THE OTHER WOMAN: SECONDARY HEROINES IN THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY BRITISH AND AMERICAN NOVEL

DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

In a recurrent pattern in the nineteenth-century novel, authors introduce two female characters, only to focus on one and appear to forget the other. My dissertation examines this other woman: the “secondary heroine.” The protagonists of Romantic novels are written to embody stable national identities, suggesting a transatlantic history of the Romantic novel in which both British and American authors equate the primary heroine with a cultural ideal of femininity. Yet both traditions challenge that cultural ideal through the figure of the secondary heroine. My dissertation demonstrates how authors initially deployed the “other woman” to suppress alternative images of womanhood and nationhood, but eventually embraced the secondary heroine as the centerpiece of the Realist novel.

In the first three chapters, I pair British and American novels and examine the secondary heroine as a challenge to generic and nationalist constraints. I divide the Romantic novel into three separate subgenres: the epistolary novel, as exemplified by Samuel Richardson’s *Clarissa* (1747-8) and Hannah Webster Foster’s *The Coquette* (1797); the Gothic and its inheritors in the cult of sensibility, represented by Ann Radcliffe’s *A Sicilian Romance* (1790), Jane Austen’s *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), and James Fenimore Cooper’s *The Pioneers* (1823); and the historical romance in Sir Walter Scott’s *Ivanhoe* (1820) and Catharine Maria Sedgwick’s *Hope Leslie* (1827). By pairing
British and American texts of similar genres, I underscore the secondary heroine as a site of difference who reveals anxieties over unstable national identities.

The Realist novel reversed the roles of “primary” and “secondary” heroines, preferring dangerous women to conventional heroines. My fourth chapter traces the role of the secondary heroine in theories of Realism. I argue that the Realist novel works to contain dangerous women through two narrative strategies: acculturation and resistance.

My final chapter turns to the heroines of Henry James’s *The Golden Bowl* (1904). Situated at the cusp of Realism and Modernism, James’s novel provides a fitting endpoint for my study: the construction of national identity via multiple marriage plots anticipates the fragmentation of identity and multiple narrators that characterize the modernist novel, erasing the distinction between primary and secondary heroines.
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INTRODUCTION

There was a mad disorder in my thoughts – a tumult unappeasable. Could it, indeed, be the living Rowena who confronted me? Could it indeed be Rowena at all – the fair-haired, the blue-eyed Lady Rowena Trevanion of Tremaine? Why, why should I doubt it? The bandage lay heavily about the mouth – but then might it not be the mouth of the breathing Lady of Tremaine? And the cheeks – there were the roses as in her noon of life – yes, these might indeed be the fair cheeks of the living Lady of Tremaine. And the chin, with its dimples, as in health, might it not be hers? – but had she then grown taller since her malady? What inexpressible madness seized me with the thought? One bound, and I had reached her feet! Shrinking from my touch, she let fall from her head the ghastly cerements which had confined it, and there streamed forth, into the rushing atmosphere of the chamber, huge masses of long and disheveled hair; it was blacker than the wings of midnight! And now slowly opened the eyes of the figure which stood before me. “Here then, at last,” I shrieked aloud, “can I never – can I never be mistaken – these are the full, and the black, and the wild eyes – of my lost love – of the lady – of the LADY LIGEIA!” (1534)

So ends Edgar Allan Poe’s famous short story, “Ligeia,” but the transformation of the Lady Rowena Trevanion of Tremaine into Ligeia raises more questions than Poe’s conclusion answers: how has the Lady Rowena been transformed into the Lady Ligeia? What were those ruby drops that appeared in the air before falling into Rowena’s drink? Did our narrator poison Rowena? Is this all an opium dream, or has Ligeia truly been able to conquer death? Who – or what – is the Lady Ligeia? These questions have haunted readers since Poe’s story first appeared in the September 1838 issue of The American Museum and will undoubtedly continue to haunt readers for as long as Poe’s text remains in print. But let me tell you the question that haunts me: who is the Lady Rowena Trevanion of Tremaine?
In a text otherwise preoccupied with knowledge – with what we can know and what we cannot know – the Lady Rowena exists as a strange anomaly: our narrator does not tell us very much about her, and, it appears, most readers do not particularly care. Like the narrator, because of the narrator, readers are obsessed with Ligeia. In “Ligeia,” Poe makes visible, makes horrifying, a sort of narrative violence typical to the nineteenth-century novel: the “forgetting” of one heroine to make way for another. However, because Poe’s story is Gothic, he inverts the typical narrative pattern: the unknowable Ligeia returns to the narrative by possessing the body of the familiar Rowena. Indeed, Poe’s story is Gothic at least in part because he inverts readers’ expectations by unearthing a buried narrative problem: the secondary heroine. Poe gives Ligeia center-stage; he makes her unforgettable, and unforgotten – in fact, he makes her uncanny – but in doing so points to a history of forgotten heroines: women who exist outside the primary courtship plot of the novel.¹ This project focuses on the marriage plot to amend the history of the novel by recovering the role of this forgotten heroine, a figure I term the secondary heroine.

Readers of novels tend to be preoccupied with the main character. We wait to see if the heroine will marry the hero, or suffer tragically. In doing so, we overlook the other

¹ In his essay, “The Uncanny” (originally published in German in 1919), Sigmund Freud takes as a starting point the suggestion of Jentsch: “doubts whether an apparently animate being is really alive; or conversely, whether a lifeless object might not be in fact animate” (201). Although Jentsch is referring to waxwork figures or dolls, this idea certainly has resonance with the story of Ligeia. Perhaps more appropriate, however, is Freud’s own definition of the uncanny: “this uncanny is in reality nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression” (217).
woman, or the secondary heroine.\textsuperscript{2} I call these women “secondary heroines” to point to a paradox: these characters are not mere stock background figures, but they are not protagonists either. Secondary heroines are defined by a particular and peculiar narrative pattern: they begin the novel as significant characters, but then disappear, only to return at the conclusion of the novel. Poe foregrounds this pattern by drawing attention to Ligeia’s “strangeness” (1526); she is always just out of descriptive reach. Every description of her is over-determined, multiplying her significance in so many strange directions that it is impossible to pin Ligeia down: she is vaguely eastern, vaguely beautiful, vaguely intelligent, vaguely rich – all of which makes her dramatic resurrection all the more startling, for Poe teases the reader with the promise of Ligeia’s materiality, dares us to think that we finally might know just who Ligeia is, even as he almost necessarily withdraws that possibility by concluding his tale. Instead of forgetting Ligeia, the narrator opposes the unforgotten memory of Ligeia with the body of Rowena, whose materiality is further underscored by the mention of both her last name, Trevanion, and her home, Tremaine – two things, it is important to note, that the narrator cannot remember about Ligeia. In contrast to the excess of descriptors for Ligeia, the lady Rowena is presented as if already known. By inverting narrative priority – that is, by focusing on the “strangeness” of Ligeia rather than on the more typical heroine Rowena – Poe calls attention to the uncanny return of the secondary heroine in the nineteenth-century novel.

\textsuperscript{2} Despite the images of seductive adulteresses or angry wives called up by the phrase “the other woman,” secondary heroines don’t get to be so glamorously dangerous (or so central to the plot) until the Realist novel.
This pattern appears in some of the earliest novels written in English and persists, on both sides of the Atlantic, throughout what is typically termed “the rise of the novel.” The persistence of this pattern is what leads me to conclude that the secondary heroine is worth considering as an intentional narrative strategy used for deliberate ends. For novels to introduce secondary characters – rivals, friends, villains – and then dismiss them from the plot is not surprising. But when novels introduce secondary heroines only to forget and then remember these secondary heroines . . . that, I think, requires explanation. This study undertakes that explanation by claiming that British and American novels ask readers to embrace the primary heroine as a representative of national ideals while displacing the anxiety produced by those ideals onto the figure of the secondary heroine.

Part of the work of this study is to suggest that while the narrative pattern of the secondary heroine remains fairly consistent throughout the Romantic novel, the secondary heroine herself assumes different forms to respond to different historical and literary tensions. Such forms have heretofore been the apparatus for studies of character in the novel. For example, scholars have examined representations of sisters in the novel under this rubric. Although I do consider secondary heroines who are sisters in Chapter Two, this project is not a study of sisterhood. Such studies exist, and have already amply covered the peculiar psychological relationship between sisters and the representation of that relationship in literature. I am instead interested in the difference sisterhood does or

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3 See, for example, Sarah Annes Brown’s *Devoted Sisters*, also a transatlantic study; or Amy Levin’s *The Suppressed Sister*, which focuses on 19th and 20th century British texts; or Helena Michie’s *Sororaphobia*, which expands the definition of sisterhood from a purely biological fact to incorporate metaphorical sisterhood in British texts.
does not make to the power dynamics between primary and secondary heroines. Similarly, while I consider secondary heroines who might be termed “exotic” or “savage” in Chapter Three, this project does not limit “otherness” to race, but rather suggests that the secondary heroine is deployed to point to the conflict between race and nation in the historical romance. I suggest that whether the other woman is a sister, a Native American, wealthy, or poor is significant because that defining trait is made secondary by the plot of the novel; in other words, rather than imposing a narrative of “race,” “sisters,” or “class” on the history of the novel, I want to look at the ways novels represent even as they suppress these categories of difference through the figure of the secondary heroine.

The connection between the history of England and America and the history of the English and American novel is central to my understanding of the secondary heroine. I draw heavily on the research of Cathy Davidson, Nancy Armstrong and Felicity Nussbaum, among others, to make certain historical claims; namely, that British and American citizens were particularly preoccupied with constructions of femininity in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and that they understood the (fluctuating) definition of womanhood to be intrinsically linked to the (fluctuating) definition of nationhood.

The connection between female protagonists and national identity has been long established in literary criticism on both sides of the Atlantic. The venerable Ian Watt, for example, suggested in *The Rise of the Novel* that Pamela embodied a new Protestant individualism, nascent in Richardson’s contemporary England. While Nancy Armstrong writes against Watt in *Desire and Domestic Fiction*, she too claims that narrative shapes national identity. In particular, Armstrong argues that the creation of desire for the
domestic woman in the novel creates desire for the domestic woman in the British nation. In a similar vein as Armstrong (and, ironically, just after rejecting a transatlantic approach), Cathy Davidson claims “My concern is with the ways in which a small body of Americans used the novel as a political and cultural forum, a means to express their own vision of a developing new nation” (Revolution and the Word, 11). Davidson focuses on the development of an American literature “against the overwhelming impact of their nation’s residual Colonial mentality” (11); I am interested in exactly where and how American literature embraces or rejects the literature of the parent nation. My project connects Armstrong’s Desire and Domestic Fiction and Davidson’s Revolution and the Word to write a transatlantic history of the novel via the figure of the secondary heroine. The protagonists of British and American Romantic novels are written to embody stable national identities. This point of similarity suggests a transatlantic history of the Romantic novel in which both British and American authors equate the primary heroine with a cultural ideal of femininity. Yet both traditions also challenge that cultural ideal through the figure of the secondary heroine.

I take as a starting point Armstrong’s compelling claim that “the internal composition of a given text is nothing more or less than the history of its struggle with contrary forms of representation for the authority to control semiosis. In this respect, there is no inside to the text as opposed to the outside, no text/context distinction at all, though we must make such distinctions for the purposes of copyright laws and traditional literary analyses” (Desire and Domestic Fiction, 23). I want to push Armstrong’s claim

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4 In her introduction to the recent reprint of Revolution and the Word, Davidson acknowledges that (if she was going to write the book again) she would consider a transatlantic approach.
in two directions: first, I argue that part of the struggle for authority in the novel (and thus the nation) is staged in the relationship between primary and secondary heroines; second, that the “outside” of the text reaches beyond the boundaries of either England or America. I argue instead that texts are constantly engaged in what I see as the paradox of nationalism: that in order to define the nation, one must have something to define it against, and that both England and America, in their attempts to push apart from one another, remain as entangled as ever. Thus while the primary heroine embodies national ideals – England for Englishmen and women, America for Americans – the secondary heroine pulls against the narrative drive towards resolution, pointing to the instability of national identity.

This “loose end” embodied by the secondary heroine is particularly striking in the history of the novel because of the pat conclusions common to the Romantic novel. Such novels typically end in the comforting certainties of marriage or death. In *The Rise of the Novel*, Ian Watt argues that Richardson’s development of the courtship plot marked the origin of the novel proper in England. In this project, I argue that the courtship plot becomes the dominant plot of the nineteenth-century novel in England and America not only because it offers structural unity, as Watt claims, but, perhaps more importantly, because it operates to stabilize very unstable definitions of nationhood and womanhood – that is, the courtship of the heroine and hero offers a romantic fantasy of stable national identity through the figure of the heroine. The early novel is populated with dangerous rakes and rather anemic heroes: one path leads to happy marriage, the other to seduction and death. The fate of the plot, and thus the fate of the nation, lies in the heroine’s hands.
Thus, the secondary heroine functions in two ways: she is both an embodiment of national anxieties and a proto-realist alternative to the romanticized femininity of the heroine.

I understand the changing power dynamics between primary and secondary heroines in the novel as the representation of a struggle to define womanhood and nationhood – a desire for a pat conclusion (and thus for a secure national identity and understanding of femininity) that is always already undone by the very presence of the secondary heroine, the other. In doing so, I hope to bridge what I see as a disconnect between feminist scholarship in area studies and the current work in transatlantic studies. Despite Frederic Jameson’s assertion that “feminism, taken in its broadest sense, certainly projects an ‘interdisciplinary’ coherence which is neither that of the period, nor of the area study” (18), with a few notable exceptions, very few feminist studies of nineteenth-century literature offer a transatlantic perspective.

Gilbert and Gubar’s seminal work, Madwoman in the Attic, focuses almost exclusively on British women writers from Austen to Eliot, with the exception of their last chapter: “Strength in Agony: Nineteenth-Century Poetry by Women.” In this chapter, American authors from Emily Dickinson to Whitman to Hawthorne to Stowe seem to proliferate in company with Virginia Woolf, Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Christina Rossetti – as if an embargo of sorts had been lifted – but Gilbert and Gubar do not address their sudden switch to a transatlantic perspective. Indeed, their only invocation of the transatlantic is to hope that Woolf read Dickinson, and to offer a
reading of Dickinson’s marginalia in her copy of *Jane Eyre*, gesturing to (but without commenting on) the transatlantic book trade that made such sites of exchange possible.

Often a few floating signifiers – such as “separate spheres” or “true womanhood” – serve both nineteenth-century Americanists and scholars of nineteenth-century British literature, with very little discussion of the implications of the common use of these terms. For example, two anthologies – *Separate Spheres No More!: Gender Convergence in American Literature 1830-1930* and *No More Separate Spheres!* – address the prevalence of the idea of separate spheres in American literature, but do not gesture to similar discussions in British literature, even as they invoke Patmore’s Angel in the House, or Woolf’s now more famous invective against her. Readings of Realist fiction by Nancy Armstrong and Amy Kaplan gesture to the commodification of the domestic interior, but do not discuss the transatlantic implications of the nearly simultaneous appearance of Lady Clementina Hawarden’s photographs of upper-middle class women in domestic interiors and Edith Wharton’s “interior architecture” (Kaplan, *Social Construction*, 80).

An important corrective to these separate spheres of feminist literary criticism is Sarah Annes Brown’s *Devoted Sisters*, although Brown’s rationale for comparing British and American texts is brief:

Very early in my research I decided that this was to be a study of both British and American literature. Despite the important differences between the two traditions, both draw on the same tropes of sisterhood, and there is much evidence of influence and exchange between these nations’ sister texts, although some local phenomena (such as the Deceased Wife’s Sister Act) may certainly be identified. (viii-ix)
The secondary heroine serves as an apt starting point for such a discussion, as she is a figure common to both British and American texts, while the cultural and national ideologies she represents as repressed or discarded often diverge, thus illustrating the tension between union and disunion inherent in this transatlantic relationship.

With this in mind, I want to return to my earlier discussion of “Ligeia” to further illustrate the possibilities of transatlantic feminism as a critical approach. Editors have frequently suggested Sir Walter Scott’s heroine, Rowena, as literary antecedent of Poe’s Lady Rowena of Tremaine. I dwell on this connection, not to posit a Bloomian anxiety of influence, but rather to suggest an intentional reference that uncovers anxieties about femininity and nation. As is the case with Scott’s Rowena, Poe’s description of Rowena Trevanion depends on two stereotypes of femininity: beauty and dependence. Her fair hair and blue eyes link her to a stereotype of beauty, while her last name and home locate that beauty as a commodity within existing patriarchal structures.

The second description of Rowena more firmly locates her within such structures by depicting her marriage as the product of the traffic in women: “Where were the souls of the haughty family of the bride, when, through thirst of gold, they permitted to pass the threshold of an apartment so bedecked, a maiden and a daughter so beloved?” (1504). The exotic bridal chamber, so often read as a sort of psychomachia, is importantly an Eastern space full of “Arabesque” patterns, “candelabras of Eastern figure,” “the bridal couch of an Indian model,” and “a gigantic sarcophagus of black granite, from the tombs of the kings over against Luxor” (1504). This eastern space – this apartment so bedecked
underscores the bride’s family’s greed; they have sold her into a foreign and potentially dangerous space for their own economic gain and without regard for her safety.

In revisions to the tale, Poe more specifically evoked an opposition between this Eastern space and the English abbey which contains it, by claiming that the visitor to the chamber “saw himself surrounded by an endless succession of the ghastly forms which belong to the superstition of the Norman, or arise in the guilty slumbers of the monk” (1504). The juxtaposition highlights the unsuitability of “halls such as these” to house the lady Rowena, whose physicality is decidedly non-Eastern, and whose unplaceable but known genealogy and hometown, Trevanion and Tremaine respectively, point to at least a Western, if not a British nationality. Poe’s treatment of these questions operates as a return of the repressed, asking us to re-read Ivanhoe, and Romantic novels more generally, with the Gothic knowledge revealed in Poe’s short story.

“Ligeia” takes up questions of transatlantic or transnational commerce on several levels: the imported objects that decorate the halls of the English abbey echo the juxtaposition of the exotic Ligeia and the domestic Rowena, which in turn resonates with Scott’s juxtaposition of Rebecca and Rowena. Transatlantic trade, more broadly conceived, has been the focus of much study in recent years: Paul Gilroy’s Black Atlantic has offered important insight into the Atlantic slave trade and the cultural power of the black diaspora, Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse have posed the

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5 Although I will not push the connection between Poe’s story and Scott’s Ivanhoe here, let me briefly note that Poe’s choice of “Norman” superstition and the “guilty slumbers of the monk” pair nicely with Scott’s novel.

6 It is interesting to note that Poe’s Gothic landscape is an English abbey – as opposed to the Italian and French landscapes popular in British Gothic fiction.
intriguing possibility that Richardson’s *Pamela* was inspired by American captivity narratives, and many scholars, including Paul Giles, John Carlos Rowe, Lawrence Buell and Robert Weisbuch, have looked at the possibilities of transatlantic transmission through literature and culture. In doing so, each of these scholars has forwarded some understanding of “the transatlantic,” whether, as in Lawrence Buell’s work, it is “postcolonial”; or a “comparative transnationalism” that offers a critique of nationalism even as it appropriates nationalist rhetoric, as discussed in the work of John Carlos Rowe; comparative and reflective, according to Paul Giles; or a one-way transmission of cultural imperialism, as we see in Robert Weisbuch. Central to these understandings of “the transatlantic” is white America’s status as both colonial subject and colonial power. Implicit in the very terms “subject” and “power” is the compelling question of how America has negotiated this dual and apparently contradictory position, as well as its attendant politics. We see some evidence of these negotiations in American historical romances as they attempt to reconcile the expansionist politics of manifest destiny (and the concurrent suppression or extinction of indigenous identities) with the more insular project of defining American communities. In focusing solely on the transatlantic relationship between Britain and America, I examine the constitution of national identity internal to these nations – England’s changing relationship to the rest of her Commonwealth, particularly Scotland, and America’s own attempts to answer Crevecoeur’s question: “What is an American?” – and evident in the unique relationship

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7 This claim is subject to much debate. I am here siding with Paul Giles and Edward Watt to claim that America was both post-colonial (former colonial subject of England) and imperialist (having colonized America by oppressing the indigenous people and then working to establish itself as a national power post-Revolution).
between these two nations. The undeniable fact which all of these variations of transatlanticism share as their starting point is the exchange of cultural artifacts and ideas between England and America, from the first settlement through today.

In moving towards a definition of transatlantic studies, then, I, too, begin with this same given historical fact: Americans read English books, and, despite Sydney Smith, the English read American books. The English also read accounts of America in travel narratives and occasionally, as we see in the case of Washington Irving, Emerson, and even Maria Susanna Cummins, met Americans themselves. Despite America’s attempts to distinguish itself from England through the formation of a distinct national culture, and despite England’s attempts to disavow her relationship to her lost colonies through a disdain for that new nation’s culture, America and England remained, and indeed remain, inextricably linked. This tension between union and disunion, between a shared language and history and the historical events that divided England and America as well as the threats of rupture from within, serves as the foundation for my understanding of transatlantic studies.

Transatlantic studies reunite text and context, examining works not only within their own national contexts, but within the contexts of the other audiences to which that work speaks, evident in the direct address to those other nations (as we see in Thoreau’s famous musing about John and Jonathan), in the representation of other nations/national cultures within texts (as we see when Clarissa considers emigrating to Pennsylvania, or in

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8 For this reason, I do not examine (for example) French novels. America and England’s “special” relationship persists to this day, as is made evident in Tony Blair’s recent speech after George W. Bush’s second inauguration.
Henry James’s great international scenes), and in the common deployment of generic or characterological strategies, which are the primary focus of this dissertation.

In the first three chapters, I pair British and American novels and examine the secondary heroine as a challenge to generic and nationalist constraints. All of the novels I study might be categorized as romances, but, crucially, I divide the Romantic novel into three separate subgenres: the epistolary novel, as exemplified by Samuel Richardson’s *Clarissa* (1747-8) and Hannah Webster Foster’s *The Coquette* (1797); the Gothic and its inheritors in the cult of sensibility, represented by Ann Radcliffe’s *A Sicilian Romance* (1790), Jane Austen’s *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), and James Fenimore Cooper’s *The Pioneers* (1823); and the historical romance in Sir Walter Scott’s *Ivanhoe* (1820), and Catharine Maria Sedgwick’s *Hope Leslie* (1827). By pairing British and American texts of similar genres, I underscore the secondary heroine as a site of difference who reveals anxieties over unstable national identities.

The Realist novel reversed the roles of “primary” and “secondary” heroines, preferring dangerous women, such as Becky Sharp and Lily Bart, to their more conventional counterparts, Amelia Sedley and Gerty Stepney. The characters most in need of further study in such novels are not the secondary heroines (who are, confusingly enough, primary), but rather the primary heroines who have been exiled, like Rowena Trevanian of Tremaine, to the margins of the plot. Such a study might, for example, offer a more extensive comparison of Scott’s Rowena with Poe’s, or investigate the rather disturbing end of *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*. Such a study might give Gerty Stepney her due, or explain how Thackeray manages to make Amelia so dull and still have readers
believe that all the girls at Miss Pinkerton’s academy for young ladies adored her. Rather than focusing on two central texts, my fourth chapter examines what Michael Davitt Bell discusses in his book of the same name as “the problem of American Realism.” I investigate the many competing Realisms of the mid and late nineteenth-century to argue that the traits that constituted a heroine in the Romantic novel have become marginalized in the Realist novel through two narrative strategies: acculturation and resistance. The heroine must either be educated out of Romanticism and into “Realism” (often figured as obedience to social norms) or the Romantic heroine is juxtaposed with a “real” heroine – a dangerous woman – and is thus simultaneously revealed but also endorsed as social construct. To put it more plainly: Amelia Sedley’s marriage should make us happier than it does. The increasing preoccupation with the real, however – with Becky’s gambling debts and manipulative schemes – renders Amelia’s happy ending hollow.

Whereas the Romantic novel had relied on the marriage of the heroine and hero to cement national identity, the Realist novel stages that happy ending as a comforting fiction. My final chapter builds on my reading of the Realist novel by turning to James’s last novel, *The Golden Bowl*. Like much of James’s work, *The Golden Bowl* utilizes the marriages of its protagonists to explore the encounter between the New World and the Old. However, the quartet of lovers and two marriages that occur over the course of the novel do not settle national identity, they call it into question. Maggie Verver and Charlotte Stant each alternately inhabit the role of primary and secondary heroine as the novel takes up the questions of imperialism, nationalism, internationalism and American
isolationism. The conflict between Maggie and Charlotte for Prince Amerigo defines both American femininity at the turn of the century and the relationship between America and the rest of the “International Scene.” Yet, despite Amerigo’s Italian ancestry, James limits the action of *The Golden Bowl* to England and America, relying once more on the “special relationship” between England and America to stage the question of American identity.

I include my reading of *The Golden Bowl* as a sort of coda to this study of the secondary heroine in the rise of the novel. The lines between primary and secondary, as well as between English and American (not to mention Italian) blur and are redrawn throughout *The Golden Bowl*. The novel opens with Amerigo musing about Rome via London – locating the *Imperium* in Hyde Park – and continually invokes a mythical “American City” without ever actually letting the reader see the city. In the same vein, the novel begins with the impressive Charlotte Stant, and ends with the triumphant (at least to some readers) Maggie Verver. For all this confusion, James does not erase the line among English, Italian and American, or between primary and secondary heroine: he only suggests that it may be redrawn. Yet, by calling into question the fixity of the line, James opens the possibility of erasing it all together.
CHAPTER 1
THE SECONDARY HEROINE AS ADVISOR: EPISTOLARY COQUETRY IN
CLARISSA AND THE COQUETTE

This chapter begins not quite at the beginning, but, perhaps more appropriately for a discussion of secondary heroines, with Richardson’s second novel, Clarissa. While Richardson’s first novel, Pamela, was wildly successful, it was the format of Clarissa that attracted imitators in England and America well into the late eighteenth century. The oft-cited accounts of readers writing to Richardson to advise on the progress of Clarissa testify to the engaging power of the text. Rather than a simple exchange of letters between Pamela and her parents, Clarissa’s complex narrative structure is composed of letters circulating in an extended community. In Pamela, her one-to-one correspondence with her parents underscores the value she places on their judgment: her letters and journal entries seek to justify her actions to them. Pamela’s letters are published by the “editor” as an example of “virtue rewarded.” In contrast, Clarissa’s estrangement from her parents places the burden of exoneration upon the community she inhabits; within the novel she orchestrates the publication of the letters in order to effect that exoneration. This tension between a community of judging readers and a fallen individual had

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9 See Leonard Tennenhouse, “The Americanization of Clarissa” and Ruth Perry for accounts of Clarissa’s imitators and publication history.
10 See, for example, Lady Bradshaigh’s letters to Richardson, or William Warner’s account of the publication history of Clarissa in Reading Clarissa. Although Richardson’s readers were similarly invested in Pamela, her “virtue rewarded” satisfied readers’ expectations. In contrast, Clarissa’s demise occasioned protests.
particular resonance in the early Republic, as the reprints and American editions of *Clarissa* attest. These American editions have received much scholarly attention.

Readings by Jay Fliegelman, Nancy Armstrong, Leonard Tennenhouse, and others have focused on *Clarissa* as a site of transatlantic exchange. Nancy Armstrong has argued convincingly for the influence of early American captivity narratives such as Mary Rowlandson’s, widely read in both England and America, on the plot of *Clarissa*. Jay Fliegelman and Leonard Tennenhouse have each examined the Americanization of *Clarissa*; they document both why the novel was appealing to a nation about to secede from England and how *Clarissa* was adapted, both in the American editions and by its imitators, to suit that political purpose. Tennenhouse argues that *Clarissa* appealed to American readers because it “allowed American readers to think of themselves as English, despite their political separation from England” (“Americanization,” 178). Following Armstrong, Tennenhouse suggests that in the American *Clarissa*, “the question turned on what the heroine does – can she reproduce an English way of life outside of England?” (“Americanization,” 191). Armstrong understands Clarissa’s death as a rehearsal of the conventional captivity narrative; Clarissa dies because it is better to die than to “go native.” While Armstrong reads an American captivity narrative into an English novel, Fliegelman claims Clarissa’s prodigal daughter narrative was appealing to Revolutionary Americans trying to find justification for disobeying their parent nation, England. In Fliegelman’s reading of the connection between *Clarissa* and *The Coquette*, he claims:

11 Also see Tennenhouse for a rehearsal and critique of the arguments of Davidson, Fliegelman and Warner.
Caught between the ingratitude of seducer and the severity of parents, the Richardsonian heroine receives too late the pardon of her penitent parents and thus dies in heroic isolation, a death of sorrow and faith. A later incarnation of the seduced and abandoned heroine is forgiven her credulity by benevolent parents, but is either so terrified of grieving the guardians of her infancy or so reproached by a parent’s kindness that she either dies of shame or chooses, as does the heroine of Hanna Foster’s *The Coquette*, to end her own life. . . . Ultimately, however, both varieties of martyrs – Richardson’s Clarissa and Foster’s Eliza – are victims of a sentimental code that elevated children to such a sacred position as to make their honor identifiable with the honor of their family. (262-63)

As Fliegelman’s reading of Eliza and Clarissa suggests, the heroines of *Clarissa* and *The Coquette* meet similar ends. Indeed, the broader similarities between the two texts are striking: both feature a well-educated heroine who has refused several offers of marriage only to be seduced and abandoned by the local rake; in both, the heroine ultimately dies, leaving a corpus of letters addressed to her friends and relatives – a textual body to supplant her corpse. The rake in both novels has a correspondent to whom he reveals his plots (and his vanity), which renders his schemes transparent to the reader. Finally, both feature a secondary heroine, a correspondent who follows the heroine’s plight, offers advice, and survives the heroine to tell her tale.

While Fliegelman is most interested in connecting the novels under a Lockean sentimental code, such a connection undervalues the differences between Clarissa and Eliza. Clarissa’s troubles, one might argue, begin because of her grandfather’s will. The legacy granted to Clarissa is a source of anxiety and attraction in the novel. Clarissa’s decisions, and ultimately her death, can be traced to class anxiety: if she resumes control of her grandfather’s estate, she will be financially independent, but also independent of her family. If she does not resume control, she is subject to her family, and thus subject
to marrying Solmes, who is attracted to Clarissa’s estate as much as to her person.

Clarissa is herself attracted to raising her station by marrying Lovelace, and her estate as well as her virtuous reputation raises her in Lovelace’s estimation. The independence afforded Clarissa by wealth, and the anxiety that attends that independence, drives the plot of the novel. In brief, the change in Clarissa’s class status resulting from her grandfather’s will enables her individualism. In contrast, in The Coquette, Eliza is clearly less wealthy than her friend Lucy Freeman, and is already chastised by Lucy for her coquettish airs. Indeed, Eliza’s lack of fortune prevents Sanford from marrying her, for although Sanford appears wealthy, he is actually deep in debt. While Clarissa’s unsettled class identity occasions much of the conflict in Clarissa, Sanford’s deceptive class identity is marginal to the plot of The Coquette, which, as Julia Stern and others have argued, is more concerned with the political implications of domestic actions. The novel opens with the death of authority, manifested in the death of Eliza’s father and her aged fiancé, Mr. Hale. Eliza’s individualism is not primarily located in her class status, but in her refusal to submit to the yoke of obligation once the strictures of paternal authority are removed. This absence of paternal authority resonates clearly in the early Republic given America’s recent rebellion against the paternal authority of Britain.

However, if, as John Adams said, “Democracy is Lovelace, and the people are Clarissa” (qtd. in Barnes, 41), then what does that make Anna Howe? Or Julia Granby? By turning to the secondary heroines in each text, I will complicate readings of Clarissa and The Coquette by suggesting that these secondary heroines are just as significant to the construction of nationhood as their more famous correspondents. Both secondary
heroines occupy the same precarious position as Eliza and Clarissa: each is a young, unmarried woman, and, unlike the other female characters in these novels, each secondary heroine attracts the attention of the rake. Anna Howe is notorious for her warmth, and virtually abets Clarissa’s seduction through her advice, but she concludes the novel happily married and secure in her class and social identity. In contrast, Julia Granby manages her reputation more successfully than Eliza by negotiating her social status instead of her marital status, and she, too, ends the novel secure in her station as Lucy Sumner’s friend. The different resolutions meted out to these secondary heroines belie national difference and concerns with authority in the novel. While American editions of Clarissa revised the novel from an epistolary to a third person narration to justify rebellion from England with as much authority as possible, The Coquette’s American revision of Clarissa restores the epistolary form and transforms the British novel’s preoccupation with class into a post-revolutionary preoccupation with the politics of the new nation, in which the epistolary format enables Foster to present all sides of the argument. The immanent, indeed, almost transcendent individualism of the primary heroine is punished in both the British Clarissa and in The Coquette as a challenge to authority, while the secondary heroine’s mutable representations enable her to survive the novel precisely because they prevent us from fixing any statement as authoritative: the secondary heroine’s actions are always contextual.

Jürgen Habermas has called the eighteenth century, “the century of the letter” (48), and has argued that the epistolary novel rose from the already semi-public nature of

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12Lovelace fantasizes about both Clarissa and Anna; Sanford believes that Julia is impossible to seduce. I will discuss these encounters later.
the letter: “Subjectivity, as the innermost core of the private, was always already oriented to an audience. The opposite of the intimateness whose vehicle was the written word was indiscretion and not publicity as such. Letters by strangers were not only borrowed and copied, some correspondences were intended from the outset for publication” (49). But the historical fact of the circulation of private letters to unintended or intended audiences does not give sufficient attention to the complicated relationship between the public and the private in the epistolary novel. Habermas quickly dismisses the epistolary format of Pamela by suggesting that the novel in letters actually changes the relationship among author, work and public into a more private and intimate relationship. This relationship only becomes public, according to Habermas, because

[T]he familiarity whose vehicle was the written word, the subjectivity that had become fit to print, had in fact become the literature appealing to a wide public of readers. The privatized individuals coming together to form a public also reflected critically and in public on what they had read, thus contributing to the process of enlightenment which they together promoted. (50-1)

In other words, the epistolary novel creates private relationships among author, reader and work, which only become public when readers share their private reading experiences with each other.

In his Habermasian reading of eighteenth-century American print culture in The Letters of the Republic, Michael Warner further and more explicitly develops the meaning of publication: “at a certain point printing came to be specifically defined as publication, now in opposition to manuscript circulation. . . . It is because publication is a political condition of utterance that we meaningfully distinguish between books impressed by types and those impressed by pens” (7-8, original emphasis). But how do
we distinguish the public from the private in a printed book composed of letter manuscripts? Warner indirectly addresses this question in his discussion of a correspondence published in the pamphlet: *A Letter from a Freeholder, to a Member of the Lower House of Assembly*. He claims that the form of the pamphlet (public discourse) overwhelms the pose of a personal letter (private correspondence):

> The meaning of public utterance, for both men, is established by the very fact that their exchange can be read and participated in by any number of unknown and in principle unknowable others. . . . The surplus of the letter over the relation of correspondents is determined not as the free play of language – indeed it requires a perfect faith in the determinacy of meaning – but as a condition of the norm. Following Habermas, we may call this norm the principle of supervision, “that very principle which demands the proceedings be made public.” (41, original emphasis)

However, in Warner’s reading of *The Coquette*, he ignores the overtones of publication and censorship within the novel. Instead, Warner argues that the novel’s claim to be “founded on fact” addresses the anxiety that the reader will be unable to distinguish “private imaginary from general virtue” (176), suggesting that, “it dramatizes the order of politeness in order to supply, against it, fantasies of virtue and authoritative publicity” (174). That is, the “fantasies of virtue and authoritative publicity” are external, rather than internal to the novel. Foster’s claim that the novel is “founded on fact” is opposed to the intra-textual “politeness” of Eliza and Sanford.

Grantland Rice’s analysis of *The Coquette* focuses on Eliza’s coquetry as a “tale of what happens to the interpersonal behavior of individuals when human relations begin to take on the characteristics of commodity exchange” (164). In Rice’s reading, Eliza’s coquetry is a way of controlling the market, and is metonymic for the role of the author in

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13 See Elizabeth Hewitt’s recent book, *Correspondence and American Literature, 1770-1865*, for a detailed consideration of epistolary writing in early America.
the early Republic. By playing the coquette, that is, by teasing readers with the market-friendly intrigue of the seduction plot, while simultaneously instructing them to become better citizens, Rice argues American authors survived a rather difficult transition in American history and letters. He concludes by claiming: “the popularity of literary forms which mimicked interpersonal communication in republican America – the epistolary novel, the dialogue, the serial, the overheard conversation – stand as testimony to the efforts of authors to reassert the imperatives of communication and participation in an age which ushered in what N.N. Feltes has called ‘the commodity text’” (171).

Yet each of these critics underemphasizes the significance of the epistolary form in its particulars: the epistolary novel, as embodied in Clarissa and in The Coquette, is not a simple dialogue between two correspondents that is published, consumed by the bourgeois reading public, and then (ideally) “re-published” in the discourse of the public sphere. Instead, the intrigue of the epistolary novel depends on the various minor acts of publication that are interior to the text, which in turn complicate the didacticism and the reception of the published novel. In other words, the epistolary novel does not just model “participation,” nor is it merely anxious that its readers will retreat into the private sphere of “politeness” and cease to practice public virtue, nor is it simply a representation of interior subjectivities to be internalized by a reader and then discussed in the public sphere of other readers. Rather, the epistolary novel disrupts the fiction of private correspondence by publishing narratives in which private correspondence, theoretically a closed circuit in which one subjectivity/correspondent writes to one other subjectivity/correspondent, is made at least partly public by acts of enclosure,
transcription and circulation. These fictional part-publications echo both the advantages and dangers of circulation in the “real” public sphere; thus, attending to these moments complicates our understanding of the private and public in England and America.

My attention to the public sphere and to the acts of enclosure, transcription and circulation that complicate the one-to-one correspondence of the letter may seem to undermine the importance of the secondary heroine. If every letter is subject to the supervision of the community, then what is to distinguish one correspondent or member of that community from another? Why should we privilege Anna Howe or Julia Granby over Mrs. Norton or Lucy Freeman? Indeed, most readings of *The Coquette* do privilege the community opinion of Eliza’s correspondents, without singling out one or another. Yet, as I will argue in this chapter, we should single out the women I have termed the secondary heroines of these texts because of their provocative connection to the heroine. In the opening letter of *Clarissa*, Anna Howe asks Clarissa to write her “whole story” (40). Clarissa eventually asks Belford to assemble the letters as a defense of her actions and reputation, but it is Anna who has been provoking Clarissa’s narrativization of events, and Anna who survives Clarissa’s trial to marry Hickman, thus highlighting Clarissa’s unmarried death. In contrast, we do not have a fictional occasion for the collection of letters that comprises *The Coquette*, and, indeed, the thrust of the narrative overwhelms private correspondence with public letters: namely, Eliza’s tombstone and the account in the “public papers” survive, whereas Eliza’s final writings are suppressed by Julia Granby, who trades on Eliza’s troubles to form her own esteemed reputation. Julia’s control over Eliza’s narrative distinguishes her from the other women who crowd

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14 See Julia Stern’s reading of the novel in *The Plight of Feeling*.
the text. Eliza and Clarissa fall in part because they assume that their representation in letters reflects their immanent identity; in contrast, Anna and Julia are fully aware of the potential disparity between representation and immanence. Anna’s suggestion that Clarissa treat their correspondence as public record is contrasted with Julia’s reportage, that publishes Eliza’s actions to Lucy via letters; both blur and indeed manipulate the boundaries between private and public and in doing so, succeed within the world of the novel.

**Mapping Geographies of Wealth: Inclination and Obligation in Clarissa**

Samuel Richardson’s *Pamela* was originally intended to be a collection of letters for young women to model. How these exempla transformed into the racy didactic novel we read today is uncertain, but it is clear that the early didactic intentions of the text survive into the fictive epistolary novel. When Richardson turns from the correspondence between a young girl and her parents, to a novel concerning the letters between a young girl and her best friend, the stakes are even higher. Clarissa’s letters to her parents are models of filial duty, but her letters to Anna Howe make up the bulk of her narrative.\(^{15}\) It is Anna’s advice that Clarissa seeks and often follows; Anna frequently makes Clarissa’s “hidden” feelings apparent and, in effect, teaches Clarissa how to act. Yet, as fascinating and feisty as Anna is, critics have overlooked her half of the correspondence.\(^{16}\)

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\(^{15}\) As Victor Lams has observed, at Harlowe Place: “Clarissa’s correspondence with Miss Howe consumes 645 of the 670 page total, or 96 percent of the stage time” (10). Although Clarissa’s correspondence with Miss Howe eventually cedes the epistolary stage to Lovelace’s correspondence with Belford, when Clarissa does write, it is most often to Miss Howe.

\(^{16}\) See, for example, Julia Genster’s “Belforded Over: The Reader in Clarissa,” which dismisses Anna to focus on Belford. Other critics, such as Nancy Armstrong in “Reclassifying Clarissa: Fiction and the Making of the Modern Middle Class,” focus on Clarissa’s frugality, but not Anna’s offers of economic
*Clarissa* opens, not with a letter from its title character, but with a letter from Anna Howe, asking Clarissa to recount “the whole of your story from the time that Lovelace was first introduced into your family . . . and pray write in so full a manner as may gratify those who know not so much of your affairs as I do. If anything unhappy should fall out from the violence of such spirits as you have to deal with, your account of all things previous to it will be your justification” (40). Admittedly, Anna’s request appears to be an authorial contrivance, designed to give Clarissa an opportunity to set the scene, and to foreshadow Clarissa’s unhappy end; however, Anna’s opening letter is still remarkable for several reasons. First, Anna’s chief concern appears to be that Clarissa is the subject of “public talk” (39). Anna’s comments give us Clarissa’s character as “Rather useful than glaring” (40), establishing both Clarissa’s prudence and her status as the model of the neighborhood. Moreover, Anna reveals the surveillance that Clarissa is subject to: at present, the “public talk,” later, the watchful eye of servants. Second, Anna’s comments establish a community opinion, a community notably composed of Clarissa’s former suitors, that disagrees with the opinion later held by the Harlowes.

In a similar vein, Jerry Beadsley has focused on Clarissa’s speech acts, but not Anna’s. Melinda Rabb discusses the pairs in Clarissa, but only focuses on Lovelace and Clarissa as dualistic, not their correspondents. In an article titled “Richardson the Advisor” that discusses the role of advice in Richardson’s novels, Kevin Cope does not once mention Anna Howe. William Warner contends that Clarissa and Lovelace determine how we read the text, a position echoed by Terry Castle. One exception is Ramona Denton’s “Anna Howe and Richardson’s Ambivalent Artistry in *Clarissa*”; however, she fails to account for Anna’s decreasing presence later in the novel.

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17 This passage is worth quoting in full: “I know how it must hurt you to become the subject of the public talk; and yet upon an occasion so generally known it is impossible but that whatever relates to a young lady, whose distinguished merits have made her the public care, should engage everybody’s attention” (39). This echoes, to a degree, William Warner’s comment that Anna’s request gives Clarissa an opportunity for public justification. Here again, I complicate Denton’s reading, which argues that Anna’s command “echoes our curiosity and gives Clarissa the concrete motivation for ‘scribbling’ Pamela often lacks” (54).

18 Thus a Habermasian reading of the text might suggest that the novel ultimately endorses the public sphere by convincing the Harlowes, through rational-critical public discourse, of the public’s consensus.
Most obviously, we must question why Richardson chooses to make Anna the occasion for Clarissa’s narrative. By requiring Anna to draw out Clarissa’s story, as she will later draw out Clarissa’s feelings towards Lovelace, Richardson establishes Anna as Clarissa’s advisor; her resistant readings of Clarissa’s letters shape Clarissa’s course of action.\footnote{Julia Genster has cited a wonderful series of letters between Lady Bradshaigh and Richardson, in which Bradshaigh approaches Richardson as “Belfour” and asks him to change the plot of the novel. Richardson responds, ultimately, by renaming Bradshaigh Miss Howe: “you are the Twin-sister of that Lady” (157). In doing so, Richardson identified Bradshaigh’s behavior (that is, her desire to revise the plot), with that of Anna Howe.}

More significantly, Richardson’s anxiety over presenting a virtuous text prevents him from including the bulk of the early correspondence between Clarissa and Lovelace; instead, Richardson displaces that seduction onto the correspondence between Anna and Clarissa. After Clarissa’s fall, Anna’s correspondence lessens, while Lovelace’s increases: Anna slips out of the narrative like the seducer out of the bedroom; Lovelace insists that he can repair the wrong he has done to Clarissa by marrying her at any moment and thus must remain present. As Alison Case has rightly argued in *Plotting Women*, Clarissa fails because she cannot out-plot Lovelace. However, Case and other critics ignore Anna’s manipulative strategies, strategies apparent from her opening letter to her final letter, a character description of the lost Clarissa.

In another early letter, Clarissa gives a description of herself reading Anna’s previous letter that establishes Anna’s power over her:

Had you, I say, been witness of my different emotions as I read, now leaning this way, now that; now perplexed; now apprehensive; now angry at one, then at another; now resolving; now doubting – you would have seen the power you have over me; and would have had reason to believe that, had you given your advice in any determined or positive manner, I had been ready to have been concluded by it. (243)

(i.e., Clarissa’s virtue). Such a reading minimizes Anna’s role; however, the role of “public talk” and “public opinion” in the text is worth attention.
Although Terry Castle has pointed to Anna’s power over Clarissa as a reader and advisor, going so far as to claim that Anna’s visions of Clarissa’s danger become a self-fulfilling prophecy, Anna rarely gives her advice in any determined or positive manner. Despite her confident style, Anna’s raillery never coalesces into a plan of action. The contradictions inherent in Anna’s advice undermine the efficacy of their friendship. For with her family constituted as a phalanx against her, and suitors invading on all sides, Clarissa has no one to turn to for rational advice except for Anna. Clarissa is thus isolated on two contradictory fronts: she has been exalted above her peers as the model for the neighborhood, and she is then removed from her acquaintance as the rebel daughter. Anna’s friendship with Clarissa is the only apparent link to her community; but even their friendship is uneven. Clarissa’s letters communicate her situation in regard to Lovelace, but also chide Anna’s warmth. Though Lovelace fears Anna’s influence over Clarissa, Richardson presents Clarissa as the monitoress, pitting Clarissa’s consistent advice against Anna’s shifting plans of action.

Lovelace tricks Clarissa into a clandestine correspondence, but Anna reveals the implications of this strategy, chastising Clarissa: “What an intimacy does this beget for the lover! – How is it distancing the parent!” (71). Strangely, Anna immediately excuses Clarissa’s actions: “Yet who, as things are situated, can blame you?” (71). As several critics have noted, Richardson is incredibly adept at cornering Clarissa, yet Richardson’s maneuvering should not prevent us from attending to Anna’s rhetoric. Anna’s advice to Clarissa in this difficult situation is worth close attention:

20 Oddly, Anna does not have the same concerns about her own private correspondence with Clarissa, which arguably also distances Clarissa from her parents.
And I would advise you (as you would wish to manage on an occasion so critical with that prudence which governs all your actions) not to be afraid of entering upon a close examination into the true springs and grounds of your generosity to that happy man.

It is my humble opinion, I tell you frankly, that on inquiry it will come out to be LOVE – Don’t start my dear – . . . .

I have been tinctured, you know. Nor, on the coolest reflection, could I account for how and when the jaundice began; but had been over head and ears, as the saying is, but for some of that advice from you which I now return to you.

(71)

Anna’s diagnosis of Clarissa, for she couches her own experience in medical terms, implies that Clarissa does not know her own mind and requires, as Anna once required, the diagnosis of an outside observer. Anna’s advice to Clarissa suggests a double coquetry: Clarissa must “manage” the occasion, or in less euphemistic terms, dissemble, but she also must inquire whether, as Anna suggests, she is dissembling towards herself in regards to her feelings for Lovelace. Clarissa’s letters are full of the stratagems of her family and Clarissa’s attempt to influence, individually, its members. In contrast, Anna does not respond to several of Clarissa’s letters, in order to “have before me as much of the workings of your wise relations as possible,” but encourages Clarissa to examine her own heart, to “mind how it comes on” (173). In an argument strikingly similar to that of her first letter, Anna relies on Clarissa’s letters as proof. While the first letter suggested that Clarissa’s letters would exculpate her virtue, Anna now claims that she can challenge Clarissa’s virtue, or at least her claim that she does not love Lovelace, using the same proof: “fifty places in your letters” (173). Here Anna models a sort of resisting

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21 Indeed, Anna’s previous mésalliance has been overlooked by critics. While Anna is frequently termed “a rake,” the motive for her distrust (or disgust) of men might in part be her own narrow escape, which has made her suspicious of her own impulses as well.

22 As Victor Lams has suggested, Anna possess a “reactive rather than goal-directed mindset” (144). While Lams argues that this is Anna’s failing, I would suggest that the novel ultimately endorses Anna’s method – after all, Anna ends the novel happily married.
readership, which reads against Clarissa. In part, we might attribute this to Richardson’s anxiety over Clarissa’s sincere virtue. Anna’s argument carries so much weight that Clarissa reuses the phrase in her response, to better refute her claim. But why does Anna have so much authority over Clarissa?

Jay Fliegelman has termed the correspondence between Anna and Clarissa a “rational friendship” and, in keeping with recent scholarship, has suggested that Anna and Clarissa demonstrate the necessity of choosing one’s family via affective relationships, rather than relying on the chance biological ties that bind us to one another. Although Clarissa’s family is horrifying, I contend that Clarissa’s reliance on Anna is tied into a more complex social dynamic. In Richardson’s first novel, Pamela, social class was one of the chief obstacles to a union between Pamela and Mr. B. Most readings of Clarissa, therefore, ignore class as a significant factor in the plot because the disparity is not so large as that between Pamela and B. Clarissa is notoriously unspecific about the

23 Here I build upon Terry Castle’s claim: “Clarissa, Lovelace, Anna, Belford, and the rest – these characters are present to us first as readers of texts: they exist in that they participate in a vast system of epistolary exchange. Their own letters preserve interpretations of previous texts: those of their correspondents” (19). However, Castle reads Anna as a reader “imposing certain constructions on Clarissa’s words and actions” (77), arguing that what I term Anna’s resisting readership is a self-fulfilling prophecy. Castle does not account sufficiently for Anna’s motivation. Certainly, I agree with Castle’s claim that “Anna’s scenario” (80) plays a large role in Clarissa’s seduction, but why is Anna interested? What is Anna’s role in, to borrow Castle’s term, the “politics of meaning” (183)? I will interrogate Anna’s political power in the text, as opposed to Clarissa’s “political despair” (183).

24 The public response to Pamela, after all, was in part to question Pamela’s virtue. See Scott Paul Gordon’s article, “Disinterested Selves: Clarissa and the Tactics of Sentiment” for an argument that suggests Richardson was trying to resist readings of self-interest.

25 A stunning exception is, of course, Nancy Armstrong’s “Reclassifying Clarissa: Fiction and the Making of the Modern Middle Class.” However, Armstrong is mostly concerned with accounting for the shift from public abuse to private writing. Armstrong does have an excellent reading of the economics of Clarissa’s courtship in which she explains why the Harlowes prefer Solmes. In The Rise of the Novel, Ian Watt persuasively suggests that the small class disparity between Lovelace and Clarissa is what teases out the social and moral implications. (220)
location of Harlowe Place; it is a novel more concerned with geographies of wealth than of location.\textsuperscript{26} Mapping these geographies of wealth illuminates each character’s motives.

The post-script of Anna’s first letter asks for a copy of the preamble to Clarissa’s grandfather’s will so that Anna may show it to an Aunt Harman who only reappears in the text near the conclusion.\textsuperscript{27} Again, though ostensibly a device to allow the reader to look over Anna’s shoulder and read the will, the weight placed on Clarissa’s estate is surprising in a novel purportedly about virtue and courtship. The will itself establishes the prosperity of the Harlowe family and reveals that they are all provided for, with the exception of Clarissa, by other relatives. Clarissa’s virtue is the last reason given for the special favor her grandfather shows her. Similarly, Clarissa’s resignation of that estate to her father curries the favor of her uncles, which is a source of concern to her brother, who remarks, “This little siren is in a fair way to out-uncle as well as out-grandfather us both” (80). James’s greed and his desire to make a fine figure in the county induce him to forward Solmes in preference to Lovelace.\textsuperscript{28}

Solmes’s noble settlements tempt the family, who seek to raise themselves through wealth, but are unappealing to Clarissa, who observes, “The upstart man, I repeat, for he was not born to the immense riches he is possessed of; riches left by one niggard to another, injury to the next heir, because that other is a niggard” (81). Clarissa

\textsuperscript{26} I am indebted to Marlene Longenecker for her observation that Richardson’s geography seems impossible and often contradictory. How can Harlowe Place be in the country, but still near a major thoroughfare and close enough for Anna to pick up Clarissa’s letters every day? For a reading of place in the novel, see Margaret Doody’s “A Fine and Private Place” in \textit{A Natural Passion: A Study of the Novels of Samuel Richardson}.

\textsuperscript{27} Anna Howe visits Aunt Harman in the Isle of Wight towards the conclusion of the novel.

\textsuperscript{28} As Nancy Armstrong has noted: “the Harlowes still feel that Clarissa will be giving Lovelace access to property that belongs to them since they stand to lose the capital that would come to them from trading her to Solmes” (28).
does not want to impoverish Solmes’s family by accepting the settlements originally
designated for his relations, but her very terms suggest that she privileges Lovelace’s
established wealth over the bourgeois commercial wealth of Solmes. Indeed, Clarissa’s
letter to Lady Betty Lawrance after her fall claims: “I must own to you, madam, that the
honour of being related to ladies as eminent for their virtue as for their descent was at
first no small inducement with me, to lend an ear to Mr. Lovelace’s address” (984).
Anna, however, is the first to note this disparity between Clarissa’s conception of status
and that of her family:

You are all too rich to be happy, child. For must not each of you by the
constitutions of your family marry to be still richer? People who know in what
their main excellence consists are not to be blamed (are they?) for cultivating and
improving what they think most valuable? Is true happiness any part of your
family-view? – So far from it, that none of your family but yourself could be
happy if they were not rich. (68)

Clarissa is too delicate to do more than hint at her mother’s wealth and superior fortune.
Anna, much to our delight and Clarissa’s dismay, discloses the Harlowes’ pride in their
own name, discerning that Harlowe House is not a paternal seat, but an acquired manor.29
Anna’s careful reading of the situation contradicts Clarissa’s, again modeling a resisting
reader. Despite Clarissa’s attempts to minimize her personal wealth, her value seems
equally located in her virtue and in the Grove, and it is her ability to justly dispose of her
grandfather’s inheritance in her will that becomes the final testament (excuse the pun) of

29 Armstrong and Watt’s readings, though compelling, overlook Anna’s role in the revelation of Clarissa’s
class status, as well as her part in encouraging Clarissa to choose Lovelace.
Clarissa’s virtue. While Clarissa seeks to detach her virtue from her wealth, Anna attempts to connect Clarissa’s estate with the preservation of her virtue.

Anna and Lovelace each endeavor to persuade Clarissa to resume her estate and make herself independent, but only Anna’s letters lie before the reader, with Lovelace’s attempts at persuasion accounted for in Clarissa’s letters. I want to call attention here to a difference in style between Anna and Clarissa. During her confinement, Clarissa is always writing, contriving and circulating letters among her family members and then sending them on to Anna, while Anna is almost always recounting conversations to Clarissa. Clarissa forwards letter after letter, artifact after artifact, if you will, in order to demonstrate the truth of what she says. Anna, on the other hand, filters all conversations through the medium of her self. Anna is retelling conversations, verbal performances, rather than textual ones. Her orality, which seems connected to her quick wit, is contrasted with Clarissa’s meditative (and pre-meditated) letters. Nancy Armstrong claims that Clarissa “becomes increasingly self-contained and dependent on writing alone as she descends in economic position to the barest of subsistence economies” (“Reclassifying,” 30). Armstrong overlooks Anna’s independence from writing. While Clarissa is spending more and more time writing, Anna is noticeably absent. Despite

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30 Watt’s reading of Clarissa’s death in terms of contemporary funeral rites and psychology is fascinating, but overlooks the material element of her will, as do many readings of the novel.
31 Since she is imprisoned, of course, Clarissa does not have many conversations to report.
32 Tom Keymer’s claim that Clarissa teaches its readers to doubt and scrutinize letters as rhetoric overlooks Anna as a model of such a resisting reader. Anna’s letters, which often include transcripts of conversations, are less pre-meditated than Clarissa’s. Scott Paul Gordon also overlooks Anna when he claims that Richardson wanted readers who read with the heart, not the head. (487) Similarly, Melinda Rabb’s claim that “cor-respondence, under-and over-plotting in Clarissa stress words over deeds” (70), ignores Anna’s orality.
Clarissa’s faith in the written word as evidentiary, she initially excludes the letters between herself and Lovelace, which she transcribes into her letters to Anna.

Clarissa does not enclose a letter from Lovelace until she begins to suspect him of artifice; thus we might conclude that Clarissa encloses the earlier letters of her family as evidence of their art. By enclosing Lovelace’s letter and her response in her letter to Anna, Clarissa subjects Lovelace to Anna’s scrutiny. 33 Shortly after the first enclosure of Lovelace’s letter, Clarissa sends Anna her first set of parcels, consisting of some linen, and copies of all her letters, separately bundled. She asks Anna to peruse them, particularly her letters to Lovelace, to review her conduct. Anna replies: “I shall not open either of your sealed-up parcels, but in your presence. There is no need. Your conduct is out of all question with me: and by the extracts you have given me from his letters and your own, I know all that relates to the present situation of things between you” (292). Yet after Clarissa flies with Lovelace, Anna chastises her for her “first fault, the answering his letters” (403). In contrast to her earlier desire to keep the intrigue sealed-up, post-flight, Anna begins to discuss Clarissa’s letters in terms of the public talk once more: “You lay the blame so properly and unsparingly upon your meeting him, that nothing can be added to that subject by your worst enemies, were they to see what you have written. I am not surprised, now I have read your narrative, that so bold and contriving a man – I am forced to break off – ” (403). As Anna changes strategies to consider Clarissa’s public plight, her own narrative authority slips. Anna’s letters to Clarissa take on a fragmented and interrupted tone, with Anna frequently jesting about her own fear of being “Harlowed.”

33 This also marks the second occasion in the novel that Clarissa reminds Anna of the date of her last letter.
Once Clarissa has placed herself in Lovelace’s power, the novel continues by offering their separate accounts to their correspondents, John Belford and Anna Howe.\(^{34}\)

As Lovelace comments to Belford: “Never was there such a pair of scribbling lovers as we – yet perhaps whom it so much concerns to keep from each other what each writes. She won’t have anything else to do. I would, if she’d let me” (416). Whereas Clarissa’s letters to Anna often rehearse her conversations with or letters to Lovelace, Lovelace frequently slips between addressing Belford and addressing Clarissa in his letters to Belford. Why does Lovelace displace these conversations onto his correspondence with Belford? His rants mostly reveal his stratagems, and are full of warnings to Clarissa that the reader must hear, but not Clarissa herself. In other letters, Lovelace imagines dialogues with Belford, again solely for the sake of revealing his own stratagems: “Now, Belford, canst thou imagine what I meant by proposing Hannah, or one of the girls here, for her attendant? I’ll give thee a month to guess. Thou will not pretend to guess, thou sayest. Well, then, I’ll tell thee” (449). Here Richardson’s editor takes the reins, and omits passages of Lovelace’s letters that repeat Clarissa’s account of the scene, leaving only those passages which differ slightly or that show Lovelace’s “humour.” Thus, the editor competes for Anna’s power in the text.\(^{35}\) By including Lovelace’s plots, while allowing Clarissa only representation of what has happened to her, the editor emphasizes

\(^{34}\) As Ruth Perry has noted, countless epistolary novels by women repeat this formula, including Hannah Webster Foster’s *The Coquette*, the subject of the second half of this chapter.

\(^{35}\) Richardson’s editor is “assumed to be” Belford. See Julia Genster and Victor Lams for readings of Belford’s role in the novel. It is interesting to note, with William Warner, that in his letter to Aaron Hill, Richardson wrote “Solicitude for the Publication to be rather Miss Howe’s than Clarissa’s” (Letters 77, qtd. in Warner, 95).
Clarissa’s helplessness. While Anna has never been able to entirely direct Clarissa’s actions, she has, as I have noted earlier, often directed the contents and frequency of Clarissa’s correspondence. The intrusion of the editor complements Anna’s decreasing authority in the text. Though Anna frequently proffers choices of action for Clarissa, they are all unsuitable, and her letters themselves become more vitriolic in their abuse of Clarissa’s and her own relations, and less helpful in terms of a course of action. Because of her mother’s intervention, Anna must now rely on Hickman to help her communicate with Clarissa, and the discourse of obligation begins to enter the text.

In Clarissa’s first letter to Anna after the narrative of her flight, she concludes with what might be termed a meditation on obligation. She begins by considering her relationship with Lovelace: “But tricked away as I was by him, not only against my judgment, but my inclination, can he, or anybody, expect that I should immediately treat him with complaisance, as if I acknowledged obligation to him for carrying me away? – If I did, must he not either think me a vile dissembler before he gained that point, or afterwards?” (410). Clarissa’s desire to appear not to have played the coquette leads her into this conundrum, and, indeed, forces her to acknowledge her difficult situation. She has to rely on Lovelace and “place confidence” in him, as Anna advises, because he is her only protector, yet to have confidence in him would be to acknowledge obligation which would suggest inclination and thus coquetry in her earlier refusal of him. Instead of acknowledging her obligation to Lovelace, Clarissa displaces it onto Hickman for the assistance he gives in helping her to correspond with Anna, and laments that her own

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36 See Ian Watt’s chapter on *Clarissa* in *The Rise of the Novel* for his reading on the narration of Clarissa’s rape.
37 This discourse of obligation is also a key factor in Foster’s adaptation of Richardson in *The Coquette*. 37
state of obligation prevents her from being able to be obliging. This tricky rhetorical formulation is followed by an explanation, in which Clarissa advises Anna to be kinder to her relations, or, in other words, to oblige them. Yet it is Anna’s resistance to obligation that enables her to remain unseduced and free. As Ramona Denton has suggested, we might attribute this to the absence of Anna’s father (56). Without any sort of patriarchal authority seeking, to borrow Armstrong’s terms, to trade her for capital, Anna has claim to a freedom denied Clarissa. While Clarissa is imposed upon by her grandfather’s will, her uncles and, of course, her father, Anna has only her mother to contend with. She is, throughout the text, leery of incurring any obligation to Hickman and only concedes such an obligation to advise Clarissa.

It is notable that Hickman’s entrances and exits are marked in all of Anna’s previous letters as interruptions, or as comic stories for Clarissa’s diversion, until Clarissa runs off with Lovelace and Hickman becomes a sort of go-between for Anna and Clarissa. Then, Hickman appears constantly at Anna’s side, while Anna’s mother, under Uncle Anthony’s advice, becomes “so busy, so inquisitive” (452) that Anna no longer rehearses their conversations in her letters, but rather Mrs. Howe becomes the interruption, Mr. Hickman the constant presence and consultant: “And here she is continually in and out – I must break off. Mr. Hickman begs his most respectful compliments to you, and offer of services. I told him I would oblige him . . . but that he must not imagine he obliged me by this” (452). Anna’s frank attempt to claim the terms of obligation is in this respect similar to Clarissa’s predicament, but by displacing the
obligation onto Clarissa’s virtue, Anna delays her inevitable marriage to Hickman.\textsuperscript{38} Indeed, in Anna’s letter to Belford she explains that she has been essentially tricked into a regard for Hickman by the pressure of her friends and her mother, who “prevail upon me to promise him encouragement,” and later, “both held me to it . . . having obtained my promise (made, however, not to \textit{him}, but to \textit{them})” (1457). Here Anna privileges the community opinion (them) over personal obligation (him). Hickman’s patience extends to a full six months after Clarissa’s demise, when Anna finally consents to put aside her mourning and marry him. Although Clarissa’s deathbed wish that Anna marry Hickman is the attributed cause for their nuptials, we learn from Hickman’s own earlier letter that the settlements were drawn up long before Clarissa’s illness. Anna’s ostensible devotion to her friend is further undermined by her increasing absence from the text.

In part, Anna’s absence is owing to Lovelace’s machinations. He is convinced that Anna’s advice is all that prevents Clarissa from yielding to him, and so contrives to intercept Anna’s letters and replace them with forgeries that better serve his ends. Thus Lovelace prevents Clarissa from discovering the true nature of Mrs. Sinclair’s house, and drives the first wedge between the two friends. In the third letter that Lovelace intercepts, and the first after Clarissa’s fall, Anna terms Clarissa, “Miss Harlowe,” and threatens to break off their much admired friendship: “inform me whether you are really married or not – And then I shall know whether there must, or must not, be a period shorter than one of our lives, to a friendship which has hitherto been the pride and boast

\textsuperscript{38} Here I disagree with Ramona Denton, who argues that Anna marries Hickman because he is “a man she can control” (53). Similarly, Jocelyn Harris’s claim that Anna “speaks like the liberal courtesan of erotic texts who questions established values: she is indeed a rake in her heart when she fails to see why Clarissa should not marry Lovelace and torments her own suitor” (113), overlooks that Anna ultimately marries her suitor.
of Your Anna Howe” (932). Anna’s willingness to disband their friendship suggests her sensibility to social pressure, but more accurately, her readerly frustration at not being “in the know” because of Clarissa’s sudden silence.39

Clarissa’s loss of narrative voice may be attributed to her fall; after she is ruined, her “mad papers” and the distracted letters that follow attest to a shattered intellect that is only repaired by her preparation for death. During this time, we see Clarissa writing, and have her conversation reported to us, but her letters are less frequent – intending perhaps to build up to the final revelation of her will and posthumous letters.40 Anna’s increasingly absent voice is more difficult to account for. In part, we might blame the confusion occasioned by Clarissa’s hasty and frequent removes, and Lovelace’s stratagems, but Anna’s strategy throughout the novel has been one of alliance, and in the aftermath of Clarissa’s ruin, she resorts to the same tactic, ultimately abandoning her alliance with Clarissa in favor of others that are more useful to her.41

In Clarissa’s earlier distresses, Anna had suggested that she make use of Dorcas, for example, or Miss Partington, and chastised Clarissa for her over-niceness in forming alliances. William Warner has argued that Clarissa “is someone preoccupied with measuring, calculating comparative advantage, and judging herself and others. In winning an advantage over others, Clarissa’s crucial move is the invention of a ‘self’”

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39 Here I disagree with Martha Koehler, who claims that Clarissa’s “alienation finally takes the form of rejecting her body itself as well as her close friendship with Anna. Both of these ‘exclusions’ form necessary conditions for Clarissa’s role as paragon . . . . After Clarissa’s rape and as she begins to desire her own death – the exclusion of her body – Clarissa tells Anna that their friendship will inevitably become distanced” (167). Koehler cites Clarissa’s injunction to Anna on 1088, but Anna is first responsible for placing distance between herself and Clarissa on 932.

40 This is certainly Armstrong’s argument in “Reclassifying Clarissa: Fiction and the Making of the Modern Middle Class.”

41 Despite her frequent fights with her mother and Hickman, Anna has kept up a network of spies and gossip to look into Lovelace’s actions, not to mention her alliance with Clarissa.
(17), but Warner under-emphasizes the fact that Clarissa’s unique “self” is contrasted not only with other individual selves, but with the community at large. Indeed, Clarissa’s virtue is also her fault, for, in seeing herself as the model of the neighborhood, she has prevented herself from learning how to rely upon her neighbors. Even after her flight with Lovelace, she dispenses advice to Anna; after her fall, once she has recovered her senses, she becomes even more evangelical. Anna, in contrast, has always promoted alliance. Despite Anna’s desire to live single, and despite her notorious “warmth,” Anna constantly encourages Clarissa to abandon her tenacious claim for reconciliation with her family and instead throw herself into the protection of Lord M. or the Misses Montague, or any handy protector, even the villain himself. Victor Lams has suggested: “While Clarissa considers the world one great family, Miss Howe thinks that human relations are entirely power-based” (145). For Lams, this is one of Miss Howe’s failings, part of her Hobbesian view of the world that is dismissed in favor of Belford’s “other-reflective” persona. Anna’s preference for alliance, however, is a survival tactic in a complex social milieu. Anna frequently reminds Clarissa of their other female friends, who desire news of her, or suggests that Clarissa prosecute Lovelace publicly. She is convinced that only public alliance can save Clarissa, for she conceives of reputation as a public and changeable thing.

In turn, Clarissa’s desire to maintain a consistent appearance, and her desire not to impose on the public at large, prevent her success. To marry Lovelace would be to retreat from her professions of virtue and cower under the shelter of a barely-preserved reputation. Instead, Clarissa chooses death. In her repentance, she proves to be a model
for the Smiths and for Belford. In her will and posthumous letters, Clarissa temporarily regains narrative power. Richardson’s anxiety over a right reading of *Clarissa* induces him to present Belford’s commentary with the posthumous letters. Belford’s reformation, effected by Clarissa, and his praise of her deportment endorse Clarissa’s letters and encourage us to read them favorably, as just and tempered reproaches. But her stainless virgin white gown and near-supernatural power of moving her auditors prevent Clarissa from seeming approachable. Lovelace admits he must drug her to compromise her, and claims that she is indeed more angel than woman – a praise echoed by all Clarissa’s acquaintance. Clarissa’s angelic qualities allow her to transcend mere personhood and stand in for English virtue.

Lovelace’s frequent appellation – my Gloriana – reminds us of Spenser’s Gloriana, a stand-in for Queen Elizabeth. Clarissa’s more frequent praise as the finest woman in all of England confirms her standing. Colonel Morden’s father wants a sample of her needlework to take abroad, “to show the curious of other countries for the honour of his own, that the cloistered confinement was not necessary to make English women excel in any of those fine arts which nuns and recluses value themselves upon” (1469). Leonard Tennenhouse, among others, has argued for Clarissa as a model of Englishness.

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42 Here I disagree somewhat with Warner, who claims that Clarissa’s death grants her final control over the narrative. Instead, I would argue that Belford, Anna and Lovelace all complicating what Warner would term the “whole meaning.”

43 Thus Belford has been the subject of much recent criticism, with scholars dismissing Anna to focus on Belford’s assumption of narrative authority at the end of the text. See, for example, Victor Lams, *Clarissa’s Narrators* and Julia Genster, “Belfordeal: The Reader in *Clarissa*."

44 See Margaret Doody for a reading of Clarissa’s angelic qualities via art history.

45 Margaret Doody has suggested that Lovelace takes his cue from Lee’s *Gloriana*, “forgetting that Gloriana was ultimately the victor in the sexual battle” (111). One could argue that Clarissa is the victor (and it’s surprising that Doody doesn’t make that claim; however, I think Spenser is a more compelling, if more distant reading of Lovelace’s term. 

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He claims that in the English editions of Richardson, “The putative author – though a woman – was the model for ‘the individual,’ and her discourse presumed that virtually anyone with sufficient literacy could emulate a brand of interiority that denoted a superior quality of Englishness” (“Americanization,” 185). Clarissa’s desire to remove from England is representative of her awareness that she might no longer stand in for England. However, Belford asks Anna to give a character of Clarissa: “I am more especially curious to know, says he, what was that particular disposition of her time . . . to account for . . . how, at so tender an age, this admirable lady became mistress of such extraordinary and such various qualifications” (1465). In asking Anna to give Clarissa this character, Belford both re-establishes Clarissa as the model of English virtue, and, more interestingly, gives Anna power over Clarissa’s representation. We know from Anna that Clarissa kept an account book in which she recorded the very information Belford desires, but rather than publish her individual diary, Anna usurps the representation of Clarissa, even asking “if you do anything in this way, you will let me see it – If I find it not to my mind, I will add or diminish, as justice shall require” (1466). By claiming control of the final representation of Clarissa, Anna challenges Clarissa’s

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46 Nancy Armstrong has argued that Belford’s fascination with Clarissa’s schedule indicates her role as a stand-in for the emergent middle class.

47 Victor Lams has argued that Belford allows Anna to give a character of Clarissa in a scene “which should belong to Lovelace” because “Miss Howe knows her as the most amazing young woman their neighborhood ever produced, while Lovelace, having put aside his ‘reptile envy’ (VII.399), knows her as the “kind and cross dear” (VIII.132) who wanted to help him. As different as their perspectives are, their testimonials taken together constitute a memorable commemoration of Clarissa” (47). This does not seem entirely sufficient to me. See also Terry Castle’s Clarissa’s Ciphers, which suggests that Clarissa’s will reveals her new distrust of textual authority. Although I agree with his claim that Clarissa is anxious about how her last testament will be read, I’m not entirely convinced that Clarissa has given up the fight for textual power. Finally, William Warner has argued that Anna’s memorial is intended “as part of an attempt to silence critics of the heroine” (124), but this understates the filter of Anna’s “self” too much.
own attempt to gain control over her final representation. Whereas Clarissa had attempted to represent herself through the inscriptions on the coffin, her will, and her instructions to Belford (who had made clear his willingness to be instructed by her), Anna’s assertion of authority reminds us that Anna had never been successfully governed by Clarissa’s instructions. Her “justice” is very different from Clarissa’s pliant forgiveness. Anna’s final lines remind us of this disparity and indirectly prophesize the conclusion of the novel:

To lose such a friend, such a guide – if ever my violence was justifiable, it is upon this recollection! – for she only lived to make me sensible of my failings, but not long enough to enable me to conquer them; as I was resolved to endeavour to do.

Once more then let me execrate – But now violence and passion again predominate! – And how can it be otherwise?

But I force myself from the subject, having lost the purpose for which I resumed my pen. A. Howe. (1472)

For indeed, violence and passion do again predominate in the final encounter between Lovelace and Morden, and order only appears to be recovered in what is assumed to be Belford’s conclusion.

The Conclusion, “[s]upposed to be written by Mr. Belford” (1489), might seem to be a last attempt to endow Clarissa with agency. The characters’ histories are given, with everyone appearing to meet his or her just deserts. Yet the very fact that the Conclusion’s authorship is only tentatively attributed undermines the apparent restoration of order. In a novel full of epistolary manipulation – from Lovelace’s overt forgeries, to Clarissa’s own allegories and deceptions – the tentative authorship of the Conclusion is

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48 See, for example, William Warner, who notes: “Midway through the novel’s last installment we find Clarissa planning the editorship of the novel we are reading. This is her bid to turn all the contradictory movements of the text into a unified sign of her virtue and triumph” (3).
worth attention. Belford has claimed control of the narrative as Clarissa’s executor, but it is perhaps more significant that Belford is the rake whom Clarissa has reformed. Belford is the only example of Clarissa’s agency in the text, which is why Richardson must privilege his account of events. By casting doubt on the certainty of Belford’s authorship, however, Richardson resumes editorial control. Any anxiety that readers might ascribe Belford’s summation to self-interest is allayed, but so is Clarissa’s power. Anna’s final history, given in the Conclusion, and thus outside the epistolary frame, is worth attention as well:

In every other case, there is but one will between them; and that is generally his or hers, as either speak first upon any subject, be it what it will. Mr. Hickman, she sometimes as pleasantly as generously tells him, must not quite forget that she was once Miss Howe, because if he had not loved her as such, and with all her foibles, she had never been Mrs. Hickman. (1492)

This is quite a different model for relationships than Lovelace’s trial of Clarissa’s virtue, and suggests that Richardson wishes to endorse this version of companionate marriage; one that is really almost feminist in its assertion of equality, and humanist in its desire that we each be loved for our foibles. Anna preserves a measure of individualism – “that she was once Miss Howe” – because she has compromised to the “one will between them,” or, more broadly, to community opinion. That we close with an account of each of our characters, excluding Clarissa, reminds us that the novel privileges community over individual identity.49

49 Margaret Doody has argued that Clarissa’s individualism is Richardson’s opposition to the “social-minded fiction of the eighteenth century” (A Natural Passion, 106). It’s worth noting that although Doody speaks of the contemporary student, who “may well feel startled” (106) by the difference between Richardson’s fiction and that of his contemporaries, Richardson’s contemporaries would have been equally startled; indeed, their reading habits would have trained them to the socially assimilated characters as successful. Her focus on Clarissa and Lovelace as “dramatic” characters thus ignores the social characters such as Anna Howe.
It has been often noted that Clarissa falls because of her own excellence. As Ian Watt observes, “Clarissa eventually comes to realize that she fell into Lovelace’s power because of her spiritual pride” (213-14). Clarissa’s individualism, re-exemplified in her excessive directions for her funeral, is ultimately overwhelmed by the community. Her will and her letters posthumously distribute Clarissa amongst her community; both her virtue (inscribed in her letters) and her wealth (in the form of legacies in the will) are dispersed. The Conclusion’s final account of the community Clarissa leaves behind her devotes attention to each of the ensemble of characters. Anna, although one of the protagonists, is assimilated into the community both through her marriage to Hickman, and through her inclusion in the epilogue. This might seem to challenge the notion of a heroine altogether, much less a secondary heroine. However, it is Anna’s mercurial ability to assimilate, or rather, to react to the situation she finds herself in that distinguishes her from the other female characters in the novel as a secondary heroine. Clarissa dies for her individualism and leaves a monument to herself in her funeral, while dispersing that same self through letters and legacies. Her dangerously unstable class identity is also dispersed through the legacies. Clarissa’s faith in immanence – in things being exactly what they seem – enables her to trust in the power of her letters to exonerate her virtue in opposition to Lovelace’s disguises or representational stratagems. The final authority, however, rests with the editor of Clarissa’s letters, and, Clarissa implies, with her readers. The readers within the novel, the recipients of her letters, model a reading of Clarissa’s letters, and thus Clarissa herself, which reinforces her virtue, but also memorializes it as lost. In contrast, Anna’s alliance with Hickman
preserves her identity and agency, for although she is now Mrs. Hickman, and must compromise to the “one will” they share, she lives and acts in the community. Her perhaps equally tenuous class identity, as the daughter of a widow, is stabilized by her marriage: Hickman now possesses her wealth. Notably, Anna never speaks for herself in the conclusion. She writes a memorial to Clarissa, which competes with Clarissa’s self-representation in letters, but Anna’s epilogue is given by the editor. While her class identity is fixed by her marriage to Hickman, her orality, strategies of alliance, and representational mutability prevent us from fixing Anna’s identity as we do Clarissa’s. Anna offers readers a way out of the text: we do not have to die with Clarissa, we can live with Anna Hickman.

**Corresponding Coquettries**

*Clarissa* serves as a prototype for Hannah Webster Foster’s novel, *The Coquette*; the text of the novel itself acknowledges this when Mrs. Richman cautions Eliza: “I do not think you seducible; nor was Richardson’s Clarissa, till she made herself the victim, by her own indiscretion. Pardon me, Eliza, this is a second Lovelace” (38). While *The Coquette* has often been dubbed “Richardsonian,” insufficient attention has been given to the specific relationship between *Clarissa* and *The Coquette*. In particular, critics have all but ignored the role of Julia Granby in Eliza’s demise.

The novel presents two primary role models for Eliza: Lucy Freeman and Julia Granby, with Lucy’s role usurped by Julia after Lucy’s marriage.50 These “rational friendships,” as they are termed by Jay Fliegelman, are complicated by class strictures.

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50 Stern does not offer much by way of explanation for Julia’s rise, except for to claim that Julia is Eliza’s successor as the belle of the county, and that Julia is the spokeswoman for the “female chorus,” a claim that I will complicate later.
and geographical distance. While Richardson’s heroines are whisked away from the comforts of home by their would-be ravishers, Foster’s women trundle about on a seemingly endless round of visits. Some visits are pleasurable, others, as I will demonstrate, are visits of obligation. The disparity between inclination and obligation, and the social necessity of appearing not to distinguish between the two, in effect create coquetry. By linking the social coquetry apparent within the novel with the coquetry of Foster’s text, which teases the reader with omissions and enclosed letters, I will argue that Foster’s characters teach each other, and us, a more successful coquetry than Eliza’s: a coquetry that is more concerned with the social plot than the seduction plot.51

The novel opens with letters from Eliza Wharton to Lucy Freeman. Though many critics have noted that Lucy seems to be intended as a role model for Eliza, most overlook the omission of Lucy’s letters until Letter XIII.52 Eliza appears to have received replies to her own missives, but Foster does not make Lucy’s correspondence available to the reader. In her second letter, Eliza makes it clear that she has received a response from Lucy to her first letter:

I have received your letter; your moral lecture, rather; and be assured, my dear, your monitorial lessons and advice shall be attended to. I believe I shall never again resume those airs, which you term coquetish, but which I think deserve a softer appellation; as they proceed from an innocent heart, and are the effusions of a youthful and cheerful mind. (7)

In a novel that later encloses letters between friends and lovers to other parties, the omission of Lucy’s “monitorial lessons” seems striking. Lucy’s letters are not made

51 This is rather different from Rice’s assertion of the coquetry of Foster’s text.
52 See, for example, Jeffrey Richards’ “The Politics of Seduction: Theatre, Sexuality and National Virtue in the Novels of Hannah Foster,” or Bruce Burgett’s “Corresponding Sentiments and Republican Letters: Hannah Foster’s The Coquette.” For a more in depth reading of Lucy, see Jared Gardner’s “The Literary Museum.”
available to the reader until after Boyer and Sanford have already appeared in the text, and only then at Eliza’s invocation: “I immediately retired to write this letter, which I shall close, without a single observation on the subject, until I know your opinion” (26). The subject is Boyer’s proposal, and Lucy’s response reveals the real motives for Eliza’s delay to the reader.

The effect of Lucy’s absence, I would argue, is to enable the reader to assume the role of Lucy for the beginning of the novel. Eliza’s constant entreaties for advice place the reader, in the absence of Lucy, in the role of advisor. When Eliza responds to letters that are not included in the text of the text of the novel, it is as if she is responding to our unwritten advice. By installing the reader as the moral center, while controlling our advice through Eliza’s responses, Foster in effect teaches the reader how to be a moral authority. We do not identify with Eliza, the future fallen woman; instead Foster aligns us immediately with Lucy, future wife, and ensures that we are not seduced by the text.

Lucy only appears in the text and intercedes when Foster is afraid the reader might not be perceptive enough to discern the connection between Eliza and Sanford: “Methinks I can gather from your letters a predilection for this Major Sanford” (26), and to reveal Eliza’s class ambitions, “I know your ambition is to make a distinguished figure in the first class of polished society” (27). If Lucy did not make Eliza’s class and her ambitions transparent to us, we might have guessed at them anyway. Eliza’s visit to the Richman’s home already makes her dependent upon other, wealthier friends; this dependence is echoed by her unwillingness to make a “single observation” on Boyer’s proposal without knowing Lucy’s opinion. A few letters later, Eliza actually terms Lucy
“your ladyship” (32). Though the women generally seem on equal terms, Eliza receives advice more often than she gives it, suggesting that her social position is lower.\[^{53}\]

I am not the first to notice Eliza’s dependence on the opinions of her friends: Jeffrey Richards has already contrasted Eliza’s “insufficient instructors” with the direct Mrs. Williams of *The Boarding School*. Sharon Harris suggests that the women of the novel “all voice opinions about ‘women’s place’ as advocated by the dominant culture . . . they believe their counsel is offered for Eliza’s own good” (9).\[^{54}\] Finally, Julia Stern lays the blame at the feet of a Federalist “female chorus” that is threatened by Eliza’s individualism. Eliza’s class ambitions make her anxious to secure a husband above her station, while also making it necessary that she garner the approval of her wealthier friends. Her instructors are “insufficient,” as Richards notes, but they are insufficient because they cannot teach Eliza to do what they have never had to do themselves. Instead, they proffer what Harris identifies as maxims about “women’s place,” while simultaneously keeping Eliza “in her place.”

To keep Eliza in her place, Lucy establishes the terms and nature of their correspondence. While Eliza proclaims in her third letter “I must write you the impulses of my mind or I must not write at all” (8), Lucy tells Eliza: “My swain interests himself very much in your affairs . . . . Not that I am going to betray your secrets. These I have no right to divulge; but I must be the judge what may, and what may not be communicated” (31). Eliza never comments on this breach of confidence, which

\[^{53}\] See Claire Pettengill’s article “Sisterhood in a Separate Sphere: Female Friendship in Hannah Webster Foster’s *The Coquette* and *The Boarding School*” for a fuller version of this argument.

\[^{54}\] Harris’s attention to Lucy is particularly compelling. Harris notes that Lucy’s letters do in fact grow less frequent, and shorter, after her marriage. She also observes that Lucy’s letters become more maxim-filled immediately before and after her marriage.
suggests to me that Lucy has the authority to make such a breach. Lucy is literally Eliza’s “judge”; Eliza’s submission to this hierarchy suggests that it is one imposed on their friendship by their relative social positions. The status of women as femme-covert, and Lucy’s own admission that her husband watches her write renders the privacy of her correspondence with Eliza suspect and reminds us that Lucy, too, is subject to authority, however lax the reins. This mutual condition of surveillance to some degree effaces class disparity and encourages political readings of the text. Wealth, in *The Coquette*, is possessed by the men, and is only significant in respect to the marriage plot. The novel teaches its readers that wealth in the new republic is not fixed or stable, and that a politic demeanor, that is, a coquetry which masks the disparity between private and public, is a more suitable strategy to negotiate the social matrix. Eliza’s insistence on inclination, her refusal to play the coquette by masking obligation as inclination, or public necessity as privately desirable, is the cause of her fall.

Though Eliza may narrate her perception of the public results of her public display, she seems to view letters as private. In her first letter to Boyer, aware that her wit may startle the sedate cleric, Eliza writes: “I cannot conveniently be at the pains of restraining its sallies, when I write in confidence” (48). She thus suggests that she does restrain these sallies in public, or when not “in confidence.” As I have noted earlier, Foster has already called this confidence into question. Lucy’s decision to share portions of Eliza’s letter with her future husband may keep Eliza’s correspondence “private” in

55 Julia Stern reads this scene as part of Eliza’s pain at being “scrutinized and commodified by the gaze of a community that includes both Lucy herself and her husband-to-be Mr. Sumner” (113).
56 David Waldstreicher suggests that even in her “private” letters to Lucy Freeman, Eliza always “moves on to describe the visible manifestations of sensibility and the results of such display” (207). Waldstreicher does not place sufficient emphasis on Eliza’s conscientious differentiation between private and public.
that it is not shared with the public at large – Eliza’s letter does not circulate beyond their home. However, Eliza’s letters to other characters, and letters concerning Eliza are frequently circulated among the other characters, thus making them public. Eliza’s letters are enclosed in Selby’s letter to Boyer, causing Selby to remark: “I have heard so much in praise of Miss Wharton’s penmanship in addition to her other endowments, that I am almost tempted to break the seal of her letter to you; but I forbear” (46). In contrast, Eliza does not enclose copies of Boyer’s first rejection of her; we know what Boyer has written because he has enclosed copies in his letter to Selby, thus making his rejection of Eliza public. When Eliza does circulate the content of letters, she transcribes them into her own text – Sanford’s billet asking her to meet him, for example, is included in this fashion. Rather than publishing letters, in effect, by appending copies to her own correspondence, Eliza preserves the private nature of the letters she receives by transcribing them into her own text as part of her own narrative. Eliza’s strategy also prevents the reader from forming an independent judgment of the letters by couching them in her own terms; in effect, she re-authors them.

In addition to this distinction between enclosed and transcribed letters, I would like to call attention to the differentiation Foster makes between billets and letters. Billets promise an impending face-to-face interview and are often merely formal invitations. Sanford uses billets to ensure Eliza’s affection by posing questions that he claims can only be answered in person. Boyer, alternately, maintains an epistolary correspondence with Eliza that alienates her emotionally as she is literally alienated by

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57 As I argued earlier, by forwarding the letters to an unintended audience, the recipient “part-publishes” them.
his physical absence. Sanford’s method is, of course, the more successful, but as Julia Granby later wonders, what induces Eliza to fall under his spell? When Eliza narrates Sanford’s intrusion into her garden and his depiction of the confinement of life with Boyer, she claims: “My heart did not approve his sentiments, but my ear was charmed with his rhetoric, and my fancy captivated by his address” (36). Strangely, we already know that her heart does approve Sanford’s sentiments; a few letters earlier, Eliza had written to Lucy regarding her potential future marriage to Boyer:

I recoil at the thought of immediately forming a connection, which must confine me to the duties of domestic life, and make me dependent for happiness, perhaps too, for subsistence, upon a class of people, who will claim the right of scrutinizing every party of my conduct; and by censuring those foibles, which I am conscious of not having prudence to avoid, may render me completely miserable. (29)

Here Eliza clearly realizes that the “confinement” of a life with Boyer will make her miserable because of Boyer’s situation. The “class of people” upon whom they will be dependent, presumably Boyer’s parishioners, will be the moral yoke she dreads. In contrast, Sanford’s wealth and status as a gentleman protects his reputation, and would also cover Eliza’s imprudent foibles. Despite Eliza’s claim that she “restrains” herself in public, as this letter makes clear, Eliza finds it difficult to mask her follies with an acceptable “public” self. In addition, Sanford’s physical presence as orator enables him to “charm” and “captivate” Eliza in a manner that Boyer’s cold, didactic letters cannot.58

Throughout the novel, in fact, Eliza seems to privilege face-to-face encounters, at least for certain topics. As she replies to Boyer’s first letter: “In regard to the particular subject of your’s [sic] I shall be silent. Ideas of that kind are better conveyed, on my part,

58 Here I disagree slightly with Julia Stern, who claims, “The significant absence of a correspondence between Eliza and Sanford is an index of the emotional limitations of their exchange” (100).
by words, than by the pen” (47). The suitor who approaches Eliza with words, rather than with letters, ultimately prevails. Aside from the occasional dramatic billet, Eliza never hears from Sanford via letter, not even during his long absence on his southward tour. Sanford’s idleness, enabled by his wealth, allows him to be near Eliza if he chooses to. We, as readers, are in the privileged position of being able to read Sanford’s one-sided correspondence with Mr. Charles Deighton. Eliza is not, and indeed, if she had access to Sanford’s sloppy prose, she might think differently of him. We never read anything from Sanford’s correspondent, Deighton, nor do Sanford’s letters suggest that Deighton has offered any particularly moral advice; thus we never read ourselves into Deighton in the manner I have earlier suggested we read ourselves into Lucy. Boyer’s correspondent, Selby, offers very careful and occasional advice, but also, at least initially, sanctions Boyer’s choice of Eliza. Interestingly, Sanford’s ecstasies over Eliza are only confirmed by Selby, as Boyer’s own descriptions are too reserved. In contrast to the community of women who surround Eliza and constantly advise her, Sanford appears to be writing into the void. Perhaps these one-sided relationships are intended to mirror one another: the lack of advice which Sanford so desperately needs must make us more conscious of the over-abundance of advice to which Eliza is subject.

An example of this super-abundance occurs immediately after Boyer’s rejection, when Eliza receives a letter from Mrs. Richman, who “through the medium of my friends at Hartford” (96), has heard all about the progress of Eliza’s affairs. Perhaps to keep

59 Julia Stern has suggested that the absence of letters between Sanford and Deighton or Sanford and Eliza makes Sanford’s writing “onanistic.” Further, “this suggests that Sanford’s agency to do Eliza harm is, in the end, secondary to the totalizing power of the female chorus” (109). Certainly, Deighton’s absence denies Eliza the power accorded to Clarissa in her relationship to Belford.
Eliza more closely under guard, Mrs. Richman invites her to stay with them again. We do not have Eliza’s reply to read; we only know that she accepts their invitation. Unlike Eliza’s last visit to the Richmans, which occupied the bulk of Eliza’s first letters, Eliza condenses this trip into one letter, written after the visit has ended, which barely recounts any events, other than to inform Lucy that she has decided to write to Boyer per Mrs. Richman’s advice, and that she is puzzled not to have heard from Sanford. Eliza encloses a copy of her letter to Boyer, and his reply, in her next letter to Lucy. As I have observed earlier, Eliza does not usually make private letters public by enclosure, which raises the question of her change in conduct.

Eliza’s enclosure of Mr. Boyer’s letters suggests to me a transformation that has been subtly occurring throughout the novel; though frequently branded a coquette, Eliza does not actually appear to be one until the end of the novel. Eliza’s countenance has always betrayed her true emotions – Boyer, for example, is jealous that she appears more brilliant with Sanford than in his company – but it is not until the end of the novel that Eliza consciously and seriously attempts to dissemble. While she might have pretended to “fix her phiz” for Boyer, Eliza truly changes countenance to appease her concerned mother: “I am therefore, obliged to conceal my disquietude and appear as cheerful as possible in her company” (106). However, Eliza’s slide into coquetry is abetted by the visit of Julia Granby.

Julia is immediately aligned with Eliza from her entrance to the Wharton household: Julia is eager for amusement and dissipation, as Eliza once was. Julia’s powers of dissimulation, however, are rarely directed towards men. She frequently
speaks of marriage as improbable, and seems content to shuffle from household to household. But perhaps this apparent content is merely an example of Julia’s ability to “fix her phiz.” Julia initially functions as an intermediary between Lucy and Eliza; she assumes Lucy’s role of advisor towards Eliza, while simultaneously usurping Eliza’s role of writer. She begins by offering parallel accounts of Eliza to Lucy, at one point saying, “I need not repeat to you anything relative to Major Sanford’s conciliatory visit. Eliza has given you a particular, and I believe, a faithful detail” (121). The implication, of course, is that her letters serve as a corrective to Eliza’s increasingly shorter missives. In her last letter to Lucy before returning to Boston, Julia writes: “Her mind is surprisingly weakened! She appears sensible of this; yet adds to it by yielding to her own imbecility. You will receive a letter from her with this; though I had much difficulty to persuade her to write. She has unfortunately become very averse to this, her once favorite amusement” (131). Here Julia’s letter literally corrects Eliza’s, which the text of which the novel presents first and in which Eliza seems perfectly astute. Despite Julia’s claims that Eliza’s mind is weakened, Eliza’s own letter reveals a stronger mind than the thoughtless Eliza of the earlier pages of the novel.

Aware of the disparity between how she feels and how she must appear to feel in order to placate her friends, Eliza gives an account of her changed attitude towards writing: “I believe my friend, you must excuse me if my letters are shorter than formerly. Writing is not so agreeable to me as it used to be. I love my friends as well as ever; but I think they must be weary of the gloom and dullness which pervades my present correspondence. When my pen shall have regained its original fluency and alertness, I
will resume and prolong the pleasing task” (127). Eliza is hardly “yielding to her own imbecility”; her friends have already chastised her gloom and dullness. Mrs. Richman’s last letter had encouraged her to be cheerful; Lucy has written “I received yours of the 24th ult., and thank you for it, though it did not afford me those lively sensations of pleasure which I usually feel at the perusal of your letters” (112). Eliza quite correctly perceives that unless she can dissemble her usual vivacity her friends will be disappointed in her.

Julia’s letter to Lucy immediately follows Eliza’s and is titled “to the same.” Typically this heading also assumes that the author of the letter is also the same. This reinforces the presence of an authorial editor who has collected and titled these letters, and also suggests a correlation between Julia and Eliza, in which Julia supplants Eliza. Julia Stern describes their relationship: “Eliza cedes her social stakes to Julia, who . . . assumes the lead in the patriarchal drama of proper female comportment” (141). Eliza refuses to visit Lucy or Mrs. Richman because, after the deaths of her father and Mr. Haly, she refuses to make obligation appear like inclination, or, to use the language of her letter, transform “dullness” into “alertness”; Julia goes where she is summoned, even if she demonstrates polite resistance, as one might argue she does when Lucy recalls her from Eliza’s side: “I regret leaving Eliza! I tremble at her danger!” (131). Despite such occasional melodramatic outbursts, Julia’s language is usually couched in a rhetoric of obedience. When she arrives at the Wharton’s, her first letter to Lucy begins: “Dear Madam, You commanded me to write you respecting Miss Wharton; and I obey” (110).

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60 Eliza uses this same formal heading in her first letter to Boyer. Lucy’s adoption of this formality reveals the estrangement of the two friends.
As I have suggested earlier, Eliza is clearly not Lucy’s equal. She has the power to request Julia’s company, but she does not have the authority to summon her from Lucy. When Julia leaves for Boston, Eliza writes: “I very much regret the departure of Julia; and hope you will permit her to return to me again, as soon as possible. She is a valuable friend. Her mind is well cultivated; and she has treasured up a fund of knowledge and information, which renders her company both agreeable and useful in every situation in life” (127). Despite the entreaties of Eliza and Julia, and Lucy’s claimed concern for Eliza as her childhood friend, Lucy withholds Julia and perhaps, in effect, causes Eliza’s ruin. Even granting Lucy’s sincerity in attempting to have Eliza join them in Boston, Lucy’s unwillingness to send Julia home is suspect. Indeed, she keeps Julia longer than expected, as Julia writes:

Little to I intend, when I left you, to have been absent so long; but Mrs. Sumner’s disappointment, in her plan of spending the summer at Hartford, induce me, in compliance with her request, to prolong my residence here. But for your sake, she now consents to my leaving her, in hopes I may be so happy as to contribute to your amusement. (136)

Julia’s language, however subtly, reveals that her own apparent intentions (to return to Eliza) are at odds with Mrs. Sumner’s orders: Julia is “induced” to “comply” with her “request.” Julia’s ability effectively to play both sides is what enables her to successfully negotiate the complex social matrix of the novel. Julia’s letters to Eliza suggest a desire to be near her; however, when near Eliza, she seems to sabotage rather than contribute to her happiness.

Admittedly, Julia is not responsible for Eliza’s fall. Indeed, as several other critics have noted, Eliza hardly seems accountable for her own undoing. While most
readings of the novel observe that Eliza only considers herself “undone” when Boyer misreads her interview with Sanford, Sanford’s own account of Eliza’s fall is worth attention. In his last letter to Deighton, Sanford writes: “To [Eliza] I lay not the principal blame, as in like cases, I do the sex in general. My finesse was too well planned for detection, and my snares too deeply laid for any one to escape who had the least warmth in her constitution, or affection in her heart” (158). It is easy to dismiss Sanford’s claim as proof of his egotism, but his distinction of Eliza from “the sex in general” might remind us of another woman Sanford so distinguishes: Julia Granby. Sanford famously comments that “the dignity of her manners forbid all assaults upon her virtue” (140), but when read against Julia’s other actions in the novel, the “dignity of her manners” reads as Julia’s true defense: her ability to efface all indications of obligation or inclination, requisite for the social coquetry that is her forte.

Julia’s reaction to Eliza’s confession is almost horrifying to read. First, she counsels suicide, a la Lucrezia: “Wretched, deluded girl! Is this a return for your parent’s love and assiduous care; for your friends’ solicitude and premonitory advice? You are ruined, you say! You have sacrificed your virtue to an abandoned, despicable profligate! And you live to acknowledge and bear your infamy!” (142). Notice that Julia places Eliza’s undoing in terms of a sort of economic exchange between friends; Eliza’s fall is a “poor return” for the care and advice her friends have invested in her. It is only when it seems as if Eliza may actually kill herself that Julia “fixes her phiz” to appear conciliatory. However, on their ride the next day, she broaches the topic again, once more in economic terms:
I observed to Eliza, as we rode, that with her natural and acquired abilities, with her advantages of education, with her opportunities of knowing the world and of tracing the virtues and vices of mankind to their origin, I was surprised at her becoming the prey of an insidious libertine, with whose character she was well acquainted, and whose principles she was fully apprised would prompt him to deceive and betray her. (145)

To read Julia at all sympathetically, we must assume that she feels she is acting up to the conduct book expectations of Lucy, whom she has already held up as a model in a letter to Eliza. However, I would argue that the language of this letter, addressed to Lucy, reveals Julia’s aspirations. Given the same abilities, advantages and opportunities as Eliza, Julia implies she would have made better use of them.

Despite her apparent coldness towards Eliza, Julia writes to Lucy: “Think what a scene rises to the view of your Julia! She must share the distresses of others, though her own feelings, on this unhappy occasion, are too keen to admit a moment’s serenity! My greatest relief is in writing to you; which I shall do again by the next post” (147). Julia’s use of the third person distances herself from actual experience: “She,” not “I,” shares the distresses of the Whartons. Julia/ “I” enjoys the relief of writing to Lucy, of acting the part of the recording angel. Unlike the recording angel Eliza imagines, however, Julia gives a complete account: “To relieve your suspense, however, I shall write you every circumstance, as it occurs. But at present, I shall only enclose Eliza’s letters to her mamma, and me . . . ” (152-3). These private letters, Eliza’s final words to her mother and her “dear friend,” are thus made public.

In her third letter, Eliza informs us: “I have been taking a retrospect of my past life; and a few juvenile follies excepted, which I trust the recording angel has blotted out with the tear of charity, find an approving conscience and a heart at ease” (9). The
“recording angels” that surround Eliza, however, rather magnify her errors than blot them. The image of the tear of charity recurs several times in the novel, most significantly, in Julia’s letter to Lucy which recounts Eliza’s death, when Eliza hands Julia letters of explanation: “[Eliza said:] For this purpose, what I have written, and what I shall yet say to you, must close the account between you and me. I certainly have no balance against you, said [Julia]. In my breast you are fully acquitted. Your penitential tears have obliterated your guilt, and blotted out your errors with your Julia” (149). Clearly, Eliza’s penitential tears have not blotted her errors out of Julia’s letters. Julia continues to record Eliza’s errata with a faithfulness that would please Franklin.

When Eliza’s death is reported, Julia writes to Lucy: “You have doubtless seen the account, in the public papers, which gave us the melancholy intelligence. But I will give you a detail of circumstances” (161). Julia’s desire to fill in the public account appears to align her with Foster, whose novel, though founded in fact, functions as a “detail of circumstances” to the public papers of Elizabeth Whitman. But Julia withholds what might be considered the most important details: the “scraps of writing” found with Eliza. Julia describes these papers as “valuable testimonies . . . calculated to soothe and comfort the minds of mourning connection” (162-3), and therefore suggests that these writings are intentionally public. Unlike Eliza’s private letters, these “testimonies” are “calculated” to appeal to Eliza’s judges and comfort them. By refusing to enclose Eliza’s writings because they are intended to appeal to Lucy, Julia maintains control over Eliza’s image. In fact, Lucy has not seen the papers that announced Eliza’s death; Julia’s account.

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61 Again, notice the bankers terms Julia employs: “account” and “balance.” One cannot help but think of Sanford’s comment about Julia’s “eye” here – clearly her perceptive eyes will not be clouded by tears.
62 In this respect they are similar to Clarissa’s posthumous letters.
letter, intended to follow such accounts, instead becomes the “first information of this awful event” (167). Unconditioned by the public papers or by Eliza’s scraps of writing, Lucy’s response to Julia’s letter appears to address a larger audience: “Upon your reflecting and steady mind, my dear Julia, I need not inculcate the lessons which may be drawn from this woe-fraught tale; but for the sake of my sex in general, I wish it engraved upon every heart, that virtue alone...can secure lasting felicity” (168). Lucy writes with the pen, but wishes to engrave her sentiments on the hearts of the American Fair. Instead, Lucy orders the engraved inscription on Eliza’s tombstone.

The tombstone fixes the recording angel’s more charitable version of Eliza’s demise in stone. The recording angel, in this case, is literally Lucy Sumner, but the inscription is narrated to Eliza’s mother (and to the reader) by Julia Granby. Julia’s final letter, far from authorizing her as the novel’s moral authority, points once again to her obedience to Lucy Sumner: “The day after my arrival, Mrs. Sumner proposed that we should visit the sad spot which contains the remains of our once amiable friend. The grave of Eliza Wharton, said she, shall not be unbedewed by the tears of friendship” (168). Julia faithfully records Lucy’s suggestion, phrased as a command, and begins her next paragraph by recording their obedience: “Yesterday, we went accordingly” (168). Again, Julia gains control over the depiction of Eliza’s final hours; knowledge gained second-hand through her conversations with the people of the town. As she narrates to Mrs. Wharton and the reader: “The minutest circumstances were faithfully related; and from the state of her mind, in her last hours, I think much comfort may be derived to her afflicted friends” (168). In these concluding paragraphs, Foster again draws our attention
to the ways in which Julia manages information; the reader does not have access to the “minutest circumstances” but rather must take Julia at her word, and the text has previously demonstrated that Julia’s words are suspect. Despite her rhetoric of obedience and the fact of her obligation, Julia’s coquetry, her ability to make obligation appear to be inclination, also enables her to manipulate those obligations into opportunities. Julia is now the preferred companion of Mrs. Lucy Sumner; the history of Eliza Wharton concludes with trite platitudes to Mrs. Wharton, thus confirming Eliza’s usefulness to Julia.

Foster appears to include Julia as a model for what Eliza might have been, had she been able to resist Sanford. However, what Foster actually depicts is a more socially able coquette, one who is able to successfully circulate her image via the tarnished image of Eliza Wharton. Eliza privileges face-to-face encounters because she believes that she cannot be misread in person, but her “fall” is just such a misreading: when Boyer sees her and Sanford in the garden. Eliza forgets, repeatedly, that in letters and in person, one is always observed. The cessation of her letters at the close of the novel and her eventual death reflect her attempt to cope with this state of constant surveillance by trying to disappear. In contrast, Julia successfully manipulates her appearance by billing herself as observer. While Eliza presumed on a “large stock in the bank of friendship,” Julia’s metaphors for interactions are the terms of economic exchange. Julia does not save, as Eliza does by waiting for the virtues of Boyer and Sanford in one man: she circulates.
Marriage Market: Wealth, Obligation and Female Friendship

Readings of Clarissa and The Coquette have tended to focus on the individualism of their heroines: Clarissa’s status as the model of her community is part of what tempts Lovelace to see if she is an angel or a mere woman; Eliza wishes to distinguish herself from her peers, and does so, in part, by insisting that she will inscribe herself “Eliza Wharton” until she is satisfied with a suitor. Ultimately, each of these heroines falls, and each novel concludes with a reconstituted community. Anna and Lovelace both memorialize Clarissa, as do her posthumous letters and the collected letters we have been reading, but the novel closes with the Conclusion’s final summation, which devotes equal attention to the members of the community. Eliza Wharton is remembered in the public papers and by the correspondence that comprises the novel, but the tombstone that Julia and Lucy erect in her memory is for the edification of the American Fair. Critical preoccupation with the fall of each of these heroines has overlooked the plight of their correspondents. Julia and Anna’s survival of the narratives depends in great part upon their strategies of alliance and their manipulation of the terms of obligation. Clarissa and Eliza begin as individuals, but end in self-imposed exile and death, whereas Anna and Julia, despite their virtues and faults, end each novel in their chosen communities.

But these communities are very different: Anna ends the novel as Mrs. Hickman; Julia ends the novel as Lucy Sumner’s chosen friend. Ruth Perry has argued that Richardson’s imitators valued the friendship of the female correspondents as “essential to their emotional survival. Like Clarissa and Anna Howe, the pairs are often split between the sweet and the salt, the exemplary and the pert, the good and the spirited” (127); she
also claims that “Hannah Foster’s *The Coquette: or, The History of Eliza Wharton*, for example, published in Boston in 1797, is a late variation on the theme” (126). Perry does not note that, in Foster’s text, the pair is reversed: Eliza is the pert, and Julia the exemplary. The lateness of *The Coquette*, as well as its American location, suggests that Foster is writing in a different historical and social milieu, but why, then, does she return to Richardson’s example? By returning the historical narrative of Elizabeth Whitman to the realm of the fictional, Foster grants herself a sort of poetic license to fill in the details of the historical record. Her reliance on the most famous and successful model of a tragic seduction plot is perhaps not terribly surprising, especially if, as Cathy Davidson has claimed, Foster no longer had to write to readers who were convinced of the immorality of the novel. Foster’s decision to include a secondary heroine may have more to do with the necessities of the epistolary form; however, Deighton never writes to Sanford, and the precedent for a one-sided correspondence is certainly set in *Pamela.* Instead, I would argue that Foster retains Richardson’s model, and the secondary heroine, because in a novel about the fall of one type of femininity, another must rise. Although Nancy Armstrong has read Clarissa as the model for the emergent middle-class, Anna more closely resembles the trading hucksters Armstrong describes. In turn, Eliza’s lost voice, which Julia Stern suggests is drowned out by the Federalist chorus of female voices, is actually supplanted by Julia Granby’s voice. In both cases, an individualistic voice that stands apart from community opinion by relying on immanence is replaced by an individual voice that can successfully negotiate communities via representation.

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63 As Cathy Davidson has noted in her section on *The Coquette* in *Revolution and the Word.*
Anna’s marriage to Hickman accords with the community standards, but, it is one that she has managed on her own terms, and in part through her displacement of obligation onto her friendship with Clarissa (i.e., she would not be under obligation to Hickman, except she must find a way to communicate to her friend Clarissa). In contrast, Julia manages to increase her value to Lucy Sumner by replacing Eliza’s voice with her own. Instead of climbing the social ladder through marriage, as Eliza intends to do, Julia advances through friendship. Power, in The Coquette, seems to lie outside of the marriage economy. Lucy Freeman is under the surveillance of her husband, Mr. Sumner; Mrs. Wharton is remarkably ineffective; the Richman’s marriage is tarnished by the death of their child; and Eliza’s first intended dies. Even to enter into that marketplace through coquetry, as Eliza does, imperils the individual. The choice before Eliza, Boyer or Sanford, is really a choice of deceptions. If Eliza marries Boyer, she must deceive the community of his parish that she is sedate and without foibles. If she marries Sanford, she will find herself deceived in her estimation of his wealth. Eliza’s coquetry, therefore, ultimately fails because it is directed towards men and matrimony. Foster’s revision of Richardson proffers another choice, one that Anna had hinted at in her privileges of her friendship with Clarissa, but abandoned in her marriage to Hickman. We never know Julia’s parentage, and we know her marriage is unlikely; rather, we see Julia circulate in communities of women and in the company of men.

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64 In this respect, I both agree and disagree with Leonard Tennenhouse’s reading of the Americanization of Clarissa. Tennenhouse reads Charlotte Temple as a bad Clarissa for English readers, and better than Clarissa for American readers, because it holds out the promise of a strange sort of reconciliation with England (or at least Englishness) through Charlotte’s child. Tennenhouse, rather unfairly, does not look at The Coquette, the novel of which Fliegelman and Davidson (both discussed in his review of criticism on Clarissa and America) proffer readings. All of the infants in The Coquette die in infancy, which troubles Tennenhouse’s reading.
Rather than suspending a woman’s value between the family she is born into and the family she marries into, Julia places her value in society and thus prospers.
The primary heroines of Clarissa and The Coquette refuse to marry; I have argued that after their deaths they are supplanted by the secondary heroine. James Fenimore Cooper’s The Pioneers (1823) almost ends with the marriage of the hero and heroine, Edward Oliver Effingham and Bess Temple. Almost ends, but doesn’t. Instead, the last chapter begins with Bess and Oliver walking towards the graveyard, discussing their future. When Oliver fails to guess Bess’s plans, she replies: “Do you forget Louisa, and her father?” (448). In the exchange that follows, their badinage over Louisa’s future frequently repeats that phrase: “you forget Louisa.” As Oliver and Bess debate, readers are reminded that they have forgotten Louisa. Indeed, Cooper appears to have forgotten Louisa –she has not appeared since she refused to return to the mountain with Bess. Although Louisa attracts readers’ attention early in the novel, by the end she has faded from view, her heroic status replaced by Bess, the consummate “American girl.” In this respect, Louisa functions as a secondary heroine.

In this chapter, I locate the erasure and then the return of Louisa as part of a larger narrative pattern of forgetting in the nineteenth-century novel. Specifically, I examine

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65 Oliver’s name and heritage is a source of confusion in the novel, and the revelation of his heritage is key to Cooper’s reconciliation of the competing Native American, British and American claims to Templeton. In this chapter, I refer to Edwards Oliver Effingham as Oliver, and to Elizabeth Temple as Bess.
Ann Radcliffe’s *A Sicilian Romance* (1790), Jane Austen’s *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), and *The Pioneers* to argue that each novel “forgets” a heroine, only to have her return at the end in a puzzling and uncanny “return of the repressed.” Rather than understanding this return in psychoanalytic terms, however, I examine these heroines in terms of competing ideals of national identity and femininity. Specifically, I show that the primary heroines in these novels represent a socially-visible “sensibility” that represses the more invisible “sense” represented by the secondary heroines. Whereas *Clarissa* and *The Coquette* featured secondary heroines whose correspondence with the primary heroines modeled reading practices, the novels I address in this chapter evoke readers’ sensibilities, either to enforce or, in the case of Austen, to question the role of sensibility in shaping the national identities of England and America through literary heroines. In this way, I demonstrate that the transatlantic transmission of the figure of the forgotten heroine is illustrative of the cultural work performed by the novel as a genre in both England and America.66

Several literary and historical narratives link the novels that I study in this chapter: most importantly, the cult of sensibility, the Gothic, and the marriage plot. The secondary heroine provides a way to locate these organizing narratives intertextually. While the primary heroines of Radcliffe, Austen and Cooper’s novels each possess sensibility, brave a form of the Gothic, and end happily married, the secondary heroine in each of these novels illuminates the work of sensibility, the Gothic and the marriage plot.

66 In this chapter I use “secondary” and “forgotten” heroine interchangeably. In later chapters, I examine the development of the secondary heroine who becomes, in fact, more interesting than the primary heroine over the history of the novel (as we see, for example, in Scott’s *Ivanhoe*, where Rebecca is clearly not “forgotten” or in James’s *Charlotte Stant*).
in stabilizing constructions of femininity and national identity and suggest, quite literally, the cost of sensibility. These secondary heroines suffer because of their lack of independent financial resources; they make visible the structure of wealth girding the nation, but masked by sensibility of primary heroines.

Traditional transatlantic studies of Radcliffe, Austen and Cooper might focus on their shared publishing histories. The novels I examine are early works: *A Sicilian Romance* was Radcliffe’s second novel; *Sense and Sensibility* grew out of the sketch *Elinor and Marianne* (1795), and was Austen’s second published novel; *The Pioneers*, famous as the first of the Leatherstocking Tales, was, in fact Cooper’s third novel. In each case, the author’s first works have been read as a response to earlier fictions: Radcliffe’s *The Castle’s of Athlin and Dubayne* is “very evidently a response to earlier Gothic fictions, most notably Clara Reeve’s *The Champion of Virtue* (Milbank, “Introduction,” ix); Austen’s *Northanger Abbey* is obviously a response to Radcliffe; Cooper’s *Precaution* is “a weak imitation of British manners fiction” (Ringe, vii). I chart these genealogies to explain my insistence that we understand these forgotten heroines as part of an attempt by British and American authors to define the nation in the advent and aftermath of revolution and the parameters of the novel at the peak and subsequent decline of the cult of sensibility. As young, recently successful writers, Radcliffe, Austen and Cooper respond to the literary marketplace, and to other recently successful writers. To read their texts in sequence is to watch literary history. Like archeologists, then, we must ask why certain elements survive. These novels each offer a reworking of the Gothic, raise questions of sense and sensibility, and deploy the containing structure of the
marriage plot, but, most importantly, they each feature a secondary heroine whose narrative role makes sense of these other narratives. While the marriage plot is, by definition, constant and unchanging, predictable and comfortable, the alternative subjectivity forwarded by the forgotten heroine is made uncomfortable and unpredictable. By turning our attention to these characters we more clearly read the narrative possibilities otherwise diminished by the routine marriage plot. These characters respond to the overwhelming ideological power of sensibility by insisting that we remember the ordinary.

It has been common in recent years to study both British and American early novels in terms of the impact of the cult of sensibility on the history of the novel. Robert Jones opens his review of five recent books on this subject by remarking: “Earlier conceptions of sensibility as a particular literary, artistic or social mode--most often described as the ‘cult’ of sensibility – have given way to a history of the late eighteenth century that regards sensibility as the animating force for the whole period” (395). Recent considerations of sympathy, such as Audrey Jaffe’s *Scenes of Sympathy: Identity and Representation in Victorian Fiction* (2000) or Kristin Boudreau’s *Sympathy in American Literature: American Sentiments from Jefferson to the Jameses* (2002), extend the influence of sensibility well into the nineteenth-century.67 These scholars and others

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67 I do not wish to conflate sympathy and sensibility; for the purposes of this chapter, I consider sympathy to be one of the qualities necessary to possess sensibility. To possess sensibility, as Margaret Anne Doody has defined it, is “to possess the capacity of human sympathy, as well as the capacity for aesthetic responsiveness” (“Introduction,” xiv). The power of sympathy, according to Adam Smith’s *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), is to bridge this divide between individual minds: “As we have no immediate experience of what other men feel, we can form no idea of the manner in which they are affected, but by conceiving what we ourselves should feel in the like situation” (10-11). Smith suggests that observing a fictional sentimental hero or heroine’s response to an occasion for sympathy, such as suffering or beauty, and the narrative reward of that appropriate behavior, or punishment of inappropriate behavior, enabled the
have uncovered the ways authors narrate the spectacle of suffering to provoke sympathy in characters and readers alike, and then use that sympathetic response to cement national identity or reshape social policies. However, attention to this spectacle, this scene of sympathy, has obscured the role of the secondary heroine. In both British and American Romantic novels, the heroine of sensibility embodies national ideals that the ideal reader internalizes via sympathy. This narrative strategy connects the British and American literary traditions through the cult of sensibility. In contrast, the secondary heroine’s lack of sensibility limits readers’ sympathy for her character and thus, at least initially, for the alternative possibilities of nationhood and womanhood she represents.

Before turning to the secondary heroine, I want briefly to follow the trajectory of the primary heroine in the three novels (and three genres) I consider in this chapter. In the Gothic novel, the reader watches the heroine of sensibility appreciate the beauty of a piece of music or a picturesque scene and, through sympathy with her, learns to value that aesthetic. Such sentimental scenes often begin the Gothic novel, as we see in Ann Radcliffe’s *A Sicilian Romance* or in Charles Brockden Brown’s *Wieland*. In each novel, the central characters pursue their education in idyllic settings. Their education, which focuses on aesthetic refinement, produces the corresponding moral refinement of sensibility. This parallel echoes both the sentimental literature that precedes the Gothic and popular conduct books in encouraging readers to cultivate appropriate sensibility. The Gothic plot disrupts these scenes of sensibility, but we return to them once the reader to internalize sentimental ideals. In turn, the reader’s appropriate response to the representation of a scene of sympathy allows the reader to claim to possess sensibility. Thus, despite the decline of the “cult of sensibility,” theories of sympathy continued to impact the novel.

68 Thus, sympathy is inherently tied to questions of class identity and nationalism, issues also central to the resolution of the marriage plot in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novel.
Gothic mystery has been resolved. The Gothic plot, therefore, serves as both interruption and test for the heroine of sensibility, and she is rewarded by the restoration of order, implicit in the return to the pastoral, and by the resolution of the marriage plot in favor of the hero of sensibility who shares her aesthetic tastes and moral virtues.

In the nineteenth-century novel, as the discourse of sensibility falls out of favor, we see British and American authors incorporating heroines of sensibility to very different nationalist ends. In England, as we see in *Sense and Sensibility*, the narrator’s ironic distance from the marriage plots illuminates the excessive sensibility of the protagonists and calls into question the possibility of true sympathy. As Elizabeth Nollen has argued, Austen reworks Ann Radcliffe’s *A Sicilian Romance* and critiques the apparent privileging of sensibility in that novel as well the effect of such sentimental and Gothic excesses on women readers who, as Austen had demonstrated in *Northanger Abbey*, were only too happy to read gothic horrors of Italian castles into their own lives. By setting her novel in a very familiar English landscape, Austen offers a sort of test case that asks how the sensibility endorsed by the eighteenth-century novel fares in quotidian England. In *The Pioneers*, Cooper also finds himself in conflict between the novel of sensibility and the domestic novel. His heroine, Bess, is the heroine of sensibility who rightly appreciates the beauty of the American landscape and is able to respond appropriately to scenes of distress. However, Bess also establishes American domesticity through her management of Judge Temple’s house and his wayward subordinates and in her marriage to Oliver Edwards. In this way, Cooper establishes a new American sensibility able to face both the wilderness and the management of the hearth.
By writing a historical romance, Cooper is also clearly indebted to Sir Walter Scott. Scott’s Waverly novels first appeared in 1814, three years after the publication of *Sense and Sensibility* and nine years prior to *The Pioneers*. I will address the relationship between British and American historical romance in the next chapter. In this chapter, I focus on Cooper’s less-studied debt to Austen to understand the significance of the cult of sensibility to the development of the novel and the nation. In Radcliffe and Austen, the heroines are sisters, ensuring a common biological background; the difference between each heroine is one of sensibility. While Cooper insists that Louisa and Bess are different – both emotionally and biologically – Louisa’s social status is the key marker of difference. Cooper’s focus on the class identity of his heroines connects his version of the historical romance to Austen.

The secondary heroines I examine in this chapter – Emilia, Elinor and Louisa – receive little sympathy from their sister heroines of sensibility. Radcliffe and Cooper intentionally limit readers’ sympathy for these figures in order to consolidate national identity under the auspices of the heroine of sensibility, but in doing so reveal the ways

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69 Elizabeth Barnes’s *States of Sympathy* is particularly useful here. In *States of Sympathy*, Barnes suggests that early sentimental seduction novels and the domestic fiction of the 1850s are connected by a common preoccupation with sympathetic identification: “Whereas seduction fiction depicts the middle-class family as a closed system – a nuclear and potentially incestuous unit based on the affiliation of blood ties – the domestic story represents the family as a collection of shared values and emotional experiences” (15). Cooper rewrites Radcliffe and Austen’s sisters into friends to ensure that Louisa is, in effect, always already forgotten – exterior to the family unit of Templeton.

70 Race is, of course, also a central issue in *The Pioneers*. Cooper locates the threat of miscegenation in his male characters, especially Oliver. Oliver’s manifestations of an appropriate sensibility – his hand resting naturally on the piano, for example – assure Bess and the reader that the apparent markers of racial identity (his name and knowledge of their language, his time with Natty and Indian John) must be misleading. Cooper’s conclusion not only erases the threat of miscegenation, but it reveals that Oliver is the rightful heir of Templeton, reinstating the importance of primogeniture in legitimating the new nation’s claim to the American landscape.
that sensibility masks the link between money and matrimony. While Radcliffe and Cooper deploy very similar strategies of “forgetting” in the undomesticated landscapes of the Gothic and the American frontier, Austen reveals the limits of sensibility by giving narrative weight to pragmatic Elinor as well as to the more effusive Marianne. In Austen’s novel, the reader is encouraged to have sympathy for Elinor at least in part because Marianne and the other figures of sensibility do not. In reimagining the British domestic within the borders of home, Austen reffigures the marriage plot to value the quotidian. Austen occupies a pivotal point in my argument: a point where British and American traditions divide. Austen’s valorization of the domestic is often located as a point of origin for the British realist novel. In the American tradition, Cooper responds to Austen by once more forgetting the secondary heroine in order to shore up the nationalist project of the historical romance.

**Domestic Sense and Italian Sensibility in *A Sicilian Romance***

Whether with respect or derision, the nineteenth century looked back to “Mrs. Radcliffe,” or “Mother Radcliffe,” as Keats called her, as the exemplary author of the Gothic novel. It has become a critical commonplace to name Radcliffe the founder of a form of “female Gothic,” though the scope of definitions of this term is as dizzying as the landscapes of her novels. Kate Ellis succinctly suggests that the term arises “to distinguish it from other fear-producing narratives in which a rescued heroine is not foregrounded” (“Ann Radcliffe,” 161); Fred Botting claims they were “associated with femininity and identified as products of female writers and for the undiscriminating

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71 This is, as I will illustrate in the next section, complicated by the location of Radcliffe’s novel in Sicily.  
72 See, for example, George Levine, who suggests in *The Realistic Imagination*: “Realism got its second full start in the English novel (after Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding) in the work of Jane Austen” (35).
consumption of female readers” (190). These two examples encapsulate the critical discussions of the “female Gothic”: one camp claiming that the valorization of the interiority and/or subjectivity of the female heroine is its defining trait, and the other privileging the relationship between female author and an (assumed) female audience. Finally, E.J. Clery traces the origin of the phrase back to Ellen Moers in Literary Women, suggesting that Moers coined the term “in order to reveal a tradition of women’s writing, an alternative canon; by it, she meant simply ‘the work that women have done in the literary mode that, since the eighteenth century, we have called the Gothic’” (qtd. in Clery, “Ann Radcliffe,” 203). Clery rightly continues to question the accumulated connotations now surrounding Moer’s coinage in order to raise the central question of her argument: “Why a heroine?” (203). The question raised by A Sicilian Romance, however, is why two?

Traditionally these sisters, Emilia and Julia, have been read as representations of sense and sensibility, with Emilia’s “sense” quickly dismissed to focus on the education of Julia’s sensibility. Though Julia certainly takes on the status of primary heroine, Emilia is not neatly killed off, imprisoned or exiled. Instead, her story surfaces at several points to punctuate Julia’s Gothic adventures with an alternative narrative of domestic confinement and bereavement. In the conventional Gothic novel, the heroine survives her adventure to be married to the hero; Emilia has no adventure and survives the novel

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74 Literally, in Elizabeth Nollen’s essay, which claims that Julia and Emilia served as a model for the Dashwood sisters of Austen’s Sense and Sensibility. Valerie Clemens and Brigitta Berglund also claim that Emilia contrasts Julia’s sensibility.
unmarried and with apparently no inclination to be married. Radcliffe’s insistence on Emilia’s return suggests that the restoration of order is not complete once the Gothic is explained and the hero and heroine reunited. While the Gothic now has an explanation, Emilia’s confinement in the Castle Mazzini does not. By encouraging readers to draw comparisons between their own domestic confinement and Emilia’s while suggesting the Gothic nature of that confinement, Radcliffe raises the possibility that the Gothic is not only in Sicily, but also at home.

The novel’s exotic setting, Sir Walter Scott noted in his *Lives of the Novelists*, “give[s] probability to events which could not, without great violation of truth, be represented as having taken place in England” (qtd. in Mighall, xvi). Scholars of the Gothic novel have not shared Scott’s confidence in the difference between Sicily and England. Indeed, critics have been apt to look for ways in which Sicily or the other Southern European nations that so frequently serve as the backdrop for these novels function as a dark mirror for English anxieties. Robert Mighall complicates this reading by examining depictions of Europe in popular eighteenth-century British travel narratives. He notes that, for the traveler, “Encountering Catholicism meant traveling back in time, and seeing the great work of the Reformation undone” (18). Thus, Mighall argues, in Radcliffe’s novels, the heroine of sensibility faces the Gothic horrors of sixteenth-century Italy as a way of celebrating the virtues of progressive, liberal, Protestant England in opposition to the anachronistic, undemocratic, Catholic Italy travelers encountered in the eighteenth century. Certainly, Radcliffe had never been to

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75 Even Kate Ellis’ otherwise quite excellent reading of *A Sicilian Romance* in *The Contested Castle* ignores Emilia’s role in the novel. (103-107)
Sicily; the marvelous caverns, cliffs and castles of *A Sicilian Romance* are entirely fabricated or culled from popular travel narratives. However, attention to the plight of Julia as a means of establishing the nationalist implications of the Gothic has obscured the function of the Sicilian landscape, and has ignored the implications of Emilia’s narrative.

The Sicilian island – enclosed and inescapable – mirrors the plot of the novel. Despite numerous red herrings, Julia and readers repeatedly experience the uncanny; the tempest that casts Julia back on the shores of Sicily also throws readers back into the inescapable plot of the novel. The narrative gives us every reason to expect Julia and Ferdinand’s attempt to leave Sicily will be successful: “When the dawn appeared, Julia returned to the deck and viewed with a sigh of unaccountable regret, the receding coast of Sicily. But she observed, with high admiration, the light gradually spreading through the atmosphere, darting a feeble ray over the surface of the waters, which rolled in solemn soundings upon the distant shores” (151). The language prepares the reader to expect a new beginning for Julia and her brother, and Radcliffe toys with the reader by dwelling on the “coup d’oeil, striking and sublime” (152), only to eventually and suddenly introduce an unexpected tempest.

The tempest, like the dawn, is another literary convention. Typically, the tempest drives the ship from the safe confines of the charted course to an uncharted desolate location. Radcliffe tempts us to predict this outcome for her heroine and hero: “They beheld a wild rocky shore, whose cliffs appeared inaccessible, and which seemed to

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76 It is possible that Radcliffe had read some travel literature, such as Henry Swinburne’s *Travels in the Two Sicilies*; Milbank suggests that Radcliffe’s landscapes are heavily indebted to the paintings of Salvator Rosa. See also Clara F. McIntyre, *Ann Radcliffe in Relation to Her Times.*
afford little possibility of landing. A landing, however, was at last affected; and the
sailors, after much search, discovered a kind of pathway cut in the rock, which they all
ascended in safety” (153). 77 Radcliffe holds out another possibility of a new sort of fresh
beginning for Julia and Ferdinand, only to retract this offer again almost immediately,
first in the characters minds (“they imagined they were on the shores of Sicily” [153]),
then in narrative confirmation: “They had travelled near half a league, when the savage
features of the country began to soften, and gradually changed to the picturesque beauty
of the Sicilian scenery” (154). This sort of constant narrative violation contradicts the
predictability of the gothic that Diane Hoeveler has claimed “was particularly attractive
during the late eighteenth century because it reified a lost world that was somehow not
precisely definable” (65). Indeed, this narrative violation, though it rather famously
disappointed Coleridge and Sir Walter Scott, was also a source of praise for Radcliffe’s
novels. 78 In Radcliffe, this narrative violation operates on two interconnected levels: the
level of landscape and the level of plot. Julia is repeatedly unable to escape Sicily
because she has not yet discovered her imprisoned mother, the real source of the
apparently supernatural light from an uninhabited portion of the castle. By constantly
providing a rational explanation for her supernatural events, it has been argued, Radcliffe
educates her heroine and her readers’ sensibilities, teaching them to rely on their reason

77 Hippolitus will eventually succeed Ferdinand as hero, but, at present, Ferdinand is the hero of the tale. However, Toni Wein reads Ferdinand as the hero in British Identities, Heroic Nationalism, and the Gothic Novel, 1764-1824.
78 Scott complained “that when ‘all the circumstances of her narrative, however mysterious, and apparently superhuman,’ are explained away ‘on natural principles, . . . disappointment and displeasure’ too often follow” (Ellis, “Ann Radcliffe,” 166).
instead. However, Radcliffe not only “disappoints” us by revealing the rational behind the supernatural, she disappoints almost all of our readerly expectations, in effect refuting the rational reader’s attempt to relegate the plot of the novel to expected conventions. If the novel teaches Julia, and through Julia, us, that the mysterious light has a perfectly rational explanation, what the novel teaches us, but not Julia, is that we should not expect this novel to fall into conventional patterns so easily. By returning periodically to Emilia’s confinement, Radcliffe violates her own narrative pattern and raises the possibility that, for readers, Emilia, and not her mother, is the Gothic mystery that must be discovered at the heart of the Castle Mazzini.

The novel concludes by falling into the greatest of all possible literary conventions, the marriage plot, but I would argue that by establishing a pattern of narrative violation throughout the course of her novel, Radcliffe teaches readers to be disappointed in the tidy ending by revealing its constructedness. In turn, our dissatisfaction with the conclusion of the novel, our awareness that something is not quite right here, encourages readers to look for the rational explanation, the making-right, that Radcliffe has always offered. As Claire Kahane has convincingly argued:

This disjunction between the Gothic experience and the novel’s conclusion illustrates a pervasive ambivalence for the female reader in the Gothic paradigm. . . Thus as in *Udolpho* and *Jane Eyre*, while the heroine ultimately moves into a

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79 This has become such a critical commonplace it seems almost unnecessary to offer sources, but, for the sake of illustration: see, for example: Kate Ellis, “Ann Radcliffe and the Perils of Catholicism” where she distinguishes between Catholic superstition opposed to pious sensibility: E.J. Clery reads this pedagogy in Marxist terms as enabling the reader to indulge in a consuming “passion that is economically desirable but morally problematic; happily...sublimated by the same means, in sympathetic identification with the virtuous and most immaterial heroine” (“Ann Radcliffe,” 212). More straightforwardly, see Fred Botting, “Dracula, Romance and Radcliffean Gothic”; Scott Mackenzie, “Ann Radcliffe’s Gothic Narrative and the Readers at Home,” John Stoler “Having her Cake and Eating it Too,” James Watt’s *Contesting the Gothic* and Michael Gamer’s *Romanticism and the Gothic*.

80 If you can call the discovery of your presumed-dead, long-imprisoned mother a “rational” explanation.
space that she seemingly controls, that control is illusory, based as it is on social withdrawal and psychological repression, on an ultimate submission to patriarchal constructs of the feminine.[...]Both conclusions excise the Gothic terrors, idealizing the mother and the heroines as well. Yet beneath the pedestal lies an abyss; at the Gothic center of the novels, a fearsome figure in the mirror still remains, waiting to be acknowledged. (340)

Kahane sees the heroine’s confrontation with the mother as the dark center of the Gothic novel from which the heroine (and the reader) are “saved” by repression and a return to the pastoral/patriarchy at the conclusion of the novel. In the case of Julia in particular, her many attempts at escape lead her back to her true point of origin – her mother. Julia appears to be doomed to a fate similar to her mother’s, thus perpetuating the repetitious cycle of doubles and traps characteristic of this novel. In keeping with Kahane’s argument, it is possible to read Julia’s inability to escape from Sicily as a narrative device forcing her further inward towards the confrontation with her mother. However, despite appearances, *A Sicilian Romance* does not end by repressing the Gothic danger Julia had faced and ushering the hero and heroine into a comfortable pastoral landscape. Instead, the novel insists on the return of the repressed through both landscape and the secondary heroine.

We leave Julia at the close of chapter fourteen, hiding from the Marquis with no sign of escape. Her eventual escape with her mother, aided by Hippolitus, is destined to fail in precisely the same manner as her first attempt with Ferdinand. Julia’s encounter with her mother has not made it possible for her to escape Sicily. However, the discovery of Julia’s mother does change the narrative practices of the novel: the story of their escape and attempt to flee to Italy is told in the past tense, as all of the characters are seated around a happy villa fireside. Secure in the outcome for Julia – a happy reunion –
the Gothic events of the story are made harmless and almost inconsequential. Indeed, our narrator does not indulge in the descriptions that have heretofore characterized the novel. In contrast to the lengthy description of Julia’s discovery of her mother, their reunion with Hippolitus is described as follows: “No color of language can paint the scene which followed; it is sufficient to say that the whole party agreed to quit the cell at the return of night” (195). Readers have followed Julia through all of the picturesque scenery of Sicily; now their journey to Palermo is condensed: “Having escaped from thence they proceeded to a neighboring village, where horses were procured to carry them towards Palermo. Here, after a tedious journey, they arrived, in the design of embarking for Italy” (197). The storm which (inevitably!) strikes their small vessel is contained in one sentence: “They soon had reason to repent their temerity; for the vessel had not been long at sea when the storm arose, which threw them back upon the shores of Sicily, and brought them to the lighthouse, where they were discovered by Ferdinand” (198). Compared to the tempest described earlier in the novel, the transformation in Radcliffe’s narrative tone is amazing. Yet although the narrator’s tone and manner of description appears to indicate that the narrative is headed towards resolution, the tempest, operating as a sort of deus ex machina, returns the characters to the shores of Sicily to fetch Emilia from the Castle Mazzini and reminds readers that they have forgotten Emilia for the majority of this tale.

Once Ferdinand and his family (and readers) remember Emilia, they remove from the Gothic castle in Sicily to Naples. In Naples, which has come to represent order and reason in contrast to the lawless Sicilian landscape, the characters can meet their happy
ends, which seem to have been merely interrupted by the events at the castle Mazzini. It is worth remembering, however, that Hippolitus, in the opening pages of the novel, is distinguished from other natives of Naples: “He had sublimity of thought, which taught him to despise the voluptuous vices of the Neapolitans, and led him to higher pursuits” (11). Thus, although Naples is the site of order in that it restores lands to their rightful owners and neatly disposes of our central characters, it also contains Gothic possibilities, albeit sublimated. For the careful reader, the return to Naples will be uncanny – the “voluptuous vices of the Neapolitans” remind us of the vices of the Marquis and Maria in the Castle Mazzini. These vices persist in the Neapolitan landscape, even if they have been exiled from the family by the death of the Marquis and his second wife and further eradicated by the remove from Sicily.

These Gothic possibilities are also evident in the almost untold story of Emilia. Once the family has “settled their future plans,” Ferdinand “hastened to the castle of Mazzini to fetch Emilia, and to give orders for the removal of his household to his palace at Naples, where he designed to fix his future residence. The distress of Emilia, whom he found recovered from her indisposition, yielded to joy and wonder, when she heard of the existence of her mother, and the safety of her sister” (198). The “distress of Emilia” is interrupted by the clause “whom he found recovered from her indisposition.” Some might claim this is simply Radcliffe tying up loose ends; indeed, it might appear that Radcliffe has suddenly remembered that Emilia was left “confined to her bed by a dangerous illness” (193) after the deaths of the Marquis and Maria, but this is consistent with Radcliffe’s treatment of Emilia throughout the novel.
Emilia is gradually left out of the plot from the moment Julia sees Hippolitus. The morning after the ball, the narrator tells us “Julia found it impossible to support a conversation with Emilia, whose observations interrupting the course of her thoughts, became uninteresting and tiresome” (21). The introduction of “the Gothic” to the novel, in the form of the mysterious lights and sounds from the uninhabited portion of the castle, serves as much to throw Julia and Emilia back together, at least initially, as it does to ultimately unite Julia and Hippolitus. It is not the mysterious chambers of the castle, but rather the marquis’ decision that Julia should marry the Duke de Luovo that once again separates Julia and Emilia. Whether the suitor is the appealing Hippolitus or the vile Duke de Luovo, the effect of the marriage plot on Emilia and Julia is the same: separation.81 Julia plots her escape with Ferdinand and Hippolitus and without Emilia or Madame de Menon: “A sentiment of generosity justified her in the reserve she preserved to Emilia and Madame de Menon, whose faithfulness and attachment she could not doubt, but whom she disdained to involve in the disgrace that must fall upon them, should their knowledge of her flight be discovered” (65). Julia does, as we later discover, leave Emilia a letter. Radcliffe is at pains to describe Emilia’s reaction to the letter, and the reaction of the Marquis and Marchioness: “The letter, when it was given to Emilia, excited emotions which she found it impossible to disguise, but which did not, however, protect her from a suspicion that she was concerned in the transaction, her knowledge of which this letter appeared intended to conceal” (72). Thus Julia’s “sentiment of generosity” is contradicted by her sentimental desire to bid adieu to Emilia, and her

81 See also Elinor in Sense and Sensibility, who must keep Edward and Lucy’s engagement secret from Marianne; also Elizabeth and Louisa – Elizabeth’s jealousy separates her and Louisa.
exclusion of Emilia from the plot is ineffective in excluding Emilia from suspicion. We would expect to hear more of the effects of this suspicion, especially from a figure like the Marquis, but Radcliffe drops Emilia out once again, and sends her other characters out to scour the countryside.

Emilia does not return to the narrative until the end of the first volume, when Madame de Menon’s accidental discovery of the Marchioness’s intrigue forces her to leave the castle. Unlike Julia, who abandons friend and family without a word, Emilia’s distress at Madame de Menon’s departure is markedly vocal: “In madame she lost her only friend; and she too well understood the value of that friend, to see her depart without feeling and expressing the deepest distress” (102). This vocal distress is valorized by our narrator, who commends madame’s and Emilia’s grief at parting: “They left each other with a mutual sorrow, which did honor to their hearts” (103). By valorizing “mutual sorrow” and the expression of feeling, Radcliffe quietly rebukes Julia’s selfish sentimentality that prioritizes her own marital happiness over female friendships. Emilia’s narrative, when it surfaces, prevents readers from fully identifying with Julia’s narrative by making visible what Julia represses: the toll sensibility takes on other characters.

At the close of the novel, our narrator recounts the fate of each of the characters, beginning with the Marchioness, followed by Hippolitus and Julia, Ferdinand, Madame de Menon, and lastly Emilia, whose future is elided with that of the Marchioness: “Emilia, wholly attached to her family, continued to reside with the Marchioness, who saw her race renewed in the children of Hippolitus and Julia. Thus surrounded by her

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children and friends, and engaged in forming the minds of the infant generation, she seemed to forget that she had ever been otherwise than happy” (199). The text only definitively states that Emilia is “wholly attached to her family,” but the pairing of Emilia and the Marchioness is suggestive. Although this pairing might appear to conflate Emilia’s imprisonment with that of the Marchioness, there is a crucial difference: the Marchioness married the Marquis; Emilia has never been married. By having Emilia choose to remain with her family, unmarried, Radcliffe authors and authorizes an alternative to marriage, but perhaps more importantly, reveals the perilous position of women. Choosing a bad husband, such as the Marquis, or choosing no husband, as Emilia does, has the same effect: imprisonment.

Though Emilia, like her mother, may have “seemed to forget that she had ever been otherwise than happy” (199), by concluding the manuscript annals with this line Radcliffe reminds us that Emilia had indeed been “otherwise than happy” and points us back into the text. But where is the record of Emilia’s unhappiness? Where has she been for the last hundred pages? Emilia thus becomes a Gothic mystery and in the untold tale of her imprisonment within the Castle Mazzini the reader might infer instead a domestic double of Madame de Menon and Julia’s adventures. All we are told is that “the castle Mazzini, which had been the theatre of a dreadful catastrophe; and whose scenes would have revived in the minds of the chief personages connected with it, painful and shocking reflections – was abandoned” (198). Emilia is the chief personage connected with the castle Mazzini, having spent the bulk of the novel within its ramparts. If Julia is
perpetually cast back “upon the shores of Sicily,” Emilia is kept within the confines of
the castle without hope of rescue and subject to Ferdinand’s “fetching” her.

The barely-narrated story of Emilia’s imprisonment is compelling if we remember
that Emilia had never been impatient to leave the confines of the Castle Mazzini, as is
made evident by her and Julia’s strikingly different reactions to the approaching festival:

Julia, who, in the distance, had considered the splendid gaieties of life with
tranquility, now lingered with impatient hope through the moments which
withheld her from their enjoyments. Emilia, whose feelings were less lively, and
whose imagination was less powerful, beheld the approaching festival with calm
consideration, and almost regretted the interruption of those tranquil pleasures,
which she knew to be more congenial with her powers and disposition. (15)

Emilia’s contentment with her tranquil retirement is only troubled by the disappearance
of those female friends and relatives whose company she enjoys. Julia’s entry into “the
world” through her attachment to Hippolitus exiles her from Emilia, and, at least for the
first volume of the novel, from Madame de Menon. This exile begins long before Julia’s
escape, when her preoccupation with Hippolitus renders Emilia’s conversation
“uninteresting and tiresome” (21).

By entering “the world” through heterosexual desire, Julia subjects herself to
competing authorities: Hippolitus and her brother, Padre Abate, as well as the Marquis
and Duke. In contrast, Emilia remains subject to her father’s authority, but suffers
because of the preoccupation of the household with the impending threat of Julia’s
marriage, whether to Hippolitus or to the Duke. In the novel, Radcliffe describes two
scenes as “known only to those who have experienced a similar situation”: the first is
Emilia’s “anguish” (103), at the departure of Julia and then Madame de Menon; the
second is “the strangely mingled emotions of joy and terror that agitated Hippolitus”
(164), upon the rediscovery of Julia in the caverns of the banditti. Clearly the gothic excess of the latter makes it unlikely that any reader would identify with Hippolitus; moreover, that Radcliffe’s readers were predominately middle-class women makes their identification with a young Neapolitan aristocrat even more suspect. Emilia’s domestic confinement, on the other hand, would echo their own, and they would certainly be sensible to her pain at the loss of her female friends.

Thus Julia’s Gothic adventures illustrate the perils and the inescapability of not only the Sicilian landscape but the tandem impossibility of escape from the competing patriarchal authorities of the father, whether embodied in the aristocratic Duke, the Catholic Church (certainly already suspicious to a Protestant like Ann Radcliffe), or the literal paternal figure.\textsuperscript{82} However, Emilia’s untold story, her confinement in the Castle Mazzini, which despite its Gothic secrets must also be described as her home, allowed the readers of Radcliffe’s novels a space in which to realize their own English identity within the novel, both in their complicity with the Gothic structures that nearly killed the Marchioness, whom Emilia is said to be so much like, but also in the difficulty of completely abandoning those structures. For readers of \textit{A Sicilian Romance}, the forgotten heroine’s return, like the return to Naples, is a return of the repressed. While readers may wish to forget Emilia, as Julia does, to do so requires that they repress the narrative of her confinement. Emilia’s return reminds readers that the dangers apparently surmounted in Sicily are not so safely distant from their own shores.

\textsuperscript{82} Although Julia does escape from the church and from her father, Ferdinand assumes the head of the household. Additionally, as Toni Weir has argued, Ferdinand’s adoption of military dress consolidates his virility as the hero. Tellingly, Weir does not read Hippolitus as the hero of \textit{A Sicilian Romance}, although Weir does make arguments concerning feminized heroes at other points in the book.
A New British Domestic: *Sense and Sensibility*

In *Sense and Sensibility*, the frequent cases of mistaken identity that drive the plot, the incorporation of the picturesque and the sublime, and, of course, the silences and secrets that estrange our characters from each other are all reminiscent of the Gothic. Most readings of Austen limit her response to the Gothic to a discussion of her early novel, *Northanger Abbey*. The Gothic elements of *Northanger* are contained by Henry Tilney: it is Henry who first suggests to Catherine the Gothic possibilities of the Abbey, and Henry who undoes the Gothic spell by asking: “Remember that we are English, that we are Christians. Consult your own understanding, your own sense of the probable, your own observation of what is passing around you. . . . Dearest Miss Morland, what ideas have you been admitting?” (136). By using Henry to contain the Gothic possibilities Catherine imagines, Austen ensures that their marriage provides the kind of rational explanation Radcliffe offered to her readers.

*Sense and Sensibility* opens with the exile of the women from their home, Norland, by the conditions of their father’s will. In effect a social-realist parody of the conventional Gothic cruel father who drives his daughter beyond the pale, the unintentional cruelty of Mr. Dashwood sends his daughters and wife outside of the domestic. The world they encounter is not filled with banditti or inescapable caverns, but it is equally challenging, as they attempt to negotiate the British economic system. As women in the eighteenth century, this system would have been entirely unfamiliar to

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83 See, for example, Judith Wilt’s *Ghost of the Gothic: Austen, Eliot, Lawrence*. Wilt focuses on *Northanger* and *Emma*, but barely addresses *Sense and Sensibility*.

84 Although Captain Tilney’s subsequent actions suggest that he is not much better than a Gothic villain, Henry once again intervenes by proposing to Catherine anyway, locating the Gothic in the past.
them. Austen juxtaposes the heroine of sense, Elinor, with the heroine of sensibility, Marianne, to discipline readers into emotional and fiscal management. Critics have long argued over the respective status of these two heroines; I argue that Marianne is the primary heroine, and Elinor is the secondary heroine.\(^8^5\) In doing so, however, I do not mean to suggest that Elinor is less significant than Marianne. Instead, I argue that Elinor lines up with the category of the “forgotten heroine,” but that Austen’s project is to insist that we remember her.

In the eighteenth century, the manifestation of proper sensibility was a marker of class status. However, the later appropriation of the discourse of sensibility by the middle class devalued the performance of sensibility. Although Marianne’s spectacle of sensibility gets readers’ attention and often our sympathy, it is Elinor’s more difficult and often less interesting attempt to negotiate the English class system in search of financial security that Austen trains her readers to appreciate.\(^8^6\) In this respect, Austen builds on Emilia’s domestic confinement in *A Sicilian Romance*. Emilia values female friendship,

\(^8^5\) There are two major critical camps: pro-Elinor and pro-Marianne. (However, within these critical camps is a strong tendency to insist that Austen troubles a simple division between sense and sensibility, or between Elinor and Marianne.) For pro-Elinor readings, see: James Thompson, Marilyn Butler, Stuart Tave, and Barbara Seeber. See also Alistair Duckworth and Mary Poovey. For pro-Marianne readings, see: Angela Leighton, Julie Shaffer, and Karl Kroeber. Laura Goodlad explicitly connects Austen to both the French Revolution and English nationalism: “Austen’s early novel contrasts Elinor’s ideal Englishness, a synthesis of ‘sense’ and ‘sensibility’ with Marianne’s immoderate Frenchness” (60). Other readings of the novel, including Poovey, Kroeber, Butler, and Leighton, have argued that Elinor’s reserve is Augustan, Classical, or in other ways outdated and is contrasted with Marianne’s more modern Romantic sensibility. I argue, instead, that Marianne’s sensibility is depicted as outdated, whereas Elinor’s “sense” is progressive and tied to economics, rather than aesthetics.

\(^8^6\) Scholars of this novel have addressed, rather extensively, the strange paradox that readers are sympathetic to Marianne, even though Austen appears to punish her excessive sensibility in the novel’s conclusion. As Tony Tanner has noted: “As in behavior, so in language, Marianne gives an added dimension of warmth and vitality to the world of the book and Jane Austen was well aware of it” (96). Where Tanner and others struggle is in reconciling Marianne’s sympathetic character with Austen’s treatment of Marianne in the conclusion. I argue that this struggle comes from a critical forgetting of Elinor, who is alternately dismissed as an “overpowerful ideology that has limited value and that therefore deserves deauthorization” (Shaffer, 143), or as “the bearer of a more or less fully developed historical and national consciousness” (Goodlad, 65).
but is financially dependent on her father. By choosing not to marry, she necessarily chooses domestic isolation until the family is reconfigured in Naples. The death of the father at the start of *Sense and Sensibility* leaves the Dashwood women without any financial resources: they cannot remain at home. By devaluing Marianne’s encomiums on the English landscape in favor of Elinor’s pragmatic approach to economics, Austen establishes a new British domestic. This new domestic recognizes that the sensibility of the Dashwood girls does not ensure happiness, as it might in one of Marianne’s novels; instead, the Dashwoods are dependent on the sympathy of their relations, their own ability to economize and, lastly, on the possibility of marrying well. In short, the Dashwood women need money, and the juxtaposition of Elinor and Marianne is in some ways a competition to determine the best way to get it. This competition reveals the correlation between economic and emotional management.

The Dashwood women are in financial need, but support from their relations is highly unlikely. John’s discussion with Fanny concerning the interpretation of his father’s last wish that he would “assist his widow and daughters” (6) reveals their want of true sympathy. Their overmanagement of financial resources – in short, their greed – makes them unsympathetic to the Dashwoods. John and Fanny are more attentive to their own comfort, and imagine how they would feel if they were in place of the Dashwoods quite literally, by moving into Norland and lamenting the loss of the original linen and china. In their limited understanding of the economic plight of Mrs. Dashwood and her

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87 See Tara Ghoshal Wallace’s article, “*Sense and Sensibility* and the Problem of Feminine Authority,” for an interesting reading of Fanny, and other monstrous women in Austen. Wallace suggests that Elinor is actually aligned with authoritative figures like Fanny and Mrs. Ferrars and is emblematic of Austen’s own authorial anxieties.
daughters, they imagine them either well-married, or able to shift on the inheritance they already have. In contrast, Austen places the Middletons, whose excessive hospitality also discomfits the Dashwoods. It is notable that their hospitality not only consists of financial support through the low rent at Barton cottage, the frequent invitations to dinner, and the journey to town, but also extends to the preoccupation of Sir John and Mrs. Jennings with the intimate details of the social lives of the Dashwood sisters. Thus even financial generosity is not necessarily equivalent with true sympathy, a requisite for proper sensibility. Their ambition to see the girls married results in a great many awkward misunderstandings concerning the three primary suitors: Willoughby, Colonel Brandon, and Edward Ferrars.

The three suitors, in turn, offer different representations of wealth and economy as they operate in England; the financial practices of Austen’s men are an echo of their true sensibilities. Willoughby’s excessive spending and want of management not only results in debt but also in his dishonorable relationship with Eliza. Willoughby is, we discover, not what he seems, and thus true sympathy with Marianne is impossible. Colonel Brandon’s history is determined by both wealth and sensibility: his love for Eliza was obstructed by his parents’ determination to wed her to his older brother for the sake of uniting their family fortunes. Brandon’s careful management of his own wealth and his generosity to Edward are reflections of his appropriate sympathy for others and management of his own emotions. Although Brandon styles himself a “poor narrator,” he knows when it is appropriate to divulge information, and when it is best to conceal what one feels. In contrast, Edward’s financial security as a gentleman, unallied to any
sort of profession, leaves him adrift and susceptible to the superficial charms of Lucy Steele.\textsuperscript{88} Only after Edward is tethered to Lucy by their engagement does he begin to understand his failure of sensibility. His subsequent disinheriontance requires that Edward find a profession; his new responsibilities as pastor render him fit for the anti-Gothic new world of sense that Austen constructs as the English ideal. Austen does not imagine a world of independent women possessing rooms of their own, but instead suggests that economic and emotional management on the part of men \textit{and} women will secure domestic England.

The Dashwood women will achieve financial security through marriage, but they must first learn to economize for themselves. It is only after they have successfully negotiated domestic economy and sensibility that these heroines can identify and thus sympathize with the management of sensibility and wealth by their suitors. While the Gothic novel opposed the greed of the father to the sensibility of the daughter, Austen’s domestic novel requires that her heroines manage their money and their marriages (and understand the relationship between the two). The initial description of the sisters gives their reaction to their father’s death and the loss of their home: “[Marianne and Mrs. Dashwood] gave themselves up wholly to their sorrow, seeking increase of wretchedness in every reflection that could afford it, and resolved against ever admitting consolation in future. Elinor, too, was deeply afflicted; but still she could struggle, she could exert herself” (5). Already in this passage, we see Elinor’s grief channeled into the more

\textsuperscript{88} Lauren Goodlad argues: “Nevertheless, the greatest irony, as we shall see, is that Austen’s resort to the logic of Spivak’s ‘soul making’ project is less a defense against Marianne’s emancipatory politics, than against the increasing sway of Lucy’s bourgeois epistemology” (76). Although Lucy’s desire to know how much everything costs is clearly a dark echo of Elinor’s attempts to economize, it is Lucy’s corresponding over-management of her own sentimental economy that the novel condemns.
productive domestic duties of coping with the arrival of John and Fanny, whereas Marianne and Mrs. Dashwood indulge in excessive sensibility. Elinor’s “exertions” enable her to take charge of the family’s domestic economy, but they also govern her own sentimental economy.

Even before Elinor learns of Edward’s engagement to Lucy Steele, she does not openly display her feelings: “Without shutting herself up from her family, or leaving the house in determined solitude to avoid them, or lying awake the whole night to indulge meditation, Elinor found every day afforded her leisure enough to think of Edward” (90). The negative construction of this sentence invites comparison with Marianne, who would, of course, shut herself up, leave the house, or lie awake the whole night to think of Willoughby. By illustrating the negative consequences of Marianne’s excessive sensibility, Austen trains her reader away from the narrative of sensibility epitomized in the story of the two Elizas, and into an understanding of the British domestic, in which the real tragedy occurs, as George Eliot would later remark, in “the roar on the other side of silence.” Marianne’s disdain for the Colonel and preference for Willoughby and his sonnets mark her as descendant of the Gothic heroine of sensibility. However, as we have seen in the embedded narrative of the Elizas, such heroines no longer end happily. Elinor’s silence (although probably initially as disappointing to Austen’s readers as it is to Marianne) grants her desire, whereas Marianne’s multiple letters to Willoughby produce little effect. Marianne’s letters are manifestations of her sensibility, but Austen reveals that if an excess of wealth does not support that excess of emotion, it has no
effect. In Austen’s new domestic England, happiness is preserved, at least fictionally, for those capable of emotional management as well as fiscal responsibility.

In Willoughby’s dramatic night-time visit to Elinor, he offers an explanation for his actions, but he also demonstrates an understanding of Marianne’s sensibilities, even as he seems perhaps unable to live up to them: “Thunderbolts and daggers! – what a reproof would she have given me! -- her tastes, her opinions – I believe they are better known to me than my own, – and I am sure they are dearer” (285). Willoughby’s adoption of Marianne’s sensibilities renders him more sympathetic to the reader, and indeed, one suspects, is what attracted Marianne to him in the first place. However, his sudden appearance does not gain him access to Marianne, nor is it a forecast of lasting unhappiness for either Willoughby or Marianne. Instead the visit operates to resolve the reader’s sympathy with Willoughby and prepare the reader, and Marianne, to relinquish that first attachment for a second match.

By reforming her expectations from Gothic to domestic, Marianne is able to find some sort of contentment. Brandon’s connection to Willoughby through the two Elizas makes Marianne sympathetic to him, and out of that sympathy their attachment is formed. This sympathy is in contrast to Marianne’s pride in her “sensibility.” Whereas Marianne’s sensibility values her individual response to Norland or to Cowper, and finds sympathy with those who share her exact response, as Willoughby appears to, Marianne’s discovery of sympathy is not linked to appearance (Brandon is, after all, twice her age and fond of flannel waistcoats), but rather to Adam Smith’s understanding of sympathy: “As we have no immediate experience of what other men feel, we can form no idea of the
manner in which they are affected, but by conceiving what we ourselves should feel in
the like situation” (10-11). Marianne imagines herself in the place of each Eliza and
realizes that her sensibility is not individual and individuating, but dangerously common.
Through the first Eliza, Marianne becomes aware of the possibility of parental prejudice
to her lack of wealth; through the second, Marianne furthers the correlation between
wealth and sympathy: if one’s wealth is contingent on another, one’s sympathy must
follow. However, by imagining herself in the place of Eliza, Marianne is able to imagine
herself in Brandon’s care.

Marianne’s first moment of sympathetic identification is not with either Eliza, but
with Elinor. Marianne has sympathy for Elinor because Elinor is experiencing something
that Marianne has also experienced: the marriage of a former suitor. When their man-
servant informs the Dashwoods that Mr. Ferrars is married, Marianne’s reaction
illustrates that she has literally imagined herself in Elinor’s place, but in doing so
prevents others from sympathizing with Elinor:

Marianne gave a violent start, fixed her eyes upon Elinor, saw her turning pale,
and fell back in her chair in hysterics. Mrs. Dashwood, whose eyes, as she
answered the servants inquiry, had intuitively taken the same direction, was
shocked to perceive by Elinor’s countenance how much she really suffered, and in
a moment afterwards, alike distressed by Marianne’s situation, knew not on which
child to bestow her principal attention. (310)

Although Marianne’s “violent start” is solely occasioned by her concern for Elinor’s
feelings, it produces much the same effect as her previous effusions of sensibility – it gets
everyone’s attention. By the time Marianne has been attended to by her mother and the
maid, Elinor “had so far recovered the use of her reason and voice as to be just beginning
an inquiry of Thomas, as to the source of his intelligence” (310). Elinor’s suffering is
barely noticed by the characters within the narrative, as is made evident by Mrs. Dashwood’s shock at Elinor’s countenance. In maintaining this distance from her own suffering, and seeking always the benefit of others, Elinor resembles Austen’s narrator, whose ironic distance from narrative events disallows sympathy, or at the very least, reveals the ways in which sympathy functions within its own economy, whereby one must construct a narrative which will engage the sympathy of the listener. Marianne is never fully aware of the way a story is told; she instead responds to stories that appeal to her. Elinor initially uses silence to manage her emotional response to narratives (such as Lucy Steele’s account of her engagement to Edward), but eventually learns to tell her own story in order to manage Marianne’s emotions.

Elinor tells Marianne about Edward’s engagement twice. The first time, the narrator suppresses her account and tells us instead: “Her narration was clear and simple; and though it could not be given without emotion it was not accompanied by violent agitation, nor impetuous grief. – That belonged rather to the hearer, for Marianne listened with horror, and cried excessively. Elinor was to be the comforter of others in her own distresses, no less than in theirs” (227). Elinor’s narrative, intended to “suggest a hint of what was practicable to Marianne” (227) in the management of one’s sensibilities, only provokes Marianne’s sensibilities. Elinor must reconstruct her

89 Marilyn Butler has argued that Austen’s use of “free indirect speech” gives readers access to Elinor’s point of view, rather than Marianne’s (190). Similarly, Stuart Tave has claimed: “Sense and Sensibility is the story of Elinor Dashwood. The action of the novel is hers; it is not Marianne’s and it is not equally divided between the sisters; it is Elinor’s. The whole of Marianne’s story is included within Elinor’s: Marianne’s begins later and it ends earlier” (96). However, both of these readings overlook the ways in which Elinor’s narrative is packaged (so to speak) for Marianne’s consumption.
narrative to appeal to Marianne’s sensibilities. Her second narration, full of dashes and emotional confessions, finally moves Marianne to realize how selfish she has been in her own distresses. But perhaps Marianne goes too far in embracing “sense” – as the narrator tells us, she embarks on a rather excessive course of study, and in the end, marries Colonel Brandon out of pure sense: “With such a confederacy against her – with a knowledge so intimate of his goodness – with a conviction of his found attachment to herself, which at last, though long after it was observable to everybody else – burst on her – what could she do?” (333). Marianne’s new responsibilities, however, are still those of pre-industrial England. She and the Colonel have no profession except for the management of their estate and the village. It is significant that the narrator focuses not on Marianne’s happiness, but rather on the Colonel’s – describing Marianne as his “reward” that “consoled for every past affliction” (334) and thus coding their life together as outdated.

It is instead Elinor, who mediates sensibility with sense and who persists in her first very reasonable attachment to Edward, whom the narrative quietly endorses. Elinor and Edward’s residence in the parsonage at Delaford marks them as resolutely middle-class. Their very real concerns with household economy result from their similar economic situations. Each is unexpectedly disinherited: Elinor, by her father’s early death and the entailment of Norland; Edward, by his misstep with Lucy and the resultant

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90 Strangely, despite consistent critical attention to and praise of Austen’s use of language, critics have ignored this exchange between Elinor and Marianne. For discussions of Austen’s use of language, see Thompson, Tanner and Kroeber.

91 Laura Goodlad has interpreted Marianne’s status as “mistress” as revealing “the potential compilicities between domestic and imperial dominions” (76). But in 1811, the year of Sense and Sensibility’s publication, the British Empire had just lost a colony (America) and was about to enter the War of 1812. Rather than reading Marianne as emblematic of an ascendent imperialism, therefore, I argue that she is allied with an outdated feudal agrarian culture.
forfeiture of his “right of eldest son.” However, the novel discourages reliance on these antiquated legal mechanisms of acquiring property and wealth, and instead rewards Edward’s and Elinor’s characters, which earn them the living and Delaford and the grant of ten thousand pounds from Mrs. Ferrars. In doing so, Austen not only revises literary tastes from Gothic to domestic, but also envisions a new British domestic that is not bound by artificial economies of sympathy or the artificial economies of primogeniture.

Marianne’s marriage to the man in the flannel waistcoat is dissatisfying because it undoes the reader’s nostalgia for uncomplicated sentimental resolution. In this new domestic, for Marianne to find her sentimental equal she will have to look to an older man, an older generation. Elinor’s rather uninteresting marriage to Edward is in fact progressive. The seamy economic underbelly of the national romance is thus made explicit and renounced in favor of a sort of national realism. Austen directly confronts the vestiges of British aristocracy that the Gothic had located in the past and on the Continent and devalues the means by which they sustain power.

**Remembering the Rival: Louisa Grant**

Austen’s gentry and middle class represent a very narrow swath of the British class structure. In James Fenimore Cooper’s *The Pioneers*, the construction of American identity in the wake of revolution assembles a more socially diverse group of characters, but ultimately re-imposes the aristocracy as the best means of ordering the previously “composite order” of Templeton. This “composite order” governs the architectural style of Templeton, but is also an apt metaphor for the polyglot cast of characters Cooper assembles to constitute the settlement. However, the Dutch lawyers, French shopkeeper,
and Irish barmaid are auxiliary to the novel’s preoccupation with mapping a conventional marriage plot onto the novel American landscape. The marriage of Elizabeth and Oliver at the close of *The Pioneers* does, as many critics have argued, establish the ideological stakes of the new nation, while attempting to reconcile or erase alternative possibilities: Indian John dies, Natty heads west, and Edwards/Effingham’s complex ancestry seems to satisfy all of the quibbles over land ownership and law that have plagued Templeton.\(^92\) However, one alternative remains: Louisa Grant.

Critics have long dismissed Louisa Grant as a bland foil who renders Elizabeth, or Bess, more brilliant, but to dismiss Louisa requires that we ignore Cooper’s insistence on her presence in the text.\(^93\) At the close of the novel, when Oliver and Bess are walking towards the graves and planning the future of Templeton, and when, indeed, Louisa Grant is the last thing on readers’ minds, Bess divulges her plans: “Do you forget Louisa, and her father?” (448). In the exchange with Oliver that follows, their badinage over Louisa’s future frequently repeats that phrase: “you forget Louisa.” As Oliver and Bess debate, readers are reminded that they have, indeed, forgotten Louisa. Louisa’s exile at the close of the novel removes the last impediment to Oliver and Bess’s marriage – Bess’s rival – and reveals that Bess does, as she claims, “manage more deeply than you imagine, sir”

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\(^92\) Additionally, Natty has trained Oliver to be both a good shot and a conservationist. Elizabeth’s affection for and debt to Natty ensures that they both will abandon the “wasty ways” that had threatened the natural resources of Templeton. See also Janet Dean’s excellent article, “The Marriage Plot and National Myth in *The Pioneers,*” for a reading of Elizabeth as contested property.

\(^93\) See, for example, Joy Kasson: “Elizabeth Temple’s education shines more brightly when she is contrasted with simple Louisa Grant” (57); John Shechter: “In *The Pioneers,* references to ‘the delicacy of her sex’ and ‘natural feminine timidity’ almost always occur in connection with the thoroughly conventional Louisa Grant, to contrast her lack of imagination and her cowardice with the energy and courage of Elizabeth” (41); or Abby Werlock, for a similar reading.
By resigning the future of Templeton, and by extension, America, to Bess’s management, Cooper writes Louisa out of the novel and with her the alternative subjectivity she represents. In doing so, Cooper chooses the stable narratives of aristocratic primogeniture to consolidate the new nation even as he raises, if only to dismiss, the possibility of a meritocracy.

The first appearance of each heroine is significant in determining the relationship between the heroine and the possible direction of the nation: Louisa and Bess are each initially obscured from the reader’s gaze, but both become visible and audible when they resolve an awkward situation. When Bess and Judge Temple approach Templeton, Bess is buried beneath layers of garments. She remains silent during the quibbling over the deer, and her father disenfranchises her voice in that debate: “There is Aggy, he can’t vote, being a slave; and Bess is a minor – so I must even make the best of it” (24). However, she casts aside her cloak and her silence to tend to the young hunter, Oliver: “During this scene the female arose, and, regardless of the cold air, she threw back the hood which concealed her features, and now spoke, with great earnestness” (25). As Janet Dean has already noted, something of Bess’s character is revealed in this action: her sensibility to the young hunter’s dangerous wound overcomes her prudence in sheltering

94 Critics have been too quick to dismiss Louisa’s potential as Bess’s rival, as I will argue later. In this scene, after their marriage, Bess questions Oliver’s feelings towards Louisa: “fixing her eyes with a searching look on his countenance, where they met only the unsuspecting expression of manly regret” (449).

95 I use this term advisedly. I do not mean to suggest that Louisa is “better” than Bess – Louisa’s racism and timidity are very unappealing qualities. Rather, I argue that Bess’s class status is what enables her lack of fear (for Louisa’s racism is really a sort of fear, rather than a belief in the inferiority of the other). By writing Louisa out of the novel, Cooper affirms class hierarchies at the expense of any alternative system of order, including both the religious hierarchy suggested at times by Bess herself, Richard Jones, and Reverend Grant, but also a similar secular hierarchy that would privilege Louisa’s suffering as a mark of merit, rather than Bess’s wealth.
herself from the cold air. This early example typifies Bess’s behavior throughout the novel as she braves the elements of the American frontier – scaling the Vision, paddling in the canoe, walking unattended in the woods – as she says, “My father’s daughter fears nothing, sir” (188). Her temerity – attached to her status as heiress – is requisite for the frontier, where she must be willing and able to meet the challenges of the wilderness. Her self-identification – “my father’s daughter” – underscores the literal genealogy of this temerity. By deploying her status as heiress, Bess establishes her authority over the American landscape.

In contrast, the reader is introduced to Louisa at the first formal service held at the new church. The parishioners, accustomed to a rotating minister, do not know what the appropriate responses are in the Episcopalian service; they may, in fact, be somewhat suspicious of the service because of its ties to England. The narrator informs us that after the American Revolution, the Episcopalian church “languished” until American ministers could be ordained in England: “Pious and suitable divines were at length selected, and sent to the mother country, to receive that authority, which, it is understood, can only be transmitted directly from one to the other, and thus obtain, in order to preserve, that unity in their churches, which properly belonged to a people of the same nation” (102). The Episcopalian church, therefore, appears to function as a transatlantic bridge between England and America and suggests an alternative to nationalism, one that incorporates the English, the Americans and the Native Americans under the umbrella of Christianity. Cooper makes clear that the authority of the Episcopal divines is more tenuous than the authority of law, embodied in Judge Temple. While Judge Temple’s questionable legal
practices are always effective, Cooper’s history of the Episcopal Church in America, his
depiction of the first Episcopal service in Templeton, and Reverend Grant’s unsuccessful
attempt to perform the last rites for Indian John all depict the church as ineffective.

In the first depiction of the Episcopal Church, the minister’s daughter, Louisa, is
the only member of the congregation familiar with the correct responses and willing to
speak them out loud. Bess and Oliver, we later discover, have been raised in the city and
are familiar with the service, but neither is brave enough to speak alone. Bess cannot
speak until she hears Oliver join Louisa, and certainly her motivations are not as pure as
Louisa’s piety: it is only once Oliver tacitly rebukes her silence that she joins the prayer
to maintain his good opinion. The other people of Templeton, accustomed to a rotating
minister, do not know the proper responses for the Episcopal service. Richard Jones’s
attempt to impose one permanent church in Templeton is unsuccessful because the only
attendees familiar with the proper responses are those who have spent time in the city, as
opposed to the frontier. Although the church appears as an ordering structure in the new
colonies, alongside government and the law, it does not carry the authority of these other
structures of order: while Reverend Grant attempts to convert Native Americans, and
Louisa lives in fear of them, Bess’s marriage to Oliver at the conclusion erases the threat
of the many claims to Templeton through primogeniture, and exiles Louisa and her father
to Boston.

The ideological impact of the conclusion of the novel is so forceful that it is easy,
perhaps, to forget that Louisa’s attachment to Oliver is not entirely unfounded; in the
early chapters of the novel, Oliver’s attentions seem devoted to her: “Drawing her arm
through his own, he lifted his cap from his head, allowing the dark locks to flow in rich curls over his open brow, and walked by her side, with an air of conscious pride, as if inviting an examination of his inmost thoughts” (140). Solicitous of her comfort, Oliver saves Louisa from a falling branch: “the figure of Louisa, slowly yielding in her saddle; and but for his arm, she would have sunken to the earth” (240). By constantly placing Louisa in situations where she is dependent on Oliver, Cooper seems to forward a romance plot between them.

In contrast, Bess repeatedly refuses Oliver’s aid. Until she can ascertain his real identity, she will not be dependent on him in any way. Bess’s status as heiress makes it particularly important for her to keep her distance from this unknown quantity. Louisa, on the other hand, finds the various potential identities for Oliver – Native American, for example – troubling, but not troubling enough to prevent her attachment to him. Louisa’s insistence on seeing the good in Oliver overwhelms these other considerations, and highlights Bess’s distancing strategies. Bess sees the transformation of the American landscape; Louisa notices the transformation in Oliver. Bess sees a subject to sketch; Louisa sees how superior Oliver is to his companions. Bess may see the American landscape in its totality, but she does so because her class status requires her to see herself apart from the landscape and its inhabitants.

As the novel progresses, sympathy develops between Oliver and Bess, but Oliver is consistent in his attentions to both young women. After the incident with the panthers, Oliver inquires after Louisa’s health, provoking Bess’s jealousy. Whereas Louisa is constantly praising Oliver and requiring his aid, Bess’s frequent silences and disdain for
his attention mark her own affection. The paradox is that Cooper narrates Bess’s
silences as part of the romance plot, signposting for the reader that Bess’s feelings are
perhaps greater than she expresses and suggesting that silence is appropriate for
heiresses, especially when faced with so mysterious a character as Oliver Edwards. Bess
and Oliver’s most telling examples of sympathy occur in asides (such as when Bess
discovers Oliver speaks French), and their disclosure of mutual affection occurs behind
closed doors. The narrator, and therefore the reader, witness scenes of sensibility of
which the other characters remain unaware. Bess and Oliver’s shared sensibilities are
evident despite their attempts at secrecy: for example, Oliver’s hand rests naturally on the
piano, despite his hunting garb. Bess reads Oliver’s sensibilities as evidence of his true
identity, and only waits for more tangible confirmation of his worthiness. Cooper
foregrounds these scenes of sensibility to prepare readers for the revelation of Oliver’s
identity, but his narrator distances us from Louisa by limiting our perception of her to the
perspectives of the other characters. This narrative distance echoes Austen’s use of Mrs.
Jennings to relate Elinor’s marriage, and to similar effect. Louisa is made auxiliary to the
other characters, and particularly to Bess.

However, Cooper complicates the novel’s endorsement of Bess through
depictions of Bess’s jealousy. Bess’s jealousy reveals the merit of Louisa, and the extent
of Bess’s management. When Oliver expresses surprise at her desire to send Louisa
away, Bess questions his motivations: “fixing her eyes with a searching look on his
countenance, where they met only the unsuspecting expression of manly regret” (449).
Oliver passes her test, but Bess’s jealousy forces readers to question her motivations for
exiling Louisa at the end of the novel. Bess is right to be jealous, for Louisa is the only other woman in the Patent who is her equal; indeed Remarkable Pettibone, admittedly for selfish reasons, prefers Louisa to Bess: “Now, to my reckoning, Lowizy Grant is much more pritty behaved than Betsy Temple” (176). Bess herself acknowledges Louisa’s superiority, although her sincerity is questionable: “‘Nay, Louisa, humility carries you too far. The daughter of a minister of the church can have no superiors. Neither I nor Mr. Edwards is quite your equal, unless, ‘she added, again smiling, ‘he is in secret a king.’” (279). Rather than locating superiority in social status, Remarkable and Bess each assign an alternative form of value. Remarkable suggests that Louisa’s “pritty” behavior surpasses Bess’s temerity; Bess suggests that Louisa’s place in the Christian hierarchy, as the daughter of a minister, gives her a higher station than herself of Oliver, unless Oliver is “in secret a king.” Bess quickly changes the compliment to Louisa into a prying barb at Oliver’s secrecy, one that reveals her own anxieties about Oliver’s social status and national identity. Louisa’s social status can be located, but Oliver’s is a contradiction: his sensibilities suggest that he is from the same social class as Bess, but his attire and association with Natty and Indian John complicate Bess’s reading of his sensibilities. Oliver is also Young Eagle: both his Native American and English names prevent Bess from reading his social status because neither name provides a genealogy. Oliver is an assumed name, and Young Eagle is a name given to him by Indian John to mark his adoption: it is only at the close of the novel when Oliver’s true name is revealed that Bess can accept his proposal and his heritage.
In contrast, Louisa’s legible social status obscures her merit, especially in conversations between Oliver and Bess. It is easy to lose perspective of the “real” Louisa in the complex motivations behind all of these speeches, until Louisa speaks for herself:

> It is sometimes dangerous to be rich, Miss Temple; but you cannot know how hard it is to be very, very poor. . . . Ah! Miss Temple, you little understand the troubles of this life, I believe. My father has spent many years as a missionary, in the new countries, where his people were poor, and frequently we have been without bread; unable to buy, and ashamed to beg, because we would not disgrace his sacred calling. (305)

This almost untold story of Louisa’s past opens a gap in the history of Louisa narrated in the text. We have, of course, seen a glimpse of Louisa’s history in the opening pages of the novel, when Oliver first visits the Grants: “[Rev. Grant] was a widower, and that the innocent and timid maiden, who had been his companion, was the only survivor of six children. The knowledge of the dependence, which each of these meek christians had on each other, for happiness, threw an additional charm around the gentle, but kind attentions, which the daughter paid to the father” (141). Mr. Grant’s dependence on Louisa is underscored by his desire that she not spend too much time with the Temples, or his housekeeping will be neglected. Mr. Grant’s dependence on Louisa is contrasted with Bess’s refinement, and reminds us of the class disparity between them.

While the Louisa visible to Bess and Oliver lacks the polish of Bess’s education, wears garments inappropriate to the season, and is in general “timid” and “maidenly,” Louisa has known “the sick and the hungry” (305), the death of her siblings and the horrors of poverty. Louisa’s class position as minister’s daughter has not granted her the respect and superiority that Bess and Oliver imagine, but instead has insured nothing but suffering and hunger, as the Grants conscientiously attempt to maintain the same level of
subsistence as their parishioners. Bess’s status as “the heiress” may make her the more obvious choice for Oliver, but it has also preserved her from the suffering Louisa has endured. Bess deploys her status to justify a sort of exceptionalism: as “my father’s daughter” she may board a canoe or witness a turkey shoot without impinging on her maidenly delicacy. She assumes her position as mistress over Remarkable Pettibone by adopting the title Miss Temple and exiles Oliver from her walk with Louisa because she does not want to entertain “particular attentions” from someone whose family history is unknown. Bess’s apparent fearless independence is tempered by a rather Old World sense of social propriety and class distinctions. Louisa’s experiences of poverty and suffering complicate the novel’s attempt to dismiss her as unfit for the frontier: instead, it becomes clear that Louisa’s merit is overshadowed by her class identity. Cooper introduces the possibility of an alternative system of value, but forecloses it in favor of a conclusion that establishes the legal right of white Americans to the land through the very same strictures of primogeniture that Austen had called into question.

After her indirect rescue of Bess and Oliver, Louisa never reappears in the novel. However, she is discussed by Oliver and Bess, and narrated once by Cooper, during the strange comedy of Monsieur LeQuoi’s proposal. Janet Dean has read these proposals as “the connection between marriage and nationhood,” arguing that Elizabeth, should she accept Monsieur LeQuoi, would become French, and relinquish her property in Templeton and, by implication, “the promise of the American future” (1-2). Dean ignores Monsieur LeQuoi’s subsequent proposal to Louisa, which is also rejected. Monsieur LeQuoi’s proposals are offered “as a duty which a well-bred man owed to a
lady in such a retired place” (444), and remind us that Louisa is as qualified as Bess to receive them. Louisa’s refusal, however, is significant in that through it, Louisa exiles herself from the marriage plot. There are no other young men in Templeton, as Oliver observes “I really don’t know any one hereabouts good enough for her” (448), and by refusing Monsieur LeQuoi, Louisa, in effect, refuses marriage. Aside from Cooper’s account of her refusal, Louisa is removed from the novel. Bess’s plans for Louisa’s future are, as Oliver notes, evidence of how deeply she manages, but seem unlikely to agree with Louisa’s own desires or tastes. It is almost impossible to imagine Louisa in a situation where she “may meet with such society, and form such a connexion, as may be proper for one of her years and character” (449): society has never been Louisa’s forte. Thus Cooper requires the reader to imagine Louisa’s future as one outside the marriage plot Bess and Oliver imagine, and allows for another possibility.

Louisa, therefore, has a double function within *The Pioneers*: she represents, on one hand, a possible alternative to the marriage plot by choosing independence rather than a marriage of convenience with Monsieur LeQuoi. On the other hand, Louisa also stands in as representation of what is lost through the solidification of American identity emblematized in the marriage between Bess and Oliver. For while their marriage can be read as reconciling competing nationalisms – British, American and Native American – in favor of a new, legitimate order, the exile of Indian John, Natty and Louisa from that

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96 Although popular with the ladies, Monsieur Le Quoi is, admittedly, no prize. However, Louisa is here presented with the choice to be married; with Oliver she had no choice or opportunity.

97 Louisa’s exile might be compared to Natty’s – although it is difficult to think of the timid Louisa as “the foremost in that band of Pioneers” (456).

98 We see this same pattern rehearsed in Catharine Maria Sedgwick’s *Hope Leslie*, in which Esther declines any future offers of marriage once her engagement to Everell is broken off.
new order points to what is absent from this new American identity. Natty and Indian
John live on in the rest of the Leatherstocking tales, which, it is important to note, are
prequels to *The Pioneers*, but Louisa’s prehistory and subsequent fate are left unnarrated,
pointing to the erasure of women by history unless they are allied to the dominant
hierarchies of power. But the forgetting of Louisa also suggests the significance of
women in consolidating national identity: the possibility of Oliver and Louisa’s marriage
must be eliminated, and is, in fact, so frequently raised and discarded that it persists even
after the marriage of Bess and Oliver. The narrative’s inability to forget Louisa
underscores Bess’s methodical elimination of any other claim to the American landscape
she and Oliver inhabit. Louisa’s suffering, allied to her status as a minister’s daughter,
poses an alternative hierarchy of value that reveals the economic underpinnings of the
legal unification of Templeton, and thus America. Bess’s sensibilities surmount the
American wilderness, just as Marianne’s effusions over dead leaves and Julia’s ever-
ready lute surmounted the British and Sicilian islands, respectively, but each of these
heroines indulged their sensibilities at the expense of a secondary heroine who remained
at home. Emilia, Elinor and Louisa each suffer, and attention to their suffering reveals
the cost of sensibility.

**Conclusion: Who Can Afford Sensibility?**

For Radcliffe, the forgotten heroine serves as a site of readerly identification, in
which the barely-told narrative of Emilia’s loss of her friends to the Gothic plot, set in
play by Julia’s desire for Hippolitus, is similar to the less Gothic experience of so many
young women as they reached marriageable age. Julia’s adventures in Sicily point to the
dangers of wealth and aristocracy: the Marquis’s desire to profit by marrying Julia to the Duke de Luovo, the banditti rampant in the Sicilian caverns, the greedy Padre Abate’s attempt to coerce Julia into becoming a nun. The restoration of the Marchioness, the marriage of Julia and Hippolitus, and the return to Naples under the direction of Ferdinand resolve these issues by instituting a stable domestic family. However, Emilia’s narrative clearly does not belong in the crags and caverns of the Sicilian landscape in the manner that Julia’s does. Rather, through Emilia, Radcliffe offers readers a way back from Italy to England, and suggests that the stability of the domestic is always available there, but also always compromised.

Austen’s novel is set in the domestic England Emilia emblematizes. In Austen, both heroines marry at the end, and so we must instead understand why Elinor seems “forgotten” throughout much of the text while we are preoccupied with Marianne. Elinor’s silences, her ability to manage her emotions rather than indulge in them, mark her as already having successfully exchanged the discourse of sensibility for that of sense. Marianne’s reeducation teaches her the dangers of a hero like Willoughby, and her marriage to Brandon, who shares a similarly Gothic past, is coded as traditional and even antiquated. Elinor and Edward’s residence in the parsonage at Delaford makes them dependent on the Brandons, but they are also depicted as progressive: the parsonage has been remodeled, and their prosaic wish for “rather better pasturage for their cows” is indicative of their mutual proficiency in financial, as well as sentimental management (330).
In writing a novel clearly preoccupied with a romantic reconciliation of history, Cooper selects an outspoken and wealthy heroine to create a new and uniquely American aristocracy that resolves, however superficially, America’s tenuous position as former colonial subject and nascent colonial power. However, Louisa’s experiences of poverty and hardship, when contrasted with the luxuriant excess of Judge Temple’s house, suggests a correlation between financial security and sensibility. Bess’s bravery is, quite literally, a luxury she can afford. In contrast, as the sole surviving child of Reverend Grant, Louisa has witnessed the price of temerity, and her father cannot afford to lose her assistance. Bess’s plans for Louisa, in tandem with the exile of Natty and the death of Indian John, attempt to remove the threat that suffering poses to the national romance.

The relationship between these novels and the cult of sensibility is complex, and is explicitly tied to concerns of national identity. At the height of the cult of sensibility Radcliffe’s novel introduces two sisters, not for the purposes of a contrast novel that exalts one sister and deprecates the other, but rather to provide an alternative narrative to the Gothic plot that anticipates Austen. While Radcliffe’s Emilia still inhabits Sicily, she rarely ventures outside the confines of home. In turn, Austen’s critique of sensibility is also a critique of the fantastic displacement common to the Gothic novel. Readers who identified with a victimized Italian noblewoman, according to Austen, have more important, and perhaps more terrifying challenges to face in domestic England. Austen’s heroines ask readers to choose between two versions of English identity: the familiar heroine of sensibility, who is comically out of place in quotidian England, or a pragmatic heroine of sense, who is capable of navigating the changing class structure of early
nineteenth-century England. In turn, Cooper’s romance adopts Gothic strategies to
displace and resolve competing national origins. Although the landscape of *The Pioneers*
is explicitly American, it is clearly not the America familiar to Cooper’s readers. By
reintroducing the heroine of sensibility as the emblematic American girl, Cooper exploits
her ideological power to exile competing national identities, including that of the
secondary heroine.
In the first two chapters, I discuss the secondary heroine’s role as an advisor in the epistolary novel, and the “forgotten” secondary heroines of novels by Radcliffe, Austen and Cooper. This chapter turns to racialized secondary heroines in Sir Walter Scott’s *Ivanhoe* (1819) and Catharine Maria Sedgwick’s *Hope Leslie* (1827): the Jewish Rebecca, and the Native American Magawisca. Both novels depict a distant past of conquest and war; both foreground religion; both feature a secondary heroine who is racially-marked, and whose race is a source of concern in the novel; and most crucially, for both novels these racialized heroines are central to each novel’s inquiry into nationalism.\(^99\) Indeed, these heroines are so central to the questions of national identity raised in each novel that they often overshadow the more conventional primary heroines. Early reviewers and critics alike have extolled the virtues of Rebecca and Magawisca.\(^100\)

\(^99\) Alide Cagidemetrio suggests: “Race [in Scott] is a concept of descent” (16). Cagidemetrio is invested in opposing this concept of race (allied to the Saxon Norman conflict) with the conflict between “Jews and Gentiles” (18). Instead, I will follow Scott and Sedgwick’s slippery use of “race” in this chapter. Ezra Tawil’s discussion of “race” as a term in the nineteenth-century is helpful: “During the first quarter of the nineteenth century, a period wedged, so to speak, between the waning authority of eighteenth-century natural science and the racial biology yet to emerge into dominance, ‘race’ had various meanings. It could refer simply to groups of kin such as families or extended kinship networks, or, by extension, to larger social units such as tribes or nations. But rarely during this period was race used to refer to types of men as defined by essential or permanent attributes—a sense, of course, which the word would acquire by mid-century” (115).

\(^100\) See, for example, an anonymous review of *Hope Leslie* in the April 1828 edition of *The North American Review*: “Possible or impossible, she is a glorious creature, and even if we had no right to her creation, we welcome her to our heart of hearts” (418). For an example of the praise lavished on Rebecca, see Letitia Elizabeth Landon’s “Female Portrait Gallery” of heroines from Scott’s novels, collected in Blanchard’s
However, as Scott makes clear in his “Dedicatory Epistle,” Rebecca cannot marry Ivanhoe; Rowena, whether readers like it or not, gets her man. Scott’s real achievement, of course, is in making readers disappointed in the ending that almost a century of novels had prepared them to expect. Sedgwick, writing in the wake of Scott, concludes her novel with a similarly pat, yet disappointing resolution. This chapter seeks to answer the question: why does the historical romance make us want what we can’t have? In other words, if the nationalist projects of *Ivanhoe* and *Hope Leslie* insist on exiling Rebecca and Magawisca, why are these characters so appealing to the hero and to the reader?

In part, the answer lies in the genre of the historical romance: the Native Americans were exiled from their lands; the Jews were persecuted and exiled. Discourses of history and of nation-building rely on narratives of cause and effect and those of genealogy; Scott and Sedgwick challenge these narratives by depicting the effect of nation-building on racialized identities written into history and simultaneously excluded from the genealogy of the new nation. Sedgwick replaces the Native American Magawisca with the Anglo-American Hope, but also posits an alternative to genealogical constructs of nationhood in the contented spinsterhood of Esther Downing, who spends her days performing acts of disinterested kindness reminiscent of Rebecca’s. Sedgwick revises Scott to incorporate the unmarried woman in the American body politic. For

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*Life and Literary Remains of L.E.L.*: “The character of Rebecca stands pre-eminent among Scott’s finest conceptions.” Also, the *Eclectic Review*: “[Ivanhoe’s] attendant is a lovely Jewess, the magnanimous heroine of the tale, upon the delineation of whose character, the Author has bestowed his very best efforts” (qtd in *Scott: The Critical Heritage*, 194).

*101* *Ivanhoe* is the first novel Scott terms a “romance,” while Sedgwick inherited the traditions of Scott and Cooper. In *Hope Leslie*, she differentiates her narrative mode from each: Scott (149) and Cooper (84).
Scott, however, Rebecca’s exile points to the limits of English identity. Although Rebecca considers herself “of England,” her lineage and faith – often conflated in Scott under the term “race” – prevent her assimilation into the new England of the novel’s conclusion.

Scott turns to England, according to the preface, in order to represent a more distant past:

All those minute circumstances belonging to private life and domestic character, all that gives verisimilitude to a narrative and individuality to the persons introduced, is still known and remembered in Scotland; whereas in England civilization has been so long complete, that our ideas of ancestors are only to be gleaned from musty records and chronicles, the authors of which seem perversely to have conspired to suppress in their narratives all interesting details, in order to find room for flowers of monkish eloquence, or trite reflections upon morals. (xvii)

By formalizing the difference between the culture of England towards the end of the reign of Richard I and the culture of his nineteenth century audience, while at the same time reminding them that “the tenor [of our ancestors’] affections and feelings must have borne the same general proportion to our own” (xxi), Scott, via Templeton, claims that he is doing something new, something different from his Scottish historical novels. He is revitalizing the English past by filling in the dry monkish chronicles, but Scott is also revising that past and thus creating a new genre, the historical romance.

The liberties historical romance takes with history illuminate the pressures that national identity, politics, and genre place on the history recounted in the work. Significantly, Scott and Sedgwick both preserve historical distance between the readers of their romances and the subject of the romance: the romance narrates the formation of a

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102 See David Brown and Paul deGategno for extensive close readings of the “Dedicatory Epistle.”
national identity that the romance’s readers already possess. Scott appears to encourage readers to see the construction of English identity as defined by the conflict between Saxon and Norman, yet by continuing the Saxon/Norman conflict of 1066 in the 1190s reign of Richard Coeur-de-Lion, Scott suggests that the construction of national identity is not so easily located within history. Rebecca’s outsider status to both of these historical moments, contrasted with her active role in preserving Ivanhoe, whom the romance designates to resolve this conflict, mark her as the secondary heroine.

Alternatively, Sedgwick’s *Hope Leslie* is set in the 1630s and 40s, a little less than 200 years prior to the novel’s publication date. Sedgwick preserves historical chronology: her characters are contemporaries of one another. In a marked departure from Scott, she splits the secondary heroine into two figures: the native Magawisca who at the beginning of the novel is already part of a vanishing people – the Pequod War is Sedgwick’s 1066 – and the settler Esther, whose adherence to the letter of the law makes her unsuitable for Everell, who must marry a proto-Revolutionary and thus proto-American wife.

The heroes of each of these novels carry the weight of romantic resolution: Rowena’s marriage to Ivanhoe and Hope’s to Everell are anticipated from the opening pages of each novel, but also contingent on the actions of the hero. Ivanhoe must return home from the Crusades and reconcile with his father; Everell must detach himself from Magawisca and then Esther in order to marry Hope. This romantic resolution is also figured as a national resolution: Rowena and Ivanhoe’s marriage resolves the tension between Saxon and Norman; Hope and Everell’s marriage anticipates the American Revolution and the formation of American identity. By attending to the ways in which
Scott and Sedgwick make these resolutions uncomfortable through their deployment of secondary heroines, we can better understand how these secondary heroines complicate the incipient nationalism these novels appear to endorse.

The historical romance emphasizes the plight of the racialized secondary heroine as one whose threat to the home as a woman attractive to the hero is perceived also as a threat to the nation because of her race. *Ivanhoe* opens in chaos: Richard is imprisoned abroad, but his corrupt brother John holds the throne; Ivanhoe is exiled from his family home and is purportedly fighting in the Holy Land while the Normans Bois-Guilbert and the Prior have descended on his home. Already the tension between the national and the domestic should be clear. Ivanhoe’s narrative is an echo of Richard’s; when Ivanhoe is restored to Rowena, Richard will be restored to the throne of England. The transgressive possibility inherent in Rebecca – socially forbidden as a Jewess, but privately appealing as a virtuous and beautiful woman – must be eliminated in order for England to be English. Yet by favorably contrasting a member of a “degraded race” (402), the Jewish Rebecca, with the Saxon heiress Rowena, Scott empties lineage of significance and questions the central role of lineage in the sort of national myth-making that Rowena’s marriage to Ivanhoe represents.\(^{103}\) The disconnect between Rebecca’s lineage and her character as depicted in the novel challenges the resolution of the historical romance.

Rebecca, like the Normans, is an intruder, an interloper, a foreigner, but in early America, the first settlers were the intruders. The project of the historical romance in America is not a return to order and Englishness, but rather the construction of a new

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\(^{103}\) Cedric’s preoccupation with the marrying Athelstane to Rowena is depicted as ridiculous, also raising questions as to the value of lineage and race in the formation of national identity.
order and an American identity. The problem faced by American historical romance is twofold: how to construct an American history or usable past, and how to cope with the displacement of the original Americans. In *Hope Leslie, or Early Times in the Massachusetts*, Sedgwick attempts to resolve these problems. Like Scott, her preface situates her text between history and romance: “The following volumes are not offered to the public as being in any degree an historical narrative, or a relation of real events. Real characters and real events are, however, alluded to; and this course, if not strictly necessary, was found very convenient in the execution of the author’s design, which was to illustrate not the history, but the character of the times” (3). Sedgwick does not see the novel as “a substitute for genuine history” but encourages the reader to move from the affective history presented here to the “true” early history of the nation.\(^{104}\) While Scott compiles a monolithic history that “loses” the distinction between Norman and Saxon at Rowena and Ivanhoe’s wedding, but also loses Rebecca, Sedgwick presents several competing narratives within her text: Magawisca’s history of the Pequot war is set against Digby’s; Rosa’s confession of her relationship with Sir Phillip Gardiner is contrasted with his attempts to disguise their connection; Faith’s silence becomes a stage for competing narrations by Oneco and Hope; Esther’s decision to remain unmarried is placed against Hope and Everell’s married life.\(^{105}\) These competing stories are not subsumed within Hope’s narrative, but rather remain external to Hope’s history as

\(^{104}\) In her most explicit comparison between her project and Scott’s, Sedgwick writes: “The mighty master of fiction has but to wave the wand of his office, to present the past to his readers, with all the vividness and distinctness of the present; but we, who have no magicians enchantments, wherewith we can imitate the miracles wrought by the rod of the prophet; we must betake ourselves to the compass and the rule. . . . [and base our description] not on any apocryphal authority, but quoted from an authentic record of the times” (149).

\(^{105}\) A note on spelling: Pequot is currently considered correct, but Sedgwick spells the name “Pequod.” I will use Pequot for my comments, but preserve Sedgwick’s spelling in quotations from the novel.
alternatives. Sedgwick locates the question of American identity in the attraction Hope, Magawisca and Esther feel for Everell. For Magawisca, her race identity is more significant than her infatuation with Everell; Esther chooses obedience to the higher authorities of God and the law. Both secondary heroines value an organizing authority over private desire, but Magawisca’s race identity, in keeping with the tradition of the Vanishing American and the separatist politics on both sides of the Pequot war, cannot be incorporated into American identity. In contrast, Esther’s obedience to authority is recast as a devotion to the public good that requires she remain single so as not to “give to a party what was meant for mankind” (371).

Scott’s romance of national origins is chiefly focused on one conflict, Saxon-Norman, and one history, that of England. Rebecca’s tolerance for other faiths, and her desire to find common ground is lost, ironically, because of her very specific racial identity. The genre, as Scott envisions it, prevents her survival within the world of the novel. Sedgwick’s romance of national origins must revise Scott to reconcile what her nineteenth-century readers would recognize as two very disparate national identities (Native American and English) into a new American identity. She does so by displacing two secondary heroines (Magawisca and Esther) in favor of a hybrid primary heroine: Hope reconciles the Gothic romance of William and Alice’s separation, but, through Hope, Sedgwick also attempts to reconcile the lost romance of Magawisca and Everell. By restoring Esther to America at the conclusion of her novel, Sedgwick further revises Scott to leave space in the nation for the single woman. At the conclusion of *Ivanhoe*,

106 The subplots of Rosa and Faith suggests that women’s identities are dangerously susceptible to the constructions of men: once seduced, Rosa disguises herself as a boy and Faith adopts Native American customs to such an extent that she cannot communicate with her sister.
Rebecca must leave England in order to pursue her disinterested kindness. In contrast, Sedgwick illustrates the potential dangers of romantic attachment in the narratives of Rosa and Faith in order to confirm a vision of America as an arena in which women may circulate in public unfettered by marriage. The national work of the secondary heroine in these novels is quite different. Scott’s portrayal of Rebecca highlights her loss as the most tragic cost of nation-building. In contrast, although Sedgwick eliminates the threat of miscegenation posed by Magawisca by conforming to the convention of the Vanishing American and by replacing her with Hope, she also incorporates Esther into American national identity, providing an alternative model of nation-building centered on disinterested kindness rather than genealogy.

**The Fair Jewess and the Less Interesting Rowena: Race, Femininity, and History in *Ivanhoe***

In the last chapter, I discussed secondary heroines who were remarkable for their absence or silence; in reading *Ivanhoe*, one is struck by Rebecca’s presence. It is with good reason that Ian Duncan terms Rebecca “one of the sublime heroines of nineteenth-century fiction” (xxiv), yet to single out Rebecca is to undervalue the marriage/reunion plot that structures the novel. By any standard definition of romance, Rowena is clearly the conventional heroine.¹⁰⁷ She is beautiful and fair, she has an impeccable lineage from the “true” kings of England (Alfred), personal wealth, and she marries the hero, who is

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¹⁰⁷ Coleridge never finished *Ivanhoe*, laying the blame at least in part on the heroines: “Perhaps the foreseen hopelessness of Rebecca – the comparatively feeble interest excited by Rowena, the from the beginning foreknown bride of Ivanhoe. . . —these may, or may not have been the causes, but *Ivanhoe* I never have been able to summon the fortitude to read thro’. Doubtless the want of any one predominant interest aggravated by the want of any one continuous thread of events is a grievous defect in a novel” (Scott: the Critical Heritage, 182). Coleridge’s frustration lies in the fact that Rebecca cannot marry the hero (her foreseen hopelessness) and that Rowena (who should marry the hero, and is thus the conventional heroine) is not particularly interesting as a character.
also truly “English” and her childhood companion. Their marriage is supposed to restore order at the conclusion of the novel, but generations of readers have refused to accept the idea of two heroines – one who marries the hero and one who doesn’t – and have wished that Scott would marry Rebecca to the hero to confirm her heroic status at the expense of Rowena’s.

Scott replies to this desire in his “Dedicatory Epistle”: Rebecca’s decision to squelch her attraction to Ivanhoe is the story which he hopes that the fair readers of romances will wish to emulate, whereas Rowena’s conventional romance plot is portrayed as dangerous: “[I]t is a dangerous and fatal doctrine to teach young persons, the most common readers of romance, that rectitude of conduct and of principle are either naturally allied with or adequately rewarded by the gratification of our passions, or attainment of our wishes” (xiv). The question we must ask is: why does Scott retain the conventional plot of romance and the conventional romantic heroine? And, more importantly, why does Scott appear to forward an alternative, and more admirable, femininity in a racially-marked character who is subject to prejudice within the text, and perhaps to the prejudice of Scott’s contemporary readers without?

In Ivanhoe, Scott abandons his own racially-marked title as the Author of the Scottish Novels (vii) in order to focus on a different racial battle: the conflict between the Saxons and the Normans, and the distant conflict in Palestine between Christians and heathens.\(^{108}\) Thus race is always already an issue with which this novel is concerned (and certainly one that would also resonate with Scott’s reading public just over a hundred

\(^{108}\) Although “Scot” is not always considered a race category, my use of it is in keeping with the blurred nineteenth century definition of race.
years after the union of Scotland and England and in the aftermath of Napoleon). Yet while race and nationalism are clearly primary concerns in *Ivanhoe*, and indeed in all of Scott, their presence has generated strikingly different readings. Graham Tulloch has suggested that the distant historical setting of *Ivanhoe* “placed the historical at the center of the reader’s attention” (404), as opposed to the national focus of the “Scotch novels” which preceded *Ivanhoe*. In contrast, Edgar Johnson has claimed that, for Scott, “the past was not a refuge from the present, but the matrix in which the present had been formed” (27). Ian Duncan has argued for a historicized reading: in writing *Ivanhoe*, the colonized (Scot) becomes the colonizer (Scott); Scott’s colonization succeeds “because it represents a cultural rather than a political or economic colonization” (“Introduction,” vii). Scott’s English subject is a politicized choice reflecting contemporary colonial anxieties, rather than an escape from nationalism into history, or a construction of present from past. Most damningly, David Brown suggests: “*Ivanhoe* is therefore a good example of Scott losing his grasp on a situation which, socially, he does not understand, and inventing a non-realistic, quasi-social struggle in order to give his composition the accustomed animation and interest” (186). The struggle that Scott invents, according to Brown and other historians, is the Saxon-Norman conflict, but the struggle of the Jews to find a place in this topsy-turvy social order is ignored.

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109 See Clare Simmons’s *Reversing the Conquest* for a reading of the English preoccupation with the Saxon and Norman conflict from the eighteenth century through the death of Victoria.

110 Post-colonial theory also informs Harry Shaw’s reading of Scott, but he is interested in Scott’s treatment of the Eastern Other, “rehearsals of the specificity of cultural identities may also help readers take responsibility for where they are in their cultures, and where their cultures are” (178). Curiously, Shaw does not read *Ivanhoe*, instead he focuses on the more immediate encounter with Palestine in *The Talisman*.

111 Even readings, such as Judith Wilt’s, that address the role of the Crusades and the Jews in the novel ultimately focus on Scott’s treatment of chivalry.
Rebecca does not fit within the Saxon-Norman conflict, but Scott does place her firmly within the love-plot that also structures the novel and does so in terms of race. Interestingly, Scott’s characters seem to be able to reconcile the racial prejudice between Saxons and Normans – even the staunchly nationalistic Cedric the Saxon learns to tolerate the Normans – but none of the characters are able to fully overcome their prejudice towards Rebecca or her father as Jews. Perhaps this is because the conflict between Saxons and Normans is effectively in the past; indeed, Scott very famously rewrites history to make the tension between Saxon and Norman present in the world of the novel, whereas historically it had long since dissipated. In contrast, the tensions between England and the Jews, perhaps because not formally imperialist or colonialist, were still present in Scott’s day and well after.

The resolution of the national tale in the marriage of Rowena and Ivanhoe is a restoration of public order that covers over the tension between Saxon and Norman and occasions the exile of Rebecca and her father. In his extensive introduction to the Oxford edition of *Ivanhoe*, Ian Duncan suggests: “Scott’s romance of cultural origins shows the modern ‘separation of spheres’, the gendering of public and private life, to be founded on the primal violence – the threat of a force that reduces persons to bodies – rather than on any ethical fitness” (xxii). For Duncan, these categories (public and private) map onto the generic constituents of the historical romance: the national tale and the Gothic. Duncan reads Ulrica’s narrative as the Gothic center of the text, and one that complicates the comic-national marriage of Ivanhoe and Rowena at the conclusion of the novel. Michael Ragussis’s reading further explores the implications of Ulrica’s story: “Precisely
insofar as Ulrica’s story demonstrates the way in which conversion functions as a sexual transgression that is at the same time a racial erasure, her story represents a narrative model that threatens to overtake the stories of the two other major female characters in the novel: Rowena and Rebecca” (193). Ulrica’s suicide is atonement for her complicity in the Norman invasion, but that invasion (even with Scott’s revised timeline) is well within the past of the novel. In perhaps a further irony, Ulrica’s death enables the victory at Torquilstone of a combined Saxon and Norman force (King Richard, Cedric the Saxon, Robin Hood and his men).

Rebecca, however, has no form of miscegenation to atone for. Indeed, her conscientious resistance of her attraction to Ivanhoe troubles this otherwise compelling account of the tensions between the Gothic and comic-national tale in the new genre of historical romance. In the concluding paragraph of his introduction to the novel, Duncan argues:

Rebecca’s exile in the last pages of *Ivanhoe* brings home the anomaly that the final marriage is an inter-cultural but not an inter-ethnic union, despite the rhetoric about racial blending. Although Ivanhoe has assumed the manners of Norman chivalry, he and Rowena are both Saxons. Scott’s text continues to register the pressure of the categories—sexuality and race—that will mark the limits of ‘culture’, the fluid space of national identity formation, in nineteenth-century discourse. . . . Rebecca’s stately withdrawal offers something more critical than a pre-emption of nationalist racism by the internalization of its decree of purity. . . . More Christian than the Christians themselves, who are united in nothing but their anti-Semitism, the Jewess diminishes the English future from which she is shut out. (xxv-xxvi)

My reading of *Ivanhoe* picks up where Duncan’s leaves off, with an extensive reading of Rebecca’s role in the novel that more fully explores the complex relationship between the two heroines and its implications for the English nation in Scott’s historical romance.

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112 Judith Wilt has noted that Scott revises Robin Hood from a Norman land-owner to an outlaw of roughly the same class status as the Saxons.
As I have argued earlier, Rowena is clearly the conventional heroine of romance. The opening chapter of the novel prepares the reader to sympathize with the Saxons, and Rowena is, genealogically, the most noble of all Saxons. In contrast, Rebecca’s Eastern apparel and faith would seem to mark her as an enemy, especially during the Crusades, but Scott’s careful presentation of Rebecca instructs the reader to see her as a model, while effacing Rowena’s agency. Scott relies on two strategies to effect this transformation: 1) We often see the effect of Rebecca’s action before we know the agent, whereas Rowena’s actions are emptied of subjectivity by her conscription within terms such as “fair Saxon”; 2) Rowena and Rebecca are placed in parallel scenes. *Ivanhoe* falls neatly into three major scenes: Ashby, Torquilstone and Templestowe. While these scenes are often read for their critique of chivalry, they also pair Rebecca and Rowena. As readers, we witness Rowena’s response to a difficult situation, and then see Rebecca’s. This comparison always reveals Rebecca as the stronger and more interesting character. By teaching readers to value Rebecca over Rowena, Scott undoes the resolution of the national romance, revealing that resolution – like Rowena’s ringlets – can only be formed with the assistance of art.

The first description of each heroine establishes the contrast between them. Rowena is described to the reader in the Prior’s conversation with Bois-Guilbert:

“Cedric is not her father, replied the Prior, ‘and is but of remote relation: she is descended from higher blood than he even he pretends to, and is but distantly connected with him by birth’” (46). Rowena’s worth is established by her impressive lineage, and confirmed by her beauty – itself a marker of her heritage. However, Rowena’s very
typical Saxon beauty is defamiliarized by Bois-Guilbert’s stare and by our narrator’s insistence on the effects of nurture and art:

Formed in the best proportions of her sex, Rowena was tall in stature, yet not so much as to attract observation on account of superior height. . . . If mildness were the more natural expression to such a combination of features, it was plain that, in the present instance, the exercise of habitual superiority, and the reception of general homage, had given to the Saxon lady a loftier character, which mingled with and qualified that bestowed by nature. Her profuse hair, of a color betwixt brown and flaxen, was arranged in a fanciful and graceful manner in numerous ringlets, to form which art had probably aided nature. (61)

The narrator’s description of her features suggests that they are so striking only because of her care in arranging her hair, and Cedric’s care in raising her as a Saxon heiress. Without her hairdresser and her haughty demeanor, Rowena might be nothing more than a tallish girl in unfashionable clothes. Rowena will be deprived of both during her imprisonment in Torquilstone, revealing that lineage does not grant real superiority any more than ringlets do.

In contrast, the opening description of Rebecca emphasizes an exotic beauty that the narrator renders natural:

The figure of Rebecca might indeed have compared with the proudest beauties of England, even though it had been judged by as shrewd a connoisseur as Prince John. Her form was exquisitely symmetrical, and was shown to advantage by a sort of Eastern dress, which she wore according to the fashion of the females of her nation. . . . The brilliancy of her eyes, the superb arch of her eyebrows, her well-formed aquiline nose, her teeth as white as pearl, and the profusion of her sable tresses, which, each arranged in its own little spiral of twisted curls, fell down upon as much of a lovely neck and bosom as a simarre of the richest Persian

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113 Chris Vanden Bossche’s assertion that Normans represent artifice as opposed to Saxon/nature underestimates the constructedness of Rowena’s Saxon beauty. Letitia Elizabeth Landon’s “portrait” of Rowena makes this connection: “Rowena is an ingenious blending of the natural and the artificial, so generally at war with each other in society. Born timid, sweet, and yielding, she is brought up to pride, reserve, and authority” (118).

114 I will later discuss Rowena’s “fictiveness”: her artificial beauty belies what Scott calls her “fictional dominance,” uncovered at Torquilstone. In turn, this allows us to question the “truth” or immanence, to borrow a term from chapter one, of her Saxon heritage and its import.
silk, exhibiting flowers in their natural colors embossed upon a purple ground, permitted to be visible – all of these constituted a combination of loveliness which yielded not to the most beautiful of the maidens who surrounded her. It is true that of the golden and pearl-studded clasps which closed her vest from the throat to the waist, the three uppermost were left unfastened on account of the heat, which something enlarged the prospect to which we allude. (93-94)

The narrator’s coyness should not prevent the reader from noticing the sexualized description of Rebecca’s body; but it is a naturalized sexuality. Rebecca’s dress is flattering, but it is also “the fashion” of her country; Rebecca’s simarre is of rich silk, but it presents flowers in their “natural colors”; Rebecca’s neck and bosom are exposed, but it is only because of the heat. In a conceit that Scott will continue to use throughout the novel, Rowena appears unveiled, whereas Rebecca is always veiled. Rowena’s rank, however, is protection enough, whereas Rebecca’s exotic beauty exposes her to the gaze of everyone, despite her veil. Rebecca is dangerous precisely because she is an outsider to the chivalric codes of rank and honor that give Rowena power and, to a degree, protection. The contrast between Rebecca and Rowena makes the narrator’s insistence that Rebecca can be compared to the “proudest beauties of England” even more striking. Although Rowena is crowned the Queen of Love and Beauty, Rebecca is a controversial, but no less qualified contender for the title.¹¹⁵

Having thus established Rowena and Rebecca as rival femininities, Scott introduces them to one another. Rowena and Rebecca first meet on the road from the tournament at Ashby. Isaac attempts to beg the Saxons’ protection, but it is only Rebecca who secures their good will, “throwing back her veil” (195), and claiming the interest of Rowena, who is prominently visible on horseback. This is another moment in which

¹¹⁵ Indeed, Rowena’s alliance with Ivanhoe gives her a bit of an unfair advantage.
Rebecca is disguised and then revealed to the reader. Rebecca’s removal of her veil foreshadows its removal at Templestowe. There, as well as here, the discovery of her beauty and dignity renders her audience more tractable. Despite the narrator’s emphasis on racialized difference – Rebecca’s “Oriental fashion” as opposed to the “Saxon lady” Rowena (195) – Rebecca’s appeal to Rowena is made on the basis of common ground; rather than focusing on the difference between a Christian and a Jewess, she appeals to their shared belief in God and the Ten Commandments. In contrast to Rowena’s haughty demeanor that emphasizes her separateness, her difference as a Saxon heiress, Rebecca always approaches others in terms of alliance and similarity. Because of her race, and the prejudice she encounters, this is a strategy of survival for Rebecca, but Scott is careful to transform Rebecca’s rejection of difference into a virtue.

We later discover that God and the Laws of Mount Sinai are not the only things Rebecca and Rowena share; the “one dear to many” hidden in the litter is Ivanhoe (195). Scott keeps this secret, however, for almost a hundred pages. Our suspense over the identity of the mysterious stranger is, of course, one of the pleasures of the text, but I would like to suggest a more nuanced understanding of Scott’s narrative strategy. By withholding Ivanhoe’s identity, Scott is able to build sympathy and admiration for Rebecca in opposition to Rowena and thus establish the possibility of romantic conflict. As readers of historical romance, our prejudice naturally lies with Rowena.

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116 See also her encounter with Cedric in the halls of Torquilstone, as well as the conclusion of the novel, which I will discuss later. It is worth noting that Rebecca’s removal of her veil to carry Ivanhoe away from Ashby is what initially subjects her to the notice of Bois-Guilbert.

117 This is indeed the strategy that Scott uses throughout the text to overcome readerly prejudice towards Rebecca.

118 Again, although critics have termed Rebecca “the heroine” it is important to remember that such a maneuver is the work of Scott’s text; the reader of romance would expect Rowena to fill that role.
The text has marked her as the heroine by her beauty, wealth, lineage, and previous attachment to Ivanhoe. To convince readers to switch allegiance requires a lot of maneuvering; Scott relies on the standard Gothic device: captivity.

Shortly after Rowena accepts Rebecca into their train, the party is attacked, captured, and taken to Torquilstone. Within the narrative, Maurice DeBracy’s elaborate scheme to kidnap and then rescue Rowena really has nothing to do with Rebecca, but it is convenient that she is there, for her presence allays DeBracy’s anxiety that Bois-Guilbert might also be interested in Rowena.\(^{119}\) Bois-Guilbert retorts: “I care not for your blue-eyed beauty. There is one in that train who will make me a better mate” (208). Rowena is dismissed as nothing more than a “blue-eyed beauty,” whereas Rebecca is elevated as a “mate.” Within the narrative, this distinction may seem insignificant or trifling, but by positioning Bois-Guilbert and DeBracy’s respective conversations with Rebecca and Rowena side-by-side, Scott further exalts Rebecca’s complex agency in opposition to Rowena’s bland passivity. Rebecca’s agency is attributed to her social location outside of those constructs of race and primogeniture that grant Rowena authority. Scott connects Rowena’s bland passivity and her position as Saxon heiress, undermining the authority of genealogy in the construction of English identity.

Rowena is lodged in “the apartment of the castle which had been judged most fitting for the accommodation of the Saxon heiress” (225), the apartment that had belonged to the Norman Front de Boeuf’s deceased wife.\(^{120}\) While the distinction between Saxon and Norman is predominantly political (conquered and conqueror), it is

\(^{119}\) Bois-Guilbert’s dismissal of Rowena is all the more interesting since he had yielded to Prior Almyer’s claim that she was the most beautiful woman in England

\(^{120}\) This is especially appropriate since DeBracy would like to make Rowena a Norman wife.
also portrayed as a class distinction: the rude but noble Saxons are contrasted with the chivalrous but ignoble Normans.\textsuperscript{121} DeBracy’s strange wooing of Rowena reveals that his courtship is not necessarily concerned with personal happiness, but with public esteem:

\begin{quote}
Thou are proud, Rowena, and thou art the fitter to be my wife. By what other means couldst thou be raised to high honour and princely place, saving by my alliance? How else wouldst thou escape from the mean precincts of a country grange, where Saxons herd with the swine which form their wealth, to take thy seat, honored as thou shouldst be, and shalt be, amid all in England that is distinguished by beauty or dignified by power? (227)
\end{quote}

That Rowena is immune to the lure of power and prestige has already been made evident to the reader in her refusal of Athelstane, the Saxon prince whom Cedric would like her to marry so that they might reclaim the throne of England.\textsuperscript{122} However, DeBracy’s courtship operates to dismantle the rhetoric of courtly love and romance as ultimately political and economic. When faced with Rowena’s refusal, DeBracy further underscores the very unromantic nature of his suit:

\begin{quote}
“Rowena,” said De Bracy, “art thou, too, deceived by the common error of thy sex, who think there can be no rivalry but that respecting their own charms? Knowest thou not there is a jealousy of ambition and of wealth, as well as of love; and that this our host, Front-de-Boeuf, will push from his road him who opposes his claim to the fair barony of Ivanhoe as readily, eagerly, and unscrupulously as if he were preferred to him by some blue-eyed damsel?” (228)
\end{quote}

Rowena’s value to De Bracy is not located in her subjectivity, but rather in her lineage and thus in her potential inheritance, here figured as the fair barony of Ivanhoe.

\textsuperscript{121} The Saxons make their money from their land, especially from swineherding; the Norman’s inherit their money, or conquer it.
\textsuperscript{122} Athelstane is the “last sprout” of Edward the Confessor, the sainted, childless, and last King of England prior to the Norman Conquest.
Rowena’s sense of self-worth is also located in this construct of entitlement. We have already learned that Cedric has raised Rowena to consider herself a Saxon heiress, and that DeBracy values her for that haughty demeanor. In her captivity, however, Rowena is forced to strip away all fictions. Duncan has claimed “Rowena understands immediately that the courtly-love blandishments of De Bracy are nothing more than a new-fangled mask for primitive coercion; in his earlier phrase (Chapter XV), ‘the work of the Conquest should be completed’” (“Introduction,” xxi), but it is perhaps more accurate to say that Rowena comes to understand the coercion behind DeBracy’s courtly sentiments because he has revealed their underpinnings to her. The potential romance of a captivity in which one is treated well and according to the laws of chivalry – and one need only turn to Athelstane’s expectation of board according to his rank to prove that the captives do not actually consider themselves in danger – is debunked before Rowena, and reveals her strength as empty show:

Her haughtiness and habit of domination was, therefore, a fictitious character, induced over that which was natural to her, and it deserted her when her eyes were opened to the extent of her own danger, as well as that of her lover and her guardian; and when she found her will, the slightest expression of which was wont to command respect and attention, now placed in opposition to that of a man of a strong, fierce, and determined mind, who possessed the advantage over her, and was resolved to use it, she quailed before him. (229)

Rowena throws her arms to heaven and begins to pray. While this makes DeBracy slightly uncomfortable, he has proceeded too far to turn back, and so Rowena’s action, or rather inaction, is utterly useless. It is not surprising that when Cedric bursts into the apartment to rescue Rowena, she is still praying: “The noble Saxon was so fortunate as to reach his ward’s apartment just as she had abandoned all hope of safety, and, with a
crucifix clasped in agony to her bosom, sat in expectation of instant death” (314). The narrator’s assertion that Cedric was fortunate to find her because of her dangerous state of mind, as opposed to any immediate danger to her person, emphasizes the almost comic nature of her agonized inaction. Paul DeGategno’s claim that “Rowena’s Pamela-like trial, in which she shows superior strength over De Bracy . . . accords her a kind of recognition she has long sought but always been denied” cannot fully account for Rowena’s tears, especially not when contrasted with Rebecca’s strength under duress (57).

Rowena’s helplessness once she realizes that her Saxon lineage carries no weight with DeBracy is juxtaposed with Rebecca’s resourcefulness in captivity, enabling Scott to create the desire which he later chastises readers for indulging in: the desire to see Ivanhoe and Rebecca united. The narrator invokes a comparison between these two candidates for Ivanhoe’s hand:

Rebecca was now to expect a fate even more dreadful than that of Rowena; for what probability was there that either softness or ceremony would be used towards one of her oppressed race, whatever shadow of these might be preserved towards a Saxon heiress? Yet had the Jewess this advantage, that she was better prepared by habits of thought, and by natural strength of mind, to encounter the dangers to which she was exposed. (234-5)

DeGategno suggests that Scott equates property with political responsibility (32), but such a reading overlooks the political responsibility figured in Rebecca. While Rowena’s education has rendered her incapable of action unless she can deploy her status as “heiress,” Rebecca’s much more precarious position as a wealthy and wise woman who is simultaneously the victim of prejudice as the homeless “daughter of a despised race” (235) fits her for the task ahead: “Thus prepared to expect adverse circumstances, she had
acquired the firmness necessary for acting under them” (235). It is, according to our narrator, Rebecca’s qualities of mind as well as her social situation that enable her to act with resolution.

The conversation between Bois-Guilbert and Rebecca centers on race and heritage, further underscoring the difference between Rowena’s fictions of inherited superiority and Rebecca’s apprehension of her precarious social status. As a Jewess, Rebecca is suspicious of a Christian’s advances. As a Templar, Bois-Guilbert cannot marry. But, unlike Rowena, Rebecca realizes the danger of her position immediately and engages in a charged debate with Bois-Guilbert, and one that, it is worth noting, she wins. If DeBracy requires Rowena’s pride in order to elevate her from Saxon heiress to Norman wife but ultimately resorts to a political power play over lands and wealth, Bois-Guilbert tries to tempt Rebecca with wealth and then with power but ultimately values her for her inherent virtues: “‘Rebecca! She who could prefer death to dishonor must have a proud and powerful soul. Mine thou must be! Nay, start not,’ he added, ‘it must be with thine own consent, and on thine own terms’” (241). While the Templar initially began his suit with exotic and erotic endearments, such as “rose of Sharon,” after Rebecca’s argumentative victory, he begins to behave less like a conqueror and more like a suitor. Bois-Guilbert’s preference for Rebecca, especially as he had previously judged Rowena the fairest in England, fully establishes Rebecca’s beauty and worth.

123 Alice Chandler’s suggestion that “To [Bois-Guilbert’s] late medieval opportunism, the Jewess counters with the chivalric code” (192) is troubled my Rebecca’s critique of chivalry in her conversation with Ivanhoe, a critique which Chandler reads as overcome by Ivanhoe’s response, “the incipient voice of the law itself, magisterially protecting the weak from the strong” (193). That Ivanhoe is bed-ridden, while Rebecca stands in armor at the window renders this reading suspect, and indeed, almost ironic.

124 Duncan correctly identifies Rebecca and Bois-Guilbert as “the true antagonists of Ivanhoe” in his introduction. (xxiv)
As I have been arguing, Rebecca’s merits, contrasted with Rowena’s fictitious dominance, are revealed through the parallel challenges each heroine faces. It is only after the reader watches Rebecca more successfully weather captivity and dismantles his or her own potential prejudices towards her that Scott returns to the initial encounter between Rebecca and Ivanhoe. Scott opens the scene by framing it in the context of a romance: “The youngest reader of romances and romantic ballads must recollect how often the females, during the dark ages, as they are called, were initiated into the mysteries of surgery, and how frequently the gallant knight submitted the wounds of his person to her cure whose eyes had yet more deeply penetrated his heart” (275). Readers might expect, then, the account of Ivanhoe and Rebecca to proceed in similar fashion. But race intervenes: “But the Jews, both male and female, possessed and practiced the medical science in all its branches” (275). Rebecca’s skill is here dismissed by the narrator as proper to her race, much in the manner that her exquisite and flattering dress had been naturalized in the opening scene. Our narrator’s prefatory comments thus prepare the reader to expect that the following scene will not be a romance, yet it seems to follow the genre, at least at first: “I know not whether the fair Rowena would have been altogether satisfied with the species of emotion with which her devoted knight had hitherto gazed on the beautiful features, fair form, and lustrous eyes of the lovely Rebecca” (279). Ivanhoe is clearly susceptible to Rebecca’s beauty and skill, and it is only Rebecca who rewrites the scene into the narrative we have been lead to expect:

But Ivanhoe was too good a Catholic to retain the same class of feelings towards a Jewess. This Rebecca had foreseen, and for this very purpose she had hastened to mention her father’s name and lineage; yet – for the fair and wise daughter of Isaac was not without a touch of female weakness – she could not but sigh
internally when the glance of respectful admiration, not altogether unmixed with
tenderness, with which Ivanhoe had hitherto regarded his unknown benefactress,
was exchanged at once for a manner cold, composed, and collected, and fraught
with no deeper feeling than that which expressed a grateful sense of courtesy
received from an unexpected quarter, and from one of an inferior race. (279-80)

By recounting her history, literally her genealogy, Rebecca’s status as romantic object is
devalued. Alide Cagidemetrio has suggested that Rebecca represents a “very successful
compromise between ‘dress and lineage’ on the one hand and tongue and Englishness on
the other. . . . Rebecca consistently embodies contemporary England much more than
does the novel’s canonic mediator, Ivanhoe” (18-19). However, the resolution of the
novel makes clear that Rebecca embodies what is lost to contemporary England. When
they first meet, Rebecca corrects Ivanhoe (who addresses her in Arabic) by responding,
“I am of England, Sir Knight, and speak the English tongue, although my dress and
lineage belong to another climate” (298). As the subsequent plot of the novel makes
clear, Rebecca’s dress and lineage keep her on the outskirts of English identity.

Rowena’s descent from the line of Alfred and her subsequent tenancy of both
property and title make her an object of interest to DeBracy because they establish her
place in history through men. In contrast, even as Scott renders Rebecca appealing to the
reader, her Jewish ancestry and her father’s profession of usurer chill Ivanhoe’s
attraction. Moreover, Rebecca’s realization that her race and her faith are equivalent to
Ivanhoe (a consideration not faced by the Saxons or Normans as Catholics) complicates
her internal conflict.\(^{125}\) She may bridge the differences in their faiths by pointing to the

\(^{125}\) Clare Simmons has argued that part of the appeal of Saxon identity to the English after the Reformation
was that it enabled them to imagine a better pre-Norman, pre-Catholic England. In *Ivanhoe*, however,
Saxon and Norman alike are Catholics; Ulrica is the only remaining practitioner of what Scott terms the
religion of her ancestors.
Ten Commandments, or their shared God, but she cannot overcome racial or national identity. Much of the interest of the rest of the novel comes from our privileged position as reader as we watch Rebecca struggle with her feelings towards Ivanhoe, and thus struggle with her desire to bridge differences and her sense of her own definitive racial identity.

Rebecca heals Ivanhoe’s wounds, and to some degree his racism, but her most important lesson is perhaps the easiest to overlook. While Ivanhoe is bedridden from his wounds, the castle is stormed by their rescuers. Impatient to be a part of the action, or at least to be aware of what is happening, Ivanhoe asks Rebecca to look out the window. Literally armed for battle to protect herself from the archers, Rebecca reports the action to Ivanhoe, while at the same time expressing her regret at the bloodshed.\footnote{See Morrillo and Newhouse for an interesting reading of the narration of the battle in terms of readerly expectation. I disagree, however with their claim: “Scott’s description of the scene consistently reminds us that the debate between historical and romantic modes of narrative is itself opposed by a greater ‘truth’ that ultimately defies any attempts at narrative control. This larger truth is the truth of an outside world experienced through the senses, and suggests a sublimity beyond the conventions of either history or romance” (280). Particularly unsatisfactory is their conclusion that Rebecca embodies the nexus between history and romance because of the oral tradition of Judaism.} It seems an unlikely time for a discussion of the merits of chivalry, but such a discussion ensues.\footnote{This discussion troubles Chris Vanden Bossche’s claim that Ivanhoe mediates between Saxon and Norman through his right understanding of chivalry (14) and through his knowledge of languages – Rebecca is clearly a much more skilled linguist than Ivanhoe.}

While many readings of \textit{Ivanhoe} address the role of chivalry in Scott, they tend to focus on chivalry as a marker of Ivanhoe’s Norman-ized identity, or on the fascination with chivalry that Scott’s novels encouraged – and that Mark Twain blamed for the condition of the American South. In the discussion of chivalry within \textit{Ivanhoe}, however, Rebecca reveals that chivalry imperils the English nation.
Ivanhoe vaunts the honor and glory of chivalric battles, and the fame that they garner for their heroes. Rebecca retorts: “[I]s there such virtue in the rude rhymes of a wandering bard, that domestic love, kindly affection, peace and happiness, are so wildly bartered, to become the hero of those ballads which vagabond minstrels sing to drunken churls over their evening ale?” (295). Ivanhoe resorts to claiming that Rebecca’s race keeps her a stranger to “the high feelings which swell the bosom of a noble maiden when her lover hath done some deed of emprize which sanctions his flame” (295). This argument is significant for two reasons. The first is that Ivanhoe cannot face Rebecca’s claims without resorting to race. It is true that Rebecca is a stranger to feeling pleasure at the deeds of her lover, but this is not because she is incapable of those feelings as a Jewess, but rather because, since she is a Jewess, no Christian knight could entertain those feelings for her. The second, the one that I have hinted at earlier, is that Rebecca’s view of chivalry is the one that the novel ultimately endorses. Ivanhoe’s knight-errant escapades in Palestine by Richard’s side must end in order for him to be restored to his father’s graces, and marry Rowena. The tournaments and conquests that pepper this novel are finally insignificant in comparison to the restoration of domestic order. It is no coincidence that Scott pays this homage to Richard just before the conclusion of the novel:

In the lion-hearted king, the brilliant, but useless character of a knight of romance was in great measure realized and revived; and the personal glory which he

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128 Ivanhoe’s rescue of Rebecca does, of course, occasion these high feelings in her bosom. But more importantly, it provides a counterpoint to Rowena’s coronation as Queen of Love and Beauty at the beginning of the novel. Clearly, Ivanhoe’s defense of Rebecca to preserve her life is a more important victory.  
129 Here I complicate Paul deGategno’s claim that “By unifying both cultures under a banner of law and order, Scott suggests the final failure of chivalry and its heroic code” (9).
acquired by his own deeds of arms was far more dear to his excited imagination than that which a course of policy and wisdom would have spread around his government. . . . [H]is feats of chivalry furnishing themes for bards and minstrels, but affording none of those solid benefits to his country on which history loves to pause, and hold up as an example to posterity. (426)

Ivanhoe is in grave danger of becoming a similarly useless character, and Rebecca’s argument, and care, restore him to home and a more responsible course of action.

Similarly, Rebecca’s triumph, for I must consider it a triumph, both in the Templar’s court and in the lists, is not a triumph of chivalry or even of law, but rather a triumph of personal dignity in the face of these ordering structures. Although Ivanhoe eventually appears as her champion, it is not the blow of his lance, but the violence of Bois-Guilbert’s “contending passions” (456) that preserve Rebecca and kill Bois-Guilbert. In order to fully understand Rebecca’s agency in her own preservation, it is necessary to recover the source of Bois-Guilbert’s “contending passions.”

Rowena is safely rescued from Front-de-Boeuf’s castle, and has “recovered all the dignity of her manner” (322), secure in the knowledge that Ivanhoe is safe, and (mistakenly) convinced that Athelstane is dead. Rebecca, however, has been carried off by Bois-Guilbert to Templestowe, where, unfortunately, the Grand Master of their order has just arrived. By a series of accidents and coincidences, Beaumanoir (the Grand Master) discovers that Bois-Guilbert has kept Rebecca prisoner, and immediately plans to make an example of him. The timely intercession of Malvoisin convinces the Grand

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130 Graham Tulloch has traced the source of this phrase to Scott’s reaction to Lauchie’s death. See Sroka for a reading of Ivanhoe’s “failure” as a sign of Scott’s revisions of romance towards realism.

131 Strangely enough, Athelstane “dies” when he mistakes Rebecca for Rowena and attempts to save her. It is also worth noting here that just after Bois-Guilbert carries Rebecca off to safety, Richard appears to rescue Ivanhoe: “And seizing upon Ivanhoe, he bore him off with as much ease as the Templar had carried off Rebecca” (314).
Master that Rebecca is a witch and has used magic arts to enthrall Bois-Guilbert. In the face of a very uncertain future, Rebecca is remarkably calm. When commanded to unveil at her trial, her dignity and beauty have a palpable effect on the audience: “the younger knights told each other with their eyes, in silent correspondence, that Brian’s best apology was in the power of her real charms, rather than of her imaginary witchcraft” (382). But this fictive court, and the fictive charges against Rebecca, cannot be dispelled by her inherent virtue or beauty. Instead, as Bois-Guilbert knows and advises her, Rebecca must demand a champion and clear her name in their own terms.

The Grand Master of the Templars writes Rebecca into history, quite literally, by recording the trial into the Templar’s Chronicle. However, Rebecca’s request for a champion contains an alternative to this history: “‘God will raise me up a champion,’ said Rebecca. ‘It cannot be that in merry England, the hospitable, the generous, the free, where so many are ready to peril their lives for honor, there will not be found one to fight for justice” (386).\(^\text{132}\) Rebecca’s attempt to distinguish between honor and justice is a tacit claim that a coherent English identity already exists and so the tournaments pitting Saxon against Norman (such as the tournament at Ashby) do not determine English identity, but are simply a quest for honor. Rebecca casts her request for a champion as an opportunity for the English to accede to the identity she has spoken for them – the hospitable, the generous, the free – in opposition to the nation-less Templars, particularly Bois-Guilbert.

\(^{132}\) In the form of her challenge, Rebecca offers the Saxons and the Normans the possibility of a united English identity – to fulfill her request for a champion is to confirm that Saxons and Normans both are English. This foreshadows Rebecca’s final encounter with Rowena when she describes the people of England as “a fierce race,” conflating Saxon and Norman into one English race.
Bois-Guilbert’s conscience is troubled by his knowledge of Rebecca’s innocence and his contempt of the excessive laws that govern the Templars. Yet Bois-Guilbert considers himself trapped by his desire for power. In his final encounter with Rebecca, he offers to forsake the Templars for her, but imagines that they will instead achieve power and wealth in another nation. In answer to his claim, “England – Europe – is not the world” (401), Rebecca asserts two reasons she will not go with him: “Enough, that the power which thou mightest acquire I will never share; nor hold I so light of country or religious faith as to esteem him who is willing to barter these ties” (402). Bois-Guilbert cannot tempt Rebecca because the power he pretends to offer her is the inaction of a queen. In essence, Bois-Guilbert offers to transform Rebecca into Rowena. Rebecca’s second objection concerns the ties of race and nation. Although Rebecca’s race has been subject to discussion for most of the novel, her inclusion of “country” as a mitigating factor is striking. Despite the frequent characterization of Jews as “homeless,” Rebecca appears to value those who have a sense of home. As I noted earlier, she encourages Ivanhoe to privilege home over fame, and here chastises Bois-Guilbert for his willingness to abandon England in service of the quest for power.

In arguments concerning herself, however, Rebecca situates herself in the context of all women. It is only the narrator’s interjection that marks her as a Jewess, and thus different from other women: “‘Bois-Guilbert,’ answered the Jewess, ‘thou knowest not the heart of woman, or hast only conversed with those who are lost to her best feelings. . . . I am myself a woman, tenderly nurtured, naturally fearful of danger, and impatient of pain; yet, when we enter those fatal lists, thou to fight and I to suffer, I feel the strong
assurance within me that my courage shall mount higher than thine” (402). Such universalizing claims are Rebecca’s common strategy of defense (we might remember that she appealed to Rowena based on their shared belief in God and the Ten Commandments). The narrator’s interjection, “the Jewess,” reminds us that Rebecca is viewed by all other characters as a Jewess, not as a woman. Bois-Guilbert is unable to forget Rebecca’s difference, her race, and can only imagine a happy ending if one of them forsakes their faith.

Rebecca’s religion appears to be the obstacle to Bois-Guilbert, but the real obstacle is her race. Although Bois-Guilbert might wish Rebecca a “Christian” and “of noble birth” (402), such desires only underscore the impossibility of such a transformation in the twelfth-century world of the novel. It is a testament to the power of Rebecca’s rhetoric that Bois-Guilbert imagines that he might be the one to switch faiths: “When I gaze on thee, and think when and how we are next to meet, I could even wish myself one of thine own degraded race . . . this could I wish, Rebecca, to be near to thee in life, and to escape the fearful share I must have in thy death” (402-3). Bois-Guilbert’s use of the term race underscores the impossibility of conversion for him. To become Jewish is not only to switch faiths, but to become a member of a “degraded race.” It is, of course, Bois-Guilbert’s unwillingness to renounce his ambitions, not his unwillingness to renounce Christianity, that necessitates his complicity in Rebecca’s sentence. Although Bois-Guilbert claims ignorance of the source of Rebecca’s power over him, she has, as he says “well-nigh unmanned [him]” by troubling his complacent acceptance of the value of
power and prestige (404). The contending passions that kill Bois-Guilbert are his desire for Rebecca and his desire for ambition and fame, not the blow of Ivanhoe’s lance.

The death of Bois-Guilbert marks the end of the Templars, and the restoration of Richard to the throne. It also marks the end of Ivanhoe’s obligation to Rebecca – an obligation that one might argue he has hardly repaid – and thus completes his restoration to Rowena and his family. Of course, Ivanhoe has already been reunited with Rowena and his family – in the middle of Rebecca’s distress. It is significant that this restoration is a very public and political one. Richard, unknown to Cedric in his disguise as the Black Knight, had requested a “boon” of him, in recompense for his rescue. Yet when Richard returns to claim his reward, he must reveal himself as Richard Plantagenet in order to compel Cedric’s compliance. In response to Cedric’s claim, “in that which concerns the honor of my house, it is scare fitting that a stranger should mingle,” the Black Knight must claim his prerogative as ruler to interfere in Cedric’s affairs, and more so, must redefine himself as “Richard of England,” rather than Richard of Anjou, “whose deepest wish is to see her sons united with each other” (437). In thus assuming the interests of England, Richard turns a private family dispute, a dispute that we must remember arose because Ivanhoe and Rowena’s attachment foiled Cedric’s political plans to marry her to Athelstane, into a public matter, indeed a matter of national import. The conversation quickly shifts to the question of Richard’s right to the throne, which Richard can only end by returning to the personal, requiring Cedric to make good his word, even if he “hast refused to acknowledge [Richard’s] lawful sovereignty” (438). This strange confusion between home and nation governs the conclusion of the novel.
Once Ivanhoe and Rowena are permitted to marry, they each disappear from the scene: Rowena flees to her room, and Ivanhoe flees to return Rebecca’s kindness by acting as her champion. It is only after Ivanhoe has attempted to repay his debt to Rebecca and after Richard has expelled the Templars and convinced Cedric through personal attention that the Normans aren’t that bad that Ivanhoe and Rowena are married. Their marriage is contingent on the resolution of the national tale and the restoration of public order. But their marriage, the celebration that we are anticipating from the opening pages of the novel, is barely narrated. We are told that the King attended, and “the countenance which he afforded on this and other occasions to the distressed and hitherto degraded Saxons, gave them a safer and more certain prospect of attaining their just rights than they could reasonably hope from the precarious chance of a civil war” (463). Gurth and Wamba form the entirety of the “domestic retinue” and our narrator casts the wedding as a public affair, which “marked the marriage of two individuals as a pledge of the future peace and harmony betwixt two races, which, since that period, have become so completely mingled that the distinction has become wholly invisible” (463). As Duncan and Tulloch have noted, the narrative’s claim that Wilfred and Rowena’s marriage marks the end of conflict between Saxon and Norman is troubled for two reasons: their own, untainted Saxon heritage, and the historical location of the novel in the 1190s, well after the Conquest of 1066. What is perhaps most compelling about this contrived restoration of order is that it does not seem sufficient, not even to Scott, who instead concludes the novel with a meeting between Rowena and Rebecca.

133 Graham Tulloch has noted that “Richard of England” didn’t really spend that much time in England after the Crusades, but instead immediately returned to France.
Scott’s choice of a private, domestic scene for the conclusion of his romance calls into question readings of the novel that ignore the domestic in favor of various politicized readings of the “greenwood” or the novel’s critique of chivalry. The national romance, which we expect to conclude in the marriage of Wilfred and Rowena, actually concludes with Rebecca’s exile. The making of Englishness is unmade. Ian Duncan has suggested that Scott’s “normative solution” is

the restoration of romance power from women to men. In exorcism of the spectre of castration, women pour forth their natural-magical energies of healing upon the hero, disoriented and disabled at the labyrinthine centre of his adventure. The complicity of women is the source of energy – the private current of romance – that flows behind the scenes of male history. Its familiar end is in self-cancellation, a consenting exclusion from those scenes, absorption into the male as its shadow. (Modern Romance, 72)

While this reading appears to map quite nicely onto the plot of Ivanhoe, Rebecca’s complicity with the national romance is troubled by her inability to “cancel” herself from Ivanhoe’s thoughts, and by the unraveling of order in the final paragraphs of the novel. The “complicity of women” is rendered explicit in the concluding scene of Ivanhoe, and if the women do not entirely end “in power,” neither do the men.

As is typical of Rebecca’s appearances in the novel, she enters in anonymity. Elgitha tells Rowena that a “damsel” wishes to speak with her, and our narrator begins by describing her: “She entered – a noble and commanding figure, the long white veil, in which she was shrouded, overshadowing rather than concealing the elegance and majesty of her shape. Her demeanor was that of respect, unmingled by the least shade either of fear or of a wish to propitiate favor. Rowena was ever ready to acknowledge the claims, and attend to the feelings, of others” (464). This passage is remarkable for several

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134 See, for example, deGategno and Wilt.
reasons, not the least of which is the strange white veil, reminiscent of a bridal veil but also of a death shroud, which Rebecca wears. In a domestic space filled only with women, this bridal veil/shroud is, for the first time, not exoticized. Yet what is perhaps most interesting is the narrator’s tacit claim that Rowena has misread Rebecca.\(^{135}\) Rowena’s readiness to acknowledge any “claim” contradicts the narrator’s description of Rebecca’s demeanor. Indeed, Rowena continues to misread Rebecca, and the state of the English nation, through the entirety of their encounter. By claiming that Ivanhoe or Richard’s personal intercession will prevent Rebecca from encountering prejudice in England, Rowena overlooks the global picture, a picture Rebecca paints in graphic terms that undermine the novel’s heretofore comic conclusion: “the people of England are a fierce race, quarrelling ever with their neighbors and among themselves, and ready to plunge the sword into the bowels of each other. Such is no safe abode for the children of my people” (465). Here Rebecca reverses the terms of prejudice, reminding the English that they too possess a racial identity that can be subject to stereotype.\(^{136}\) Despite the contention between Saxon and Norman, Rebecca’s final barb unites the English as a race and grants them a national identity that they are not yet sure they possess. But this Englishness is a national identity of isolation and argument; Rebecca’s retirement from

\(^{135}\) Here I disagree somewhat with Michael Ragussis’s otherwise fascinating reading of Rebecca in terms of contemporary debates over the “Jewish Question.” While Ragussis’s claim that Rebecca’s suitors might emblematize different national attempts to address the “Jewish Question,” his reading of this final meeting between Rebecca and Rowena as a “psychic intrusion” (204) on Rowena and the consciousness of England undervalues Rebecca’s agency and ignores the distinction between the public trial at Templestowe and this private, domestic scenario.

\(^{136}\) Cagidemetrio has suggested, in response to this passage: “In a nation that aims as representing itself as safe, pacified, and unified under the name of marriage and citizenship, there is no place for the Wandering Jewess. . . . As Rowena says to Rebecca, there is nothing to flee from or to fear in the new England” (43). Cagidemetrio argues that the gulf between Rebecca and Rowena is race, and that Rebecca can only bridge that gulf through miscegenation.
the world is actually a more active involvement in it: the “works of kindness to men” (467) that she leaves England to pursue are a surer cure than Rowena’s offer of Christianity and sisterhood.\textsuperscript{137} Despite the novel’s apparent privileging of domestic order, Rowena’s incompetent grasp of nationhood, and her desire to always substitute the personal (sisterhood) for the national (the end of prejudice), reminds us of what is lost with Rebecca’s departure. Rebecca’s race, and the double-consciousness it engenders, foregrounds the national. Rowena’s privileged status as Saxon heiress has enabled her to efface the national, as she in turn is effaced by the national. In other words, Rowena’s privilege shelters her from concern with national identity and allows her to view the world in terms of her personal dominance and personal desires. However, this fictitious dominance is subject to the national, as her encounter with DeBracy, and even her eventual reunion with Ivanhoe, attests.

With Rebecca’s departure, the narrative concludes in two paragraphs. But they are two paragraphs of loss. Rowena’s marriage is “long and happy,” but our narrator tells us “it would be inquiring too curiously to ask whether the recollection of Rebecca’s beauty and magnanimity did not recur to his mind more frequently than the fair descendant of Alfred might altogether have approved” (467). This sentence effaces Rowena’s subjectivity in favor of her lineage, while leaving Rebecca’s beauty and magnanimity intact in Ivanhoe’s recollection. Richard’s reign and Ivanhoe’s success, the very public and political ends that Rowena and Ivanhoe’s marriage should have

\textsuperscript{137} Here I obviously agree with Kenneth Sroka’s claim that Rebecca’s decision to leave England “undermines the reconciliation scene” (654). While I concur with Sroka’s claim that Ivanhoe and Richard are as culpable as Prince John or Bois-Guilbert, I would suggest that Rebecca’s self-exile does more than move villainy from private individuals to larger social problems; the loss of Rebecca is significant because it is the loss of a solution to the difficult mediation of private and public.
supported, also vanish. We learn that Ivanhoe succeeded, and “might have risen still
higher but for the premature death of the heroic Coeur-de-Lion”; with Richard’s death,
“perished all the projects which his ambition and his generosity had formed” (467). The
tenuous union of Saxon and Norman, as well as home and nation, occasioned by Rowena
and Wilfred’s wedding is only a union in ritual, but it is the foundational ritual of the
historical romance. The secondary heroine, in whom home and nation are united
internally, is lost to England, although she remains a necessary feature of the genre of
historical romance.

Magawisca’s Missing Arm: Absence and Replacement in Hope Leslie

While Scott attempts to blend Saxon and Norman to arrive at English, Sedgwick
narrates the usurpation of America by the settlers, who are both no longer English and not
yet American. In doing so, Sedgwick must narrate both emancipation and conquest.
More than the male characters, the women of Hope Leslie embody alternative
possibilities and dangers for the new nation. Each of these women represents a possible
model of femininity for the new nation (as well as for the new genre of historical
romance and, more broadly, the novel), but Sedgwick’s focus on the Fletchers, and
particularly on Everell, draws particular attention to Magawisca, Esther and Hope.

By depicting these three heroines as rivals for Everell’s affection, Sedgwick
requires the reader to compare them – Everell’s choice becomes, in a manner of speaking,

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138 Although they still refer to themselves as “English,” the conflict between King and Parliament, in which
the colonies side with Parliament, foreshadows the Revolution. Also, Sir Phillip Gardiner, Alice Leslie’s
father, and Uncle Stretton are all figured as dangerous characters. The good English, it is implied, exiled
themselves to America.
the reader’s choice. An early review of *Hope Leslie* in *The North American Review* commented on this trio of heroines as friends and rivals:

Hope Leslie, the white heroine of this work, is a finely-drawn character, full of enthusiasm, affection, truth and yet sparkling with gaiety and wit. Her friend and rival – yes both friend and rival – Esther Downing, is lovely too, in her way; which, as was to be expected in those times, a rather precise one, and her loveliness is as distinct from Hope’s as possible. Magawisca, too, is another friend and rival, as was before hinted. Here are three ladies who seem to love and admire each other as much as they do Everell Fletcher, who, by the way, excellent as he is, hardly deserves such an accumulation of honor. (420)

As the reviewer suggests, three rivals for the affections of one man is a bit excessive, especially in a novel with multiple love plots. The other love plots are more properly subplots, but these subplots figure even more dangerous possibilities for the new nation.

The subplot featuring Mary/Faith Leslie/“white bird” is emblematic of the dangerous possibility of “going native” – one of the legacies of the captivity narrative.\footnote{The Faith Leslie plot has received a lot of critical attention for its revision of the captivity narrative. See, for example, Ezra Tawil’s “Domestic Frontier Romance, or How the Sentimental Heroine Became White.” Although Tawil’s reading is compelling, he does not address the other potential blurring of racial boundaries: the potential marriage between Everell and Magawisca. That the narrative is comfortable with a white woman “going native” -- but not with a white man -- seems incredibly significant.} While Sedgwick appears to be sympathetic to the relationship between her and Oneco, and even rewrites the “vacancy” in Mary’s eyes from a result of her captivity by the tribe to a result of her captivity by her family, her escape at the end of the novel closes the possibility of Mary functioning as a bridge between white and Native American communities. Rosalin/Rosa’s narrative undoes certain romantic expectations embodied in Sir Phillip Gardiner, himself a stand-in for dangerous Englishness and chivalric romance. Esther and Magawisca certainly play a larger role in the novel than either of these women, but they are also our secondary heroines because they rightly identify the
merit of the hero, Everell Fletcher. They are each a potential mate for him, and each embody very different directions for the historical romance.\footnote{Despite readings that locate \textit{Hope Leslie} at the crossroads between domestic and frontier fiction (Tawil, etc.), I use the term historical romance to situate Sedgwick within both British and American traditions, particularly Scott. One similarity worth noting here is that Rebecca and Rowena both recognize the virtue of the hero, Ivanhoe.}

Similar to Rebecca’s self-imposed exile at the conclusion of \textit{Ivanhoe}, the self-exile of each of these women enables Hope and Everell’s marriage at the expense of alternative visions of national identity. For both Esther and Magawisca, the conflict between personal desire and public duty informs their relationship to Everell. Magawisca’s departure conforms to the historical exile of Native Americans from the colonies; by writing this exile as a choice, Sedgwick emphasizes the choice of duty over desire. Esther’s exile is significantly more complicated: as a white woman, there is certainly no obvious reason why she couldn’t have married Everell; in fact, her guardian forwards the match. In Esther, Sedgwick rewrites Scott to ensure that disinterested kindness is not solely located in the Vanishing American, but remains in the American colonies.

In part, we might argue with Nina Baym that Sedgwick’s project feminizes Scott by creating a central female character who “had to be imagined as participating more directly in historical events than as somebody’s girlfriend” which, Baym suggests, Sedgwick does by “making her act to preserve or forward some historical trend that was only embryonic in her own time . . . the cultural refinement of America, which preserved the good aspects of aristocracy” (\textit{American}, 155). Baym’s reading is an appealing account of Hope Leslie’s transatlantic self: Hope is the daughter of William Fletcher’s
former love Alice, who was forcibly retained in England. Hope’s arrival in America is a sort of replacement for Alice’s failed attempt to escape England, and foreshadows her marriage to Everell, which will in turn replace or complete the courtship of Alice and William and establish a new American aristocracy. However, by focusing on Hope, Baym ignores the alternate potential solutions to the problem of heroinism presented by the text. She dismisses Magawisca by limiting her role to the political arena of the novel; Magawisca’s “intransigent resistance to conciliatory white overtures” (American, 158) are read as Magawisca accounts for them in her trial, and later in her conversation with Hope and Everell: “The Indian and the white man can no more mingle, and become one, than day and night” (349). When placed next to Rebecca’s struggle between personal desire and social duty (and the parallel struggle she occasions in Ivanhoe), Magawisca’s mirror answers at the trial and to Hope and Everell seem suspect because Magawisca and Everell have a deeper connection than Baym or other critics will allow. Despite our narrator’s insistence that Magawisca does not hesitate in her reply, her parting request for the miniature portrait of Everell reminds us of Magawisca’s private affection, an affection which she has sublimated in favor of her obligations to her tribe.

The significant difference between Scott and Sedgwick is located in the splitting of Rebecca’s role into Esther and Magawisca. Like Rebecca, Esther chastens her affection in order to devote herself to the larger public good:

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141 Here I disagree with Alide Cagidemetrio, who has suggested: “Rebecca’s traits are given both to Magawisca and to Hope; both speak for the ‘new woman,’ the republican female citizen of the postrevolutionary nation; they are both bold and independent, open-minded and generous. Magawisca’s blessing of Hope and Everell is anticipated in the novel by Hope, who renounces Everell in favor of her bosom friend Esther, a true daughter of the Puritans, a saintly fair and rigorous maiden, as pale as her literary ancestor, Rowena. . . . But Everell is better off than Ivanhoe: both Hope and Esther come from illustrious families of pure English stock, and he can discard Esther and yet marry within his blood.” (34)
She illustrated a truth, which, if more generally received by her sex, might save a vast deal of misery: the marriage is not *essential* to the contentment, the dignity, or the happiness of a woman. Indeed, those who saw on how wide a sphere her kindness shone, how many were made better and happier by her disinterested devotion, might have rejoiced that she did not “Give to a party what was mean for mankind.” (371)

Esther’s useful gifts are contrasted with Magawisca’s inaccessible and vanishing happiness; Esther’s continued circulation in the colonies ensures that she will be a part of the new nation as an unmarried woman. By splitting the role of the secondary heroine in two, Sedgwick is able to recast spinsterhood as a positive choice, unattached to the racial logic that informs both Rebecca’s and Magawisca’s exile.

In the union of Hope and Everell, as Magawisca and Mr. Fletcher note, the obstructed marriage of Alice and William is finally completed. The Gothic narrative of Alice’s escape from her family, and her recapture, is replaced by the romance of Hope and Everell’s long attachment, which is not impeded by tyrannous parents, but rather by their own desires to do good. Located historically just as the colonies are beginning to thrive, but before the Revolutionary War, Hope and Everell embody a rebellious virtue that will make revolution possible and right. Thus Hope and Everell’s union emblematizes both a conclusion of the long-deferred romance plot of Alice and William and consolidates the nation under the auspices of a couple who are always ready to rebel against order in favor of right: a proto-Revolutionary family.  

To do so, however, the

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142 Judith Fetterley has argued that the novel imagines “Republican sisterhood” in place of Republican motherhood; Everell and Hope’s brother-sister relationship ensures that Hope has a voice in the new Republic. Fetterley focuses on the possibility of sisterhood between Hope and Magawisca and Hope’s real sister, Faith, dismissing Rosa and Esther as “the ‘English’ twins” (78).
novel must displace two alternative mates for Everell, and therefore potential versions of American femininity: the Native American Magawisca and the Puritan Esther.¹⁴³

Magawisca is introduced into the Fletcher family before Hope arrives, and in her early relationship with Everell, Sedgwick offers an alternative narrative of American history – one in which white man and Native American, like Saxon and Norman, intermingle and live peacefully together. American history, of course, makes such a narrative impossible, and Sedgwick must find a way to foreclose this possibility without vilifying Magawisca or Everell. As Douglas Ford has argued, one way in which Sedgwick achieves this end is by having Magawisca articulate the impossibility of interracial marriage: “placing the power of commentary and perspective in the hands of a normally marginalized character: a Native American woman” (87), just as Rebecca recognizes the impossibility of a marriage with Ivanhoe. Other readings have argued for a sisterly relationship between Magawisca and Hope. Maria Karafilis has claimed that Hope’s appropriation of Magawisca’s metaphorical language and the relationship between the two characters “‘nativize[s]’ Hope and construct her as particularly ‘American’ as Hope's absorption of autochthonous traces links her to the New World” (340). In a similar vein, Gustavus Sadler notes the similarities between Hope and Magawisca and suggests: “In comparison to Magawisca, however, Hope is nervous, excitable and often agitated. Under the burden of holding a secret, she struggles to contain her information in a manner the text implicitly juxtaposes with Magawisca's

¹⁴³ Sedgwick suggests a genealogical model here: Alice’s daughter and William’s son are more perfect rebels than their parents, and their descendants will participate in an even larger rebellion, the American Revolution. While Magawisca is pushed further west, away from the colonies; Esther is displaced to England for several years, but returns to contribute to the construction of American identity in the settlement.
composed body of knowledge” (43). Thus, for Sadler, Magwisca contributes to the nation-building work of the text by helping Sedgwick to “locate a different national origin, one in which bodily presence and pain help cement the state” (44). These readings of Magawisca are compelling for their attention to the political stakes of Magawisca’s presence, but they underemphasize Everell’s mediating role in the relationship between Magawisca and Hope; a role which renders their sisterhood suspect, as I will argue later in this chapter.

Sedgwick, like Cooper before her, is concerned with imagining a truly American girl. In The Pioneers, as we saw in the last chapter, Cooper endorses primogeniture as an ordering structure for the post-Revolutionary U.S. Bess’s status as an heiress enables her to brave the wilderness of the American frontier and the hearth. Sedgwick’s novel is set prior to the American Revolution; her heroine must – and Hope does – anticipate the American revolution through acts of virtuous rebellion. Maria Karafilis has suggested “Sedgwick deliberately contrasts Hope with Esther, the niece of Governor Winthrop, a ‘perpendicular’ young woman who embodies the precision, constraint, and lack of originality associated with Britain (and who, significantly, goes off to Britain for a period near the close of the novel), traits which often were presented as singularly unfitting for life in the new nation” (339). Like Hope, Esther is beautiful, wealthy, and related to the Governor (as close to lineage as one gets in America). But Esther is also timid, meek and obedient. Whether this obedience is attributed to a British identity, as Karafilis claims, or to Esther’s devout Puritan faith, Esther’s unwillingness to disobey ultimately costs her

144 Although Cooper and Sedgwick are contemporaries, his fame precedes hers, as she acknowledges when she differentiates her narrative from his by not going into the details of woodcraft that characterized his Leatherstocking tales.
Everell’s esteem. Esther’s language often conflates all forms of authority into heavenly authority; Hope, on the other hand, distinguishes between doing what is right and doing what you are told.

While the nationalist agenda of the novel requires that both Magawisca and Esther cede Everell to Hope, the secondary heroines also represent possibility outside of the marriage plot, a possibility which Sedgwick appears to endorse. As Judith Fetterley has suggested, Hope’s marriage to Everell appears to confirm that private desires are in service of, and perhaps equivalent to, the public good. However, the secondary heroines privilege a community identity at the expense of personal desire and are valued for doing so: Magawisca’s return to her tribe is rewarded when she governs her tribe during Mononotto’s lunacy, and Esther’s decision to remain unmarried and in the service of mankind is valorized by the narrator. The deflated narration of Hope and Everell’s wedding and the narrator’s concluding paean to Esther’s disinterested kindness suggests that Sedgwick imagines the new citizens of the republic as those who privilege public good over private desire.

As I have argued above, although Hope replaces Magawisca as Everell’s “sister” and potential mate, Magawisca and Esther have more in common than Everell: they both value the ordering structures of government (whether that government is tribal or colonial) over disordering desire. I am not the first scholar to suggest a connection

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145 Here I disagree with Fetterley’s reading of Esther as twinned with Rosa. Fetterley claims: “Both are women who accept male authority and see their own position as subordinate, who regard romance and religion as the main concerns of women, and who accept the separation of public and private, which entails their own confinement to the latter” (78). Fetterley fails to account for the different forms of authority Rosa and Esther affirm and their different fates: Rosa is seduced by Sir Phillip and ultimately dies, Esther survives her romantic attachment to Everell and becomes a useful public citizen.
between Magawisca and Esther. Sadler has suggested that Esther takes on Magawisca’s role within the novel:

Throughout the novel, Magawisca’s “form” helps the English characters – especially female characters – to regulate their psychological states. And while Magawisca exits the novel before its end, her work apparently done, Sedgwick ultimately attempts to embed some of her power in the body of Hope's friend Esther Downing, a young English woman who comes to resist the demands of the marriage plot which increasingly encroaches on the narrative. (43)

In locating Magawisca’s performativity in her liminal status within Native American and white communities, and dismissing her “vanishing” as convenient to the narrative, Sadler undervalues Magawisca’s decision to embrace her public identity as Native American, instead of her place within the private community of Everell and his family. For Sadler, Esther’s unmarried body becomes a powerful spectacle. In contrast, Karafilis claims that after Magawisca vanishes, “Esther Downing is also ‘removed’ from the space of the text for a time, returning to England; and Hope remains the lone heroine in the New World. Thus, it is only through Hope (and her union with Everell) that the text holds out the potential for radical democratic individualism beyond the scope of the novel” (341). But such a reading dismisses the progress that Esther has made over the course of the novel from love-sick girl to public woman. Sedgwick must educate her characters, and also her readers, out of personal attachment and into national responsibility. For Magawisca, this education is in terms of external conflicting duties inherent in the state of the nation: which family should she choose: the Fletchers, or her tribe? For Esther, this education takes the form of an internal conflict between selfish desire and public good, framed by her strict adherence to Puritan doctrine and her affection for Everell.
Magawisca’s introduction to the Fletcher family establishes her merit and encourages the reader to concur with Mr. Fletcher and Everell’s acceptance of her, rather than with Jennet or Mrs. Fletcher’s slurs. Fletcher chastens his wife for her prejudice and praises Magawisca’s intellect: “You surely do not doubt, Martha, that these Indians possess the same faculties that we do. The girl, just arrived, our friend writes me, hath rare gifts of mind – such as few of God’s creatures are endowed with” (20).

Magawisca’s intellect, and her command of English, enables her to circulate in the public sphere as an interpreter, but despite her ability to navigate both native and English cultures, Magawisca’s identity is firmly located by her status as the daughter of the chief. Within the narrative, Magawisca’s lineage, intellect, beauty, and the “low thrilling tone” of her voice enable characters to overcome their initial prejudices (77). But despite Magawisca’s exceptional qualities, Sedgwick insists on making her and Everell representative: “She and her conductor were no unfit representatives of the people from whom they sprung” (22). In similar fashion, Magawisca’s beauty is transformed from a marker of exceptionalism to a quality that marks her as representative of her race: “it was an expression of dignity, thoughtfulness, and deep dejection that made the eye linger on Magawisca’s face, as if it were perusing there a legible record of her birth and wrongs” (23). Her birth, in other words, that she is born a Native American, is the source of the wrongs done to her. Her legible face, especially in one so young, suggests a collective, rather than a personal history. Her face is legible because it is Native American, not because it is hers.146 But the personal attentions of Everell affect Magawisca as an

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146 One might contrast Magawisca’s “legible” face with the gaze Rebecca’s body is subject to in *Ivanhoe*. While Sedgwick wants to be able to read a Native American history in Magawisca, Rebecca is read as a
individual. In the opening scene he interposes twice: once with Jennet, and once with
Digby. Everell’s interpositions create a personal tie between the two characters, one that
is tested when Magawisca learns that her father is planning on attacking the Fletchers.

Magawisca is torn between her affection for Everell and her responsibility to her
family. Magawisca’s relationship with her family is personal, but it also fits into the
larger categories of tribe and race. Her relationship with Everell is a purely personal tie.
When considered on the more abstract levels of race and nation, their attachment
threatens both categories. Magawisca’s divided loyalties are illustrated in two significant
scenes: Mrs. Fletcher’s letter to her husband, which uncovers Magawisca’s attachment to
Everell, and Magawisca’s account of the Pequot war, which rewrites the history that
Everell, and presumably Sedgwick’s readers, are familiar with. I want to pause here to
stress the careful opposition of these two moments in Sedgwick’s text. Mrs. Fletcher’s
letter to her husband reveals that she suspects an attachment:

Think not that this anxiety springs from the mistaken fancy of a woman . . . . No –
my heart yearneth towards this poor heathen orphan-girl; and when I see her, in
his absence, starting at every sound, and her restless eye turning an asking glance
at every opening of the door; every movement betokening a disquieted spirit, and
then the sweet contentment that stealth over her face when he appeareth; – oh,
my honored husband! All my woman’s nature feeleth for her – not for any
present evil, but for what may betitde. (33)

Mrs. Fletcher’s empathy with Magawisca as a woman overshadows her anxiety about
the attachment – an attachment that would not be sanctioned by their colonial
community. That this account is conveyed in a private letter to her husband is also

woman, despite her Jewish race. However, like Rebecca, Magawisca is torn between personal attachment
and national duty.
significant, especially when contrasted with Magawisca’s alternative history of the Pequot war, recited out loud as a corrective to the colonial version recited by Digby.

Phillip Gould has admirably contextualized Magawisca’s account of the Pequot war within competing nineteenth-century accounts. He argues:

Despite Sedgwick’s apparent efforts to bestow full authority on Magawisca, the text of Hope Leslie resists this impulse and argues instead for historical relativism. Sedgwick’s rendition of the war is, indeed, just what she dubbed Magawisca’s narrative, a “recital,” or performance, of history, and one which was in competition with other such performances in the early republic. (644)

This very competition is, of course, rehearsed within Sedgwick’s text: while Magawisca’s history focuses on the personal suffering of the Pequot, it is also a narration of a historical event (told by the conquered) that she contrasts with Everell’s history (told by conquerors). Everell is educated by Magawisca: “he had heard [stories about the Pequod war] in the language of the enemies and conquerors of the Pequods; and from Magawisca’s lips they took a new form and hue; she seemed, to him, to embody nature’s best gifts, and her feelings to be the inspiration of heaven” (55). Magawisca hopes that her retelling of the Pequot war will, quite literally, change history. Or rather, restore an untold history to the chronicle, which it does, through the medium of Sedgwick’s text. This history is also intended to justify her allegiance to her family, but Magawisca’s account of national history, to Everell, only increases her value as an individual.

Although Magawisca’s nationalist and familial obligations prevent her from warning the Fletchers, she does intercede for them and particularly for Everell.147 In a

147 Although the term “nation” is difficult to apply to Native American tribes of 1640, I describe Magawisca’s obligations as “nationalist” because of her tribe’s role in the Pequot War. Magawisca and her tribe resist the establishment of the Anglo-American nation in racialized terms – the Indian and the white man – but the separation of Indian from white man is important to the construction of American national
scene which foreshadows her later intercession and dismemberment, Magawisca steps between an attacking warrior and Everell: “The warrior’s obdurate heart untouched by the sight of the helpless mother and her little ones, was thrilled by the courage of the heroic girl – he paused and grimly smiled on her” (66). This heroic deed gains esteem from both Native Americans and whites, underscoring that it is only Magawisca’s race that prevents an attachment with Everell. In a later conversation with Digby, Everell argues that even that obstacle would not have been important: “You do me honor, by implying that I rightly estimated that noble creature; and before she had done the heroic deed, to which I owe my life – Yes, Digby, I might have loved her – might have forgotten that nature had put barriers between us’” (223). Douglas Ford has read this passage against Sedgwick’s preface as a “textual conflict” that “reveals the degree to which Everell's notion of ‘nature’ exists as a construction of language” (91). That Everell could only love her by “forgetting” the barriers of “nature” is in itself problematic because it renders a natural human attraction unnatural. But this quotation also negatively implies that it is Magawisca’s “heroic deed” which both makes her worthy of Everell’s notice and prevents it from being possible because this deed ensures Everell’s escape, and because of her disfigurement, which I will return to later in this chapter. Digby’s response to Everell reminds us of the constraints of this historical romance:

I don’t know but you might, Mr. Everell, but I don’t believe that you would; things would naturally have taken another course after Miss Hope came among us; and many a time, I thought it was well it was as it was, for I believe it would have broken Magawisca’s heart, to have been put in that kind of eclipse by Miss Leslie’s coming between you and her. Now all is as it should be; as your mother

identity. The story of Mary raises the possibility that Indian and white man could, in fact, “mingle,” but Sedgwick is careful to reveal to Hope, and to the reader, that Mary has fully embraced her Native American identity, to the point that she and Hope cannot communicate.
– blessed be her memory – would have wished, and your father, and all the world. (224)

“All is as it should be” in the narrative’s predictable march to the union of Hope and Everell, the union that, as I have argued above, is necessary to the novel’s historical project. But Digby’s sympathy for Magawisca also illuminates Sedgwick’s maneuvering.

Sedgwick’s plot prevents a direct competition between Magawisca and Hope by rending Everell from Magawisca at the moment of Hope’s expected arrival. The novel also passes over the early intimate scenes between Hope and Everell; Sedgwick jumps from Magawisca’s heroic sacrifice to Hope’s letter to an absent Everell, with whom she is already on terms of familial intimacy. The disjunction between Magawisca’s “lopped quivering member” (97), and the happy prattle of Hope’s letter is startling, and, I would argue, intentional. The reader should be startled by Magawisca’s dramatic absence and Hope’s sudden presence. Sedgwick’s tactic is a photonegative of Scott’s narrative strategy. Scott reveals Rebecca’s agency repeatedly in Ivanhoe by juxtaposing her agency with Rowena’s passivity; Sedgwick presents Magawisca’s agency first, then disrupts it by supplanting her with Hope. This substitution is puzzling until Sedgwick reveals, through Hope’s letter, that she has created a second, but white Magawisca in Hope.

First, I would like to return to the scene of Magawisca’s dismemberment. After several attempts to help Everell escape, Magawisca is imprisoned in a separate tent. She does not leave Everell without a struggle, and it is one that affects him deeply: “when the mat dropped over the entrance and separated him from the generous creature whose heart had kept true time with his through all his griefs, who he knew would have redeemed his
life with her own, he yielded to a burst of natural and not unmanly tears” (91).

Sedgwick’s anxiety over Everell’s tears underscores the depth of his attachment to Magawisca, and such an attachment is necessary recompense for what she is about to go through for him. Magawisca’s first injury is the scalding of her hand as she drugs the guards. This prefigures the dismemberment and establishes Magawisca’s ability to transcend human pain in service of those she loves. The dismemberment is, indeed, accidental, but Magawisca’s ability to quickly transform it from a tragic accident into an occasion to save Everell marks her power:

“Stand back!” cried Magawisca. “I have bought his life with my own. Fly, Everell – nay, speak not, but fly – thither – to the east!” she cried, more vehemently.

Everell’s faculties were paralyzed by a rapid succession of violent emotions. He was conscious only of a feeling of mingled gratitude and admiration for his preserver. He stood motionless, gazing on her. “I die in vain then,” she cried, in an accent of such despair, that he was roused. He threw his arms around her, and pressed her to his heart, as he would a sister that had redeemed his life with her own, and then tearing himself from her, he disappeared. No one offered to follow him. The voice of nature rose from every heart, and responding to the justice of Magawisca’s claim, bade him “God speed!” To all it seemed that his deliverance had been achieved by miraculous aid. All – the dullest and coldest, paid involuntary homage to the heroic girl, as if she were a superior being, guided and upheld by supernatural power. (97)

Magawisca’s management of this scene is striking: she is able simultaneously to persuade the tribe to accept her claim and honor her sacrifice, while rousing Everell to action and giving him directions. But I also want to call attention to Sedgwick’s anxiety here:

Everell thanks Magawisca, “as he would a sister.” Sadler accepts Sedgwick’s assertion that Magawisca is a “surrogate sister” to Everell, and so must read her amputation as “the mark of her loyalty to the sympathetic bonds offered in the proto-antebellum-domestic-space of the Fletcher household” (45). However, as I will demonstrate later in this
chapter, Magawisca consistently describes her amputation as a sacrifice she makes for Everell. While Sedgwick is willing to attribute Magawisca’s action to a “generous love,” she deflates the erotic possibilities of this scene until Hope is introduced and they are no longer threatening.

Any further anxiety over the reader’s possible preference for Magawisca is allayed in Hope’s letter: “I repeated what I had often heard you, Everell, say, that Magawisca believed the mountain, and the valley, the air, the trees, every little rivulet, had their present invisible spirit and that the good might hold discourse with them. ‘Why not believe the one,’ I asked, ‘as well as the other?’” (111). Hope possesses the virtues of a Magawisca without the baggage of a racially other identity. If Magawisca rescues Everell, well, Hope rescues Nelema, although with considerably less glamour or danger to herself.

Having temporarily dispatched with one alternative femininity, Sedgwick now turns to the other: Esther Downing. In the years that have passed, the relationship between white man and Native American, conqueror and conquered, has become more stable; the novel now turns to the internal problems of nationhood. What will an American girl look like? Esther and Hope are placed side by side, at the moment of Everell’s homecoming. In order to build suspense for the reunion scene, Sedgwick refrains from naming her characters:

“You say it’s edifying, and all that,” said the shortest of the two young ladies, in reply to what seemed, from the tone in which it was concluded, to have been an expostulation; “and I dare say, dear Esther, you are quite right, for you are as wise as Solomon, and always in the right; but for my part, I confess, I had infinitely rather be at home drying marigolds, and matching embroidery silks for aunt Grafton.”
“Hope Leslie! By Heaven!” exclaimed the young man, springing forward. The young lady turned at the sound of her name, uttered a scream of joy, and under the impulse of strong affection and sudden delight, threw her arms around the stranger’s neck, and was folded in the embrace of Everell Fletcher. (135)

We later discover that Everell also knows Esther Downing, but in this opening scene, despite hearing Esther’s name mentioned, Everell recognizes Hope. Yet in the scenes that follow, we read, with Hope, the possibility of a romantic attachment between Everell and Esther.

What we know of Esther appears to favor an attachment. Her family is the prominent friend of the Governor, and she is considered a model woman in the neighborhood. When Everell surprises them, “Miss Leslie now drew her friend’s arm within hers, and as she did so, she perceived that she trembled excessively” (136). But Esther is not the only one to arouse suspicion; when they reach the Winthrop’s, Everell’s actions are also suspect: “Hope Leslie, noticing that Everell cast stolen glances of anxious inquiry at her friend, made, with the usual activity of a romantic imagination, a thousand conjectures as to the nature of their acquaintance” (137). Like Hope, the reader makes a “thousand conjectures” as to the connection between Everell and Esther.

We do not have long to conjecture, for the next pages give the history of Esther and Everell. While Magawisca and Hope are each permitted to narrate their own histories (Hope, in her letter to Everell; Magawisca, in her oral account of the Pequot wars), the narrator usurps the account of Esther and Everell’s history: “Miss Downing then proceeded to relate some of the following particulars; but as her narrative was confused by her emotions, and as it necessary our readers should, for the sake of its illustration, be possessed of some circumstances which were omitted by her, we here give
it, more distinctly, in our own language” (140). Esther’s inability to speak for herself, and the dismissive language of the narrator create distance between the reader and Esther: we learn not to trust her narrative, or narratives like it – the conventional romance plots of popular fiction. Esther does not die from unrequited affection, but only nears death because of the burden of fantasy, a fantasy that is private and not in service of the national good. Once she confesses her feelings to Everell, she lives to suffer under them. By allowing readers to witness Esther’s suffering, Sedgwick encourages a reconsideration of the value placed on romantic attachments. While Esther imagines (and extensively fantasizes about) an attachment between herself and Everell, Hope is entirely ignorant of her own feelings for Everell, but acts in what she perceives to be the interests of her friends.

Hope’s initial attempt to mediate an attachment between Everell and Esther requires her to use the language of courtly love; language she borrows from Scott and chivalric romance: “‘Esther,’ she said, ‘Everell shall not be our knight at tilt or tournament, if he cannot use the lance your uncle has dropped at his feet. Are there not always, Everell, in your heart, arguments of love unfeigned, when you drink to the health of a fair lady?’” (156). The only other character to speak in such terms is Sir Phillip Gardiner, whose meditations on Hope and Esther are also of a decidedly chivalric character: “[W]ould it not be a knightly feat to win the prize against a young gallant, a pink of courtesy, while the unfledged boy is dreaming of love’s elysium? Besides, the helpmate selected by these Judges of Israel, for the good youth might be, if she were a little less saint and more woman, a queen of love and beauty” (208-10). Sedgwick often
refers to Sir Phillip as “the knight,” and these knightly sentiments owe a particular debt to *Ivanhoe*, where the competition for the Queen of Love and Beauty juxtaposed Rebecca and Rowena. But in borrowing these terms, Sedgwick is differentiating her historical romance from its predecessor. By displacing the rhetoric of chivalry onto Sir Phillip, already suspect as an English Catholic, Sedgwick educates the reader into a suspicion of historical romance that is not connected explicitly to a historical reality: Sir Phillip’s chivalry does not belong in America in 1640. He is, of course, a false knave in many other ways as well; Hope’s appropriation of these courtly terms underscores the falseness of her desire to unite Everell and Esther. On the opposite extreme, Mr. Downing’s plan to marry Hope and Everell off to parties who they imagine will tame their rebellious natures (namely, Sir Phillip and Esther) is equally false. Their misjudgment of Sir Phillip echoes their misjudgment of Everell. The covert presentation of Downing’s argument in a letter to Governor Winthrop belies the covert logic of his argument: wealth and power. In marrying Hope, Everell would have access to her fortune, which would give Everell power in opposition to the Downings, whose worth rests in the valuation of Esther’s spiritual graces.

Hope does succeed in arranging Esther and Everell’s engagement and Sedgwick attempts to assign the blame to Hope’s nature: “Thus had Hope Leslie, by rashly following her first generous impulses, by giving to ‘an unproportioned thought its act’ effected that, which the avowed tenderness of Miss Downing, the united instances of Mr. Fletcher and Governor Winthrop, and the whole colony and the world beside, could never

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148 For another reading of Sedgwick’s use of Scott that focuses on Sir Phillip Gardiner, see Clare Simmons’s article, “Hope Leslie, Marmion, and the Displacement of Romance.”
have achieved” (225). This may seem to be another proof of Hope’s uncanny personal powers of persuasion, or a critique of Hope’s lawless impetuosity, but Everell only considers marrying Esther because of Hope’s coolness to him, which in turn, is a result of the reappearance of Magawisca, who requires Hope to keep a secret:

Utterly engrossed in one object, [Hope] never reflected that there had been anything in her conduct to excite Everell’s distrust; and feeling more than ever, the want of that sympathy and undisguised affection which she had always received from him, she was hurt at his altered conduct; and her manner insensibly conforming to the coldness and constraint of his, he naturally concluded that she designed to repel him, and he would turn from her, to repose in the calm and twilight quiet that was shed about the gentle Esther, whom he knew to be pure, disinterested, humble and devoted. (216)

It is Hope’s secret, not her rash action, which drives a wedge between Hope and Everell and encourages his attention to Esther. Everell’s decision to “repose” in Esther will not do for the national romance, and is related to why Esther will not do for a national heroine: she is too obedient to function as a proto-revolutionary, as Everell will discover.

It is only after Everell is safely engaged to Esther that Sedgwick feels comfortable reintroducing Magawisca, and indeed, she must introduce her in captivity. In the narrator’s description of Everell’s reaction to her appearance, we see her dangerousness: “‘Now God be praised!’ he exclaimed, as he caught the first glance of a form never to be forgotten – ‘it is – it is Magawisca!’” (244). The ambiguity of the “form never to be forgotten” is telling; the narrator is not clear whether Magawisca’s form is memorable because of her beauty or because of her dismemberment. We know from Hope’s first meeting with Magawisca that her deformity is not visible under the mantle of her blanket: “Magawisca might have at once identified herself, by opening her blanket, and disclosing her person; but that she did not, no one will wonder who knows that a savage feels more
even than ordinary sensibility at personal deformity” (191). But Magawisca’s sensitivity over her deformity is not typical of “a savage,” it is synonymous with her attachment to Everell, as we see when she first sees him: “through the aperture Magawisca had a perfect view of Everell, who was sitting musing in the window seat. An involuntary exclamation burst from her lips; and then shuddering at this exposure of her feelings, she hastily gathered together the moccasins that were strewn over the floor, dropped a pair at Hope’s feet, and darted away” (193). To expose her arm is to expose her weakness, and her tie to Everell. When Sir Phillip visits Magawisca at the jail and undermines her confidence in Everell, as she later tells him:

“That bad man”, she said, “made me, for the first time, lament for my lost limb. He [Sir Phillip] darkened the clouds that were gathering over my soul; and, for a little while, Everell, I did deem thee like most of thy race . . . but when I found thou wert true,” she continued in a swelling, exulting voice, “when I heard thee in my prison, and saw thee on my trial, I again rejoiced that I had sacrificed my precious limb for thee; that I had worn away the days and nights in the solitudes of the forest musing on the memory of thee, and counting the moons till the Great Spirit shall bid us to those regions where there will be no more gulfs between us, and I may hail thee as my brother.” (349)

As this passage occurs near the conclusion of the novel, Sedgwick must complete at least the surface deflation of Magawisca and Everell’s relationship; if Everell embraced Magawisca as a “sister’ when she rescued him, now Magawisca must imagine a time she can “hail” him as a “brother.” By locating this moment in the future, Magawisca leaves space for a current uncertainty. Indeed, just after she sees Everell for the first time, Magawisca troubles their “fraternal” relationship: “I have learned to deny even the cravings of my own heart; to pursue my purpose like the bird that keeps her wing stretched to the toilsome flight, though the sweetest note of her mate recalls her to the
nest. But ah! I do but boast . . . I may not trust myself; that was a childish scream that escaped me when I saw Everell” (199). Her “toilsome flight” is clearly her nationalist responsibilities, which lure her away from Everell and to the management of her tribe in her father’s stead.

Magawisca’s deformity is central to the action of the novel one other time: at her trial. In the trial, Magawisca most clearly values her race identity, at the expense of personal desire. She turns aside the well-meaning counsels of Everell, and exiles herself. The climax of the trial occurs when Magawisca prophesies the vanishing Indian, and overturns the public authority of the court through the exposure of her limb:

“Take my own word, I am your enemy; the sun-beam and the shadow cannot mingle. The white man cometh – the Indian vanisheth.” . . . She paused – passed unresisted without the little railing that encompassed her, mounted the steps of the platform, and advancing to the feet of the Governor, threw back her mantle, and knelt before him. Her mutilated person, unveiled by this action, appealed to the senses of the spectators. Everell involuntarily closed his eyes, and uttered a cry of agony, lost indeed in the murmurs of the crowd. She spoke, and all again were as hushed as death. “Thou didst promise,” she said, addressing herself to Governor Winthrop, “to my dying mother, thou didst promise, kindness to her children. In her name, I demand of thee death or liberty.” (309)

Everell’s reaction to her limb and his knowledge of the personal sacrifice it represents is lost in the public murmur. The public later joins Everell in crying for her liberty, and so the absent limb, a previously hidden marker of Magawisca’s attachment to Everell, is re-read as a public appeal to the senses of her spectators to ensure her liberty.

The rescue of Magawisca proves to be the deciding point in the contest between Hope and our secondary heroines. Magawisca learns that Hope did not betray her when Hope arrives to rescue her: “‘Then, Hope Leslie,’ she exclaimed, rising from her abject seat, and throwing off her blanket, ‘thy soul is unstained, and Everell Fletcher’s truth will
not be linked to falsehood” (327). Once Magawisca has ascertained Hope’s virtue and worth, she can resign her to Everell. The reader, of course, has known of Hope’s innocence almost the entire time, so Magawisca’s concession is significant only because it reconciles her to the union of Hope and Everell, and thus reconciles the reader to the impossibility of a romance between Magawisca and Everell. The rescue also tests Everell’s regard for Esther.

Everell asks Esther to help him rescue Magawisca, but what is fascinating about their discussion is the markedly political tones of the debate. In response to Esther’s initial refusal, Everell argues: “But surely, Esther, there must be warrant, as you call it, for sometimes resisting legitimate authority, or all our friends in England would not be at open war with their king. With such a precedent, I should think the sternest conscience would permit you to obey the generous impulses of nature, rather than to render this slavish obedience to the letter of the law” (292). Although Everell politicizes this claim in terms of the war between King and Parliament occurring contemporaneously in England, it clearly has Revolutionary resonances. Esther’s insistence on submission to authority answers Everell’s political and personal question in terms that conflate the authority of the law and the church: “‘For me, Everell, it would be to sin presumptuously, to do aught, in any way, to countervail the authority of those chosen servants of the Lord, whose magistracy we are privileged to live under’” (292). Esther’s inability to imagine a situation in which rebellion is warranted makes her unfit for the national romance, as we see when Everell compares her to Hope by crying: “Oh Hope Leslie! How thy unfettered soul would have answered such an appeal!” (294). Hope’s ability to discern between
obedience and justice will make her sympathetic both to Magawisca and to the “friends in England” who oppose the King. In turn, these instances of right rebellion anticipate the American Revolutionary War.

Throughout the novel, Sedgwick carefully juxtaposes the personal and the political. Once Everell and Hope have freed Magawisca, the three heroines (Hope, Esther and Magawisca) are again compared in the discussion surrounding the miniature of Everell. The discussion, aptly enough, rehearses the conflict over Everell through the anxiety over the miniature:

Immediately after Everell’s arrival in England, he had, at his father’s desire, had a small miniature of himself painted, and sent it to Hope. She attached it to a ribbon, and had always worn it. Soon after Everell’s engagement to Miss Downing, she took it off to put aside, but feeling, at the moment, that this action implied a consciousness of weakness, she, with a mixed feeling of pride, and reluctance to part with it, restored it to her bosom. While she was adjusting Magawisca’s disguise in prison, the miniature slid from beneath her dress, and she, at the time, observed that Magawisa’s eye rested intently on it. She must not now hesitate – Everell must not see her reluctance, and yet, such are the strange contrarieties of human feeling, the severest pang she felt in parting with it, was that Everell would think it was a willing gift. (353)

While the earlier conflicts between our three heroines had been staged in terms of plot (that is, Sedgwick manipulating the events of the novel to juxtapose our heroines), the miniature is significant because it stages the conflict within Hope. For most of the novel, Hope has been ignorant of her feelings for Everell, but the history of the miniature substantiates the narrative’s claim that those feelings have always been present. Hope’s decision to wear the miniature when Everell is engaged to Esther is an attempt to navigate the situation she finds herself in: to wear the miniature is to acknowledge her regard for Everell, but she can recast that regard as friendship, which she should not be
afraid to own by wearing the miniature. To give Magawisca the miniature, however, is only possible if, as Magawisca claims, she has possession of the “living form.”

In turn, the education of our secondary heroines is only complete if they resign their hold over the “living form.” Once Magawisca possesses the image of Everell in miniature, she leaves, and with her, the Indian vanishes. The possibility of an alternative history of intermarriage between colonized and colonizer is forever lost. Her departure, and the sympathy it engenders in Hope and Everell, unites them spiritually before they are literally united: “there was a consciousness of a perfect unity of feeling, a joy in the sympathy that was consecrated by its object, and might be innocently indulged, that was a delicious spell to their troubled hearts” (354). Through sympathetic identification with Magawisca, Hope and Everell can share feelings with each other without revealing their feelings for each other. This scene of sympathy is contrasted with Hope’s guilt when they return to Esther:

Their eyes met. A deep, scorching blush suffused Hope’s cheeks, brow and neck. Esther’s face beamed with ineffable sweetness and serenity. She looked as a mortal can look only when the world and its temptations are trampled beneath the feet, and the eye is calmly, steadily, immovably fixed on heaven. . . . Hope turned away from Esther, and crept into her bed; feeling, like a condemned culprit, self-condemned. (360)

Esther’s peace, like Hope and Everell’s sympathy, comes from having resigned personal desire for the greater good. However, Hope and Everell’s sympathy for Magawisca is simultaneously an acknowledgement of their feelings for one another: Hope’s guilt at meeting Esther confirms that her sympathy for Magawisca is contingent on feeling that she possesses some claim on “the living form” of Everell. But this claim contests Esther’s engagement to Everell. As I have noted earlier, Esther’s earlier account of her
relationship with Everell is usurped by our narrator; desire and dismay render her unintelligible. Once Esther has renounced personal desire, she regains her serenity and disappears from the narrative as a personality, but she is also allowed to speak for herself.

In her farewell letter to Hope and Everell, Esther writes with the authority of an author. She chastises Hope and Everell for their errors, and writes their marriage into the text, thus making their attachment public. Mr. Fletcher echoes her letter by uniting their hands. Hope and Everell’s confessions of mutual love, however, occur behind the curtain. While their engagement is, in this manner, left private – beyond the ken of both writer and reader – Hope’s wedding is left to the “fancy” of “that large, and most indulgent class of our readers, the misses in their teens” (369). The public ceremony belongs to the public imagination, without any authorial shaping. The marriage achieved, the details of dress are insignificant. Sedgwick is more anxious that her readers rightly read Esther’s fate. Though Esther is initially exiled to London, Sedgwick needs to make room for the femininity she represents in America as well, and so Esther returns, after two or three years, to exactly the same station she held before. To redeem her potentially condemnable status as old maid, Sedgwick must make it Esther’s choice, and so she instructs the reader: “Her hand was often and eagerly sought, but she appears never to have felt a second engrossing attachment” (370). Esther’s unmarried state results does not result from an inability to feel; rather, in the concluding sentence Sedgwick describes Esther’s private feeling self as most fulfilled when most erased in service of the public:

She illustrated a truth, which, if more generally received by her sex, might save a vast deal of misery: that marriage is not essential to the contentment, the dignity, or the happiness of woman. Indeed, those who saw on how wide a sphere her kindness shone, how many were made better and happier by her disinterested
devotion, might have rejoiced that she did not “Give to a party what was meant for mankind.” (371)

By effacing all interest, and indeed, all personhood, Sedgwick is able to recast Esther as a “disinterested” public agent and model for her readers.

Ironically, contemporary reviewers questioned Magawisca’s legitimacy as an “angel Indian,” while they were frankly bored with Esther’s own angelic qualities. Sedgwick’s contemporaries had embraced the version of American identity embodied in Hope Leslie, and were not convinced by Sedgwick’s attempt to rewrite Scott in order to make the alternative posed by the secondary heroine available. However unsuccessful her attempt to sway her readership, Sedgwick’s novel illustrates the work performed by secondary heroines in service of national identity. Magawisca’s decision to value her race identity as Native American over her affection for Everell is revealed to be a choice between two transient things. While the possibility for Magawisca (and thus other Native Americans) to share in the new American identity vanishes, Esther’s vaunted kindness to mankind, like Rebecca’s before her, literally exceeds national boundaries in her voyage to England, but her return to the colonies ensures that it is also an American virtue.

**Why Does the Historical Romance Make Us Want What We Can’t Have?**

I began this chapter by discussing the secondary heroine as she functions within the genre of historical romance. She is, in *Ivanhoe* and *Hope Leslie*, the race that does not fit within the new nation. Saxon and Norman may be reconciled, but Jew does not fit easily within that resolution. Indeed, Rebecca’s unfittedness underscores the tenuousness

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149 Preoccupation with the question of whether Magawisca was a probable character or not persists from the moment of publication to the end of the century. See, for example, a late mention in the February 1891 issue of *The Living Age*: “*Hope Leslie* . . . contains, in Magawisca, the Red Indian heroine, an impossibly idealized character” (520).
of that reconciliation, which might lead contemporary readers to question the work the novel does to consolidate English origins and the deployment of Saxon and Norman as differently valued terms to describe English national identity in their own century.

Readers’ dissatisfaction with the conclusion of Scott’s novel suggests that Scott succeeded in changing the desires of an English audience. Sedgwick’s desire to create a usable past for American readers in a republic that is only about fifty years old requires that she revise Scott’s conception of the historical romance, both by more overtly portraying the chivalric romance as dangerous, through Sir Philip Gardiner, and by dividing the secondary heroine in two: one secondary heroine who is racially marked and must vanish from the novel as she vanishes in history, and one secondary heroine who brings the virtues of the lost secondary heroine, that is, her public service to the nation, into the novel’s closing vision of America. For the secondary heroine’s unfittedness, which exiled Rebecca from England, is what allows her agency in Sedgwick’s historical romance.

This is true for both of Sedgwick’s secondary heroines. Magawisca’s dismemberment occasions Mononotto’s lunacy and thus Magawisca’s rise to power within her tribe. As I have argued earlier, this dismemberment results from racial conflict between Native American and white man, but also from Mononotto’s conflation of the nation (the Pequod War) with the domestic (the Fletchers). Magawisca’s decision to take the miniature instead of Everell is a decision to separate the domestic from the nation, and the Native American from the nascent American nation. For Sedgwick, however, Magawisca’s choice is unsatisfactory because it is an intensely separatist choice.
Magawisca does not choose reconciliation and universal good, as Rebecca does, instead she chooses exile as the white man’s enemy. Although in keeping with history, Magawisca’s exit at the conclusion of the narrative leaves no room for an alternative to the marriage plot in the newly formed American nation.

In contrast, Esther’s lack of nationalist zeal and her complicity with the rules make her an unsatisfactory heroine for the marriage plot, but once she has rejected the romance plot, she can operate without the confines of the domestic. Hope and Magawisca, it is important to remember, are always acting in secret, and that secrecy is imposed by the conflict between the domestic and the nation. While Hope’s rebellious nature is necessary for revolution, it is a revolution that, for Sedgwick’s readers, is already in the past. In Esther’s disinterested kindness, Sedgwick inscribes a model of civic duty, and one that she hopes will educate her readers away from the romance plot and into civic virtue.

To return to the question with which I began this chapter: why does the historical romance make us want what we can’t have? The secondary heroines of historical romance embody romantic possibilities that the knowable facts of history render impossible. For Scott, Rebecca’s ability to transcend nationalism is a valuable lesson for the English of any century. While the prejudices of their age make a marriage between Ivanhoe and Rebecca impossible, Scott has challenged the prejudices of his own age to make such a marriage desirable to his readers. Rebecca’s appeal to Ivanhoe and readers alike troubles the novel’s consolidation of English identity as Anglo-Saxon, but she also challenges the idea of what constitutes a heroine. Sedgwick’s multiple heroines operate
similarly, each seemingly representative of the possibilities available to American
identity in the seventeenth century, but her focus on Magawisca, Esther and Hope belies
her revision of Scott. By splitting the secondary heroine, Sedgwick removes the
problems of race and conquest while still retaining a viable alternative to the marriage
plot. Esther’s serenity is solely a result of her rejection of romance, not, as was the case
for Rebecca, a submission to the realities of racial prejudice. Although the contemporary
reviews of *Hope Leslie* suggest that Sedgwick failed to make this possibility appealing to
young readers, it still exists. Concluding the novel with return, rather than with exile,
Sedgwick incorporates disinterested kindness into American identity. Taken together,
*Ivanhoe* and *Hope Leslie* occupy a turning point in the history of the novel: the historical
romance, situated at the cusp of Romanticism and Realism, strains against both terms.
In the first chapter of his novella, *Rebecca and Rowena*, Thackeray voices the opinion of many readers of Sir Walter Scott’s *Ivanhoe* when he expresses dissatisfaction with Scott’s conclusion:

nor can I ever believe that such a woman [as Rebecca], so admirable, so tender, so heroic, so beautiful, could disappear altogether before such another woman as Rowena, that vapid, flaxen-headed creature, who is, in my humble opinion, unworthy of Ivanhoe, and unworthy of her place as heroine.

In the pages that follow, Thackeray attempts to rewrite the conclusion of Scott’s novel to reunite Rebecca and Ivanhoe and dispatch the dull and overly pious Rowena. Yet although this project is avowedly fictional – Thackeray specifically addresses the novel-readers who, like he, must have been dissatisfied with Scott’s conclusion – it is also constrained by “the real,” even if that constraint is only voiced in Thackeray’s persistent fictionality. The narrator’s cry, “Life is such, ah, well-a-day! It is only hope which is real, and reality is a bitterness and a deceit,” is enacted on the level of plot in *Rebecca and Rowena*. Ivanhoe’s hope for future happiness is perpetually undercut by Rowena’s persistent reappearance, and his marriage to Rebecca is only made possible by a variety of providential occurrences: hope is the only reality. Ivanhoe and Rebecca’s marriage, once it is made “real,” is dismissed by the narrator, who assures us that they were not “boisterously happy” and died “rather early.” The narrator’s turn away from the very
scene of happiness which he avowedly began the project in order to have the pleasure of narrating underscores some of the concerns of Realism, concerns that I will address in this chapter.

But what is Realism? It has become a critical commonplace to question not only the nature of the real, but also the nature of Realism. In this chapter, I examine the ways scholars have recently addressed the problem of Realism as a bridge from my consideration of the historical romance in the last chapter, to my reading of late James in the next and final chapter. By and large, I do not necessarily challenge these readings of (or for) Realism; rather I seek to present the problem of British and American Realism in its complexity to suggest that the Realist heroine, touched on tangentially in each of the critics I read, is central to any understanding of Realisms more broadly. I propose that Realism takes up primary and secondary heroines in a very different way than the Romantic novels with which we have heretofore been concerned, and that the treatment of these heroines in the Realist novel reveals the centrality of the changing role of women to the transforming social milieu so often associated with the switch from Romance to Realism. The Realist novel reverses the role of primary and secondary heroines, preferring dangerous women to conventional heroines. \(^{150}\) The novel works to contain these dangerous women through two different narrative strategies: acculturation and resistance.

In the novel of acculturation, the conventional heroine is often the agent of acculturation, helping the dangerous woman to contain herself. In the novel of resistance,
the conventional heroine is the opposing paradigm to the dangerous woman, but is often presented unsympathetically. While I do not claim that the study of heroines is the panacea to the problem of Realisms, I would suggest that the plight of heroines in the Realist novel serves as a sort of connective tissue, linking the competing Realisms of the literary marketplace with the changing constructions of womanhood and nationhood central to my understanding of literary history.

To return to the example with which I began this chapter: Thackeray’s novella revises Scott’s historical romance in two directions. On the one hand, Thackeray offers a comedic, but arguably realistic account of the day-to-day married life of Ivanhoe and Rowena – the comedy lies, of course, in Thackeray’s juxtaposition of quotidian married life (Ivanhoe adopting a “degage” air over tea to broach an issue), with all of the clinking armor of historical romance. On the other, the conclusion of Thackeray’s novella articulates the difference between desire and reality: in order to achieve the desired marriage of Rebecca and Ivanhoe (and to preserve the schoolboy fantasy of an entirely happy ending), Thackeray’s narrator employs a good deal of authorial privilege (namely in the narration of Rebecca’s secret and previously unknown conversion to Christianity) and he finally literally refuses to narrate the scene of their romantic reunion and subsequent marriage. The narrator’s revisions empty Rebecca of national and racial difference and thus enable her, rather than Rowena, to occupy the place of conventional heroine. The deflation of our romantic expectations in the final paragraphs ultimately mimics Scott’s conclusion, which, as I argued in the last chapter, unravels the very order that the novel has struggled to create through the marriage of Ivanhoe and Rowena. In
Thackeray’s novella, the swap of heroines does not make the world better; it only gestures toward the reader’s desire for a better world as a desire that realistic narratives cannot, ultimately, fulfill.

The tension between desire and objectivity – or between the desire for (fictional) conventions and the desire for objectivity – structures critical approaches to British Realism. Despite very different critical frames, George Levine, Nancy Armstrong and Amanda Anderson each posit the tension between a desire to adhere to a set of conventions and a desire for objectivity as the basis of the Realist project, a project which is therefore necessarily always in flux. Yet although this “flux” is often described in terms of the imperialist, nationalist and cosmopolitan concerns that Realism addresses, the critical traditions of British and American Realisms are predominantly mono-national. Without conflating British and American Realism, I want to trace the similarities and differences in critical understandings of these traditions in order to underscore the centrality of gender, and (for me) secondary heroines in particular, to a transatlantic approach to Realism.

In *The Realistic Imagination*, George Levine traces the progress of British Realism from Shelley to Lawrence as the struggle between the order of fictional conventions and the increasing disorder of perceived reality. Beginning with Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, Levine suggests that Realism explores the tension between selfish desire (often figured as ambition) and social good and arrives at a compromise that excludes all forms of excess – excess of desire, character, or language. Ultimately, however, the Realist novel moves away from this compromise by locating excess
elsewhere – either in the Alpine landscape of *Frankenstein*, in the watery death of Maggie Tulliver, the exile of Daniel Deronda, or in the privileging of the individual consciousness typical of late realism. Levine gives particular weight to the role of landscape in the realist novel: landscape provides an outlet for excess. Thus Frankenstein and his monster traverse the Alpine waste, Waverley explores the Highlands, and *Daniel Deronda* concludes by imagining its hero elsewhere. However, later in the book, Levine seems to conflate landscape with character, suggesting that if Realism does not deflect excess into the landscape, it must locate it in an excessive character: “The novelist’s instinctive sympathy with the rebel is reflected in the landscape, in Ruskin’s passions for mountains, in George Eliot’s preference of the Rhine to the Rhone, in Thackeray’s attraction to Becky Sharp or to Beatrix” (215). The pairs evoked in the last two clauses – Rhine and Rhone, Becky Sharp as opposed to Amelia – suggest that the struggle between the desire for order and the apparent disorder of reality is often contained within the realist novel through the pairing of an excessive landscape with an ordered reality or of a rebel like Becky with a conventional heroine like Amelia. Levine’s preoccupation with landscapes of excess overshadows the tension between desire and restraint on the level of character.

Nancy Armstrong shares Levine’s concern with the tension between desire and restraint, but locates this tension in the advent of photography. Armstrong builds on her work in *Desire and Domestic Fiction* to suggest that just as domestic fiction authorized

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151 See Susan S. Williams’s *Confounding Images: Photography and Portraiture in Antebellum American Fiction* for a reading of the significance of photography to antebellum American literature.
the kind of women described in the conduct books of the period . . . the kind of
visual description we associate with literary realism refers not to things, but to
visual representations of things, representations that fiction helped to establish as
identical to real things and people before readers actually began to look that way
to one another and live within such stereotypes. (Fiction in the Age of
Photography, 3)

The tension between word and image informs Armstrong’s understanding of Realism.
Particularly, she argues that the creation of a vocabulary of photographic images located
the class status, race, nation, and gender of the subject of the photograph via a series of
visual cues that were then imported into fiction in the form of description or vice versa.
Like Levine, Armstrong sees landscape as crucial to her understanding of Realism. Yet
where Levine focuses on the role of untamed landscapes in Realist fiction, Armstrong
focuses on the history of the picturesque in England as an example of the ways in which
the image could replace “the real” and in doing so, make safe the real. Armstrong
uncovers the ways in which photographs of the urban poor or the English landscape could
make safe (often by making invisible) the labor and thus the condition of the poor. While
photography made the exterior landscapes of the countryside, the city, and the empire
“safe,” it also affected the representation of interiors. Photographs of domestic interiors
established the coherence of the Victorian middle class, and the centrality of Victorian
middle-class women to that coherence, against a threatening exterior world.

Armstrong’s readings of Dickens, The Picture of Dorian Gray, Wuthering
Heights, Alice in Wonderland, and the novels of H. Rider Haggard establish the force of
the image in determining the difference between the middle-class woman and her
working-class or native counterpart. The difference between the “real” of Dickens and
what she terms Victorian fantasy is a distinction between narratives that adhere to image
categories even as they forward an exceptional case and narratives that play with identities that fall outside of conventional categories only to ultimately reaffirm convention. In her reading of Victorian fantasy, then, Armstrong suggests that racial difference within England (epitomized by the deployment of race in *Wuthering Heights*) and without (as illustrated in the imperialist tales of H. Rider Haggard) challenges visual categories in order to establish cultural difference and English superiority. Armstrong’s emphasis on internal and external colonialism privileges race as the dominant category of difference, deployed through marriage and particularly through the body of the woman.

In response, Amanda Anderson’s *The Powers of Distance* claims that while Armstrong and fellow critics Mary Poovey and Elizabeth Langland have made the middle-class woman central to the history of fiction, they have done so at the expense of her agency: “The Victorian domestic angel was often described as making her presence and influence felt without any element of deliberation, calculation or even self-awareness. This ideological formation conforms uncannily to the current ‘reconstruction’ of domestic power as, to adapt a formulation of Foucault’s, ‘both intentional and nonsubjective’” (41). As a corrective to this formulation, Anderson suggests critics turn to the relationship of women to nascent cosmopolitanism and modernity. According to Anderson, the vexed relationship between women and modernity stems from the association of women both with “traditional forms of life and knowledge,” and thus anti-modernity, and with the model of moral progress, which required detachment and was thus associated with progress and modernity (35-36). Therefore, for Anderson, women occupy a similarly vexed position as the two other categories or figures she surveys: the
Jew and the dandy. These figures point to the situatedness of detachment: “detachment, whatever form it takes or predominately allies itself with, is always situated – it is always a detachment from a particular mode of experience, a social situation, or a form of identity” (175). Anderson identifies this quest for detachment as the fundamental struggle of the Realist novel: the tension between “good” and “bad” forms of detachment, or between provincialism and universalism (or nationalism and cosmopolitanism) motivates critic, author and character alike. Anderson productively explores the tensions between, for example, George Eliot’s engagement with detachment and the limits of Daniel Deronda’s “model of reflective dialogism” (141), which cannot accommodate his mother’s struggle with Judaism and traditionalism.

Such readings are sensitive to the ways in which gender informs detachment, but tend to gesture to gender as a corrective: Daniel’s dialogical model is revealed as insufficient through his attitude towards his mother; Lucy’s experiments with detachment are juxtaposed with the unsatisfactory modes of detachment practiced by the women that surround her; Wilde’s dandies enact a freedom denied to the women who form the audience and often the subject of their epigrams. With the possible exception of Lucy, women tend to represent a challenge or corrective to masculine narratives of detachment (and Lucy’s stoicism is often described by Anderson as masculine). In this respect, her argument is consonant with the critical tradition of American Realism. Indeed, Anderson, Armstrong and Levine emphasize the centrality of gender to the Realist tradition, and particularly the opposition of the middle-class English woman to the various forces of empire, modernity, ambition and social change.
Without dismissing the special complexities of the English social world, I want to turn to the critical tradition of American Realism to suggest a similar preoccupation with the relationship of women to the novel, the nation and the social world. In the introduction to her book, *The Social Construction of American Realism*, Amy Kaplan argues that dominance of the romance thesis in American literary history has had the effect of diminishing American Realism as an unsuccessful imitation of Continental Realism: “The association of romance with a uniquely American culture has displaced realism to an anomalous and distinctly unAmerican margin of literary criticism, which has necessarily viewed its literary mode as a failure” (3). The work of Kaplan’s book is to rewrite this literary history, replacing the dismissal of Realism with an appreciation of American Realism as “a strategy for imagining and managing the threats of social change – not just to assert a dominant power but often to assuage fears of powerlessness” (10). In compelling readings of Howells, Wharton and Dreiser, Kaplan argues that Realism allied itself with a middle-class work ethic as opposed to the conspicuous consumption embodied by both romance and mass-market fiction. Realism thus occupied a social and artistic middle ground between a past aristocracy and an emergent mass culture: “a tenuous balancing act negating the idealism of genteel culture while resisting the sentimentalism of mass culture” (66). Kaplan’s attention to the Realist heroine culminates in her reading of Edith Wharton’s *House of Mirth*.

In a nuanced reading of Lily Bart, Kaplan charts the relationship between narration and vision to ultimately suggest the impotence of narrative for the woman
protagonist (and perhaps for the woman writer). Lily’s power and her downfall are both located in her status as commodity, or, in Kaplan’s terms, her status as a lady:

Through conspicuous consumption, the lady becomes a narcissistic artist who produces herself as an object of art. Paradoxically this self-display is self-effacing because it functions as a sign of her husband’s wealth and status. Although the lady of leisure is both producer and product, her status as sign requires that she erase any trace of the productive labor that makes her existence possible. (69)

Lily’s suicide marks the end point of “the spatial coordinates of Lily’s descent as she moves down the social scale through very different interiors” (101), leaving her body as a spectacle. Yet this end point is, as Kaplan notes, unsatisfactory.

Kaplan reads this dissatisfaction with the conclusions of Realist novels as evidence of the conflicts inherent in the narratives themselves:

The “unrealistic” endings of realistic novels embody the desire to posit an alternative reality which cannot be fully contained in the novels’ construction of the real, and they challenge our notion that the real is that which cannot be changed. As the endings lay bare the unresolved debates with competing versions of reality, we are better able to see the social construction of realism. (160)

By and large, however, Kaplan replicates Lily’s status as commodity by focusing on Rosedale and Selden as competing “realists.” The spectacle of Lily’s deceased body claims the attention of both Gerty and Selden, but Kaplan privileges Selden’s response and reads the women of Wharton’s novel as evidence of the dominance of conspicuous consumption. The social construction of Realism, and of Realist authorship, is one that is dictated by men. Kaplan leaves less fully explored her compelling assertion that Wharton desired to reclaim the domestic interior as a public space through the use of “interior architecture” (80), a strategy that renegotiates the boundaries of public and private and the respective separate spheres of men and women. Kaplan’s later work, especially her
well-known essay, “Manifest Domesticity,” follows a trajectory similar to Anderson’s in noting that the separate spheres model requires women to simultaneously police the borders of the home and provide a pervasive moral influence that extends beyond those borders and beyond, indeed, the borders of the nation. While “Manifest Domesticity” is exclusively concerned with the domestic novels of the 1830s-1850s and the attendant imperial politics of Manifest Destiny, Kaplan’s reading of Lily Bart, which so often adopts similar terms, raises the question of whether the women in *House of Mirth* provide a counter or a consonant narrative to that of the male “Realists” Kaplan identifies.

In response to Kaplan, Michael Davitt Bell’s influential text, *The Problem of American Realism*, compellingly argues that the terms “Realism” and “naturalism” seem, in the usage of authors and critics alike, “almost devoid of any consistent meaning” (4). Rather than attempting to assign such a meaning, therefore, Bell examines three major authors typically described as “Realists” – Howells, Twain and James – to “examine just how [the terms Realism and naturalism] have been used, to ask what purpose they have served and still serve, not only for nineteenth-century novelists but for twentieth century critics and literary historians” (4-5). Bell suggests that these three major figures are not united by a common definition of Realism, but rather by a common preoccupation with masculinity. James, Howells and Twain were all sickly as children and therefore isolated from masculine activities (with the exception of Twain, who overcame sickness and weakness to become fairly athletic). According to Bell, this outsider status coupled with a societal perception of literature as feminine or feminizing

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152 Bell argues that Kaplan uses realism to demarcate a historical period without suggesting the characteristics of realism as a genre.

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resulted in the rewriting of literature (and authorship) as manly activities, or, at the very least, as a form of acceptable social interaction between these socially marginalized men and their audiences.

Bell’s emphasis on the masculinization of literature and authorship is most evident in his consideration of Sarah Orne Jewett in the final chapter. Bell articulates Jewett’s relationship to Howellsian Realism: “For if realism sought to ally itself with ‘the world of men’s activities,’ the characteristic world of New England local color fiction is distinguished above all by the absence of men and of masculine activity” (176). The language here suggests that he is positing a connection between authorial anxiety and representation: male realist authors, for Bell, are concerned with representing “the world of men’s activities” in order to rewrite the profession of literature as masculine. Bell’s focus on this crisis of masculinity obscures the role of female heroines in Realist novels by male and female authors alike. When he turns to Jewett, a woman author who depicts a community of New England women, Bell can only describe her in terms of absence. The absence of “men and of masculine activity” in the plots of Jewett’s texts is consonant with the absence of a theory of Realism. Without denying the success or merit of Jewett’s fiction, he concludes that Jewett’s rejection of Howells’s rationale left her with no place to go, “no counter-rationale to put in its place” (204).

Bell is self-consciously anxious about the privileging of male authors in his text; throughout the introduction and in the preface to his chapter on Jewett, he repeatedly urges that his consideration of Jewett be considered as a template for examining other

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153 I am skipping Bell’s consideration of naturalism as obviously supporting the masculinist agenda outlined in his section on realism.
female “realists,” namely Cather and Wharton. But the terms that Bell provides for Jewett quite literally suggest a silencing of novels written by women: Jewett has “no counter-rationale,” and “silence, the essential quality of Dunnet Landing, is finally not an inspiration for literary vocation but an alternative to it, or a respite from it” (203). Bell thus implicitly argues that a consideration of Wharton and Cather will yield the same silence, a silence replicated in his rejection of “such possible precursors of the so-called realism of the 1880s and 1890s as the domestic best-sellers of the 1850s, such as Susan Warner’s *The Wide, Wide World*” (7). Despite Bell’s theoretical justification – “since I do not assume that there was a coherent tradition of realist practice in America in the 1880s and 1890s, it would make little sense for me to talk about influences on such a tradition” (7) – in practice Bell does argue for a sort of Realist tradition, one unified by a concern with “men’s activities,” which therefore has no place for women as writers or, particularly, as characters.

It is useful here to juxtapose Bell’s reading of James’s *The Bostonians* with that of Nancy Glazener in her seminal work, *Reading for Realism*. Bell suggests that *The Bostonians* is enmeshed in the struggle between realism and romance: on one hand, James is actively rewriting Hawthorne’s *A Blithedale Romance* to “fix” it (86); on the other, Bell uncovers a romance paradigm in *The Bostonians*, suggesting that Basil and Olive occupy the fairy-tale positions of Ogre and Knight, with Verena as the contested

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154 Kaplan instead suggests that Wharton actively writes against such literary forebears. Implicit, but never articulated, in her argument about Howells is that his privileging of domesticity makes him very similar to the domestic realists of the 1850s. In this respect, the debate over “Realism” might be productively rewritten by attending to the role of women in the narrative: such a reading would enable us to ask why certain high Realist texts share values with domestic Realism, even as they deny any association with that earlier fiction.
damsel in distress (90). Bell’s reading suppresses the class concerns of the novel, as well as any consideration of the representation of the feminist movement, in favor of the implicitly masculinist constructions of his paradigm of romance. Verena must be rescued; Olive must assume the masculine role of “Knight” or “Ogre” and ultimately cede it to the literal male, Basil Ransom. While Glazener’s reading might arguably come to a similar conclusion, the means by which she arrives at that conclusion are significantly different. Glazener reads Olive as James’s “mocking response to certain ideas about realism’s obligations to ‘the People’” (118), thus grounding The Bostonians in a very real social milieu encompassing the Women’s Rights Movement and other reform movements as well as the advent of authorial professionalism. While Glazener also suggests that the plot of The Bostonians centers on the competition of Olive and Basil for Verena, she reads this competition as a question of “women’s nature and destiny” both as women and as professionals. Glazener claims: “These novels suggest that authorial professionalism, because it was often conceptualized as a masculine control over some feminine capacity, was bound up with a version of heterosexuality that produced men as the controllers of many things feminine, including feminine sexuality” (145). Without fundamentally disagreeing with Bell’s perception of high realism as a masculinist enterprise, Glazener reads for the cultural stakes of that enterprise.

Glazener is, of course, best known for her consideration of the construction of “high realism” as “connoisseurship” opposed to the “addictive consumership” of sentimental and sensational fiction. Glazener suggests that the Atlantic group established this opposition in order to consolidate the link between class and culture: “To forego
addiction was to exert the kind of self-control that was supposed to bring success under capitalism, which meant that one endorsed the system and identified with its dominant culture, differentiating one’s self from the people who failed in the system (or whom the system failed)” (98). Included in the category of those “whom the system failed.” of course, were those who fell outside of the category of white male, especially women and African-Americans. However, Glazener’s focus on the production of this difference limits her discussion of the sentimental texts themselves. Indeed, the “masculine coded restraint of the feminine” that Glazener identifies as central to the institution of high Realism often appears in the very sentimental texts that high Realists disparaged (146).

In response to these historicist considerations of Realism, Phillip Barrish’s recent book, *American Literary Realism, Critical Theory and Intellectual Prestige, 1880-1995*, examines what I have been calling (following Bell) the problem of Realism within the Realist novels themselves. Barrish turns to the protagonists of novels by Howells, James, Cahan and Wharton to uncover the ways these protagonists claim cultural and intellectual prestige by “developing specifically ‘realist’ modes of cultural distinction” (126). After arguing that the male protagonists of novels by the male Realists in his study achieve their cultural distinction through forms of negative action and separation, Barrish turns in his penultimate chapter to a consideration of Wharton’s late novel, *Twilight Sleep* (1927), and its flapper heroine, Nona. Barrish understands Nona as posing a different form of Realist prestige, one that “derives from her hard-won ability to, as it were, include traumatic emptiness within her own daily, domestic “fold”” (126). In his concluding chapter, Barrish further builds on his reading of Nona’s form of distinction, suggesting...
that Nona’s vision of a “convent where nobody believes in anything” (qtd. in Barrish, 156) imagines a space where: “exploring the real could, at least in imagination, be undertaken without quite the same terrifying isolation implied by the single observation-slit that Nona had earlier felt her ‘eyes glued to’” (156-157). While the male protagonists Barrish examines each achieve cultural distinction, it is important to note that Barrish only suggests the possibility of reading the conclusion of *Twilight Sleep* as positive. Nona’s confinement in bed, he argues, must be considered in light of Wharton’s own practice of writing in bed each morning: “*Twilight Sleep*’s final scene of Nona in bed hints that the latter’s prostration before the real may be yielding her a distinct cognitive and emotional power, as well as the possibility for artistic creativity” (124). The tentative nature of Barrish’s claim suggests that Nona’s “distinction” is far more tentative than that of the male protagonists his study has treated thus far. Furthermore, the convent of women Nona imagines exists only in imagination for Nona, although Barrish suggests that such a community may exist in feminist and queer scholarship of our age.

These primary theorists of American Realism share a preoccupation with the distinctions between women and men, which are often synonymous with the distinction between low and high culture. Glazener and Kaplan in particular pay close attention to the construction of these distinctions in the social milieu of the Realist novel: Kaplan examines the letters and critical writings of her authors to determine their attitudes towards high and mass culture; Glazener focuses on the nascent magazine culture and the relation between authors, publishers, magazines and public. In turn, American Realism’s preoccupation with the distinction between high and low or masculine and feminine,
obscures the preoccupation of both high and low, masculine and feminine, American
and British Realism with the role of heroines. My use of the word “preoccupation” is a
bit misleading: the role of the heroine, or heroines, appears very infrequently in
discussions of Realism by Realist authors themselves. But it does appear, either in
examples specific to individual novels – such as Howells’s claim that Isabel Archer is
more “subtly divined” than Dorothea Brooke (“Henry James, Jr.,” 27) – or, occasionally,
in a sort of negative comparison, as critics either wish for or bewail the depictions of
heroines in previous literature. I want to dwell here on the discussions of heroines found
in Howells’s “False and Truthful Fiction” (1887) and Charles Dudley Warner’s “Modern
Fiction” (1883).155

Warner’s essay nostalgically yearns for “the lovely heroine, the sweet woman,
capable of great passion and great sacrifice,” “sweet girls, made to love and be loved,”
and worries in his conclusion: “Are there no noble women, sensible, beautiful, winning,
with the grace that all the world loves, albeit with the feminine weaknesses that make all
the world hope?” (41). Instead, Warner finds modern fiction preoccupied with
“scheming and artificial” women, divorce, and wickedness. Warner distinguishes
between modern fiction and the domestic novel, but the domestic novel does not escape
his censure either:

> I am not sure but the so-called domestic, the diluted, “goody,” namby-pamby, un-
> robust stories which are so largely read by school-girls, young ladies and women,
do more harm than the “knowing,” audacious, wicked ones, also, it is reported,
read by them, and written largely by their own sex. For minds enfeebled and
relaxed by stories lacking even intellectual fibre are in a poor condition to meet
the perils of life. (42)

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155 Warner succeeded Howells’s as author of the “Editor’s Study” columns.
Thus Warner outlines two categories of novel very similar to what I have termed novels of acculturation and resistance. For Warner, however, a community of women writers and readers who pen and consume both domestic and “knowing” fiction has replaced the lost “lovely heroine.”

More than this lovely heroine even, Warner misses the happy endings of earlier fiction. In a rather sadistic fancy, Warner insists that the novelist can try the heroine to “the verge of endurance, in agonies of mind and in perils, subjecting her to wasting sicknesses even, if he only brings her out at the end in a blissful compensation of her troubles, and endued with a new and sweeter charm” (40). The excessiveness of this passage (not just one wasting sickness, but sicknesses) serves to highlight Warner’s privileging of resolutions that ultimately reward the good and punish the bad. Warner’s quandary is that the novels that conform to his expectations of “art” do not end happily or feature “lovely women” as heroines – as he claims: “marriage itself is almost too inartistic to be permitted by our novelists, unless it can be supplemented by a divorce, and art is supposed to deny any happy consummation of true love” (37). On the other hand, the novels that do conform to his expectations of heroines and happy endings are the domestic fiction that he condemns as lacking “intellectual fibre.” Thus, for Warner, the gender of the author and the implied correlative lack of intellectual prowess overshadow the type of heroine depicted.

For Warner, the question of heroines is tacitly a question of national prestige: his longing for “the lovely heroine” contributes to his later claim that American literature is still a “failure.” Howells instead posits the heroines of domestic fiction as the
descendants of Warner’s “sweet girls, made to love and be loved,” reorganizing fiction into “good” and “bad” (or to use Howells’ own terms, true and false) based on its depiction of heroes and heroines:

That heroine long taught by example, if not precept, that Love, or the passion or fancy she mistook for it, was the chief interest of a life which is really concerned with a great many other things; that it was . . . altogether a finer thing than prudence, obedience, reason; . . . . More lately she has begun to idolize and illustrate Duty, and she is hardly less mischievous in this new role, opposing duty, as she did love, to prudence, obedience and reason. (78)

For Howells, both romantic and domestic fiction must be opposed by the “true” depiction of women and men in Realist fiction. Howells’s binary is a bit confusing – isn’t duty after all a form of obedience? – but by insisting that such heroines, even those appearing in contemporary fiction, be considered as not just false but also outdated, Howells underscores the primacy of character to the Realist novel. For Howells, the great mischief of the “gaudy” heroines and heroes of novels past is that they “impose” their values on readers: we read of the heroine’s sacrifices for love and are convinced that such sacrifice is noble. Yet although Howells claims, in contrast, that our first question should be “Is it true,” his praise of Henry James lies in this same persuasive power, as Howells terms it: “his power of engaging your preference for certain people” (“Henry James, Jr.,” 28). Importantly, James engages the American reader’s preference for his or her “unaffected countrymen and women” as opposed to the “Europeanizing sort” (28). Thus, for Howells, the “true” is necessarily allied with the “unaffected,” which is a distinctly American quality, but one that is in danger from both the representation of “gaudy” heroes and heroines and the “Europeanizing sort.” True Realist authors, according to Howells, will engage our sympathies for American heroes and heroines and prevent us
from sympathizing with any sort of affected characters. In different fashions (and with different aims) Howells and Warner both chart a shift in the sorts of heroines that appear in Realist fiction, and point to the nationalist concerns surrounding those changes.

As we saw in the last chapter, the primary and secondary heroines of the historical romance seem in danger of changing places: Scott and Sedgwick’s racialized secondary heroines, Rebecca and Magawisca, are more compelling than the primary heroines, Rowena and Hope. Each novel concludes, however, with the marriage of the primary heroine and the hero; the possibilities inherent in the secondary heroine are foreclosed in service of the nation-building project of the genre. The Realist novel changes the role of primary and secondary heroines in two distinct, but related narrative strategies: acculturation and resistance. These categories map fairly neatly onto the distinctions between sentimental novels (novels of acculturation) and high Realism (novels of resistance) in the American tradition. I use my terms to shift focus from the social construction of realism to the construction of womanhood within the Realist novel on both sides of the Atlantic. Realist novels, like their literary forebears, end in marriage or in death (literal or social). More boldly, I propose that Realist novels end in marriage and in death: and the difference between the novel of acculturation and the novel of resistance lies in which term is privileged. In turn, the representation of women within both the novel of acculturation and the novel of resistance is inherently linked to the changing

\[156\] Howells discusses both heroes and heroines, but often uses female characters for his examples (e.g., the juxtaposition of Isabel Archer and Dorothea Brooke, quoted above). In contrast, Warner invokes the “lovely heroine” of novels past as a sort of leitmotif throughout his text, suggesting perhaps that the switch from conventional heroine to dangerous woman in “artistic” novels (to use his phrase) is what is most troubling about the advent of Realism.
conceptions of nationhood and the negotiation of Romance and mass culture explored by Levine, Armstrong, Anderson, Glazener, Bell, Barrish, and Kaplan.

The novels of acculturation portray potentially dangerous women as Romantic in order to educate them into an obedience figured as Realist. In *Jane Eyre*, for example, the eponymous heroine’s fright in the famous “red room” scene establishes the Gothic overtones of the story that will be echoed in the events at Thornfield. Jane’s education into Realism, particularly through the management of her temper, enables her to succeed at Thornfield and, eventually, results in her marriage to Rochester. In a similar vein, Ellen Montgomery’s self-discipline in *The Wide, Wide World* transforms her from a child who gratifies her own will by wandering around the countryside (a very Wordsworthian project), into a woman who seeks to gratify the will of others (as evidenced in her compulsion to leave the Humphries for the Lindsays in obedience to her father’s letter). Ellen’s obedience is crucial to her marriage to John Humphries: John does not propose until he has witnessed (unbeknownst to Ellen) her obedience to his instructions. These are but two examples of a persistent pattern in the novels of acculturation.

The marriages that conclude these novels are depicted as “real,” often through an insistence on partnership and work. Rochester’s Byronic qualities are diminished by blindness and injury, leaving Jane with a more manageable invalid husband whose dependence on her in turn allows for her temper to find a productive outlet. Ellen’s marriage to John is scarcely narrated, but we do see the room that he has prepared for her. John has selected every ornament as an object-lesson for Ellen’s continuing education as part of an implied contract between them for mutual enrichment: Ellen’s domestic labor
is exchanged for John’s intellectual guidance. By concluding with an emphasis on the “work” of marriage, novels of acculturation evade the Romantic closure of earlier novels but reflect instead the promise of social change implicit to Realism.

Whether secondary heroines take the form of madwomen in the attic, like Bertha Mason, or gentle teachers, like Alice Humphries, the secondary heroines in the novels of acculturation are depicted as necessary to the primary heroine’s acculturation, but also as part of the past within the narrative and within literary history. At the end of Maria Susanna Cummins’s *The Lamplighter*, Emily and Phillip marry and reclaim his ancestral estate in the country. But their marriage, so typical of the Romantic novel, is not the focus of the conclusion. Instead, the novel concludes with Gerty and Willie sitting on the porch in the city, watching as the gas-man passes in “a moment” (419). This conclusion gestures forward, towards Willie and Gerty’s future in the American city as Christian bourgeois capitalists and the continuing progress emblematized by the replacement of the lamplighter with the gas man. Similarly, Jane’s marriage to Rochester dismantles certain traditional English class structures in favor of a progressive meritocracy: Jane, although she is a governess, is good, and therefore deserves to be mistress of Thornfield. The traffic in women (and the concomitant imperialist connotations) implied by that famous madwoman in the attic is Rochester’s past; Jane is his future.

Although the novels of resistance are typically chronologically later than the novels of acculturation, I see these two categories as attempts to solve the “problem” of Realism. In doing so, I resist the tendency to privilege one form over the other, and I

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157 Alice’s gentleness and piety are associated with her preparation for death. The other women in *The Wide, Wide World* are significantly older than Ellen, with the exception of Nancy, who becomes Ellen’s protégé.
allow for the slipperiness of literary history and, more importantly, the significance of
national histories to the development of Realism. In States of Sympathy, Elizabeth
Barnes notes the influence of America’s Second Great Awakening on the domestic novel
of the 1850s – what I have termed the novel of acculturation. However, Louisa May
Alcott’s Little Women, published in 1868 and set during the Civil War, also follows the
pattern of a novel of acculturation. Alcott’s women are already Christians: the novel
begins with their decision to pattern their lives on Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress. For
Alcott, therefore, the turning point from resistance to acculturation is not the acceptance
of Christianity, but the end of the Civil War. Mr. March’s return at the end of the first
volume sets in motion the resolution of the lives of each March girl: Meg’s wedding,
Beth’s death, Amy and Laurie’s wedding, and finally Jo. Jo’s desire to “go and fight
with papa” (3) is replaced by her desire to “open a school for little lads – a good, happy
home-like school, with me to take care of them and Fritz to teach them” (482). Jo’s
acculturation is mirrored by the transformation in her literary productions from her early
sensation fiction to more domestic fare: “a simple little story” (436) and the poem, “In the
Garret,” which unintentionally promotes the return of Professor Bhaer and their eventual
marriage. Jo’s gender rebellion – manifested in her desire to be a boy and in her efforts
to write stories that please boys – is contained by her marriage to the paternal Bhaer and
her work at the “home-like” school. This gender rebellion is explicitly connected to the
war: Jo wants to be a boy so that she can “go and fight with papa,” and her sensational
plays and stories all enact fantasies of liberation from home. After the war, Jo must learn
instead to value home, and that new sense of value is reflected first in Jo’s domestic
fiction, which is successful in postbellum America. Professor Bhaer’s reading of Jo’s poem, which he comes across in a paper, reattaches the circulating poem to its domestic origins and uncovers Jo’s wish to be loved.

Amy and Jo each conclude the novel meditating on their “castles in the air.” While Meg’s is “the most nearly realized,” Jo and Amy each argue that they have not given up their artistic ambitions, but rather have domesticated them. Jo claims, “I haven’t given up the hope that I may write a good book yet, but I can wait, and I’m sure it will be all the better for such experiences and illustrations as these” (489) and Amy echoes “I don’t relinquish all my artistic hopes . . . I’ve begun to model a figure of baby . . . and mean to do it in marble, so that, whatever happens, I may at least keep the image of my little angel” (489). Jo’s and Amy’s future artistic productions will mirror and enforce the value of the domestic in the face of difficulty and thus privilege the unified American home over Jo’s early sensation stories or Amy’s time abroad.

Yet, as Donna Campbell notes, by marrying Jo to Professor Bhaer instead of to Laurie, Alcott resists her readers’ expectations. We might read Alcott’s resistance in terms of postbellum concerns about American masculinity: Jo’s masculine qualities influence and threaten to overwhelm the feminized Laurie. Through marriage to the hyper-feminine Amy, Laurie becomes “more serious, strong and firm” (489), in short, more manly. But the novel is also concerned with postbellum femininity as well, particularly in its depiction of Amy and Jo. In marrying Laurie, Amy gets to inhabit the elegant social sphere she aspired to, but it is only through suffering that she develops into the “sweeter, deeper, and more tender” Amy of the conclusion (489). In contrast, the
domesticated Jo does not undergo the physical transformation common to earlier heroines in novels of acculturation. While Gerty’s and Ellen’s growing acceptance of God’s grace in their hearts is manifest in their development of a corresponding exterior grace and Amy Laurence is certainly more serious and deep than Amy March, Jo Bhaer is just as unfeminine in body and character as Jo March. At the apple-picking festival that closes the novel, Alcott describes her: “Jo was in her element that day, and rushed about with her gown pinned up, her hat anywhere but on her head, and her baby tucked under her arm, ready for any lively adventure which might turn up” (487). Thus, while *Little Women* insists that its heroines end as wives and mothers working for the social good of the Union, it resists the effacing of individualism common to earlier novels of acculturation in favor of multiple visions of the domestic.

*Little Women* makes room for both Jo and Amy in order to preserve the union of the March family and of the Union. The novels of resistance pose a different solution to the problem of Realism that responds to the social and literary codes of Victorian England and America. I use the term “novel of resistance” to indicate two forms of resistance: first, the dangerous woman’s resistance to the prevailing social codes, as narrated in novels including *The House of Mirth* or *Vanity Fair*; and second, the Realist author’s resistance to the Romance paradigm. Implicit in the term resistance, however, is failure. (To resist is not to triumph.) Although Lily Bart and Becky Sharp are depicted as “real” women attempting to manipulate “artificial” social strictures, these heroines are ultimately faced with the choice to submit to such conventions or die. Becky’s social death is represented in similar terms as Lily’s literal death; in each case the man who
formerly served as her advisor discovers the heroine’s body. The chief difference lies in the outcome of this confrontation. The sight of the corrupted body – in Lily’s case, from an overdose of morphine, in Becky’s case, from her immersion in prostitution and crime – provides the impetus for the hero to transfer his affections, or at least his interest. While Lily’s literal death opens the possibility of an attachment between Selden and Gerty, Becky’s social death ensures Dobbin’s dislike. Jos, however, persists in his dangerous and disreputable attachment to Becky, leading, eventually, to his death. Becky’s continued social circulation at the conclusion of the novel juxtaposes her “Vanity Fair” (literally – Becky is last seen running a booth at a Charity Fair) with the domestic happiness of Amelia and Dobbin.

The conclusions of such novels often present the death of the dangerous heroine alongside the potential marriage of a conventional woman – Lily dies, but Gerty lives; Becky “dies” but Amelia lives – providing a Romantic conclusion that does not ultimately efface the “real” plight of the dangerous woman. Although the novel of resistance engages the question of national identity, the contrast between primary and secondary heroines is unsettling: the nation as it stands cannot accommodate a Becky or a Lily, and the happiness of an Amelia or a Gerty is a poor consolation. Indeed, the narratives refuse to allow even that consolation: Amelia must content herself with being second to her daughter in Dobbin’s eyes, and Gerty’s future with Selden is far from certain.158 Rather than consolidating national identity through the marriage of the heroine and hero, as we saw in the Romantic novel, or suggesting a new national future (and one

158 Becky and Lily are only two representative examples. One might also consider Tess d’Urberville and her sister, or Gwendolen Harleth and Mirah, among others. I will return later to the question of Isabel Archer and her foils in Portrait of a Lady.
that is explicitly domestic), as we saw in the novel of acculturation, the novel of resistance dislodges the stability of national identity through competing constructions of femininity.

Henry James is often invoked as either an exemplar or an exception to the tenets of Realism; to return to the critics of American Realism, Bell asserts “For James . . . the power of the realist (a term, by the way, that he does not use in ‘The Art of Fiction’) is made manifest through art, through imagination and execution. And it was just this sort of power that he set out to achieve or appropriate during the realist phase of his middle years” (80). Barrish examines a work from late James to claim that for both James and Merton Densher, “realist prestige depends not only on displaying a powerful grasp of the real, it depends on attaining the arduous discipline to ward it off” (71). By contrast, Kaplan ignores James entirely, focusing instead on Howells as the theorizer of Realism, and on the responses of Dreiser and Wharton to that articulated theory. I will instead follow Glazener by invoking James at two distinct points in his career, albeit at two different moments than those selected by Glazener. Glazener examines The Bostonians (1886) to expose the misogyny of high Realism’s construction of the professional author, and turns to “The Turn of the Screw” as a clever critique of the romantic revival. Because I am not concerned with James’s self-conscious experimentation with “Realism,” I will not limit myself to James’s “Realist” novels, as The Bostonians and The Princess Casamassima are often termed. Instead I focus on The Portrait of a Lady and

[159] Among the British critics, only Levine invokes James, referring to The Ambassadors as an illustration of Realism’s eventual privileging of the individual consciousness. Armstrong’s failure to mention James is particularly striking, given James’s own use of photography (especially in the New York Editions). Similarly, Anderson’s focus on cosmopolitanism calls James to mind, at least for this reader.
The Golden Bowl as the bookends of James’s career to chart a sort of trajectory from the debates over femininity, nationhood and Realism (which I have examined in terms of the novel of acculturation and the novel of resistance), to the end of the century and the beginnings of modernism. My implicit argument is that James’s deployment of primary and secondary heroines makes genre legible. Rather than isolating James as “the Master,” I want to suggest that James thematizes the literary and political concerns of his time by enacting them on the level of plot.

In his Preface to the New York edition of Portrait, Henry James describes the process of composing the novel as “organizing an ado about Isabel Archer” (9). The “ado” James organizes is a confluence of the various plans characters in the novel develop for Isabel, all attempting to answer James’s great question: “Well, what will she do?” (12). The Touchetts bring Isabel to England, Ralph engineers her inheritance, and Madame Merle plots her marriage to Gilbert Osmond. There are unsuccessful plots as well; namely, Warburton’s proposal and Henrietta’s attempt to marry Isabel to Caspar Goodwood. In this respect, Portrait follows the pattern of the novel of acculturation. We wait to see what Isabel will do, but our expectation is that Isabel will ultimately do “the right thing” (whatever that may be) because she is our heroine, and heroines – young women “affront[ing] their destiny” (9)– almost inevitably learn to do “the right thing.” Isabel has no peers in the novel, no Becky Sharp or Amelia Sedley to define her role as conventional heroine or dangerous woman. Rather, Isabel is surrounded by female foils: Madame Merle, Pansy and Henrietta Stackpole.
Lest we consider these foils as equivalent, in the Preface James singles out Henrietta as an authorial failure: “It is a familiar truth to the novelist, at the strenuous hour, that, as certain elements in any work are of the essence, so others are only of the form; that as this or that character, this or that disposition of material, belongs to the subject directly, so to speak, so this or that other belongs to it but indirectly – belongs intimately to the treatment” (12). James continues to badger Henrietta with less flattering comparisons – carriage wheel, ficelle, fishwife – but ultimately he cannot dismiss Henrietta so casually. In his conclusion, James returns to Henrietta: “she exemplifies, I fear, in her superabundance, not an element of my plan, but only an excess of my zeal. . . . Henrietta must have been at that time a part of my wonderful notion of the lively” (15). Despite James’s initial attempt to dismiss Henrietta as a serviceable bit of stuff to help drive the plot, he finds himself unable to contain her within the role of carriage wheel, and locates her superabundance in a much more charged arena – the author’s zeal and conception of the lively.

In fact, Henrietta has very little effect on the plot of Portrait. Her chief project – to unite Isabel and Caspar – ultimately fails. In the meantime, however, Henrietta herself succeeds as a reporter, sending letters back to America from abroad, and marries a rather bumbling Englishman, Mr. Bantling. Henrietta successfully navigates the transatlantic in a manner that Isabel does not. Bantling, although depicted as a bit of an idiot, is a far lesser threat to Henrietta’s happiness than Osmond is to Isabel’s. Isabel initially registers

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160 Howells also singles out Henrietta for special attention in “Henry James, Jr.”: As ‘frost performs the effect of fire,’ this impartiality comes at last to the same result as sympathy. We may be quite sure that Henry James does not like the peculiar phase of our civilization typified in Henrietta Stackpole; but he treats her with such exquisite justice that he lets us like her” (26).
disappointment in Henrietta’s marriage: “There was a want of originality in her marrying him . . . . A little later indeed she reflected that Mr. Bantling himself at least was original. But she didn’t see how Henrietta could give up her country. She herself had relaxed her hold of it, but it had never been her country as it had been Henrietta’s” (470). But the very terms of Isabel’s disappointment reflect on her own failed marriage: Osmond is, as the reader has by this point discovered, not at all original. And, as Isabel herself realizes moments later: “[Henrietta] had not renounced an allegiance, but planned an attack. She was at last about to grapple in earnest with England” (471). In contrast, Isabel has only ever encountered Americans abroad (with the exception of Lord Warburton, whom she rejects). Thus, Henrietta manages a truly transatlantic identity: her relationship with Bantling is a mutual endeavor to “find out the mystery and the proportions of it” (471), and that mystery is explicitly nationalized. The secondary heroine, in this form, is one who allows us to see through a truly transatlantic lens: Henrietta brings together the issues of convention highlighted by those studying British Realism, and those of masculinity addressed by Americanists.

With this in mind, let me return to James’s description of Henrietta as “an excess of my zeal . . . part of my wonderful notion of the lively.” Although James locates that notion in the past (“at that time”), it is clear that Henrietta exceeds the plan of Portrait by exceeding the bounds of femininity and nationhood in which Isabel is so clearly circumscribed. This is the difference between Henrietta and the other women of Portrait. Whereas Madame Merle, Pansy and Isabel are, at the conclusion of the novel, limited by Osmond (and, one might argue, by James), Henrietta and Caspar conclude the novel as
loose ends, wandering, quite literally, off the page together; the closing line of the novel reads: “She walked him away with her, however, as if she had given him now the key to patience” (490). Although Henrietta initially appears to conform to a particular type of American woman abroad, she exceeds that type in her marriage to Bantling. Her transatlantic marriage does not reify stereotypes in the manner that her letters to her newspaper at home or Armstrong’s account of fiction in the age of photography suggest, but rather works to undo them. Henrietta is hired to report on the English nation to an American public – indeed, she first falls in with Bantling to gain access to the English upper classes – but her marriage requires interpretation. Is she, as Isabel suggests, planning “an attack,” and thus maintaining a detachment from Englishness in a manner similar to Anderson’s discussion of cosmopolitanism? Or is she, as Henrietta herself claims, eschewing detachment in favor of discovering the “mystery” of Bantling’s identity and vice versa? By comparing Henrietta to Caspar, who does maintain his detachment from Europe and continues to inhabit the stereotype of American maleness, we can see the connection between the issues of convention and masculinity addressed by critics of Realism.

Henrietta and Caspar both have professions: she is a reporter, he an industrialist (a rather popular profession in James). As such, they embody elements of the American Realism debates that we have traced in Bell, Glazener and Kaplan. The rise of the newspaper and magazine is central to these histories of Realism. For Bell, Howells’s time as a reporter is directly linked to his understanding of “men’s activities” and thus his call for Realism. For Kaplan, but especially for Glazener, the changing class dynamics of
urban centers are crucial to the nature of Realism in the latter half of the nineteenth-century. Henrietta’s liveliness is located in her profession, her status as a “modern” woman; Caspar’s influence lies in his capitalist wealth, not, as is true of Osmond, in his taste. Thus while Isabel’s destiny is to return to Rome, Henrietta’s future, like her instructions to Caspar, is unclear: is he “young,” and therefore capable of forming another attachment, or does he now possess the “key to patience” that will enable him to wait for Isabel’s unlikely return? Whatever Caspar’s future with Isabel (and it seems unlikely that there will be one), his final encounter with her makes clear that he imagines that future in America, supported by his wealth. Caspar’s time in Europe has not had much effect. Although Caspar is ushered off by Henrietta, her future seems much more open: what will become of her new newspaper, purchased by the sale of Ralph Touchett’s library? And what will be the impact of Henrietta’s marriage to Mr. Bantling? These loose ends suggest alternative possibilities to Isabel’s “very straight path,” and they are alternatives that seem to be entirely under Henrietta’s direction, even as she exceeds Henry James’s plan.

Published simultaneously in England and America in serial form from 1880-1, *Portrait* is earlier than James’s so-called “Realist” novels, and is often considered a point of origin for James’s mature work: the first novel to anticipate the master works of his “Major Phase.” The late novels often fall into a separate category in considerations of Realism (and in the history of the novel more generally). For example, Bell and Kaplan each conclude their consideration of Realism with the turn to naturalism; although chronologically linked, it is still difficult to imagine a connection between, say,
McTeague (1899) and The Golden Bowl (1904). Glazener offers an alternative “ending,” and one that is more helpful in reading James. According to Glazener, the decline of Realism at the end of the nineteenth century is marked by the “romantic revival,” which she attributes to the campaign for an eight-hour workday and the new conceptions of work and leisure that resulted. The new romance also reflected the changing concept of nation held by Americans near the turn of the century. As Glazener observes, the popular authors of the romantic revival were overwhelmingly British: Kipling, Stevenson and Haggard. Glazener suggests:

romance theory reoriented American literature as part of a new international alliance. It posited, not William Dean Howells’s collection of mainly French, Russian, and Scandinavian writers – an enlightened international brotherhood promoting democracy through realism – but a set of racial bonds to Anglo-Saxons (or Teutons) predating national identities and facilitating the subjugation or economic manipulation of other countries. (166)

The new romance justified and imagined imperialism as the fulfillment of the Anglo-Saxon destiny, made available to all through the adventure novel.\(^{161}\) Therefore, in Glazener’s formulation, the romance was simultaneously an antidote to the routine and drudgery of modern life for U.S. citizens and a form of justification for the imperialist agenda the U.S. was at that moment pursuing.

As I will show in the next chapter, The Golden Bowl engages these debates of race and nation, but not through the adventure plots of the “romantic revival.” Instead, James foregrounds questions of American imperialism and race through transatlantic marriages, building on the centrality of the marriage plot and the international scene we

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\(^{161}\) It is worth noting that Levine also suggests a return to romance in late Realism (particularly Conrad). Armstrong reads Haggard as part of the tradition of Victorian fantasy – not necessarily as part of a masculine romantic revival, but a way of explaining the “unreal” in historically Realist texts including Wuthering Heights and Jane Eyre.
have discussed in regard to *Portrait*. In doing so, James continues to direct attention at the competing constructions of femininity common to the Realist novel on both sides of the Atlantic. The novels of acculturation transformed rebellious girls into conventional women; the novels of resistance emphasized the plight of “dangerous women” as opposed to conventional heroines. The heroines of *The Golden Bowl* enact this struggle between conventional heroines and dangerous women for primacy in the marriage plot: the contest between Maggie Verver and Charlotte Stant for Prince Amerigo is critical to the redefinition of American femininity in the novel.

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162 Isabel Archer’s marriage to a transplanted American takes center stage in *Portrait*, and Henrietta’s transatlantic marriage is left marginal to the plot. *The Golden Bowl* foregrounds the same pattern of marriages, but ups the stakes. Like *Portrait*, it features a marriage between an American and a European (Maggie and Prince Amerigo), and between a transplanted American and a more conventional American (Charlotte and Adam Verver), but the focus on femininity, race and money is far more heightened in *The Golden Bowl*. 
In *The Golden Bowl*, Adam Verver’s relationship to an international economy is hinted at in descriptions of his and Maggie’s voyages all over the world in search of items for his collection. Yet James does not incorporate this truly international scene into the plot of the novel, nor does he narrate the Ververs’ point of origin – refusing even to designate a real location and choosing instead the allegorical name “American City.” James’s famous “International Scene,” therefore, is more accurately a “transatlantic scene.” By focusing on Americans, and often American women in Europe, James limits the expanding network of national relationships in the late nineteenth century to one very familiar pairing: New World and Old World. James contrasts a particular transatlantic context (and transatlantic marriages) with the dangerous possibilities of an “international scene” manifest in both Verver’s imperialist plunders and Charlotte’s “race-quality” (32). Yet while Verver’s wealth enables American isolation, Charlotte’s ambiguous genealogy and race threaten the stability of national identity and femininity.

The Golden Bowl is divided into two halves: “The Prince” and “The Princess.” This split has often been read as indicating the respective centers of consciousness of each section; further, critics have claimed that Maggie’s narrative overtakes and subsumes that of Prince Amerigo. However, Maggie’s rise to narrative authority is
contingent on Charlotte’s fall and on the support of the Assinghams, who first discern Maggie’s potential and model scenarios by which Maggie becomes the heroine.

Maggie’s rise is also contingent on a new understanding of national identity. Maggie and her father, Adam Verver, initially emblematize a form of American isolationism, one that plunders cultures for aesthetic treasures without ever engaging with those cultures. To regain the Prince, Maggie must learn to live up to her new international, transatlantic identity: “The Princess.” While Adam and Amerigo seem to embody relatively stable national identities, Maggie, because of her marriage, must create a new transatlantic identity. In contrast, Charlotte, who seems to possess almost no discernible national identity, must be fixed in her place, as she tells Fanny Assingham shortly after her marriage to Adam Verver – returned to American city to play cicerone to Adam Verver’s treasures. Critics have attempted to argue that Charlotte is the tragic heroine of the novel, but such an argument overlooks the preponderance of work James does to make Charlotte secondary. In turn, scholars who recognize Charlotte as “the other woman” focus instead on Maggie in their readings of the novel (Stevens, 67). In this chapter, therefore, I will demonstrate that Charlotte Stant is made secondary by her class, but most importantly, as James terms it, by her “race-quality,” or, to borrow another of the Prince’s descriptions of Charlotte, the fact that she appears to have “blood . . . of every race” (217). Charlotte’s relegation to the status of secondary heroine is significant to the

163 “International” because the title of “Princess” implies a role in a multi-national community, “transatlantic” because the marriage by which Maggie gains the title is between an American and an Italian.

164 See, for example: F.O. Matthiessen, who disparages The Golden Bowl as “obscene” because of the treatment of Charlotte; Jean Kimball, who links Charlotte to James’s earlier heroines; Hugh Stevens, who examines Maggie’s masochism in order to endorse Charlotte; and Elizabeth Owen, who rightly claims “But none of these sympathizers with Charlotte has offered us a detailed examination of her; they turn to her only briefly, in revulsion from Maggie” (364).
representation of American identity in *The Golden Bowl* and to the broader history of the British and American novel. Situated at the cusp of Realism and Modernism, *The Golden Bowl* provides a fitting endpoint for my study: the construction of national identity via multiple marriage plots anticipates the fragmentation of identity and multiple narrators that characterize the modernist novel, erasing the distinction between primary and secondary heroines.

**“Blood! You’ve that of every race”: Legible Femininity, Illegible Nationality**

The clearest demonstration of Charlotte’s status as secondary heroine lies in the structure of the narrative itself: the Prince and the Princess each dominate the narrative in turn; events are most often narrated through Amerigo’s point of view in the first part, and Maggie’s in the second. Charlotte rarely speaks for herself, and events are rarely narrated from her point of view. However, what is perhaps most interesting about *The Golden Bowl* is that Charlotte resists the category of secondary heroine. The secondary heroines I have examined in the first three chapters are clearly deferential to the primary heroine: Anna Howe writes a glowing “character” of Clarissa, Julia Granby works with Lucy Sumner to ensure that Eliza’s grave is visited, Emilia cares for Julia’s children, Elinor lives on Marianne’s estate, Louisa is exiled to Boston by Bess, Rebecca gives Rowena a casket of jewels before she leaves, and Magawisca and Esther each step aside to ensure Hope and Everell’s marriage. The flight of the secondary heroine, especially on the eve of the marriage between the primary heroine and hero, is an old and familiar device that often concludes novels. In *The Golden Bowl*, however, the novel *begins* just after this moment, with Charlotte’s return from America to London.
By beginning with the marriage of Amerigo and Maggie, James signals a break from the novels that precede him and suggests a reconsideration of the power dynamics between his heroines. Fanny Assingham reveals that Charlotte’s trip to America was inspired by her decision to give up her attachment to the Prince: “‘The poor girl’s departure was a flight – she went to save herself . . . . Well, also, really, I think, to save him too. I saw it afterwards – I see it all now. He would have been sorry – he didn’t want to hurt her’” (44). By returning to London, Charlotte refuses to accept the role of secondary heroine, a role that is, in her opinion, only determined by her class status. She cannot afford to marry the Prince. She returns to spend one day with the Prince before his marriage, ostensibly to purchase a wedding gift for Maggie – the infamous Golden Bowl from which the novel takes its title. When the Prince insists that Charlotte does not need to get Maggie anything, Charlotte retorts: “I’m too poor for some things . . . but I’m not too poor for others. . . . I’ve been saving up” (55). By suggesting that she can sidestep her class status, that her gift will be “something, precisely, that no rich person could ever give her” (55), Charlotte casts herself as exceptional, as possessing a virtue that exceeds wealth. Charlotte does possess such a virtue: typically figured as social facility, this virtue is in fact contingent on what the Prince calls her “mystifying instinct” (32). Charlotte’s ability to always say the right thing and look the right way is not the product of wealth – indeed, the Ververs illustrate that wealth almost excuses one from the cultivation of social graces – but rather the result of her adaptability to constantly changing national contexts.
Surprisingly, Charlotte’s “race-quality” goes without comment in most critical treatments of the novel. For example, Patricia McKee’s chapter on *The Golden Bowl* in *Producing American Races* examines Fanny, Adam Verver, Maggie and Amerigo, but does not comment at all on Charlotte, except to contrast the Prince’s different, foreign vision of Charlotte with the Ververs’ American perception. Similarly, L.A. Westervelt invokes Charlotte’s “political use of language” and “cosmopolitan” knowledge without discussing the nationalist implications of those terms. Stuart Burrows’s otherwise excellent reading of innocence and imperialism in the novel ignores Charlotte entirely. In part, this may be a product of the narrative practices of the novel itself, which frequently represents Charlotte *through* other characters. Importantly, Charlotte deploys her “mystifying instinct” most successfully in the first half of the novel, narrated primarily by the Prince. Readings that pity Charlotte’s exile focus on her success (and particularly her social success) in this half of the novel, but it is impossible to fully understand this success apart from Charlotte’s national identity, and its implications for American femininity.

The first time readers witness an event from Charlotte’s point of view occurs after her marriage to Adam Verver, at her first grand social event: the party she attends with Amerigo. Charlotte new class status is described in very material terms:

She was herself in truth crowned, and it all hung together, melted together, in light and color and sound: the unsurpassed diamonds that her head so happily carried, the other jewels, the other perfections of aspect and arrangement that made her personal scheme a success, the *proved* private theory that materials to work with had been all she required and that there were none too precious for her to understand and use – to which might be added, lastly, as the strong-scented flower of the total sweetness, an easy command, a high enjoyment, of her crises. (145-6)
The diamonds and jewels assign Charlotte a very specific class rank: she is adorned with jewels that surpass the other manifestations of wealth at the party. Her appearance at this party garners even the notice of “the greatest possible Personage” (156), not because of her rank in the social order – Maggie is after all the Princess – but because of her “personal scheme.” Thus although Charlotte’s success is manifested by material goods – the unsurpassed diamonds, for example – her success is rather a product of her ability to use such materials than purchased by the materials themselves. This uneasy power dynamic between Ververs’ millions and Charlotte’s schemes provides one of the central conflicts of the novel: the Verves’ millions purchase their isolation from the international community, whereas Charlotte’s manipulation of European mores enables both her affair with the Prince and her social success.¹⁶⁵

The connection between Charlotte’s schemes and national identity is made explicit in a description of Charlotte’s facility with languages. The Prince, who is able to converse in French, Italian and English with ease, notes that Charlotte rises beyond that: “The point was that in this young woman it was a beauty in itself, and almost a mystery: so, certainly, he had more than once felt in noting, on her lips, that rarest, among the Barbarians, of all civil graces, a perfect felicity in the use of Italian” (32). The Prince’s use of the term “Barbarians” is rich in ambiguity, implying both meanings of the term: those who speak a different language from oneself, and those who are not as civilized as oneself.¹⁶⁶ Indeed, for the Prince, “felicity” in language is often equal to civilization, as

¹⁶⁵ See, for example, Charlotte’s manipulation of Lady Castledean, which the Prince muses on in terms of national identity – the “Englishness” of their time at Matcham.
¹⁶⁶ See C. Miller Brook’s reading of James’s notebook entry:
he notes at Matcham: “But he was always – that was really the upshot – cultivating
thanklessly the considerate and the delicate: it was a long lesson, this unlearning, with
people of English race, all the little superstitions that accompany friendship” (208).
Charlotte’s skill with language is also her skill with manner, and her ability to navigate
between English and Italian language and society is what makes her appealing to the Prince.

Charlotte herself suggests their affair to the Prince in nationalized terms, when
Amerigo expresses his frustration at not being able to fully understand Adam and Maggie:

“You’re of the same race, at any rate – more or less; of the same general tradition
and education, of the same moral paste. There are things you [Charlotte] have in
common with them [the Ververs]. But I, on my side, as I’ve gone on trying to see
if I haven’t some of these things too – I, on my side, have more and more failed.
There seem at last to be none worth mentioning. I can’t help seeing it – I’m
decidedly too different.”
“Yet you’re not” – Charlotte made the important point – “too different from
me.” (185)

Charlotte’s ability to elide national difference makes her relationship with the Prince
easy: as the Prince notes, “the important point” is that national difference is not a
complicating factor in his relationship with Charlotte. However, the question of national
identity is always raised with Charlotte. In the first pages of the novel, the very first

In a notebook entry which foreshadows the imperial metaphors of The Golden Bowl, he compared them to
the Barbarians who invaded the Roman Empire:
the deluge of people, the insane movement for movement, the ruin of thought, of
life, the negation of work, of literature, the swelling, roaming crowds, the “where
are you going?; the age of Mrs. Jack, the figure of Mrs. Jack, the American, the
nightmare...The Americans looming up – dim, vast, portentous – in their millions
-- like gathering waves -- the barbarians of the Roman Empire.
In this nightmarish montage, James records his anxieties about an American invasion of Europe. By
referencing Barbarians James insinuates that the American presence – or at least the presence of certain
kinds of Americans – involves an unsettling of stable imperial forms. (181-182)
mention of Charlotte is when the Prince asks Fanny: “‘But she doesn’t like her country?’” (23). Fanny’s reply, “‘Hers, my dear man? – it’s little enough “hers,”’” begins a series of incidents in which it is made clear that Charlotte is not really “American,” and that this liminal identity, or the ability to navigate multiple national identities, is what makes Charlotte so dangerous.

The Prince, although he is the narrative center of consciousness for the first half of the novel, is not the primary agent. Instead, he provides a sympathetic narration of Charlotte’s actions from a foreign point of view, that of an Italian man in the care of American women: “What were they doing at this very moment, wonderful creatures, but combine and conspire for his advantage?” (210). While Maggie and Charlotte (and Fanny Assingham) work for his advantage, Amerigo’s action is always negative. In the Prince’s reverie on the morning of their last day at Matcham, he makes it explicitly clear that he has thought about staying over with Charlotte, “though he had not fully thought out, even yet, the slightly difficult detail of it; but he had had no chance, such as he needed, to speak the definite word to her” (213). Although discerning who is responsible for what idea is made somewhat difficult by the Prince and Charlotte’s “identities of impulse” (213), it is Charlotte who most often turns impulse to action: “What in fact most often happened was that her rightness went, as who should say, even further than his own; they were conscious of the same necessity at the same moment, only it was she, as a general thing, who most clearly saw her way to it” (213-214). While the Prince has thought of staying over, Charlotte has looked up the train, the cathedral they must pretend to visit, the inn they will actually stay at, and so forth. Elizabeth Owen and Mark
Reynolds have each interpreted Charlotte’s schemes as manipulative, even evil, and express relief when Maggie retaliates in Book Two. Charlotte’s manipulative skill is unquestionable, but cannot be understood out of context. Charlotte is neither entirely evil, nor is she, as Margery Sabin suggests, “insufficiently courageous” (212). Rather, Charlotte actively resists the position of secondary heroine by exploiting the American isolationism of Maggie and Adam.

Charlotte and the Prince stay late at Gloucester, ostensibly to “do the cathedral,” which she insists that Maggie and Adam would expect of them. Just as the Prince and Charlotte take on the social work of the Ververs, they also tour for them. By this arrangement, the Ververs never have to leave the Americanized spaces of Fawns, Portland Place or Eaton Square to confront old Europe. Maggie and Adam remain indoors with “homely work” and the Principino (189-90). Charlotte takes on the visiting list and social obligations of the Ververs almost as part of her marriage contract: “She had come, frankly, into the connection, to do and to be what she could” (189). While the Prince and Charlotte are absolutely necessary to the social life of London, they are totally unnecessary in the Americanized domestic spaces inhabited by Adam and Maggie; in fact, they are an intrusion. Secure in the knowledge that they will not be missed, Charlotte proposes that they resume their affair, and plans all of their encounters, most importantly their rendezvous at Gloucester. Yet, by staying late, Charlotte is too courageous.\footnote{Several critics have suggested that Charlotte and the Prince’s affair is unsympathetic because of the trite language in which it is couched and because it depends on the complicity of the unappealing Lady Castledean and her ridiculous Mr. Blint. The Prince remarks on this strange combination in nationalized terms, comparing his Roman heritage with the impossibility of understanding the English. In part,} This definite and bold act wakes Maggie up and rouses her to action.\footnote{Several critics have suggested that Charlotte and the Prince’s affair is unsympathetic because of the trite language in which it is couched and because it depends on the complicity of the unappealing Lady Castledean and her ridiculous Mr. Blint. The Prince remarks on this strange combination in nationalized terms, comparing his Roman heritage with the impossibility of understanding the English. In part,}
The second half of the novel, told predominately from Maggie’s point of view, silences Charlotte. As Maggie remarks several times, “‘I’ve often wondered,’ Maggie mused, ‘what Charlotte really understood. But it’s one of the things she has never told me’” (349). In part, therefore, Charlotte is silenced because Maggie does not share with her the Prince’s “identities of impulse” and therefore cannot narrate what Charlotte feels or thinks. But Maggie also works actively to return Charlotte to the position of secondary heroine; thus placing the redefinition of American femininity at the center of the novel.

Fanny and Bob Assingham’s conversations frame major events in the novel; like readers, they watch and attempt to understand the events that unfold before them. In particular, Fanny and Bob debate the relative merits of Maggie and Charlotte: when they switch allegiances, readers switch allegiances as well. Unlike readers, however, Fanny holds herself responsible for her role in arranging both marriages. Fanny’s conversations with Bob, which initially worried about why Charlotte had returned early from America, turn instead to rewriting Maggie as a heroine:

I’m not sure that I don’t begin to see more in her than – dear little person as I’ve always thought – I ever supposed there was. I’m not sure that, putting a good many things together, I’m not beginning to make her out rather extraordinary. . . . In fact – I do begin to feel it – Maggie’s the great comfort. I’m getting hold of it. It will be she who’ll see us through. In fact she’ll have to. And she’ll be able. (166)

It is almost as if James himself was thinking through the problem of how to resolve the situation – that is, how to convince readers used to dangerous heroines like Lily Bart and However, the trite language points to the Prince and Charlotte’s affair as something already in the past, both within the world of The Golden Bowl and within the larger history of the novel. James is, even at the consummation of their affair, working to render Charlotte secondary, by contrasting her tired expressions with Maggie’s exotic and original imagery.

168 Notably, one of Maggie’s strategies is to take an interest in the cathedral at Gloucester, thus confirming that she and Adam have not really taken much interest in either the social life or the travels of Amerigo and Charlotte.
Becky Sharp, or those expecting Charlotte’s reform, to pay attention to the mild Maggie Verver. Rather than insisting that Fanny is some sort of author figure, I want to suggest that she and Bob model a practice of reading as they puzzle out the situation with and in view of the reader. But, like all reading practices, the Assinghams’ is biased; their bias – the part that I do want to attribute to James – is in favor of Maggie, and teaches readers to see “more in her” than a “dear little person.” Indeed, Maggie’s rise to power is a direct result of her exploitation of that perception of herself. Her “mildness” becomes, in fact, her weapon, whereas Charlotte’s dazzling social skills are devalued.

To illustrate this point, I turn to the two direct confrontations between Maggie and Charlotte. These encounters are mirror images of one another, and have attracted critical attention for James’s compelling and often strange imagery. Most importantly, by pairing these two scenes, James makes explicit the reversal of power between Charlotte and Maggie. At the first meeting at Fawns Charlotte had initiated the conversation and controlled its terms, so much so that as Maggie looks through the window at her father, she feels Charlotte’s mediating and controlling presence: “She was looking at him by Charlotte’s leave and under Charlotte’s direction, quite in fact as if the particular way she should look at him were prescribed to her; quite, even, as if she had been defied to look at him in any other” (390). Just after Charlotte shows Maggie her father through the

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169 See Eileen John, “Henry James: Making Moral Life Interesting,” for a reading of Fanny and Bob’s relationship and their role as readers. See also Liesl Olsen, “Under the Lids of Jerusalem: The Guised Role of Jewishness in The Golden Bowl” for a reading of Fanny as Jewish, and as the catalyst of “the more devious events of the novel,” and Stuart Burrows, who reads Fanny and Bob’s transatlantic marriage in terms of the imperialist dynamics of the novel.

170 See, for example, Margery Sabin’s reading of these encounters in “Henry James’s American Dream in The Golden Bowl,” where she compares Maggie’s imagery to Conrad’s Heart of Darkness.
windows at Fawns, she pulls Maggie onward towards another set of windows to
solemnize their silent pact:

Here Charlotte again paused, and it was again as if she were pointing out what
Maggie had observed for herself, the very look the place had of being vivid in its
stillness, of having, with all its great objects as ordered and balanced as for a
formal reception, been appointed for some high transaction, some real affair of
state. In presence of this opportunity she faced her companion once more; she
traced in her the effect of everything she had already communicated; she
signified, with the same success, that the terrace and the sullen night would bear
too meagre witness to the completion of her idea. Soon enough then, within the
room, under the old lustres of Venice and the eyes of the several great portraits,
more or less contemporary with these, that awaited on the wall of Fawns their
final far migration – soon enough Maggie found herself staring, and at first all too
gaspingly, at the grand total to which each separate demand Mrs. Verver had
hitherto made upon her, however she had made it, now amounted. (391)

Charlotte keeps Maggie outside of the drawing room, looking in through the windows at
the room of the house in which Charlotte’s social skills excel – the pompous drawing
room. By keeping Maggie in isolation, outside of the windows, from both her father and
the grand drawing room, Charlotte implies that Maggie is jeopardizing both worlds: the
social world and her relationship with her father. Although Maggie’s relationship with
her father has been read as incestuous, when that relationship is glossed in terms of
national identity, Maggie’s “incestuous” relationship with her father is one in danger of
refusing exogamous marriage, refusing transnational, or in this case, transatlantic
exchange in favor of an solely American identity. Charlotte’s grand total is figured as a
transatlantic transaction parallel to the “old lustres of Venice” that are to be shipped to
American City, ironically prefiguring her own “final far migration.”

The conversations between the Assinghams have prepared the reader to expect
Maggie’s new authority, but by contrasting Maggie’s strategies with Charlotte’s previous
exercise of authority at Fawns, James makes clear that Maggie is claiming the position of primary heroine. In the second confrontation, Maggie approaches Charlotte:

The relation, today, had turned itself round; Charlotte was seeing her come, through patches of lingering noon, quite as she had watched Charlotte menace her through the starless dark; and there was a moment, that of her waiting a little as they thus met across the distance, when the interval was bridged by a recognition not less soundless, and to all appearance not less charged with strange meanings, than that of the other occasion. (421)

Maggie’s language suggests that these meetings are inverses of one another, but her strategy is almost exactly the same as at the last meeting, with one significant difference. She allows Charlotte to appear to control the conversation, but their exchange only points up the difference between appearances and actuality. Charlotte’s claim that she would like to return to America may seem to be an exertion of power, but readers know that was Adam Verver’s idea. Charlotte then argues that Maggie has always stood between her and her husband, but readers know that Maggie has “sacrificed” her father for Amerigo. Finally, Charlotte’s parting question, “‘You recognize then that you’ve failed?’” (434), signifies, in fact, Maggie’s success. Maggie, as she claims, “had done all” (434).

“Nothing short of obscene”: Charlotte as Secondary Heroine

The terms of Maggie’s transformation are crucial to understanding the import of the conflict between herself and Charlotte; in fact, her transformation is initially described in terms of Charlotte. When Charlotte and the Prince telegraph to say they will return late from Matcham, Maggie arrays herself in finery and waits for the Prince to

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171 This quote come from F.O. Matthiessen’s reading of The Golden Bowl. The full quote runs as follows: “But James’ neglect of the cruelty in such a cord, silken though it be, is nothing short of obscene. James’ failure to examine the premises of Mr. Verver’s power led Ferner Nuhn to the ingenious conjecture of what this novel would have been like if recorded from Charlotte’s point of view. He concluded that even ‘the lovely Princess of the fairy tale’ might then have turned out instead ‘to be the bad witch.’” (100-101)
return, but imagines what *Charlotte* would think of her attire: “Hadn’t Charlotte, with so perfect a critical vision, if the truth were known, given her up for hopeless – hopeless by a serious standard, and thereby invented for her a different and inferior one, in which, as the only thing to be done, she patiently and soothingly abetted her?” (251). Charlotte’s “critical vision” is what enables her social success – both her ability to plan dinners and to cover up her affair with the Prince – and Maggie’s attempts to resume her social responsibilities as Princess require her to become very much like Charlotte. In fact, Maggie suggests that Charlotte is her mentor on such matters: “To what else but this, exactly, had Charlotte, during so many weeks of the earlier season, worked her up? – herself assuming and discharging, so far as might be, the character and office of one of those revolving subordinate presences that float in the wake of greatness” (332).

Charlotte will assume the role of “subordinate presence” as Maggie finally assumes the role of Princess. Although the title of Princess thus appears to be a solely social obligation, it is also an explicitly national title. Maggie’s accession to her social role is a complication of her national identity: the American girl is also an Italian Princess. In contrast, Charlotte’s national identity is always already complicated; as the Prince at one point exclaims: “‘Blood?’ he echoed. ‘You’ve that of every race!’” (217). Charlotte’s

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172 Susan Griffith reads this moment as Maggie’s effort to distract herself from worrying about Amerigo, but the emphasis on “what Charlotte might think” is too prominent throughout the novel to be dismissed so easily. Indeed, even for Griffith, imagining Charlotte enables Maggie’s move towards self-consciousness.

173 Donald Griener’s *Adultery in the American Novel* provides a reading of James’s notebook entry planning the novel that is based on national identity: “Two phrases in the outline strike the reader. First, the daughter is ‘American of course’ and thus in the sophisticated English world of Jamesian domesticity is unable initially to cope with the complexities of adultery practiced by those who define morality as ‘high intelligence.’ Second, the situation has the ‘characteristic consequence’ that sexual transgression is bound to occur when an innocent American girl, devoted to her father, marries an experienced English man, devoted to his pleasure” (78-9).
relegation to the status of secondary heroine can be best understood in terms of the novel’s retheorization of American femininity and thus American identity more broadly.

This retheorization is enacted on the level of narrative, as the center of consciousness switches from Amerigo to Maggie. The result of this shift is that readers no longer have access to Charlotte’s thoughts, but only what Maggie imagines Charlotte might be thinking. While Maggie’s maneuvers contain Charlotte’s agency socially as Maggie herself assumes the role of Princess, Maggie’s narration contains Charlotte’s appeal to readers: we read Charlotte only as Maggie imagines her. One of the most famous passages in the novel illustrates this new narrative style: Maggie is literally watching Charlotte guide interested neighbors around Mr. Verver’s collection, but she imagines that she hears Charlotte in pain, and visualizes her father holding Charlotte in check with a halter. F.O. Matthiessen has read this passage as Charlotte’s transformation:

she becomes a tortured lecturer on herself as she recites her lesson: “The largest of the three pieces has the rare peculiarity that the garlands looped round it, which as you see are the finest possible *vieux Saxe*, aren’t of the same origin or period, or even, wonderful as they are, of a taste quite so perfect.” Unlike the Ververs, Charlotte, who has been brought up in Europe, is “of a corrupt generation.” (99-100)

Although I agree with Matthiessen’s reading, the real interest of Charlotte’s tour lies in Maggie’s perception of Charlotte’s pain: “The high voice went on; its quaver was doubtless for conscious ears only, but there were verily thirty seconds during which it sounded, for our young woman, like the shriek of a soul in pain” (418). Charlotte’s speech concerning the Verver treasures is transformed by Maggie’s imagination into the “shriek”; what Charlotte herself feels is not narrated. Maggie thus not only assumes the role of primary heroine, but she also articulates Charlotte’s role as secondary heroine.
Maggie imagines Charlotte’s pain as an inarticulate, almost primal shriek in place of Charlotte’s actual words, but in her mind, her father articulates Charlotte’s thoughts: “She thinks it may be, her doom, the awful place over there – awful for her; but she’s afraid to ask, don’t you see? just as she’s afraid of not asking; just as she’s afraid of so many other things that she sees multiplied round her now as portents and betrayals. She’ll know, however – when she does know” (416). In Maggie’s imagination, her father appears as the authoritative voice or the man in the straw hat smoothing over every difficulty. Notably, Charlotte is not in power here; she is not manipulating events with the Prince to keep Maggie and Adam placated; she is not even speaking for herself. Instead, Adam and Maggie hold her doom beyond the reach of her knowledge and speak for her. The emphasis – “awful for her” – reminds readers that America is not awful for everyone. It is, in particular, not awful for Adam Verver, who has traveled the world collecting treasures only to return them to his museum in American City, for the benefit of a people who do not think well of him. Charlotte fears returning to America because to do so would be the end of her relationship with the Prince, and the end of her ambiguous “race-quality.” Maggie’s greatest fear in sending Charlotte overseas is that she will be wasted in American City. In both cases, their anxieties stem from a perceived clash between Charlotte’s national identity, described as her “race-quality,” and American identity.

In contrast, and despite the “horrible vulgar jokes” of the people of American City concerning his reputation (420), Adam Verver is depicted as the consummate American at two moments in the novel, both of which occur during his conversation with
Maggie that determines his decision to return to America. At the beginning of their conversation, Maggie asks her father if they’ve been selfish. His response is in almost comic vernacular, and marks the first use of American slang in the novel:

“Look here, Mag,” he said reflectively – “I ain’t selfish. I’ll be blowed if I’m selfish.”
Well, Maggie, if he would talk of that, could also pronounce. “Then, father, I am.” “Oh shucks!” said Adam Verver, to whom the vernacular, in moments of deepest sincerity, could thus come back. (400)

If the vernacular only returns to Adam Verver when he is sincere, readers must assume he has been insincere for much of the novel. Although this is a compelling reading, I would suggest that Adam Verver speaks in the American vernacular at this particular moment because James wants to remind us that Verver is American, and distinguish his older version of American identity from Maggie’s new American identity. Maggie and her father must separate: with Verver returning with Charlotte to America while Maggie and Amerigo remain abroad. Why, then, this formulation? In other words, why must Maggie and Amerigo remain overseas while Charlotte and Verver return to American City?

At the end of her conversation with her father, Maggie imagines him as a larger-than-life incarnation of American identity: “The ‘successful,’ beneficent person, the beautiful, bountiful, original, dauntlessly willful great citizen, the consummate collector and infallible high authority he had been and still was – these things struck her, on the spot, as making up for him, in a wonderful way, a character she must take into account in dealing with him either for pity or for envy” (407). Adam Verver’s citizenship, his

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174 Verver is frequently described as “young”; almost too young, in fact, to be Maggie’s father, which has led to readings of the novel that suggest an incestuous relationship between the two. Instead, I would suggest that Verver’s youth is emphasized to suggest the relative “youth” of America. Verver is, however, still Maggie’s father – he is of the previous generation.
American identity and the success it enables, is his consolation for losing Maggie, whereas Maggie imagines Charlotte “like some object marked, in blackness, saw her waver in the field of vision, saw her removed, transported, doomed” (406). Charlotte becomes, in the end, a substitute for Amerigo as an exotic object in Mr. Verver’s collection.\footnote{James Freedman has read Verver in the context of empire: “the booming American capital he represents, in the position of the imperial projects that preceded him – those of Greece, Rome and England. The translation of empire, in other words, is one with the transmission of culture: the matter of Americans in Europe is not simply a case of the innocents abroad, but also one of the remaking of cultural power at the moment of modernity” (7).} Although Charlotte claims immediately after her marriage, “I’m placed – I can’t imagine anyone more placed. There I am!” (152), she is actually unfixed and not placed. She is ostensibly displaced by Maggie in her relationship to her husband – this is her charge at their final meeting – but she is quite literally without place, without nation.

Charlotte’s biography, narrated by the Prince, is given as an explanation for her mastery of Italian, but before he begins the hurried summary of her Florentine childhood, he claims, “Her account of the mystery didn’t suffice” (32), and again at the conclusion of the account, the Prince says, “Such reminiscences, naturally, gave a ground, but they had not prevented him from insisting that some strictly civil ancestor – generations back, and from the Tuscan hills if she would – made himself felt, ineffaceably, in her blood and in her tone” (33). This imagined Tuscan ancestor only appears when Charlotte speaks Italian, and only as a justification for how she can speak so well. Her real ancestors are unknowable, much like her race.\footnote{According to Amerigo: “difficult indeed as it might have been to disembroil in this young person her race-quality. Nothing in her definitely placed her; she was a rare, a special product” (31-32).} Although one might argue that this is a condition of American identity, Maggie is frequently described as manifesting her New England heritage and speaks in American idioms. In contrast, Charlotte is consistently...
denationalized, and she explicitly refuses American identity when she returns from America for Maggie’s wedding: “[My country, America,] doesn’t, I fear, seem particularly mine. And it doesn’t in the least matter, over there, whether one likes it or not – that is to anyone but one’s self” (33). The selfishness implied by Charlotte’s terms – that whether one likes America or not matters only to oneself – is reflected in Maggie and Adam’s deployment of American identity, what Maggie calls “their selfishness.” Charlotte feels socially disconnected in America, and thus dismisses national affiliation – America doesn’t seem particularly hers, mostly because Americans don’t particularly care whether she feels at home or not. In contrast, Maggie and Adam require Charlotte to navigate the social connections of Europe so that they can indulge their “selfish” desire to spend time together alone. That same selfishness, which might also be termed isolationism, is part of their interest in Prince Amerigo.

Fanny narrates to Bob, and thus to the reader, that one of the initial attractions of Amerigo for both Maggie and her father was his name:

“the name, four hundred years ago, or whenever, of the pushing man who followed, across the sea, in the wake of Columbus and succeeded, where Columbus had failed, in becoming godfather or name-father to the new Continent; so that the thought of any connection with him can even now thrill our artless breasts”. . . . “My point is, at any rate, that I recall noticing at the time how the Prince was, from the start, helped with the dear Ververs by his wearing it. The connection became romantic for Maggie the moment she took it in; she filled out, in a flash, every link that might be vague.” (46-7)

It is the Prince’s (rather weak) connection to American identity that the Ververs latch onto, and that Maggie accepts, rather than filling out any “link that might be vague” with real knowledge. Although Adam Verver may regard the Prince as an object in his collection, he is appealing because he is Italy made safe, made almost American.
Amerigo speaks perfect English; however, he sees the connection between English language and Roman identity in terms of the British and Roman empires: “If it was a question of an Imperium, he said to himself, and if one wished, as a Roman, to recover a little the sense of that, the place to do so was on London Bridge, or even, on a fine afternoon in May, at Hyde Park Corner” (1). What the Prince’s reverie gently underscores is that as a Roman he can only “recover” the sense of empire through other national empires. In contrast, for Maggie, the Prince’s excellent English makes him less exotic; although she mentions this as “his only fault,” she is placated by the Prince’s answer that “he was practising his American in order to converse properly, on equal terms as it were, with Mr. Verver” (3). The Prince here makes a distinction between the English language and an “American” language that goes remarkably unnoticed. While the Prince’s English may be perfect, he must practice his “American,” and his effort to be agreeable to Maggie’s father is in terms of erasing the difference between them, placing themselves on “equal terms.” In the language of empire, these distinctions are particularly important. The Prince must practice his American because America, emblazoned by Adam Verver, is the nascent Imperium.

It is therefore particularly significant that Maggie, on the day she discovers the Golden Bowl, has been researching the Prince’s ancestors. In researching the Prince’s Italian heritage, Maggie effectually reinscribes national difference: “After the occasion had come and gone she [Fanny] was confirmed in her optimism; she made out, in the evening, that the hour spent among the projected lights, the annals and illustrations, the parchments and portraits, the emblazoned volumes and the murmured commentary, had
been for the Princess enlarging and inspiring” (334). When Maggie eventually reveals that she discovered the Golden Bowl on that same day, it has the appearance of making the Bowl, and not her deeper discovery of the Prince’s heritage, “enlarging and inspiring.” However, a closer look at Maggie’s language reveals that the volumes and the Bowl both contribute to her new knowledge:

And then she had felt, somehow, more at her ease than for months and months before; she didn’t know why, but her time at the Museum, oddly, had done it; it was as if she hadn’t come into so many noble and beautiful associations, nor secured them also for her boy, secured them even for her father, only to see them turn to vanity and doubt, turn possibly to something still worse. “I believed in him again as much as ever, and I felt how I believed in him,” she said with bright, fixed eyes; “I felt it in the streets as I walked along, and it was as if that helped me and lifted me up, my being off by myself there, not having, for the moment, to wonder and watch; having, on the contrary, almost nothing on my mind.” (338)

Maggie’s ease, her willingness to “wonder and watch,” comes from her time at the Museum, which brings her closer to the Prince through her discovery of his history. Rather than seeing her connection to the Prince as “romantic” because of his associations with America, she sees now the “noble and beautiful associations” she has “come into” by being connected to his Italian ancestry.177 Her trip to the museum begins as an effort to understand his difference as nationalistic, but ends by revealing to Maggie and the reader a transatlantic identity that is both Italian and American.178

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177 In contrast, Charlotte, through her marriage, comes into a state of social obligation and of wealth. See, for example, Charlotte’s justification: “What could be more simple than one’s going through with everything,’ she had asked, ‘when it’s so plain a part of one’s contract? I’ve got so much, by my marriage ... that I should deserve no charity if I stinted my return” (190).

178 At this point my reading diverges from David Grant’s otherwise compelling account of national identity in the novel. Grant argues: The basis of Maggie’s exhilaration seems to be a renewed faith, fostered by her research, in the effectiveness of the simple direct acquisition of European values originally wrought by her marriage to the prince and now reflected in a new confidence in Amerigo’s fidelity... As a result, she relaxes sufficiently from her recent anxiety to indulge her ‘low taste; for shopping by ‘wander[ing] a little wild’ in the London
identity, in turn, leads her to explore an unfamiliar area of London, which brings her, ultimately, to the shop in Bloomsbury that houses the Golden Bowl of the title.

The scenes in the shop have often been read primarily in terms of the shopkeeper’s ethnic identity and the potential anti-Semitism displayed.\textsuperscript{179} As other critics have adequately covered this ground, I want to focus on a different aspect of national identity made visible in the multiple narrations of the two encounters in the shop, beginning with the last rehearsal of Maggie’s visit to the shop: “The [Prince’s] difficulty in respect to the little man had been for the question of his motive – his motive in writing, first, in the spirit of retraction, to a lady with whom he had made a most advantageous bargain, and then in coming to see her so that his apology should be personal” (376). Maggie suggests two reasons: the first reason is, “the thought of his purchaser’s good faith and charming presence, opposed to that flaw in her acquisition which would make it, verily, as an offering to a loved parent, a thing of sinister meaning and evil effect” (376), but Maggie settles on “‘Oh, most certainly, he \textit{told} me his reason was because he ‘liked’ me!’” (376).

Rather than fully explaining her possession of the Golden Bowl, Maggie requires an explanation of the Prince of how he came to be there with Charlotte. The Prince casts his explanation in terms of Maggie: “We took two or three hours together, by arrangement; it \textit{was} on the eve of my marriage – at the moment you say. But that put it on the eve of yours too, my dear – which was directly the point . . . . You were naturally

\textsuperscript{179} See, for example, Liesl Olson and Jonathan Freedman.
not to be told – precisely because it was all for you” (361). Of course, this is not at all true; Charlotte made clear her motivation for asking the Prince for those two or three hours: “To see you once and be with you, to be as we are now and as we used to be, for one small hour – or say for two – that’s what I have had for weeks in my head. I mean, of course, to get it before – before what you’re going to do” (57). If Maggie has anything to do with their excursion, she is merely the “pretext” and, at least initially, her marriage to the Prince is the deadline. Moreover, although the Prince mentions to Maggie that the shopkeeper spoke Italian, he downplays the significance of that fact: Charlotte and the Prince had been conversing in Italian so that they could be confident of secrecy. The shopman does not reveal that he understands them until the Prince and Charlotte decide not to exchange gifts: “You’ve seen, disgraziatamente, signora principessa, too much” (66). After revealing that he has been able to understand their entire conversation, the shopman offers Amerigo and Charlotte the Golden Bowl. Although Amerigo and Charlotte both, eventually, apprehend the problem with the Golden Bowl – the crack – their different perceptions suggest different degrees of knowledge, degrees that are coded in terms of their understanding of the foreign.

Amerigo instantly perceives the crack – proving Charlotte was right to ask him to come with her to the shops, even if it was only a pretext; Charlotte, in turn, reads the situation, knows that something must be the matter with the Bowl, and eventually persuades the shopman to tell her. They both, Maggie notes, recur to the shopkeeper’s memory precisely because they were able to discern that something was not quite right with the Bowl, whereas Maggie was completely oblivious and paid entirely too much.
Although these different perceptions seem, and are, connected to the symbolism of the Bowl in terms of the larger thematics of adultery and knowledge, they are also explicitly connected to national identity. Before Charlotte and he enter the shop, the Prince claims “I don’t understand your English buying, and I confess I find it dull. . . . I understood my poor dear Romans” (55). Charlotte’s retort, “Our amusement here is just that they don’t understand us” (55), is proved false by the antiquario’s facility with language.

The antiquario’s shop makes evident the intersection between transatlantic relationships and transatlantic transactions. The shopman, like Charlotte, is of an unfixed nationality: he answers in English to their Italian, and in Italian to their English. Charlotte mistakenly believes that the shopman cannot understand their foreign tongue, but will remember them as “right people” because of “his taste” (63). But the “right people” for the shopman are not Charlotte and Amerigo; he remembers and prefers Maggie. However, Maggie’s father, and therefore Maggie, “had little to do with shops, and was mostly, as a purchaser, approached privately and from afar” (59). This example of Verver’s American isolationism is compounded by the fact that he deals with the “personages” of Europe under a cover of anonymity: “high personages, incredibly high, and more of them than would ever be known, solemnly sworn, as everyone was, in such cases, to discretion, high personages made up to him as the one man on the short authentic list likely to give the price” (60). The Prince and Charlotte rely on Maggie’s upbringing to keep her from ever wandering into the Bloomsbury shop; they assume that, like her father, Maggie will wait for the outside world to approach her, and even then, will keep them at a distance through the guise of anonymity. Maggie’s visit to the shop
evidences her naivete in transatlantic transactions, but reveals her newly developed skill in transatlantic relationships: the shopman “likes” her as he did not like the others.

Rather than emphasizing the shopman’s opinion as the *ne plus ultra*, I suggest that the shopman is one symptom of Maggie’s increasing confidence and dexterity in the transatlantic scene. The Ververs’ wealth may attract attention and deference, but their wealth is also what enables them to remain isolated in American City and abroad. By deploying her social position as Princess, Maggie essentially learns to beat Charlotte at her own game: social interaction and social manipulation in a transatlantic context. In the final version of her encounter with the shopman, tossed off casually, Maggie reveals that the shopman had not liked Charlotte and Amerigo: “ah, no, distinctly, hadn’t liked them as he liked the Signora Principessa. Certainly – she had created no vagueness about that – he had been in possession of her name and address, for sending her both her cup and her account” (379). Maggie deploys her title openly, whereas the others, although “he had been sure they were great people” (379), remained unidentified, without title, and, more importantly, without nationality. Charlotte’s and Amerigo’s easy command of both Italian and English makes such a distinction impossible. Somewhat ironically, Charlotte has relied too much on national difference, both in her encounter with the shopman and with Maggie. But James makes clear that Charlotte’s curious “race-quality” is not the solution either. Rather, James suggests that transatlantic relationships create national identity.

In the second encounter between Maggie and Charlotte, readers and Fanny Assingham already know that Charlotte is doomed to be exiled to American City. Fanny
paints a rather grim picture of life in America for Charlotte, but does so in explicitly transatlantic terms:

I see the long miles of ocean and the dreadful great country, State after State – which have never seemed to me so big or so terrible. I see them at last, day by day and step by step, at the far end – and I see them never come back. But never – simply. I see the extraordinary “interesting” place – which I’ve never been to, you know, and you have – and the exact degree in which she will be expected to be interested. (425-426)

Unlike the wedding tour to America, which the novel and the characters mention only to allude to Charlotte’s fortitude, this trip to American City is repeatedly imagined by each of the characters for Charlotte. When Charlotte mentions “her plan” to Maggie in their final confrontation, therefore, it is laden with the weight and connotations of these other plans. Charlotte claims, “‘I want, strange as it may seem to you’ – and she gave it all its weight – to keep the man I’ve married. And to do so, I see, I must act’” (432). This claim is undermined by Charlotte’s complete lack of agency in the trip to American City. When Charlotte suggests that she will “take him home – to his real position,” it is actually Adam Verver who takes Charlotte to her real position – that of cicerone to his collection in American City.

Significantly, the next chapter begins with Maggie offering to travel with the Prince: “I’ll go abroad with you, if you but say the word; to Switzerland, the Tyrol, the Italian Alps, to whichever of your old high places you would like most to see again – those beautiful ones that used to do you good after Rome and that you so often told me about’” (435). Maggie’s willingness to travel to the Prince’s “old high places” is counterpoised with the Prince’s desire to stay in London, even though the season is over.
This extremity of positions is further compounded by the narrator’s description of each of them in strikingly nationalized terms:

It was strange, if one had gone into it, but such a place as Amerigo’s was like something made for him beforehand by innumerable facts, facts largely of the sort known as historical, made by ancestors, examples, traditions, habits; while Maggie’s own had come to show simply as that improvised “post” – a post of the kind spoken of as advanced – with which she was to have found herself connected in the fashion of a settler or a trader in a new country; in the likeness even of some Indian squaw with a papoose on her back and barbarous bead work to sell. Maggie’s own, in short, would have been sought in vain in the most rudimentary map of the social relations as such. The only geography marking it would be doubtless that of the fundamental passions. (436)

Here the narrator most explicitly formulates what is at stake in their transatlantic marriage, with Amerigo’s “old Roman” juxtaposed with Maggie’s “new country” – in fact an older version of American identity that sought to fashion itself almost out of nothing, refusing English and Native American identities. This passage has rightly received much critical commentary. Margery Sabin suggests:

As figures for the decency and dignity of Maggie’s creative love, however, these images may seem dubious, too far-fetched and artificial in relation to the dramatic particulars of this marriage. The problematic distinction between marauder and victim in America’s own Western history further destabilizes any consolidation of Maggie’s identity into a positive figure for American creativity. (218)

Instead, Sabin looks to Maggie’s “wild west” encounter with Charlotte to argue that James is appropriating the western as a vehicle for American imperialism (218). Stuart Burrows’s argument is almost exactly opposite, suggesting that metaphor can erase imperialism:

historical and cultural difference between colonizer and colonized are elided through a metaphoric association which insists that settler and squaw occupy the same profitable place, both textually and historically. . . . Such an assertion can only be read as utopian in the strictest linguistic sense – utopia as nowhere, a geographical map of passions and desires rather than places – but James’s figure
indicates that Maggie’s discovery is of a shared American identity that, through
the erasure of history only available to metaphor, offers possibilities for freedom
unavailable in Europe, a freedom conferred by the absent space that defines
innocence. (105)

In keeping with Burrows’s argument is the narrator suggestion that “the fundamental
passions” will create a new geography for social relations; indeed, the Prince’s closing
words – “See? I see nothing but you” (464) – would seem to confirm this reading.
However, Amerigo and Maggie do not reconcile until Charlotte and Adam have left the
country; thus, both Sabin and Burrows undervalue Charlotte’s role in the resolution of the
novel. The Prince and Maggie’s relationship is contingent on Charlotte being, finally,
placed; that is, their transatlantic marriage requires that Charlotte’s dangerous femininity
– dangerous because of her “race-quality” – is placed, literally, in American City.

Just before the start of the affair with Charlotte, the Prince attempts to theorize his
relationship with Maggie and her father, which becomes in turn a theory of American
identity:

Those people – and his free synthesis lumped together capitalists and bankers,
retired men of business, illustrious collectors, American fathers-in-law, American
fathers, little American daughters, little American wives – those people were of
the same large lucky group, as one might say; they were all, at least, of the same
general species and had the same general instincts; they hung together, they
passed each other the word, they spoke each other’s language, they did each other
‘turns.’ In this last connection it of course came up for our young man at a given
moment that Maggie’s relation with him was also, on the perceived basis, taken
care of. Which was in fact the real upshot of the matter. (175)

This “free synthesis,” although admittedly limited to elements of Maggie and Adam
Verver, allows the Prince to expand his observations to all Americans who occupy those
categories, before returning to Adam and Maggie. The “real upshot” is that what the
Prince considers an “American” way of doing things is what allows the Prince to consider
an affair with Charlotte. For Maggie to reclaim the Prince, she must surprise him by changing not only the micro-level habits of their relationship, as she does when she waits for him at home to return from Matcham, but also by transforming his understanding of American femininity.

Maggie’s discovery of the Golden Bowl occurs after she has been looking into the Prince’s Italian heritage. It is a turning point in the novel, but the discovery of the affair is also bookended by the questions of national identity. The Prince’s heritage occasions her trip to the Bloomsbury shops, and in the aftermath of the discovery, when Fanny arrives at her room, Maggie is described in nationalized terms:

It had ever been her sign that she was, for all occasions, found ready, without loose ends or exposed accessories or unremoved superfluities; . . . that reflected her small still passion for order and symmetry, for objects with their backs to the walls, and spoke even of some probable reference, in her American blood, to dusting and polishing New England grandmothers. If her apartment was ‘princely,’ in the clearness of the lingering day, she looked as if she had been carried there prepared, all attired and decorated, like some holy image in a procession, and left, precisely, to show what wonder she could work under pressure. Her friend felt – how could she not? – as the truly pious priest might feel when confronted, behind the altar, before the festa, with his miraculous Madonna. (336)

Maggie’s New England propriety has previously ensured that she is “found ready.” However, under the pressure of her discovery, she is transformed into an Italian Madonna, prepared for the festa. Maggie’s American “small still passion for order” suggests an agency manifested in her Americanization of her surroundings; in contrast, after the discovery, she is transformed into a figure “carried there prepared.” Although Maggie herself is Catholic, James’s use of the word “festa” signifies that Maggie is finally confronting Italy. Her new agency lies not in polishing her surroundings into
American places, but rather in working some sort of miracle in an explicitly unAmerican space, a miracle that must appear to have occurred independent of her agency. It is crucial that Maggie’s American identity is described in terms of feminine agency – “her sign”, “her still small passion”, “dusting and polishing” – whereas her current state, as Italian Madonna, is described in terms of passive (and perhaps deceptive) appearances: “she looked as if she had been carried there prepared,” suggesting an alternative possibility, or “Her friend felt – how could she not?” the very question opening up the possibility of not feeling the same way as Fanny Assingham. The performance of passivity is crucial to Maggie’s success.

Maggie’s miracle is to “place” Charlotte, and she does so by insisting upon Charlotte’s “greatness” to both her husband and her father. In the penultimate confrontation between Maggie and Amerigo, Maggie insists upon Charlotte’s role in their happiness:

“But shan't you then so much as miss her a little? She's wonderful and beautiful, and I feel somehow as if she were dying. Not really, not physically,” Maggie went on – "she's so far, naturally, splendid as she is, from having done with life. But dying for us – for you and me; and making us feel it by the very fact of there being so much of her left."

The Prince smoked hard a minute. "As you say, she's splendid, but there is – there always will be – much of her left. Only, as you also say, for others."

"And yet I think," the Princess returned, "that it isn't as if we had wholly done with her. How can we not always think of her? It's as if her unhappiness had been necessary to us – as if we had needed her, at her own cost, to build us up and start us." (450)

While the Prince attempts to exile Charlotte from memory as well as from London, Maggie insists on the price of Charlotte’s unhappiness to “start” their relationship, insists that while she is making her life in America, she is making their life as well. Upon
Charlotte’s “mastery of the greater style” (463) rests the entire last encounter between the two couples. But Charlotte herself, as I have noted earlier, seems vacant – more image than substance in this final scene. Maggie records what Charlotte does – her refusal of the plate of petit fours, for example – but not what Charlotte says or what Charlotte might think or feel.

By the end of the novel it is not Charlotte herself, but the idea of Charlotte’s greatness that serves as a foundation for the happiness of the other characters. Charlotte is forced to adopt the role she previously only pretended to perform: the role of the secondary heroine. She becomes a mere substition: if she formerly substituted for the Ververs in the social milieu of London, now she substitutes for what Maggie “didn’t and couldn’t say” (460). Maggie’s claim that Charlotte “is incomparable” and later “great” becomes a sort of unspoken contract between herself, her father and her husband (460). When Adam Verver responds, “Charlotte’s great” (461), Maggie interprets his response as something they could “close upon” (461), with Maggie promising her father that Charlotte will sufficiently replace her in his life, and Adam promising Maggie that Charlotte’s greatness will not be wasted in America. Maggie hopes that Charlotte’s greatness will resolve her relationship with Amerigo: “‘Isn't she too splendid?’ she simply said, offering it to explain and to finish . . . . ‘That’s our help, you see,’ she added, to point further her moral” (463-4). Maggie hopes to use Charlotte’s “greatness” as Charlotte had previously deployed Maggie and her father’s “innocence” – as a justification, a “help.” Maggie’s “moral,” however, is lost, as the Prince responds by once more attempting to efface Charlotte: “See, I see nothing but you” (464). Maggie’s
attempt to, in effect, use Charlotte without using her – to relegate Charlotte to the status of secondary heroine without erasing her or diminishing her greatness – fails as the prince refuses to compare Maggie to Charlotte, but insists instead on a monolithic vision of Maggie – seeing nothing but her.
CONCLUSION

Although Charlotte is ultimately fixed in her place as a secondary heroine, the visual spectacle of Charlotte dominates the first half of the novel, and persists through the final meeting of the quartet. Amerigo insists at the conclusion that he sees nothing but Maggie, but this totalizing vision is only possible through exile and isolation: the Prince isolates himself until the parting meeting with Charlotte and Adam. It is only after Charlotte is safely en route to American City that the Prince can look at Maggie and see nothing but her. In contrast to earlier secondary heroines like Radcliffe’s Emilia, who disappears for long stretches of the novel, Charlotte is always both in view and on view. Not only does she construct herself visually, she also is constructed as an image at key points in the novel. It is by defining herself against the image of Charlotte – whose very legible image underscores her illegible “race-quality” – that Maggie comes into her own as heroine, as Princess. In the spectacle of Charlotte, James literally makes visible the role of the secondary heroine.

The secondary heroine first appears in the epistolary novels of the eighteenth-century as a formal necessity: the heroine-writer must have someone to write to. When we compare Pamela to Clarissa, however, we realize that Anna Howe is not merely someone to write to, as Pamela’s parents are; she is someone who writes back. Anna Howe inaugurates the tradition of the secondary heroine as an alternative narrative, not
necessarily subversive or triumphant, but importantly different from the dominant narrative of the courtship plot. One might argue that these descriptive terms – difference, dominant, alternative – suggest that the secondary heroine is always already subversive. Rather, the term “secondary heroine” suggests a diminished otherness. This diminution is constituted by the narrative pattern of the secondary heroine: initially central to the narrative, she drops out at the crucial moment, only to return at the conclusion. The narrative “forgetting” of the secondary heroine tempts readers to forget her as well. The secondary heroine’s return at the conclusion disrupts the narrative drive towards resolution. It reminds us of her difference, of the alternative she provides, and of the other possibilities foreclosed by the resolution of the courtship plot. The work of this study has been to explain exactly what it is that the secondary heroine wants to remind us of, or, put more simply: why does she return?

The secondary heroine returns to loosen the knot of the conclusion; a persistent loose end, her reappearance keeps the reader from being overly complicit in the construction of nationhood via the femininity of the primary heroine. Like the definitions of the terms nationhood and femininity themselves, the secondary heroine’s role is tailored by two transatlantic histories: the history of the novel, and the history of England and America. As I have argued, the secondary heroine marks the interface of similarity and difference in the British and American traditions: while both traditions employ the secondary heroine, they do so in explicitly nationalized terms. In the early British and American seduction novels, for example, the secondary heroine survives to write the story of her fallen friend. Their strategies of representation are indicative of national
projects. In *Clarissa*, the titular heroine’s attempt to transcend the British class hierarchy and legal system through her symbol-laden funeral is counterpoised with Anna’s overly pragmatic account of the disposition of her hours that reduces Clarissa’s piety to a ledger-system that is no more transcendent than banking. In the American counterpart, *The Coquette*, Eliza’s final scribbles are overwritten by Julia’s description of the engraving on her tombstone. The representation of Eliza is more significant than Eliza herself; Julia deftly assumes representative authority. The survival of the secondary heroine in these early texts points to the instability of national identity and femininity in the early republic and early imperial England: the fallen woman at the center of each text belongs to a still-nascent and thus uninhabitable new world order.

In the years following the American Revolution, just as Victoria takes the throne, the seduction novel cedes to the domestic novel. Courtships end successfully in marriage, not in death. The marriages that conclude Romantic novels look forward, if not explicitly to progeny then to future happiness under the auspices of the happy couple. The marriage of the hero and the heroine initially quiets Gothic demons in Radcliffe’s evocation of the Italian past, but later is deployed to quiet the less remote demons of national identity in Austen and in the historical romance. Austen educates the sensibility of her heroine and her readers to construct a new British domestic capable of facing the horrors of the home, rather than the Gothic landscapes of Italy. As we have seen, Scott, Cooper, and Sedgwick all rely on the concluding marriage of hero and heroine to solidify national identity against internal and external threats, threats that, in the case of Scott and Sedgwick, take shape in the hero’s attraction to the secondary heroine’s racialized body.
The secondary heroines of each text pull against such hegemonic readings, pointing to the tendency of nation-building projects to reduce national identity to a binary of same and different, nation and other. By foregrounding the other, even as it is foreclosed by both the facts of history and the project of romance, the return of the secondary heroine gestures to the politics and the price of both nation-formation and narrative closure.

Indeed, the secondary heroine is the price of both nation-formation and narrative closure, and thus disappears when such projects are no longer central to literature. As we saw in Henry James’s *The Golden Bowl*, Maggie and Charlotte each occupy the position of primary and secondary heroine – although James archly hints at Maggie’s eventual triumph in the very titles of each section: the Prince and the Princess. Charlotte’s downfall is structurally foretold. The modernists’ increasing experimentation with form renders such structural and narrative distinctions difficult. This is not to suggest that the secondary heroine does not remain a useful construct. Rather, I am arguing that the secondary heroine must be understood differently, within the context of the first and second world wars and the later history of the novel: I leave that work to scholars of modernism and post-modernism.

Instead, I conclude by turning to two recent films: the film adaptation of *The Golden Bowl*, and the romantic comedy *Alex and Emma*. In film, the appearance of each character and each place has already been imagined for the viewer, and the camera literally directs the viewer’s gaze. The film adaptation of *The Golden Bowl* attempts to create real visual images to supplant the textual ones: Uma Thurman in turn-of-the-century costume becomes Charlotte Stant. The spectacle of Charlotte is subject to the
interpretation of the director. This attempt to find real images to substantiate a fictional scenario and location is anticipated by James’s preface to The Golden Bowl. In the preface, James describes his quest, in the company of a photographer, to find locations to photograph as frontispieces for the edition. Like his characters, James and his photographers wander about searching for a quaint antique shop. James’s characters stumble across the golden bowl in the shop, but James and his photographer must be able to imagine the golden bowl in the shop they choose to photograph. Just as the image of the shop may have a double valance for a reader who has seen the “real” shop that is attempting to serve as a referent for the fictional one, Uma Thurman as Charlotte Stant creates a problem for the viewer: she is simultaneously recognizable as Uma Thurman and as Charlotte Stant. In the case of both the photograph and the movie, the “real” that serves as a visual referent for the fictional location or character carries its own connotations that interfere with or even contradict the very fiction it should embody.

This same tension between the fictional and the real is foregrounded in Alex and Emma through the figure of a twenty-first-century secondary heroine: the secondary heroine who writes back. Emma’s refusal to confirm or conform to the plot of Alex’s novel reshapes his novel and his choices within the film, teaching Alex to value prosaic women like Emma over the glamorous (but ultimately fictional) heroines of both his novel and his life. Alex Sheldon hires Emma Dinsmore, a mousy stenographer, to transcribe his novel. The novel is a Gatsby-esque romance, in which the main character, Adam Shipley (modeled on Alex himself), is infatuated with the wealthy but unavailable
heroine, Polina Delacroix. Emma openly expresses her disdain for Alex’s plot, and is soon written into the novel as the annoying chambermaid/au pair. The chambermaid’s name changes as often as her national identity – Alex imagines her as Ylva the Swede, Elsa the German, Eldora the Spaniard, and finally, Anna the American from Philadelphia – the only continuity is that it is always Emma in costume. Over the course of the film, as Alex falls for Emma and begins to listen to her critiques of his story, the chambermaid becomes a more concrete and more central character.

The heroine of the film writes the secondary heroine of the novel into the center. Just as the secondary heroine of the novel seems to be making progress, Alex’s old girlfriend appears, challenging Emma’s status as heroine within the film. Emma quickly realizes that the real ex-girlfriend is Alex’s model for the fictional Polina. Faced with the possibility of losing Emma, Alex rewrites the ending of his novel to conform to Emma’s understanding of the real, and recasts his glamorous ex-girlfriend as a more than fictional character: “Yes, Polina had been a dream, like a creation from one of his stories; but Anna was real, and for the first time in his life that felt more powerful than anything he could ever invent. The End.” Alex reads the conclusion to Emma, and by identifying with their fictional counterparts, they come to their own happy ending within the world of the film. All is eventually resolved in match cuts of Alex and Emma kissing that erase the distinction between the “real world” of the film and the fictional world of the novel.

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180 Alex’s novel appears to be a complete fiction, he writes fake histories, sets the novel on a fake island “St Charles”, and invents a fake explorer “Jacques Cartier” – Emma insists on the real.
181 In the opening scene, Emma is obsessed with conclusions: she reads the end of books first. Ironically, Alex cannot begin his novel: “Do you see why I can’t begin? The giants that have gone before me”
182 As Emma says: “In great romantic novels there’s no laundry; or there’s people like Ylva and Elsa to do it – maybe that’s what I like them; they can wash their own clothes.”
What I like about *Alex and Emma* is that it enacts a fantasy that has haunted me throughout this project: the desire to see the secondary heroine triumph. What *Alex and Emma* also makes clear is that this desire is bred from our own cultural moment, and thus cannot and should not be imported back into the ways we understand the past. Emma can critique Alex’s representation of the 1920s, but the film’s writers have been careful to erase any impediments to the marriage of the hero and the chambermaid. Those potential impediments are surprisingly similar to the obstacles facing secondary heroines in the novels I have examined here: class, femininity and nationality. The things that change between *Clarissa* and *Alex and Emma* are the justification for the broad historical scope of my project, which now ranges from the eighteenth century to the twenty-first. What changes is the historical moment and its concurrent politics of national identity as figured in the courtship plot of these novels.

My intention has been to recover the role of the secondary heroine in the early history of the novel and to make visible the cultural work she performs. In doing so, I have tried to rethink what I see as two problems in the way we perform literary criticism. First, despite our disciplinary attention to markers of difference such as race, class, sex, and gender, I have been struck by how often we do not read “against the grain” of the texts we study on the level of narrative. As adept as we have become at unpacking the ideological thrust of texts – how novels build nations, oppress or exalt women, and construct or critique social identities, to name some of the threads I have engaged in this study – we undervalue the ideology of character. In other words, we attend to the discourse and ideology of the text at the expense of the competing discourses and
ideologies of individual characters. While I have argued for the value of finer distinctions on the level of character, I have argued against the mono-national thrust of much literary criticism. Without necessarily positing a Bloomian genealogy of influence, I have suggested that by reading British and American texts together we write a much fuller history of the novel, one that takes England and America’s unique transatlantic connection into account, and accounts for the deployment of the secondary heroine throughout the early history of the novel. I see these two problems as intrinsically related: by remaining complicit with the early novel’s ideology of character we become complicit with its attendant ideology of nation-building, which is in turn replicated in our critical treatment of texts. By resisting the narrative drive towards resolution and turning our attention to such sites of resistance as are proffered by figures like the secondary heroine, therefore, we also resist the more familiar but no less insidious ideologies of monolithic nationalism that our critical practice has uncovered, but not sufficiently questioned.


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