combination found in the salon, the spiritualist séance, and the circulation of print, EBB was also influenced by the other women whom she regularly met.

Alison Chapman explores precisely how EBB was not working alone in her revolutionary poetics and politics, which culminated in the controversial publication of her *Poems before Congress* in 1860, and how she was "immersed in a dynamic network of politicized women writers who influenced her thought and writing."[34] Chapman detects a new, and felicitous, turn in literary studies—one that avoids insular Anglocentrism and embraces the transnational or cosmopolitan dimension. For this purpose, she examines the most significant salons run by these expatriate women poets in Florence—a center of poetic culture that attracted an unprecedented number of foreign poets in the 1840s and 1850s—and she concludes that these salons "were informal, fluid and heterogeneous, bringing together a varied group of nationalities and professions, genders and classes."[35] Significantly, one common central feature was the mythologized figure of the *improvisatrice*, even though Chapman traces the "schismatic shift in their poetry from the conventional sphere of the poetess."[36]

Besides EBB, the other British expatriates were Theodosia Trollope, Isa Blagden, and Eliza Ogilvy, who were known, respectively, as a Jewish multilingual "Corinne," a Eurasian cosmopolitan "peripatetic," and an internationalized Scottish "minstrel"; the North American expatriates were the poet and journalist Elizabeth Kinney and the poet and spiritualist medium Sophie Eckley. Chapman argues that "these women's identification with Italian struggles was related" to "the formation, grounding, and policing of bourgeois liberal identity" but beyond that "the Risorgimento both represented and became their own struggle to achieve public, political agency—individual and collective—in their poetry."[37] Thus, "the poetry of the female expatriate community can be understood as a matrix producing verbal, social, and political acts," a performative poetics, as Chapman argues, in line with Warwick Slinn, one that was produced by the women poets' networking for and on behalf of a new nation.[38] She thus detects a major shift from the poetry of lyric effusion and hyperfemininity to a much more active and muscular poetics.

The expatriate women's poetry claims to *do* something: "bless, curse, prophesy, baptize, reproduce, resurrect, rejuvenate, transform, mobilize, mediate, plead, create, intervene, awaken, destroy, enervate, anoint, comfort, seduce, mock."[39] It is significant that the first political poem that EBB wrote after her semivoluntary escape to Italy was "The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim's Point" when the U.S. National Anti-Slavery Bazaar

(in the person of its leader, Maria Weston Chapman) asked her to contribute to the cause. In accepting the commission, she was conscious of the fact that her own family had been plantation owners for generations and that she probably owed her privileged situation to the work of enslaved people. Therefore, the task may have been faced with the deliberate intention of redeeming herself from the sins of her ancestors. Constructed in the form of a complex dramatic monologue, it gives voice to a black woman who had been enslaved and raped by her white master and who, to prevent the perpetuation of discrimination, takes the final dramatic gesture of murdering her mixed-blood baby. Given EBB's feelings of complicity or guilt, it is not surprising that she wished to assume and embody this woman's voice and performance as a form of redemption, seeming to suggest that the woman's infanticide was justified. It is no coincidence either that the poem takes place at Pilgrim's Point in New England, the symbolic arrival site of previous fugitives fleeing religious persecution, which recalls Hemans's earlier poem:

> I stand on the mark beside the shore
>   Of the first white pilgrim's bended knee,
> Where exile turned to ancestor.[40]

For her transatlantic critical purpose, EBB showed that the Pilgrims' descendants were now the perpetrators of the systems of tyranny that were creating further displacement and suffering.

Alison Chapman claims, however, that the most famous poem of all to come out of the expatriate network in Italy is EBB's verse novel, *Aurora Leigh*.[41] It not only constitutes "a decisive shift in women's poetry away from the English poetess and toward a more muscular, political, public, epic poetics," but "owes a debt" to "the expatriate poetry culture from which it emerged . . . the community in Florence."[42] The name of the work itself, based on classical myth, connotes Anglo-Italian relations and is politically charged with the symbolism of the "dawning of light," the dawning both of female knowledge and emancipation and of revolutionary change—the Italian apocalypse. The children of an Italian intellectual exiled from his homeland because of his political beliefs, the Rossetti siblings, Dante and Christina, would, in turn, constitute the following major English-Italian transnational link of the period. As Caroline Levine argues, thinking of wider artistic connections, "as a literary hub that connects transnational missionary printers to Italian radicals and American free verse to African Christians and the French avant-garde, the Rossetti family resists any literary history that roots them in an English literary tradition."[43]

Notwithstanding the obvious relevance of this link, we need to focus now on the more central issue of a later feminine networking—one conducted, mostly, in the margins of that famous "literary hub" and also carried out through different media. As Michele Martinez has argued, several female poets and art critics in the distinctive context of the so-called feminine Pre-Raphaelitism experienced and expressed the complexities of sisterhood and rivalry, and the sister arts analogy, in particular, was instrumental in the quest for these women's legitimacy as poets.[44] Christina Rossetti and Elizabeth Siddal made an impression on a literary world saturated with male voices with their thought-provoking symbolism and deep questioning of human mortality.[45] According to Jill Rappaport, "nineteenth-century sisterhood, more than a biological relationship, was also an elective affiliation, 'an achieved and achievable state of relationship to others.'"[46] Both Christina Rossetti and Maria, the sister to whom she dedicated the manuscript of *Goblin Market*, were active in the communal lives and social services of Anglican sisterhoods. Whereas Maria Rossetti joined the sisterhood of All Saints at Margaret Street, Christina later became an associate, or "lay sister," of the St. Magdalene's Penitentiary in Highgate, participating in the work to rescue women from the margins of Victorian sexual propriety.[47] They also realized that through the Anglican sisterhood, they were able to pursue careers outside of the domestic sphere. Rossetti, though, did not treat the sisterhood relationship as a feminist movement but instead as a support system for women; she believed in the redemptive power of sisterhood and had a utopian vision of such female communities.[48]

Rappaport indeed locates not only the themes of Rossetti's poems but their narrative mode in this movement, claiming that "it owes them more than just its images of women's solidarity, activism and rescue."[49] The sisterhood community viewed the temptation of the outside world as a threat, which is the prominent theme in such Rossetti poems as "Noble Sisters," which emphasizes two roles for sisters, as protector or protected.[50] This balance between them is disturbed only when the protected sister has a suitor, as the sisterhood worked to reduce female dependence on male figures. The ubiquitous relationship between the sisters, Laura and Lizzie, may convey some clues about Rossetti's ideas regarding relationships between women; read in conjunction with poems like "Cousin Kate" and "Maude Clare," her attitude seems to betray a certain ambivalence: if she clearly praises sisterhood, she also shows features of jealousy and hostility between women.[51]

The rapid formation of those communities, following the Oxford movement and the rise of Anglo-Catholicism, expanded the communities' conception to give their work a new, professional status, making them appealing to and influencing a number of progressive female writers, such as Elizabeth Gaskell,

Anna Jameson, and Florence Nightingale. As Rappaport states, these sisterhoods were extremely controversial, as "they challenged British and anti-Catholic sentiment," as well as "traditional attitudes toward gender roles, family structure, and Church hierarchy."[52] They also devised an alternative response to the so-called single women "surplus" problem, which caused many women to be transported to the colonies, by creating "domestic colonies at home." Besides, theirs was a "redemptive economy," as they refused to be paid for work that ought to be voluntary. By refusing the prevailing cash nexus of relationships, they asserted their communities' stand against "the 'cruel' brothers of competitive markets,"[53] and this moral difference between the sexes is what is mostly emphasized in *Goblin Market*, namely, through Lizzie's silver penny symbolism.[54]

As Rappaport observes, however, this approach of the sisterhood did require a privileged position in terms of wealth and status—only upper- and middle-class women could afford to "offer" these services. She significantly mentions that "within religious communities themselves, sisters were split along hierarchical lines," as working-class women were not just a minority but had to perform domestic labor and were prohibited from voting, thus leaving little room for them to be religious or professional "saviours."[55] But with the progressive secularization and democratization of British society, many communities of women would, indeed, cease to be conceived along strict religious or social class lines and would gradually converge around more academic, artistic, or politicized groups.

The Late Victorian Networks of Webster, Blind, and Levy

As it became gradually clear, particularly in the three last decades of the century, many English women were not just actively fighting for such causes as female suffrage, higher education, and employment but were also contributing to the creation of alternative artistic circles and selves (namely, the "New Woman") within the then male-dominated Aesthetic and Decadent movements. This was the case of several women poets and artists of the later period and at the fin de siècle, among whom were Augusta Webster, Mathilde Blind, and Amy Levy.[56] In her annotated anthology dedicated specifically to the latter, Judith Willson explains,

> Webster was part of the circle of campaigners for suffrage and education that included Emily Davies, and to which Mathilde Blind and, more distantly, Amy Levy, also had connections. When Blind died, she left a bequest to Newnham College, Cambridge, where Amy Levy had been a student seventeen years earlier.[57]

Detecting a line of contiguity and continuity between the three women, Willson believes that "there is a symbolic significance in the link" but is careful to point out that they were not writing in social isolation. She explains that "the networks within which they moved—their friendships with the Rossettis and the Garretts, Swinburne and William Morris, and Eleanor Marx . . . form recurring, overlapping patterns," as do, she adds, "the colleges and committees and lobbying groups."[58] I would add, in turn, that besides maintaining close connections with the more radical and modern male artistic circles, they all dialogued with the most forward-looking and innovative texts of the older women poets, namely, those of Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Christina Rossetti.[59]

Being closely associated with the Langham Place circle of women campaigners and reformers, a feminist activist network advocating changes in women's employment, education, and marital law,[60] and having worked for the National Committee of Women's Suffrage in the 1870s and the London School Board in the 1880s, Julia Augusta Davies (1837–1894) saw herself, from the first moment, as a professional woman writer (poet, translator, dramatist, and reviewer) and also as one with a "disguised" feminist project. Marysa Demoor rightfully argues that Augusta Webster's "ideological struggle needs to be seen in relation to the other forms of discourse in which she engaged,"[61] especially her dramas and reviews, because she "channeled her feminist anger" in all her writings, namely, her poetry, and she "negotiated her position as an authoritative critic in a world which was fundamentally hostile to women reviewers."[62] More importantly, Demoor affirms that Webster's poetry stands out as belonging to the most powerful writings of her age (the last quarter of the century), enhancing that she adapted the dramatic monologue entirely to her own ends, "giving it a distinctly feminist mission."[63]

In one of those monologues, "Circe," Webster presents us with an original version of that mythological figure, one close to a postmodern, feminist revision of the tale of Ulysses and centered on the dilemma of the lonely and depressed Circe, who is also sexually frustrated. Her repeated plea of "Give me some change. . . . Something outside me stirring" is reminiscent of Jane Eyre's own wish for change in her life.[64] However, Circe's deep-set distrust of men and their nature (which she compares to swine) seems to emerge even more vigorously in the interior monologue of "A Castaway," a poem that voices the defensive thoughts of a prostitute in a deliberately accessible language, which has a pamphleteering quality. Although anger, resentment, and blame for her situation are leveled against the male Other and her time's double standards, Eulalie (the poem's marginalized but eloquent speaker) openly recognizes and psychoanalyzes closely her own personal guilt as to her fate.[65] After deconstructing these female stereotypes through

her highly subversive poetry and social writings in *A Housewife's Opinions* (1879), Webster openly addressed the reading public in her critical essays as a reputed reviewer in the *Athenaeum* and *Examiner*. For Webster, in this later aesthetic period, poetry should fulfil only a polemical or political function *if* it is written in such a (beautiful) way that it outlasts its message.

Mathilde Blind (1841–1896), in her turn, is a figure interesting not only for her embeddedness in Pre-Raphaelite, feminist, and bohemian circles but also as an outstanding representative of the current of polemical unbelief that runs through Victorian literary Aestheticism, as seen, namely, in "The Prophecy of St. Oran."[66] An independent scholar, feminist, and political radical, Blind was an insider within the cosmopolitan world of political revolutionaries (in which she grew up) but somewhat of an outsider in middle-class English life. Openly recognized as a republican writer within freethinking communities, Blind also understood her revolt in terms of gender, and she demanded education as a right for women; as James Diedrick has shown, "she openly criticized marriage and the patriarchy while boldly expressing female agency and sexual desire, often looking . . . for alternatives to contemporary social and gender relationships."[67] In this she followed other women activists such as Frances Cobbe and Augusta Webster, whom she met regularly at Mary Robinson's Gower Street Salon or the Reading Room of the British Museum—spaces that offered women an opportunity for intellectual cultivation and communication. Nevertheless, as Susan Bernstein has pertinently observed, these spaces "had the appearance of openness, yet required a process of admissions," which made them somewhat exclusive in reality.[68]

Blind used journalism (in *The Athenaeum* and *The Dark Blue*) to establish and extend her literary reputation and, more importantly, to promote connections between the earlier female aesthetes and the Decadent and New Women writers. James Diedrick suggests the range of her writings in the latter journal as being "those of a feminist aesthete who could write haunting poems about haunted lovers, erudite essays on Icelandic poetry, and short fiction exploring the corrosive effects of class divisions on human relations."[69] Blind's decision to express her social and political activism through a feminist perspective was present in her decision to write biographies of strong women figures such as George Eliot and Mary Wollstonecraft.[70] Blind believed that republicanism would lead to a new world order that would change the position of women in society; her early poetry, especially, shows a strong transnational commitment to nineteenth-century democratic movements.[71] For Isobel Armstrong, Blind's poetical work "shares the intensity, and sometimes the violence, of Levy, but in the attempt to create new evolutionary and humanist myths"; in particular, "she

seems to have seen, in *The Ascent of Man*, evolutionary ideas as the key to reconfiguring a new myth of creativity and gender."[72] The long Darwinian epic poem is thus an attempt to find out how the "feminine principle" might be the source of a new humanist myth, a change that is to be effected through the transforming power of woman's love:

> Drop in dew and healing love of woman
> On the bloodstained hands of hungry strife,
> Till there break from passion of the Human
> Morning-glory of transfigured life.[73]

A generation younger than Webster and Blind, Amy Levy (1861–1889) was the first Jewish woman to attend Newnham, in Cambridge's predominantly Christian environment, but as Naomi Hetherington and Nadia Valman have written, she "was also a queer writer who had passionate attachments to other women." Therefore, they conclude that "it is as a symbol of cultural marginality that Levy has achieved iconic status," one that was, in turn, inflated by her suicide at the age of 27.[74] Levy's writing engages with numerous contemporary scientific ideas, namely, "those about race degeneracy and her own Jewish identity," but her poetry "had a broader impact through its reception and dissemination in the feminist press," forming "a significant site for the consolidation of the female poet as a New Woman."[75] It provides a rich and complex discussion of femininity and sexual politics in the context of late Victorian women's intellectual circles. But Levy's writing also reflects and negotiates her position both inside and outside minor (Jewish) and major (British) communities, and for this reason, many critics have mentioned "exclusion" and "unfitness" as themes and motifs in Levy's stories.

It is perhaps significant that, as Hetherington and Valman state, Amy Levy's first published poem appeared in a feminist campaign journal, the *Pelican*,[76] and that she also published in the *Victoria Magazine*, issued by Emily Faithfull's woman-run Victoria Press. Soon after, with the probable influence of Webster, she began experimenting with the dramatic monologue, in which she explored the relationships between race, gender, and class. Reflecting a shared interest in the issue of women's education, Levy's most famous monologue, "Xantippe" (1880), voices a woman's marginal position in the intellectual life of the university; the poem "is a passionate plea for women's education in the voice of Socrates' wife Xantippe, who was excluded from his circle of male philosophers on account of her sex."[77] She ironizes,

'Twas only that the high philosopher,
Pregnant with noble theories and great thoughts,
Deigned not to stoop to touch so slight a thing
As the fine fabric of a woman's brain—[78]

After traveling on the Continent by herself (as Blind had done), Levy "threw herself into London life, forging a network of intellectual and literary connections through the British Museum Reading Room."[79] There, she met not only Webster and Blind but also Olive Schreiner and Eleanor Marx. Nearly all her friends were socialists or social reformers and writers, including Clementina Black (a journalist and active trade unionist). In 1883 Levy joined the evolutionary biologist Karl Pearson's discussion club (a place for intellectuals of both sexes to meet) and, in 1885, her family moved to Bloomsbury—the heart of intellectual and artistic London. In the last year of her life, Levy would attend the first Ladies' Literary Dinner (chaired by Mona Caird), which had been "founded to celebrate the achievements of women writers and provide a discrete place for them to socialize and network."[80]

At this time, Levy was apparently setting herself up as a professional writer, "earning an independent income by penning short stories for women's and society's magazines," on the topics of sexual morality and limited opportunities for women's financial security outside marriage.[81] These were published in *Woman's World* under the editorship of Oscar Wilde—a new and progressive forum for women writers. Levy also submitted two critical essays, one on the poetry of Christina Rossetti and another on "Women and Club Life," the latter of which praises these clubs as new spaces for women in London to meet and work undisturbed by the demands of domestic life.[82]

Notwithstanding this prominent activity, Levy's categorization as a New Woman comes mostly from her poetry, which has been frequently appropriated by feminist literary critics. These mostly make use of Levy's dramatic monologues for "their radical repudiation of civic and sexual institutions oppressive to women," and the passages that they select "highlight her radical repudiation of marital heterosexuality, her [philosophical] pessimism, and her love poems to other women."[83] The latter are usually about rejection and disappointment, whether they are addressed to women that she knew well or to an unnamed female beloved. Emma Francis claims that these poems offer a highly complex exploration of femininity, of sexuality, and also of women's relation to power.[84]

However, it is the suicide of a male poet, isolated and excluded by the literary establishment, that the title poem of Levy's second collection, *A Minor Poet*, describes, thus disguisedly reflecting her own concern with marginal and

dispossessed voices.[85] This choice suggests that Amy Levy explored the modern concept of "minority writers" long before such a category had any real cultural or critical meaning. Moreover, there is evidence of Levy being excluded by both British and Jewish communities: she was not invited to attend the reformed Men and Women's Club for scientific discussions and was shunned in the Jewish quarter for her negative portrayal of that community in her novel *Reuben Sachs*.[86] Besides, her platonic love for the feminist art critic and novelist Violet Paget (a role model) was not reciprocated, leaving her with a major sense of rejection.

Conclusion

One of the greatest ironies of networks is that their establishment and functioning, although appearing and aiming to be solid, are, in fact, often fragile and subject to conflict because, as has been suggested in this chapter, they can be (and often are) both inclusive and exclusive. And women, including some of those analyzed here, were frequently more vulnerable to all sorts of exclusion and prejudice on social or generic lines, not to mention their intrinsic difference as women who were also artists and poets. Nevertheless, despite those individual and collective fragilities, these various female communities played a crucial role in nineteenth-century women's lives and careers. As they had no real precedent in either the male or the female traditions, being to a certain extent unique phenomena of their own, their respective political and artistic networking could be said to both originate *from* and result *in* a specific dynamic of power in this also unique period.

Notes

1.   Caroline Levine, From Nation to Network, *Victorian Studies* 55, no. 4 (Summer 2013): 647.

2.   Levine, From Nation to Network, 656–657.

3.   Levine, From Nation to Network, 658.

4.   Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

5.   Alison Chapman, Poetry, Network, Nation: Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Expatriate Women's Poetry, *Victorian Studies* 55, no. 2 (Winter 2013): 276.

6.   Páraic Finerty, The Poetics of Sisterly Celebrity: Sarah Hale, British Women Poets and the Gift of Transatlantic Fame, *Comparative American Studies* 14, no. 1 (2016): 21–22.

7.   Finerty, Poetics of Sisterly Celebrity, 23.

8.   Sarah Josepha Hale, ed., *The Ladies' Wreath* (Boston: Marsh, Capen, & Lyon, 1837); Hale, ed., *The Ladies' Wreath: A Selection from the Female Poetic Writers of England and America* (Boston: Marsh, Capen, Lyon, & Webb, 1839).

9.   Finerty, Poetics of Sisterly Celebrity, 22. He grounds this claim by stating that Hale's "para-textual materials . . . created intimacy between readers and poets and positioned both groups within a sisterly community . . . built on egalitarian rather than hierarchical relationships between women."

10.   Tricia Lootens, States of Exile, in *The Traffic in Poems: Nineteenth-Century Poetry and Transatlantic Exchange*, ed. Meredith McGill (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 16.

11.   Felicia Hemans, The Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers in New England, *New Monthly Magazine*, 1825, reprinted in *Records of Woman, and Other Poems*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1828). The poem was often printed as a gift book with engravings.

12.   Lootens, States of Exile, 17.

13.   Lootens, States of Exile, 18–19.

14.   Hemans, The Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers in New England, lines 15–18, as reprinted in Susan Wolfson, ed., *Felicia Hemans: Selected Poems, Letters, Reception Materials* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), 416–417.

15.   Susan Wolfson, Introduction, in Wolfson, *Felicia Hemans*, xii–xxix. According to Wolfson, between 1808 and 1835, 19 volumes of her works appeared, some in multiple editions. By the 1820s, with increasingly appreciative reviews in the establishment press and a regular presence in popular magazines and ornate annuals, "Mrs. Hemans" had emerged as England's premier "poetess."

16.   Felicia Hemans, *Tales and Historic Scenes* (London: John Murray, 1819).

17.   Gary Kelly, Death and the Matron: Felicia Hemans, Romantic Death, and the Founding of the Modern Liberal State, in *Felicia Hemans: Reimagining Poetry in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Nanora Sweet and Julie Melnyk (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 198.

18.   Felicia Hemans, *Records of Woman, and Other Poems*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1828).

19.   Wolfson, Introduction, xv.

20.   Wolfson, Introduction, xv. The works referred to are Hemans, Casabianca, *Monthly Magazine* 2 (August 1826), reprinted in *The Poetical Works of Felicia Dorothea Hemans* (Philadelphia: Porter & Coates, 1835), 396; Hemans, The Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers in New England; Hemans, The Homes of England, in *Records of Woman, and Other Poems*, 169–171; Hemans, England's Dead, in *National Lyrics, and Songs for Music* (Dublin: William Curry Jr., 1834), 195–198.

21.   Letitia Elizabeth Landon, Stanzas on the Death of Mrs. Hemans, *New Monthly Magazine* 44 (1835): 286–288, reprinted in F. J. Sypher, ed., *Poetical Works of Letitia Elizabeth Landon, "L.E.L."* (Delmar, N.Y.: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1990), 408–411, lines 29–32, 93–96. Wolfson, Reception, in Wolfson, *Felicia Hemans*, 572–573.

22.   Most often, each such poem is literally about a picture or statue (though her descriptions sometimes contradict the pictures).

23.   Letitia Elizabeth Landon, Erinna, in *The Golden Violet, with Its Tales of Romance and Chivalry: And Other Poems* (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown & Green, 1827), 191–192.

24.   Elizabeth Barrett Browning, L.E.L.'s Last Question, *Athenaeum*, 26 January 1839, reprinted in *The Poems of Elizabeth Barrett Browning* (London: Frederick Warne, 1844), 290–292; Christina Rossetti, L.E.L., in *The Prince's Progress and Other Poems* (London: Macmillan, 1866), 136–138.

25.   *The Keepsake* was variously edited by Caroline Norton (1836); Lady Emmeline Stuart-Wortley (1837, 1840); Margueritte Gardiner, Countess of Blessington (1841–1849); and Marguerite Agnes Power (1850–1857). Mary Russell Mitford edited *Finden's Tableux* with various subtitles from 1838 to 1841, and Lucretia Elizabeth Landon edited *Fisher's Drawing Room Scrap-Book* throughout. Angela Leighton and Margaret Reynolds, Introduction, in *Victorian Women Poets: An Anthology* (Oxford, U.K.: Blackwell, 1995), xxvi.

26.   Leighton and Reynolds, Introduction, , xxvi.

27.   Letitia Elizabeth Landon, The African, in *Fisher's Drawing Room Scrap-Book*, ed. Letitia Elizabeth Landon (London: Fisher, Son, & Jackson, 1832), 35–36; Elizabeth Barrett Browning, The Romaunt of the Page, in *Finden's Tableaux of the Affections; a Series of Picturesque Illustrations of the Womanly Virtues*, ed. Mary Russell Mitford (London: Charles Tilt, 1839), 1.

28.   Marlon Ross, *The Contours of Masculine Desire: Romanticism and the Rise of Women's Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 30.

29.   Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre: An Autobiography* (London: Smith, Elder, 1847); Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *Aurora Leigh* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1856).

30.   Paula Guimarães, Felicia Hemans's "The Coronation of Inez de Castro" (1830): Feminine Romanticism and the Memorialization of Woman, in *Ensaios de Cultura e Literatura*, ed. Jorge Silva and Maria Castanheira, Studies in Classicism and Romanticism 2 (Lisbon: FLUP/CETAPS, 2013), 143–158.

31.   Ann Braude, *Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women's Rights in Nineteenth-Century America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989).

32.   Alex Owen, *The Darkened Room: Women, Power, and Spiritualism in Victorian England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990). John Kucich's *Ghostly Communion: Cross-Cultural Spiritualism in Nineteenth-Century Periodicals* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 2004) devotes a chapter to spiritualist feminism in periodicals, illustrating how spiritualism was used by American periodicals aimed at underrepresented groups (women, Native Americans, and African Americans) to give them a voice in the national consciousness.

33.   Elizabeth Barrett Browning's transatlantic investments were particularly exemplified by her relationship with the New York *Independent*.

34.   Alison Chapman, *Networking the Nation: British and American Women's Poetry and Italy, 1840–1870* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), xxvi. The cost of networking the nation was made quite clear by the hostile reaction of the press to Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *Poems before Congress* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1860).

35.   Chapman, *Networking the Nation*, xxvii–xxix.

36.   This feature means that although they reconfigured and transformed the conventions of the "poetess," they deliberately assumed a posture modeled on Madame de Staël's titular protagonist of *Corinne*, the notorious Italian *improvisatrice*, who combined both femininity and fame. Chapman, *Networking the Nation*, xxvii.

37.   Chapman, *Networking the Nation*, xxviii.

38.   Chapman, *Networking the Nation*, xxviii–xxix. See Warwick Slinn, *Victorian Poetry as Cultural Critique: The Politics of Performative Language* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003).

39.   Chapman, *Networking the Nation*, xxxi.

40.   Elizabeth Barrett Browning, The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim's Point, in Friends of Freedom, *The Liberty Bell* (Boston: National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, 1848), 29, stanza 1, lines 1–3.

41.   Browning, *Aurora Leigh*.

42.   Chapman, *Networking the Nation*, xxxi.

43.   Levine, From Nation to Network, 663.

44.   Michele Martinez, Women Poets and the Sister Arts in Nineteenth-Century England, *Victorian Poetry* 41, no. 4 (Winter 2003): 621–628. This essay suggests that it is worth exploring how the rise of women painters and sculptors in the nineteenth century informed various forms of sister arts verse by poets actively engaged with the concept of a rivalry among the arts.

45.   In different ways, in their respective works, Rossetti and Siddal challenged the overwhelming dominance of the male gaze and the male voice in representations of the feminine in both the poetry and the visual arts of the period.

46.   Jill Rappaport, *Giving Women*: *Alliance and Exchange in Victorian Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 91.

47.   Rappaport, *Giving Women*, 92–93.

48.   For a more detailed account, see Scott Rogers, Re-reading Sisterhood in Christina Rossetti's "Noble Sisters" and "Sister Maude," *SEL: Studies in English Literature 1500–1900* 43, no. 4 (Autumn 2003): 859–875.

49.   Rappaport, *Giving Women*, 93.

50.   Christina Rossetti, Noble Sisters, in *Goblin Market and Other Poems* (Cambridge: Macmillan, 1862), 47–50. See Rogers, Re-reading Sisterhood, 862.

51.   Christina Rossetti, Cousin Kate and Maude Clare, in *Goblin Market and Other Poems* (Cambridge: Macmillan, 1862), 44–46, 76–79, respectively.

52.   Rappaport, *Giving Women*, 93.

53.   Rappaport, *Giving Women*, 95.

54.   Rossetti's most famous poem foresees a world in which women will possess some control over their lives and therefore some independence from the male sphere of influence. Its cautionary message, presented through the ominous example of the "fallen" Jeanie, aims at proving that without their sisterhood's support women will be "sold" and "consumed" (and not just symbolically) on the marriage market.

55.   Rappaport, *Giving Women*, 96–97.

56.   Others with a significant contribution and impact in the later period were Michael Field, Rosamund Watson, Alice Meynell, Mary Robinson, May Kendall, Constance Naden, and Charlotte Mew.

57.   Judith Willson, Introduction, in *Out of My Borrowed Books: Poems by Augusta Webster, Mathilde Blind and Amy Levy*, ed. Judith Willson (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 2006), 3.

58.   Willson, Introduction, 4. William Michael Rossetti and Charles Algernon Swinburne, for example, were known to have attacked the Victorian artworld network of exhibition systems and critical authorities.

59.   Their poems present a complex set of allusions and comments to those of Browning and Rossetti, as well as to the novels of Emily Brontë and George Eliot, among other works by both male and female writers.

60.   The Langham Place Circle was formed around 1856, in central London, by two unmarried women from progressive Unitarian families, Bessie Rayner Parkes and Barbara Leigh Smith (later Bodichon), and it has been characterized as the first organized feminist movement in England. Among its reform projects, there was an employment agency for genteel impoverished women, an emigration society for unmarried middle-class women, a women's college—Girton—at Cambridge, a women-only reading room, and a law-copying office that employed women. It also used its monthly magazines and public-speaking opportunities to broadcast its message, thereby creating a political community of feminist readers.

61.   Marysa Demoor, Power in Petticoats: Augusta Webster's Poetry, Political Pamphlets, and Poetry Reviews, in *Voices of Power: Co-operation and Conflict in English Language and Literatures*, ed. Marc Maufort (Liège: Language and Literature for the Belgian Association of Anglists, 1997), 133.

62.   Demoor, Power in Petticoats, 134.

63.   Demoor, Power in Petticoats, 134.

64.   Augusta Webster, Circe, in *Portraits* (London: Macmillan, 1870), 14–22. See Willson, *Out of My Borrowed Books*, 56.

65.   Augusta Webster, A Castaway, in *Portraits*, 35–62.

66.   Mathilde Blind, The Prophecy of Saint Oran, in *The Prophecy of Saint Oran and Other Poems* (London: Newman, 1881), 1–65, is based on a medieval Scottish legend in which a young and saintly monk sins with a young woman and, as a punishment, is killed by order of St. Columba. In the end, the dead monk stands up in his grave to tell his brothers that there is no God, only to be reburied for his blaspheming tongue.

67.   James Diedrick, *Mathilde Blind: Late-Victorian Culture and the Woman of Letters* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2017), 2.

68.   Susan D. Bernstein, *Roomscape: Women Writers in the British Museum* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 77.

69.   Diedrick, *Mathilde Blind*, 12.

70.   Mathilde Blind, *George Eliot*, Eminent Women Series (London: W. H. Allen, 1883); Blind, Mary Wollstonecraft, *New Quarterly Magazine* 10 (July 1878): 390–412.

71.   See, e.g., Mathilde Blind, The Torrent, in [Claude Lake], *Poems* (London: Alfred W. Bennett, 1867), 7–13, in which she extolls the figure and the voice of the Italian revolutionary, Joseph Mazzini.

72.   Isobel Armstrong, *Victorian Poetry: Poetry, Poetics and Politics* (London: Routledge, 1993), 366. See Mathilde Blind, *The Ascent of Man* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1889; repr., with introduction by Alfred R. Wallace, London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1899).

73.   Willson, *Out of My Borrowed Books*, 134. See Blind, *Ascent of Man*, 100.

74.   Naomi Hetherington and Nadia Valman, Introduction, in *Amy Levy: Critical Essays*, ed. Naomi Hetherington and Nadia Valman (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2010), 2.

75.   Lyssa Randolph, Verse or Vitality? Biological Economies and the New Woman Poet, in Hetherington and Valman, *Amy Levy: Critical Essays*, 216.

76.   Hetherington and Valman, Introduction, 8.

77.   Hetherington and Valman, Introduction, 2. See Amy Levy, Xantippe, in *Xantippe and Other Verse* (Cambridge: E. Johnson, 1881), 1–13. The poem was symbolically performed at Newnham in 1881, the year in which women were formally permitted to sit university examinations.

78.   Willson, *Out of My Borrowed Books,* 183–184. See Levy, Xantippe, 6.

79.   Hetherington and Valman, Introduction, 3. By gaining access to the Reading Room, women automatically defined themselves as public scholars, thus asserting their intellectual authority and professionalism.

80.   Hetherington and Valman, Introduction, 4.

81.   Hetherington and Valman, Introduction, 5.

82.   See Amy Levy, The Poetry of Christina Rossetti, *Woman's World* 1 (1888): 178–181; Levy, Women and Club Life, *Woman's World* 1 (1888): 364–367. It was a public response to the figure of the "masculine club," and probably because of this, it was often the object of mockery, namely, in *Punch.* Another of its features was its conception as a "club for workers," for professional women.

83.   Hetherington and Valman, Introduction, 10.

84.   Emma Francis, Amy Levy. Contradictions? Feminism and Semitic Discourse, in *Women's Poetry, Late Romantic to Late Victorian: Gender and Genre, 1830–1900*, ed. Isobel Armstrong and Virginia Blain (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), 192–193.

85.   Amy Levy, *A Minor Poet, and Other Verse* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1884).

86.   Amy Levy, *Reuben Sachs, a Sketch* (London and New York: Macmillan, 1889).

9

THE SALEM WITCHES (RE)CREATED AS NINETEENTH-CENTURY ROMANTIC HEROINES

Inês Tadeu F. G.

Abstract. In the nineteenth century, women remained invalidated as authors, and their work was often reviewed as unremarkable. Despite being dismissed both as authors and historians, they engaged creatively in retrieving the archival narratives about the Salem witch hunt of 1692. They contributed, on the one hand, to the preservation of a transcultural memory of the women as witch from Salem and, on the other, to the construction and recreation of the countermemory of the Salem witch hunt as a significant cautionary tale in nineteenth-century America and beyond. This chapter discusses the relevance of nineteenth-century historical fiction as a medium for the portrayal of the countercultural memory of the woman as witch and her recreation as the romantic witch-heroine in the historical novels *Salem: A Tale of the Seventeenth Century* (1874) by D. R. Castleton, the pen name of Caroline Rosina Derby, about Rebecca Nurse and *Martha Corey: A Tale of the Salem Witchcraft* (1890) by Constance Goddard Du Bois. However, the appropriation of these Salem women as witches by Castleton and Du Bois goes beyond mere historical representations. Nurse and Corey are mimetically recreated and represented as either victims of discrimination or romantic woman-as-witch heroines. The work of Castleton and Du Bois further suggests that, like their counterparts, the authors were firmly present in the nineteenth-century network of American fictional "herstories" as both writers and vicarious characters. While endeavoring to counter the dismissal of the woman as witch from Salem's herstory, Castleton's and Du Bois's additional depictions of her as a romantic heroine

offered both themselves and their contemporary female audience a stirring solace to slacken the clasp of their own "corseted" standing in society. Indeed, Castleton and Du Bois, like several others, may have also made the nineteenth-century American woman more mindful of the likelihood of a shift in her own social and cultural status quo.

The Salem Witch "Delusion"

The term *delusion* was extensively used by Charles Wentworth Upham in connection with the episode of the Salem witch hunt. According to Sarah Ferber, in the original Dewey system, in the "major section entitled 'Philosophy' (100–199), the 130s subheading of 'Anthropology' leads to sub-subheadings of 'Mental physiology and hygiene' (131) and 'Mental derangements' (132) and then 'Delusions, witchcraft, magic' (133). Thus, beliefs in magic and witchcraft (and implicitly in demons) are directly aligned with delusion but are also proximate to mental illness."[1]

The Salem witch hunt began in the early winter months of 1692 when two girls in the household of the newly appointed Puritan minister Samuel Parris of Salem Village began to suffer strange convulsions. They were his 9-year-old daughter Elizabeth Parris and his 11-year-old niece, Abigail Williams. William Griggs, the resident physician, after examining the girls, concluded that they were exhibiting all the signs of possession begotten by witchcraft. For over a month, Parris prayed and fasted, but then he instructed his daughter and niece to name their tormentors, and so they did. A few weeks later, there were more afflicted girls. Their accusations increased in number and swiftness, spreading from Salem Village to neighboring communities, and before long the entire county of Essex in Massachusetts was affected.[2] Between January 1692 and May 1693, approximately 183 townsfolk and villagers in Massachusetts were charged with being witches, a crime punishable by death under the early modern English common law. The Witchcraft Act of 1604 came into effect within a year of James I's accession to the throne of England. Harsher than previous versions, it made causing harm while resorting to magic—*maleficium*—even if it did not result in or lead to death, a capital crime. It also decreed death for anyone found guilty of committing for a second time a punishable offense using magic. It also proscribed the use of dead bodies in magic or the keeping, as opposed to the conjuration, of spirits.

In effect, it made it much simpler to convict anyone suspected of witchcraft, as the burden of proof was much reduced.[3] Of the accused, 114 men, women, and children were arrested and imprisoned for months. Another 43 people were tried, of which 27 were convicted and sentenced to death. Nineteen people were hung by short drop. An elderly man, Giles Corey, was pressed to death with stones for refusing to enter a plea. Eight people died in prison, including two nursing infants of the jailed women and a little girl. Six of the condemned were reprieved, whereas 16 others who had the financial means and could count on the help of family relatives of good social standing managed to escape prison entirely. Confessed witches numbered 46. Confession released people from their punishment and restored them to "the body of God's people." For the Puritan magistrates, the purpose of the civil courts was fundamentally a religious one, and the execution of justice was carried out according to the righteous word of God, hinging on the ritual of confession. The people charged with crimes appeared before the magistrates and were expected to acknowledge their guilt, reveal the truth, and exhibit repentance.[4] For the Puritans, confessing to the sin and crime of witchcraft was important, as Elizabeth Reis explained:

> Confessions had to be accompanied by sincere contrition. . . . The Salem witch trials epitomize the kind of confession required of accused women. Because of the supernatural nature of the Devil's perceived powers, witchcraft was a special case, difficult to prove without a confession. But confession, whether voluntary or coerced, had to follow certain prescriptions [as i]t was the only way to avoid damnation.[5]

Two people who were found innocent were unable to pay their jail fees and were forced into indentured servitude. By early October 1692, the newly appointed governor, William Phips, halted the trials, and by 12 May 1693 he issued a general amnesty to all the accused and convicted that were still imprisoned.

(Re)creating Goody Nurse and Goodwife Corey

Among the executed women were Rebecca Towne Nurse and Martha Pennoyer Rich Corey. Although they were respectable Puritan matriarchs by all accounts, Ann Putnam Jr., a member of their church, named them both as her spectral torturers. Rebecca Nurse was the oldest child of William Towne and Joanna Blessing and was born in Great Yarmouth, a coastal town in Norfolk, on the east coast of England. She was baptized at St. Nicholas Minster on 21 February 1621 and lived in Great Yarmouth until she was 16. She emigrated to America with her parents

and her five siblings aboard the *Rose of Yarmouth* in 1637, arriving in Boston later that same year. Two more Towne children were born in New England, where the family settled on a farm in Salem Village. Around 1644, Rebecca Towne married Francis Nurse—"Old Francis"—an English yeoman. As "a member of the mother-church in Salem [Rebecca Towne] had never transferred her relations to the village church, with which, however, she had generally worshipped, and probably communed."[6] At the time of the witch hunt, the 71-year-old widowed matriarch of the prosperous God-fearing Nurse family was perceived by friends and neighbors alike as "the very essence of what a Puritan mother should be. . . . When [she] spoke it was as if one of the grand women of the Old Testament were speaking. . . . In her home life she had resembled the wise woman of Proverbs."[7]

Nurse was first arrested on 23 March "for having practiced certain detestable arts called witchcraft upon Ann Putnam, Mary Walcot, Elizabeth Hubbard, and Abigail Williams."[8] After being excommunicated, hers was one of the first cases tried by the court when it resumed its sittings later in June. A jury headed by Thomas Fisk heard the evidence and returned a verdict of not guilty. However, her initial acquittal was soon overturned largely because of spectral afflictions that had befallen Ann Putnam between 19 and 24 March 1692. On 19 July, after her incarceration, Nurse was one of five women sentenced to death for the crime of witchcraft and hung on Gallows Hill.[9] Charles Wentworth Upham, nineteenth-century New England historian, Salem mayor, congressman, and Unitarian pastor, in 1867 published the first substantial history of Salem to date, and it was the first history to organize the scattered records into a coherent and detailed reconstruction of the memory of the trials.[10] About Nurse, Upham stated,

> there is no more disgraceful record in the judicial annals of the country, than that which relates the trial of this excellent woman. . . . The case of Rebecca Nurse proves that a verdict could not have been obtained against a person of her character charged with witchcraft in this county, had not the most extraordinary efforts been made by the prosecuting officer, aided by the whole influence of the Court and provincial authorities. The odium of the proceedings at the trials and at the executions cannot fairly be laid upon Salem, or the people of this vicinity. But nothing can extenuate the infamy that must for ever rest upon the names of certain parties to the proceedings.[11]

In D. R. Castleton's *Salem: A Tale of the Seventeenth Century*,[12] Rebecca Nurse is portrayed as a far more outspoken woman than the trial records allow us to infer when she spontaneously utters,

"Afflicted children! Indeed!—afflicted fiddlesticks, I say," quoth Goody Nurse; "I don't believe a word of it; I believe it's all shamming. If either of my little maids had trained on so at their age, I guess I would have afflicted them with the end of my broomstick. I would have whipped it out of them, I know."[13]

Indeed, in a whole chapter detailing Rebecca Nurse's ordeals as an accused witch, the narrator underlines, "Mrs. Nurse . . . was a free-spoken, active body. . . . No doubt Mrs. Nurse had been free in the expression of her sentiments upon these subjects—it was the nature of the woman to be so."[14] However, "Mrs. Nurse [is also] the purest, truest, humblest Christian, and blameless in character."[15]

Giles Corey and Martha Pennoyer Rich Corey lived in the southwestern corner of the village of Salem as prosperous farmers. In 1692, Giles Corey was nearly 80 years old. Pious but short-tempered, over the years he had been served with lawsuits, and worse. Born in 1612, in England, he went to New England some time before the 1660s. With his first wife, Margaret, he had four daughters. She died, and in 1664 he married Mary Britt, who also passed away in 1684. Already an old man, he took another wife a year later, Martha Rich, a widow.[16] Martha Rich was 25 years his junior—she is thought to have been in her sixties and the widow of Henry Rich when she married Giles. While still a young woman, she had borne a mixed-race son out of wedlock who still resided in the Corey household.[17] Nonetheless, she had long been a good standing member of the Salem Town Puritan church. In addition, by the time of the Salem trials it had been a year since she had also been welcomed into the Salem Village congregation.[18] She was a respected older woman of the Puritan faith because of her perfect attendance at meetings and her inflexible prayer habits. She was not well liked, however, known for being far too outspoken and opinionated.[19] As Upham details it,

> when the proceedings relating to witchcraft began, she did not approve of them, and expressed her want of faith in the "afflicted children." She discountenanced the whole affair, and would not follow the multitude to the examinations; but was said to have spoken freely of the course of the magistrates, saying that their eyes were blinded, and that she could open them. It seemed to her clear that they were violating common sense and the Word of God, and she was confident that she could convince them of their errors. Instead of falling into the delusion, she applied herself with renewed earnestness to keep her own mind under the influence of prayer, and spent more time in devotion than ever before.[20]

According to Marion Starkey, Martha Corey's scepticism about the whole course of the Salem witchcraft hunt bordered on heresy.[21] Upham states, "It is proved conclusively by the depositions adduced against her, that her mind was wholly disenthralled from the errors of that period. She utterly repudiated the doctrines of witchcraft, and expressed herself freely and fearlessly against them."[22] Ultimately, this outspokenness would lead to the accusations of witchcraft against her, resulting in her long imprisonment and excommunication and, similarly to Rebecca Nurse, hasten her demise. On 22 September, having been sentenced to death for the crime of witchcraft, she was also hanged on Gallows Hill.[23]

In Constance Goddard Du Bois's *Martha Corey: A Tale of the Salem Witchcraft*,[24] the protagonist is a younger woman who is characterized by her wit, her extensive knowledge of herbal medicine, and her trust in divine inspiration through prayer: "I went, therefore, to my closet, and prayed for guidance, and it came as it always does."[25] She is also portrayed as the sort of intrepid woman who "was dismayed by her arrest, but not cast down. She looked forward to a speedy vindication when she should be brought face to face with her accusers."[26]

Underlining the gross miscarriage of Puritan justice against both Nurse and Corey, Upham notices,

> there was this difference between Rebecca Nurse and Martha Corey: The latter was an utter heretic on the point of the popular faith respecting witchcraft; she did not believe that there were any witches, and she looked upon the declarations and actions of the "afflicted children" as the ravings of "distracted persons." The former seems to have held the opinions of the day, and had no disbelief in witchcraft: she was willing to admit that the children were bewitched; but she knew her own innocence, and nothing could move her from the consciousness of it.[27]

The Woman as Witch from Salem

Witch-hunting was ever present in seventeenth-century New England. The mostly Puritan colonists remained rather close to the English Tudor and Stuart tradition as far as their beliefs about the woman as witch were concerned. The Salem clergy, congregation members, and villagers shared with their contemporaries in England the same transcultural memory about the woman as witch. In early modern demonological and strixological literature, a witch had the powers of metamorphization, transvection, spectral projection, keeping familiars–incubi and succubae or demons in the shape of animals—and causing harm—or *maleficia*. Also, "the witch was your spouse, your clergyman, your teacher, your doctor, your cousin the nun, or even your child."[28]

Suggesting disparagingly that the author is very much acquainted with the English woman as witch, the narrator in *Martha Corey* comments,

> It was not necessary at that time for anyone to discuss the premises in the theory of witchcraft, for it was as generally understood and believed in as is any accepted scientific theory to-day. Accepting the credibility of such cases, occurring by hundreds in Europe, and in scattered instances in America, the question was only, Is this a similar and well authenticated case?[29]

The crime of witchcraft in early modern New England was also primarily linked to women and womanhood. The suspected witches were perceived as either "weak-minded wenches, easily misled by the Great Deceiver, or ill-tempered hags who asked the Devil for assistance"[30] to perform their *maleficium*, that is, to cause harm to others by preternatural means. For sixteenth-century and seventeenth-century Christians, the term *supernatural* referred to the realm of God and denoted "the activity of his grace." Witchcraft, ghosts, and the power of the devil constituted the *preternatural*. This category related to what occurred beyond the normal bounds of nature and ranged from the activity of the devil himself and the demonic dealings of magical agents such as witches to the activities of all spiritual agents other than God and his immediate servants: the angels, the disembodied souls of the dead, and demons. However, since the nineteenth century, the use of the word *supernatural* relating to the divine has fallen into disuse, and most contemporary readers understand this term as signifying beings other than God.[31]

Besides inflicting harm on neighbors and their property, the woman as witch committed apostasy for she entered into a covenant with Satan. The Puritan ministers were thus particularly wary about the woman as witch being the Devil's agent who ensnared members away from their congregations. As a woman as witch, you were an enemy of both New England society and the Puritan faith.[32] Also in Du Bois's *Martha Corey*, Lady Phips, governor Phips's wife, laments how

> a terrible calamity has fallen upon this land [Salem]. Good and learned men believe that Satan has won many to sell their souls for the sake of possessing the power of a witch, and that dwellers in our villages, and members even of our churches have joined the evil covenant. It is a fact plain to me that terrible injustice has been done by the superstition which engulfs the innocent with the guilty, and I can hardly believe that any are guilty of this charge.[33]

Not Forgetting the Salem Witch Hunt

The transcultural memory of the Salem witch hunt of 1692 has notoriously commanded the attention and challenged the creativity of many American writers, men and women alike, in both fiction and nonfiction. Indeed, "popular impressions of the subject have been shaped more by fictional than factual accounts."[34] The fictional and nonfictional literary construction and recreation of American cultural memories has been ongoing since the European colonization.[35] This controlled and culturally contained construction of a site of American memory was pervasive in the nineteenth century, mainly between the War of 1812 and the Civil War.[36] The publication of a considerable number of historical novels was "central to the development of the American culture at that time."[37] These were the literary sites of memory that supported the architecture of a national American culture and identity as individuals responded to "the collective desire for fictional commemorations of earlier stages of colonial and national U.S. American History."[38] Post-Revolutionary Americans set out to inculcate a "unifying set of national values" and contributed to the "construction of a collective national memory" in the early United States.[39] Alternatively, in nineteenth-century America,

> memory was needed not simply to understand the past: it had to relate
> to who one was in the present. But the more a person felt the need to
> insist on memory and to construct his or her past, the more it seemed
> to be in danger. The wish to tell one's story was met by the anxiety of
> being unable to do so, even though there was a story to tell. Memory
> was celebrated but in constant crisis.[40]

The Salem witch hunt was an example of such a story, widely known not only regionally in New England but nationally as well. Reassembled mostly through memory and imagination, the "mythology that is going to constitute the history of the Salem Witchcraft trials"[41] became an inescapable portion of the cultural countermemory of the American colonial past. This was due not only to the existence of a large body of contemporary written materials, such as the trial transcripts and published commentary that recorded the events, but also to the later nineteenth-century historiographical and literary constructions and recreations. Thus, I agree with Marta Rodríguez that the nineteenth century should be "the starting point for any analysis of the mythology that has been created around the Salem witch hunt."[42]

The trials are very well documented. The records are uniquely detailed to the extent that there are three or four separate accounts of some of the pre-trial examinations and the statements of the accusers and the accused. Marion Gibson suggests that the abundance of surviving records may be the result of the legal traits of the Salem court, namely, its central location in the small community where all the accusations arose and the contribution of many ministers and other godly and well-educated people from both within and outside that community. Also, Puritan religious beliefs held that not only did you often examine all visible manifestations of God's providence, but you also wrote about them, wrote to others about them, and reflected on and debated them.[43] So as well as court records, the notebooks and letters of magistrates, clergymen, and other literate people were also made readily available for historical research shortly after the events took place. Moreover, though the texts about the Court of Oyer and Terminer were lost, the bulk of the pretrial and open records was not.[44]

The original records of the Salem witchcraft trials are a unique medial source in that they provide modern scholars with a better insight—though perhaps not an accurate one[45]—into the early American Puritans' views on both the events that led to witchcraft accusations and also which criminal procedures applied to the crime of witchcraft.[46] Nineteenth-century historians thus emphasized the accusatorial tone of the early trial records with little care for their detailed content. As Gibson points out, they "preserved, too, an anxious concern with the inclusive and (as they saw it) worryingly democratic nature of American justice. . . . But they buried the actual texts under thick layers of myth that have proved almost impossible to remove."[47]

Indeed, according to Brian F. Le Beau, "by the third decade of the nineteenth century the Salem witchcraft hunt had become sufficiently embarrassing to some and marginalized to others to assume only a minor role in the nation's and region's history."[48] The belief that the Salem hunt had been the fault of the New England clergymen and interested public men was then articulated in the nineteenth century by Upham, who failed to make an unbiased argument, blaming almost exclusively certain accusers and judges to the detriment of others. To him, the men and women accused of witchcraft were innocent victims of "delusion," whereas their accusers—the girls, the ministers, the neighbors—were malicious liars. Upham also saw Cotton Mather as culpable, biased, and the source of inflammatory speeches, whereas Reverend Samuel Parris was said to have acted out of revenge or personal gain.[49] Upham's impact is quite noticeable, for example, in Du Bois's portrayal of Minister Parris as the villainous instigator of the Salem

witch hunt: "Opposition meant enmity in Mr Parris's opinion; and he returned the feeling with a malevolence that would have astonished his opponents. . . . He stood behind the scenes and pulled the wires."[50]

Nevertheless, Upham is seemingly the only nineteenth-century historian to have gone through all the Salem witchcraft sources, published or unpublished, and the first to systematize them.[51] Moreover, though in some cases Upham misread the records and in others he creatively sought to breach the gaps in the historical narrative, he was the favorite authority on the Salem witchcraft trials in the nineteenth century, and perhaps for many, he still is today. For Gibson, Upham's "view—a summation of liberal-Christian impulses expressed in the medium of witchcraft history—is dominant in liberal American culture."[52] Undeniably, about the events of the Salem witch hunt, Upham concludes,

> One of the most cruel features in the prosecution of the witchcraft trials, and which was practised in all countries where they took place, was the examination of the bodies of the prisoners by a jury of the same sex, under the direction and in the presence of a surgeon or physician. The person was wholly exposed, and every part subjected to the most searching scrutiny. The process was always an outrage upon human nature; and in the case of the victims on this occasion, many of them of venerable years and delicate feelings, it was shocking to every natural and instinctive sentiment. There is reason to fear that it was often conducted in a rough, coarse, and brutal manner.[53]

The pervasiveness of Upham's historical account of the Salem witch hunt, particularly that of the Salem woman as witch as the victim of a "delusion," is one of the most distinctive features in the historical novels here introduced of the witch heroines Rebecca Nurse and Martha Corey. For example, in *Salem*, the narrator laments that "the terrible delusion of witchcraft upon this narrative is founded, had a sudden rise, but it had still a more sudden termination; the monstrous evil had sprung up and swelled until it burst by the innate force of its own virulence."[54]

The Woman as Witch in "Herstorical" Fiction

As previously discussed, in the early decades of the nineteenth century the interest in telling, interpreting, preserving, and commemorating U.S. national history heightened considerably. American women writers, having mainly been left out of the new American historiography, saw the popular genre of historical fiction as

a means of changing the prevailing patriarchal narratives of national origins and historical development. They wanted to reflect the many experiences and contributions of American, female, historical agents underrepresented in the nation's past.[55] Many women writers used historical fiction to write women back into the country's "herstory." Thus,

> when female historical novelists stepped in to provide their answers to this essentially theoretical question and to develop their models of historical process, they inevitably introduced the term of gender into the equation. Without challenging the essential principles of historical progress and the transmission of culture between generations of Americans, women writers made critical adjustments to it, questioning the patriarchal assumptions on which it rested. By imaginatively revisioning the American past, these writers sought to insert women into antebellum historiographies discourse, to revise, if not absolutely to reject, the theory of patriarchal historical transmission, and thereby to define an enduring role for women historical actors in the ongoing progress of the nation.[56]

Since historical fiction is mnemonic and mimetic, as a medial for presenting a reimagined past, it facilitates cultural memory not only by memorializing but also by acting as countermemory. As argued by Mitchell and Parsons, "in this way, the novel both offers itself as a witness to, or commemoration of, the [historical event] and its victims, including the survivors, and dramatizes the process by which memory is transmitted; the events are made memorable by the affective evocation of unrepresentable suffering and the numberless dead."[57]

Though mindful of the impact of historiography, some women writers like Castleton and Du Bois resorted to the fictional historical discourse to recreate the political life of the nation, to comment on it, and to rewrite the history of American women. The choice of historical fiction has frequently been used by women writers as a way of writing about subjects that would otherwise be off-limits or of offering a critique of the present through their treatment of the past. Perhaps even more important for female authors has been the way that the historical novel has allowed women to invent, or reimagine, the unrecorded lives of marginalized and subordinated people, in this case, women. The problems that arise from writing history—the lack of records, the inappropriateness of standard periodization and chronology, and the focus solely on public events—led some female historians, including H. F. M. Prescott, to opt for writing historical fiction.[58] Yet, as Castleton highlights, they undertook the correct use of the historical sources at hand:

In all that is purely historical we claim to be strictly authentic: such portions being either copies from the court records, or carefully compiled from the most reliable historians. Our own feet have trodden the precincts of "Salem Village," of "Gallow's Hill," and "Prison Lane;" in our own hands we have held the veritable "witch-pins;" our own eyes have searched the records, and read one of the original death-warrants still in preservation—and therefore we claim to know something of that of which we have written.[59]

The high degree of fictionality of the female historians' work often led it to be labeled, however, as historically inaccurate and to be dismissed as inconsequential, particularly by the women's male peers. For instance, Nathaniel Hawthorne protests that "America is now given over to a damned mob of scribbling women, and I should have no success while the public taste is occupied with their trash."[60] Unwaveringly, in their prefaces women writers often addressed this very issue. For example, Du Bois asks the gentle reader

to overlook various anachronisms of speech which the author of these pages has allowed her characters,—believing that to reproduce with absolute fidelity a past phraseology, one must be more antiquarian and linguist than romancer, and that a faithful historical study can be made by an outline sketch as well as by a finished picture. . . . It seemed needful to draw a veil across this darker side of the subject, and to depend on the reader's historical consciousness for the appreciation of that which is left untold.[61]

For their works of historical fiction, women authors like Castleton and Du Bois were more harshly criticized for "failing to reproduce Scott's sense of the past."[62] However, their historical novels were intended for various audiences, and women writers of this genre published as prolifically as men. George Dekker asserts that "the nineteenth-century historical romance must be regarded as a predominantly masculine genre on two counts. First, . . . the most successful historical romancers were men [and] its heroic matter favoured the celebration of male feats and male relationships."[63] I agree with Nina Baym in rejecting this view. Besides not making clear his concept of "successful," Dekker completely disregards many other nineteenth-century women writers, such as the ones discussed in this study. He further ignores how many women writers at that time published under male pseudonyms.[64] More than 20 women's prose miscellanies included historical fiction at this time. A considerable number of uncollected historical stories were also published in the periodical press since "New England far exceeded other regions

in per capita production and consumption of literature."[65] Indeed, many famous American women of letters tried or dabbled in historical fiction, but only a few of them remained exclusive to the genre.[66] Others still abandoned historical fiction after only one, unsuccessful, attempt.[67] Most women writers of historical fiction were Anglo-Protestant and from New England, and almost half of the historical societies founded in America between 1790 and 1830 were New England based or devoted to the memorialization of the New England past. Unsurprisingly, as the cultural memory of the Salem witch hunt was well established in the nineteenth century, it became a frequent leitmotif, particularly in historical fiction.[68]

In addition to the recreation of the cultural countermemory of the Salem witch hunt, the work of female women authors informed readers about relevant contemporary themes and antiquarian interests, expressing a variety of proto-feminist sentiments. Furthermore, though these women authors wrote mostly in a domestic context, I must agree with Jane Tompkins that their work is anything but domestic, in the sense of being limited to purely personal concerns. On the contrary, their work is "global and its interests identical with the interests of [gender and] race."[69] The resulting Salem herstories conveyed in novels such as Castleton's *Salem* and Du Bois's *Martha Corey* "provided Americans with a useful cultural boundary marker between the rational, independent present and the superstition-filled colonial past," being a "New England-based attempt to turn real British colonists into symbolic American settlers, [as the] memory of the 1692 Salem witchcraft trials emerged as a negative symbol."[70] In other words, a cautionary tale was constructed and recreated as a countermemory.

Often in nineteenth-century American novels, "the story of individuals [was] constructed within a larger historical setting and driven by the memory of past events." For example, both the witch-heroines in the novels here discussed, Rebecca Nurse and Martha Corey, are brought back to life but within the context of the Salem witch hunt's countermemory. The transcultural memory of the woman as witch is in symbiosis with the countermemory of the Salem witch hunt. As Rodríguez argues, "the introduction of the general beliefs in witchcraft emphasizes the similarity of what happened in Salem to the previous executions in Europe. At the same time, we can see an apparent historiographical influence because some of the references included in the history books can also be found in the works of fiction."[71] In *Salem,* for instance, the narrator interrupts the narrative, for "it becomes necessary to the course of our narrative that we should turn back and learn what the pages of history and the voices of tradition have preserved of the commencement of the strange and terrible delusion which, under the name of the 'Salem Witchcraft.'"[72] During this plot hiatus, the reader is briefly lectured

about historical, geographical, economic, social, and theological aspects that led to and surrounded the Salem witch hunt. Though the reader may come across many evident historical deviations in these historical novels, Rodríguez concludes, "if only one accusation is presented, or if one fictional character is constructed out of several historical individuals, it should be considered a specific contribution of literature to the fictional representation of the SWT [Salem witch trials] and not a lack of accuracy or a desire to alter the historical reality."[73]

All in all, women authors like Castleton and Du Bois chose to add or to leave out or to make up many of the historical elements of the Salem witch hunt. However, to us, it is not only the "literary construction of this historical event" that matters. What is most pertinent is their contribution to the creation of the countermemory of the Salem witch hunt as "a warning against what can happen in any society that is drawn by delusion and hysteria."[74] In the words of the narrator in Castleton's *Salem*, "but the history of the Past is the warning of the Future."[75]

Last, we must also consider the nineteenth-century use of the transcultural Anglo-American memory of woman as witch in the Salem-plotted historical novels. Susan Elsey, in her doctoral dissertation, addresses the recurrent use of the image of the woman as witch in nineteenth-century literature. Still a sinister outcast, the nineteenth-century woman as witch nonetheless assumed the role of "spokescharacter" through which writers and artists could express what was often considered unspeakable in reputable Victorian society. The woman as witch thus became a figure of pity or scorn who predominantly evoked empathy and reminded the intended audiences of "the margins and the marginalised."[76] Likewise, as Elsey also argues, the nineteenth-century witch was portrayed "as both a woman erroneously labelled a witch through fear, hatred or delusion, (including self-delusion), and as a malign demon. The underlying message of nineteenth-century fiction is that witchery is in the eye of the beholder."[77] We find that Elsey's description resonates with the woman-as-witch heroines Rebecca Nurse and Martha Corey since they are portrayed not as demonic hags, but as "innocent or deluded victim[s]."[78]

The Romantic Witch-Heroines from Salem

As already stated, the topic of witchcraft and, more specifically, the Salem witch hunt of 1692–1693 became one of the favorite aspects of colonial Puritan history explored by many American women writers of historical fiction during the nineteenth century. Several, like Castleton and Du Bois, chose to deal with this theme

in the form of a romantic historical novel.[79] Their partiality for this theme may have been aimed at giving more visibility to Puritan religious intolerance, fanaticism, superstition, bigotry, zeal, and misogyny or to better express the sectarian strife of colonial times. Philip Gould, however, offers us a more political point of view. He argues that the historical context of the Puritan epistemological interest about spectral evidence at Salem, and all the historical literature around it, was profoundly shaped by the legacy of classical republicanism and the natural fear of latent factions during the rise of the political parties between the 1790s and the 1830s.[80]

Ultimately, Castleton and Du Bois inscribed women—or more specifically the woman as witch—into the predominantly male cultural memory of the Salem witch hunt as romantic witch-heroines to "demonstrate the ways that patriarchy ignores, violently controls or represses the desires of women, be they aristocrats or beggars."[81] Accordingly, Castleton makes her intentions quite clear in *Salem*'s preface:

> We know, indeed, that the more practiced hand of an able and faithful historian has already put it upon record in a masterly way, and in so doing has made a rich and valuable contribution to our national literature. But these books, though deeply interesting, are too valuable and too weighty to be found in free circulation among general readers; and we have been surprised to find how very vague and incorrect was the knowledge of this subject in many cultivated persons who were well-informed on other matters of history.
>   We have endeavored with careful hand to retouch the rapidly fading picture—to call up again to view the scenes and actors of those terrible times; and if in so doing we have ventured "to twine round history's legends dim the glowing roses of romance," it was only to heighten the effect of the picture.[82]

The subgenre of romantic historical fiction is more thoroughly historicized and, consequently, more meaningful when studied from a cultural point of view. Ernest E. Leisy argues that it "satisfies a desire for national homogeneity [and] is concerned with historical truth."[83] In romantic historical fiction, the love relationship is determined by the historical events and characters of the period in question, and the actual romantic interest focuses on a central fictional character or characters that, for the sake of historical verisimilitude, behave authentically in conformity with his or her place and time. For example, to further fill in the gaps concerning the underlying causes of the Salem witch hunt, in most Salem-plotted romantic historical novels one can find the "love triangle or love plot" as a

typical frame of reference. It replaces "the family feuds, the fights among neighbors because of land problems, and the misfortunes, such as the loss of cattle or the ruin of the crops, which have generally been used by scholars to explain the accusations."[84] As a result, often the main motive for the witchcraft accusations is to take revenge for unrequited love or love rebuffs.[85] In Du Bois's *Martha Corey*, Beatrice Desmond is engaged to be married to Charles Beverly and is very much in love with him. Her cousin, Capt. Percy Desmond, however, is determined to have her for his wife. To break the couple up, he reveals to her, on her wedding day, that Charles had been having an affair with a married woman. With a broken heart, instead of falling into Captain Desmond's arms, Beatrice runs away to New England, where she is taken in by the Coreys under an assumed name. Captain Desmond tracks her down and, failing to win her affection, out of revenge plots with Minister Parris her demise, as well as Martha Corey's, who had stoically stood by and had protected Beatrice from him. Both are accused of witchcraft, but while Martha Corey stays behind and embraces her fate, Beatrice is rescued by Charles Beverly: "Beverly richly rewarded the jailer . . . and Beverly hurried Beatrice away from the fatal spot."[86]

Conclusions

The transcultural memory of the woman as witch from Salem is present in the characters of Rebecca Nurse in Castleton's *Salem* and Martha Corey in Du Bois's *Martha Corey*. Romantic heroines are cultural constructs that do not necessarily derive from reality and facts but are mimetically constructed and recreated. Instead of presenting objective or comprehensive views of history based on the available records of the Salem witch hunt, these romantic historical novels offer personal, family, or fictional memories in order to provide subjective, selective, and individualistic reports. They further offer an alternative or countermemory to the more official versions of the nineteenth-century historians that were circulating at the time. The manner in which the women authors of romantic historical novels chose to write about witchcraft and the Salem witch hunt, "often [stressing] the importance of chance, irrational and inexplicable impulses, supernatural events, and the individual as the subjective center of his or her own mental world, [is] detached from wider social processes."[87] In doing so, women writers such as Castleton and Du Bois conceivably envisaged instilling in nineteenth-century American women's minds, at the very least, a willingness to entertain the possibility of a change in their own social and cultural status quo similar to that of the recreated romantic witch-heroines of Salem.

The exegesis of Salem-plotted romantic historical novels, however, cannot be reduced to a mere exploration of how the historical facts may have been perverted by the authors of historical fiction.[88] It must also be an examination of the process of cultural representation of the woman as witch. Their appropriation of the woman as witch connects Castleton and Du Bois, and they do go beyond the historical representations. They recreate and represent the witches Rebecca Nurse and Martha Corey as romantic witch-heroines instead.

The women as witches, as they are crafted by these female authors, always initiate some form of subversion. As illustrated in Castleton's *Salem* and Du Bois's *Martha Corey*, in these romantic historical novels, witches and women form a covenant of subversion against the limits and violations imposed upon them by external stereotypes or cultural constructs. Like other female authors of their time, Castleton and Du Bois further interpret and reconfigure the woman as witch from Salem for their protofeminist agenda. They engaged creatively in retrieving and rediscovering the archival narratives of their time about the Salem witch hunt. They were resolutely present in the nineteenth-century network of American fictional herstories as both authors and characters. As Christine Palumbo-Desimone puts it, these authors achieved "the uncanny doubling between female protagonist and female reader who recognizes her own vulnerability, lack of agency, and powerlessness in society"[89] and endeavored to counter it. Their mnemonic reimaginations of the woman as witch from Salem as a discriminated victim and a romantic heroine seemingly contributed to the maintenance of the transcultural memory of the woman as witch and witchcraft, and the "victimization involved in witchcraft accusations or the social panics so often connected to them."[90] Finally, by challenging the subjugation of the women as witches by the colonial, Puritan, patriarchal status quo the Salem witch hunt had long come to epitomize, women authors such as Castleton and Du Bois also helped in the recreation of the cultural countermemory of the Salem witch hunt as a cathartic cautionary tale not forgotten in nineteenth-century America and beyond.

Notes

1.   See Charles W. Upham, *Salem Witchcraft: With an Account of Salem Village and a History of Opinions on Witchcraft and Kindred Subjects*, 2 vols. (Boston: Wiggin & Lunt, 1867; facsimile edition with foreword by Brian Le Beau, Mineola, N.Y.: Dover, 2000), 5, 33–38, 41–42, 52, 54, 65, 70, 90–100, 113, 117, 135, 156, 167, 171, 190, 207, 216, 236, 238, 246, 248, 259, 286, 288, 308, 310, 312, 335, 343, 346, 348, 358, 363, 364, 366–369, 377, 380, 383, 398, 411–412, 428–429, 433–435, 438–440, 447, 457, 461, 471, 489–490, 495, 503, 508, 510, 513, 520; citations refer to

the Dover edition. Sarah Ferber, Psychotic Reactions? Witchcraft, the Devil and Mental Illness, in *Emotions in the History of Witchcraft*, ed. Laura Kounine and Michael Ostling (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 231–245.

2.   Richard Godbeer, *The Devil's Dominion: Magic and Religion in Early New England* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 179–181.

3.   See C. L'Estrange Ewen, ed., *Witch Hunting and Witch Trials: The Indictments for Witchcraft from the Records of 1373 Assizes Held for the Home Circuit AD 1559–1736*, Routledge Library Editions: Witchcraft 3 (London: Routledge, 2011; first published, London: Keegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1929), 19–21.

4.   See David D. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgement: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990), 175.

5.   Elizabeth Reis, *Damned Women: Sinners and Witches in Puritan New England* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1997), 131.

6.   Upham, *Salem Witchcraft*, 56.

7.   Marion Lena Starkey, *The Devil in Massachusetts: A Modern Enquiry into the Salem Witch Trials* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949; repr., New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1989), 78–79. Citations refer to the Doubleday Anchor edition.

8.   Upham, *Salem Witchcraft*, 60.

9.   For a detailed account of Rebecca Nurse's examinations and trials, see Starkey, *Devil in Massachusetts*, 78–79, 159–164, 175; Upham, *Salem Witchcraft*, 356–357, 360. For her full arrest warrant, examination, physical examination, evidence, summons, and death warrant, see Bernard Rosenthal, ed., *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 28–32, 47, 61, 217, 244, 253–255, 259, 267, 271, 285–294, 340, 343, 357–373, 382, 417–418, 420.

10.   See Marion Gibson, *Witchcraft Myths in American Culture* (London: Routledge, 2007), 42, 56; Paul S. Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum, *Salem Possessed: The Social Origins of Witchcraft* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976), x–xi.

11.   Upham, *Salem Witchcraft*, 509–511.

12.   D. R. Castleton [Caroline Rosina Derby], *Salem: A Tale of the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1874).

13.   Castleton, *Salem*, 45.

14.   Castleton, *Salem*, 144–166 (quote at 147).

15.   Castleton, *Salem*, 185.

16.   See Peter Charles Hoffer, *The Salem Witchcraft Trials: A Legal History* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1997), 121.

17.   Mary Beth Norton, *In the Devil's Snare: The Salem Witchcraft Crisis of 1692* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), 47.

18.   Starkey, *Devil in Massachusetts*, 66–68.

19.   On the social power of a witch's language in Puritan New England and how a woman's speech identified her as either virtuous or sinful, see Jane Kamensky, Female Speech and Other Demons: Witchcraft and Wordcraft in Early New England, in *Spellbound: Women and Witchcraft*

in America, ed. Elizabeth Reis (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1998), 25–51. Also see Starkey, *Devil in Massachusetts*, 66–68, 70–71, 74–75.

20. Upham, *Salem Witchcraft*, 38–39.

21. Starkey, *Devil in Massachusetts*, 66–68.

22. Upham, *Salem Witchcraft*, 458.

23. For a detailed account of Martha Corey's examinations and trial see, for example, Starkey, *Devil in Massachusetts*, 64, 66–68, 70–71, 74–75, 150, 203, 255; Upham, *Salem Witchcraft*, 341–345, 626–627. Also, to read in full her arrest warrant, examination, physical examination, evidence, summons and death warrant, see Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 15–21, 24, 30, 47, 61, 66, 164, 217, 239–240, 269, 384, 458, 476–477, 549.

24. Constance Goddard Du Bois, *Martha Corey: A Tale of the Salem Witchcraft* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg, 1890).

25. Du Bois, *Martha Corey*, 109.

26. Du Bois, *Martha Corey*, 288.

27. Upham, *Salem Witchcraft*, 361.

28. See Jane P. Davidson, *Early Modern Supernatural: The Dark Side of European Culture, 1400–1700* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: Praeger, 2012), 58–60.

29. Du Bois, *Martha Corey*, 238.

30. Carol F. Karlsen, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman: Witchcraft in Colonial New England* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1998), 5.

31. See Francis Young, *English Catholics and the Supernatural, 1553–1829* (Farnham, U.K.: Ashgate, 2013), 23–26.

32. Karlsen, *Devil in the Shape of a Woman*, 2–3, 4–5.

33. Du Bois, *Martha Corey*, 302.

34. Karlsen, *Devil in the Shape of a Woman*, xii.

35. Astrid Erll, *Memory in Culture*, trans. Sara B. Young (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 48.

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37. Harry Brinton Henderson, *Versions of the Past: The Historical Imagination in American Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), xviii.

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41. Marta Maria Gutiérrez Rodríguez, Historia y ficción: La representación de los procesos de Salem (1692) en la prosa de ficción angloamericana del siglo XIX (Ph.D. diss., Valladolid, Universidad de Valladolid, Valladolid, Spain, 2009), 3.

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44. Gibson, *Witchcraft Myths in American Culture*, 23.

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46. Gibson, *Witchcraft Myths in American Culture*, 30–34.

47. Gibson, *Witchcraft Myths in American Culture*, 37–38.

48. Le Beau, Foreword, in Upham, *Salem Witchcraft*, xv.

49. For a more detailed discussion about Upham's conclusions, see Le Beau, Foreword, i–liii.

50. Du Bois, *Martha Corey*, 129, 284.

51. Boyer and Nissenbaum, *Salem Possessed*, x–xi.

52. Gibson, *Witchcraft Myths in American Culture*, 56.

53. Upham, *Salem Witchcraft*, 500.

54. Castleton, *Salem*, 331.

55. Juliette Guilbert, Rewriting the Republic: American Women's Historical Fiction 1824–1869 (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, New Haven, Conn., 1999), 9.

56. Guilbert, Rewriting the Republic, 16.

57. Kate Mitchell and Nicola Parsons, eds., *Reading Historical Fiction: The Revenant and Remembered Past* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 10–11.

58. Quoted in Wallace Notestein, *A History of Witchcraft in England from 1558 to 1718* (Washington, D.C.: American Historical Association, 1911), 2.

59. Castleton, *Salem*, v.

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61. Du Bois, *Martha Corey*, 6.

62. Nina Baym, *American Women Writers and the Work of History, 1790–1860* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1995), 265–279.

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70.   Adams, *Specter of Salem*, 43–44.

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74.   Rodríguez, Salem Witchcraft Trials, 27–28.

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10

CHOOSING TO BE ARTISTS

Women's Networks in Evelyn Scott's *Escapade*

Khristeena Lute

Abstract. Evelyn Scott was profoundly affected by early events in her life, including her role as a Southern woman, her elopement with a married man twice her age, and her experience during the seven years they spent living in poverty in Brazil. This experience became the basis for Scott's 1923 memoir, *Escapade*, which chronicles her life in Brazil. Evelyn Scott has been the subject of little research in recent years, and none to date has addressed her place in women's social networks. In her teens, Scott participated in women's suffrage clubs, wrote editorials for the local paper, and involved herself in various social networks that her class and education made available to her. Once in Brazil, however, she no longer possessed the privilege her class once gave her; Scott sought an escape from Southern patriarchy and oppression and, instead, found herself in an even more heavily oppressed environment with little presence of the women's networks in which she once participated. Scott's time without women's networks resulted in a deep isolation and loneliness, which led her to turn inward, focusing on her physical pain after a difficult pregnancy and childbirth. Once Scott returned to the United States, her creative life was able to grow, with women's networks once again to support her. Scott's situation raises the following questions: How does involvement in and removal from women's social networks impact the woman writer? How do poverty and issues of social visibility affect her intellectual pursuits? Using Scott biographers D. A. Callard and Mary Wheeling White and various Scott critics, such as Paul Jones, in this chapter I explore the role that feminist networks played for Evelyn Scott, how the lack of these networks affected Scott in Brazil, and how this failure affected Scott as a Southern woman writer.

For nineteenth-century American women, social ties were usually a luxury to seek when they had leisurely lives that provided them the time and means to socialize. Sociologist Laura Lein explains the importance of human connection and networks: "Not only do networks allow individuals to provide each other with pragmatic and logistical help, but they provide emotional and psychological support."[1] Nineteenth-century women depended on these networks, especially when they were contained in the home and had little to no exposure to outside ideas, friendships, or connections. As Deborah Belle notes, "social support, defined as emotional and instrumental assistance from others, has been perhaps the most widely researched moderator of stress."[2] And yet poverty lowers the chances and opportunities for women to form these necessary social ties, resulting in elevated stress and social isolation.

Evelyn Scott's women's networks were weakly formed before her sojourn in Brazil. Her conservative Southern society eschewed her after she ran away with a married man; her mother (represented as Aunt Nanette in her memoir, *Escapade*)[3] suffered a mental breakdown and openly blamed Scott, her spouse (represented as John in *Escapade*) blamed her for her debilitated physical condition after the birth of their son, and her father (Uncle Alec in *Escapade*) abandoned her mother and remarried a much younger woman, and once again, her mother blamed Scott. These excessive traumas deeply isolated Scott, who could not maintain connections under these stresses. About the events in *Escapade*, Evelyn Scott told biographer D. A. Callard, "I had to write it, and write it just as it was."[4]

Scott's Childhood and Education

Evelyn Scott was born Elsie Dunn in Clarksville, Tennessee, in 1893 and grew up in a decaying Southern patriarchy. Elsie's mother, Maude Thomas Dunn, was connected to a formerly wealthy but still aristocratic family, but her marriage to Seely Dunn, a Northerner, resulted in suspicion from their Southern neighbors. Seely, like his father before him, worked for L&N Railroad, and Elsie spent her childhood near Maude's extended family between Clarksville and Russellville, Kentucky. Even as a small child, Elsie was precocious and curious beyond her years.

Despite having a weakened physique after a serious case of malaria at age five, Elsie strove to find equality with the boys around her, both in wit and physical strength. Biographer Mary Wheeling White writes, "No matter her accomplishments, though, she was never accepted into their clubs; the unchangeable fact remained that she was a girl."[5] Elsie desired inclusion and acceptance above all else; as in the Old South, a girl's worth was only as much as her desirability to men. Though Elsie could match the boys' strength and wits, "she quickly discovered that as a female, she could not simply succeed at tasks commonly performed by males; rather she could succeed only *in spite of* her sex."[6] Elsie would never be seen as "equal" to the boys, nor would her feats be as successful as theirs. Even later in her career, William Faulkner, when asked whether Scott was a talented writer, replied that she was "pretty good . . . for a woman," upholding the paradox that women must outperform their male counterparts in order to be viewed as half as qualified.[7]

As a teen and young woman, Elsie took a deep interest in the social rights of marginalized groups. She took on a role of savior to those she saw as oppressed, and "in her youth, Elsie's commitment to social equality led her to speak up for any sort of people considered 'beneath' her family—prostitutes, poor whites, criminals, blacks."[8] After the Dunns moved to New Orleans to join Seely's family, Elsie became active in the early feminist movements of the twentieth century, including joining the Louisiana Women's Suffrage Party and serving as its secretary at the age of 17. In this case, the burgeoning women's networks in New Orleans in the 1910s provided a great deal of encouragement to young Elsie.

New Orleans hosted the World's Fair in 1884, and during the event, the Woman's Department set the wheel of social change into motion. Historian Miki Pfeffer writes, "All the attention on higher education in the Woman's Department was a factor in the founding of H. Sophie Newcomb College the following year."[9] The creation of multiple women's clubs throughout the city encouraged women to educate themselves and take part in arts and social endeavors, and in the late 1900s, the social response to the modernizing idea of "woman" was beginning to change in New Orleans, as shown by Eliza Nicholson's rebuke of a fellow reporter's criticism of the Association for the Advancement of Women (AAW): "It has gone out of fashion to 'poke fun' at the 'advanced woman' when she is gentle, refined, intellectual and in any way genuinely womanly."[10]

Elsie's early formation of artistic identity began because of the women's networks present in a modernizing New Orleans[11] in the 1910s, though these networks were tenuous at best. Throughout her teen years, Elsie struggled to find

a balance between meeting the traditional societal expectations for which her family groomed her and the burgeoning artist/rebel that she idealized. Elsie, at the time, was the youngest woman ever to attend Newcomb College for Girls, a sister college to Tulane University. Though Elsie saw herself as a progressive and mature individual, she still occupied a position as a White, Southern belle whose singular expectation was to procure a well-positioned husband. She socialized and befriended beaux easily, but "the 'nice' young men Elsie knew eventually either tried to seduce her or admitted that they had visited prostitutes. She refused to play the courtship game as long as the age-old double standard excusing men's behavior still applied."[12] Elsie was trapped in a gender bubble living in the South in the 1910s; she could neither abide fulfilling the societal expectation of a Southern belle nor live completely open, free, and socially accepted, as she wished. As such, Elsie began pushing these societal boundaries, hence the openly signed letter posted in the *Times-Picayune*. By positioning herself as marginal in her own social class, Elsie set in motion her attempt to transform into a new creature: the enlightened modern woman, free from the albatross of past traditions.

Scott's Elopement and Loss of Female Networks

Over time, she developed a close friendship with an acquaintance of her father's, Creighton Wellman, dean of tropical medicine at Tulane University. Elsie and Wellman spent a great deal of time together, and eventually, their friendship deepened into a romantic relationship, despite Wellman's being two decades older than Elsie and married to his second wife. The two secretly ran away together in December 1913, but they later recorded very different versions of this escape in their respective memoirs. Elsie created a fantasy version of their adventures; she envisioned them as lovers headed to a tropical paradise, where they would be sustained by their intellectual pursuits and love for each other. Elsie blended the idyllic Southern girlhood fantasy of falling in love with a man who would carry her away to a life of beauty with a more modern rebellious fantasy of running away to a life filled with passion. Wellman wrote in his memoirs, however, that "Miss Dunn was the only woman I knew at the time who would consent to go to the tropics with me."[13] The reality of this disparity would not become clear to Elsie for some time, if it ever truly did.

While sailing first to England to follow up on possible job leads for Wellman, Elsie wrote a short drama in which a couple modeled after herself and Wellman sail on a ship that sinks. Further complicating her sense of identity is that en route, she and Wellman changed their names to Evelyn and Cyril Kay Scott,

and so even the attributes that she used to define and understand herself were changing. In the epilogue to her memoirs, only Cyril Kay Scott is mentioned, not Evelyn. White explains, "Even at this early start of her journey, Evelyn struggled with the fear of her lack of self, the looming absence of an identity she had not yet begun to explore."[14] She expressed her anxieties through her writing, even at this early state of their adventure, perhaps because no one else could hear her voice. Writing her thoughts and fears would at least document them, for herself at least, and prove that she existed in the world. At this point of her self-imposed exile, Evelyn was simply a part of Cyril's adventure and life.

Scott's loneliness is evident from her biographer's description of her arrival in Brazil and, in *Escapade*, from the dedication page before the work even begins. Scott brought several books with her when she left New Orleans: Keats, Shelley, and Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. Oddly enough, she selected no women writers, and even these male writers objectified women or saw them as merely part of the man's story. The selections here further complicate Scott's fear of nonexistence; she is merely a footnote for her husband. The lack of female companionship or connections further complicates Scott's anxieties because, without them, she must rely completely upon male companionship, and yet the men around her do not see her as a companion. Instead, she eventually befriends pets and animals and collects quite a menagerie. In a way, Scott creates her own network of connection and even dedicates *Escapade* to her animal companions, displaying the importance of animals and companionship to an isolated young woman.

Scott's Brazilian Escapade Begins

On the opening page of *Escapade*, a serving girl enters the hotel room, but Scott speaks no Portuguese, so John (Cyril Kay Scott) speaks to the girl on Evelyn's behalf. Scott writes, "I felt my exclusion from the life about me, my helplessness."[15] The language barrier keeps Evelyn in complete isolation from Brazilian society, as does her wealthy class. When John explains that Evelyn does not speak Portuguese, the serving girl scoffs and laughs, which further isolates Evelyn. In this setting, John must speak for her at every interaction, even those between her and other women, thus keeping her away from forming a feminine network in Brazil. Wellman wanted freedom in Brazil from all responsibilities, but instead, upon arrival, he had a young, pregnant partner who did not speak any Portuguese and thus was completely dependent upon her husband for all things. Though she lived in Brazil for six years, Scott never learned Portuguese, perhaps as a form of her own personal protest.

The Scotts' new poverty posed another great difficulty for Evelyn in forming a feminine network during their exile. Her previous status as a White Southern patrician left her well educated and with a higher notion of class status and identity. From her previous experiences of life, she "thought poverty was something which could be more completely shared."[16] In her idealistic version of their life, Evelyn pictured a quaint life of her and Cyril/John working together, side by side, not the never-ending fight for survival, living hand to mouth, that deep poverty actually was for them. The reality was utter loneliness because her only social contact was John, who was too exhausted to communicate with her after long days at work. When Evelyn insists that she take on domestic work to earn a meager income, she "was really glad when John discouraged [her],"[17] as this reinstates Evelyn's past identity, thus giving her some small reminder that her past identity continues into this new life. John's discouragement serves as a small reminder that Evelyn is above such menial labor. Should Evelyn have taken on domestic work, she would have been acknowledging that she lacks power or independence of any kind, as domestic servants in Brazil, according to Scott, were powerless and quite badly treated.

And yet Scott's admission here begins a more complete transition for her, in terms of identification of her own caste or class placement. Up until this point in her life, Scott had been a steadfast advocate for the poor, especially for prostitutes and working women—until she was threatened with becoming a working woman of the lowest class herself. To be clear, she does not treat the women badly because of their class, but neither does she envy them. John's assertion that her own class is different from theirs begins Scott's fully seeing herself as apart from the working women, and she begins to take on some of the entitled attributes of her past Southern aristocratic heritage that she despised. Later, Scott takes this behavior so far as to make demands and threats at a clinic solely on the basis of her right as a higher-class woman, and

> while her intentions might be good, Scott's description here [p. 157] confirms her embracing of a superior, empowered position at the expense of those that she casts as racial and economic inferiors. Thus Scott seems to reveal herself to be no different from the other Southerners in her works who attempt to recreate the hierarchy of privilege from the US South to the further South.[18]

In these moments, Scott reverts to the Southern caste system because only in this social structure can she maintain or exert any sense of power. White cites Scott's illness, poverty, and isolation as her motivation for reverting to a Southern expectation of superiority, and this assertion fits Scott's circumstances quite

well. Her extended state as an invalid following the birth of her son left Scott feeling physically vulnerable, and the Scotts' deteriorating financial status kept them from having any social authority or power. Evelyn's powerless state is greater than John's because she also faces the language barrier and near complete isolation from all aspects of society. Janis Stout interprets *Escapade* as an "imperialist vision" and reads these scenes as Scott's realization that only money can earn her respect or even humane treatment from the society around her; rather than risk disappearing altogether and losing her own sense of identity, she decides to secure her position assertively. And so the Scotts orchestrate the pretense that Evelyn's father is quite rich to ensure her physical safety, as well as offers of aid and assistance, should illness befall John, her sole protector. In this way, they hope people would help Evelyn return to the coast. Their actual class and financial status, however, are tenuous at best.

Adding to their financial struggles, Aunt Nannette (in real life, Evelyn's mother) arrives and tells Evelyn about the disgrace she has brought upon herself and the family because of her running away with John. Nannette's anxious and unceasing laments reveal that she, too, has been rejected from the network of elite, well-bred ladies. This sudden expulsion, as well as her husband's abandonment of her for a younger woman, challenges Nanette's own abilities to live completely isolated from women's networks.

Scott's Struggle to (Re)define Herself

The erasure of her family matriarch's status and assumed power leads to Scott finally understanding her own lack of power, and this understanding frightens her deeply. Early in the text, she states, "I resent my physical inequality which nothing can overcome," as the true nature of her isolation and complete dependence on John becomes clear.[19] But in this state of vulnerability, Scott begins to find a sense of self, however tenuous: "I am afraid of the world—of people—but my fear surrounds me. It doesn't permeate me any longer,"[20] by which she means that her sense of identity and self exists surrounded by rather than being created of that fear; her fear remains external to her identity, whereas Nanette's fear seems to *become* her identity. Scott understands that she can exist within this fear and not let it completely redefine her sense of self, an important moment because, in it, she acknowledges that she exists as a separate person from her anxiety. It surrounds her, but she is not her anxiety.

Scott struggles throughout the rest of the text to come to terms with the idea that she is her own person and can exist separately from others. Though she

rebelled against patriarchal conventions in the American South, Brazil's gender dynamics were even more strident: "Men show me respect only as they respect the physical belongings of another. They don't really respect me, but John's property."[21] Being seen as merely her husband's property weighs heavily on Scott's own identity, with which she had already been struggling even before reaching Brazil. She returns repeatedly to the idea of her own nonexistence throughout *Escapade*: "To have one's individuality completely ignored is like being pushed quite out of life."[22] "If nobody recognizes me, then it is a sign that I have ceased to exist."[23] At this stage of her life, Scott can define herself only as others see her, and in Brazil, they simply do not see her at all or see her as merely a nuisance. White writes, "The status of women and children as mere property frightened her,"[24] and this fear fueled her anxiety, spiraling to a near breaking point.

Scott desires to be seen for herself, and this desire motivates one of her most quoted statements from *Escapade*: "What I resent most deeply is the attempt to deprive *me* of responsibility for my own acts. To have John sent to prison as though *I* had not equally selected the condition to which we have been brought!"[25] Scott refers here to the Mann Act and Cyril/John's previous wife's threat to have him arrested for violating it. The Mann Act was also known as the White-Slave Traffic Act, which made it a felony to move or transport women or girls for debaucheries, that is, prostitution and immorality. Evelyn views the unequal disbursement of blame as society's admission that she is nothing more than a child or piece of property, thus supporting the notion that she does not exist as an equal entity in a patriarchal society.

Scott's writing demonstrates her view of society as deeply oppressive. In early passages, the heavy heat and sun represent the patriarchal society in which Scott resides. She writes at great length about the weight of the light: "A wedge of light, thrust across the floor, widened, and swept everything with a glare from which there was no escape."[26] In this case, she chooses the words "wedge," "thrust," and "no escape." The description here is almost reminiscent of sexual assault. In these same scenes, Scott's dress is a wool dress, which was appropriate in the United States in December but which is smothering and oppressive in the Brazilian heat: "I loathed the contact of the woolen material where it touched my naked skin."[27] And yet she must wear the heavy dress in order to be a "proper" White lady. Scott has a desire, however, to be nude and natural, thus insinuating that the wool dress and heavy clothing are unnatural.

In a society in which she has no feminine networks or connections, Scott's only option is to maintain her male networks, though she sees how tenuous and fickle they can be. Scott continues to see herself as an artist in exile, an inde-

pendent woman making her own choices, and yet White documents her need for male approval, which is most easily gained through her physical appearance: "Evelyn's adult life would be colored by her need for men's approval in a male-dominated world. Consequently, her recurring fear was that as she aged and her beauty fled, this particular kind of clout would likewise disappear."[28] In her youth, Scott learned how many of her male friends visited prostitutes while courting other young ladies; and her own husband had abandoned his previous family to run away with a young woman half his age: her.

Her own father, Seely Dunn, abandoned her mother and remarried a much younger woman. In every example around her, Scott sees women blatantly betrayed and many abandoned as they age and are replaced with younger women.

Scott's Rejection of Local Female Networks

The pattern of men abandoning women partially explains Scott's consistent view of women as competition, rather than as companions. While in Rio de Janeiro, Scott does befriend an embroidery teacher, and though the "professora" earns very little, the job "provided beans and manioc for herself and an aged relative" while "not offend[ing] the strict conventions of a lady."[29] Almost immediately, however, John secures another job that takes them away from Rio and their burgeoning friendship. Scott bids farewell to the "professora," who had "tears in her dreamy unintelligent eyes."[30] Shortly after, Scott attempts to quasi-befriend the prostitutes who frequent the hotel in which she and John currently reside: "I often meet some of the prostitutes and they talk to me. I like them."[31] The manager of their room warns Evelyn to avoid the women, but she reveals that she "would like to tell him that his guests [the prostitutes] are as good as he is—probably as good as I am."[32] The prostitutes are not referenced again, leading the reader to assume that the friendships were not deep ones or, perhaps, were formed only as a mild act of rebellion against the manager or possibly even John.

Shortly after, Scott meets Dona Matilda, who has five daughters between the ages of 15 and 21—roughly the same age as Scott. She spends time with the family and notes that the women exist in their own social bubble, cut off from the rest of society. All interaction is brought into the "House," and even when the women leave the House, they carry their blockade with them. By this, Scott means that their lives—their worries, their concerns, and their chatter—remain in this narrow sphere. The outside world does not interfere with it in any way. Scott both laments and is grateful that she cannot exist in such social isolation. On the one hand, Dona Matilda and her daughters have their own small community,

which moves with them, wherever they go. But Scott, without such an association, must venture out into society and attempt to exist in a male-centered network, rather than one of her own or another woman's creation. On the other hand, this isolation means that they cannot interact with the world around them; they must remain inside their bubble, trapped—an idea, however enticing, that Scott cannot abide.

Evelyn describes the sewing and embroidery in Dona Matilda's house, as well as the chipped furniture and a constantly humming sewing machine. The constant sounds of sewing bring out a feminine presence, whereas most of the rooms Scott describes are barren, drab, or sparse. The chipped furniture shows the family's limited financial means, and yet they seem content with their lives. A macaw squawks in the corner until Dona Matilda throws a duster at it and knocks it from its perch, and then it climbs back up and glares at her from its cage. Evelyn writes, "I feel as if the life of generations has been arrested here in a moment's scene."[33] Inside the house, Matilda controls life, even the squawking parrot, a male, that quiets and submits to her scolding. In this House and network, Matilda reigns supreme. Scott cannot gain this level of power and control in her own house because she and John reside in hotels, where managers and maids openly scold the foreign Scott for various perceived transgressions, such as not knowing how to speak Portuguese.

Immediately after this passage, Scott notes that she is "going to dress [her] baby in a *queira* such as Brazilian infants wear";[34] Scott decides that "I am going to have a girl. Girls are unpopular, so I shall love a girl most."[35] After she gives birth to a baby boy, she writes, "I saw the baby lying there on its stomach, naked. Its conical head was lifted uncertainly and its blue eyes, fixed."[36] When Scott thought of a baby girl, she used the pronoun "she," but when the baby is a boy, the pronoun shifts to "it." Scott's need for female companionship is so great that she imagines a relationship between her and her unborn daughter. The reality of a son causes her to reconfigure her imagined life, and so as she adapts to a new reality, her pronoun use also shifts slowly before she returns to the gendered pronoun, he. Cyril Kay Scott writes in his memoirs, "I was now partly compensated. For I was no longer alone."[37] Evelyn Scott, it seems, does not count as a person, and John/Cyril clearly felt he was entitled to something more.

Complications from childbirth of the Scotts' son, Jackie, led to a great deal of ensuing pain for Scott, and yet she relished being a new mother because, as White notes, "for the first time since coming to Brazil, she had a steady stream of women visitors, connecting her to the community."[38] Following her son's birth, a series of women caretakers come into and leave her life. At times, Scott finds female companionship in their presence, as with Theresa. At other times, however,

their presence stresses Scott and reinforces her notion that women are competitors for male attention rather than potential friends or companions. At first, Scott seems to have found a companion in Petronilla, but this quickly fades. When Scott tries to fire her for stealing money from the family, Petronilla says, "I am in great trouble and I have no people—no place where I can go."[39] She then learns that Petronilla is pregnant and "had no mother to care for her welfare. She had given herself to a soldier who had professed to love her but had abandoned her immediately she told him of her condition."[40] Scott clearly sees the similarity in a fate she had almost shared, had John decided to leave her en route to Brazil. Even at this point in their exile, she fears being abandoned in her invalid state in a place in which she has no networks, family, or true friends. Petronilla picks up on Scott's own fears and uses them to hold onto her own place in the home.

Petronilla's experiences as an adult woman, however, are quite different from Scott's, especially when comparing their pregnancies. Petronilla is sexually active during her pregnancy, something John had refused Evelyn during her own. Scott finds the servant beckoning men from a nearby walkway into the bushes for sexual trysts, and the men continue coming to see her. Scott is clearly jealous of Petronilla's sexuality, and above all, she is jealous that the men still treat Petronilla with sexual interest, regardless of her physical condition. Scott craves this attention, and yet her own husband refrains from a sexual relationship with her because of her perceived frail state. Scott's "five years of ill health in Brazil had led to Cyril's abstaining from sex (with her, anyway)."[41] Scott is sexually frustrated and, once again, sees her rejection while others around her are fully accepted.

Petronilla has her baby—the girl Evelyn had dreamed of having—and flaunts the child, cooing and snuggling her while Evelyn is in the room but then cursing her when Evelyn leaves. Even John/Cyril is clearly disappointed in Evelyn's physical disability, and he comments in his memoir, *Life Is Too Short*, on Petronilla's strength in pregnancy and delivery. He laments his wife's physical inability to give birth easily, as he thinks native women do, and writes, "Civilized women are biologically incompetent."[42] Though these passages are not directly expressed in *Escapade*, Scott's written responses reveal her difficulty with Petronilla, to whom men are attracted, little girls are born, and men, including her husband, offer respect. Petronilla, however, does not actually raise her infant girl, and the child weakens quickly from a lack of nutrition and Petronilla's negligence. Evelyn names her Elena, but she finds the emaciated baby grotesque and admits to hating Petronilla for her cruelty to the infant. The baby dies after just a few days. John/Cyril does not reference the loss of the child in his memoirs, as he does the success of the native mother's birth.

In addition to Petronilla, the Scotts also hire Theresa, a 16-year-old cook, to live in their home and help with the housekeeping and caring for Jackie. Scott's relationship with her, however, does not seem to go deeper than servant-employer. Scott comments about Theresa's good humor, beautiful body, and loyalty to her, and Theresa develops a deep affection for Jackie—so much so that she works for only room and board. And yet Scott and Theresa do not exchange deep thoughts about literature, writing, or art, most likely because of Scott's higher education level as well as her perception of class boundaries.

Eventually, Scott is able to receive an alternative surgery to the one she truly needs, and the Scotts arrange for the procedure. Scott needs abdominal surgery that cannot be performed in Brazil at the time, and so she receives 24 vaginal stitches instead, until the more advanced surgery can be performed. This temporary surgery is performed at a clinic run by Dr. Beach, his wife, and their son, the younger Dr. Beach, all of whom profess immediately that the environment is not designed to care for upper-class White women. At Dr. Beach's for surgery, Scott "was very conscious of being looked at by men—not doctors."[43] Scott cannot exist in masculine spaces in Brazil, and when she does find herself in them on occasion, she feels uncomfortable ("I don't like to be scrutinized and commented on as if I were inanimate"[44]). After the surgery, John must return to work, while she heals at the Beach's makeshift hospital (a nurse was hired to care for Jackie). While there, Scott writes, "I was left to myself," and "I am frightened of the whiteness of the sky, of the noiseless motions of the trees."[45] In this moment, Evelyn has absolutely no connection to any network. She has no family, friends, or even reminders of herself to help her stay connected. Her fears are legitimate and deep.

Scott does find some peace toward the end of their tenure in Brazil while the family resides in almost complete seclusion from the outside world. In recording this section of her life, Scott is alone in her melancholy and no longer needs to seek approval from any outside entity. In this remote region of the country, society simply does not exist for her, so she no longer needs to worry about existing for it. In this way, away from being socially visible, Scott is able to find some sense of her identity. Her physical pain also lessens, though it does not cease completely.

Reconnecting a Network of Women Artists

This stage of Scott's life is a turning point for her socially and for her career, and the two are directly connected. In 1919, Scott sent two poems to editor Lola Ridge in New York. Immediately, Ridge is taken by Scott's persona and writing, though at first Scott submitted the poems and letters without her name. The two

women connected through their letters and expressed themselves openly in their writing to one another. For example, in a letter that Scott wrote to Ridge, she confessed, "If I had known there was somebody like you in the world a few years ago some of my conclusions about the universe would have been modified and I would have been a good deal happier."[46]

"Women" and "Young Girls," the poems Scott sent to Lola Ridge from Brazil, were published in *Others* in 1919.[47] The poems "illustrated her literary interest in the female's place in the world"[48] and demonstrate Scott's focus on women needing to live *through* men, just as she had been forced to do during her time in Brazil. Society gives permission for men but not women to be adventurous, and biology gives men the physical strength to do so as well—a thought that would be especially present in a woman who had experienced a difficult pregnancy and after effects. Even with her exile and isolation from other writers and literary movements, "Scott's verse was remarkably contemporary for a beginning writer who had been out of the country for six years."[49] Scott's writing conveys a sensual eroticism deeply connected to the female body. The language and images in these poems as well as Scott's collection, "Tropical Life," mirror those in *Escapade*, and "as in *Escapade*, sensations of pain and fear predominate."[50]

During World War I, the Scotts had difficulty procuring passports to return to the United States, but in 1920, they were finally able to do so. Evelyn carefully chose their new home for its central role in the creative movement of the 1920s: Greenwich Village. The Scotts sent Evelyn's mother back to Clarksville, Tennessee, to be with her family. After settling in New York, Evelyn Scott quickly adapted and began the most creatively productive time in her life, putting out nearly a book per year.

This level of productivity coincides with her growing friendship with Lola Ridge and other women writers whom Ridge introduced, such as Kay Boyle, who cited *Escapade* as a highly influential work for her own development as an artist. For new women writers, "Scott may have served as an example of a new woman who followed her heart rather than convention—no matter what."[51] Though their friendships waxed and waned in closeness, many of the women remained in contact for the duration of their lives, mostly through their letters. Caroline Maun writes of Ridge and Scott, "Their friendships supported and intertwined with their writing lives—they supported each other in ways that included recognizing the worth of each other's work, providing direct feedback on manuscripts, and simply acknowledging each other's talent."[52] Between these remarkable women, "there is an exchange of energy that helped to enable present work and allowed each woman to imagine a future as an artist."[53]

Conclusion

Scott had set an exciting precedent for women writers: they, too, could choose to be artists, just as Scott did. Her extreme isolation in Brazil may have challenged every aspect of her identity, but in the end, she chose with purpose and intent to be an artist, and she defined her own identity based upon that singular decision. By charting that lesser-traveled path and showing that such a life was possible, that decision allowed other women to make the same choice: to be artists. Boyle wrote in her book *Being Geniuses Together* in 1968 about Scott, "The reality of our friendship resided in our letters, and this may have been because each of us was writing not to a stranger but to another facet of herself."[54] In this way, the women connect to each other and themselves, in both the past and present, thus changing their futures. The external validation of their artistic identities helps the women continue to see themselves as artists, and because of this formation of identity, they continued to write and to blaze the trail for the next generation of women writers also to choose to be artists.

Notes

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2.   Deborah E. Belle, The Impact of Poverty on Social Networks and Supports, in Lein and Sussman, *The Ties That Bind*, 90.

3.   Evelyn Scott, *Escapade* (New York: Thomas Seltzer, 1923; repr., Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995). Citations refer to the University Press of Virginia edition.

4.   D. A. Callard, *"Pretty Good for a Woman": The Enigmas of Evelyn Scott* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1985), 23.

5.   Mary Wheeling White, *Fighting the Current: The Life and Work of Evelyn Scott* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1998), 10.

6.   White, *Fighting the Current,* 11.

7.   Kathryn B. McKee, The Portable Eclipse: Hawthorne, Faulkner, and Scribbling Women, in *Faulkner in America*, ed. Joseph Urgo and Ann J. Abadie (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2001), 176.

8.   White, *Fighting the Current*, 11.

9.   Miki Pfeffer, *Southern Ladies and Suffragists: Julia Ward Howe and Women's Rights at the 1884 New Orleans World's Fair* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2014), 217.

10.   Quoted in Pfeffer, *Southern Ladies and Suffragists*, 220.

11.   Mary Gehman and Nancy Ries, *Women and New Orleans* (New Orleans: Margaret Media, 1988), 74.

12. White, *Fighting the Current*, 16.

13. Cyril Kay Scott, *Life Is Too Short: An Autobiography* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1943), 168.

14. White, *Fighting the Current*, 22.

15. Scott, *Escapade*, 1.

16. Scott, *Escapade*, 5.

17. Scott, *Escapade*, 8.

18. Paul Christian Jones, Recovering Southern Identity in Evelyn Scott's *Migrations* and *Escapade*, *Mississippi Quarterly* 59, no. 3–4 (Summer–Fall 2006): 573.

19. Scott, *Escapade*, 6.

20. Scott, *Escapade*, 9.

21. Scott, *Escapade*, 39.

22. Scott, *Escapade*, 51.

23. Scott, *Escapade*, 53.

24. White, *Fighting the Current*, 27.

25. Scott, *Escapade*, 17.

26. Scott, *Escapade*, 3.

27. Scott, *Escapade*, 3.

28. White, *Fighting the Current*, 32.

29. Scott, *Escapade*, 22.

30. Scott, *Escapade*, 23.

31. Scott, *Escapade*, 40.

32. Scott, *Escapade*, 40.

33. Scott, *Escapade*, 47.

34. Scott, *Escapade*, 47.

35. Scott, *Escapade*, 47.

36. Scott, *Escapade*, 56.

37. C. K. Scott, *Life Is Too Short,* 192.

38. White, *Fighting the Current,* 28.

39. Scott, *Escapade*, 84.

40. Scott, *Escapade*, 85.

41. White, *Fighting the Current,* 45.

42. C. K. Scott, *Life Is Too Short* , 193.

43. Scott, *Escapade*, 107.

44. Scott, *Escapade*, 10.

45. Scott, *Escapade*, 111.

46. Quoted in Caroline Maun, *Mosaic of Fire: The Work of Lola Ridge, Evelyn Scott, Charlotte Wilder, and Kay Boyle* (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 2012), 68.

47. Evelyn Scott, Women, *Others: An Anthology of the New Verse* 5, no. 1 (February 1919): 14–15; Scott, Young Girls, *Others: An Anthology of the New Verse* 15, no. 1 (February 1919): 15.

48. White, *Fighting the Current*, 39.

49. White, *Fighting the Current*, 38. See Evelyn Scott, Tropical Life, *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse* 15, no. 11 (November 1919): 70–75.

50. Callard, *Pretty Good for a Woman*, 19.

51. Maun, *Mosaic of Fire*–87.

52. Maun, *Mosaic of Fire*, 2.

53. Maun, *Mosaic of Fire*, 55.

54. Quoted in Maun, *Mosaic of Fire*, 89. See Robert McAlmon, *Being Geniuses Together, 1920–1930*, revised, with supplementary chapters by Kay Boyle (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1968).

11

TRANSATLANTIC CULTURAL AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

The Relational Selves of Mary Russell Mitford and Rebecca Harding Davis

Julia Nitz

Abstract. In a discussion of English writer Mary Russell Mitford's (1787–1855) *Recollections of a Literary Life; or, Books, Places, and People* (1852) and of U.S. Southern writer Rebecca Harding Davis's (1831–1910) memoirs of 1904, *Bits of Gossip*, I illustrate how both highly acclaimed authors tell their lives through association with places and well-known public personages (mostly literati). I argue that nineteenth-century women writers consciously chose to present themselves via places and predominantly male contemporaries and predecessors in order to write themselves into a patriarchal world. They focused on the representation of others in order to position themselves firmly as mitigating consciousness of their respective culture and age. Mitford and Davis refrained from telling their own life stories; instead, they posed as witnesses and judges of their times, writing cultural histories in the process. They erased themselves from their narratives as experiencing subjects and focused on people they met in real life or on the written page. It will emerge from my discussion that Mitford and Davis participated in a transatlantic tradition of female self-writing that by relating themselves to an "other," allowed them to write themselves into collective memory and into the literary community. Women authors on both sides of the Atlantic shared notions of life writing as cultural endeavors of nation building and of gender negotiation. Davis and Mitford inscribed themselves and others into their respective nations and wrote others out, establishing themselves as authorities and arbiters of their peoples' past and present.

In her *Recollections of a Literary Life; or, Books, Places, and People* (1852), English writer Mary Russell Mitford (1787–1855) claims that "there is far too much of personal gossip and of local scene-painting" to connect it "in the slightest degree to autobiography."[1] When mid-Atlantic writer Rebecca Harding Davis (1831–1910) published her memoirs in 1904, she aligned herself with Mitford's disclaimer of autobiographical intent, titling her account as *Bits of Gossip*.[2] Both autobiographical texts ultimately concentrate more on stories of the women's contemporaries than on their authors' private or public life.

Such a tendency toward cultural autobiography among nineteenth-century women writers has traditionally been explained by inhibitions on self-centeredness and self-indulgences imposed by the Victorian concept of True Womanhood, which held that women's cardinal virtues were piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity.[3] Additionally, scholars of autobiography such as Sidonie Smith argue that the focus on others in the life writings of Victorian women was largely due to their being strongly "affiliated physically, socially, and psychologically in relationship to others . . . as a member of a family, as someone's daughter, someone's wife and someone's mother." As John Eakin maintains, "all identity is relational." In an exploration of the psychology of life writing, he explains how identity develops collaboratively with others and how, consequently, autobiographers often turn into autoethnographers. Scholars such as Smith and Eakin assume that individuals and especially women "literally and narratively experience their sense of being 'I' in relation to others, and in social interaction."[4]

Codes of female decorum dictated many disclaimers by nineteenth-century women authors to ascertain that their writing was not a means of self-aggrandizement or a sign of self-centeredness. Additionally, relational identity is an essential part of how people perceive of themselves. Nonetheless, I claim that Rebecca Harding Davis and Mary Russell Mitford intentionally opened up relational fields in their life writing and focused on the representation of others in order to position themselves firmly as mitigating consciences of their respective culture and age. That is to say, each of them adopted the role of a cultural historian who judges and evaluates her contemporaries and her times. In the process, they wrote certain people into and others out of cultural history and, most importantly, claimed agency and authority as cultural experts based on their life experiences.

In a discussion of Mitford's and Davis's autobiographical writing, I illustrate how both highly acclaimed authors created selves in relation to places, people, and literature. My argument is that both women participated in a transatlantic tradition of female self-writing that by relating themselves to an "other" allowed them to write themselves into collective memory and into the literary community. In the end, it will emerge that women authors on both sides of the Atlantic during the nineteenth century shared notions of life writing as cultural endeavors of nation building and of gender negotiation. Centering my analysis on mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion of particular groups of people from the genesis of the self and the nation, I illustrate how Davis and Mitford inscribed themselves and others into the nation while writing others out or relegating them to the margins.

In the following, I explore in depth the relational fields established in the life writings of Mary Russell Mitford and Rebecca Harding Davis. After a brief outline of the sociocultural context both authors inhabited and after situating Davis's and Mitford's life-writing strategies within women's traditions of self-narration, I shall provide an overview of the various areas of relational construction Davis and Mitford employed in their autobiographies. Focus will then be on the way these women relate to literary works and the transatlantic scope of their life writing.

Writing Cultural Autobiography

Separated by half a century, Davis and Mitford were writing from within rather similar positions, Mitford as a single woman and Davis as a wife and a mother: both were White middle-class women who received a thorough education in literature and the classics. Both were part of the community of leading intellectuals and literati of their generation and made a name for themselves as writers.[5] In addition, both pioneered strands of realist writing: Davis is one of the pioneers of naturalism in the United States with her novella "Life in the Iron Mills," published in 1861, and Mitford helped launch rural realism with her vivid descriptions of English country life in *Our Village* (1824–1832).[6]

Davis's and Mitford's approaches to memoir writing are as similar as their basic life trajectories. Both life chroniclers identify themselves primarily via historically relevant spaces, via illustrious contemporaries, and via literature. Neither Davis nor Mitford strays from this focus on the private sphere. They position themselves and the public personae they encounter and relate to mostly in the home. However, they extend the concept of family and friends to the literary

and intellectual realm, that is, to imagined communities of writers and thinkers. Although Davis and Mitford do not leave the private sphere to encounter contemporary public personages, they meet them as guests, as visitors via letters, or through their writing.

In many respects their life-writing techniques correspond to the characteristics usually ascribed to women's autobiographies, for example, by Estelle Jelinek in her seminal work on *The Tradition of Women's Autobiography*. Jelinek studied autobiographies by women written (mostly) in the English language from antiquity to the present and in the process identified specific aspects of subject matter, narrative form, and self-image as the most salient and basic traits of women's autobiography. According to Jelinek, family, close friends, and domestic activities form the content base of women's self-narration.[7]

Davis, for example, dedicates a chapter to abolitionists, explaining that "when I was young, although I lived in a slave State, chance threw me from time to time in the way of some of the leading Abolitionists."[8] She then elaborates on the characters of well-known antislavery proponents, such as the medical doctor Francis Julius LeMoyne (1798–1879), explorer and politician John C. Frémont (1813–1890), author, editor, and statesman Horace Greeley (1811–1872), and even the radical abolitionist John Brown (1800–1859). She had met all of them when they came to her home town of Wheeling, Virginia. Other prominent contemporaries she met later in life at friends or her husband's, Lemuel Clarke Davis's, house in Philadelphia, such as authors and intellectuals Wendell Phillips, John Greenleaf Whittier, James Russell Lowell, and Henry Ward Beecher. Davis takes a silent observer's perspective and does not talk much about their politics or her relationship to these figures but rather focuses on their general demeanor and popularity (especially with the women): Phillips was "so interesting a man that you forgot the cause he urged"; with Lowell, "politics and poetry were, as a rule, kept inside of his books." Whittier was "always the poet and the Abolitionist," and "he gave his views on slavery and the South with a gentle, unwearied obstinacy, exasperating to any one [*sic*] who knew that there was another side to the question." Beecher had an "aggressive personality" and "magnetism" but "repelled most women."[9]

Mitford likewise reports on people she met at her father's house, at her home, or at social gatherings. For instance, she describes at length the people she met during a visit with her father to the celebrated English writer William Cobbett (1763–1835). Like in Davis's writing, in Mitford's descriptions, the men's reputation is juxtaposed to their general character and behavior. Admiral Thomas Cochrane, a famous naval officer in the Napoleonic Wars, for example, is described as "a gentle, quiet, mild young man, was this burner of French fleets and

cutter-out of Spanish vessels, as one should see in a summer day."[10] She allows her readers, who would know of the famous fighter, an intimate glimpse into his private character, showing the soft side of the military man. Mitford and Davis, as other women autobiographers, focus on the domestic and personal, but since the world seemed to have passed through their parlors, they manage to comment on public men and women through a domestic lens.

Jelinek identifies a tendency in women's autobiography to apply an episodic, anecdotal, nonchronological, disjunctive style. She views this as expressive of a "paradoxical self-image," "colored by a sense of inadequacy and alienation, of being outsiders or 'other.'"[11] Again, both Davis and Mitford adhere to this trait in women's life writing. They each start off with a childhood anecdote to anchor their narratives within the autobiographical genre but then deviate, digress, and seemingly in random fashion relate episodes and incidences that run entirely counter to the progressive and linear narrative style usually associated with men's autobiography.[12]

Davis begins her story with two chapters that refer to her childhood ("In the Old House") and her early married life ("Boston in the Sixties"), but then she digresses into chapters on different sections of the nation ("In the Far South," "The Scotch-Irishman," "The Shipwrecked Crew," "A Peculiar People," "Above Their Fellows"). Mitford commences her narrative with a childhood episode that explains her obsession with literature, and each chapter revolves around her personal interests and tastes in the works and authors she introduces to the reader. Mitford's chapter headings likewise make no pretense to an autobiographical narrative, variously announcing "Irish Authors," "Old Authors," "Female Poets," "American Orators," "Poetry that Poets Love," or just "Fishing Songs."

Jelinek ascribes such lack of self-centeredness and a focus on others in women's life writing to their "need for authentication, to prove their self-worth." Yet in Stephen Arch's definition of the genre, Davis's and Mitford's memoirs would not count as autobiographical at all because they lack what he calls a "romantic" autonomous individual, a "concept of independent, distinct, original selfhood" that emerged in the late eighteenth century. Accordingly, Davis and Mitford would be categorized in Arch's rubric as part of the Benjamin Franklin tradition that defined self in relation to society in a Christian and classical view of selfhood. Margo Culley, in her discussion of American women's autobiography, emphasizes women's need to rid themselves of self-centeredness when dealing with the public gaze in their life writing and points to their claim to be writing as part of a community.[13] I would align myself with Culley and further claim that although Mitford and Davis clearly position themselves as part of a community

and even distance themselves from the idea of writing an autobiography, they, in fact, write their selves through the community and thereby create a relational autonomous self after all.

Mitford explains at the outset that "the title of this Book [*Recollections of a Literary Life*] gives a very imperfect idea of the contents." She finds it difficult to come up with "a short phrase that would accurately describe the work," which does not "in the slightest degree" come close to being an autobiography. Instead, "the courteous reader must take it for what it is:—an attempt to make others relish a few favorite writers as heartily as I have relished them myself."[14] Mitford disclaims any pretensions to an autobiography, but she does not explain why she selected a title that invokes the genre. In fact, the title indicates her true purpose, which is to authorize her personal literary history through her literary life experience, that is, her expertise as a writer, a reader, and an observer of the literary community. She writes in her preface that "my opinions, such as they are, have at least the merit of being honest, earnest, and individual, unbiased by the spirit of coterie or the influence of fashion."[15] She adopts an outsider's position—not part of "the coterie of fashion"—and thereby promotes her ideas as knowledgeable but disinterested. She implies that because she is not part of the public sphere, she can present an undiluted picture of the same.

Davis argues along similar lines for history from below or within the private sphere. In her preface, she maintains that

> each human being, before going out into the silence, should leave behind
> him, not the story of his own life, but of the time in which he lived,—as
> he saw it,—its creed, its purpose, its queer habits, and the work which it
> did or left undone in the world. Taken singly, these accounts might be
> weak and trivial, but together, they would make history live and breathe.[16]

Just like Mitford, Davis asserts that she is not writing her own story but that of her time and believes that such communal storytelling will bring about a well-rounded picture of the past. Like Mitford, she seems to say that the ordinary and insignificant individual should have the prerogative in telling a nation's history (or, as in Mitford's case, literary history).

In sum, both women opt for cultural autobiography, defined by Lasseter and Harris as "a text that can be thought of as both the story of an individual's life as well as a description of the culture in which that life was lived."[17] Although both authors emphasize their sole intent of describing their culture, however, their self-referential and relational life writings highlight that their narratives generate from a conscious self-location within that culture.

In effect, the term "gossip" that Davis applies to her narrative's title can, to some extent, be taken literally when understood as insider/intimate information about public personages. It is also related to the Irish tradition of the traveling gossiper, whom Davis mentions in the character of Mat o' the Bowl. Mat is a young man born without legs, who is carried around in a "wooden bowl with handles" and given board for "telling the gossip of the country for a day, a week or months." Without legs, Mat literally cannot go out on his own and is therefore confined to the private sphere, usually positioned in a "snug corner by the fire" in the kitchen. He is a bound observer, appreciated for sharing his observations. In the same way, Davis and Mitford make use of their exclusion from public events and public talk and of their observer positions to gossip about the private human side of life.[18] There is, however, a noticeable difference between the handicapped and impoverished Mat o' the Bowl and the two autobiographers. As much as they are claiming an outsider's observer position, they were still part of the intellectual and moneyed elite, and their humble and unpretending attitude has to be read as a purposeful narrative strategy to circumvent gender restrictions.

Self-Representation in Relation to Places

With *Bits of Gossip*, Rebecca Harding Davis is writing a cultural memoir in order to provide an "index to the . . . American."[19] In the manner of a Crèvecœur, Davis sets out to explain what an American is by extending the concept to women. As she tries to elucidate, in order to understand and to appreciate fully the American man and nation, you have to take into consideration the nation's women. This argument goes two ways; on the one hand, women are an integral part of American society, and on the other hand, they are also important historians, providing insights inaccessible to men. The first argument she makes through depictions of the role of women in the history of the nation and the second by her own example.

Davis sees the American Civil War as a catalyst for the birth of what she calls "a homogenous people."[20] But she writes against the established ideas of Americanism as focused solely on the Puritan and Southern heritage, on the war as a glorious revolution, and on a male intellectual tradition that determines what is considered American. For her revisionist approach Davis chooses a very loose chronological structure that creates an analogy between the course of her life and the growth of the American nation. With chapters on her childhood in early America, the Old South, the Scotch-Irish immigrants, the Civil War, unlucky poets, and abolitionists, she attempts to draw a cultural picture of the nineteenth century via the agents whom she believes have given it its character.

Mary Russell Mitford, for her part, set out to rewrite English literary history, which among other things ignores the "charming poetry of the early Stuarts and the Commonwealth."[21] Her chapter on "Autobiography of Dramatic Authors" illustrates the way she connects her life story with literary history. She starts by praising drama as the most fascinating of genres and the most addictive. She then connects it to her own passions: "I have some right to talk of the love of the drama, the passionate, absorbing, worshipping love, since it took possession of me at the earliest age, and clung to me long."[22] She continues with anecdotes from her teenage years when, against her father's express wishes, she indulged in reading drama instead of studying music. Subsequently, Mitford elaborates on her passion and taste in particular plays and comments on William Shakespeare as the greatest of poets. She proceeds with her attraction to the life history of dramatic writers and then hands over the narrative to Colley Cibber, actor-manager, playwright, and dramatic autobiographer, quoting extensively from his *Apology for His Life of Colley Cibber*, in which he comments on the contemporary theater scene.[23] In this section, as elsewhere, Mitford views the literary world through her passions, mentioning the famous but then focusing and embedding her own story within the life trajectories of the less well received, such as Cibber, who was notorious for his bad adaptations of Shakespeare and Molière. In sum, both Davis and Mitford weave autobiographical details into their stories of the genesis and the character of their respective imagined communities, giving the details a clear autobiographical gist.

Mitford and Davis variously employ spatial settings to situate themselves within their (trans)national communities. Both women relate themselves to the nation by claiming shared spaces with influential contemporaries and predecessors. Davis, for instance, dedicates an entire chapter to Boston, where she met with the leading intellectuals of her time, whom she irreverently calls the "Atlantic coterie," including, among others, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Amos Bronson Alcott, and Nathaniel Hawthorne.

Similarly, Mitford, in one of the chapters dealing with "Authors Related to Places," tells of a visit to Maidenhead in Buckinghamshire, the cradle of Englishness, in which she guides the reader like a tourist through the remains of buildings connected to literary personages such as John Milton, Edmund Burke, Alexander Pope, and John Dryden. She finds that the ruins speak to her like Old English ballads because they provide "a view not merely of the degree of civilization of the age, but of the habits and customs of familiar daily life."[24] The emphasis is on common people and ordinary life. Rural cottages feature just as prominently in Mitford as do the urban centers of London and Oxford. In a similar vein, Davis juxtaposes the rural backwaters of the far South with the intellectual hub of Boston.

Ultimately, both women highlight spheres of action they shared with exceptional personages while at the same time emphasizing their spatial anchoring within the rural and the ordinary, claiming a link to potential readers. Spatially, Davis defines herself primarily via her border identity. She grew up in Wheeling, Virginia, close to the Ohio and Pennsylvania borders, connecting the reformist North with the rural South. Mitford, for her part, identifies deeply with her cottage garden on the route between London and Oxford that caused many illustrious visitors to seek her out. Both women claim border spaces for themselves that turn them into ideal mediators between the ordinary countryside and illustrious urbanity.

Mitford and Davis spin a complex net of relationships with their contemporaries. Their narratives are linked by five recurring tendencies when it comes to relating themselves to other people: (1) When reporting family tales, both women relate primarily to their fathers. Although Davis only marginally talks about her family, Mitford repeatedly invokes the relation to her father as formative. Husbands or other spouses and relations are noticeably absent. (2) Both women emphatically claim relations to the intellectual elite, including politicians, reformers, and writers. (3) Both tend to explicitly mention the most famous but then concentrate on the neglected—they share a concern for neglected male authors and thinkers. (4) Both women style themselves as part of a female intellectual network. (5) They define their national origins as transatlantic in scope. In the remainder of the paper, I shall elaborate mostly on the last three relational foci since my primary concern is to illustrate mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion in the self-narration of both autobiographers.

Self-Representation in Relation to Others

The absence of family relations and, in Davis's case, the entire omission of her husband seem remarkable and unusual in narratives defined as "domestic." These aporia can be understood, however, as part of an overall narrative strategy. Davis and Mitford are writing from a domestic location, but they are not writing a domestic or private history. On the contrary, their focus is on the nation or literature at large, and family, or, rather, fathers, feature only as enablers of education, travel, and experience in childhood episodes. The family is written out of the narrative because the authors are unwilling to share either their authoritative voice or their witness stance with others, nor do they wish to present an intimate portrait of themselves.

Family relations do not feature strongly; instead, Mitford and Davis firmly establish themselves as part of the intellectual elite with frequent name-dropping and commentary on their prominent acquaintances. They do not dwell too much on the elite or "coterie" but, as mentioned before, expressly memorialize and revive "neglected authors." Mitford, for example, heads the chapter on the canonical authors John Milton, John Dryden, Edmund Burke, and Alexander Pope with the name of an obscure poet, namely, Thomas Noel, who is the only author she quotes in this section. Davis dedicates an entire chapter to what she calls "the shipwrecked crew," in which she erects a pedestal for the uncelebrated.[25]

In contrast to Mitford, Davis puts more emphasis on female supporting figures in her discussion of influential male contemporaries. One of her main objectives is to stress that the male intellectual elite could not have survived without womankind. Mitford, likewise, dedicates several chapters to women writers, with all of whom she claims friendship, such as Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Margaret Fuller, Catherine Fanshawe, and Joanna Baillie.[26] Davis, in turn, discusses at length the character of female reformers and writers whom she had met on several occasions, such as Lucretia Mott, Louisa May Alcott, and Sophia Hawthorne.

In the chapter "Boston in the Sixties," for example, Davis relates her encounters with leading intellectuals during her Northern tour after the publication of her acclaimed novella "Life in the Iron Mills." Davis strongly criticizes the uncurbed celebration of men like Emerson, Hawthorne, Lowell, and Alcott, who were deemed the essence of American thinking and granted sole authority of defining the national character. She calls their take on history and the nation one-sided and feels that "while they thought they were guiding the real world, they stood quite outside of it, and never would see it as it was." Davis finds that these literati and philosophers see the American Civil War, for example, as a shining mission of heroes who died for the enslaved. They talk of the war in poetic terms, whereas Davis, who had just witnessed what she believes was "the actual war; the filthy spewings of it; the political robbery in Union and Confederate camps; the malignant personal hatreds wearing patriotic masks," maintains that "war may be an armed angel with a mission [as James Russell Lowell called it], but she has the personal habits of the slums."[27]

What Davis finds expressly exasperating is that these men philosophized and were praised as the new "American prophets" while often being egoistic, unsocial, and even incapable of providing for their families. She especially complains of Amos Bronson Alcott that when his house "was bleak and bitter cold with poverty, his wife had always worked hard to feed him and his children," but he did not use his carpentry skills to support them. She accuses Emerson, who was perceived

as "the modern Moses who had talked with God apart and could interpret Him to us," as listening eagerly to people only to enrich his stock of experience to be used in his philosophy rather than because he cared or sympathized with the talker.[28] In short, although these paragons of nineteenth-century American thought were valuable philosophers, to Davis their views were focused on the abstract and often lacked touch with the real tangible world around them. In Alcott's case, he may not even have survived had it not been for his wife and famous author daughter.

Davis goes further by illustrating that women may be thinkers and writers, but they do not neglect the care of others nor demand fame in the world. Her prime example is Louisa May Alcott (1832–1888), author of many popular works, including *Hospital Sketches* and *Little Women*.[29] Instead of watching from afar, she got engaged in the war effort and produced beloved pieces of literature, which in turn enabled her "to give to a few men and women who she loved material aid." Ultimately, her main interest remained with her family for whom "she would have ground her bones to make their bread." Davis's verdict is that "the altar for human sacrifice still stands and smokes in this Christian day of the world, and God apparently does not reject its offerings." Nonetheless, Davis is determined to make this sacrifice known and to acknowledge women's share in the making of the nation.[30]

For Mitford, the idea of uncelebrated authors and women of talent goes hand in hand. She is also intent on making women's talent known while celebrating woman as paragon of the private sphere. In short, she asks the world to acknowledge women's share in the genesis of the nation but does not seek public acclaim. Paradoxically, while calling attention to women, Mitford maintains in the same breath that fame is detrimental to a woman's character and "career." In her discussion of "Female Poets," Mitford paints the ideal "literary lady" as "quiet, unpretending, generous, kind, admirable in her writings, excellent in her life." Her prime example of such an unpretentious and withdrawn English poet is Catherine Maria Fanshawe (1765–1834), whom she admires for her "disinclination to enter the arena [which] debars her from winning the prize seated midway on the hill of fame." Mitford "look[s] up to a woman, who, with powers to command the most brilliant literary success, contents herself with a warm and unenvying sympathy in the success of others with a mixture of reverence and admiration greater than I can accord to mere genius, however, high."[31]

For Davis and Mitford women excel by keeping level in their ambitions and not losing sight of life's realities and demands. Men might be celebrated as geniuses, but women surpass them in modesty and self-restraint. This ideal of female restraint is also why Mitford prides herself on discouraging young talented ladies from thinking too much of themselves:

If in my humble career I can look back to any part of my own conduct with real satisfaction, it is that I have always, when a young lady has been brought to me in her character of prodigy, had the courage to give present pain in order to avert a future evil. I have always said "wait"; certain that the more real was the talent the greater was the danger of over-exciting the youthful faculties, of over-stimulating the youthful sensibility.[32]

Like Mitford, Davis promotes women as disinterested nourishers as well as intellectually capable individuals. She praises the Quaker social reformer, women's rights activist, and abolitionist Lucretia Mott, for example, as

one of the most remarkable women that this country has ever produced. Fugitive slaves, lecturers, reformers, everybody who wanted to give help, found their way to her quiet little farmhouse on the Old York Road; some were checked and some urged onward, but all were cared for and helped.[33]

In essence, Davis argues that human worth is not about mere intellect and creed but about charity and heart. What makes women so valuable is their feminine side of loving, caring, and working hard for the family's upkeep.

Much of Mott's power, according to Davis, came from

the fact that she was one of the most womanly of women. She had pity and tenderness enough in her heart for the mother of mankind. . . . She might face a mob at night that threatened her life, or lecture to thousands of applauding disciples, but she never forgot in the morning to pick and shell the peas for dinner.[34]

Overall, a significant part of Davis's and Mitford's experience of self is related to male figurehead intellectuals of their day as well as to a network of the "uncelebrated," including fellow women contemporaries. Ultimately, both authors derive part of their legitimacy for telling stories through acquaintance with celebrities on both sides of the Atlantic, about whom they share intimate knowledge in their works. Both women, however, attempt to use the interest garnered by their illustrious friends to draw attention to the less regarded and obscure. Both find merit in obscurity, something both define as a genuinely feminine quality. Mitford explicitly rejects fame as detrimental to talent and imagination. Davis, for her part, praises women such as Louisa May Alcott because "fame and success counted for nothing with her except for the material aid which they enabled her

to give." Ultimately, both women authors realize that they may become obscure characters themselves, remembered by posterity solely for the merit of their relation to the famous.

Self-Representation in Relation to the (Trans)national Literature

Mitford and Davis respectively identify mostly with their immediate English and American communities. Nonetheless, they regard the national character as closely linked to a transatlantic heritage. First of all, both stress their nation's Anglo-Saxon origins, including the Irish and the Scottish, dedicating individual chapters to them. Both women's transatlantic perceptions of self and the nation become apparent in this idea of a common Anglo-Saxon heritage and even more so through commentary on a shared cultural and literary tradition. They emphasize inherent differences between the United States and Britain but perceive them as variations of a kind. The following characterization of Mitford on the literary output of her American "cousins" serves as a vivid example for this attitude. It provides a rare view of the perception of the American literary market by the English and therefore is quoted here in its entirety:

> The representatives of the Anglo-Saxon race across the Atlantic—our cousins I do not know how many degrees removed—have in no way better proved their kindred than by the growing pith and substance of their literature. Of such prose writers as Channing, Norton, Prescott, Ware, Cooper, and Washington Irving, together with the many who, where there are such leaders, are sure to press close upon their footsteps, any country might be proud. . . . But they are an ambitious race, these transatlantic kinsmen of ours, commonly called Americans; they like to have the best that can be obtained in every department, and they do not dislike to vaunt of their possessions; and now that their great literary want is supplied in the person of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, they may glorify themselves to their heart's content, certain that every lover of poetry, whether born under the red-cross banner of Queen Victoria, or the stripes and stars of the States, will join the general All Hail![35]

Mitford considers American kinsmen who have their particularities, for example, in ambition and pride, but share a notion of literary excellence that is hailed in both countries. In fact, Americans have proven their affiliation with the English by the increasingly high quality of their literature. For Mitford, the English nation is literally defined by its literary output and literary taste, and

membership may be claimed by literary excellence or appreciation of art. She treats the Irish and the Scottish similar to Americans; that is, she classifies them as affiliates via the authors they produced.

Davis is also aware of the kinship between Americans and the English but rather dwells on their differences when she explains how entirely the popular American woman of this country differs from those of England and France:

> As for the women who have won fame in my day, the first fact which strikes me on turning to them is how entirely the popular woman of this country differs from that of older peoples. We all know the grand dame of France and England, though we never may have seen her. She is as distinct a personality as the Sphinx or the Pope. She may be beautiful or ugly, a saint or a Messalina, but she must be the outgrowth of a class set apart for generations as noble.[36]

In short, the worth of the continental woman is usually rooted in her aristocratic ancestry. Not so for American women: "they all had the distinction of good birth and breeding; they sometimes had beauty, but always that personal attraction, that sweet, soft, elusive charm of the purely feminine woman." The ideal American woman, "expresses to [men] purity, motherhood, and religion, all in one . . . there is nothing masculine in their character or habits of thought, they are womanly, even womanish in both." Davis's claim for female agency does not lie in birthright or intellectual vigor but in her very femininity, in which American women seem to especially excel.[37]

Mitford's and Davis's stance toward a common transatlantic heritage reflects their respective ages' attitudes toward the other. Mitford exhibits a rather condescending view, generously, albeit censoriously, allowing Americans a claim to literary fame. In fact, nineteenth-century Americans were keen on establishing an independent American literary canon and on emancipating themselves from continental literature. Such an attitude echoes in Davis's biting remarks that the English value only class and rank instead of true merit.[38] As we shall see, however, regardless of their manifest nationalistic attitudes, Mitford and Davis are entirely in tune in their admiration of American authors.

Overall, the most important element in the relational selves of Mitford and Davis is literature. The relationship to the written word and, especially, to imagined worlds is multifaceted and determines the two women writers' understanding and perception of the world and themselves to a large degree. In fact, I maintain that in the case of Davis and Mitford it would be legitimate to talk of literary relational selves. They relate themselves to literature via three main modi

operandi: via certain literary forms, via literary content or subject matter, and via their own writing skills.

Intriguingly, the way both women position themselves toward American writer Nathaniel Hawthorne serves as an excellent example of the mechanisms of literary relationality at work in their writing. Although 50 years and an ocean apart, Mitford and Davis plainly single out Hawthorne as an inspirational source, and their descriptions of his character are truly of a kind. Mitford states,

> these excellent writers [Irving, Cooper, Dr. Bird] have been long before the public; but a new star has lately sprung into light in the Western horizon, who in a totally different manner—and nothing is more re-markable among all these American novelists than their utter differ-ence from each other—will hardly fail to cast a bright illumination over both hemispheres. . . . I am told that Mr. Hawthorne is astonished at his own reputation, and thinks himself the most overrated man in America. Then that portrait—what a head! And he is said to be of the height and build of Daniel Webster ["tall and muscular person"]. So much the better. It is well that a fine intellect should be fitly lodged, harmony is among the rarest.[39]

Davis's commentary on Hawthorne runs as follows:

> Hawthorne was in the Boston fraternity [Holmes, Longfellow, Emer-son, Ticknor] but not of it. He was an alien among these men, not of their kind. . . . He knew and cared little about Nathaniel Hawthorne, or indeed about the people around him. . . . Even in his own house he was like Banquo's ghost among the thanes at the banquet. . . . Personally he was a rather short, powerfully built man, gentle and low voiced, with a sly, elusive humor gleaming sometimes in his watchful gray eyes. The portrait with which we are all familiar—a curled barbershop head—gives no idea of the singularly melancholy charm of his face. There was a mysterious power in it which I never have seen elsewhere in picture, stature, or human being.[40]

Both women set Hawthorne in relation to his literary contemporaries and clearly single him out among them. He belongs to the best but is not "of them." Somehow his character and merit elude classification, whereas he is ex-tremely modest and thinks himself overrated. Mitford and Davis are especially taken by his natural and mysterious style. Discussing *The House of the Seven Gables*, Mitford maintains, "The story is not told, we find out; we feel that there

is a legend; that some strange destiny has hovered over the old house, and hovers there still. The slightness of the means by which this feeling is excited is wonderful." She goes on to compare his method to the supernatural school of E. T. A. Hoffmann and the Gothic romance of Ann Radcliffe but thinks them lacking in conviction juxtaposed with Hawthorne's "vague, dim, vapory, impalpable ghastliness."[41] Davis explains the fascination of the mysterious in Hawthorne as being "the product of generations of solitude and silence." Thinking it "no wonder that he had the second sight and was naturalized into the world of ghosts."[42]

Rebecca Harding Davis encountered Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales* as a child, reading and escaping into imaginary worlds sitting in a treehouse.[43] It was the first cheap book that she ever saw, and it impressed her deeply: She read the stories so often, she asserted,

> that I almost know every line in them by heart. One was a story told by a town pump, and another the account of the rambles of a little girl like myself, and still another a description of a Sunday morning in a quiet town like our sleepy village. There was no talk of enchantment in them. But in these papers the commonplace folk and things which I saw every day took on a sudden mystery and charm and, for the first time, I found that they, too, belonged to the magic world of knights and pilgrims and fiends.[44]

Davis, as a child, was charmed by Hawthorne's ability to turn the everyday, the life as she experienced it herself, into a worthwhile and enchanting story. This talent not only arrested her as a child but lastingly influenced her own style of writing; as we know, naturalism became her hallmark.

Mitford not only finds that Hawthorne candidly captures human hypocrisy in literary form but is enchanted by his character portrait of Hepzibah Pyncheon, a "poor old maid," in *The House of the Seven Gables*. She finds herself perfectly reflected in that character, commenting, "Ah, I have a strong fellow-feeling for that poor Hepzibah—a decaying gentlewoman, elderly, ugly, awkward, near-sighted, cross! I have a deep sympathy with 'old maid Pyncheon.'"[45] Hepzibah had an unfortunate facial expression that made her seem to scowl most of the time, leading people to judge her as cross and unkind. Mitford seems to feel similarly misjudged and unappreciated. Unmarried, rather plain, and often financially vulnerable, she felt excluded and marginalized by fashionable society. This feeling is reflected in the passage that Mitford quotes from *The House of the Seven Gables*, in the contrast created between Hepzibah and her niece Phoebe, the incarnation of beauty and innocence, who beautifies the world by her simple presence.

Hawthorne himself, though in a humorous vein, comments on the tragic fate of Hepzibah in real life and as a literary figure:

> Our miserable old Hepzibah! It is a heavy annoyance to a writer who endeavors to represent nature, . . . How can we elevate our history of retribution for sin of long ago when, as one of our most prominent figures, we are compelled to introduce, not a young and lovely woman, nor even the stately remains of beauty storm-shattered by affliction but a gaunt, sallow, rusty-jointed maiden, in a longwaisted silk gown.[46]

The third-person narrator in this passage mocks the tradition of the beauteous heroine and introduces a more realistic option of an ordinary female hero. Hawthorne proves the possibility of turning an old maid into a heroine by representing Hepzibah as a likeable character with whom the reader sympathizes. Mitford perceives herself as of "one order with Hepzibah," as she initially wonders whether all Americans bestow the title of "old maids" upon single women as Hawthorne does.[47] Hence, Mitford is taken with Hawthorne because she can relate to his characters and because he creates a fictional world in which appearances are misleading and in which there is room for a good old cross cousin to be a heroine. Davis felt transported by Hawthorne into the magical world of ordinary life, a magic that remained with her through old age, causing her to comment in her autobiography, "Of the many pleasant things which have come into my life, this [sitting in the tree house and reading Hawthorne] was one of the pleasantest and best."[48]

Both autobiographers dedicate a considerable space to the discussion of Hawthorne, with Davis concentrating on his personality, caught between lively loving humor and chronic melancholy, and Mitford praising his work for its emotional appeal and moral strength. In the end, however, the way his work affected and reflected on their lives is the primary impetus for singling him out.

Inclusion and Exclusion in Cultural Autobiography

The two autobiographers' discussion of Hawthorne illustrates how they are judging literature, and, by implication, people, by merit and not by fame or popularity. For the American realist writer Rebecca Harding Davis and for the local realist English author Mary Russell Mitford, writing and (wo)men's actions needed to be judged by the way they affected people, that is, the pleasure provided by their company. Davis and Mitford relate themselves to literature via the effect it has on them in the same manner as they relate to people who charm, repel, please,

or disappoint them, and more importantly, they find such manner of judging and presenting people appropriate for national autobiography. In such judgement of their contemporaries, the two women believe themselves to be experts because they have lived long and met scores of people and read plenty of literature. These encounters took place in the domestic sphere and, in the memoirists' eyes, are therefore more authoritative when it comes to evaluating people's impact on others.

Mitford and Davis end their narratives by emphasizing their own longevity, Davis thanks "the Father of us all, . . . that I have known so many of them [contemporaries], and for so long have kept them company," and Mitford frames herself as quite an "anachronism in this locomotive age."[49] Their long lives seem reason enough to legitimize their participation in writing cultural history. Additionally, both women claim an untainted, unprejudiced attitude toward the past and present that evolved from their experiences and that differentiates them from younger men and women. Davis remarks at the close of her narrative that "the long day grows clearer at its close, and the petty fogs of prejudice which rose between us and our fellows in youth melt away as the sun goes down. At last we see God's creatures as they are." Mitford ends by making a case for literature that celebrates the sky and regrets that this is rarely the case. Her promotion of the sky is tied to the fact that the sky does not differentiate between people but "is for all." Apart from supporting their claim to unbiased representation, Mitford and Davis style themselves as liberal minded, almost as classless and raceless, to further substantiate that their cultural histories are inclusive rather than exclusive. Mitford finishes her tale by commenting on the actions of people around her, including her maid servant, a Gypsy, and local farmers, styling herself as part of a village community. Davis explicitly states,

> I used to like or dislike them [people] as Democrats or Republicans, whites, Indians or negroes, criminals or Christians. Now I only see men and women slaving for their children; husbands and wives sacrificing their lives to each other; loveable boys, girls with their queer new chivalric notions.[50]

Although these endings sound like class, race, and gender prejudices overcome, we should not be misled in taking Mitford and Davis at face value here. Both invoke Christian notions of brotherhood and the idea that all men and women are equal before God, and they like that idea, especially because it legitimizes their own participation in the narrative construction of the nation.

In her memoir, Davis mostly talks about the well-to-do, albeit including tales of the idiosyncrasies of poor men and women in her portrayal of Southerners and the Scotch-Irishman. Her purpose in those sections, however, is mainly to show the valor, strength, and assertiveness of female members of that class. Women of other ethnicities and races do not feature at all, and there are only a very few references to African American men like Booker T. Washington. Similarly, Mitford concentrates her narrative on her acquaintances who belonged exclusively to the White middle and upper classes. Although Mitford and Davis claim to be writing history from below, it is, in fact, history from the middle and the domestic, which includes women and the uncelebrated but which only tentatively transcends class boundaries and leaves racial and ethnic barriers firmly in place.

This brief analysis of the autobiographical writing strategies of Rebecca Harding Davis and Mary Russell Mitford has highlighted the relational nature of their life writing. They wrote themselves in relation to places, to people, and, most importantly, to literature. In Mitford's case, her recollections turn into a sort of listing of her favorite reads, and Davis uses her literary talents to paint a portrait of the character of her times. Therefore, their narratives become episodic rather than linear and focus on others rather than on themselves. But this is true only on the content level and not on the level of the narrative voice that remains firmly in the women's hands, tied to autobiographical anecdotes and to very personal viewpoints from which an autonomous and self-centered consciousness is self-confidently exhibited.

John Eakin maintains that the relational self is a ubiquitous phenomenon applicable to all the sexes. Such theories on relational identity formation flourished with the analysis of women's life writing, implying that women felt a need to relate to others in order to avoid accusations of self-centeredness.[51] As we have seen, however, in the cases of Mitford and Davis, relationality is a means of self-expression and not of self-repression. Considering the fact that the education of nineteenth-century well-to-do women and the channel through which they entered the public sphere were almost exclusively literary, it may come as no surprise that they essentially related to the world via literature. As we have seen, the literary process of self-fashioning transcended geographical boundaries in the same way that the literary market spanned the Atlantic Ocean in the nineteenth century. Both Davis and Mitford grudgingly acknowledge their transatlantic relationship, although their kinship becomes unwittingly apparent in the similarity of the women's life-writing techniques, their celebration of the unacknowledged females in their celebrated lives, and their attempt to write middle-class women and themselves into cultural history.

Notes

1.   Mary Russell Mitford, *Recollections of a Literary Life; or, Books, Places, and People*, 3 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1852; repr., New York: Harper & Brothers, 1855), 1. Citations refer to the Harper edition.

2.   Rebecca Harding Davis, *Bits of Gossip* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1904), reprinted in Janice Milner Lasseter and Sharon M. Harris, eds., *Rebecca Harding Davis: Writing Cultural Auto-biography* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2001), 21–130. Citations refer to the Vanderbilt University Press edition.

3.   Barbara Welter, The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820–1860, *American Quarterly* 18, no. 2, part 1 (Summer 1966): 151–174.

4.   Sidonie Smith, *A Poetics of Woman's Autobiography: Marginality and the Fictions of Self Representation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 13; John Paul Eakin, *How Our Lives Become Stories: Making Selves* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1999), 43, 4; see also Janice Milner Lasseter and Sharon M. Harris, Introduction, in Lasseter and Harris, *Rebecca Harding Davis*, 13.

5.   Rebecca Harding Davis, Life in the Iron Mills; or, The Korl Woman, *Atlantic Monthly* 7, no. 42 (April 1861): 450–491; Mary Russell Mitford, *Our Village: Sketches of Rural Character and Scenery*, vol. 1 (London: G. & W. B. Whittaker, 1824; originally published serially in *Lady's Magazine*, beginning 1819).

6.   For biographical information on Rebecca Harding Davis and Mary Russell Mitford, see Lasseter and Harris, Introduction, and Martin Garrett, Mitford, Mary Russell (1787–1855), in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

7.   Estelle C. Jelinek, *The Tradition of Women's Autobiography: From Antiquity to the Present* (Boston: Twayne, 1986), xi–xii.

8.   Davis, *Bits of Gossip*, 97.

9.   Davis, *Bits of Gossip*, 108–110.

10.   Mitford, *Recollections of a Literary Life*, 217.

11.   Jelinek, *Tradition of Women's Autobiography*, xii.

12.   See Jelinek, *Tradition of Women's Autobiography*, xiii; Stephen C. Arch, John Fitch and the Origins of American Autobiography, in *Writing Lives: American Biography and Autobiography*, ed. Hans Bak and Hans Krabbendam (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1998), 9–15.

13.   Jelinek, *Tradition of Women's Autobiography*, xii; Arch, John Fitch, 13; Margo Culley, "What a Piece of Work Is Woman!" An Introduction, in *American Women's Autobiography: Fea(s)ts of Memory*, ed. Margo Culley (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), 3–21.

14.   Mitford, *Recollections of a Literary Life*, v.

15.   Mitford, *Recollections of a Literary Life*, vii.

16.   Davis, *Bits of Gossip*, 22.

17.   Lasseter and Harris, Introduction, 12.

18.   Davis, *Bits of Gossip*, 146.

19.   Davis, *Bits of Gossip*, 125.

20.   Davis, *Bits of Gossip*, 86.

21.   Mitford, *Recollections of a Literary Life*, 142.

22.   Mitford, *Recollections of a Literary Life*, 260.

23.   Colley Cibber, *An Apology for His Life of Mr. Colley Cibber, Comedian, and Late Patentee of the Theatre-Royal, with an Historical View of the Stage in His Own Time* (London: John Watts, 1740).

24.   Mitford, *Recollections of a Literary Life*, 27.

25.   Mitford, *Recollections of a Literary Life*, v; Davis, *Bits of Gossip*, 87.

26.   Elisa Beshero-Bondar, *Women, Epic, and Transition in British Romanticism* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2011), discusses Mitford as an author of women's epic who tended "to prioritize female experience and perspectives" (15) and explains how in her sonnet "To Miss Porden on Her Poem of Coeur de Lion," Mitford "explicitly claims epic poetry by women as poetry for Woman" (3). Cf. Eleanor Anne Porden, *Cœur de Lion; or, The Third Crusade: A Poem, in Sixteen Books*, 2 vols. (London: G. & W. B. Whittaker, 1822).

27.   Davis, *Bits of Gossip*, 38–39

28.   Davis, *Bits of Gossip*, 42–43.

29.   Louisa May Alcott, *Hospital Sketches* (Boston: James Redpath, 1863); Alcott, *Little Women: Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy*, 2 vols. (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1868–1869).

30.   Davis, *Bits of Gossip*, 42.

31.   Mitford, *Recollections of a Literary Life*, 152–158.

32.   Mitford, *Recollections of a Literary Life*, 222–223.

33.   Davis, *Bits of Gossip*, 111.

34.   Davis, *Bits of Gossip*, 112.

35.   Mitford, *Recollections of a Literary Life*, 62.

36.   Davis, *Bits of Gossip*, 124–125.

37.   Davis, *Bits of Gossip*, 126, 129.

38.   For a discussion of how nineteenth-century American authors tried to fashion an independent literary tradition, see Dorothy C. Broaddus, *Genteel Rhetoric: Writing High Culture in Nineteenth-Century Boston* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1999); Leslie Butler, *Critical Americans; Victorian Intellectuals and Transatlantic Liberal Reform* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

39.   Mitford, *Recollections of a Literary Life*, 531, "tall and muscular person," 228.

40.   Davis, *Bits of Gossip*, 48.

41.   Mitford, *Recollections of a Literary Life*, 519.

42.   Davis, *Bits of Gossip*, 50. See Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The House of the Seven Gables* (Boston: Ticknor, Reed, & Fields, 1851).

43.   Nathaniel Hawthorne, *Twice-Told Tales* (Boston: American Stationers' Co., 1837).

44.   Davis, *Bits of Gossip*, 37.

45.   Mitford, *Recollections of a Literary Life*, 520.

46.   Hawthorne, *The House of the Seven Gables* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1907; reprint of 1851 ed.), 37; Mitford, *Recollections of a Literary Life*, 525.

47.   Mitford, *Recollections of a Literary Life*, 520.

48.   Davis, *Bits of Gossip*, 52.

49.   Davis, *Bits of Gossip*, 130; Mitford, *Recollections of a Literary Life*, 556.

50.   Mitford, *Recollections of a Literary Life*, 554; Davis, *Bits of Gossip*, 129.

51.   Eakin, *How Our Lives Become Stories*, 43.

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INDEX

Connecting Women features presentations from the second conference of the Intercontinental Cross-Currents Network, "The Dynamics of Power: Inclusion and Exclusion in Women's Networks during the Long Nineteenth Century," held in 2016 at the University of Minho in Braga, Portugal. Intercontinental Cross-Currents provides a cooperative platform for researchers from all scholarly disciplines interested in the literal and metaphorical networks created and navigated by women from the European and American continents from 1776 to 1939—the so-called long nineteenth century. Organized by the University's Institute of Arts and Humanities' Centre for Humanistic Studies and the Department of English and North American Studies, the conference brought together international participants who investigated mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion within women's networks forged in Britain, France, Italy, the Philippines, Portugal, and the United States. *Connecting Women* delves into both literary networks and those with social and political agendas that centered around temperance associations, anti-slavery societies, crime syndicates, suffragism, political organizations, and war relief.

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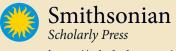
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