INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6” x 9” black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI
A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600
SHAME AND GENRE IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY AMERICAN NARRATIVE: A PSYCHOLOGICAL READING OF CHARACTER AND CHOICE IN JAMES FENIMORE COOPER, SUSAN WARNER, HENRY JAMES, AND THEODORE DREISER

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the

Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

Nils Samuels, M.A.

The Ohio State University

1998

Dissertation Committee:

Professor Steven Fink, Advisor
Professor Susan S. Williams
Professor Daniel Barnes

Approved by

English Department Graduate Program
ABSTRACT

My dissertation compares shame in characters from works of American romance, realism, and naturalism. As characters' psychological complexity increases, genre shifts permit differing degrees of character autonomy, free will, and accountability. The shamed self attributes a perceived violation of internalized values to a core inadequacy. To avoid shame, the self must measure its impulses against an imagined community, which may exclude the self from an actual community. Combining shame psychology and genre studies, I consider the essentialism of James Fenimore Cooper, shame and self-discipline in Susan Warner, Henry James's Isabel Archer, and the reduced representation of shame in Theodore Dreiser. By analyzing shame psychology relative to the formal and ideological attributes of American fictive genres, we can understand better the evolving psychology of American culture through the nineteenth-century and the tussle between individual impulses and societal restraints.

Transgression implicates subcultures and individuals in Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), with the stakes extinction. Romance foregrounds action, resulting in largely static characters with predetermined
fates. Such predetermination is consistent with essentialism and intractable shame. Warner's *The Wide, Wide World* (1850) chronicles Ellen Montgomery's evolution into Christian womanhood. Ellen must learn self-discipline to internalize shame as conscience and surrender willfulness to domestic compliance to men and God. Isabel Archer in James's *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881) savors realism's apparent autonomy, postponing incorporation into conventions she questions, especially marriage. Psychological realism tests Isabel's empathetic awareness and the growth of her imagination through suffering, as she moves from a romantic sensibility to the freedoms and terror of choice. Dreiser's *An American Tragedy* (1925) frames potential shame situations for Clyde Griffiths but withholds the substance, because shame and individual accountability, like choice, are seen as illusionary inside deterministic naturalism.

The flight impulse of shame resists self-examination and the self-consciousness of guilt. Yet the fictional narrative moves historically towards increasing psychological complexity. Testing the generic parameters of character representation against a model of shame brings into relief the struggle between individual and communal impulses.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to thank first my advisor, Steve Fink, whose patience, good humor, and perception has made this project something more than half done. Never a bully, always a gentle prod, he is the reader I'd like to be. Thanks also to my readers, Dan Barnes, Carla Pestana, and especially Susan Williams, all of whom challenged me to see beyond my security and whose impact is especially evident in the epilogue. I want to thank also Mike Davey and Mary Castoe. Both helped me feel not disenfranchised from the department after I became ABD. With some apology I also thank my dissertation partner and friend, John Calvert, who was especially helpful in the formative stages of this dissertation and to whom I owe more than a phone call. I haven’t called, John, because of Sarah, the wonderful woman who helped normalize my life so that I could see beyond the paper trees and whose work with literature and kids has sharpened my sense of purpose in this uncertain discipline. A big old thanks, Sarah, for putting up with all this nonsense. And thanks to Jennifer and her little ones, Bridget, Brianne, D.J., and Dakota, for providing happy distraction and vicarious support.
Finally, I want to thank my family: my brother and best friend, Rolf, for never talking about it; Lisa, for not worrying when I didn’t return her phone calls; Shirley, for leading all the rest of us forward into this madness and for her shared interest in nineteenth-century American fiction; Larry, for the monetary assistance and willingness to listen to Rolf and me talk baseball; Grandmother, for that visit last year that helped keep me sane; and my extended family, Hugh and Stuart, who love me regardless.

To my parents I owe in ways mysterious and explicable. Coming to terms with my father’s shame and my inherited shame was the spark for this particular project. My mother’s patience in watching four of her children fight towards the useless beauty of a PhD in English is beyond me. Thanks also to her for the familial fellowship that gave me the luxury to concentrate on finishing my writing.

A closing thanks to all the teachers out there who encouraged me despite my resistance to conventionality, from elementary school to graduate school, especially Isabel Inglis, Carole Jarrell, Karen Edwards, Dave Baker, John Ward, and David Frantz. We let students go without always knowing if they learn from us. These teachers have stayed with me and helped model what teaching should be.
## VITA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 29, 1961</td>
<td>Born Bethesda, Maryland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>B.A. English, Kenyon College, Gambier, Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>M.A. English Literature, The Ohio State University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987-1998</td>
<td>Graduate Teaching Associate and Lecturer, The Ohio State University</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### FIELD OF STUDY

Major Field: English
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments ........................................................................................................ iv

Vita ................................................................................................................................ vi

Table of Contents ........................................................................................................ vii

Chapters:

1. Sleeping in Separate Heavens: The Ramifications of Shame and Genre in *The Last of the Mohicans* ........................ 1

2. Walking the Straight and Narrow: Discipline, Shame, and Genre in *The Wide, Wide World* ........................................ 50

3. Resisting an Accountability of Choice: Isabel Archer in *The Portrait of a Lady* ................................................................. 93

4. Running from Shame: Naturalism's Plan for Clyde Griffiths ............... 144

Epilogue ...................................................................................................................... 229

Works Cited ................................................................................................................. 253
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

SLEEPING IN SEPARATE HEAVENS:
THE RAMIFICATIONS OF SHAME AND GENRE IN THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS

My dissertation argues that character shame in American prose narrative manifests itself according to the genre within which characters operate. Shame shines a light on the shadowy boundaries of what is allowable for characters and slaps the hands of those transgressors who cross the line of understood acceptable behavior. The degree of perceived character accountability within these narratives—their affective shame or guilt—determines whether accepting the freedom to choose and thus the responsibility for their fates are viable and meaningful concepts within the fictive world.

Good news is no news. So too with narratives, which take as a first cause some conflict, to be resolved within the pages of the narrative. The paradigmatic American cultural conflict pits individualism against social
conformity, though ego impulses struggle with communal restraint universally. In psychological terms, this struggle is resolved when the ego accepts the restraint of the superego. In social terms, it is resolved when that superego mirrors the community's standards, when internalized value systems align with external ones.

While strength of character may not be inversely related to social obedience, it is at least true that our enduring literary characters are those who test the limits of their space. The rise of the novel through the nineteenth century follows the rise of individualism, with attendant attention to increasing psychological complexity and an increasing if sometimes sporadic illusion of character autonomy. In tracing the movement in American prose fiction across the hundred years from James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), through Susan Warner's *The Wide, Wide World* (1850) and Henry James's *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881) to Theodore Dreiser's late naturalist narrative *An American Tragedy* (1925), I hope to show that with increased fullness of characterization comes a changing sense of how shame and guilt operate on these characters. The movement towards maturation should mean that individuals surrender their shame response for guilt, in the process recognizing that value rests in action in a social context. Those who refuse may light out for the territory, but the business of the novel is with those pioneers who stay.
My method is psychological, using an evolving model of shame psychology to access character situations. The surge in attention to shame in recent years has only slowly manifested itself in literary studies.¹ Although I do make some use of classical literature scholarship, my model is built from scholarship in psychology, with occasional input from other fields. I draw upon literary criticism where relevant, especially where criticism informs degrees of character choice and the possibilities of genre.

As characters move towards greater complexity in the novel, their authors become parents, with characters as children who grow into their own choices and learn to accept increasingly their responsibility for their action, apart from their parent/author. The fictional narrative genre moves from essentialism to an action-based self-assessment, wherein individuals are responsible for their fate. In the process, genre shapes the possibilities of character. Characters are seen more and more relative to the community, not impervious to the community, with the result that realism and naturalism situate characters in social settings, without the freedom from background granted the romance, whose social world does not impinge characters.

Cooper's characters are automatons, Warner's are children, but James's and Dreiser's are sometimes reluctant adolescents, forced to confront the social responsibility of choice, even if the free will behind that choice ultimately is undercut. Isabel Archer in *The Portrait of a Lady* and Clyde Griffiths in *An American Tragedy* may not succeed equally in the task,
but the challenge they face is qualitatively different from Ellen Montgomery's in *The Wide, Wide World* and Magua's in *The Last of the Mohicans*: Isabel and Clyde let us see the possibilities of responsibilities of guilt. We hold these characters accountable for their actions in a fuller way, because these characters have a greater illusion of autonomy and psychological depth.

To whom much is given, much is expected. The shamed self either is given no space for change or refuses to confront the responsibility, preferring to retreat inward. Shame is the immature response, forgivable in immature characterization (romance), less forgivable in bildungsroman (domestic fiction), and less forgivable still in the fully drawn social worlds of realism and naturalism, where the challenge is accepting an obligation/connection to others and channeling the feeling of failure to the corrective response of guilt.

Let me begin by developing a working model of shame, measuring it against Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans*. The process of discussing shame begins with definition, and the definition begins with distinguishing what shame is from what it is not. This distinction is especially important relative to guilt. Although popularly conjoined, shame and guilt are separated by the authorial appeals made by each. In short, shame is a response to the ego-ideal, while guilt is a response to the superego, following Gerhart Piers and Milton Singer's distinction. The superego establishes boundaries which guilt violates; the ego-ideal creates a goal which the shamed self falls short
Shame suggests a failure of essence, the self failing to realize its goal. Guilt involves a failure of action, the self violating its behavioral parameters. In Helen Lewis's words, shame is **being** inadequate, guilt is **doing** inadequately. Shame feels intractable: since the self's core is judged inadequate, corrective action does not address the deficiency. Nor is the attention on action finally the point of shame—it is the ego that is paramount, not the consequences of action beyond the self.

The social standard violated in each case may be the same, but the difference lies in the response. The shamed self focuses inward, often creating internally the judge and judgment which inspires feelings of shame, regardless of the presence or absence of any actual judging other. The guilty self looks outward to the recipient of whatever action has brought on the self's guilt and seeks corrective action. Guilt inspires a movement towards community, shame a retreat from community. The community, real or projected, may respond with reintegration or banishment. Its presence depends on the corrigibility of the offending individual: if the offender's transgression does not indicate a core inadequacy, the individual is likely to be forgiven. If, however, the community judges the action as indicating intractable failings of self, the judged self will be denied reintegration.

Consider the following example from *The Last of the Mohicans*. A Huron brave has shown cowardice in battle and is openly judged.
They who composed the outer circle of faces, were on tiptoe to
gaze; and even the culprit, for an instant, forgot his shame, in a
deeper emotion, and exposed his abject features, in order to
cast an anxious and troubled glance at the dark assemblage of
chiefs. . . . As the chief slowly uttered [his condemnation] . . . the
culprit raised his face, in deference to the other's rank and
years. Shame, horror, and pride, struggled in its lineaments.
His eye, which was contracted with inward anguish, gleamed
around on the persons of those whose breath was his fame and
the latter emotion, for an instant predominated. He arose to his
feet, and baring his bosom, looked steadily on the keen,
glittering knife, that was already upheld by his inexorable judge.
As the weapon passed slowly into his heart, he even smiled, as
if in joy, at having found death less dreadful than he had
anticipated, and fell heavily on his face, at the feet of the rigid
and unyielding form of Uncas. (242-243)

We see in this passage many of the signs of shame. The judgment
may be delivered by another, but it requires the agreement of the self. The
banishment by the chief takes the extreme form of extermination and includes
a review of previous action, suggesting that the community had been willing
to reintegrate the transgressor had he shown that his cowardice was a slip
that did not indicate a core failure of self. Finally, a judgment: the culprit is
incorrigible and should be excluded from the community. Had a judgment of
guilt been delivered, the community would have looked to future action as
indicating corrected behavior, in accord with the community. But it apparently
is too late for that.

Ironically, the culprit's acceptance of his sentence indicates that he
himself agrees with the judgment of his core essence as inadequate. Indeed,
the self must agree for the self to feel shamed, for shame involves
internalization of a value system. If the self violates a social system to which
he/she does not subscribe, shame will not result. The musical psalmist David
Gamut does not carry a gun in the wilderness of *The Last of the Mohicans*,
but his belief system does not expect him to. Although Hawkeye condemns
Gamut initially for failing to arm himself, Gamut is immune to this shame—he
simply has not internalized marksmanship as an ideal. Both Douglas Cairns
and Gabrielle Taylor agree that self-judgment may not coincide with an actual
audience's judgment. Thus not external sanctions but the self's projection of
an external model brings the judgment which leads to shame. Most of us,
however, do absorb the dominant cultural model and so are more likely to
experience shame when found lacking in some social expectation.
Fortunately, our self-castigation does not usually result in death.

Note that the sacrifice of the brave in this passage does not largely
help his community. Although the tribe is rid of a bad seed, it would be better
served by a reformed seed and one more contributing member to the
community. But shame is not intent on consequences beyond the self; it is inward-looking not outward-looking. While the guilty self may seek to make amends, the shamed self cannot bear being seen, nor in this case can his judges bear seeing him. Thus we can imagine the effort of the condemned brave to raise his lowered face and make eye contact with his judges.

The etymology of shame helps explain the desire to disappear and avoid public exposure. Cairns and Bernard Williams both note that linguistically the Greek word for shame *aidos* connects to nakedness, from which the Greek word *aidoda* (meaning genitals) is derived. In the context of battle, nakedness suggests exposure to physical injury, resisted as an animal attempts to protect its vulnerable underside. Even Homeric shame cannot be resolved by merely adjusting to the expectations of society. The fear of exposure is not just to anyone but to a particular someone whose opinion matters to the individual, a someone whose values the shamed self has also internalized. Again, this someone needs to be one who fits the shamed self’s moral and communal expectations rather than someone outside a potentially judging class. Such a judgment represents more than simply an individual’s reaction but represents rather a communal judgment.

Williams sees in *aidos* elements of shame and guilt, principally in that *aidos* allows for the idea of reparation and forgiveness. Guilt allows more obviously for forgiveness because it is the externalized other who has suffered the wrong and has the power to bestow forgiveness. With shame,
the judgment is ultimately delivered against the self by itself as it projects a judging other or concurs with an actual judging other.

Morality also separates guilt from shame. Williams and others argue that shame is neutral on issues of morality in that concern about core essence is rooted in moral egoism rather than moral behavior. This makes sense when we consider that morality exists in a social world; manners are, for instance, secular morals. Since the shamed self's impulse is to shun contact, its moral concerns are logically reduced.

Williams and Cairns are both writing about ancient cultures primarily, ones which they argue are more honor-based than ours, a distinction argued for as well by William Ian Miller. Miller argues that in an honor-based system such as that in the Icelandic sagas, individual value lies in community assessment more than self-evaluation. People in such communities lack independent psychological complexity; the self consistently is understood relative to community. Self-respect is generated by the respect given by others. Medieval Icelandic culture saw honor as almost a physical commodity which one could take from or lose to another, through violence when necessary: "By nominalizing shame, as the Icelanders did by making it independent of the self, they could readily subsume it conceptually into the structure and logic of the key systems of reciprocity: the feud and gift exchange" (119). Note, though, that this distancing technique, while warding off shame, may deny a fuller psychology than a more direct recognition of
these feelings might instill. Arguably, the consolation is a greater sense of social accountability. Honor is a prerequisite for shame; both depend on the internalized judgments of others, one on their esteem, the other on their disdain.

Miller agrees with others, however, that shame need not be experienced in the company of others so long as the individual has absorbed the communal values. Without subscribing to these values, neither honor nor shame is granted by members of the community. Icelandic culture was much more conscious of honor and vulnerable to shame than is present twentieth-century society, which allows for greater gradations and milder pains with less extreme implications for one's place in the community. Honor works further to sustain social hierarchy in systems without formal hierarchy. Because hierarchy was fluid, people maintained their position only so long as they held onto their honor, which those below them in status tried to wrest from them (130).

Return to the Huron brave. The right to be a warrior is not formalized in the Huron culture. The community does not assume individuals have inherent intractable worth. Worth may seem related to action and so might seem to fall under the domain of guilt—except that the action ultimately reveals the actor's core essence. Even something as apparently formalized as family is open to reinterpretation by virtue of specific action. When the slain Huron's father unwittingly mentions his son, an awkward silence makes
plain the son's changed status. The father pronounces his expected judgment: "'It was a lie,' he said; 'I had no son! He who was called by that name is forgotten; his blood was pale, and it came not from the veins of a Huron'" (247). But his public repudiation of his son does not spare the father from judgment: "The Indians, who believe in the hereditary transmission of virtues and defects in character, suffered him to depart in silence" (247).

Biological determinism suggests evaluations made ultimately on the basis of essence not action, reinforcing the notion of static characters in the romance genre but also suggesting the naturalism of Dreiser.

Slowly we can see how these distinctions between shame and guilt play themselves out in situations. The heroic expectations of the Icelandic culture are evident too in the Indian culture of Cooper. The expectations for warriors are high, and the consequences of not measuring up are life-threatening. This binariness fits philosopher Herbert Morris's shame model, which argues that shame involves a sense of failing to achieve a maximum ideal while guilt is a failure to meet a minimum one, a version of Piers and Singer's ego-ideal and superego. Consider the implications of maximum ideals: one is either perfect or nothing. Because of the extreme expectations of the shame model, a shamed self does not really fail—if measured against normal expectations. But because the self's expectations are absolute, the shamed self has a more difficult time putting aside concerns about acceptability and participating or reintegrating itself with the larger community.
from which it may feel excluded. Morris notes that the guilty person, while vulnerable to judgment, is seen as committing wrong action which can be corrected; the presumption is that the guilty individual’s core self remains intact and redeemable. Thus the shamed self may find itself in self-imposed exile, while the guilty self may be the prodigal son.

Our sacrificed brave tells us the scope of punishment is larger than Morris suggests, however. Looking at the intent of punishment may clarify. If we punish to correct behavior and to rehabilitate the offending party, then perhaps Morris is correct. The shamed self, however, feels incorrigible. The brave welcomes the judgment because it matches his own. Because the shamed self has fallen short of its lofty goal, it can conceive of no middle ground. It is divinity or death. For this obvious reason, Morris prefers a guilt model for society, where attention is to behavior more than motivation and intentionality, where minimum behavior rather than a maximum ideal is defended, where rules and regulations are the norm, where the wounded other’s rights are primary, and where restoration of relationship is a goal. Such is not the world of romance but the world of realism.

Morris notes that this is the model for law. Tellingly, the law seeks to discover if a party is guilty or innocent in action: what the offender actually feels about the transgression is not the issue. Although our sense of guilt is clearly not the same as this legal definition, the attention to action is the same. Ignorance of the law is no excuse, because the attention is not on the
agent but on the action. The action is social. The inside motivation of the self is not.

The common elements of all these views on guilt and shame are 1) guilt involves action, shame involves essence; 2) the individual experiencing shame focuses not on the other but on the self; 3) shame is less social, since the shamed self retreats rather than seeking to redress the offended other; 4) guilt and shame are not mutually exclusive but exist together; 5) while culture plays a role in the components which make up the shamed response, the shamed individual's sense of violation against standards does not necessarily mirror the majority view of the culture at large.

Because guilt is action-oriented, some critics argue that the self is less likely to internalize the action. In this scenario, people who feel guilt judge the action as wrong, but confirm their sense of self by being able to pass judgment on their own actions. The sense of transgression applies to both guilt and shame and would seem to imply that transgressing individuals have internalized some code which allows them to render the judgment that either they or their action falls short of the accepted standard. Why might shamed individuals be less social if both guilt and shame require a recognition of a social standard? Again, largely because the shamed self turns inward not only for self-castigation but also for value systems; the self may construct a value system completely apart from the larger community values. Both guilt
and shame are felt only when an individual subscribes to a value system whose tenets he/she violates, a system that may be completely solipsistic.

The Huron culture in Cooper is shame-based in large part because of an absence of a middle ground between mighty warrior and slain outcast. Michael Lewis argues that this desire to be a great warrior necessarily connects an individual to shame. The desire for greatness evidences hubris. In Lewis's model, both shame and hubris spring from a belief/disbelief in self at its core, apart from specific action. Their less extreme relatives would be guilt and normal pride, both of which involve specific attribution relative to specific action. Both shame and hubris spring from global attribution, a judgment of the self's essence rather than its actions. While good actions stave off guilt and bring on pride, specific actions do not keep away shame, since neither hubris nor shame depends on particular action. Further, the attention to self and away from actions which move beyond the self makes recognition of others less important.

Essence suggests another aspect of shame, narcissism. Andrew Morrison argues somewhat counterintuitively that shame is actually a reaction-formation against narcissism. As such, shame asks us to see our place relative to community. In such a model, shame would serve a social function. While Morrison may be right that shame is reaction-formation against a certain kind of narcissism, he seems to miss that aspect of shame which retreats from all social encounters. His formulation suggests guilt,
since in Morrison's model shame is an impetus to action, reserved usually for
guilt in most models. Morrison may be saying that avoiding shame means
staying within social guidelines, rather than letting the ego follow its own impulses.

Processing experience as guilt assumes a self strong enough not to
crumble in the face of failure. For Helen Lewis and Leon Wurmser,
narcissism is part of the defense against the possibilities of crumbling. Lewis
believes that narcissism functions to maintain the boundaries of the self
against the threat of the dissolution of self-other. For Lewis, narcissism plays
a more reduced role than in other writers' theories of shame-narcissism.
Wurmser writes of the protection of the integrity of the self which is based on
sublimated narcissism. Theologian Donald Capps follows Morrison's
discussion of the depleted shamed self by arguing that modern-day
narcissism is different from its nineteenth-century roots: the old "rugged
individualists" were isolated by choice, while the new narcissists are isolated
by solipsism; they have no larger cause.³

Capps and others discuss the roots of narcissism in normal childhood
development, following Freud. Infants begin by seeing themselves as the
center of the world, a healthy narcissism which eventually gives way to a
recognition that there is a world external to them. This necessary narcissistic
injury inspires the defensive reaction Heinz Kohut calls splitting, into two
parts, a grandiose self (prone to hubris) and a depleted self (prone to shame).
To ward off crippling narcissism, a child needs successful mirroring from its parents.

I don't want to wander too far afield here without rooting myself in examples from Cooper. Natty Bumppo is one of American literature's archetypal rugged individualists. Is it possible to see his actions as those of a certain kind of narcissist? Is there any sense that any shaming situation for him would function as Morrison suggests to prevent hubris?

Let me preface further discussion by admitting that Cooper's characters lack full psychological complexity. Granting that, it seems possible still to consider what impact these ideas of narcissism and shame have on Cooper's characters, especially since these states are associated with immature psychological development. In *The Last of the Mohicans*, Hawkeye is 32 years old, a scout who travels with Chingachgook and Uncas, all three of whom are otherwise partnerless, all three of whom could be said to have no larger circle than themselves. Removed from a larger social circle, Hawkeye might seem more vulnerable to narcissism, if only because he has less opportunity to check his action against an observed social standard. For the same reason, however, he might be shameless, at least relative to a larger social standard, since the world beyond the woods is not a world he turns to for his values. We can agree at least that Hawkeye does have values, that he chooses (insofar as these characters can choose) a way of living which isolates himself not randomly but deliberately. In this respect, then, he seems
to follow Capps's vision of the person isolated not by solipsism but by principle.

If he is strong enough to choose this life, he would seem to have a strong enough ego to employ narcissism to distinguish who he is from the world around him, following Wurmser. The natural world, though providing lessons aplenty, offers uncivilized modeling which Hawkeye wrestles with accepting. One lesson Cooper imparts is that while the natural world is merciless, the mercy of the white man confirms his superiority.

Consider this early example. Hawkeye is repelling a Huron attack with Colonel Heyward and Chingachgook and has wounded a brave perched high in a tree. Hawkeye resists at first Heyward's protestations to end the brave's misery then finally shoots the Huron, cursing himself afterwards:

Hawkeye, who alone appeared to reason on the occasion, shook his head, at his own momentary weakness, even uttering his self-disapprobation aloud.

"'Twas the last charge in my horn, and the last bullet in my pouch, and 'twas the act of a boy . . . ." (75)

Hawkeye's wrestling aloud foregrounds the dilemma of maintaining beliefs in the face of opposition. Mercy, the act of a boy, meets the natural law of a man, born of pragmatic experience.

But is this a situation which challenges his ego? Would Hawkeye alone have yielded to the impulse to save his shot? Probably not. His
lament sounds a protest against imposing white values in the wilderness, all the more conflicted given Hawkeye’s reiterations that he is a man without a cross. But consider this incident from another angle. If shame is the product of a feeling of core inadequacy, perhaps Hawkeye’s words do indicate shame, rooted in narcissism. Note that his complaint is not that the act is wrong in itself but is wrong for the person he takes himself to be, a man rather than a boy. Manhood for Hawkeye is a core state; action then does not create the self but confirms a preexisting condition. Men kill not to make themselves men but to reveal inside the sculptor’s block their preexisting figure of manness. Whites show mercy not to make themselves white but to reveal inside the sculptor’s block their preexisting figure of whiteness. The threat to the sense of self lies in trying to reconcile a wrong action with a right state. In this case, an act of mercy challenges the two sides of Hawkeye, whiteness and manness, and pits two essentialist visions of himself against each other. If he judges himself by his actions in a less essential way, he would seem to have not hubris but normal pride, which would keep him from excessive narcissism.

Perhaps Hawkeye is too thin a character to stand up to these distinctions. In glossing situations that challenge Hawkeye’s ego, we must remember that he is a figure in a romance. So too with the Huron brave described above. Still, certain aspects of shame endure, even in the few basic characters that Cooper provides. Character limitations determine the
shame possibilities within any fiction. In romance, because of their essentialism, characters are more likely to feel shame.

It's clear by now that shame and narcissism are rooted in essentialism, in a self-judgment based not on particular action but to a core essence, either triumphant or worthless. In tracing how the romance genre lends itself to characters being seen in essentialist terms, I follow Richard Chase's definition of romance from *The American Novel and Its Tradition*: in romantic fiction, characters are secondary to action; reality is rendered in less detail; both the action and characters are thus allowed to be more extreme, since the allegiance is to mythic, allegorical, or symbolic representation. Characters are generally flatter than in realistic fiction, their relationship to each other more idealized and less complex, shorn of a necessary connection to society or the past. While Nina Baym notes that American antebellum writers used the terms romance and novel interchangeably, the name matters less than the attributes.

What are the implications of essentialism in romantic fiction? If action is centered on the social and character is centered on the ego, then action-based narrative would seem to have fewer possibilities for the egocentrism of character-based narrative. To put it another way, our attention is not on the inside feelings of characters but on the action they take in the world. We don't follow these characters expecting them to grow, we follow them as they chase a plot, watching as the actions they take confirm their nascent
essence. Nor should the characters themselves be expected to linger on their psychological state when there's work to be done. Manifest neurotics should be noticeably absent in this world. On the other hand, shame is rooted in an essentialist vision. While characters may venture self-questioning soliloquies, the consequence of failed action is excorporation from the community, since second chances make sense only when characters can grow and since wrong action is fused to wrong essence.

Chase adds that the romantic world is also the pastoral world, whereas the world of realistic fiction takes place more often in cities and towns. Certainly the Leatherstocking tales qualify as romance following this geography. The implications for characters' ability to alter their world is clear: the world they inhabit either does not still exist or is receding; their possibilities of affecting the future are gone, since the events themselves take place within an antiquated world. By the same token, characters are given room to express themselves with fewer fetters than communal life permits, even if that yawp in the wilderness is a noise a more fully socialized character would resist.

Because The Last of the Mohicans is set sixty years in the past, we know that the pioneers win the battle over the trappers and hunters. The implications for action are less in such a world, since no individual action will turn back the tide of time. If action is removed from consequences, then what one does matters less than what one is. Since the results are known to
Cooper, and since his readers know as well history and the conventions of romance, his characters are fighting a predetermined battle, stretching their character possibilities only so far as time and genre allow. Written before The Last of the Mohicans but situated later in the time line of Natty Bumppo's life, The Pioneers has shown us as well that whatever else happens Hawkeye will survive this narrative.

Return to Hawkeye's self-castigation following the mercy killing of the Huron brave. Even though this event happens relatively early in the narrative, we know the choice which Hawkeye has deliberated is never really in question. After all, we have already been reminded that, though living as a Mohican, Natty is "a man with no cross" of blood, a man who, when push comes to shove, will rise to whatever character his racial origins dictate: despite himself, the white boy inside him shows mercy and shoots the wounded Huron, overcoming Hawkeye the man's pragmatism. Inside this romance, he has no choice; ruled by essentialism, characters in Cooper can be other than what they are by "nature" or birth. While free will in all fiction may be illusionary (since, as Vladimir Nabokov has remarked, all characters are "galley slaves"), nonetheless early nineteenth-century fiction does not hold much promise for even the illusion of character autonomy.

How does this realization affect how we read the possibilities of shame situations? I would argue that prescribed boundaries make characters less likely to transgress, that not having the power to choose makes them less
likely to deviate in ways for which they should be held emotionally accountable. They are like children, whose manageable trespasses we forgive: kids will be kids. But kids also imagine their world in very finite terms. Not able to imagine a fuller range of choice, none of Cooper's characters will test the cattle fence of deviation. They may, like Magua, destroy, but within their character definitions such action does not transgress identity but confirms it: I kill therefore I am. On the other hand, I kill therefore I am a killer: if action confirms essence, then bad action cannot be dismissed, as Magua tries to do, by blaming firewater or outside influences. Any violation Hawkeye perceives in himself in sparing the dangling brave is illusionary, since his standard is innate. He is merciful because whites are merciful.

But what of the Huron brave whose courage failed him? What measure of choice does he have in proving his character? Measured against Uncas, none at all. While Uncas is pursuing the brave, he is caught by the Hurons. Since we know that Uncas cannot be the coward that his captors accuse him of being, that role must fall on the other combatant. He may appear to be judged by his actions, but even the tribesmen admit that this latest action merely confirms the inherent flaw in the essence of the brave. Again, in this world of romance, actions don't create character, they merely confirm essence. This of course is what Calvinism teaches, the doctrine of predestination, a sermon begun by Gamut at one point in the narrative.
Let me return to the start of Cooper’s narrative. From the first pages, Cooper invests his narrative with language associated with honor and shame. The French and Indian war has placed the British and their colonists in an uncomfortable position. Here is Cooper’s description from the first chapter:

The imbecility of her military leaders abroad, and the fatal want of energy in her councils at home, had lowered the character of Great Britain from the proud elevation on which it had been placed by the talents and enterprises of her former warriors and statesmen. No longer dreaded by her enemies, her servants were fast losing the confidence of self respect. In this mortifying abasement, the colonists, though innocent of her blunders, and too humble to be the agents of her blunders, were but the natural participators. (13)

The word choices make plain that pride is the issue. Britain has been lowered from its "proud elevation"; self-respect is now on the line. The loss of self respect represents a "mortifying abasement," passed from Britain to the colonists. Cooper adds that the colonists had witnessed the defeat of the British troops "which, reverencing as a mother, they had blindly believed invincible." Invincibility suggest hubris rather than an experiential pride. The simile of mother calls to mind narcissistic childhood injury that Donald Capps and Heinz Kohut describe, the trauma which leads to splitting into grandiose self and depleted self, prone to toggling between shame and hubris.
Already in these opening paragraphs, Cooper is placing himself in the midst of extreme expectations of honor and dishonor. John McWilliams notes that such extremes make sense within the epic tradition Cooper is working with. The focal point for the American epic was the American Indians. According to McWilliams, American writers cast Indians in roles reminiscent of the splitting of grandiose self and depleted self: Indians were either "hard, solitary, unyielding, aging, and doomed" or they were "graceful, generous, pliable, young, and doomed" (127). By casting Indians in the mold of the Homeric warrior, American writers could recreate a heroic age. The heroic age needed to be in the more distant past, McWilliams argues, because the near past of recent American or European history crowded the imagination.

Part of this heroicization lay in depicting the Indian as a noble savage, defined by Roy Harvey Pearce paradoxically as civilized because he was unsoiled by civilization. While this veneration of primitivism contradicted direct observation, it matched the romance narrative's desire to show an idealized humanity freed from corrupting civilization. But fictional accounts of Indians also borrowed from the captivity narrative model. If Uncas is noble, then Magua is the savage. Their mirroring affection for Cora shows that Cooper saw an Indian on both sides of the coin. Excessive pride and penetrating shame/rage work as binaries in a shame model as well. Just as in this model global attribution reads success and failure of essence in action,
Uncas's success and Magua's failure show the absolutism of a shame model operating in Cooper's characters.

The grandiose vision of the American Indian would seem to be necessary to cast him in an epic. While the Icelandic saga epic is less of a model here than the Homeric model, some aspects of Miller's model bear more examination. In teasing out possibilities of characters's actions, Miller admits that much remains unstated, since the Icelandic world shows reserved emotional expression. Characters are more static, given an emotional disposition which stays with them, and they are more allegorical or mythic. If this honor-based system is akin to a feud and gift exchange, self-respect becomes something granted by some party other than the self. Both of these points are consistent with the expectations for characters in romance, following Chase: they are more two-dimensional and static and generally secondary to action in importance. Miller argues honor-based cultures are more vulnerable to shame because they conceive of honor in binary terms. Modern society allows greater gradations of loss (humiliation, envy, guilt, embarrassment, among others), with less extreme implications for one's place in society.

C. Hugh Holman's *A Handbook of Literature* defines Homeric as having qualities of grandeur, magnitude, and heroism. By this definition, *The Last of the Mohicans* qualifies. Certainly Cooper's epigraphs, evoking Shakespeare's histories and Pope's *The Iliad*, encourage the association. Remember,
though, that a capacity for heroism is linked with a capacity for equally spectacular failure. The stakes in the epic are enormously high, as they are here, with tribes fighting for their very existence. On a literal level, the defeated self cannot seek reintegration, for their tribe itself is at risk for extermination. Shame confirms that the worlds of the romance and the epic have not yet accepted the terms of a reintegrative community, whose members can fail incrementally and are not automatically shunned. Guilt only works when the projected judging other can envision reincorporation. In Cooper's binary natural world, one slip may bring extermination.

With this discussion of romance and the epic in mind, once again let us return to the text. While Cooper offers a depiction of affairs at the start of his narrative, he is largely quiet about specific characters. In keeping with an expectation of representational characters, none is named in the first chapter, although we do read descriptions of Gamut, Cora, Alice, and Magua. Cooper has made clear the colonists' subservient position relative to the British already, and we have hints that there is a rigidity of class and position, shown in military ranks and in the description which ends the chapter. There Cora, as yet unnamed, responds to the sight of Magua, who is serving as guide to their party:

Though this sudden and startling movement of the Indian produced no sound from the other, in the surprise, her veil also was allowed to open
its folds, and betrayed an indescribable look of pity, admiration, and horror, as her dark eye followed the easy motions of the savage. The tresses of this lady were shining and black, like the plumage of the raven. Her complexion was not brown, but it rather appeared charged with the colour of the rich blood, that seemed ready to burst its bounds.

(19)

Richard Slotkin notes this passage in his introduction to the Penguin edition of Cooper's narrative, pointing out that we have immediate hints of Cora's mixed blood and of the essentialist pull of race. While he reads this as lust, I think it is more likely some form of shame or embarrassment, consistent with other similar reactions she has throughout the narrative. The blood rises to her face, but other signs of more comfortable interest are missing. Cooper adds that after Cora's reaction, "she bowed her face, and rode in silence" (19), both affective responses to shame. Even the smile that precedes this reaction fits into a shame model, since Cooper explains that it was "as if in pity at her own momentary forgetfulness." What she has forgotten we as readers do not know yet, but we come to see that she is remembering her mixed blood essence and acting as mild judge of her own forgetfulness. How could I forget my place?, she seems to be thinking.®

Essentialism, rooted in both the epic and romance tradition, is a given in this world, bringing the potential for shame with it. If Indians and those of mixed blood are inferior by virtue of birth, then recognition of this inferiority
admits to no possibility of solution through good deeds or deeds of any sort. Hawkeye is apparently most at odds with his birthright, living the life of an Indian. But even he looks to his group identity to explain successes or lapses. Indeed his most prized skill of marksmanship, which has earned him the title of la Longue Carabine, he does not attribute to the practice of years in the wilderness. Instead, Hawkeye sees it as a family trait, passed on through birth: "For myself, I conclude all the Bumppos could shoot; for I have a natural turn with a rifle, which must have been handed down from generation to generation, as our holy commandments tell us, all good and evil gifts are bestowed" (31).

When his aim is less than true, he attributes this slip not specifically but globally, in his origins. Firing unwisely at a fleeing Magua has alerted the Hurons of his presence, and Hawkeye initially condemns himself—"It was an unthoughtful act" (45). In proportion to its thoughtlessness, however, is the act's naturalness. Hawkeye quickly forgives his slip with "But, then it was a natural temptation! 'twas very natural!," changing the subject to encourage the party to move on to avoid the Hurons. Hawkeye throughout manages both to claim that talents align themselves "naturally" and to skirt the threat any inadequacies he might discover in himself by virtue of the same appeal.

His successes are frequent enough that he need not feel unduly threatened by an occasional failure, more so since with Chingachgook and Uncas at his side, he has seconds who will catch what he does not.
Hawkeye may lose the trail of the fleeing Hurons, but the natural talents of the Mohicans will ensure that the trail is discovered again. And so Uncas diverts a stream and uncovers tracks (216). Hawkeye believes so much in a division of talents that he is surprised when Chingachgook can detect the approach of white people, as though sounds themselves admit to such classification: "'tis strange that an Indian should understand white sounds better than a man, who . . . has no cross in his blood" (35).

When the sound is nonhuman, Hawkeye explains his failure less convincingly. Inside their waterfall cave, the party hears a sound which becomes clear to Heyward when they venture outside: it is a horse in distress, a sound Hawkeye should be able to discern by the essentialist logic of characters in this text but one that he does not. Both Chingachgook and Hawkeye receive the news calmly, though Hawkeye feels he must explain his failure to identify the noise: "'I cannot deny your words, ' he said; 'for I am little skilled in horses, though born where they abound'" (64).

Judged by Hawkeye's belief system, this statement is inconsistent. Actions spring from essence; "born where they abound," Hawkeye should logically be able to discern the sound of horses, just as he should be able to hear "white" sounds. This inconsistency does not trouble him, however. Indeed, though his situation seems ripe for potential shame—an outsider in an Indian world—he appears never to feel the threat of inadequacy which haunts so many other characters. Proud that he is without a cross, he retreats to the
world of whites when his senses let him down in the wilderness—and to the world of Indians, with no natural understanding of actions of the white world, when his actions fail to place him securely in civilized society. Like his successor Clyde Griffiths, Hawkeye's biculturalism apparently shields him from feeling ultimately responsible for any inadequacy relative to either Indian or white culture, although it also leave him finally outside of any fuller community in The Prairie.

His is an ethics of convenience, however, for in more life-threatening situations and those which implicate others, Hawkeye refuses to see beyond skin. Chingachgook, whom Hawkeye loves as his brother, is still "a just man for an Indian" (33), belying Hawkeye's claims that he is "not a prejudiced man" (31). Hawkeye is willing to shoot Magua dead upon first sight merely for being a Huron, because "they are a thievish race." While Heyward argues that this particular Huron is a reliable guide, Hawkeye answers, "[H]e who is born a Mingo will die a Mingo" (37); "God having made him so, neither the Mohawks nor any other tribe can alter him" (39).

The appeal to God and preordained order is made later when Hawkeye explains the approach of Chingachgook, Uncas, and himself to the party of the Hurons who hold Alice, Cora, and Gamut captive. Though a little reckless, "'twas all fore-ordered, and for the best!" (116). Gamut himself agrees, claiming that his liberator "hast caught the true spirit of christianity. He that is to be saved will be saved, and he that is predestined to be damned
will be damned" (116). While Hawkeye mocks him, resting his appeals in empiricism, Gamut's own ability to wander unharmed through battle suggests that Cooper at least believes him.

In such a world, redemptive acts merely confirm saved souls, and acts that might seem to elevate individuals beyond their apparent station are finally not enough. The heaven Hawkeye envisions remains one of separate quarters. While Munro, earlier keenly ashamed of the mother of Cora, now mourning the loss of her, comes to envision an afterlife where "we may assemble around his throne, without distinction of sex, rank, or colour," Hawkeye refuses the possibility, claiming that separatism endures as certainly as snow comes in winter (347).

Hawkeye has avoided shame by rejecting the belief that any failing act is indicative of any core failure of self, apparently secure in the belief that his whiteness gives him worth and superiority over those with nonwhite blood and superiority over the whites in the wilderness because he understand its ways while they do not. His projected community is white, even if he lives away from it. His code of conduct is some hybrid that allows certain acts for expedience's sake while not allowing others. Again, though, he doesn't judge himself by his actions. He is white, which suffices. We may look back to The Pioneers and see a less certain, older Hawkeye, but here he is intent on living a contradiction, paving the way for white settlers while retreating from their advance in the company of natives.
What about the other whites who appear in the woods of *The Last of the Mohicans*? Does their skin save them from shame? Although willing to judge Magua by his apparently reliable navigation, Heyward nonetheless seems to subscribe to essentialism. He and Alice share more than a romantic chemistry; they share a Caucasian biology, which separates them from Cora, though first-time readers do not yet know this. After Cora's blushing response to the athletic Magua at the end of chapter one, Alice seems to taunt her sister, suggesting that they need resolve to endure the sight of any similar savages: "[B]oth Cora and I shall have need to draw largely on that stock of hereditary courage of which we boast" (20). While Alice and Heyward discuss the reliability of Magua, Cora remains silent, even after a direct question from Alice. She finally voices her anger at the surface judgment: "Should we distrust the man, because his manners are not our manners, and that his skin is dark!" coldly asked Cora" (21). Alice gives no replies but advances ahead of her sister on her horse. Heyward looks at Cora in "open admiration" (22), though he offer no words in response either. All ride in silence for several minutes, interrupted finally by the appearance of David Gamut.

Gamut's appearance allows a reuniting as all three find humor in Gamut's awkward gait. For his part, Gamut seems immune to any humorous or serious judgment from this troop, responding evenly to Heyward's questioning about his journey, "nothing daunted by this cold reception" (23-
24). But inclusion again marks vulnerability to shame, and Gamut has won—and seems to cultivate—nothing of the kind yet. He enjoys a private joke "perfectly unintelligible to his hearers" (24). He serves here as a vent for the others. Alice seems to recognize as much, imploring Heyward to allow Gamut to accompany them. While Alice and Heyward talk to Gamut and to each other, Cora remains unheard for the rest of the chapter.

Cooper is setting up the relationship between Alice and Heyward, so it is perhaps understandable that Cora would be a third wheel. And the exclusion of her sister is not so apparent that the daughters of Munro are ever in opposition to each other. But if we wonder if Cora's exclusion is rooted in her race, the revelation by her father to her suitor at Fort Henry confirms our suspicions. There, the suitor approaches Colonel Munro to ask for permission to marry his daughter. Munro assumes Duncan means his elder daughter Cora then answers Heyward's hesitation with the story of Cora's mixed blood background. Both men are ashamed, Munro because the biological association, Heyward because his belief in Cora's unsuitability. Cooper notes that Cora's father confesses "proudly," the corollary of shame. Cast in the role of absolver, Heyward falters, "unable any longer to prevent his eyes from sinking to the floor in embarrassment" (159). Munro challenges Heyward's failure to accept Munro and his daughter with an accurate assessment of Heyward's response: "you cast it on my child as a reproach!"
and Duncan is "conscious of such a feeling, and that as deeply rooted as if it
had been engrafted in his nature" (159).

The narrative’s message against miscegenation has been noted by
many critics.  In their own company, attending to the expected behavior of
the group, these individuals are less likely to wander from the comfort of their
conventions into shame-provoking behavior. But of course these characters
in Cooper’s narrative are off their familiar paths.

Let’s look beyond Hawkeye to see how other characters negotiate this
new terrain. The start of the narrative pits the purity of Heyward and Alice
against Cora as those two hold onto their culture from one British haven to
the next, in this case Fort Henry. The wilderness grows around them,
however, forcing them to come to terms with their new surroundings. The
degree to which they feel inadequate to their surroundings depends on the
degree to which they subscribe to the values of their surroundings. In the
background initially, Cora grows stronger as the party moves further into the
wilderness, because of the simple nonwhite/wilderness parallel that Cooper creates.

To what degree, then, do Alice and Heyward recognize a connection to
the wilderness and its expectations? Heyward is certainly more immediately
compelled to face expectations, since as a soldier his skills are needed to
protect the women from Huron assault. The first indicator of Heyward’s
uneasiness with the loss of certain skills comes when he meets Hawkeye and
admits against gender type to being lost. "Sucking babes are not more
dependent on those who guide them than we who are of larger growth, and who may now be said to possess the stature without the knowledge of men" (36), says an apparent Heyward, recognizing in his confession that the company's uncertain direction unmans him. Hawkeye mocks him with a "Hoot!"—he too sees knowledge of one's bearings as indicative of manliness. But after this retort by the scout, another horseman appears, asking Hawkeye for directions. Cooper reveals that this second speaker is in fact Heyward; the first speaker becomes Gamut, though Cooper has allowed this doubling to continue for several paragraphs. Naturally, Gamut can admit to failure and unmanliness, since his belief system is a warbler's, not a soldier's. Even so, Heyward's words do not admit to much yielding. He stands firm against Hawkeye's defamation of Uncas, defending his guide's reliability. While Hawkeye appears to have the upper hand here, Duncan evokes his military position to diminish the scout's authority. Heyward does seem willing to allow Hawkeye's authority to maneuver in the woods, participating in a scheme to trap their guide Magua.

After Magua has escaped, Hawkeye makes Duncan aware of the dangers and thus the responsibilities that surround them. The threat presses upon Heyward, and he calls plaintively to Hawkeye, "desert me not, for God's sake!" (45). The admission of weakness is answered initially with silence by Hawkeye, who agrees to help if Heyward remains silent. There is no sense here that the discharging of his role as second fiddle unmans Heyward,
beyond his initial cry for help. He does not see himself as having to know the
code of the woods and is content to follow instruction. When he argues that
the Delaware are "women," Hawkeye corrects him--this is territory where
Heyward's knowledge fails him. The failure does not spawn shame in
Heyward because as a white man he does not subscribe to the belief system
of the wilderness.

Nothing again shakes Heyward's sense of himself until he is
admonished by Cora at Fort Henry, where he has left the females to attend to
military responsibilities. While he explains himself to Alice and Cora upon his
return, he admits to shame in the face of Alice's momentary judgment.
Heyward reacts, because the judge is Alice and because they inhabit once
again a civilized world, where Heyward is expected to take charge, to be, in
his words, the knight and the soldier. "Will she find an excuse for the neglect
of the knight, in the duty of a soldier?," he asks Alice: the knight may secure
the promise of domesticity, but for now the role of soldier remains paramount.
Note also the echoes of the medieval epic. As Heyward prepares to share
the results of his conference with Montcalm, Munro favors instead attending
to "the little domestic duties of his own family" (157), asking about Heyward's
romantic intentions towards his daughter. This moment of shame passes only
when Munro dons again the cloak of his military role to discuss Montcalm.

If Heyward generally resists challenges to his sense of place, Alice is
not even visible enough for most of the narrative for full discussion to be
possible. In the wilderness, she surrenders to the care of those around her, recognizing that she is out of her element and that Cora is in hers. Alice speaks up only inside the surroundings of the fort, but even there she is forced to recognize that Heyward has yet to secure the world that she represents. Being out of place does not seem to undermine her sense of self, because her essence remains intractably intact.

Her father Colonel Munro, however, is more challenged. Beyond his essentialist vision of race lies his essentialist vision of nationalism, which cannot abide the thought that Montcalm is more worthy of respect than Munro’s missing compatriot General Webb. Montcalm’s generous terms of surrender cut Munro: “I have lived to see two things in my old age, that never did I expect to behold. An Englishman afraid to support a friend, and a Frenchman too honest to profit by his advantage!” (165). The hubris attached to Munro’s vision of national character toggles in this binary world to unlivable shame, following the shame/hubris model: “From the shock of this unexpected blow the haughty feelings of Munro never recovered; but from that moment there commenced a change in his determined character, which accompanied him to a speedy grave” (165). Hereafter in the narrative, the retreating shamed Munro stays in the background.

While Munro does show shame for matters beyond race, Heyward and Alice largely avoid it. White is right, but for subcutaneous reasons: white is the color of the pioneers who displace the natives, the color of the readers
who read this narrative after the struggle is over, after their place as victors has already been secured. As long as the inadequacy is measured against a standard (adaptability in the wilderness) which readers know is obsolete, we need not feel particularly worried about their belief systems. That Munro doesn't feel as secure suggests that he is vulnerable to some standard that has receded as a concern by the time Cooper was writing. Distinctions of national origin are less important than racial distinctions in the America of the 1800s, Cooper suggests.

Naturally, those unsure about their place on the racial totem pole are more vulnerable to shame. This judgment assumes that they feel inadequate themselves, that they too have internalized the racial belief system that exposes them as impure. How they respond to their doom determines whether they will be remembered with honor (Uncas) or vilification (Magua). Aptly, both men covet Cora, whom Alice, Heyward, and Munro all feel uncomfortable about. From the first, Cora has reacted to Magua in ways beyond reason, a reaction understood as natural—like attracts like. When Magua captures Alice and Cora at the waterfall, the dynamic of shame plays a part in how Cora and Magua react to one another.

Magua summons Cora in chapter eleven to hear his complaint against her father and to ask Cora to share his wigwam. The exchange fits Helen Lewis's model of shamed self and judging other. Magua speaks to her as though she is meant to hear his confession, to absolve him of his sins: he
tells her he was born a chief and was happy before encountering whites, but
that then "his Canada fathers came into the woods, and taught him to drink
the fire-water, and he became a rascal. . . . Was it the fault of le Renard that
his head was not made of rock? Who gave him the fire-water? who made
him a villain? 'Twas the palefaces, the people of your own colour" (102).

Recall that Michael Lewis suggests that confession can free the self of
shame. In so doing, the shamed self becomes the guilty self, seeing
reparation in corrective action. His model postulates a confessor who is
forgiving and loving, which apparently asks too much of Cora, who asks why
she is asked to hear Magua's complaint. As we have seen, asking for
absolution also ask too much of the romance genre within which these
characters operate—these characters lack the possibility of growth and
change. Magua explains that his drunkenness led to his being "whipped like
a dog" by Munro in front of Munro's men then shows her the scars on his
back "that he must hide, like a squaw" (103). Despite Cora's suggestion of
Indian forgiveness for Munro, Magua wants revenge: he proposes to let
Heyward and Alice go free in exchange for Cora's agreeing to become his
wife. Arguably, what Magua wants is less revenge than reintegration into a
community of the non-shamed; he wants to lose the sense of being an
outsider, the object of scorn in Helen Lewis's model. By creating his own
sense of family, he can lose his sense of isolation and alienness, his sense of
himself as object. Who better to find inclusion with than Cora, who has
shown an affinity for outsiders and an empathy for, even an identification with, the objects of scorn?

That Magua feels ashamed is confirmed by his language. His confession to Cora is told in the third-person—"shame occurs when one is tempted to abandon one's authentic subjectivity and become an object," argues Francis Broucek; "self-objectification is incompatible with the actuality of being, the immediate sense of self as indwelling 'connected' to others" (49;40). Michael Lewis writes that this third-person distancing connects to confession:

The degree to which people confess their transgressions to others is the degree to which they join in with the others in observing themselves. This allows the self to move from the self, that is, from the source of shame, to the other. This, in turn, allows the self as the "confessee" to look upon the self as the object rather than the subject. (132)

Magua's third-person voice attempts to deny responsibility for his actions, related to his hubris: owning the shame would mean making a global attribution, not seeing his actions as wrong but seeing his essence as wrong. Not able to face this repudiation of the self, Magua claims "'Magua was not himself; it was the fire-water that spoke and acted for him!'" (103).¹¹

This transference of responsibility may be unconscious in Magua; but when he rallies his comrades with his rhetoric to stir their hatred towards the
English, his deliberateness and success show he is aware how shame may be usefully channelled. After beginning in soft tones with the fallen comrades and the misfortunes that had befallen them, "He now spoke of the wives and the children of the slain; their destitution; their misery; both physical and moral; their distance; and, at last, of their unavenged wrongs" (106). Having exposed their weaknesses, Magua turns from sympathy to scorn with his audience: "'Are the Hurons dogs, to bear this? . . . The women will point their fingers at us" (107). Magua first elicits shame then gives his audience an outlet. By focusing on the white agent of their misfortune, Magua hopes to externalize shame into anger: "[W]hen he alluded to their injuries, their eyes kindled with fury; when he mentioned the taunts of the women, they dropped their heads in shame; but when he point out their means of vengeance, he struck a chord which never failed to thrill in the breast of an Indian" (107). If anger turned inward creates shame, then directing it outward wards off such feelings. Magua fails to avenge his shame when Hawkeye and the Mohicans rescue the captives. Indeed, his defeat likely deepens his sense of shame, as does Cora’s refusal to play the part of confessor.

This truncated revenge helps explain the Fort Henry massacre. The Hurons have been denied a means of shedding shame. The British are leaving the fort before their eyes, with the Hurons expected to abide by a foreign system, which they have not internalized, which denies them an outlet for their anger. Thomas Scheff and Suzanne Retzinger root all violence in

41
unacknowledged shame and alienation. They offer as example Hitler's rise to power, which coincided with the segregation and stigmatization of Germany following the strict terms of the Treaty of Versailles—shaming which was not reintegrative. The segregation of Germany is mirrored in the social isolation of Hitler, who had virtually no close relations in his life. Further, failure to escape unacknowledged shame can lead, as with Germany, to revenge-based cycles of shame-rage. Hitler rose by displacing German shame onto Jews and sanctioning German anger. "The leader who is able to decrease the shame level of a group, interrupting the contagion of overt shame, no matter how briefly or at what cost, will be perceived as charismatic" (159).

The parallels to Magua and the Hurons are plain.

If Magua leads a threatened group, Uncas leads without even a community. Uncas and Cora share more than a blood attraction; Uncas is honorable enough to be included, however tentatively, in the white world and to be admired by Cora without apology. But both leaders have potential shame situations, especially pronounced when Uncas is held captive by Magua at the Huron camp. Magua says, "the sun must shine on his shame, the squaws must see his flesh tremble, or our revenge will be like the play of boys" (251)—or Uncas's lack of shame will mean shame for the Hurons. Uncas refuses the suggestion, pointing out the brave whose retreat lured him into the camp. While both warriors are proud, Uncas is not forced to relinquish his pride in defeat. Instead, in a world that tolerates no display of
weakness, shame revisits the Hurons with the realization of Hawkeye and Uncas's deceit and escape: "they had been insultingly, shamefully, disgracefully, deceived . . . . [They were] astonished equally at the audacity and the success of their enemies" (280-281).

For his part, Uncas triumphs not because he breaks free of this value system but because no transgression touches his core essence. Although he is the last of his race, unlike Magua he does not view extinction as an indicator of failure, perhaps because unlike Magua he still knows his race is superior, not to the whites, perhaps, but to those Indians who hold him captive. The tortoise tattoo answers his captors, punctuated by Uncas's proud words: "my race upholds the earth! Your feeble tribe stands on my shell! . . . My race is the grandfather of nations!" (309). Such hubris, of course, is confirmation that Uncas is vulnerable to attempts to shame him.

Despite the differences, neither leader survives the narrative. Nor does Cora. The death scene of all three begins when Cora refuses to go further with Magua, who threatens her with his knife. Curiously, it is one of Magua's assistants who moves his knife into his captive. Magua has paused in response to Uncas's cry. Now "maddened by the murder he had just witnessed, Magua buried his weapon in the back of the prostrate Delaware" (337) and in turn is shot by Hawkeye. Magua has transferred onto Uncas the rage born of Cora's rejection of him and the rage at her death by the hand of another. Why his fierce scream after the killing of Uncas? Perhaps it is an
assertion of the self after such an affront, following Michael Lewis's argument about aggression increasing self-esteem, especially as connected to crime and minority groups: "the consequences of . . . minority status include not only the powerlessness that derives from such condition, but also shame" (158). To the end, Uncas resists such expression, dying at the feet of his murderer but "still keeping his gaze riveted on his enemy with a look of inextinguishable scorn" (338).

While we see Uncas as heroic, reinforced by a lavish funeral in the narrative's last chapter, this heroism has a hollow core, for none of the stronger figures in the text has the promise of carrying on the next generation. Cora and Uncas have only a shared funeral without even the certainty, according to Hawkeye, of a reunion in heaven. Hawkeye may survive death, but he has no partner to carry on his legacy. His self-sufficiency is part of the charm of Natty Bumppo, part of his defining character, but in keeping with the romantic tradition, it also heralds his passing. Hawkeye skirts shame effectively, playing one group expectation off the other. Uncas and Cora answer the threat of shame by insisting on their own value systems within which they are secure, though they are not systems validated by the larger society. And Magua is shamed and killed--and killer--because of his shame. Stay within the lines, the message of the narrative seems to be. Strength of character is a punishable offense. Shame threatens only those who deviate in thought or action.
Even this threat of deviation is built in deceit, since these characters don't choose their fates, following the genres within which they operate. The romance works with characters whose roles are representational, who trace a prescribed course. Shame and hubris are their responsive choices, because their binary world does not allow for an evolution of character. If in the romance action confirms essence, none of these characters can feel guilt for transgressions. But because they operate also within the tradition of the epic, their aspirations have a dangerous loft. These two genres conspire to place characters in situations from which no character choice can free them.
Notes

1. The work in shame and literature has traditionally been rooted in classical and medieval studies. See for example Bernard Williams' *Shame and Necessity*, which eyes Greek literature, and William Ian Miller's *Humiliation*, which looks at the Icelandic saga. Two recent works on American literature and shame are Joseph Adamson's *Melville, Shame, and the Evil Eye* (1997) and Edith Wharton's *Prisoners of Shame* (1993) by Lev Raphael.

Using Silvan Tomkins's work with affect and Gershen Kaufman's work on shame, Raphael looks at character in several of Edith Wharton's novellas and novels, beginning with a review of Tomkins's work: the affect system is the primary biological motivating mechanism; affect manifests itself in shame when expectations are not satisfied; while the causes may differ, shame, discouragement, shyness, embarrassment, and guilt share the same affect. Raphael takes from Kaufman the idea of shame as a potential positive force, in the form of conscience and of shame as an internalized model from external treatment by others.

While Raphael does well to turn his attention to shame in American literature—the first to do so in detail—, his model does not sufficiently differentiate characters' actions in the various narratives he considers. Raphael also leaves undiscussed the significance of genre.

Adamson's psychoanalytic reading of Melville uses the work of Heinz Kohut, Silvan Tomkins, Leon Wurmser, and others to trace various aspect of shame psychology in characters from *Moby-Dick*, *Pierre*, and "Billy Budd," as well as suggesting how Melville worked through his own shame. Adamson's polytrophic model takes on many of the attendant affective states that Silvan Tomkins associates with shame, including rage, humiliation, fear, and exhibitionism, in the first study I have seen that employs the full arsenal of shame psychology. He is particularly strong at glossing affective representations in Melville with the sometimes confusing tools of Tomkins, whose mammoth study of affect and shame defies easy summary. Analyzing affective gestures depends upon a textual representation of affect and as such is easier done with characters in realistic fiction than with the broader characters of romance. See for example my discussion of Isabel Archer in *The Portrait of a Lady*.

2. I explore more fully how morality is tested by social utility in my chapter on Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*. There, Dreiser represents Clyde Griffiths as acting philosophically consistent with Dreiser's vision of naturalism. As such, Clyde denies any accountability to a larger social circle. His crime against Roberta is not murdering her, for technically he does not. His crime is allowing her to drown, thereby refusing his social accountability to her. Even if Clyde's actions were internally consistent, his action is immoral, because
the paramount moral standard is external to the self, in the community within which the self operates.

3. See my discussion of individualism in my Dreiser chapter. Criminologist John Braithwaite argues that a rise in criminal activity springs from a persistent belief in individualism that refuses to accept accountability to value systems beyond the self.

4. James Franklin Beard in his introduction to the SUNY edition of the text notes an even more established genre within which Cooper is working, the Indian captivity narrative, whose conventions included savage Indians and innocent, especially pious women and children. These narratives moved historically from factual accounts to increasingly lurid fictions. If Magua represents this school of conventions, then perhaps Uncas represents the noble savage Roy Harvey Pearce describes below. The two genres both treat characters as stock, seeing action reinforcing innate patterns of savagery or virtue.

5. The nostalgia associated with the pastoral, with its yearning for a preadult time, has its psychological roots in narcissistic childhood injury, wherein the child is made to see that the ego must yield to a world beyond the self. See Donald Capps and Heinz Kohut. Kohut notes that the injury that results causes a splitting of the self, the grandiose self (prone to shame) and the depleted self (prone to shame). Successful mirroring allows the self to escape this cycle by pulling it away from its narcissistic impulse. Such modeling allows the self to see its place in the larger community, accepting the external world as it is not as we wish it to be.

   The world as it is eludes Cooper, whose intent, as Beard and others note, is to idealize the natural world and make it tractable in a way that naturalists and realists would label a fabrication. Nor is this retreating from reality exceptional. Hugh Holman in A Handbook to Literature accords the romantic novel space for an author's imagination. The romance is "a form relatively free of the demands of the actual and thus able to reflect the imaginative truth which its author perceives" (389).

6. Cooper himself remarks upon the absence of material as a burden to be overcome for American writers in Notions of the Americans:

   There is scarcely an ore which contributes to the wealth of the author, that is found, here, in veins as rich as Europe. There are no annals for the historian; no follies (beyond the most vulgar and common place) for the satirist; no manners for the dramatist; no obscure fictions for the writer of romance; no gross and hardy offences against decorum for the moralist; nor any of the rich artificial auxiliaries of poetry. The weakest hand can extract a spark from the flint, but it would baffle the
strength of a giant to attempt kindling a flame with a pudding stone.

(945)

Charles Brockden Brown's *Edgar Huntly* borrows from the European gothic tradition with mixed results, by filling in the blank spaces with imagination, the paintbrush of the romance writer. Likewise, Cooper's lament allows him to violate his Preface to the First Edition and to make romantic fiction without reconciling his vision to existent culture, or, as Cooper says in his 1831 preface, to allow his fiction to approach poetry. American literature needed a fuller history before it could generate realistic fiction, with characters in distinctive American social settings. Robert Levine complicates this reading by claiming a space for historically situating American romance against a backdrop of political conspiracy.

7. In awareness of the fixed historical course of the narrative, Cooper's readers are like Dreiser's, who approach Clyde Griffiths knowing the newspaper accounts of the murder case which is the model for *An American Tragedy*. Although both narratives constrain free will, Cooper's characters largely see themselves as acting out preordained fates, while Dreiser's characters act still as if their choices matter.

8. Shirley Samuels follows Slotkin in reading the blush not just as a recognition of race but also of gender. "Her blush, that is, brings together her race and her sex, the racial body and the gendered body" (110). Samuels adds that Cora's blush fits a pattern of veiling and unveiling. I argue that the two components do connect: the gender responsiveness confirms Cora's essential racial connection to Magua. Cora's shame is a feeling of intractable essence that the social action of right behavior cannot alter. Samuels sees in Cooper a greater degree of transformation than I do, finding in the veiling and donning of masks a flexibility to assume identities at will. While Samuels does see the miscegenation as violently yoked, as with the blood mixing during the Fort Henry massacre, she does not satisfactorily explain why at the end all the dead in Cooper go to segregated heavens or why the only offspring of mixed parenting, Cora, is murdered at the close of the narrative.


10. Shirley Samuels reads in the doubling and donning of masks a flexibility of identity that undercuts the notion of racial essentialism. To my mind, while Cooper recreates the epic in an American context, honor is less rooted in the gift exchange in this version of the Homeric epic than it is in Miller's medieval Iceland. While gift exchanges in the narrative suggest a portability and transposition of character, as when Hawkeye negotiates with Magua for the release of Cora and Alice using his rifle as currency, the value of each piece
in the exchange remains relatively fixed. All can agree with Hawkeye that his rifle has an equivalent value to a white woman, and none resists his judgment that his own life is worth more than a white woman's. The feud and gift exchange in medieval Iceland allowed individuals to distance themselves from shame by seeing it as a separate entity that may be lost and regained. Allowing people to be both merchants and property prevents this distancing. Accordingly, in this scenario from Cooper, characters are vulnerable to shame whenever characters become potential goods in an exchange.

The donning of masks never is meant to be more than temporary in Cooper and is generally presented as comic. Those fooled by the masking are meant to be read as superstitious and primitive, as with the bear suit Hawkeye dons to fool the Hurons. Even the success or failure of role playing is finally attributable to the essence of the actor, so that Uncas naturally plays the bear better than Hawkeye, because Uncas is closer to nature than even a willfully uncivilized white man can be. The painted faces of actors is in stark contrast to the tattooed chest of Uncas, which suggests an immutability that confirms his core essence. Compare this masking in Cooper to the masking seen later in The Portrait of a Lady, where accountabilities for character make the stakes for role playing far higher for individuals and where characters are much more slowly and painfully unmasked. In James, because actions determine character rather than confirm essence, acting is far more than a parlor game or comic relief.

11. Clyde employs displacement as well in An American Tragedy to enable him to proceed in his plan to drown Roberta, placing the responsibility for the murderous impulse on the devil's whisper and the Giant Efrit.
CHAPTER 2

WALKING THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW:
DISCIPLINE, SHAME, AND GENRE IN THE WIDE, WIDE WORLD

Susan Warner's The Wide, Wide World presents, as its title suggests, more room for character choice than was evident in Cooper, ironically within a physical world far more constricted than Hawkeye's wilderness. Freedom of movement in a closet makes for sometimes painful constraints on the individual, but the tight quarters make self-discipline, the message of Warner's domestic fiction, that much more necessary.¹

How do discipline and will manifest themselves in an argument about the role of shame in Warner? If shame is associated with a feeling of core inadequacy, it would seem to be outside the terrain of Warner's bildungsroman, where behavior is correctable, where one can and should grow up to be a better adult than one is a child. Cooper's world involves people on the cusp of extinction, without the social systems to reinforce a sense of worthiness. The world of Warner is threatened in different ways. Ellen is the last of the Montgomeries, at least in terms of her immediate
family. She must maintain a sense of core worth while internalizing the belief that her promise for the while far outshines her realized self, with none of the certainty that essentialism brings to characterization.

Shame springs from a violation of an internalized belief system, most often corresponding to the majority belief system of the culture. In most cases, the external world reinforces the internal model. Discipline for Ellen means internalizing a sense of shame in various environments which do not give her consistent feedback on the system of beliefs she is trying to internalize—consider the indifference of Fortune Emerson. The shame response confirms that she is promising in her growth but has yet to realize her potential. Proof of her maturation will be the shedding of affective shame responses, because it will signal that her internalization of "right behavior" is complete. In such a model, emotional excess is a form of narcissism. The willfulness which brings her to shame situations will recede, replaced by compliance, the domestication which the narrative models. As hubris is connected to shame, so Ellen's pride will decrease hand in hand with shame in the course of the narrative.

Understandably, criticism on Warner turns on discipline, though opinions differ as to the technique and the consequences. Richard Brodhead posits a combination of discipline and love which he calls disciplinary intimacy. This model supposes the authority as specific to the disciplinarian; the child comes to right behavior after seeing it embodied in a loved parental
figure. Love does not undercut discipline but extends its power, since the child carries with her the love hence the disciplinary model. Love figures as well in Nancy Schnog's argument. For her, the domestic submissiveness of The Wide, Wide World allows a connection between mothers and daughters; the language of submissiveness becomes the private world of women. While the narrative seems to break down will, it solidifies feminine communion. Shirley Foster and Judy Simons also see the text as reading against itself. Although the shedding of earthly desire is the aim, the bond between women ensures that worldly relationships continue to matter.

All of these readings see that discipline blanches the self— but does not make the self invisible. The desire to read the narrative this way may owe something to a modern ethics of individuality, perhaps anachronistically grafted to this prototypical Victorian text. On the other hand, Ellen's will does keep our attention in the narrative, even tells us that she has promise, and allows her to discipline herself in the absence of external authorial figures. Jane Tompkins among others points to the unpublished chapter from the original manuscript (included in the 1987 reprint of Warner's book), wherein Ellen gets the earthly rewards, the desire for which she seems to be asked to shed throughout the narrative. Shirley Foster and Judy Simons note that Nancy Vawse, Mrs. Vawse, and even Fortune Emerson are meant to be admired to some degree for their particularly American willfulness.
Much has been made critically of the mother and daughter relationship, which is central at the start of the narrative. Elizabeth Barnes sees the writing desk as a principal gift from mother to daughter: along with the Bible, it suggests two paths toward self-mastery and suggest that precepts and method both are important. Schnog sees in these early pages an association with Christianity and submissiveness which Ellen will hereafter link with her mother and thus be obedient to, an association which ultimately is loving.

A close look at these opening chapters suggests that Brodhead's notion of discipline through intimacy is closer to the mark than these more hopeful critics. Right behavior begins with something as apparently innocuous as tea preparation, which Ellen slaves over and which her mother expects to be perfect. If this is love, it is fused to correct behavior. That Ellen may someday achieve right behavior is signaled in her mother's absence from the kitchen: Ellen is entrusted to admonish and correct herself for such a project.

Mrs. Montgomery is the mother of compliance for Ellen, the personification of Ellen's developing conscience. But for that compliance to come from within and for Ellen to be successfully socialized, her mother's external authority needs to disappear. Maturation is not about obedience; it's about obedience in the absence of external punishment. Ellen will be mature when her will can rein itself, and she will be socialized when the internal judge that reins her will corresponds to the values of the external community.
Submission for Ellen means coming to terms with her passions. We are warned from the first that those passions "were by nature very strong, and by education very imperfectly controlled; and time, 'that rider that breaks youth,' had not as yet tried his hand upon her" (11). The outburst of tears which inspires this comment follows the news of Mrs. Montgomery's imminent departure to England just three pages into the first chapter, but even such an extreme situation does not excuse Ellen's passion in the eyes of her mother. "You will hurt both yourself and me, my daughter, if you cannot command yourself. Remember, dear Ellen, God sends no trouble upon his children but in love," (12) she says to her sobbing child. ²

Preparing tea becomes more difficult in light of this news, but the difficulty is no excuse to her mother, who tells her daughter that she cannot endure Ellen's tears much longer. "Ellen was immediately brought to herself by these words. She arose, sorry and ashamed that she should have given occasion for them" (14). No doubt if there is intimacy, it is contingent upon obedience. Even the writing desk which Barnes refers to has connected to it the burden of accountable behavior. Ellen is told that should she not write regularly to her mother, the desk will "cry shame on you"; "I hope the sight of your workbox will make you blush" (37).

The suffering Ellen undergoes seems calculated to break her spirit and force her to confront situations that evoke her pride and prevent her from being rightfully dutiful. Ellen is sent to the fabric store where she is humiliated
by Mr. Saunders. Even before this encounter, Ellen is aware of being invisible to the adult concerns of the store. "She knew well enough now, poor child, what it was that made her cheeks burn as they did, and her heart beat as if it would burst its bounds" (45).

While Mr. Saunders's behavior is exposed as brutish, Ellen's response is also called into question. We see when she is on the boat in transit with the Dunscombes that her blushing is intimately connected with her pride: "And it was not passion only; there was hurt feeling and wounded pride" (66-67). It is not so much that being embarrassed is meant to be understood by her as bad; it is rather that Ellen needs to recognize what situations to feel mortified about and accordingly what behaviors to correct. The bonnet which had been mocked by the Dunscombes inspires her blush, but the old gentlemen tells her not be ashamed, since her mother selected it for her. "Will you be ashamed of what she approved?" he says (79).

Not knowingly, for Ellen seems determined to fulfill her duty, if only she can puzzle out quite what it should be. Following these opening chapters with her immediate family, Ellen is thrust into the unsuspecting arms of her aunt, Fortune Emerson. Once again she confronts an adult who would tell her what to do. Again, though, other voices offer other instruction. Mr. Van Brunt has delivered Ellen to her aunt's home by ox chart and thereafter balances the authority Fortune exerts on her charge. Van Brunt signals to
readers early that Ellen's resistance to Fortune has the sympathy of another adult perspective.

In the first collective encounter after Fortune has queried Ellen on her presence, she orders her niece to "Sit down . . . and take off your things." Although she complies with the first command, "she did not feel enough at home to comply with the second" (100). We are meant to see that Ellen is learning to obey authority so long as it matches her internalized model. Her resistance to her aunt is not mere effrontery; she already has a strong idea of how things ought to be done. So does her aunt. If Van Brunt undercuts Fortune's authority in the house by refusing to indulge her singular way of thinking, he also shows readers that Ellen's singular belief in the right way to do things should not go unchallenged if she is to be properly socialized. At the end of this same chapter, Ellen cries in her bed at the missing protocol from her aunt who has not kissed her goodnight nor told her she was glad to see her.

Tempting though it may be to side with Ellen here, we must remember that Fortune has not expected the arrival of her niece and has reason to feel put upon by her brother Morgan, who has imposed on his sister in the past. Foster and Simons argue convincingly for sympathy for Fortune's perspective by focusing on the image of self-sufficiency she presents, beginning with her name, her single status, and the great amount of work she does to keep her
homestead in order. Van Brunt’s marriage to Fortune later in the novel further undercuts the notion that her discipline has no sympathetic audience.

While critics have seen the mother/daughter relationship as primary for Ellen, they have perhaps overplayed its weight in the narrative. Ellen is searching for her mother throughout the narrative but plainly not for her literal mother, who she knows unconsciously will never return. Instead, Ellen seeks a person into whose hands she can place her developing conscience, not ripe enough to be sustained on its own. This opening encounter with Fortune naturally unsettled Ellen—her aunt seems to lack any maternal feelings whatsoever. Yet here both are, stuck with each other.

One of the first tests her aunt receives comes when Ellen returns from playing outdoors, her stockings muddy. She plays the admonishing mother well, removing Ellen’s shoes and stockings while scolding her for "staring up at the moon and stars" (108). Ellen quietly accepts her aunt’s words, perhaps content that she has induced her to play the disciplining mother so quickly. Thrust in this unfamiliar world, Ellen seeks boundaries, measuring those handed to her against her developing sense of right behavior and dutifulness. The challenge to Ellen’s will is at least unconsciously yearned for by the recipient herself. Readers tempted to dismiss Fortune as too severe are held back by the counterweight of Van Brunt, who battles Fortune’s rhetoric to a draw and shows Ellen’s aunt to be someone worth caring about. "Staring up at the moon and stars" encourages self-indulgence at odds with the mission
that Mrs. Montgomery tried to teach her daughter: duty, like morality, is social and if not selfless then at least self-denying. Who, after all, has to clean the dreamer’s stockings? Forced reluctantly to accept her ward, Fortune nonetheless obeys the responsibilities of her newfound role. She hears the declaration of her niece about writing her mother and is "softened" by it, responding by bringing Ellen tea, in short by playing mother.

But the domestic tableau that Ellen finds herself a part of still fails to pass the test of her internal checks. If Fortune is to be surrogate mother, then Van Brunt may be seen as a kind of surrogate father. Granting that Ellen’s relationship to her captain father is remote, why does she blush and flee from Van Brunt’s proposed kiss on the check in chapter 11, an encounter she relates to her laughing aunt? Perhaps because she cannot place him in the role and cannot bear him promoting a connection she refuses to admit she needs. Nancy Schnog notes that while domestic texts seem to be guiding females to submissiveness, they also create a separate sphere away from men. The civil division manifests itself in Ellen’s fear of men throughout, beginning with the remote Captain Montgomery. "Like the relationship between wife and husband, father-daughter relations have failed to provide daughters with meaningful or even positive contact" (17), Schnog observes. Ultimately, however, men are useful, though it takes nemesis/friend Nancy Vawse to point out to Ellen the usefulness of Van Brunt as mediator between aunt and ward: "if any body can help you when your aunt gets one of her
ugly fits, it's him; she don't care to meddle with him much" (119). Until and unless Ellen accepts Van Brunt in this role, she is left without even a reliable mother figure whom she can trust. "I am forgetting all that is good and there's nobody to put me in mind," Ellen cries to herself (117).

Ellen does not know her way in this wide world and fears that her internal moral compass needs reinforcement from others. The "fury of passion" with which she responds to Van Brunt is a far cry from the mortification she felt in the hands of Mr. Saunders at the fabric store. Here she has no external guide to whom she can turn. She must make do with her imagined absent mother. Any sense of wrongdoing is still measured against this invisible other, but for that reason shame is little manifest: Ellen is too young to be able to castigate herself about violations without an external reminder of such violations. Neither Fortune nor Van Brunt matches her internal model. Both are thus unfit for the role of would-be parent.

Enter Alice Humphreys. Catching Ellen in tears while on a walk, she offers comfort not by immediately placing herself in the role of mother but by evoking the Father. Ellen has been crying for herself solo, but Alice's presence propels her beyond tears to vocal confession, with Alice as the conduit: "[T]ell me what [your troubles] are. Begin with the worst, and if I haven't time to hear them all now I'll find time another day" (150). "The worst,—oh the worst is—that I meant—I meant—to be a good child, and I have been worse than ever I was in my life before," responds Ellen. "I want to be
a Christian more than anything else in the world, but I am not,—and what shall I do!" (150-1). Her emphasis on wrong being as opposed to wrong doing suggests that, while external manifestation may have been dormant in the presence of her aunt, shame about herself appears when the judging other can be projected upon a sympathetic adult figure who matches Ellen's vision of her absent judging (loving) mother. This combination of love and discipline is central to Richard Brodhead's argument about discipline in the narrative.

Note also that while Ellen represents her experience as shame, it looks more like guilt, since confession suggests not a retreat away from community but a willingness to confront the feeling and make action-based restitution.³

From the first, there is an odd refusal of sympathy from Alice which runs counter to our first impression. While her aunt has been harsh and even mean, for example, withholding letters from Ellen, Fortune has lived some example of self-sufficiency, of brown stocking functionality over white lace star gazing. Don't be morose, do something about it, she seems to suggest. Conversely, Alice recognizes little hope of solving Ellen's problems on this earth, agreeing with Ellen's dejected exclamation that "nobody in this world" can help. That "there's one in heaven that can" provides too little comfort to the girl who couldn't understand her own mother's choice of God over blood.

Yet Alice's words match Ellen's expectations, largely because they echo the scripture of Mrs. Montgomery but also because Alice doesn't preach New England self-sufficiency. Buoyed by the encounter, Ellen vehemently
repudiates Fortune's claims to hear about Alice, earning herself a box on the
ears. Ellen's conviction about her own right behavior is answered by her
conscience, which whispers "You are wrong," leading in turn to Ellen seeking
out the adult representation of her conscience, Alice.

Alice too challenges Ellen's convictions about her rightness, though she
ultimately agrees with Ellen's defense that "the heart must be set right before
the life can be" (166): right behavior is fine and well, but it must spring from
right conviction. Seen in terms of a sense of failure and shame, then, the
recipe for feeling good about herself is some blend of being and doing which
is as yet beyond Ellen's ability. The right feeling is important, for it helps
explain the perpetual sense of inadequacy Ellen feels despite her right
behavior. Because her model of ideal behavior is the complete surrender of
will, her struggle continues to be to hold onto her beliefs while yielding her
vision of herself as already master of her beliefs. She must confess her
failings and ask for divine forgiveness. "Pride struggles against it,--I see
yours does,--but my child, 'God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace until the
humble,'" (166), says Alice.

The barrier to acculturation and redemption is, in short, hubris and
narcissism, the underside of shame, to paraphrase Morrison. The shamed
self retreats from the projected communal standard because it perceives itself
as essentially unworthy. The remedy for both states is petitioning the Lord in
prayer, as Alice reminds us: "Strong passion--strong pride--both long
unbroken; and Ellen had yet to learn that many a prayer and many a tear, much watchfulness, much help from on high, must be hers before she could be thoroughly dispossessed of these evil spirits" (181).

As pride recedes, so should shame, since Ellen will no longer be trespassing the bounds of dutifulness by indulging her ego. Ellen has internalized a belief about right behavior and right heartedness so that she feels bad when she violates her code, but she must yield self-righteousness to the higher authority of God. To return to a useful distinction, Ellen’s problem is not pride in itself but hubris, excessive pride, a belief that she can puzzle out right and wrong with too little appeal to divine codes of conduct. This is the same problem she had when confronting the mandate to love God above Mother: she could not make sense of the expectation and so refused to yield to it.

Ellen’s ongoing struggle with Fortune makes more sense in light of this issue. The ways of God are mysterious just as the ways of Fortune are. Ellen’s responsibility is not to question them or try to reason them out but to surrender the need to understand and to submit. Alice reinforces this idea by refusing Ellen’s claim that the fault lies in the behavior of Fortune.

And so Ellen slowly comes to her submissiveness, with occasional backsliding. The strongest affective suggestions of shame in the company of Fortune and Van Brunt come when Van Brunt suggests that Ellen would make "a capital farmer’s wife" (236), which inspires her to blush and run
upstairs, just as earlier she had run from Van Brunt's attempted kiss and later voices her uncomfortableness with friends kissing her at a party. Ellen's extreme reaction may again connect to her will, though the specifics of it are not played out very clearly at this point in the narrative. Ellen has been consistently uncomfortable with the physical world, a trait which her nemesis/friend Nancy has mocked more than once. It may be that this encounter, like the later encounter with Mr. Saunders and her pony, reminds her of her earthly desires which she is afraid to give in to. After all, Alice is schooling her protege in the "faithful, patient, self-denying performance of every duty as it comes to hand" (239), which would seem to exclude the flesh.

Ellen's uncertain relationship to flesh is played out more fully with Alice's brother, John, whom she meets in the next chapter. Like Van Brunt, John tries to plant a kiss, but despite having just met him and "though she coloured a good deal, she made no objection and showed no displeasure" (274). Showing is key here, for in front of Alice she is conscious of understanding the edict against affective expression. There is more to the exchange of gazes, however. While Ellen initially cannot sustain the gaze and looks down, she is more than mildly interested in Alice's brother. "Ellen's eyes sought the stranger as if by fascination," Warner writes (275). G. M. Goshgarian dwells on this relationship in To Kiss the Chastening Rod, discussing the incestuous echoes of John and Ellen. While the echoes of
incest may be read in these exchanges and those between Alice and John, more plainly the purpose of securing a familial connection between Ellen and these two would be to differentiate the appeals they make to her from less reliable adult figures like Mr. Saunders. Ultimately, the familial connection transfers from mother and father (Captain and Mrs. Montgomery), to aunt (Fortune Emerson), to sister (Alice), to brother (John), to father again (Mr. Lindsay), and finally to husband (John). Never is Ellen without. Learning Christian dutifulness walks hand in hand with learning familial dutifulness.

As Alice has become surrogate for Mrs. Montgomery, John becomes surrogate for both of them. John has the added benefit of physical threat which Alice does not employ. Even from the first, Ellen sees John's power. As Ellen busies herself in the kitchen following this first meeting, she considers what to make of him. "She was quite sure from that one look in his eyes that he was a person to be feared;--there was no doubt of that; as to the rest she didn't know" (275).

Silvan Tomkins discusses the taboo against extended gazing as part of his investigation of the facial manifestations of shame. Most cultures have a taboo against extended mutual looking because the face can reveal feeling thus implicitly sexual desire. He also offers a history of "the evil eye," the belief that looks could literally kill. There is some similar recognition in the response that Ellen has to John, seeing threat and desire both in his eyes. When Ellen admits at the Christmas party to cheating to win the party prize, it
is John’s eyes that cause her mortification to be most intense. “She had not counted upon him for one of her listeners... but this was the one drop too much. Her head sunk; she covered her face a moment, and then made her escape” (294). Compare this intensity to that expressed in front of Alice regarding the suppressed letters from Mrs. Montgomery: this imagined judging other is much more extreme, though again no certain actual judgment is manifest. Ellen imagines both Alice and John in the role, a sign that she is internalizing a conscience apart from the need for an adult representative.

Following Ellen’s retreat from the party, John discovers her, holding onto her arm against her desire to flee (note the use of physical force): "Ellen shrank from meeting his eye and was silent. ‘I know all, Ellie,’ said he, still very kindly,—‘I have seen all;—why do you shun me?’” Despite his parroting of divine omniscience, John does not see how Ellen casts him in the role of judging other, or perhaps wants to assure Ellen that the degree of self-castigation is out of proportion to the crime—"You are taking the matter too hardly, dear Ellen" (296). Despite his encouraging words, Ellen cannot answer his request to face him.

John plays the role of confessor, but steers Ellen from seeing the judgment of John and Alice as primary. Instead, behavior is measured against’s God’s will, something that Ellen has not done in fearing the reaction of those assembled at the party. Once again, Ellen’s mistake is projecting a judging other that does not confirm to Christian orthodoxy. Ellen still needs to
learn to be obedient, but she must surrender her belief that her conscience is the product of her will. She must also surrender her belief that she can judge reliably on her own and puzzle out answers that are beyond her. Perhaps with this in mind John in the next chapter on Christmas explains to Ellen the word "oracle" by role playing oracle to her inquisitor, providing a vague answer to her question: "'Ah, but,' said Ellen laughing, 'that isn't fair; you haven't answered me . . . 'Exactly—but the oracle never means to be understood'" (303). When Ellen has surrendered her need to understand, she will have properly internalized the Christian (in nineteenth-century terms, feminine) lessons of submission which are the center of the narrative. And in the company of like-minded Christians—even the imagined company—she will need not fear that her internalized belief system differs from those around her, the problem of the Indians in The Last of the Mohicans. In a curious way, she also should be removed from the possibilities of shame: since we all fall short of the glory of God, we should feel no shame in slipping. Ellen must be stripped of her hubris in believing that she can and should be perfect, for as with the oracle and the inscrutable meanness of her aunt, things beyond her ken can teach her the folly of striving for divine understanding. In psychological terms, leaving behind binary thinking permits the self to rest assessment not in essence but in incremental action; it creates the space to forgive the self for failure. Happily for her, "Christian principle had taken strong hold in little Ellen's heart; she fought her evil tempers manfully. Ellen
found that resentment and pride had roots deep enough to keep her pulling up the shoots for a good while” (319).

Ellen also reacts to her own physical manifestations of passion, either because they reveal to herself her failure to contain her ego desires or because they reveal to others her lack of control. When the manifestation is mild, the recognition is largely private. While withholding a smart remark from her aunt, she cannot withhold "the quick little turn of her head which showed what she thought, and the pale cheeks were for a moment bright enough" (231). But this moment is more fleeting than the issue which still flusters Ellen completely, the letters from her mother which Fortune has withheld. Ellen spies a letter brought to the party by the postman and cannot contain her desire: "The red had left Ellen's face when Alice could see it again;--it was livid and spotted from stifled passion. She stood in a kind of maze." Alice's "sorrowful look" inspires Ellen to cover "her face with her hands, and quick as possible make her escape out of the room" (257). It is not clear whether Alice's reaction is one of sympathy or disapproval for the display of affective response, and little is said in the text to direct us either way. Yet Ellen seems to interpret the look as encouraging suppression, for moments later she refuses to confess to Van Brunt what is bothering her: "'Never mind—please don't ask me, Mr. Van Brunt—it's nothing I ought to tell you—it isn't any matter" (259).
Alice and John try to teach Ellen to avoid applying to herself too exacting a standard, one without a divine source. She must learn to match her internalized standard to the Christian model, so that any self-judgment has not herself but God on her side. This teaching has been absorbed on New Year's Day when Ellen refuses a cash gift which inadvertently has been given against her desire. After much blushing and protest, she explains to the donor that she cannot bear to be the person who would accept such a gift. Don't think I am so shameful, she protests. The force of her protest affects the gentleman: "Ellen's face was not to be withstood. The old gentleman took the bill from her hand" (328). Immediately, Ellen is relieved. The quickness of her relief suggests that the trauma is milder than the sort seen earlier. Seen in terms of a projected judging other, Ellen has once again shown that her projection is worse than the actuality. Moreover, she has avoided the potential judging other by turning judgment back on him. She laughs to hear him proclaim his own awkwardness and offers consolatory kisses with none of her usual physical awkwardness.

Rather than reading this encounter as ubiquitous progress, however, we might consider that the potential judging other is neither Alice nor John. The degree to which Ellen has located her standards for conscience in these two is reaffirmed immediately after this gift episode, while receiving a gift from John. "[H]er cheeks coloured high"; "her colour deepening very much" (329)---while not shamed by this simple exchange, clearly John still inspires a deeper
reaction than others. John has given her a book, a history of George
Washington, which connected to the notion of self-improvement through
knowledge and reinforces the importance of honesty. The spirit behind the
act and the act itself must be in accord for dutifulness to be correct.

Ellen's evolution continues along the channels she once rejected, the
hard work model that Fortune advocates. Ellen resolves to endure this
particular work and to employ the same work ethic in her free time, spent with
Alice and John in study. Her motivations for this kind of right behavior are
plainly not simply divine. Others are more pressing. As Warner informs us,
Ellen is

Urged on by a three or four-fold motive. For the love of them, and for
her own sake,—that John might think she had done well,—that she
might presently please and satisfy Alice,—above all, that her mother's
wishes might be answered. This thought, whenever it came, was a
spur to her efforts; so was each of the others; and Christian feeling
added another and kept all the rest in force. (334-335)

What's interesting is that Ellen's priorities continue to be the same ones that
brought the protests of her mother: her models for dutifulness are first
secular and only secondarily spiritual. Telling, too, is that adhering to these
parameters secures for Ellen a place away from blushing and shame. It may
be that the finiteness of her task also makes it easier to subjugate her will
and allow her to be dutiful. Rather than seeing her essence as at stake, Ellen
is banking her well-being on right action, which makes her less vulnerable to
the binary opposites of hubris and shame, more likely to respond with feelings
of socially-responsive guilt. Ellen's secular standard tests itself experientially
and so is more certainly social than the sacred model. Rooted in social
accountability, Ellen's secular standard is more responsible and arguably
more moral.

In a child so fraught with uncertainty, it would be foolish to expect this
period of docility to last. Indeed, soon after, Ellen receives the news of her
mother's death. Her mourning is broken only by the words of John, who
holds her fast against her desire to flee and explains her situation in light of
divine order. Once again, Ellen is seeing the world and her predicament in
worldly terms, while her parental figure is trying to make her shift her
allegiance. He asks her,

"Do you love Christ, Ellen?"

She nodded, weeping afresh.

"Do you love him less since he has brought you into this great
sorrow?"

"No," sobbed Ellen;--"more." (349)

Echoed in John's words are that earlier conversation between Ellen and her
mother in which Ellen made clear her allegiance was maternal not divine.
John is pressing the same point Mrs. Montgomery did: relinquish your belief
in understanding; submit to a higher unquestionable order.
The lack of apparent conflict between inner feeling and external act is plain when Ellen takes care of Fortune while she is sick. Ellen is now more prepared for this task than she was at the start of her stay, and the reversal of ill health by Warner makes this conversion plain. If once Ellen was vulnerable to illness for venturing out in snowstorms and had to be prodded by her aunt to practical duty, by now she is committed to busyness. Tompkins points to Mrs. Vawse as the female ideal, and we can see in Ellen's tidiness echoes of that ideal. Aided by "the best possible companion in her old Swiss friend," Ellen processes the loss of Alice: "I wish you would tell me all the things Alice used to do; so that I may begin to do them, you know, as soon as I can," Ellen says to Margery (455). John's contribution is not only Washington but Bunyan's Christian, the foot soldier who perseveres in John's second favorite book, the same book that he gives Ellen, complete with marginal comments to supplement study. John evokes the character Christian when the house chores threaten to overwhelm Ellen. The significance of this union of American and Christian heroes becomes clearer later when the Lindsays cross-examine Ellen.

Tellingly, Ellen shows no desire to be doing something else, no distance from the belief of domestic dutifulness. She seems to have taken to the Bible in a fuller way than she has been capable of previously. In so doing, she seems to have moved away from the possibilities of trespassing, because she is not measuring herself against a standard generated by the
self. She is also role playing wife and mother in preparation for the rewards of domesticity.

Compare this sequence of kitchen preparation for a mother figure to the sequence that starts the narrative. There Ellen was fastidious, operating in a binary world. Here she burns food with few qualms. When her aunt recovers enough to check out her housework, Ellen doesn't wilt from the interrogation. Instead, she finds rejuvenation from God: "if there was small pleasure in pleasing her aunt, Ellen did earnestly wish to please God" (370). Later Mrs. Vawse makes the same point, commenting on the stoic dutifulness of Ellen: "Ellen looks higher than to please her aunt; she tries to please her God" (384). Again, her God is made flesh in the figures of John and Alice, under whose eye she is much more cautious. In other words, it may not be as simple as Mrs. Vawse suggests. What is more likely is that Ellen is evolving in her ability to decide which adult authority figure to invest with meaning and which to ignore. It would seem that finally Fortune, like Mr. Saunders, simply isn't the judge than Alice and John are projected to be.

Already, these two matter more than Ellen's literal father, for upon receiving the news of Captain Montgomery's apparent death, Ellen's greatest concern is being separated from her dear John and Alice. "The knowledge of his death had less pain for her than the removal of this fear brought relief," writes Warner (381). Ironically, by trying to please John, Alice, and God,
Ellen manages to please her aunt as well, the byproduct of Ellen's attention to Christian duty, which includes domestic duty:

Ellen however reaped a reward for her faithful steadiness to duty while her aunt was ill. Things were never after that as they had been before. She was looked on with a different eye. To be sure Miss Fortune tasked her as much as ever... but beneath all that Ellen felt with great satisfaction that she was trusted and believed. She was no longer an interloper, in every body's way; she was not watched and suspected; her aunt treated her as one of the family and a person to be depended on. (383)

While the imagined judgment appears to come from a projection of her aunt, more likely the source remains divine or the disciples of the divine, Alice and John.

Having passed the test with her aunt, Ellen next confronts an old nemesis, Mr. Saunders, who humiliated her earlier at the fabric store at the beginning of the narrative. Here, he attempts a symbolic rape as he beats the pony and threatens further abuse until John heroically arrives. The point here is not that beating is bad, but that it needs the right purpose. What John proposes along with Warner is discipline with reason, a version of Brodhead's discipline through love.

The entire sequence has an oddly forced quality, for we are asked to accept the return of Mr. Saunders and the equally well-timed arrival of John.
As a measuring stick of Ellen’s progress, however, the incident has value. Whereas she wilted in the first encounter years earlier, here she is polite but firm in rejecting Saunders’s attempts to manhandle her pony. That violence can be useful is reinforced when John wrestles Saunders to the ground. Earlier Alice has said as much to Ellen, explaining her brother’s breaking of a horse: "it was necessary that either the horse or the man should give up; and as John has no fancy for giving up, he carried his point–partly by management, partly, I confess, by a judicious use of the whip and spur" (378).

Physical discipline has undoubtedly been part of Ellen’s learning, starting with the chores Fortune has given her. And John has already shown a knowledge of physical manipulation of Ellen—think of the way he holds her fast when talking to her. Ellen tearfully protests to Mr. Saunders that the whip to Brownie is all the more awful because she has never used it on him. Clearly Ellen has more trouble with the idea than Alice does. If Alice is the model, then Ellen needs to learn to surrender not only to God but perhaps male authority as well. The punishment/reward system manifests itself when John withholds a kiss from Ellen, only to have her admit her sense of loss under cross examination: "whatever that eye demanded she never knew how to keep back" (403). Thus begins a pattern of emotional withholding John uses to train Ellen, behind which lies the potential for physical force.

With the death of Alice, John assumes a stronger hold on the reins, though much of the authority he evokes springs from Ellen’s internalization of
his authority. Ellen consciously "begin[s] at once, as far as she could, to take
Alice's place" (454); "whatever Alice would have wished, what John did wish,
was law to her" (455)—Alice has replaced Mrs. Montgomery as the imagined
judging other, while John is the actual and the imagined judging other.
Understandably shaken by his sister's death, John grows more aloof, which
Ellen interprets as reserved judgment: "Of one thing she was perfectly sure,
what he might be doing,—that he saw and heard her; and equally sure that if
anything were not right she should sooner or later hear of it. But this was
censorship Ellen rather loved than feared" (461); "to have seriously
displeased him, Ellen would have thought the last great evil that could fall
upon her in the world" (461).

Ellen has made John the embodiment of divine law, learning to submit
without question and to increase her dutifulness. Those few instances when
she still manages to assert her own will are quickly followed by contrition, as
when John orders her to fulfill a favor for a friend after she initially declines:
"Ellen instantly rose up and with burning cheek came forward and took the
paper" (462). Ellen flushes similarly in a somewhat gentler encounter, again
wilting under the gaze of John,

the crimson of her cheeks mounting to her forehead. But her
eyes sunk immediately at the answering glance of his. . . . while
the reproof, coming from him, went to the quick, Ellen yet joined
with it no thought of harshness or severity. She was completely
subdued however; the rest of the riding-lesson had to be given up; and for an hour Ellen's tears could not be stayed. But it was, and John had meant it should be, a strong check given to her besetting sin. It had a long and lasting effect. (415-416)

Again, such violations are rare. While she was an especially vulnerable girl, Ellen has grown into a more contained, dutiful older future woman, because she has learned that growth through discipline, though painful, represented a more measured treatment of the self than a binary shame/hubris model, which allows for no incremental failure. Containment is primary, as John reminds her when they discuss this latest transgression. Before John can, Ellen administers her own whip, saying, "I was only selfish and lazy" (463), this last adjective among the most damning for this former star gazer. John does not stop her self-castigation, reminding her that "[you should] no more lose command of your horse than you would of yourself" (463). Even small slips cannot go unreprimanded. "There will not be a just firmness of mind and steadfastness of action, where tampering with duty is permitted even in little things," John says to his ward (477).

The domestic education of Ellen is tested in the last section of the narrative when Ellen departs to Scotland to live with her grandmother and family. The movement is a natural one, for Ellen must confirm that her right behavior no longer requires the external reinforcement of an approved parental figure. She has answered this concern about right judgment of adult
figures first in Mr. Saunders's return, but had then John as protector/confirmation of her judgment. Overseas, there will be only her conscience, retrained to measure impulses not against her youthful will but against divine standards. Ellen sizes up the Lindsay household as one whose warmth has obvious limits: "There was nothing, however, in the character of this fondness, great as it was that would have inclined any child to presume upon it" (504). Coupled with this emotional reserve is a familial willfulness that demands acquiescence. Ellen immediately recognizes that if her will is in accord with theirs, "very well; if not, it must yield" (504).

The first obvious test comes in a question and answer session with the Lindsays who seek to expose the limits of Ellen's American education. While the effort is designed to humiliate her, Ellen shows little embarrassment in response to their queries. Warner has placed American values next to right Christian ones, so that readers will see that to be a good Christian is synonymous with being a good American. The significance of this gesture, however, may lie less in the differences in nationality than in the differences in class. Warner seems to be allowing for the possibilities of self-improvement regardless of circumstances, a version of rags-to-spiritual-riches connected obviously to Ellen's ascension to adulthood. A more entrenched class system might suggest that responsibility for self-improvement is diminished, along with the degree that the self feels responsible for its own failure. While Ellen has not had the class advantages that the Lindsays might
have provided her, she has improved nonetheless. Were Alice present, she might say that there are no excuses not to.

Ellen seemed to have passed the test, until the Lindsays question her friendships with Alice, John, and Van Brunt, about whom her will refuses to yield. Her tears do not indicate any self-questioning; rather, they are a protest against defamation. Nonetheless, when Mr. Lindsay insists that such friendships are part of the past, to be relinquished along with her Americanness, Ellen does not voice her resistance. He proclaims himself her new father, and though "Ellen's tears had been like to burst forth again at his words; with great effort she controlled herself and obeyed him" (510). Warner reminds us in the absence of John just where Ellen stands:

She could not help loving her uncle; for the lips that kissed her were very kind as well as very peremptory; and if the hand that pressed her cheek was, as she felt it was, the hand of power, its touch was also exceeding fond. And as she was no more inclined to despite his will than he to permit it, the harmony between them was perfect and unbroken. (510)

Jane Tompkins notes the parallels between this narrative and The Story of O, wherein submission to power gives rise to happiness, albeit a selfless happiness (Sensational Designs 182). Brodhead includes love as a lubricant to discipline, and this passage suggests why his reading makes more sense. Saunders has shown authority to Ellen and so has Fortune, but
neither has coupled their admonishments with affection, as Alice and John so effectively do. While the Lindsays are emotionally aloof, they have the wisdom to play the hand of some affection tied to familial obligation, which Ellen in her perceived orphanhood cannot resist.

While the Lindsays see that Ellen "colours at everything" (522), such as being served wine at dinner, the source for her reactions differ from those experienced in the hands of John and Alice. If there she blushed when failing to live up to the Christian standards dictated to her, in Scotland she seems to fear simply the exclusion from family. Even when the other standards differ directly from what Alice and John have taught her, the larger familial (read domestic) standard remains submissiveness. If Ellen found consolation in the Bible in America, here her study time is questioned. Small wonder that she feels "a great relief to be able to weep freely [at church]; at home she was afraid of being seen or heard or questioned" (531). And while she attends to Mr. Lindsay enough to humble herself and allow herself to call him father, she ultimately refuses the edict against her hour of Bible time, one form of duty trumping the other: "She thought a great deal on the subject, and came soberly to the conclusion that it was her duty to disobey" (541).

But this rebellion is milder than her later response to the Lindsays' confiscation of her copy of *Pilgrim's Progress*:

[S]he was at war with herself. Her mind was in a perfect turmoil.

She had been a passionate child in earlier days; under religion's
happy reign that had long ceased to be true of her. . . . In vain she would try to reason and school herself into right feeling; at one thought of her lost treasure passion would come flooding up and drown all her reasonings and endeavors. (553)

The last vestige of Ellen’s youthful passion, this sequence bears closer scrutiny. Whereas her earlier stubbornness has often been her attempt to satisfy her will rather than the standards of Christianity, her will here seems to have been successfully aligned with God’s, since Pilgrim’s Progress is hardly a secular departure from Christian teachings. God’s will be done? Not, it seems, when familial duty conflicts. Ellen says of Mr. Lindsay, "[H]e is in the place of a father to you, and you owe him a child’s duty" (554). She gets down on her knees, and "when she rose up the spirit of pride was entirely broken, and resentment had died with self-justification" (554).

Curiously, this pride seems to be entirely the right kind, not born of attention to individual impulses but born of allegiance to Christian teachings, not based on essentialism but correctable action. What better reason to insist on principles? Contrast this to the episode at the start of the narrative, where Ellen cannot understand how her mother can love God above her daughter. Why is family duty now a higher priority?

Because Ellen needs to be taught first about Christian dutifulness and second about the religious basis for familial hierarchy. It is not sufficient to be dutiful for God’s sake nor to be dutiful for husband or father’s sake. What she
must learn is that the authority for female submissiveness is divine and that
the male familial authority—the social manifestation of God's will—is divine and
thus unimpeachable. And when Ellen's reading of the divine differs from her
father's, she should yield to his better judgment. Warner has placed her
protagonist overseas to confirm that she has successfully internalized the
Christian belief systems that should be the judging other for any sense of
transgression she feels, without the need for the confirmation of actual adult
figures like Alice and John; in short, to confirm her conscience.

But Warner has thrown an extra wrench into the works. The Lindsays
are weak Christians, whose faith is socially conventional rather than spiritual.
The principles of the project judging become, oddly, not ones about which she
can apparently ever be entirely sure. Measuring her behavior against her
imagined right behavior crosses Mr. Lindsay, for whose sake she allows her
pride to be broken. In the end, "he," whether Lindsay or John, is right, even if
the standard violates Ellen's understanding of correct Christian behavior.
Hers is not to reason why.

Under the guidance of several adult familial authority figures, Ellen has
moved in the course of the narrative to establishing a personal relationship
with God which sustains her in the company of the skeptical Lindsays. But
her personal faith is questioned when it results in her being less than dutiful
to her new family. Ultimately the fate of Ellen is to become part of another
family, another home, headed by John. Having been trained to be both
Christian and domestic, Ellen must learn to recognize that home is more important. The family functions as a contained, circumscribed version of the social world, wherein the man is king. Although it is tempting to read Mrs. Vawse as a model of a women in charge of the home, she is permitted to be a model only because she has first been a wife and mother, just as Fortune Emerson finally needs marriage to Van Brunt for her role as homesteader to be validated.

As readers, we may not know with certainty that John will return to stake a claim for Ellen, but when he does, to ask offstage for permission to marry Ellen in several years time, Ellen's maturation is manifest. John is pleased to see submissiveness on her face: "there was in all its lines that singular mixture of gravity and sweetness that is never seen but where religion and discipline have done their work well" (559). The union between John and Ellen is beyond the bounds of the narrative as originally published, though Tompkins includes a previously unpublished chapter which shows them years later as man and wife.

Although Foster and Simons see the novel as upsetting the idea of patriarchal superiority by virtue of various nasty men, they fail to consider the way familial connections excuse otherwise brutal behavior. The difference in discipline between Saunders and John is little; even Alice admits that John's will must be done. Patriarchy superiority is challenged only when it is outside of a family context. The attention to mother/daughter and a circle of female
communion that Schnog and others see is there without a doubt—but it is a prelude to the ultimate purpose of placing the trained female in the stern but protective hands of the husband/father. Where Mrs. Montgomery begins as the ultimate authority—greater in Ellen's eyes than God Himself—, she yields first to God then finally to John and Mr. Lindsay, the last surrogate before the female is domesticated sufficiently for breeding.

Warner's final image pictures garden cultivation. A seed has been planted with deliberation in Ellen's mind and "carefully tend by sundry hands." "[A]t the point of its young maturity it happily fell again into those hands that had of all been most successful in its culture" (569), Warner writes. She uses "culture" knowingly, for the point remains that the natural self, that well-meaning but willful Ellen, for example, needs bonsai discipline to make it fit for the larger social world of society and for the smaller social world of family. The last of the Montgomeries is not born like Uncas to uphold the earth on her shell, her essential worth unconnected to any earthy efforts. She must earn her place through good deeds.

The attention to cultivation as a parting image for Warner coupled with the same page admission by Van Brunt via letter that his thoughts are now "earnest" about religion both suggest the division between Victorian earnestness and enthusiasm, a distinction William Houghton discusses in detail. The moral earnestness of the Victorians comes from the Evangelical Movement in the Church of England and contrasts with the casual
religiousness of the Lindsays that is part of a pattern of moral flabbiness which results from favoring the impulses of the ego.

Not surprisingly, moral earnestness shunned literature not directed at fundamental questions. Naturally, John and Ellen both therefore love the instruction of *Pilgrim's Progress*, while Ellen's reluctance to carry out her duty in chapter 44, which earns John's rebuke, happens when she is caught up in her reading. We know Ellen was not reading for education when John questions her and hears her confession that she "was just amusing" herself with a book (463). In the last chapter, John includes in his instruction to Ellen before he departs the imperative, "Read no novels," though by now Ellen is trained enough to be able to answer honestly, "I never do" (564). Such proclamations reinforce our understanding of the relentless, purposeful march of the *bildungsroman* genre: this ain't no party, this ain't no disco, this ain't no fooling around.

Earnestness requires a subjugation of the body in keeping as well with the garden image that Warner offers, and in this respect echoes John's masterful whipping of horses and Richard Brodhead's argument about disciplining the body. I have written about the effort to move the mother conscience from its embodiment in external familial authority figures to an internal projected judging other, in short, Ellen's development of a self-sustaining conscience. While Brodhead sees this movement as leading back to an imaged union with the mother figure, creating the imaged community
that Schnog, Tompkins, and others find ironically empowering of women, in the end allegiance to this female-led, Christian-centered community means yielding even to morally flaccid men like Mr. Lindsay, just as Ellen's mother submitted to Captain Montgomery even while she was his moral superior. Why else would Warner leave Ellen for another three years under this secular, Bunyan-hating roof? In terms of shame, Ellen has moved to being able to reflect the larger Christian community, measuring her reactions and her sense of possible transgression against what the right Christian response would be, as handed to her by her gardener father/husband figure—regardless of the wisdom of his judgment. And so Ellen is willing to accept the ominously unnamed third request that John asks of her in these last paragraphs with no need to judge it on her own: "whatever it were, she was very sure she would do it!" (569).

Tempting though it may be to read this cultivation imagery in extreme terms, the point remains that change is possible for characters in Warner's world, since the instructional nature of bildungsroman by definition posits the possibility. The various characters in the narrative, like Nancy Vawse and Mr. Van Brunt, confirm that the self is not immutable, but matures when it recognizes a duty beyond itself. Nobody's core is incorrigible. Recognizing a social world of change, with its attendant responsibilities, is finally the business of the bildungsroman.
But change, like choice, can be frightening, as Ellen discovers, moving uncertainly in a world too wide for comfort. Houghton argues that the reaction to change is the distinguishing mark of the period. Scientific advances led the charge; these in turn spawned social changes which made belief in eternal principles—essentialism—more difficult. One response to the threat to certainty was an attachment to old religious belief as a reaction to emotional stress or simply to hold onto its tenets for the sake of social order (99). In this view, religious faith stops all the clocks and becomes willfully reactionary. Seen in terms of shame, Christianity does offer the safety of known, consensual parameters against which one can judge behavior, individually and communally. Knowing the bounds makes staying inside of them easier, especially if the bounds are open to those who can take instruction. Please fence me in, Ellen says, the world is too much for me. Two fences skirt her world, the first and closer one of familial allegiance to a male-centered household and the second and ironically more distant one of Christian dutifulness.

This view is also anti-romantic, since the self is not meant to establish a one-on-one relation to the divine, but is meant to channel through established social institutions like family and community and church. Inclusion is primary and comes from right duty, not from gazing at the stars. But by steering a course away from the essentialism of romance, the self is also less vulnerable to the binary toggling of shame/hubris and more likely to
measure itself by the incremental teaspoons of social actions. And by being properly socialized, the self is, by communal standards, moral.

The anti-romanticism also suggests how genre helps determine the possible range of behavior. Brodhead writes about Hawthorne's depictions of punishment as relevant to nineteenth-century impulses more than seventeenth-century ones, in that correction is shown externally on the body. I would argue that the genre shift in the nineteenth century means less in the way of external manifestations, more in the way of internal manifestations. In short, private whippings of guilt and shame replace public ones, in a new world where the primacy of action (the center of the romance) gives way to the primacy of character (the center of realistic fiction).

But the transition in genre is not smooth. Hawthorne's characters, for example, function with both a measure of psychological complexity and allegorical power in The Scarlet Letter. Nor are the public punishments necessarily in accord with the private ones. Thus Hester can reconfigure the A on her chest by the end of the narrative, making a private association which may differ from the public. The love between Hester and Dimmesdale has a consecration of its own, writes Hawthorne, even if the place for individual impulses is on the edge of town. The union also suggests that the overarching frame of religious faith no longer has encompassing answers.

Stowe presents a secular world which clearly has not abided by Christian principles, even in the most theologically introspective figure of
Augustine St. Clare. While certain characters like Eva and Uncle Tom are rapt by their faith, they finally perish, while more secular pragmatists like Cassy and George Harris survive.

Warner's vision seems even more contained than either Stowe's or Hawthorne's. In *The Wide, Wide World*, we are in a halfway house of individualism: here we follow the narrative on the back of Ellen's will, which compels our reading—but ultimately that will must retreat. As with Stowe and Hawthorne, Warner's Christian vision is presented in the context of a society that no longer shares perfect belief. Seen through the lens of Houghton's claims about religious reactionarism as a backlash against the loss of consensus and increasing societal change, we see that rather than accepting a new order in which individual will and psychological impulses have a currency, Warner retreats to didactic fiction. Of course, the need for instruction supposes waywarders.

Alice and John have counselled Ellen to right action and right feeling, positioning her for a surface world of romance and the inner world of realistic fiction. But they have scooped out the flesh that made Ellen alive to choices, for such choices might lead to a belief system outside the eroding fence of Christianity. The narrative turns the *bildungsroman* upside down by refusing Ellen's psychological growth. It also turns upside down our belief that an appeal to the larger frame of Christian domesticity is the most compelling standard by which to judge the self. Women should not presume to look so
far afield when the fence of a male-centered household is right before them. He, whether firm or flabby Christian, can do the thinking for all.

_The Wide, Wide World_ is not quite ready for the character autonomy suggested by realistic fiction. It is intent on being tract fiction. But it is also a world away from the simple essentialism of Cooper’s world. If shame manifests a sense of transgression, and Warner’s work is a training manual for the domestication of the nineteenth-century woman, the receding presence of shame in the narrative makes sense. Cooper’s characters are doomed to be types; given the genre of romance, accountability for choices must be far less. Even a good Indian is born to lose. Choice is stronger in Warner’s world, however, and so is accountability. If shame turns on beliefs about core essence, then one might suppose that Ellen Montgomery should feel shame less than she feels guilt. Wrong behavior is correctable, with the attention ultimately on assimilation into the larger, enduring community, the community that peeks out in _The Last of the Mohicans_ in the survivors Duncan Heyward and Alice Munro, the community that in Warner rallies in uncertain times around the word of God. The perils of choice seem to be foremost in Warner’s mind, but with careful attention to the right models in the developmental stage, choice gets turned into right habit, morality into manners.
1. Domestic fiction is a branch of the bildungsroman, defined by C. Hugh Holman in *A Handbook to Literature* as a novel centered on “the development of a young person, usually from adolescence to maturity” (52). Northrop Frye et al in *The Harper Handbook of Literature* translate the German as “A novel of education, from youth to experience” (72), noting its origins in Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahr* (1830). Its 1830 genesis fits the chronology of the novel’s evolution, as it moved from essentialist characters to those with the potential for growth. Growth leads for Holman to “maturity” and for Frye to “experience,” though a more exact explanation of what both ends mean is left unsaid. Marianne Hirsch notes that the evolution of the individual in bildungsroman is understood relative to their resistance to assimilating a social order. The narrative chronicles the process of maturation, at the end of which the protagonist has found a place in the larger culture.

This subject matter does not mean that the genre’s intended audience is children. The bildungsroman can trace internal growth not synchronized to physical maturation, as with Saul Bellow’s *The Adventures of Augie March* and Henderson the Rain King. On the other hand, these forms of bildungsroman are a giant step away from Warner’s world. *Benet’s Readers Encyclopedia of American Literature* calls Warner’s narrative "a story for girls," which suggests in turn the text as training manual. Leslie Fiedler’s passing reference in *Love and Death in the American Novel* calls it "that child’s book" (81). The reclamation of the novel courtesy of the 1987 Feminist Press edition shouldn’t lull us into forgetting that domestic fiction like this was not for academic eyes but for the eyes of young girls in antebellum America, so that they might learn how to become properly domesticated.


2. William Ian Miller’s discussion of Icelandic sagas in *Humiliation* shows stoic characters in stark contrast to the weepy Ellen Montgomery. Miller concedes that evaluating emotions found in these sagas remains difficult, because of limited affective representation. One consequence of this reticence is static characters, often granted an emotional disposition that stays with them. Such characters tends towards the allegorical. These qualities are consistent with characters in romance as well, as I argue in chapter one. Here in Warner, however fitfully, emotional excess has the fortune of presenting itself within a genre that allows for tuning the yapping instrument of personality.
3. Helen Lynd sees shame's isolation compounded by the absence of a clear method of absolution, since shame is often not tied to any misdeed. But Ellen here can find wrong action. The act of entering the confessional relationship suggests guilt not shame, wrongs felt not as innate but as correctable. Andrew Morrison argues similarly that guilt is more socially significant than shame, since guilt is rooted in action and since atonement through forgiveness or confession offers more obvious solutions than the passive, self-enveloping nature of shame. Compare Ellen's willingness to admit wrongdoing to the protracted evasions of both Isabel Archer in The Portrait of a Lady, who refuses full communication with Ralph until many chapters after realizing the failure of her marriage, and Clyde Griffiths in An American Tragedy, who never does convincingly confess his sin to Rev. McMillan.

4. The evolution of manners is traced by Norbert Elias in his monumental The Civilizing Process. Elias notes that affective restraint is consistent with the maturation of Western culture. See my discussion of Elias in my chapter on Henry James's The Portrait of a Lady.

5. Silvan Tomkins's consideration of gazing and shame begins with the affective manifestations of shame in the face: a quick lowering of the eyes, the face frozen, the head bowed (though sometimes as a defense mechanism the head may be raised), sometimes the defensive look of contempt, the embarrassed laugh. The face also often registers shame in conjunction with another expression—enjoyment, anger, a frown, a smile. Part of the mixed response that shame evokes comes from the difficulty the self has in casting away that part of the self which brings on the shame. While self-contempt allows the self to cast out that part of the self which offends it, shame does not allow as readily the destruction of the weak part of the self because the self still loves itself (153). As part of his discussion of facial manifestations of shame, Tomkins explores the history of the taboo on looking. Another connection to the taboo against looking is the child's witnessing of the primal scene. Connected to the taboo against looking is the common cultural discouragement of expressive affect, which like the eyes can betray feeling. An individual can thus learn that expression of affect altogether is shameful, though Tomkins points out that affectlessness also can cause shame, as when a parent shames a child for not being appropriately socially complimentary.

   See also Joseph Adamson's application of Tomkins in his psychoanalytical reading of Herman Melville, wherein he considers the desire to be seen and the fear of being seen as aspects of shame affect.

6. Pilgrim's Progress tempts us plainly to read Warner's narrative in allegorical terms. Just as Christian, the hero of Bunyan's tale, offers a model of dogged faith in the face of adversity, Ellen Montgomery presents in her
episodic struggles a model to readers about how to discipline their will to the path of the straight and narrow. Measured by genre, the parallel remains wobbly, since Christian as character is static—we know he will remain Christian until the end. By virtue of her freedom of choice, Ellen walks far less certainly on her road from an essentialist shame-based vision to a more social responsible guilt-based one.

7. See note 4 above.
RESISTING AN ACCOUNTABILITY OF CHOICE: 
ISABEL ARCHER IN THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY

Although Henry James writes realistic fiction, much of the problem in sorting through Isabel Archer's choices in The Portrait of a Lady is that James does not from the first represent her as one who actually has a choice, thus begging the question of whether the illusion of mimesis is sustainable. She always wants to know "the things one shouldn't do . . . so as to choose" (67), but this deliberate desire for free will does not save her from her ignorance.

Lee Clark Mitchell argues in Determined Fictions that such an awareness of choice—and especially her resistance to action—confirms Isabel's status as a realistic character. Such choice generates responsibility in realistic fiction; characters are held accountable against forces which in naturalism would be beyond their control. Further, characters in realist fiction resist those forces that seem to compel them to act in certain directions—for Mitchell, nonaction is as decisive as action. If Lord Warburton offers
marriage, then proof of Isabel’s mimetic fidelity is that she says no. "By resisting social pressure and effectively deferring their own desires, James’ women are able to achieve a series of distinctive moral triumphs" (9), notes Mitchell. "[T]he greater the gap between impulse and act, the greater the moral capacity we seem willing to attribute to them" (10).

But is a moral judgment reliable in the absence of an understanding of a social context? What do Isabel’s choices mean if she doesn’t understand her options or the consequences of her actions or nonactions? "So as to choose," she declares, but even this is insufficient, since being told what is wrong is different from firsthand experience. Ralph Touchett may believe that his cousin can remain free by virtue of her newfound monetary abundance, but there is no freedom within a world of conventions if you aren’t aware of how they work.

Isabel may recognize this dilemma. Her proclamation sounds like a desire to break free of conventionality, but it may also be read as a desire to understand the range of conventionality. What are my options?, she proclaims. She remains free so long as she does not choose; the choosing commits her to certain paths, certain subsequent actions. If Isabel could shed the clothes that she wears for convention’s sake, as Madame Merle suggests in chapter 19, she would find herself outside of the community which her beliefs critique but to which she nonetheless belongs.
Perhaps "wants to belong" is a better construction, for she leaves America to come to Europe as a kind of blank slate, having apparently left no emotional family connections behind following her parents' death. The regret about some lost past, so evident in Ellen Montgomery, is absent here; the woman who arrives at Gardencourt is still, as the Edenic name suggests, largely innocent, unfettered by a past.

Or so she would like to believe. In reality, her connection to Caspar Goodwood does tie her to her homeland and to the consequences of interactions made before her trip to Europe. Certainly Goodwood has more claim to knowing Isabel than does the smitten Lord Warburton, who has had little contact with her prior to his marriage proposal and seems more in love with what she might be than with what she actually is.

How does Isabel's desire for a pure freedom of choice/freedom from choice connect to issues of shame? Following Mitchell, the answer would lie in accountability. We feel shame when we feel inadequate relative to some standard that we believe in and that we feel we have failed. So long as Isabel refuses to take any action, she may be lulled into believing that she is not incorporated into a world of cause and effect, or at least into this particular world of cause and effect. By this logic, a character like Daisy Miller who never recognizes the standards she violates would never feel shame for transgressions. Shame always depends on the self projecting a
judging other, either in confirmation of what the external world suggests or independent of the world's judgment.

James's central character might be expected to cultivate such an independent judgment relative to the world. Madame Merle might gently remind us as she does to her protege that Isabel dresses very well: for all her protestations and her ignorance, she is already more a part of this world than she may want to admit. As with Ellen Montgomery, Isabel Archer moves through the narrative to a greater and greater sense of incorporation into the wide social world. The standard against which Isabel judges herself becomes increasingly the standard of the aristocratic world around her. We can determine her incorporation by assessing the potential shame situations she encounters. The test will be in leaving behind her romantic visions of the world and taking on and understanding instead the realistic world to which she belongs.

Participation in the world should mean that when Isabel feels a sense of transgression, she will respond with guilt, which is social in its nature, concerned with the other who has been injured. Guilt is concerned about wrong action and seeks to make amends with corrective action; it means moving beyond narcissism; it is fundamentally about participating in the social system, about the consequences of one person's action on someone else within the same group.
Isabel faces at the end of the narrative the test to determine the direction of her character. Will she pledge her allegiance to freedom or to convention? The decision will test whether Isabel has moved from her largely self-absorbed vision of the world towards a vision that shows concern and empathy for others. It will also measure the growth of her imagination through suffering, from a romantic sensibility to one that understands the freedoms and terror of choice.

Her choice touches as well on morality. Bernard Williams notes that the modern conception of morality depends on (1) the primacy of guilt over shame; (2) the overcoming of narcissism; (3) moral autonomy; and (4) voluntary action. Should Isabel move towards guilt, she would be claiming freedom of choice, taking a moral stand for which she believes herself accountable. The maturation of Isabel means seeing the world in a fuller way than she does at the start of the narrative and making a moral choice, one that is also by definition accountable to the social world beyond herself.

Let me start by discussing the way Isabel’s romanticism puts her in an unknowing position. In the beginning, Isabel is able to use her romantic imagination as a tool to keep herself one step removed from accountability in an adult world. Andrew Morrison notes the dangers of being encumbered with grandiose fantasies in his discussion of narcissism and shame (365). The self matures by learning realistic responses, empathetically engaging the world beyond the self, or else suffers the failure of being unable to realize its
myopic fantasies. Isabel's romantic impulses are similarly often solipsistic.

Consider the scene of Isabel in Albany. She is walled up in the family library, with echoes of Jane Eyre romanticism:

She had a desire to leave the past behind her and, as she said to herself, to begin afresh. . . . Her imagination was by habit ridiculously active; when the door was not open it jumped out of the window. She was not accustomed indeed to keep it behind bolts; and at important moments, when she would have been thankful to make use of her judgment alone, she paid the penalty of having given undue encouragement to the faculty of seeing without judging. (39)

There is a barrier between Isabel and the world outside; "the depths of this young lady's nature were a very out-of-the-way place, between which and the surface communication was interrupted by a dozen capricious forces" (41). Her friend Henrietta Stackpole recognizes the same filtering mechanism. When Isabel discusses the adventures she imagines for herself, Henrietta pegs her: "Like the heroine of an immoral novel, you're drifting to some great mistake" (147).

Stuck in this way of processing the world, Isabel cannot see beyond her self. She does not have the full tools to see further, but more importantly she does not want to move beyond the scripts she has already created for the world. She can discuss marriage with Caspar Goodwood and decline the opportunity to be incorporated into the world that his embarrassed response
would seem to invite. Her own assessment of his situation is drawn by James with apparent judgment of her caricaturing. After she has declined his offer,

Goodwood bent his eyes again and gazed awhile into the crown of his hat. A deep flush overspread his face; she could see that her sharpness had at last penetrated. This immediately had a value—classic, romantic, redeeming, what did she know?—for her; 'the strong man in pain' was one of the categories of the human appeal, little charm as he might exert in a given case. (138)

At this point Isabel can respond only through the blinders of her romantic preconceptions. She can see this suffering, but only by resorting to character typing; she has no ability as yet to feel it empathetically, no sense of a large social accountability.

Although she likes him more, she is no more sympathetic to Warburton's proposal, because she cannot see him very clearly beyond her preconceptions. Upon meeting him at Gardencourt, she proclaims, "Oh, I hoped there would be a lord; it's just like a novel" (27). In neither case does she seem mindful of the person behind the gesture. Although she comes to know Warburton better, she still has not left behind her romantic rubric. "She couldn't marry Lord Warburton; the idea failed to support any enlightened prejudice in favor of the free exploration of life that she had hitherto entertained or was now capable of entertaining" (101), James writes. She
tells him more directly, "I can't escape my fate... I should try to escape it if I were to marry you... It's not my fate to give up—I know it can't be" (118).

Isabel adds that what she gives up in marrying is the dark side of experience. "I can't escape unhappiness,' said Isabel. 'In marrying you I shall be trying to.'" (119)

For as much as she charms Goodwood, Warburton, and Ralph, her cousin still sees in her the need for moving beyond the boundaries of her imagination. Isabel asks early if Gardencourt has ghosts, to which Ralph replies,

The privilege isn't given to every one; it's not enviable. It has never been seen by a young, young, innocent person like you. You must have suffered first, have suffered greatly, have gained some miserable knowledge. In that way your eyes are opened to it. (52)

So long as she filters experience through her romanticism, she will remain apart from the people around her. Like Ellen Montgomery, Isabel must learn the rules to become incorporated and in the process become accountable for her own actions. She must also learn to understand her suffering so that she can empathize with others in a way she cannot at the start of the narrative. Empathy becomes possible for her only if her response to failure is not primarily shame-based. She must develop a more realistic picture of herself, one that surrenders the youthful hubris that she manifests at the start of the narrative. "She had an infinite hope that she should never
do anything wrong" (54) and accordingly is vulnerable to turning inward when she does: "at moments she discovered she was grotesquely wrong, and then she treated herself to a week of passionate humility" (53).

Such shame/hubris bipolarity is well-chronicled by Michael Lewis and others. Those who construct their evaluation of their own worth based on excess pride unconnected to a realistic assessment of their actions are especially vulnerable to the swinging of the pendulum away from hubris to the core essence failure of shame. The flaw lies in global attribution, in which the self judges its essence rather than its action. Specific attribution associated with guilt and healthy pride allows the molding influence of action; action is inherently social, allowing for the legitimacy and corrective, recalibrating input of the world beyond the self. To understand suffering as Ralph suggests means for Isabel seeing beyond the limits of her self-contained romantic imagination to this social world of action and accountabilities.

Ultimately, in growing into her portrait as a lady, Isabel does not have the option of staying inside her head, of perpetuating her romantic vision of the world. She must move into the adult world, she must act, she must choose. And she must come to understand that the accountability for choices has an audience larger than herself. She can make this move to adulthood only by coming to terms with the world of conventions that she now finds herself in, because the social world has conventions and because she is a part of that world, like it or not. Concurrently, she must also hold onto a
measure of her imagination, for without a sense of it she will be a slave to
convention, with no sense of choice, trapped as Gilbert Osmond is trapped.

Initially it is not surprising, then, that she is lulled by Madame Merle,
who understands surface grace so thoroughly as to fool Isabel's ectomorphic
instinct for people. As with much of James's fiction, the innocent are
sacrificed by the knowing, the Americans wittingly or unwittingly cut by the
knowing Europeans or Europeanized Americans. Conventions are what we
are made of, and those like Daisy Miller or Lambert Strether in The
Ambassadors are ultimately victims to forms that they naively believed they
could skirt or that they mistakenly thought they understood.

The movement is similar to what children like Ellen Montgomery
undergo as they move awkwardly towards incorporation in the adult world.
On a macro level, this same elevation of conventions is discussed by social
historian Norbert Elias in The Civilizing Process, wherein he notes this pattern
in social history of moving towards greater levels of individual accountability
with the rise of individualism and personal freedoms. According to Elias, in
medieval times, as external restraints were weaker, so affect expression of
violent joy and rage were more common. The taming of medieval passions is
akin to the movement from childhood, where external authority figures
determine the boundaries of acceptable behavior, to adulthood, where
conscience and internalized authority figures direct our movements. A
peasant in a feudal world was born and died a peasant; cultivation would
suggest fluid boundaries of class that did not exist. Along with the breaking
down of class barriers comes the possibility that the choices an individual
makes affect their social standing.

As more and more people must attune their conduct to that of others,
the web of actions must be organized more and more strictly and
accurately, if each individual action is to fulfill its social function. The
individual is compelled to regulate his conduct in an increasingly
differentiated, more even, and more stable manner. [That this involves
not only a conscious regulation has already been stressed.] Precisely
this is characteristic of the psychological changes in the course of
civilization: the more complex and stable control of conduct is
increasingly instilled in the individual from his earliest years as an
automatism, a self-compulsion that he cannot resist even if he
consciously wishes to. (445)

To maintain social cohesion, we regulate ourselves, for the good of our own
social standing and to insure that we not become excluded from our
community. Because that community has become increasingly centralized,
self-regulation has become even more important.

As witnessed by Madame Merle, the codes of conduct also become
more rarified. Elias chronicles the change in table manners, for instance,
demonstrating that the mutedness of affective behavior extends to such
matters as using cutlery instead of hands and increasing modesty about
physical nakedness. The movement is not one born out of hygienic concern, Elias argues, but out of a retreating to cultivating a private space—my fork, my napkin, and, as important, my thoughts. Such privacy becomes more urgent in a world careful governed by exact social rules. Those without cloaking concerns are vulnerable to being used by duplicitous lags or Osmonds. This vulnerability increases in tight quarters and in societies with a monopolization of power in which individual appeals to physical violence are suppressed.

As the structure of human relations changes, as monopoly organizations of physical force develop and the individual is held no longer in the sway of constant feuds and wars but rather in the more permanent compulsions of peaceful functions based on the acquisition of money or prestige, affect-expressions too slowly gravitate towards a middle line. The fluctuations in behavior and affects do not disappear, but are moderated. (450)

Viewed from the outside, then, affective action decreases; we cannot tell from a distance the differences between various emotional states. Elias argues that it is with this change that attention to human psychology takes root. Seen in terms of literary conventions, narratives move from action-based accounts like The Last of the Mohicans to increasingly internal ones such as found in Henry James, from the remote characters of romance to the more intimate portraits of the novel form. For example, since the outcome for the central heroine is meant to be apparent from the start of Jane
Austen's narratives, her characters cannot be said to have the possibilities of choice usually associated with realistic fiction. But the quietness of transgressions bears a similarity to the careful courtly world described by Elias, where inclusion and exclusion depend so much on learning and attending to conventions.

Elias notes as well that the movement to fictional representation changed as more and more people came to live lives that did not allow any affective expression. Thus arose imagined substitution: "[T]he nobility read novels of chivalry; the bourgeois contemplate violence and erotic passion in films" (453). His careful examination of books of conduct in the Middle Ages shows that as assumptions about basic rules of conduct became assimilated, their textual representation recedes—they go without saying.

Arguably, too, situational representation in fiction becomes more like complex parables that do not admit to summarizing codas. If Austen writes novels of manners, they certainly cannot be sufficiently represented by an Aesopian moral. As rules grow more complicated, books of manners become less simple. Novels of manners are logical extensions, and with the general rise of the middle class in the nineteenth century their scope of action is no longer limited to novels of chivalry.

The breaking down of class barriers comes with the rise of the merchant class and the beginning twitches of meritocracy. Breeding tells less than money; the merchant class creates the middle class. In the process, the
manners of the upper class are embraced by lower classes as part of the process of upward mobility. So long as the ceiling between the classes is stone, those who are not nobility have little incentive to refinement, for they gain no benefit in social standing. When money becomes the medium of choice, when rising and falling can be connected increasingly to conduct, those in the lower classes have a greater incentive to learn the walk and talk of those above them. In such a world, self-regulation takes on a different urgency. Fluid social movement and increasingly tight social settings make external affective responsiveness more dangerous and internal affective regulation more rewarded.

Elias's example of nakedness is illustrative. The king can undress before a servant because their worlds do not share the same conventions. Shame and embarrassment come only when the violation is against the rules of one's own group or class. Because the servant is socially invisible, the king has no sense of being exposed. Likewise, naked children evoke a different social response than do naked adults—the former are not incorporated in the same way and thus not held to the same standards.

Elias's discussion calls to mind Bernard Williams's discussion of *aidos*, linguistically suggesting in Greek nakedness or exposure. Again, however, the self has to confirm the judgment of the actual judging other. The self also has to understand the consequences of unknowing nakedness. When
children can rise and fall in social standing by virtue of their appearance, no longer is nakedness just a personal choice without larger social ramifications.

Elias's elaborate explanation shows that succumbing to shame is dependent upon an individual's acceptance of the principles of the community that may or may not include that individual. Relative to The Portrait of a Lady, Isabel Archer's vulnerability to shame will confirm whether she has absorbed, like Ellen Montgomery before her, the principles of the social world she finds herself in. Are the standards she feels she has transgressed ones that come from the world around her or are they self-generated, anti-social standards? Will she negotiate the transgressions by retreating to shame or will she seek reintegration spawned by guilt?

The most prominent structure that she must come to terms with is the institution of marriage. In the course of the narrative, Isabel considers other versions of the institution, trying to see what options for molding it to her own liking she can manage. We have already seen that Isabel is intent on holding onto the freedom from choice, that she imagines the possibility of resisting institutional incorporation, but in the end her sense of failure over her unhappy marriage to Osmond, finally revealed to Ralph, confirms her incorporation into the European world of manners, and may suggest as well a movement beyond shame to the more social, empathetic world of guilt.

Certainly the value of marriage as seen in the social world beyond Isabel is not shown by James to rest on principles of romantic love. The first
people we see are an incomplete family, the Touchetts, father and son, along with the bachelor Lord Warburton. Mrs. Touchett's arrival is unseen, reported in telegrams from America recalled by her son. Even when she arrives at Gardencourt, she remains offstage while her new project Isabel first meets Ralph, Mr. Touchett, and Warburton. The Touchett marriage offers a cold model for a union without the inconvenience of cohabitation. James offers Mrs. Touchett's appraisal of the arrangement just before launching into Isabel's romantic life in Albany: "she was virtually separated from her husband, but she appeared to perceive nothing irregular in the situation" (31). Although James mocks Mrs. Touchett, the marriage itself is shown to have some merit, since Isabel admires the husband, Mr. Touchett, and the son Ralph. Placed next to Isabel's youthful imaginings, the Touchetts' marriage has a kind of practical realism, a measure of which might serve Isabel as she herself comes to terms with the institution.

Isabel's refusal of Warburton's proposal shows that she has yet to understand the set of conventions that come with marriage, protesting that in marrying Warburton she would be trying to "escape unhappiness." Warburton answers realistically that he offers no sanctuary from suffering, but Isabel seems not to understand. In her desire to make of the world what she will, she does not accept the world as it is; she does not attend to the reactions of others who operate on other principles. Although Warburton does not display much affective reaction to Isabel's rejection, his language announces the
stake involved, if with less urgency than Goodwood's words do. Isabel seems flippant, or at least self-involved. James reinforces this sense by keeping close to Isabel's limited perspective. After this exchanges with Warburton, we do not see his reaction as Henrietta joins the conversation, beyond the note that "he was preoccupied, and with good reason" (119).

Earlier, upon first presenting the idea of marriage to Isabel, Warburton has been more untutored in his reaction, though his visible distress does not inspire an empathetic response. The only blush in this sequence comes when Warburton mentions being afraid of the turnings inside of Isabel's head (101), which prompts a recognition in internal monologue by Isabel after Warburton has departed:

Who was she, what was she, that she should hold herself superior? What view of life, what design upon fate, what conception of happiness, had she that pretended to be larger than these large, these fabulous occasions? . . . Poor Isabel found ground to remind herself from time to time that she must not be too proud, and nothing could be more sincere than her prayer to be delivered from such a danger: the isolation and loneliness of pride had for her mind the horror of a desert place. (102)

Isabel herself sees that her resistance to incorporation threatens to isolate her away from community, caught in her solipsism.
If Isabel worries about her own resistance, she is not yet ready to leave it behind. She explains herself to Ralph: "I don't want to begin life by marrying. There are other things a woman can do" (133). Ralph is an ally because he too sees the institution from the outside, by virtue of his poor health, in his words "restricted to mere spectatorship at the game of life" (132). He does have a vested interest in his cousin, however, and presses her on her own relationship to conventionality. Her answers open the door for Ralph's conversation with his father which results in Isabel's financial independence: Ralph is trying to allow her to be bound to conventions only by choice. He answers his cousin, "There's nothing she can do so well" as marriage (133), but in so speaking he does not intend to limit her options. Rather, he longs, as he explains, to "have the thrill of seeing what a young lady does who won't marry Lord Warburton" (133).

For her part, Isabel claims only to want to look not to leap: "No, I don't wish to touch the cup of experience. It's a poisoned drink! I only want to see for myself" (134). She believes that maintaining her singular liberty allows personal independence, though Goodwood is equally convinced that an unmarried woman has no independence. Her refusal of Goodwood has already been discussed—he presses her with less reserve than Warburton does, but is likewise unsuccessful. His refusal of reserve, however, has a lingering effect on Isabel, who trembles with delight upon his departure, savoring the power of rejecting so ardent a suitor. Although she has not
directly tasted the poisoned drink, "she had done something; she had tasted of the delight, if not of battle, at least of victory; she had done what was truest to her plan" (145). Note, however, that Isabel is defining herself nonetheless by the marker of marriage; she displays such passion only when addressing the conventions she is sure she will eternally resist.

There's little sense of shame in Isabel in any of Volume One. While Goodwood may lay naked his intent to her, for her part Isabel does not expose herself, because the primary principles of marriage are not ones she has accepted fully. Any expression of regret, such as her slight concern about the delight she finds in the power of refusing Goodwood, is manifested in private, suggesting a shame-based response that is self-involved rather than a more social response of guilt that recognizes a connection to a hurt other and a larger social world. Isabel is right that she is not bound to any man—she is unmarried and an orphan. But she is wrong if she believes she may escape these conventions altogether. Ultimately, she is hurt because she does not understand fully the conventions of marriage before she decides to commit herself to the institution. In her desire to wrestle independently and gloat privately about marriage, she succumbs to her pride, her belief that she can will the world to her desires. Her failure takes place in the rarefied world of what she herself sees as aristocratic (166), a world that Elias discusses as carefully coded with nuances of expression that can be easily missed. James is deliberate in presenting to Isabel, however, parallel possibilities of
observation, so that if she chooses one course she knowingly declines another. Rules only limit fools, and James takes pain to show that knowledge is available to Isabel. If she chooses a romantic vision, it springs from willfulness, from a belief in the self-sufficiency of her own judgments.

This separateness would seem to shield Isabel from a sense of shame relative to the social standards that she violates, since external judgments must conform to the self's projected judging other. However, as Elias reminds us, the new meritocratic order means larger social consequences for private actions. Isabel is caught in the trough of matrimonial conventions; she cannot find an alternate vision, despite her protestations and her refusal of two worthy suitors. Her inheritance should offer her options, but she does not test enough the boundaries of what might be: "With all her love of knowledge she had a natural shrinking from raising curtains and looking into unlighted corners. The love of knowledge coexisted in her mind with the finest capacity for ignorance" (173).

Her inheritance, instead, opens the door of anxiety for Isabel. She discusses her fear with Ralph in Italy in chapter 21: "A large fortune means freedom, and I'm afraid of that. It's such a fine thing, and one should make such a good use of it. If one shouldn't one would be ashamed" (193). Ralph has unwittingly pushed Isabel closer to coming to terms with conventions that Isabel remains uncertain about, though again the choice ultimately lies with her. With fluid class movement, affective responsibility becomes more urgent.
This conversation in San Remo marks a turn for Isabel, since James has set her up as outspokenly against these particular conventions. It's one thing to resist when incorporation is not imminent, quite another when the responsibilities of society are upon her. Her proclaimed resistance to marriage is at odds with her private musings now about Goodwood, who remains in ways unattractive to her but who might be, she now considers, a port in a storm:

She reflected that she herself might know the humiliation of change, might . . . find rest in those very elements of his presence which struck her now as impediments to her finer respiration. It was conceivable that the impediments should some day prove a sort of blessing in disguise—a clear and quiet harbor enclosed by a brave granite breakwater. (194)

It is against this private vulnerability and fear that James gives us the first scene of Madame Merle with Osmond. Marriage remains the issue, with Madame Merle intent on using Isabel as she can. The convent that houses Pansy has a front with "a somewhat incommunicative character. It was the mask, not the face of the house" (195). If Madame Merle has remained masked to Isabel, we need to remember that the chance to see her for what she is has already been given to Isabel and the reader. While Isabel may not be expert enough in the conventions at hand to see perfectly clearly, she herself acknowledges the entrenched conventionality of her new friend.
(chapter 19), even the absence of naturalness, but she does not see the dangers in Madame Merle's slavish devotion to surface charm (167). Two pages into his description of Madame Merle, James writes that her eyes were thought by some "incapable . . . of tears" (153), a judgment made by James and not clearly available to Isabel—but neither clearly unavailable to her. Madame Merle tests the boundaries of Isabel's willful ignorance in an early conversation about accouterments. When Isabel claims not to care about the houses of suitors, Madame Merle calls such a view "crude":

> When you've lived as long as I you'll see that every human being has his shell and that you must take the shell into account. By the shell I mean the whole envelope of circumstance. There's no such thing as an isolated man or woman; we're each of us made up of some cluster of appurtenances. (175)

Madame Merle sees what Isabel does not: no man is an island in the new fluid social order.

The trio of Madame Merle, Osmond, and Pansy represents a greater allegiance to conventionality than Isabel would seem comfortable with, yet it is precisely their conventionality that seems to comfort her. Why? It may not be a matter of her taking comfort in them but rather their taking advantage of her willful ignorance. Both Madame Merle and Osmond seem to be masters of conventions; knowing the conventions lets them fool Isabel, at least in the short term.
But Isabel also chooses a loyalty to Osmond's conventions. Already in Volume One, she worries about being equal to the aesthetic sensibility of her future husband. Isabel fears revealing her "grossness of perception" (226). That grossness lies largely in Isabel’s imagination projecting beyond the knowledge available to her, so that she can read both Madame Merle and Osmond more generously than either deserves. In this respect, she continues to misread conventions at her peril, even as she moves increasingly towards wanting to be incorporated by them.

Still, the marriage to Osmond strikes the reader as something of a surprise. Volume One ends with Ralph and Warburton speculating that the threat of Osmond will pass, but quickly into the second volume Isabel is engaged then married to Osmond. Why has Ralph misjudged his cousin? Because he believes what she believes, that she can overcome the weight of conventions by the will of her imagination. "You were not to come down so easily or so soon" (291), he says in disappointment, and her answer shows that the task has asked too much of her: "You talk about one's soaring and sailing, but if one marries at all one touches the earth. One has human feelings and needs, one has a heart in one's bosom, and one must marry a particular individual" (293). The failure has not only been of imagination but suggests the failure of Isabel's romanticism as well—it cannot survive in a social context because it does not permit the space for social needs. The self in isolation yearns for company. Retreating to the formal pronoun "one",

115
Isabel tries to distance herself from the specifics of her failure, her own suffering, and her social needs, answering her cousin as if she herself is not the subject of Ralph's admonishing. The language has a masking effect, as though Isabel is conscious of the need to disguise any exact revelation from her cousin for now.

Isabel is caught between two standards, though at least that standard held out by marriage has some knowable parameters, some conventions that attention can master. Ralph's expectations are more vaguely defined, ones that his cousin initially feels herself but that later overwhelm her. "The world lay before her--she could do whatever she chose. There was a deep thrill in it all, but for the present her choice was tolerably discreet" (273), James writes as Isabel sees her sister off in London. "She had never had a keener sense of freedom, of the absolute boldness and wantonness of liberty" (272)--yet it is precisely in the face of that freedom that Isabel ties herself to earth.

Goodwood presents the same words and possibilities to her in the last chapter of the novel: "The world's all before us--and the world's very big" (489), echoing John Milton and unwittingly Warner's wide world. But Isabel is a different woman from earlier, and she feels the weight of choice keenly. The world "seemed to open out, all round her, to take the form of a mighty seas, where she floated in fathomless waters. She had wanted help, and here was help." James's language deliberately calls to mind as well Isabel's
earlier musings on the role Goodwood might play in her future as a port in a storm (see 194 above). A touchstone for Isabel throughout, Goodwood returns for the last time to test her conception of liberty, but leaves disappointed. Along with the reader, he is left to wonder why has she moved so far away from her vision of freedom.

Literally, the answer lies in her marriage, for she now addresses the institution not in an abstract way but in a binding way. She rejects Goodwood in the last paragraphs of the text because she has bound herself to Osmond or--more compellingly--to Pansy, her stepdaughter, by giving her word that she would return to her. Goodwood offers freedom, but by now she has been assimilated into European society, though not without her consent--Goodwood is right that the draw of Italy is not sufficient, that she does have choices. And so she does. And so she chooses. "One must choose a corner and cultivate that" (288), she has said earlier to Ralph, and the four years in between ultimately only strengthen her conviction, despite her open unhappiness.

Choice is central to understanding how imagination helps construct her self-imposed prison. The proper use of conventions depends on the imagination to frame them, to employ them carefully. Henrietta notes this absence in Pansy: she "could not teach herself to think favorably of Pansy, whose absence of initiative, of conversation, of personal claims, seemed to her, to a girl of twenty, unnatural and even uncanny" (408). James has
earlier given us in direct address a similar assessment: "if at nineteen Pansy has become a young lady she doesn't really fill out the part; . . . she lacks in a deplorable degree the quality known and esteemed in the appearance of females as style" (311). While Henrietta herself might note the touch of James's irony here, she would remind us as well that the option of skirting style depends first on understanding it better than Pansy does.

Of course her father is the craftsman of this disposition. When Pansy expresses no affective response to the news of Isabel's engagement, Osmond notes that her muted reaction is appropriate, declaring, "The way she took it proves that her good manners are paramount" (298), but it is not accomplished without effort: "she was therefore ingeniously passive and almost imaginatively docile; she was careful even to moderate the eagerness with which she assented" to outside proposals. Even in the presence of a potentially judging other in Isabel, Pansy cannot fight for her own way. She blushes as she reveals to Isabel indirectly that she will not cross her father:

[A] deep, pure blush came into her face. Isabel read the meaning of it; she saw the poor girl had been vanquished. . . . She laid her hand on Pansy's as if to let her know that her look conveyed no diminution of esteem; for the collapse of the girl's momentary resistance (mute and modest though it had been) seemed only her tribute to the truth of things. . . [Pansy] bowed her pretty head to authority and only asked of authority to be merciful. (462)
Why a "pure blush"? Read relative to shame, the response suggests the kind of retreating of core essence failure, punctuated by words such as "collapse" and "bowed"—Pansy is not capable of addressing her situation through action. Moored to her place, like Ellen Montgomery before her, she is still a "convent"ional girl, incapable of autonomous action.

James sets up the two women as matches of a sort, for the same comment might be made about Isabel in the end when she returns to Rome. In their last meeting before Isabel departs to see a dying Ralph, Isabel comes to understand the utter limits of Pansy's defiance of her father: she will not test his authority, whatever her own romantic desires. Pansy reads Isabel as the judging other, though her stepmother's standard of imagination is less binding than the higher appeal of her father and though Isabel does not explicitly judge her. "Pansy took hold of her dress; there was a sudden change in the child's face. "You look strange; you frighten me" to which her stepmother responds, "I won't desert you" (462). The two play out the two sides of the retreating other and the abandoned self in Helen Lewis's shame model. Piers and Singer make a similar point, noting that the threat from shame is abandonment. The shamed self is excorporated and dependent on the action of the judging other to reintegrate it, to mend the broken connection.

Significantly, this simple exchange is the basis for Isabel's sense of duty to her stepdaughter, despite the encouragement in England for Isabel to
leave Rome behind forever. James repeats the language of Pansy in Isabel's last encounter with Goodwood. He grabs her by the wrist and beckons her to sit. "She closed her eyes; he had not hurt her; it was only a touch, which she obeyed," though adding, "You've frightened me" (486). Both woman are vulnerable to being placed in the position of child with the judging other as parent, both are frightened by an expectation of freedom that neither finds as the ultimate judging other, and both ultimately stay within the confines of the known, however unpleasant.

While Pansy is the opposite of a young Isabel—steeped in conventions but seemingly lacking the imagination and the will necessary to critique them—the older Isabel has moved closer to her stepdaughter's sensibility. Despite the differences, the daughter and the wife are both bound to Osmond. While Pansy appears more timid and incapable of independent action, her feelings for Rosier present an emotional course no longer available to Isabel. Pansy's suffering under the tyranny of her father becomes more acute when she considers the loss of Rosier, because she has come to understand that there is a choice. As Isabel has retreated from her imagination, Pansy has slowly discovered hers.

For all of Isabel's fumblings, she too clearly sees a choice, even if it represents uncertain options. As with Pansy, seeing the options makes forgoing her own personal happiness more difficult, but Isabel is likely vulnerable to being judged more severely, by Goodwood and by the reader,
since she has a greater capacity to imagine. Pansy may blush when admitting her failure of imagination to her stepmother, but she is simply less capable of imaginative resistance than Isabel is. The failure of Isabel's imagination is more damning because she has accepted imagination as a standard against which she judges herself in a way that Pansy has not. If Pansy belongs in a romance, Isabel now understands herself to be in a realistic novel.

"Pansy was really a blank page, a pure white surface, successfully kept so; she had neither art, nor guile, nor temper, nor talent" (268), James reports as Isabel first muses about her. That sensory deprivation, ensured by the convent and her father, helps explain her limitation against this standard of imagination. Isabel, however, has fewer excuses. She believed that her imagination could help her negotiate the terrain of her marriage, but her willful blind eye to her imagination's full range comes to haunt her: she does not anticipate the conspiracy of Madame Merle and Osmond. She excuses herself by declaring that what she might have known was beyond her capacity: "the only thing to regret was that Madame Merle had been so—well, so unimaginable" (465). The Countess Gemini is more on target and more pointed when she admonishes Isabel for having a "beastly pure mind" incapable of imagining evil. The problem is not an incapacity in her imagination, however, but an unwillingness to peek in the places where
ignorance is more convenient. "In your place, I should have guessed it ages ago," her sister-in-law tells her (450).³

To what degree does Isabel agree with the Countess's judgment? Despite her claim that she couldn't have imagined someone like Madame Merle, she shows no forgiveness for her own ignorance. "It was impossible to pretend that she had not acted with her eyes open; if ever a girl was a free agent she had been" (340), she tells herself. But Isabel's full disclosure of her misery and her accountability for her unhappiness is hidden from the reader for much of Volume Two. Not until chapter 52 do we get from Isabel an acknowledgment of her own situation. Here she admits to allegiance to the two central forces in her life which she had believed she might blend to create happiness: "Her notion of the aristocratic life was simply the union of great knowledge with great liberty; the knowledge would give one a sense of duty and the liberty a sense of enjoyment" (362).

Within the confines of her marriage with Osmond, however, no liberty is possible, because his allegiance to forms is absolute. And by virtue of her allegiance to her matrimonial bond, she must yield:

She had not as yet undertaken to act in direct opposition to his wishes; he was her appointed and inscribed master; she gazed at moments with a sort of incredulous blankness at this fact. It weighed upon her imagination, however; constantly present to her mind were all the
traditional decencies and sanctities of marriage. The idea of violating them filled her with shame as well as with dread. (386)

Although we may be tempted to allow Isabel some leeway, James makes a point of insisting on the seriousness of her situation and the correctness of her self-assessment:

It may appear to some readers that she gave herself much trouble, and it is certain that for a woman of a high spirit she had allowed herself easily to be arrested. It seemed to her that only now she fully measured the great undertaking of matrimony...[Despite his distaste for her] they were married, for all that, and marriage meant that a woman should cleave to the man with whom, uttering tremendous vows, she had stood at the altar. (448)

Note that Isabel's fidelity is to the institution rather than to her particular husband himself. The choice of adherence to marital duty is her own, though James seems to reinforce it as the appropriate one. If she feels shame, it's because she had internalized this standard as one she must measure up to. Great knowledge with great liberty: she cannot serve both masters, at least inside of this version of marriage. So she stifles her allegiance to her imagination.

Why does she feel shame rather than guilt? Because she has surrendered herself to the forms of marriage, and she sees a core essence failure if she cannot stick to her marriage. The act has defined her essence:
almost anything seemed preferable to repudiating the most serious act—the single sacred act—of her life. To break with Osmond once would be to break for ever; any open acknowledgement of irreconcilable needs would be an admission that their whole attempt had proved a failure. For them there could be no condonation, no compromise, no easy forgetfulness, no formal readjustment. They had attempted only one thing, but that one thing was to have been exquisite. Once they missed it, nothing else would do; there was no conceivable substitute for that success. (386)

Once again, this dichotomous reading of experience creates a breeding ground for shame. As Michael Lewis notes, global success and failure lead to hubris and shame, instead of self-evaluations based on specific action, which results in healthy pride and guilt. I have already discussed Isabel’s hubris, which is most pronounced in the first section of the narrative. Her hubris shows as well in her response to specific failure in her life. Even so close a counsel as Henrietta cannot elicit from her flexibility on how to process her failed marriage: "But I can't publish my mistake. I don't think that's decent. I'd much rather die. . . . I don't know what great unhappiness might bring me to; but it seems to me I shall always be ashamed" (407). Isabel's insistent withholding and her mortifying fear of exposure suggest the essential retreating position of the shamed self, against the more social response of addressing the failure with others beyond the self.
Gabrielle Taylor notes that shame is an emotion of self-protection, so that people retreat in the face of it. Herbert Morris adds that the shamed self seeks to hide from exposure, while the guilty party seeks out the injured other for reintegration. Because the shamed self has done injury to its core self, it is reluctant to reach out, since no correctable action is seen as being able to redeem an incorrigible flawed fixed self. The distinction between a failure of action (guilt) versus a failure of essence (shame) seems to be recognized by Isabel herself at one point: "She could never rid herself of the sense that unhappiness was a state of disease—of suffering as opposed to doing. To 'do'—it hardly mattered what—would therefore be an escape, perhaps in some degree a remedy" (348). This response also helps explain why Isabel hides for much of Volume Two. Unable to admit to the direct failure of her marriage and unable to see herself as partially flawed, she simply refuses to publish her mistake, either to her concerned friends or even directly to her husband.

Osmond uses his wife's shame to his advantage, aware that her hubris will prevent her from a confession to those who might offer her support. Her isolation, which from the first led her to project upon the world a romantic pattern oblivious to actual external reality, is now reinforced by her shame and by the thick layer of aristocratic social conventions that Osmond and Madame Merle offered and which Isabel has willingly chosen. So long as Isabel remains in a state of shame, she will not be able to make a moral choice as to her situation, since, as Bernard Williams, Helen Lynd, and others
note, the modern conception of morality depends on the social choice of guilt rather than shame, the accompanying overthrow of narcissism, and, echoing Lee Clark Mitchell’s discussion of realistic fiction, a sense of autonomous choice.

How specifically does Osmond reinforce the value of affected mutedness as the correct class response for himself and his wife? Repeatedly, he refuses affective expression when it seems the moral human response. We have already seen how he had helped mold Pansy, with the aid of the Catholic church, into a woman who is uncertain of her rights to affective expression. The movement towards each other’s trained inclinations for the two women in Osmond’s life is shown in the methods that Isabel employs to avoid the kind of direct expression that made her fast friends with the outspoken Henrietta and so intoxicating to the men of Gardencourt at the start of the narrative.

Geography has been the first gesture of this distancing, since those people who have been close to her in England are miles removed from the Osmond home in Rome. This distancing proves especially effective for Ralph, whose ill health would prevent him from seeing his cousin as much as he would like even if Osmond did not discourage such contact. James demonstrates the effectiveness of the geographical separation by suggesting its temporal counterpart. In chapter 36, by allowing three years to elapse between reports, James allows the reader to experience the remoteness of
Isabel much as her now distant friends do. This gap also allows the sorrow of Isabel's marriage to grow and allows her time to incorporate the affective mutedness ideal of her husband.

Whether Isabel is in fact a Stepford wife is not clear to the reader until chapter 52, where James lets us see once again inside of her head. Prior to that, once she is tied to Osmond, she is masked as well, or seems to be. When Ralph does come to see her, two years into her marriage, her erstwhile confidant cannot penetrate the surface of things, in part because he makes known his determination to expose her, hardly an encouraging audience for a surrendering of Isabel's pride. He recognizes that in so doing,

He had played the wrong card, and now he had lost the game. He should see nothing, he should learn nothing; for him she would always wear a mask . . . He would gladly have consented to pass for a goose in order to know Isabel's real situation. At present, however, she neither taunted him with his fallacies nor pretended that her own confidence was justified; if she wore a mask it completely covered her face. (330)

If Ralph himself cannot determine whether the expression is mask or real, then the reader is understandably uncertain as well at this point.

James has used the image of a mask previously in first describing the home of Osmond, and for him we learn the mask shall never be surrendered. As with his presentation of Madame Merle, James has presented from the
first the truth about Osmond’s relationship to conventionality. Osmond in his
courtship of Isabel "never forgot to be graceful and tender, to wear the
appearance. . . of stirred senses and deep intentions" (295). Upon first
meeting him, Isabel herself makes this judgment: "his manner was an odd
mixture of the detached and the involved. He seemed to hint that nothing but
the right 'values' was of any consequence" (219) Ralph makes his own
evaluation when he visits Isabel in Rome:

  under the guise of caring only for intrinsic values Osmond lived
  exclusively for the world. Far from being its master as he pretended,
  he was its very humble servant, and the degree of its attention was his
  only measure of success. (330)

Even when so loyal a slave to decorum as Madame Merle breaks down
before him, protesting that she has been so trained in affective mutedness
that she can no longer cry, Osmond remains affectively contained.

  While we may worry that Isabel’s affective mask is permanent, Ralph
later sees clues otherwise: "Her mask had dropped for an instant, but she
had put it on again, to Ralph’s infinite disappointment. He had caught a
glimpse of her natural face and he wished immensely to look into it" (389).
We also come to see that Isabel believes withholding her expression benefits
Ralph. "She didn’t wish him to have the pain of knowing she was unhappy:
that was the great thing, and it didn’t matter that such knowledge would rather
have righted him"; it is "an act of devotion to conceal her misery from him."
She concealed it elaborately; she was perpetually, in their talk, hanging out curtains and arranging screens"(364). In her active concealment, she models for Pansy, who has already been described as "ingeniously passive and almost imaginatively docile; . . . careful even to moderate the eagerness with which she assented to Isabel’s propositions" (341).

If we are to read for affective betrayals of shame in Volume Two, we must read carefully, for having assimilated the methods that Norbert Elias explains, the principal characters no longer demonstrate medieval openness about feeling. We must read in the movements of Isabel, in the silences, what might be there, what we only know to be there when James once again allows us to see inside of Isabel’s head. Small gestures with the curtains are not altogether clear to Ralph and even less clear to someone with a less elevated sensibility such as Rosier, whose pleading for Pansy’s hand is met by what he can see only as a "mystical smile" (319). Many of the gestures are perhaps too veiled for us to read into even with an awareness of the technique. How do we read Isabel rising up from a seated position in conversation with Warburton (325)? Or earlier, with Rosier, in response to a provoking word from Pansy’s suitor: "Isabel got up, turning away from him, leaving her old lady without ceremony" (316)? Even when seen full frontal, Isabel’s look often seems impenetrable, as when she returns subsequently to continue the conversation with Rosier, only to answer both gravely and
"inscrutably, as he afterwards, to himself, called it; and she gave him, straight
in the eyes, a look which was also inscrutable" (317).

Isabel herself is confronted with a test of her cultural literacy in a
vignette she witnesses from a distance involving Madame Merle and Osmond.
Although she cannot quite name her discomfort, she is trained enough in the
rarified conventions to see that something about the interaction is wrong. As
though schooled by Elias, Isabel is thereafter more reserved with her mentor,
listening "with a face that persisted in not reflecting the bright expressiveness
of Madame Merle's" (347).

Following Elias, Isabel confirms her place in her aristocratic world by
veiling herself not only in the less trying situation but in those pitched for the
highest expectation of expression. Consider the encounter with Madame
Merle wherein her mentor finally understands that Isabel knows the truth
about Pansy. It's a battle for affective control as Isabel says nothing, simply
waiting for the realization to hit Madame Merle:

[S]he had not proceeded far before Isabel noted a sudden break in her
voice, a lapse in her continuity, which was in itself a complete drama.
This subtle modulation marked a momentous discovery—the perception
of an entirely new attitude on the part of her listener. (458)

No declarations, no fireworks, just the whirling of internal wheels, with the
only tell a change in voice, one that a less schooled pupil might have missed.
More subtle still is the victory that Isabel enjoys:

130
Isabel saw it all as distinctly as if it had been reflected in a large clear glass. It might have been a great moment for her, for it might have been a moment of triumph. That Madame Merle had lost her pluck and saw before her the phantom of exposure—this in itself was a revenge, this in itself was almost the promise of a brighter day. (458)

Before we can call it a triumph, James adds the conditional "might have been". Is this any victory at all?

Isabel's only revenge was to be silent still—to leave Madame Merle in this unprecedented situation. .... [Madame Merle] might see what she would, but her danger was over. Isabel would never accuse her, never reproach her; perhaps because she never would give her the opportunity to defend herself. (459)

Why does Isabel refuse to vocalize her disgust? Because, despite herself, she has absorbed the sense of affective restraint that Madame Merle has employed throughout. Isabel has noted throughout that even from the beginning Madame Merle let slip her restraint, betrayed a meanness that was at odds with her general presentation. Faced with the same temptation, Isabel shows a measure of mercy. She is not ultimately slave to these conventions, but employs them with a separate sense of right and wrong.

The lapse by Madame Merle is more than an affective slip. It signals a moral deficiency. Isabel says later to Mrs. Touchett that Madame Merle has
done something bad, but stops short of calling her evil. M. Scott Peck in *People of the Lie*, however, notes that evil people act just as Madame Merle does: they have no desire to be good inside, but are intensely cultivating of good appearances (75). Peck notes too that there is no sense of shame in such people; they cannot be made to see that they have done anything wrong. Peck argues for core essence failure in such people; their evil deeds are not followed by any self-reflection; they are not people doing evil deeds, they are evil people. Recall also Bernard Williams's contention that morality presupposes choice. Imagination would allow some distance from the sets of conventions to which Madame Merle pledges allegiance, but Osmond's sister proclaims her too perfectly loyal for even this: "she had always had, too, a worship of appearances so intense that even Osmond himself had got bored with it" (452).

While we may make this judgment about Osmond, who refuses any admission of wrongdoing, it's not altogether clear that we should agree with the Countess that Madame Merle is to be grouped in the same class as morally incorrigible. How might Madame Merle redeem herself? By the simple gesture of confession, of admission. As Isabel stares at her, Madame Merle finally seats herself "with a movement which was in itself a confession of helplessness." This is all the confession James offers. When Isabel comes back out after having visited with Pansy, Madame Merle has regained a measure of her bearing. She speaks to Isabel "urbanely", accompanied by
a "strange" smile—she is still playing out conventions, this time turning her
deduction about Isabel's inheritance upon her. This is the last attack that
Isabel endures from Madame Merle, but it's telling: no effort at separating
herself from her actions is made by Madame Merle, no recognition of
accountability to the other party is apparent. Were she to admit, she would
have the possibility of redemption, even if Isabel herself did not forgive her.
Instead, she promises to retreat to America. Arguably, such a retreat is an
admission: it suggests that Madame Merle accepts the judgment given to
her, that her own projecting judging other confirms the judgment that Isabel
makes of her. But such a private gesture lacks the public, social
proclamation that might allow Madame Merle to be reintegrated into the public
group from which she feels excluded.

The confession that her mentor cannot bring herself to offer is one that
Isabel herself has been reluctant to express. Her reluctance has been
confirmed by a social system which places strong value on affective restraint,
because of the social consequences of affective lapses. In her encounter at
the convent with Madame Merle, Isabel shows she has learned the power of
such withholding. She is nonetheless still heavily burdened with her
unhappiness and still unwilling to admit to it.

Ralph finally is the impetus to confession. When she arrives at the
train station in London to see her dying cousin, she feels how the years have
altered her perception. She is more direct with Henrietta and Mr. Bantling
than she has been; "It seemed to her she should never again feel a superficial embarrassment" (467). Nor does she retreat from the questioning that Mrs. Touchett presents to her at Gardencourt. In neither of these encounters, however, does she drop her affective control. Indeed, she is conscious of her expression upon hearing the news of Warburton's marriage, alert to the penetrating eye of Mrs. Touchett—but not retreating.

She drops the mask at Ralph's deathbed. "She had lost all her shame, all wish to hide things. Now he must know; she wished him to know, for it brought them supremely together" (477). Ralph is uniquely situated to hear her grief: on his deathbed he serves the inverted role of priest hearing last rites; he is never a would-be suitor to his cousin; and he is by James's description reluctant to be conventional:

His outward conformity to the manners that surrounded him was none the less the mask of a mind that greatly enjoyed its independence, on which nothing long imposed itself, and which, naturally inclined to adventure and irony, indulged in a boundless liberty of appreciation.

(43)

For this reason, he may be more understanding of her masking, since he represents the group from which she may feel excluded, those whose imagination is not limited by conventionality. He is also, however, the person who most nearly matches her projected judging other.
Tellingly, like the priest whose role he is playing, Ralph is unmarriageable: if he represents a standard against which Isabel feels herself a failure, it seems to be the same standard that still has Isabel judging Henrietta when she learns of her engagement to Bantling:

It was a disappointment to find she had personal susceptibilities, that she was subject to common passions, and that her intimacy with Mr. Bantling had not been completely original. There was a want of originality in her marrying him—there was even a kind of stupidity; and for a moment, to Isabel's sense, the dreariness of the world took on a deeper tinge. (470)

Such a comment might easily have come from Ralph about his cousin. It might seem surprising that Isabel has retained this sensibility this late in the narrative, after all the efforts to assimilate the matrimonial standard. It suggests that she has not given herself over to the role of wife without retaining some distance.

What is the standard that Isabel feels she has failed? Imagination. Both thought she could triumph over conventionality, that her imagination would let her bend the rules. Plainly Ralph cannot be the standard of conventionality; she apparently has no confession to make on that score, for she refuses the allegiance that Osmond pleads for before her departure from Rome. Ralph has already suggested from the beginning the limitations of her imagination: it has not moved beyond herself to include others. When she

135
acquires that capacity, as Ralph has explained, she will be able to see the ghosts at Gardencourt.

What have you learned, Dorothy? Returning to her genesis, she waits to be announced at Gardencourt. She "grew impatient at last; she grew nervous and scared—as scared as if the objects about her had begun to show for conscious things, watching her trouble with grotesque grimaces" (471). Walking the streets of Rome just before her trip to London, after learning the truth about Madame Merle's involvement in her marriage to Osmond, she processes the world around her in a different way: "She had become deeply, tenderly acquainted with Rome; it infused and moderated her passion. But she had grown to think of it as the place where people had suffered" (430). A similar sensitivity has brought her to see Countess Gemini as more than mere appendage—"It occurred to Isabel for the first time that her sister-in-law might say something human" (449)—and has let her speculate more fully about Mrs. Touchett: "She wondered if she were not even missing those enrichments of consciousness and privately trying—reaching out for some aftertaste of life, dregs of the banquet; the testimony of pain or the cold recreation of remorse" (472).

While Isabel may fear the judgment of Ralph, she has already learned what he wanted her to learn, the value of empathy. Has her imagination failed her? To a degree, yes. But she surrendered surface embarrassment, has learned to see others, and in so doing has moved from a primarily
shame-based reality to a guilt-based reality that sees itself as involved in the social world not apart from it. Her confession to Ralph confirms that she is willing to make the gesture to reach beyond her self.

Ralph offers absolution, but not with the formality of Catholicism: Isabel is not Pansy, and Ralph is too in love with liberty to don the robes. Yet she ultimately returns to Rome, the center of the Catholic Church, to a husband who may or may not be Catholic but has a predisposition to worship the effects of its teachings, a man openly taken to the trappings of ritual. Isabel no doubt sees the battleground involving Pansy: "The old Protestant tradition had never faded from Isabel's imagination, and as her thoughts attached themselves to this striking example of her husband's genius... poor little Pansy became the heroine of a tragedy" (443). Just before coming to Gardencourt, Isabel sees what the convent makes of its inhabitants, noting that one of the nuns educating Pansy speaks

> in the tone of a woman with whom benevolence was a habit and whose conception of duty was the acceptance of every care. It fell with a leaden weight on Isabel's ears; it seemed to represent the surrender of a personality, the authority of the Church. (460)

While James does not develop this thread of Protestantism versus Catholicism, the aligning of Osmond to the prescriptiveness of Catholicism is plain.⁴ Nor is it accidental that imagination is opposed to Catholicism, since
Protestantism historically posits a more individual relationship with God that allows for more individual interpretation.

Is either more or less likely to spawn shame rather than guilt? Perhaps ironically, it may be Protestantism, in that, lacking a formal means of reintegration after a sense of transgression, the shamed self may retreat inward. The encouragement of a private relationship with God also suggests a greater allegiance to individualism than the communal values of Catholicism. If part of Isabel’s lesson is to move beyond her own solipsism, then the duty of Catholicism, the duty to Catholicism, would seem a possible prescription. Perhaps for this reason, Ralph’s words to Isabel lack the clarity of papal prescriptiveness. He does not tell her what she should do, he only reinforces that she has been loved. If she is to make peace with her situation, she must do it in an imaginative, independent way. There is no prescriptive solution.

Isabel tells Henrietta that her reason for returning to Italy is duty to Pansy, but she does not make this explanation to Goodwood in the last chapter. In fact she offers him no clear explanation. While the ending of the narrative may baffle us, we must avoid the temptation of a prescriptive conclusion. The very absence of critical consensus about the ending suggests the debate that real life decisions inspire. Regardless of her decision and our reading of her decision, her action is clearly a matter of choice, with eyes wide open. With this gesture, Isabel moves from the
predetermined sensibility of romance to the autonomous mimesis of realistic fiction, from a world of essentialism and shame to one where actions are what we are judged by, and where actions may also redeem us.

Isabel acted initially as if in a romance, but now sees herself in a novel, where actions have consequences, where actions cannot always be taken to conquer any character dilemma. As Mitchell has suggested, the power to choose is also the power not to choose. If Goodwood pleads for a romantic cutting of the Gordian knot, for the kind of medieval world that Elias describes that did not temper expression and acted violently and passionately, James gives us instead a book of manners, with coded revelations that study alone can unravel. Isabel does not light out for the territory, because she feels a social duty to community, specifically Pansy, and to some measure still to marriage. "There was a very straight path" (489), James writes, but it's unlikely that after all these turns straightforwardness is anything more than wishful thinking on Isabel's part. The more difficult choice, however, increases the depth of Isabel's characterization, as James moves the narrative form away from its previous action-based center.

In so doing, the danger for characters is too much self-reflection, so that the individual is away from the community that might recalibrate the self, that the self no longer sees action as decisive or redemptive for self definition. If characters in romance are vulnerable to essentialism and thus to core essence failure leading to shame, then characters in realistic fiction must not
let the power to choose lull them into playing with the fork in the road
indefinitely, mindless of other travel, other social duties. Isabel must balance
her private musings, those that make her a mimetic character in a narrative
whose allegiance is to character over action, with the accompanying sense of
social accountability that goes with works set in a social world—no Natty
Bumppo retreating for her.

Affective mutedness does not lessen accountability to the world or a
need to affirm our place in it by communicating. As Osmond and Madame
Merle demonstrate, accountability to the conventions of the world does not
mean the smothering of imagination. Instead, Isabel moves her imagination
Copernicus-like from herself to revolving it around others, others who may
hate her but who as Ralph reminds her may also love her and so save her.
Notes

1. Criticism specifically on Henry James and shame is limited to Carol Holly's reading of family shame in the autobiographical writing of James. Holly makes a convincing case especially for the weight elder Henry had in his son's life, though she does not offer a full psychological model for shame. Instead, she concentrates on the notion of inherited shame and the ways that the younger Henry used his writings to process his family legacy. She does not address specifically any of James's fiction.

Relevant criticism addresses issues of choice and free will in The Portrait of a Lady. F.O Matthiessen notes that Isabel's impression of freedom is false, that the course of the novel illustrates her flawed perception. Her choices do allow her to understand suffering, which helps connect her to the social world and also suggests to Matthiessen the influence of Hawthorne. Like Hester Prynne, Isabel recognizes the important of renunciation and duty. While suggestive, Matthiessen does not devote his principle attention to these issues. Phillip Rahv argues that James's heroine fits a type seen in the author's other fiction, made to confront European experiences which challenge characters' American innocence. Isabel has an Emersonian belief in the self which permits her to triumph over European adversity. Rahv agrees with Matthiessen that Isabel's belief in freedom is undermined, though he sees her transcendental faith as something that is sustained in later James fiction. This Emersonian thread is discussed by Richard Poirier among others, who finds in Isabel's decision to reject Goodwood's offer a consistency, an adherence to her idealism, despite her increased knowledge of the world. Harold Bloom nods to Poirier, but sees the Emersonian quality through the lens of Whitman's autoeroticism: Isabel remains her own salvation. This judgment is similar to William Veeder's claim that freedom for Isabel comes through her isolation, since the novel ends without a scene of reunion with Osmond. This absence of presentation is consistent with James's presentation of negation throughout, according to Veeder. If he is right that Isabel's fear of freedom has led her to surrender to the black hole of Osmond, Veeder remains unclear about how a return to Rome constitutes any freedom for Isabel. Isabel's dilemma is complicated for Oscar Cargill by her unyielding pride, though he does not find room in his discussion to develop this observation. Cargill follows other critics in recognizing that Isabel has come to see the promise of liberty that Goodwood offers as untrustworthy. Goodwood offers Isabel a version of marriage akin to the Touchetts. Cargill agrees with Matthiessen: duty resonates for the mature Isabel, a lesson learned from experience. The return to Osmond means to William Stein a denial by Isabel of the physical world in favor of the abstract, sexless world of a marriage of appearances, while for Walter Allen the return is "inevitable" since it is consistent with the genesis of the narrative project for
James and consistent with Isabel's conception of herself. Donald Mull writes that Isabel returns to Osmond as consistent with her philosophy of deferring choices. She is afraid to exercise her sense of choice because choosing closes off certain paths. Returning to Rome is a "choice against choice," because of Osmond's studied refusal to "do" anything. Doing threatens Isabel since any judging and choosing necessarily imposes limits on the possibilities of the self. Richard Chase and Martha Collins address the issue of choice through form. Both see realism confronting romantic impulses; for Collins the point of view moves away from Ralph's and the narrator to Isabel's as she comes to represent the realistic sensibility of these two voices; for Chase, the narrative offers realism against Isabel's romantic impulses. Nina Baym sees this same romantic impulse as fooling Isabel in a different way: Isabel believes she can escape the weight of independence by marrying Osmond.

Most of these critics find themselves addressing the final decision that Isabel makes to return to Rome as culmination of their particular reading of her character throughout. Even when they differ on the quality of Isabel's renunciation and return, they cluster their attention around the issue of the individual defining herself relative to the social world and its institutions, just as my discussion measures the self to the internalization of societal standards versus private standards. If the critics sometimes remain frustrated by the uncertainty of the narrative's close, it is a backhanded compliment to their involvement with the text.

2. Elizabeth Allen argues that Pansy models the role of women for her stepmother. The woman as object is manifest in Madame Merle and Osmond's treatment of their daughter but also in the more upright Rosier's treatment of his beloved. Osmond's place outside of cultivating society lulls Isabel into believing that with him she may retain some freedom apart from the bonds of the institution of marriage. Like Pansy, Isabel is object, though she hopes that knowledge of her social role will make the chains less fettering. Isabel's resistance to Osmond comes into focus when Pansy is to be sold to the highest bidder. Although both recognize their plight, only Isabel can rise above it, finding a place for herself despite her situation. When she returns to Osmond, it is a refusal of the physical objectification that Goodwood offers for the sake of a social world which, though limited in choices, allows a measure of self-awareness.

Allen is right to see the parallel between Pansy and Isabel and in seeing Isabel as more capable of some measure of self-actualization after self-awareness. However, though she recognizes the moral blindness of Isabel, she underplays, I think, the degree to which Isabel discourages Pansy's own individual impulses. Nor does Allen explain in sufficient detail what kind of compromise existence a return to Rome would be for Isabel.
3. James does not permit as much excuse as Lambert Strether is granted in *The Ambassadors*, since there the third-person limited perspective is more perfectly adhered to. Nor does Strether as consciously flee from revelations as Isabel's "natural shirking from raiding curtains and looking into unlighted corners" (173). The revelation at the end of *The Ambassadors* surprises the reader, in contrast to the realization of Isabel's fate, which James makes available to us from the first. It is not clear that Strether has the option of seeing the truth about Chad and Madame de Vionnet before he does. If he remains ignorant throughout, it seems to be with less deliberateness than in the case of Isabel Archer.

4. Edwin Sill Fussell makes a delicate case for the role of Catholicism and Protestantism in James, careful not to insist on James's stand on the denominations in his own life and in his writings but suggesting the ways that James both represents Catholics and represents conversions, including in his major works *Roderick Hudson* and *The American*. Fussell argues that James is not necessarily systematic in his use of Catholic and Protestant imagery in his fiction, often including it only for the sake of local color and for metaphoric rather than strictly religious impact. In *The Portrait of a Lady*, James is more elusive, according to Fussell, so that even Osmond cannot certainly be seen as Catholic. Fussell does not dwell on Pansy, whose allegiance would seem more reasonably Catholic.
CHAPTER 4

RUNNING FROM SHAME: NATURALISM'S PLAN FOR CLYDE GRIFFITHS

In moving from Henry James to Theodore Dreiser, we meet a genre less flexible than James's psychological realism. However we define naturalism, finally its premises assume less character autonomy and choice than those available to Isabel Archer. Ellen Montgomery and Isabel Archer both fit the bildungsroman, though how their internalized social standards differ reflects the general shift from religious to secular beliefs in the nineteenth century. Dreiser's characters also ask how to live, though their unself-consciousness might frustrate James's readers. Ellen has learned to move from impulse to an external standard that devalues her will; she has learned to walk in step with the paternal figures in her world, with shame as chastening rod. Isabel has learned as well that individual will must come to terms with social context, introducing the more socially responsible concept of guilt. Clyde Griffiths grows far less certainly, searching for his bearings within a system he refuses to accept.
The system wins, as certainly as Magua's resistance to the settlers is overrun in Cooper, just as Ellen's will is broken, just as the institutional structure in James cannot be put off by Isabel. No genre permits the self to overthrow society; the issue is degrees of choice, increments of individual expression. The essentialism of romance predestines characters' fate; in such a system, the core essence failure of shame makes sense. Warner's domestic fiction model grants more room for self-actualization, although behavior is bound to serve domesticity—freedom to act comes with the understanding of limits. Isabel's freedom seems boundless, until she sees that choosing has consequences in the social world.

Dreiser's naturalism teases us with character differently from James. If we have moved in fictional narrative across the century towards increasing attention to character and psychological complexity, we hit a bump with naturalism. The evolving freedom to choose is withdrawn by Dreiser. The implications of choice are in fact larger here than elsewhere, involving greater stakes. Clyde's failures are terrible—but his shame is almost nonexistent.

Why isn't there more overt shame in Dreiser despite obvious shame situations? Because shame involves seeing a violation of an internalized standard, not just the violation itself. The absence of shame is rooted in character recognition but also in Dreiser's focus. Rather than offering the internal psyche of his characters, Dreiser shows the naturalist forces that determine action. Instead of lingering on the individual, Dreiser pulls back to
show the larger social forces beyond character's control. We do not read for surprises of plot, since inevitability drives naturalist texts. Sooner or later, the weight of environmental forces will fall. Why then show the potential shame situations at all? To mark the absence of choice, made more manifest when characters press to extend the range of allowable human behavior. Absence of choice suggests as well why guilt does not result: guilt assumes the possibility of correcting our mistakes, cultivating our character in ways apparently at odds with a vision of individuals prey to external forces and temperament, consistent with Lee Clark Mitchell's discussion of repetition.

In addition to showing macro forces at work, Dreiser follows most naturalists in focusing on particularly unreflective characters. Clyde, for all his physical charm, lacks the awareness of Isabel Archer, who comes eventually to understand her failure. If shame requires such vision, we can see why shame situations do not yield much shame in An American Tragedy—characters lack the understanding to take responsibility for their actions. While a character might proclaim freedom of choice and act with the illusion of autonomy, Dreiser prefers the reader steered on the author's didactic naturalist course: choice in naturalism is a delusion. Likewise, these characters do not grow, they simply move, repeating the same mistakes.

Dreiser presents a narrative designed to allow for individual accountability, to offer situations in which, by better understanding their failures, characters might come to some communal recognition. Yet
recognition almost never happens. Here is a text whose absence of shame and guilt points to a central truth about naturalism, whether by design or by execution: without accountability for choice, characters remain without the markers of contrition.

Without consensual belief systems, issues of shame and guilt fail to affirm even a limited sense of community. Read this way, shame and guilt are morally responsive when they are socially responsive. Bernard Williams notes four factors upon which morality depends: primacy of guilt over shame; the overcoming of narcissism; moral autonomy; and voluntary action.

Naturalism seeks to overthrow at least the last two of these tenets. Each choice situation in this narrative, then, challenges its agent to overcome the narcissism of shame, to act as if they have an autonomous voluntary choice, and to accept the consequences of wrong action to some other potentially offended other, all in the face of an operating system that questions the plausibility of choice and thereby a binding social morality.

While the characters within the fiction may not have any clear sense of the naturalist agenda, they nonetheless by their actions can practice the philosophy of their creator. And so Clyde faces choosing situations by refusing consistently a larger accountability, more and more seeing himself as Dreiser does: a victim without free will, accordingly incapable of establishing a plausible communal connection to others. Clyde seems to insist on this excuse, even while the institutional structures of the narrative equally insist
that, even if justified by local conventions and not universal morality, guilt is the acceptable response to transgression.

My discussion of Dreiser will examine shame situations and explain why a shame based in social accountability—i.e., guilt—does not usually result, paying special attention to Clyde's increasingly isolated belief system and the degree to which he refuses accountability for these choosing situations, reinforced by Dreiser's naturalist agenda. Does the absence of choice necessarily overthrow social accountability, rendering suspect the social response of guilt? What are the limits of responsibility in a world without consensual belief systems? Does the nonuniversality of belief systems render them nonbinding?

After a review of Dreiser's naturalism and a brief philosophical consideration of the implications of determinism, I will discuss the action of Book One, with emphasis on Clyde's uncertain movement towards a secular belief system, as he flirts with choices which might bring empathy and social accountability. My discussion of Book Two concentrates on how isolation breeds internal standards out of alignment with larger consensual belief systems. I also argue that Clyde's nonaction, while reinforcing Dreiser's philosophy of naturalism, amounts to both a displacement and refusal of responsibilities beyond himself. The third section of the chapter begins with Konrad Lorenz, who glosses Darwinian aggression, suggesting animal rituals used to avoid shunning or killing transgressors, thus maintaining group
cohesion. I next consider social versus philosophical free will, paying special attention to the way that legal institutions enforce not universal morality but social accountability. I end by using John Braithwaite's reintegrative shame model to suggest a movement away from the narcissism of shame towards the social response of guilt, confession, and accountability, a movement consistent with Pizer's vision of Dreiser's optimistic naturalism.

Before addressing *An American Tragedy*, I want to discuss Dreiser's naturalism, since this genre choice helps determine the narrative's character possibilities. Although Lars Ahnebrink sees Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* as the coming of age of naturalism, his study of the origins of naturalism and its European roots does not dwell on Dreiser. Sparked by the Civil War, European immigration, and Darwinism, American naturalism still retained its optimism about progress into the 1870s and 1880s, yielding late to a rougher representation, influenced by newly available translations by writers such as Zola (*Le Roman experimental* in 1894) and Tolstoy.

In addition to drawing on scientific pretensions—the facts unadorned—French naturalists drew models from the lower classes, emphasizing bestial temperaments and the absence of higher ethics. These writers then created types rather than full psychological characters, whose animal impulses reinforced the irrelevance of ethical responsibility for their actions. Instead naturalists detailed the external environment—the
businesses, factories, and sordid setting of their characters—which rendered individual impulses insignificant.

Despite appearances, American naturalists such as Garland and Norris saw some optimism and possibility of progress. Richard Lehan agrees with Ahnebrink, since Darwinism, filtered through Herbert Spencer, perpetuates a progressive vision of humanity. Charles Walcutt sees superior human agency in Frank Cowperwood, the central figure in Dreiser's The Titan and The Financier. While Clyde offers no such strength, the social reform implicit in An American Tragedy suggests a belief in correcting social ills, born of Dreiser's socialism period.

Expanding the space for optimism, Donald Pizer adds that the lower-class characters of Dreiser's fiction have heroic qualities, manifesting "the extraordinary and excessive in human nature" (Realism and Naturalism 11), as they seek to make meaning from the uncomfortable truths of late nineteenth-century life. Imagination invests these characters with both loft and emotional and morally ambiguous depth.

Pizer notes also that naturalism combines mechanistic determinism with a specific temperament. The drama results from the chemistry of temperament--"eager, sensitive, emotional, yet weak and directionless"—mixed with social setting and opportunity, which direct the character's energy and supplies it with an operative ethic (57). Self-actualization remains, however, only partially realized, embodied in Carrie Meeber in her rocking
chair, moving without progressing. Nonetheless, resistance to external forces reconfigures human value, according to Pizer, while leading naturalism to discard outmoded beliefs such as romantic love or moral accountability (29).

Action is greater than character in naturalism, Pizer and Ahnebrink argue, because determinism's thematic point is buried otherwise. Dreiser, for instance, moves beyond foregrounded simplistic characteristics to spotlight the background of Clyde's will and explore its constituents. Allegiance other than to character helps explain the frustration of character-centered critics like Robert Shafer and Stuart Sherman, who doubt Dreiser's fiction can generate meaningful depth guided by mechanistic naturalism.

While Sherman and Shafer may show old guard resistance to the premises of naturalism, their thrust remains: does naturalism by design or execution prevent the character complications of realistic fiction? And while Walcutt argues that Dreiser's determinism presents characters first, only afterwards inserting deterministic forces, he may be wrong.

Lee Clark Mitchell agrees with Alfred Kazin that naturalism undercuts realism's moral vision. Naturalists overturn responsibility, fragment plot progression—echoing Stephen Jay Gould's version of Darwinism—and topple notions of a stable self operating in a linear world. If realists find confirmation in character deliberation and decision making, naturalists face this same fork in the road and hold it aloft. Mitchell argues that naturalists choose style to

151
linger on these forks, either through repeated scenes, repetitive language, convoluted syntax, or character doublings.

By contrast, realism reads differences in repetition as signalling a progression born of free will, liberating the self from a world that determinism sees as precluding any such separation. Both Pizer and Mitchell, then, excuse the stylistic awkwardness and plot repetitions of Dreiser by finding in them a philosophical purpose.

Any attempt to apply naturalism to Dreiser must yield to his actual writings. Whatever their differences, critics on Dreiser would agree that his naturalism is deterministic. I will grant further some American optimism in Dreiser's naturalism, though the apparent contradiction between determinism and character progress remains unresolved. Determinism would seem to undercut character progress, specifically in the case of shame and guilt, the possibility of learning from one's mistakes rather than repeating them.

If the kernel of Dreiser's naturalism is determinism, what impact does determinism have on moral responsibility, guilt and shame, and character progress? In The Implications of Determinism, philosopher Roy Weatherford notes that the apparent incompatibility between determinism and free will depends on how we define the necessary components of moral responsibility. Weatherford first separates free will from responsibility, since the first concerns metaphysics and the second concerns morality. While soft
determinists have argued the compatibility of determinism and free will, Weatherford thinks it absurd to believe humans somehow curiously apart from the forces of the natural world. He nonetheless usefully asks whether our sense of freedom of choice is dependent upon determinism, for can we not operate with the illusion of choice even within determinism?

Although Weatherford argues against the coexistence of free will and determinism, he allows room for the coexistence of responsibility and determinism. Even within determinism, we can impose sanctions, since punishment springs less from genuine responsibility and more from consequences. Personal accountability retreats in such a system of punishment, since good and bad fortune can couple with a careless act to spawn either disastrous consequences or none. Weatherford believes a moral responsibility independent of free will requires only a recognition of its functional social good. We follow moral codes not for philosophical consistency but for pragmatic social interaction. Their functional utility trumps any need to justify them philosophically with determinism.

It's an odd movement, with Weatherford decreeing a pragmatism apart from philosophy, reading morality as essentially human etiquette. This judgment confirms shame and guilt not as issues of morality but rather as social issues involving exclusion and inclusion.

By his logic, determinism would not absolve naturalist characters from responsibility, though redefining allows space for it relative to determinism.
To repeat: determinism takes away free will but not responsibility, because free will turns on metaphysics and responsibility on manners. Free will yields to determinism because the concept is not moldable to human manipulation—we either are or are not free. But we make our own kettle of responsibility.

While philosophers and naturalists may differ in their focus, Dreiser does seem to spotlight the philosophical implication of determinism by foregrounding his philosophy repeatedly in the narrative and by showing characters lost in the face of overwhelming social structures.

Yet Dreiser’s philosophy plays itself out in the social world of his novels. On such a playing field, wins and losses are actual rather than theoretical, with punishment assessed by experiential consequence. Both Mitchell and Weatherford situates their argument about punishment on wrong consequence rather than intentionality. Dreiser keeps us on this issue, the turning point for Hurstwood in *Sister Carrie* as well as for Clyde. The punishment does not fit the crime because naturalism overturns cause and effect accountability. The consequences remain regardless: Roberta is dead; the money that Hurstwood considered stealing is in his hands and the safe locked. Actions have consequences here, but these consequences are not so clear as the pain that follows a hand on the burner. The illusion of causality is presented by Dreiser to force us to recognize that at that most awful instant when we consider something as severe as murder, the choice is not necessarily ours to make; it is not in our hands.
Nonetheless, Dreiser insists on a consciousness about accountability. Why else write about the greatest human transgression? Foregrounding guilt and shame, Dreiser even devotes a third of the narrative to the legal and religious review of Clyde's guilt—then apparently refuses it, for in allowing it, he would be allowing choice.

Of course characters may still delusionally feel guilt and shame—it is not after all confirmation of accountability but rather a feeling of accountability. Might not Dreiser show characters consistently wrestling with guilt and shame, as perhaps a Russian novelist would? The truth is, inside the world of fiction, characters may exercise apparent free will relentlessly.

Weatherford would argue that this apparent free will serves a social function, which is justification enough. Any character insisting on the social application of the philosophical implausibility of free will cannot fail to transgress social boundaries. On one level, An American Tragedy is about these wrong choices, but finally choice itself is deserted. Dreiser's naturalism refuses the logic of choice, but he situates his characters in a social world where a functional reliance on the consequences of choice is paramount. The philosophical must wrestle with the social. For Clyde, coming to terms with his choices means recognizing shame situations then surrender his impulse to retreat inward in favor of a socially responsible model of guilt. It's a recognition that never happens for him, although Dreiser holds out some picture of it for others in the narrative.
As the novel begins, Clyde Griffiths is twelve, as Dreiser moves him from boy to man. The boy must yield to instruction; the man makes, apparently, his own choices. His awkward age is compounded by a family temperamentally different from himself. The Griffiths’s street preaching contrasts to the secular pedestrians whom they canvas daily, a difference felt keenly by Clyde. "The boy move restlessly from one foot to the other, keeping his eyes down, and for the most part only half singing" (17)—he seems ashamed, unwilling to make eye contact. Clyde "appeared indeed to resent and even to suffer from the position in which he found himself," Dreiser adds, since he is "plainly pagan rather than religious."

Such a position accords with his response to passersby. Clyde worries about their reaction because his sensibilities resemble theirs more than his parents. Dreiser prepares us for Clyde’s break from this world, directing us to see his parents as ineffectual from the beginning, especially the father, who remains offpage for the duration. Religious faith cannot solve their material deficits, an observation that Dreiser permits Clyde to make and which he reenforces by not establishing any narrative distance from Clyde’s judgment.

Dreiser makes clear Clyde’s deep embarrassment at being grouped with the saints rather than the sinners, as Miriam Gogol notes as well:

To-night, walking up the great street with his sisters and brother, he wished that they need not do this any more, or at least that he need not be a part of it. Other boys did not do such things, and besides,
somehow it seemed shabby and even degrading. On more than one occasion, before he had been taken on the street in this fashion, other boys had called to him and made fun of his father, because he was always publicly emphasizing his religious beliefs or convictions . . . It was that old mass yearning for a likeness in all things that troubled them, and him . . . On this night in this great street with its cars and crowds and tall buildings, he felt ashamed, dragged out of normal life, to be made a show and jest of. (18)

If Clyde has internalized a shame model, it seems thoroughly secular. While Dreiser sees the reaction as part of the mob mentality of youth, he does not show any resistance from Clyde, any religious pull in him. Clyde prefers the working world around him and judges his parents most for their failure against that world's primal value, economics. Clyde's leanings echo Pizer's model of naturalism as temperament molded by environment.

The vignette fronts the narrative, and a similar one closes it, again showing the family preaching on the street with one little boy, Esta's son, now in Clyde's shoes. For Dreiser, the cycle is clear, the deterministic forces eternal: one dies, another little baby child is born in the ghetto. Neither chooses his situation, both are determined by it. By the time we reach the second bookend, we should understand that each choosing situation an individual ponders is a fraud. So too are the narrative progressions and character development of realism. We move but without progress, Carrie's
rocking chair confirming the forces at work on us. The tick-tock of cause and effect which permits a responsible social fabric is broken. Repetition is central to Mitchell's argument in Determined Fictions: tick-tick means character stasis and naturalism—and no accountability. Mitchell sees it largely in terms of style, accounting for Dreiser's verbosity thematically, but the rhythms of plot admit to the same critique.

The text skips three years in chapter two, with a fuller sketch of Clyde at 15, isolated not just by his parents but by his "vain and proud" character: "He was one of those interesting individuals who looked upon himself as a thing apart—never quite wholly and indissolubly merged with the family of which he was a member, and never with any profound obligations to those who had been responsible for his coming into the world" (27)—seemingly more capable of choice independent of his known social circle. Fleeing responsibility means losing his family, who appear so unlike him. Dreiser shows the vanity in believing oneself capable of escaping naturalistic forces, while perhaps inadvertently making space for responsibility in this world, regardless of our inability to choose.

Recognition and initiative are given to Clyde, Dreiser explains, in contrast to his sister Esta, undone by an unwanted pregnancy. "She had neither Clyde's force, nor, on the other hand, his resistance," (29) Dreiser writes, though whether Clyde's resistance will aid or ill serve his incorporation remains uncertain initially. This resistance or self-initiative is noticeably
absent in Clyde’s parents as well, especially when faith is tested by misfortune. Religion offers uncertain support in this secular world, as Dreiser shows with Esta’s shaky belief system:

the necessity of thought had been obviated by advice and law, or ‘revealed’ truth, and so long as other theories or situations and impulses of an external or even internal character did not arise to clash with these, she was safe enough. Once they did, however, it was a foregone conclusion that her religious notions, not being grounded on any conviction or temperamental bias of her own, were not likely to withstand the shock. (29)

Nor are her parents better off, since their faith does not seem to shield them from the darker experiences:

For in some blind, dualistic way both she and Asa insisted, as do all religionists, in disassociating God from harm and error and misery, while granting Him nevertheless supreme control. They would seek for something else...and find it eventually in the error and perverseness of the human heart, which God has made, yet which He does not control, because He does not want to control it. (32)

Clyde’s pragmatic faith begs a proactive response to crisis, to take control, to choose. Dreiser and Clyde both seem to regard passiveness as useless against trouble, evident in Esta but also in her father: "During all this,
he had stood foolishly to one side—short, gray, frizzled, inadequate" (35), Dreiser writes, employing indirect discourse for Clyde's thoughts.

We may be lulled into thinking Clyde born for better things than his family. We would be wrong. More savvy than his sister and parents, able to escape in ways Esta cannot, Clyde still cannot think himself to free will. He may be brought to ponder, but the deliberating only exposes the fiction of choosing. Issues of right and wrong choice do not apply. Dreiser's choice situations only undercut the autonomy of choosing.

While Clyde shows some affective control at the Green-Davidson hotel, he remains ill equipped for more complicated choosing situations. While a dreamer of bigger worlds, Clyde has too little range to grasp the temptations Mr. Squires the hotel manager describes: "it was the further thing from his thoughts and temperament to dream of any such high crimes and misdemeanors as [Mr. Squires] had outlined" (46). One cannot do what one cannot imagine. The imagining will come later.

After the first chapter, Clyde shows little outward shame or embarrassment in Book One, because he is still learning the standards against which to judge himself. For now, he simply receives eagerly the stimulation which best stirs his temperament, measured against however much of his parents' standards he still retains.

The choices are uncertain here, tentative. Where is the shame here? Something milder is at work, peer modeling from Clyde's subculture. Boys
ought to be pagan, thinks Clyde. So he feels silly shilling the gospel on the street. Later, boys ought to be expert lovers and drinkers. So Clyde strives to become both. By subscribing to these standards, Clyde moves towards inclusion in this secular world. The process challenges the residual values of his upbringing, values which prevent the recognition of motivations by others such as Hortense.

When does Clyde feel even remotely the discomfort of shame or embarrassment? When those two sets of values collide, as when choosing to provide for his pregnant sister or his covetous girlfriend. Even in the face of his sister's dire situation, Clyde remains curiously remote. Although Dreiser writes that he feels some shame for Esta's pregnancy, Clyde evidences neither sympathy nor empathy; he has a hard time engaging himself with his sister and his family once he has been shown the secular world.

Clyde does worry about failing the secular model he admires, but only a little. While he may be a novice, he believes he can eventually master his fellow bellhops' occupational and recreational skills. He may feel like a "boob" (88) because he cannot dance, but he gives it a whirl anyway. And so he apes the drinking of Ratterer, after fretting for a paragraph about the horrors of drink and the horrors of social exclusion. His surface understanding is revealed by the poverty of choice he sees:

What would they think of him if he didn’t drink something? For ever since he had been among them, he had been trying to appear as much
of a man of the world as they were. And yet back of him, as he could plainly feel, lay all the years in which he had been drilled in the 'horrors' of drink and evil companionship. And even though in his heart this long while he had secretly rebelled against nearly all the texts and maxims to which his parents were always alluding, deeply resenting really as worthless and pointless the ragamuffin crew of wasters and failures whom they were always seeking to save, still, now he was inclined to think and hesitate. Should he or should he not drink? (71-72)

Despite appearances, Clyde sees the challenge his broader range of secular experiences poses to his more narrow upbringing. Immediately after visiting a brothel, he wonders about his action:

In spite of all that deep and urgent curiosity and desire that had eventually led him to that place and caused him to yield, still, because of the moral precepts with which he had so long been familiar, and also because of the nervous esthetic inhibitions which were characteristic of him, he could not but look back upon all this as decidedly degrading and sinful. His parents were probably right when they preached that this was all low and shameful. And yet this whole adventure and the world in which it was laid, once it was all over, was lit with a kind of gross, pagan beauty or vulgar charm for him. (82)
A twinge of concern, but not fully the pang of regret, for he immediately plans to find a "pagan girl" to satisfy his ongoing needs. Note that Clyde is declaring not that he feels shame, but that his parents would judge what he does as shameful, another indicator of leaving their value system. As with his sister, this biological impulse will eventually undo him. For now, he is allowed the illusion of deliberation and crude choice, setting up Book Two:

For the first time in his life now, he found himself confronted by a choice as to his desire for the more accurate knowledge of the one great fascinating mystery that had for so long confronted and fascinated and baffled and yet frightened him a little. (72)

"He began to sense the delight of personal freedom—to sniff the air of personal and delicious romance—and he was not to be held back by any suggestion which his mother could now make" (67), but one can only do what one can conceive. The choice issues in Book One are minor relative to what comes later: what to drink, whether to buy the coat for Hortense, whether to visit the brothel, whether to dance. Clyde sees two choices, representative of the two value systems he knows. While he leans towards the "rather open and unashamed" liberal world of Hortense Briggs, he cannot shake his parents': "And they expected him to share in revels such as these, maybe. It could not be. He was not that sort of person. What would his mother and father think if they were to hear of such dreadful things?" (76). Caught in a color world, Clyde sees largely still in black and white binaries.
Aptly, while giving some money to his mother, he is blind to Esta's predicament. When they met in the city, their exchange is remote: "His glance was quizzical, curious, imperative. She, for her part, felt recessive and thence evasive—uncertain quite what to think or say or tell" (109). Her condition makes him "a little sick and resentful" (109), and while he feels "intensely sorry for her at the moment" (110), little connection between brother and sister is evident. While her mother is ashamed of and concerned for Esta, Clyde "was not inclined to be too unsympathetic in that respect toward her, far from it" (111), a curious negative construction. And while lying to her about money makes him shamefaced, he does not sacrifice the money reserved for Hortense's coat.

Esta's situation is one of two tragedies in Book One, neither of which provoke from Clyde any sense of social accountability. If he responds to his sister, it is with modest shame, which turns his response inward. He cannot summon sympathy, which see the suffering other. This failure goes hand in hand with his binary vision of choice making. Although not legally responsible for either misfortune, his failure to respond empathetically signals an isolationism that will later haunt him: "And yet his mother looked so lone and so resourceless. It was shameful. He was low, really mean. Might he not, later, be punished for a thing like this?" (135). While Clyde calls his response shameful, it's hard to sense any genuineness. Instead, Dreiser seems to
mean that Clyde understands that he should feel shame rather than that Clyde actually does feel shame.

The other tragedy, perhaps the only tragedy, closes Book One, the car accident that kills the girl. Whatever collective the hotel employees had mustered on the ice or at the bar vanishes in the fear of consequence. The collective lack of empathy springs from a lack of communal accountability, seen earlier in the skaters on the ice scattering and falling away from each other. This crowd had already announced itself as socially suspect when only Clyde and Sparser suffer any "qualms" about borrowing the car. Hortense is representative: she cares only about milking Clyde for her desired coat. When the car crashes, she flees, wanting only "to reach her own home as speedily as possible in order that she might do something for herself" (159). The bystander who arrives is shocked at their brazen fleeing of the scene; his is the adult world of accountability that these adolescents resist.

Stay or go: the world retreats to two choices for each of the car's occupants. Staying accepts a social accountability. Going retreats from transgressive experience, a classic shame response. Clyde follows his cohorts: "And now, Clyde, as suddenly sensing what capture would mean--how all his fine thoughts of pleasures would most certainly end in disgrace and probably prison, began running also" (160) from a social responsibility that Dreiser's deterministic naturalism would seem to exclude.
Book One ends with disaster for Clyde, though the measure of his accountability here is at least arguable—he is occupant, not driver, and though the girl's death resulted from carelessness, it does not involve malice. As Weatherford and Mitchell note above, consequence matters more than intent, however, a point driven home with the trial in Book Three. Clyde has lived in a world without serious consequence prior to this accident. It's part of the reason he is remote from Esta—he hasn't got the experience to understand her predicament. Any sense of failure of standards has generally been accompanied with an adherence to another newer standard, one, he might argue, that he will have to master anyway in the secular world. Clyde has not been shameless—Hortense is far beyond him in that respect—because he still recognizes allegiances beyond himself, whether or not he eventually deserts his family and their values.

Clyde's dilemmas in Book One have been a boy's rather than a man's, his choice situations largely cartoonish—until the car fatality. Dreiser's naturalism tends to present crude choices anyway, to underscore better the illusion of choice in a deterministic universe. Running away may be a bad choice, but to a boy without a spectroscope and without a reliable peer group operating in a naturalist world it may seem the only one.
"[H]e was struck by the thought (what devil's whisper? -- what evil hint of an evil spirit?) . . . He was not that kind of a person, whatever else he was. He was not. He was not." (478)

If Clyde had a reason for guilt or shame at the close of Book One, he has a far greater cause at the close of Book Two. Roberta has drowned, and he is arguably responsible for her death. Does he recognize this accountability? Dreiser insists that this apparent choice is no choice at all, given Clyde's situation and temperament--even the choice situation is undercut by Dreiser, since the compulsion to act, to push Roberta overboard and so drown her, does not lead to action. Yet Clyde deliberates infinitives: to choose, to choose, and by so doing to act rather than to drift in his fate. If he is not ready to accept responsibility for his actions regarding Roberta, he does at least desire some choosing of his fate.

Separating his essence from any particular action offers Clyde a way out. If his actions spring from some other well, then his is not poisoned from within. When they clash with his vision of himself, he locates their agency outside himself rather than within: the "devil's whisper" sings in a voice Clyde need not call his own. That voice remains Dreiser's, denying choice, free will, responsibility. Were Clyde telling his own tale, he would at this moment
welcome the reprieve: no, it was not him; "he had not really killed her. No, no. Thank God for that. He had not. And yet . . . had he? (532). After laboring to align his actions and belief system with his social world, after climbing the socioeconomic ladder, Clyde once more flees consequentiality. Brought to the brink of socialization in a world he longs to be a part of, Clyde runs from those markers that would confirm his place in the adult world of cause and effect and social accountability. Brought to this supreme shame situation, Clyde cannot admit to choosing, cannot admit his transgression, and so cannot keep his place in society.

The signal choice situation closes Book Two, but the way is paved by the accumulation of situations that begin when he meets his uncle in Chicago three years after his departure from Kansas City. Dreiser sets up Clyde from the first, both creating opportunity and suggesting his character's limitations. Meanwhile, Clyde grows into his value systems. Now removed from direct family contact, he communicates with his mother only by letter. She urges him to contact his uncle, who heads the New York branch of the family.

We read this letter after the events have already come to pass, for Book Two begins in Lycurgus, where Samuel Griffiths tells his family that Clyde will work at the family factory. The presentation undercuts the drama of their meeting in Chicago; the choice has already been made. Does Clyde dare talk to his uncle when he meets him by chance at a hotel? Dreiser does not want us to ask such a question.
By placing three years between the hit and run in Kansas City and Clyde in Chicago, Dreiser deprives us of watching Clyde’s fresh squirms of regret. While Clyde does ask his mother for forgiveness, it’s in letter form months after the fact. He explains that he "didn’t do anything wrong that time, myself" (182), though, still cautious, he leaves the letter unsigned. Nor does his mother hold him entirely accountable, knowing "how the devil tempts and pursues all of us mortals" (183). She urges her son to keep the conscience instilled by her earlier religious teachings.

We have already read that Samuel Griffiths has found the more mature Clyde "well-mannered" (176), after Dreiser shows that manners in Lycurgus matter. The model for Clyde is his doppelganger, his cousin Gilbert, whom Dreiser paints with advantageous circumstances, a visual twin raised by different environmental fates. Apart from their different economic status, Gilbert Griffiths is unlike his cousin "Always conscious of the dignity and social standing of his family in this community, [and] he regulated his action and speech accordingly" (169).

Clyde too has now "developed a kind of self-reliance and smoothness of address such as one would scarcely have credited him with three years before ...[and] a kind of conscious gentility of manner" (179), which prepare him for the social challenge of Lycurgus and its value system, whose forms he has begun to learn. The chapter ends, however, with this assessment:
For to say the truth, Clyde had a soul that was not destined to grow up. He lacked decidedly that mental clarity and inner directing application that in so many permits them to sort out from the facts and avenues of life the particular thing or things that make for their direct advancement.

(189)

Beyond the generic denial of choice, Clyde's myopia renders him unaccountable, for good or ill fortune. Any success comes by chance. Book One has shown his limited understanding of choice. Once again, he is passenger, not driver.

Given this undercutting of choice, where is there room for feelings of transgression? Again, transgression—or pride—may be felt regardless of any actual responsibility. Clyde for his part has a greater confidence about his ability to affect his own fate, however misguided. He can now at least articulate his situation, walking the streets of this factory town: "Oh, the devil—who was he anyway? And what did he really amount to? What could he hope for from such a great world as this really, once they knew why he had troubled to come here?" (210). This questioning persists in Book Two as Clyde creates an external questioning judge in the absence of a material reliable counsel. He articulates a fear that his will remains insufficient for changing the world, since after all nepotism has brought him to New York. How can he show pride when his success lies utterly at the mercy of his
familial benefactors whether he works or not? The fate that has helped his cousin now offers to dance with Clyde.

Assessing his situation, Clyde projects an external voice for conversation, because the urban novice has no actual company. As Helen Lynd and others argue, isolation can breed shame, by permitting a burgeoning self-conceit that may boomerang. Book Two shows the increasing isolation and codependence of Clyde and Roberta, encouraged because they sense no alternative—their romance violates company rules and must be kept secret. Accepting their action as wrong, even before the pregnancy, both nurture their fear of exposure. Neither is given the release of open conversation, as Dreiser records little direct talk between them.

By talking primarily with himself, Clyde risks splitting into the offending self and judging other. Gershen Kaufman notes that vulnerability to shame comes when the self admits the other, establishing an interpersonal relationship. One escapes an interpersonal rupture by avoiding internalizing the shame and avoiding splitting or disowning parts of the self. Dreiser names this externalized judge that confirms Clyde's split self: "the Giant Efrit that had previously materialized in the silent halls of his brain, was once more here at his elbow—that he himself, cold and numb and fearsome, was being talked through—not actually taking himself" (509). This same devil has whispered to him before, when Clyde first imagines a scheme for Roberta. Chapter 46 manifests this splitting on the page, with parenthetical italicized
paragraphs showing Clyde dialoging with himself while moving closer to executing his plan with Roberta, his silent partner on the train to Utica.

While this displacement denies responsibility, without an actual external other, it does not allow absolution. While Roberta may need such forgiveness, Clyde acknowledges no wrongdoing, beyond a fleeting pause as he watches Roberta drown. His isolation does not induce shame, but it does lead to social transgression. Without an actual judging other, Clyde yields to a projected judging other whose value system violates the external social world. Morrison among others warns of the dangers of such narcissism. With a value system at odds with the outside world, one risks being shunned from the community as shameless: that which causes a sense of failure in the sense does not correspond to the social standard of the community beyond the self.

While Clyde does not show shame, he does show its corollary, hubris: he decides whether someone lives or dies. Certainly he follows Donald Capps's description of narcissism: absence of empathy, fantasies of unreal goals, emotional shallowness, anger and resentment, exploitation and manipulation in relationships, and lack of enthusiasm. The other exists for such people as mere sounding boards. And so Roberta becomes "an almost nebulous figure" (523); "she had faded to a shadow or thoughts really, a form of illusion more vaporous than real" (528). Shame evolves to check narcissistic impulses, although Michael Lewis notes that it leads to a
shame/hubris cycle often impervious to reasoned self-assessment. Faced with the loss of hubris, the shamed self often retreats, a response characteristic of Clyde. Such retreat can spare disaster. Clyde lives to fight another day after the Kansas City accident, after all. Here, despite the failure to follow through on his aberrant plans, disaster finds Clyde.

This reading fits Clyde imperfectly, since he lacks the presence of classic narcissism; he does not dare enough to disturb the universe. The limitations of Dreiser's characters fit the profile of naturalism, where broad sketches put in bold relief philosophical determinism: see, we're all stumbling about like Crane's Maggie; any proactive gesture is myopic. Still, the stumbling smarts, however dimly aware we are.

The disaster in Book Two is fed by an increasingly fuzzy perspective. Facing repeated complex situations, Clyde freezes in the headlights of choice. His will alone cannot stop the clock ticking in Roberta. As the pregnancy continues, Clyde delays taking any practical steps, mired in a lethargy based more than anything else on the ever-haunting fear of inability to cope with this situation as well as the certainty of social exposure in case he did not which caused him, instead of struggling all the more desperately, to defer further immediate action. (442)

Nor is Dreiser unsympathetic, noting as the clock ticks that Clyde has become
befuddled to the extent that for the time being at least unreason or disorder and mistaken or erroneous counsel would appear to hold against all else. In such instances the will and the courage confronted by some great difficulty which it can neither master nor endure, appears in some to recede in precipitate flight, leaving only panic and temporary unreason in its wake. (500)

Facing this uncertainty, the self retreats inward, to avoid disclosure. Shame prevents exposure, but as Leon Wurmser notes, it can indicate an unwillingness to look, a doubling seen in the "peekaboo" developmental stage in children. It is a manifestation of an immature assessment of external reality: because I do not see you, you do not exist. The buried hope of Clyde is that delaying a response to the pregnancy can prevent nature's course: he fantasizes narcissistically that because he has not acted on this crisis, time and the world of cause and effect are arrested, pending his next step. If he does not look squarely at the problem, it cannot hurt him. If he does not admit to the evil of the solution, he cannot be swayed by it:

Never once did he honestly, or to put it more accurately, forthrightly and courageously or coldly face the thought of committing so grim a crime. On the contrary, the nearer he approached a final resolution or the need for one in connection with all this, the more hideous and terrible seemed the idea—hideous and difficult, and hence the more improbable it seemed that he should ever commit it. (505)
A form of narcissistic thinking, this desire to prevent self-exposure has as its corollary a paranoia that assumes that the world is focused on one's own actions. At various points, Clyde is susceptible to both, as when he thinks that the people he encounters on the way to Big Bittern lake can tell what plans he has in his head: "(Why was that old man in that old brown winter suit and hat and carrying that bird cage in a brown paper looking at him so? Could he sense anything?)" (512), he wonders in his fragmented comments in at the station platform on the way to Utica.

Despite his self-involvement, Clyde does imagine a party to which he feels some accountability: Sondra Finchley, who represents with the Griffiths the only belief system in Book Two that provokes affectively shame or embarrassment. On his journey to Big Bittern, Clyde fears disclosure only before her upper class world. When he first comes to his benefactors' home, Clyde's affect responses suggest that above all he wants to belong to this value system. Their social response to his presence in Lycurgus has encouraged his isolation: "And so for all of five weeks before any action of any kind was taken, and with Gilbert Griffiths comforted nearby, Clyde was allowed to drift along in his basement world wondering what was being intended in connection with himself" (231). When they finally ask him to dinner, Clyde is "troubled and embarrassed" by their questioning about his past. He "blushed deeply, bethinking himself of the incident of the stolen car and of how little real schooling he had had" (242). Later, promoted at the
factory by a cool, condescending Gilbert, Clyde is flustered and "so nervous he almost stuttered[,] . . . flushing slightly and feeling down deep within himself a keen resentment at the same time that he achieved a half-ingratiating and half-apologetic smile"; "His cheeks were now highly colored" (252).

Sondra's appearance magnifies his reaction: "Clyde, oversensitive to just such airs and material distinctions, was fairly tremulous with a sense of his own inadequacy, as he waited to be introduced" (243). Similarly when Mrs. Griffiths mentions his upbringing to Sondra, "Clyde flushed, since obviously this was notice to him that his social position here was decidedly below that of the Griffiths or these girls" (245).

Confirmation of Clyde's internalization of this standard comes in the steps he takes to insure inclusion in his new social world. Piers and Singer see abandonment as a primary threat in shame anxiety, a threat Clyde feels keenly as he considers telling Sondra about his situation with Roberta:

He would never dare to speak to her of even so much as a phase of the black barrier that now lay between them. For, with her training, the standards of love and marriage that had been set for her, she would never understand, never be willing to make so great a sacrifice for love, as much as she loved him. And he would be left, abandoned on the instant, and with what horror in her eyes! (483)

By withholding the truth, Clyde plays to shame's isolation. By projecting a judging other who threatens abandonment, he creates a standard
more severe than an actual external judging other would be. By forestalling
the confrontation scene with an absolute self-judgment ("never understand,
never be willing"), he locks himself away from the release of confession and
absolution. Clyde follows his impulse towards isolation, retreating, rather than
towards mending and disclosure and incorporation.

Dreiser does not present Clyde as openly shamed; such self-
awareness eludes the central character. Still, Clyde clearly creates a judging
other, whom he does not test by actual application. He also suffers from
narcissistic delusions (unacknowledged shame and self-generated isolation)
and disassociates himself from his destructive impulses, in the form of the
projected devil and the Efrit, encouraging a fracturing of the self associated
with shame.

Even when Clyde enlarges his circle to include Roberta, he does not
leave behind the risk of isolation. Prior to Roberta, Clyde has mostly abided
by the employee code of the factory. While largely alone, he still does not
risk the unconventional. Roberta threatens that compliance, a reality that she
herself keenly feels. Although both know how they are expected to respond
to each other, neither can manage to stay within company rules, largely
because both are also very alone. Without the perspective of outside
counsel, neither can resist their impulses: "Day after day and because so
much alone, and furthermore because of so strong a chemic or
temperamental that was so definitely asserting itself, he could no longer keep
his eyes off her—or she hers from him" (280). Dreiser plainly is underlining the absence of choice, made more difficult by the arbitrariness of the company rules.

Roberta still holds out some measure of conventionality for their relationship, hoping that in time Clyde will make her an honest woman. She is also more afraid of being caught, understandably given her more tenuous position at the factory. Although Clyde's physical urges guide him in the opening stages of this relationship, he does show some pangs of conscience:

He was not without the self-incriminating thought that in seeking this, most distinctly he was driving toward a relationship which was not legitimate and would prove dangerous in the future . . . Therefore should he proceed to demand—or should he not? And if he did, could he avoid that which would preclude any claim in the future? (324)

His oughtness is not clear. Does he see that he should not harm Roberta for her own sake or for the sake of consequences that may hurt himself?

This uncertainty points to one peril of losing consensual belief systems. Shame keeps us from straying from conventions, which we may or may not perceive as arbitrary. Envisioning other choices, other possibilities, shakes our allegiance to known conventions. The rise of individualism feeds this dilemma: if we can sustain internally consistent beliefs, we are more likely to move away from the predominant value system the larger community standard. Pursuing our own course, we are less likely to move in accord with
the majority and be clear about the steps we will take. Social cohesion is sustained when we take actions designed to avoid shame, while operating inside rules designed to incorporate us. But when we in the naturalist state no longer can make certain appeals to universal beliefs such as progress or God, the open door can admit all kinds of impulses.

While Clyde has his parents as religious model, in the secular world he hears their counsel only in flickers: "was he all wrong? Was it evil to be like this? His mother would say so! And his father too" (345), he wonders—but the thought passes. The secular equivalent of religious imperatives is the law. A community corrects these impulses responsibly through mechanisms such as gossip and civic law. But both operate generally by dictating not what one ought to do but what ought not to do. Faced with an unwanted pregnancy, Clyde understands what he ought not to do but is at a loss as to what he ought to do, because he has left the value system of his parents behind and because this situation lies outside of the boundaries of its secular replacement, accepted social law—good girls don't, and when they do, no law allows a way out (at least in the time of Dreiser's narrative).

Kaufman notes that self-identity is born from identification, in modeling. In youth identification begins with family, especially parents. From them, we internalize core beliefs. When we move beyond their physical presence, we rely on conscience to direct us. This internal compass steers best when it
processes experiences that it can match against the history of the individual: we call upon our past to guide our present.

But what happens when experience has no clear antecedent, when we venture into uncharted territory, as with Clyde? Impulse control born of the mechanism of society finds no perch in Clyde or Roberta. Civic law and gossip depend on a sense of accountability to the larger community. After all, gossip works best when the subject finally hears it. But neither Roberta nor Clyde circulate enough to hear any stories about themselves, and the social world of the Finchleys is too removed from Roberta's world for Clyde to fear disclosure. Nor have either with their dating and the pregnancy broken legal laws. The alienation of both from the community of Lycurgus has helped draw them to each other, and the remoteness of a peer group prevents them from measuring their impulses against social standards.

Identification for Clyde in the secular world has led him to order the same drink as Ratterer at the bar in Kansas City and even to follow his counsel and approach his uncle in Chicago about a job, but such small scale modeling does not serve in Clyde's present dilemma.

For, apart from Liggett, Whiggam, and a few minor though decidedly pleasant and yet rather remote department heads, all of whom were now looking on him as a distinctly superior person who could scarcely be approached to familiarly in connection with anything, there was no one to whom he could appeal. (409)
And so, alone, he visits various druggists in Schenectady, hoping to abort the pregnancy. Clyde experiences strong fear about disclosure, so much that he avoids approaching the first druggist he sees, who "looked so sober, God-fearing, ultra-respectable and conventional...[that] it would not do to apply to him. He had not the courage to enter and face such a person" (410).

The projection of religious conservative values onto this potential judging other suggests Clyde's fear of exposure comes from felt moral shortcomings rather than practical shortcomings—he is not, after all, haltingly trying to explain his car's problems to the mechanic. But in both cases the self fears being exposed as a fraud in a club to which they want to belong. This club membership may have some gender rules. Kaufman notes that shame binds are created, associating the affect to shame and thus conditioning the self away from the gender inappropriate response. Shame binds are stored as scenes; scripts evolve as guidelines for understanding and enforcing the weight of the scenes. Thus are born feminine and masculine gender scripts and in turn ideologies. We feel a sense of inadequacy in front of the mechanic largely because of such gender-rooted internalized ideology: real men should know how to bleed the brakes. Scripts evolve as methods to avoid straying beyond our gender-appropriate behavior. Deliberate gender roles lead to a social order in which men and women know their roles more certainly.
To what extent does Clyde recognize his failure to live up to his understood gender role? Some, but not perhaps in a way that best serves Roberta. If real men can bleed the brakes, they can also hold their liquor—recall the bar in Kansas City—and find an outlet for their physical desires. If Ratterer is the person whom he imagines as his aid in his present situation and to whom he eventually writes for counsel, then the gender role he seeks to follow is not tied to domesticity but rather to revelry and to bachelor freedom. After all, both hit and ran in Kansas City and are bound not by duty but by a shared refusal of responsibility. Clyde balks before the first pharmacist not only because he fears his judgment but because his imagined pharmacist does not subscribe to the same values as Clyde. Clyde imagines a druggist who would understand that boys will be boys, and forgive.

After passing up four or five more druggists, he finally settles on an "undersized" one whom he does approach. This man refuses Clyde because he is a "confirmed religionist" whose creed does not allow for "interfering with the motives or impulses of nature" (411). He might well be Dreiser himself, proclaiming the folly of resisting naturalistic forces. Although Clyde sees that this druggist is "reproachful," which "reduced to a much smaller quantity the little confidence with which he had begun his quest" (411), his judgment does not stop Clyde. Some part of him accepts the judgment, but finally the standards used to measure him do not match Clyde's own. He may feel some judgment, but his sense of his core worth remains
unthreatened—this moral universe is not one to which Clyde wants to belong.

While this encounter shows Clyde's futile resistance to naturalism, especially giving his stalling with Roberta that he somehow believes can stop her biological clock, the value system of the druggist has fuller implications for society. Babies ensure the continuation of the community. They dictate at least a momentary union between a man and a woman, insist on someone taking adult responsibility for the otherwise helpless offspring. Ratterer's world, which first honed Clyde's values, has no room for this vision. There, dancing has no enduring consequences. When cause yields effect, first in Esta's pregnancy, Clyde is unable to extend himself empathetically. Later, when a car accident aborts the life of a little girl, the resulting diaspora confirms the presocial status of the automobile's occupants.

Instead of a world that sees pregnancy as a responsibility beyond the self, Clyde still measures himself against a standard designed to reenforce his sense of freedom from domestic responsibility. When in chapter 36 Clyde asks a local haberdasher for advice, it's couched in third person terms for a subordinate employee, with the bravado of one who knows but is merely out of his element locally ("If it were Kansas City or Chicago now, . . . I'd know what to do" (427)). His fear touches not morality but gender: a man ought to know how to deal with pregnancy without yielding to marriage. But nothing he has learned prepares him for this new situation, not the teachings from his
parents nor the jocular conversations of Kansas City or Chicago. And so when Roberta prepares to tell him about the pregnancy, Clyde is clueless:

\[H\]e was puzzled as to just what attitude to assume in a situation where obviously something was wrong. Being sensitive to conventional or moral stimuli as he still was, he could not quite achieve a discreditable thing, even where his own highest ambitions were involved, without a measure of regret or at least shame. (404)

While this suggests sympathy, the next sentence takes it away: "Also he was so anxious to keep his dinner engagement [with Sondra] and not to be further involved that his manner was impatient." A spoonful of shame indeed.

Contrast this attitude with Roberta's own reaction to her pregnancy:

[S]he could see her home, her mother, her relatives, all who knew her, and their thoughts in case anything like this should befall her. For of the opinion of society in general and what other people might say, Roberta stood in extreme terror. The stigma of unsanctioned concupiscence! The shame of illegitimacy for a child! (402)

Even before this, she sees "The wretched, shameful, difficult position in which she had placed herself by all this" (376) while visiting her parents in the country. By now, Clyde is romancing Sondra, and Roberta feels keenly the loss of what her sister has, a flawed husband but at least some husband, some relationship sanctioned by society. Roberta plainly sees herself tied to a conventional world of marriage and children, a world from which she has
wandered but which still defines her conscience. She projects her shame onto her offspring as well, suggesting inherited familial shame but also (in contrast to Clyde) a concern for her situation not solely confined to the self.

For his part, Clyde still accepts Roberta's judgment, which in part confirms his own, when he skips out on Christmas dinner to dance with Sondra. Reappearing at midnight, he cannot face Roberta directly. His alibi cuts her:

> It came to her now that in spite of his enthusiasm and demonstrativeness in the first stages of this affair, possible she was much more trivial in his estimation than she had seemed to herself. And that meant that her dreams and sacrifices thus far had been in vain. She became frightened. (389)

Her affective response of "mingled fear, sorrow, depression, distrust, a trace of resentment and a trace of despair" shows in eyes whose glance forces Clyde to recognize "having misused and demeaned her not a little. And because her eyes seemed to advertise this, he flushed a dark red flush that colored deeply his naturally very pale cheeks" (389-390). Both are facing a potential shame situation, with Roberta having apparently the upper hand.

Her mortification surpasses Clyde's, however, and she does not press her advantage. Instead, upon hearing him praise Sondra, she breaks down and cries, exclaiming that she never had the advantages Sondra has. "The moment she said these things she was actually ashamed of having made so
weak and self-condemnatory a confession" (393), but the confession melt
some of Clyde's coolness, as Dreiser explains with surprising thoroughness:

There was about Clyde at times a certain strain of tenderness, evoked
by experiences, disappointments, and hardships in his own life, which
came out to one and another, almost any other, under such
circumstances as these. At such times he had a soft and melting
voice. His manner was as tender and gentle almost as that of a
mother with a baby. It drew a girl like Roberta intensely to him. At the
same time, such emotion in him, though vivid, was of brief duration. It
was like the rush and flutter of a summer storm—soon come and soon
gone. (393)

The mother and child simile is apt in contrasting ways. While suggesting that
the model for the judging other springs from familial associations in youth, its
secondary echoes are ironic, since this man, after all, will soon shun parental
responsibility in favor of an preadult romance with Sondra.

For her part, Roberta is the subordinate, the excluded self seeking
reincorporation. Helen Lewis sees the shamed self as passive, paralyzed,
and childish, while the judging other is seen as the ridiculing, powerful adult,
abandoning the shamed self. The shamed self has an acute sense of being
looked down on by a person or group to which he or she wants to belong
(hence its connection often to unrequited love).
These roles are played by Clyde and Roberta, first with his managerial authority and including the drama in the autumn, when Clyde seeks intimacy beyond their public outings. He feels constrained by her propriety—"She was too cautious, too afraid of anything that spelled a little life or pleasure" (318)—while she feels threatened by his request to escalate their intimacy, which "was not to be held within conventional lines. At the same time she did not see how she could possibly comply. It was too unconventional—too immoral—bad" (319). The worlds of full incorporation into romantic love and larger communal acceptance sit in opposite corners. As Clyde walks away, Roberta must choose. "And yet so binding were the conventions which had been urged upon her up to this time that, though suffering horribly, a balance between the two forces was struck, and she paused, feeling that she could neither go forward nor stand still" (320-321).

Dreiser writes only of Roberta's affective reaction, "Pain constricted her and whitened her lips," suggesting the mortification of shame. Oddly, Dreiser ends by declaring that this pain "was the first flashing, blinding, bleeding stab of love" (321). Why? Perhaps in Dreiser's animal vision of women, to be placed subordinately is familiar, even comforting. Later, even Sondra falls under this implied injunction, responding to Clyde's adoration with a preference "to be mastered rather than to be master" (399). Following Kaufman, the gender scripts and ideologies that define Clyde define Roberta and other women just as surely.
Roberta still wrestles with her allegiances in ways that challenge her core essence ("I will be a bad girl if I do," she tells herself (321)), and she sits in the camp of communal conventions enough to declare that Clyde "should be ashamed" (322) for asking her to yield. Even the aggressor feels some hesitation about compromising Roberta, aware that he does not intend to marry her and feeling "this was sin—deadly, mortal—since both his mother and father had so often emphasized that" (328). But all this resistance is washed away by biology and temperament.

Why does Clyde fall for Sondra so soon after consummating his relationship with Roberta? In part because the conquest empowers him and feeds his hubris. "What have any of these strutting young men, and gay, coaxing, flirting girls all about me, that I have not? And if I chose—were less loyal than I am—what might I not do?" (329) he declares, intoxicated by the immediacy and self-actualization of choice. He does not see yet the consequences of his actions, beyond his reinforced gender ideology.

Sondra flatters this part of himself, but she feeds as well his vision of economic success, while asking Clyde to be accountable only to tennis and water skiing. Even before their relationship begins, Clyde responds visibly to Sondra's presence. When he flushes when discussing Sondra at a party, it's telling: he doesn't respond with the fear of exposure the same way with Roberta. Sondra also allows a world away from the consequences of his actions with Roberta. The contrast between the two is most striking when
their letters to Clyde are presented in chapter 42. Sondra's letter employs baby talk ("How is my pheet phing? All whytie?" (469)) and offers accounts of the play of privileged youth—horses, golf, tennis. The same day's mail brings Roberta's latest, with its accompanying pleas for contact and implicit reminders of a world of adult responsibilities.

Two women, two worlds, two options: the infinitude of choice truncated to two. Too myopic to see more, Clyde reads the account of an accidental drowning and follows its suggested course.

Because the apparent choice he makes to kill Roberta is so at odds with his desired self image, Clyde questions himself in third-person, which may allow him to skit a recognition of responsibility:

But, good God! What was he thinking of anyhow? He, Clyde Griffiths! The nephew of Samuel Griffiths! What was 'getting into' him? Murder! That's what it was. This terrible item—this devil's accident or machinations that was constantly putting it before him! . . . he was no such person. And yet—and yet—these thoughts. The solution—if he wanted one. . . . all—for the price of a little courage or daring. . . . Was he actually planning to do a thing like this? But he was not! He could not be! He, Clyde Griffiths, could not be serious about a thing like this. That was not possible. He could not be. Of course! It was all too impossible, too wicked, to imagine that he, Clyde Griffiths, could bring himself to execute a deed like that. (498-500)
Clyde Griffiths, the son of Asa, is now conceptualized as the nephew of Samuel Griffiths, in his own mind remade into a man with the possibilities of Sondra’s world, hoping to leave behind the adult world of Roberta.

To make this move, more than imagining is required. The devil’s voice whispers, "But you must choose—choose! And then act. You must! You must! You must!" (504). This voice arises, Dreiser writes, like a genie in the void of an actual other against whom Clyde might measure his dark impulses;

Indeed the center or mentating section of his brain at this time might well have been compared to a sealed and silent hall in which alone and undisturbed, and that in spite of himself, he now sat thinking on the mystic or evil and terrifying desires or advice of some darker or primordial and unregenerate nature of his own. (501)

The isolation of these chapters breeds poor decision making, as he allows himself to be pushed into a choice he cannot admit as his own.

Clyde wards off shame by denying agency for the action, but this displacement cannot last. As he moves towards the execution of his plan, he hesitates. If he acts, he will consent to a value system beyond his conventionality. The thought of such a move unnerves him as he fights the urge to flee: "Well, flight then—flight—and let it go at that. This strain was too much—hell—he would die, thinking thoughts like these" (520).

The urge to flee is the urge to forestall action, to surrender responsibility to another agent, even to deny consequentiality. To act is to
carve out a new identity, one that entices but frightens him. As Roberta watches from across the rowboat, his face manifests the struggle, a balanced combat between fear (a chemic revulsion against death or murderous brutality that would bring death) and a harried and restless and yet self-repressed desire to do—to do—to do—yet temporarily unbreakable here and now—a static between a powerful compulsion to do and yet not to do. (530)

Roberta's movement breaks the deadlock, forcing Clyde to see his failure to act. For Clyde, not acting is not being, a core essence failure so threatening that Clyde takes the potential internalized rage (shame) and externalized it. This shame/rage spiral is key to Thomas Scheff and Suzanna Retzinger's discussion of violence and destructive relationships. To them, all violence springs from unacknowledged shame. Kaufman's claim is more modest. Vulnerability to shame comes when the self opens an interpersonal relationship with the other. Rage wards off shame after this interpersonal bridge has been ruptured. The rage/shame spiral appears here even though Roberta does not represent the other. Instead, the judgment springs from the projected judging/encouraging other/Efrit whom Clyde has conjured as protection. Failing that standard, Clyde lashes out:

And Clyde, as instantly sensing the profoundness of his own failure, his own cowardice or inadequateness for such an occasion, as instantly
yielding to a tide of submerged hate, not only for himself, but Roberta—
her power—or that of life to restrain him in this way. (530)

Clyde still measures failure not against the standards of Roberta and the
larger society but against his internalized projecting other, the same voice
who moments later returns to encourage Clyde to watch Roberta drown. This
time, his nonaction signals an acceptance of the new standard.

Mitchell notes that Dreiser's syntax here lacks attribution for action,
consistent with the "dissipation" of the self that characterizes Clyde
throughout (73). This technique extends his refusal to take responsibility for
his actions. For Mitchell, repetition undercuts the possibility of character by
showing Clyde's inability to will himself a world larger than his basic wants
and desires. The credibility of cause and effect is further challenged by
effects far out of proportion to intention. In such a world, how can we hold
characters accountable when chance and fate deal such misaimed blows?
Whatever Clyde's original intentions he does not in fact intend to kill Roberta
when he lashes out in anger on the rowboat. Intentionality will reappear in
full force with the trial in Book Three, with a nagging reminder only slowly
acknowledged: while the effect may seem disproportional to the initial cause,
Clyde's second action (or nonaction) very directly causes Roberta to drown.

As Book One ends, so too does Book Two, with Clyde fleeing the
scene of a fatality. This repetition follows not only Mitchell but also Pizer's
notion of movement without progress, underscoring a theme of Dreiser's
naturalism. Clyde insists that his final indecision absolves him for Roberta's drowning, since his rage was only accidentally received. His isolation has prompted fantasies of power and self-actualization, ultimately leading to his failure to execute his plans. His isolation also confirms his limited sense of accountability, for Roberta does not represent the value system he wants. In leaving her, he imagines leaving complications and accountability, in favor of the imagined possibilities of Sondra's world, a world as yet without any hard choices. Running away may be a bad choice, but to a young man without a spectroscope and without a reliable peer group operating in a naturalist world it may seem the only one.
BOOK THREE

The plot flattens in Book Three—no longer waiting for what will happen, we know pretty certainly that Clyde will be punished, in accord with the expectations of a naturalist text. What then is the business of Book Three? Dreiser might say it serves to illustrate that the forks in the road of plot are not deliberated with freedom, since in a deterministic universe choice is not genuine. Accordingly, Clyde is right to plead not guilty to the accusations—he no more chooses his actions than any animal maneuvered by external forces and temperament.

This vision of naturalism leads Dreiser to paint an isolating portrait of Clyde, who without resources is vulnerable to the machinations of institutions beyond his ken and control. Such a reading supposes that Darwinian survival of the fittest applies individually, like some animal king of the mountain, with one beast left to fend off the many. Konrad Lorenz in his study *On Aggression* reminds us that animal instincts and evolution serve a collective good and not an individual one. In the fight for survival of the fittest, actual destruction against one's own species is rare. Instead, rituals evolve that allow for the recognition of superior and inferior combatants that allow the saving of face and the chance for the vanquished to retreat and flourish in a separate space. Thus appeasement gestures that reveal surrender are not met with death blows but with a participatory refusal to mete out further
punishment. Both parties know the dance and in playing their respective roles reinforce the success of the rituals to define the in-group against the standards of any out-group.

Thomas Scheff among others roots shame in internalized rage, transference for a feeling that cannot be expressed socially otherwise. Likewise, Lorenz points to rituals that prevent the expression of both embarrassment and anger, patterns evident in nonhuman animals as well. Rituals to cloak aggression or embarrassment like the Indian peace pipe free the users from the close scrutiny of affective expression that might reveal more than they like. Especially where all concerned recognize the rules of such conventions, the rituals allay anxiety by challenging aggressive impulses benignly, reinforcing a sense of shared values—hey, he drinks beer just like me—, and of defining by opposition a group against some less bonding amorphous “them.” As Norbert Elias reminds us, these gestures in humans evolve as manners.

Aggression appears when individuals deviate from the established rituals and manners. As Lorenz notes, "the nonconformist is discriminated against as an 'outside' and, in primitive groups, for which school classes or small military units serve as good examples, he is mobbed in the most cruel manner" (79). Even small deviations can mark an individual as an outsider.

Consider Clyde, whose absence of recognizable contrition to the jury and the courtroom brand him for excorporation. By failing to participate in the
animal rituals that dissipate aggression, he as nonconformist is threatened with excorporation from the community. Book Three presents chances for Clyde to recognize a larger community and its values, first legally by the prosecution and defense, second, familial by his distraught mother, and finally morally by his prison counsel Rev. Duncan McMillan. The absence of shame in Clyde may first spring from a philosophical decision on Dreiser's part to underline naturalist themes, but read from the perspective of the characters who congregate as a result of Clyde's actions the protagonist's apparent shamelessness merely confirms his incorrigibility. His deviation reinforces their own set of rituals and reinforces their collective community.

Whether communities springs from self-generated rituals and habits is immaterial to their functional reality. That these processes arise in the natural world should allow us to question naturalist critics who say that determinism precludes responsibility because it precludes free will. Birds do it, bees do it, even educated PhDs do it, not because we are more than animals but because like them our instincts are towards communion. And, with communion established, we become responsible to members of our own tribe and habitually, ritualistically forgo violence against them. The arbitrariness of our rituals and alliances makes them no less compelling, or binding.

As Book Two began away from Clyde, focusing on the Griffiths in Lycurgus, so Book Three begins with the discovery of the murder as reported to the local sheriff's office. Not until the sixth chapter of this section do we
return to Clyde's perspective. The effect of this delay is to devalue once again Clyde's individual story. Before we hear from him, the sheriff's office has gathered enough evidence to insure apparently his legal guilt. Further, public reaction grows against the perpetrator of the drowning of Roberta: he is the "reptilian villain," the "scoundrel!" the murderer!", whose crime "of the gravest character" serves to unify the locals against him (545). By defying rituals, he bonds the lawful in opposition to his deviance.

This transgressor revealed himself earlier to local hunters, we are told, by his "startled" expression upon encountering them in the woods from Big Bittern. He had jumped "as though he were seeking to hide in the brush" (544). Later, the proprietor of the inn reports to the coroner that Clyde "had acted so nervous--strangelike" (549). The psychopath passes the lie detector test because he does not believe he is lying. The affective manifestations of Clyde's conscience suggest he is not quite the scoundrel that locals prematurely represent him as being. Clyde recognizes not only that he is in danger of being caught but that he has done something that is in violation of the rituals and rules of the community, of which he is however reluctantly a nervous member. The Efrit has not converted Clyde altogether.

More communal bonding is presented before we turn directly to Clyde. Chapter four shows Orville Mason, the district attorney, travelling to the home of the Aldens to tell them of Roberta's death. Although Titus Alden parrots ingroup/out-group anxieties--"born for the most part of religion, convention, and

197
a general rural suspicion of all urban life and the mystery and involuteness of its ungodly ways" (556) — Mason's sympathy for a father's loss of his daughter suggests that the line between rural and urban dissolves in the face of strong animal feeling. Dreiser moves beyond the business of notification to a physical and human connection with his addressee:

Mason, seeing the agony into which he had plunged him, at once seized him firmly and yet kindly by the arms. . . . The excited gestures and words of Titus at this point so disturbed the district attorney that he found himself unable to explain as calmly as he would have like . . .

[Titus] leaned heavily and wearily upon Mason's arms while the latter sustained him as best he could. (554-555)

"I know how you will suffer," Mason tells him prior to the news (554).

Dreiser has sketched Mason's background earlier to reinforce his alliance with the downtrodden and resentment of the privileged, so the father and prosecutor bond over their desire for class justice. Mason thinks, "Almost the political value of all this was obscured by an angry social resentfulness against men of means in general" (560). While the legal forms compel Mason to communicate with Titus Alden, the bonding of the two men is more primal and differentiates them from the isolationism of Clyde. While shame spawns a desire to flee—an impulse that Clyde announces repeatedly in the course of the narrative and upon the course of which he is embarked when spotted by the woodsmen—on a smaller scale embarrassment and open expression of
pain provoke in the other not the desire for expulsion but sympathy, an instinctive recognition of connectedness that reinforces community. Contrast Mason's reaction to the remoteness Clyde showed his sister in Book One.

The institutional expression of this sympathy is the search for justice, to right the wrong by finding the transgressor. In its roughest form, this feeling finds expression in a lynch mob, whose animalistic energy, as Lorenz notes, can be difficult to resist. And of course a lynch mob's intention is for terminal action, with no chance for redemption. Just as table manners evolve to cloak the aggressive action of eating, civic law arises to mask the desire for vengeance and open aggression against violators of communal standards. At its root, civic law codifies moral edicts, retaining linguistic vestiges like "guilt" and "innocence."

Philosopher Herbert Morris explores the connection between guilt and shame and the legal institutions that might follow accordingly. He fixes on "guilt" as the realm of law, where attention is on behavior more than motivation and intentionality, where minimum behavior rather than a maximum ideal is defended, where rules and regulations are the norm, where the wounded other's rights are primary, and where restoration of relationship, not shunning of the transgressor, is a goal. After first separating shame from guilt following the essence versus action model, Morris argues that the essentially self-containedness of shame makes it an amorphous model for law enforcement, which focuses on action more clearly than on intent. A
shame model sets too high a bar and would be preferred only when the highest self-actualization is expected and when one's individual essence trumps social action relative to others.

Despite attending to the experiential quality of a guilt model, Morris does not dismiss intention immediately. The choices, leading a potential transgressor to an ultimate act which would be a crime, are doors, with each opening a choice taken. Were a legal system to prohibit some earlier door of intent, subsequent damage farther down the corridor might be avoided. In the end, Morris retreats from an intention-based system of law as one with too many holes. A system of law requires a way to enforce sanctions, but reading a masked intention is much more difficult than measuring an overt act. Focusing on intention also misses somewhat the mark of what compliance seeks: not the intention as much as the action itself. It is more expedient to ban the action itself.

In An American Tragedy, it is not the intention that creates the legal subculture but the resultant action, a body in a lake. With the action confirmed and the culprit apprehended, intent becomes a legal issue of premeditation and thus culpability. Roberta is no less dead for all that, but the issue of the killer remains. Why he did it serves as fodder not just for the press but for seeing how far from the bounds the transgressor has strayed.

Enter intent. The efforts by Clyde's legal counsel to argue degrees of intent have legal repercussions, naturally, but in a larger way they serve to
drive home how society permits degrees of transgressive behavior measured by motivation and how society may or may not forgive and reincorporate transgressors. "[I]n the eyes of the law, if we use his own story, he's just as guilty as though he had struck her," (646) Jepheson reminds Belknap as they discuss the case—plainly the steps leading up to Roberta's death match the doors opened in Morris's model. Even if Clyde did not finally commit the deed, his plan, however ill-conceived, was premeditated. First-degree murder earns stiffer penalties from the community because this killing presumably springs from calm methodical planning rather than simply poor impulse control. Overflowing emotions may override conscience, but people expect that once tranquility returns reason and conscience will prevail. Lorenz's rituals arise to channel our aggression in more benign ways. We forgive more readily crimes of passion than crimes of reason.

Jepheson and Belknap's final defense strategy recognizes this pattern. They create a scenario wherein Clyde "experiences a change of heart. You get me? He's sorry for her. He's ashamed of himself--his sin against her. That ought to appeal to these fellows around here, these religious and moral people, oughtn't it?" (657). While the two somewhat deride the local jury's sensibilities, their efforts to humanize their client makes obvious sense: the prodigal son may be reintegrated when the incorrigible one is not.

Impulse control confirms that individuals see beyond their own impulses to recognize social connection and accountabilities to others. What
are intentions but one manifestation of impulses? Short of controlling one’s impulses, one can apologize for emotional outbursts. "He’s ashamed of himself": in this scenario, Clyde recognizes a responsibility beyond himself; he feels guilt, which leads to social reparation and reincorporation.

The problem is that Clyde does not feel ashamed, at least against the appropriate standard. Confused, certainly, and desperate to keep the Sondra dream alive, and vulnerable to being shamed in front of her and her circle—he begs not to be brought in front of them to gather his belongings after he has been arrested at Bear Lake. But Clyde is not ashamed especially in front of his accusers, whose world he does not seem to want to be measured by. All the anxiety that haunts him while with Sondra after the drowning concerns not his wrongdoing, but the consequences of exclusion from his desired in-group: "If they should guess! The horror! The flight! The exposure! The police! The first to desert him—these—all save Sondra perhaps. And even she, too. Yes, she, of course. The horror in her eyes" (591).

While Clyde fears what he might lose, he resists the accusations of Mason, the district attorney, who hopes to elicit a confession with the trump card of Roberta’s letters, which he thrusts in the accused’s face. Clyde remains determined in his denials:

there had been growing within him the utter and unshakable conviction that in the face of whatever seeming proof or charges might now appear, he dared not tell anything...He dared not. For that would be
the same as a confession of guilt in connection with something of which he was not really guilty. (603)

Dreiser would side with Clyde, since guilt presupposes freely choosing between good and bad. A determinist universe precludes such choice. But the argument is philosophical rather than legal, a distinction brought to bear against Clyde in Book Three. Those on the playing field must abide by the rules, regardless of their universality. Clyde may wish to be playing a more upper class game with Sondra, but he remains, despite his wishes, firmly a part of a larger social world, one with more adult responsibilities than the children's games that the Finchleys play on their retreats.

The law, as his counsel notes, reads guilt in the actuality of Clyde's accident with Roberta. Certainly his premeditation is only weakly disputed by Clyde. The social crime that Clyde commits remains only dimly understood: he watched Roberta drown. This "moral cowardice," as his defense names it, violates the social contract of accountability to others, which though not legally binding in all cases resonates for the community. His counsel calls Clyde's failure systemic; it's the core of who he is. If so, the jury is perhaps right to execute him. Such a person cannot be rehabilitated.

Emblematic of his intractability is Clyde's steadfast refusal to accept responsibility for his inaction. Dreiser's naturalism does not allow room for him to claim responsibility, but Weatherford and others would argue, So what? Certainly biologically responsibility can be determined. Clyde is, after
all, the father of the fetus that dies with Roberta. But beyond this, the animal impulse is to help, as Mason shows in giving sympathy to Titus Alden. This is Darwinian, instinctive, and logical: I help those of my group, which helps my group survive.

The ritual of confession and absolution has at its root self-recognition on the part of both parties: there but for fortune go you or I. Therein lies the space for forgiveness. Guilt pushes us towards that scene, often against our retreating shameful impulses. Without confession and without a party whom the confessee deems appropriate to hear, however, there can be no absolution. The listener must be at least a representative of the offended party. The confessee must express affective contrition for the offended party to accept the act as genuine and for reintegration to be possible.

Clyde offers none of these traits. While on the witness stand, he is portrayed as shamefaced and nervous, but never with enough detail to make the affective representation ring true. Nowhere in Book Three does he show any concern about Roberta herself. Nor has he even been willing to tell his counsel the deepest truth about the drowning:

never, even to Jepheson and Belknap, had he admitted that when Roberta was in the water he had not wished to save her.

Changelessly and secretly he had insisted he had wanted to but that it had all happened so quickly, and he was so dazed and frightened by
her cries and movements, that he had not been able to do anything before she was gone. (766)

If we instinctively help our own, what does Clyde's failure reveal? Perhaps shamelessness, some essentially nonsocially compliant part of himself that cannot or will not participate in this social contract. Note, though, that this reaction is situationally specific: Clyde does not refuse any social contract. It's just that the social world to which he does respond is lost to him.

If any party might draw out a confession and some sense of social accountability, it would seem to be Clyde's mother, to whom the narrative returns after the guilty verdict. Before the trial begins Clyde admits vulnerability about his mother: "The complete truth was that his present attitude towards her was a mixture of fear and shame because of the manner in which she was likely to view his predicament—his moral if not his social failure" (668). When she finally comes to New York to see Clyde in prison, the experience brings out more emotion than any other scene in Book Three:

Clyde, now as always overawed and thrown back on himself by that uncompromising and shameless honesty which he had never been able quite to comprehend in her, announced, with all the firmness that he could muster—yet with a secret quavering chill in his heart—that he had sworn to the truth...But, alas, as she now said to herself, on observing him, what was that about his eyes—a faint flicker perhaps..
He was not so sure—as self-convinced and definite as she had hoped—as she had prayed he would be. (805)

If both are playing their parts, neither is convinced, at least initially. More conversation, however, brings the two into alignment. Mrs. Griffiths comes to believe that

he was really innocent—he must be, since he had declared it here.

And Clyde because of her smile saying to himself, his mother believed in him now. She had not been swayed by all the evidence against him.

And this faith, mistaken or not, was now so sustaining—so needed.

What he had just said was true as he now saw it. (810)

Just as shame depends on the felt sense of violating an internal belief system that may or may not connect to the larger social standard, the confession ritual requires not the confirmation of the larger social circle but only two willing participants.

Tellingly, however, Elvira Griffiths's faith in Clyde is virtually singular. If her son is vulnerable to shame in the presence of her values, he is still in the larger world functionally shameless, since no one else—beyond the elusive Sondra—presents a belief system he willingly participates in. He is still metaphorically standing on the same street with his family, zealots against the secular world, in the vignette that began the narrative. Consensual belief systems are fine within families, but the social test lies outside the home.

The shame impulse of self-judgment allows us the room to calibrate oneself
against the standards of the larger world; but because it depends on an internally projected judge, which may or may not coincide with the standards of the external community, shame remains susceptible to insularity.

Rev. Duncan McMillan offers some middle ground between Mrs. Griffiths's sectarian religious faith and a more mainstream version. For religious rather than legal reasons, he presses Clyde to confess his story, with little success. From his Christian perspective, admission is a prelude to redemption. McMillan recites Psalms 51, which Dreiser includes in whole and which reads in part: "Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me" (Psalms 51: 2-3). Note that the image of washing assumes a core self that can be made clean—guilt assumes correctable action; the core self remains intact.

The prompt for confession receives an initial blank stare as answer, though Clyde does solicit McMillan to stay to stave off the condemned's loneliness. Raised methodically in the rituals of Christian atonement, Clyde understands the expectations, but refuses his part. "I haven't thought much of what you were saying, perhaps, because I haven't felt as guilty as some think I am. But I've been sorry enough," (839) he says, while Dreiser indicates no affective markers of head bowing or turning away that might indicate guilt or shame. "Sorry enough": for the pain he himself has experienced, perhaps, the loss of Sondra and his dreams, but not obviously
for the effect of his action on others. And while Dreiser does not show Clyde’s thoughts much in these late chapters of Book Three, his physical reality—imprisoned in his cell—has the markers of the excorporated self, shunned from society and without an avenue for reintegration. What is Clyde’s loneliness if not confirmation that his actions mark him as more than guilty, since the guilty party in the social sense can seek reintegration?

"Was he going to turn to religion now, solely because he was in difficulties and frightened like these others? He hoped not. Not like that, anyway" (840). So Clyde thinks to himself after McMillan’s first visit. It would be easy to skim McMillan’s presentation of redemption, this central tenet of Christianity, given Clyde’s own ambivalence. Nonetheless, despite the undercutting of belief systems that naturalism supposes and that Dreiser reinforces, religious faith, however isolating, is not mocked in this narrative. Even so jaded a community as the press corps come to respect Mrs. Griffiths for her determination. Nor is Rev. McMillan undercut in Dreiser’s characterization.

With that said, whatever conversion that Clyde finally undergoes does not spring from much more than desperation. McMillan does prod Clyde to look back at his life in a way heretofore absent in the narrative. Such self-recognition might presage religious absolution, but Clyde wants to be more certain of what such confession will give him:
And yet, the question of repentance—and with it confession. But to whom? The Rev. Duncan McMillan, of course. He seemed to feel that it was necessary for Clyde to purge his soul to him—or some one like him—a material and yet spiritual emissary of God. But just there was the trouble. For there was all of that false testimony he had given in the trial, yet on which had been based his appeal. To go back on that now, and when his appeal was pending. Better wait, had he not, until he saw how that appeal had eventuated. (844)

The internal dialogue with the Efrit in Book Two does not have a counterpart in good counsel here. More damning still, Clyde cannot summon on his own any incentive to confess beyond his self-interest—he does not recognize any larger circle to which a confession might bring him reinclusion.

"There was the troubling question in his own mind as to his real guilt—the amount of it" (845). Even now, Clyde flings defenses up to ward off responsibility:

Those terrible, troubled days when in spite of himself—as he now understood it (Belkap's argument having cleared it up for him) he had burned with that wild fever which was not unakin in its manifestations to a form of insanity . . . The witchery and fire of [Sondra's] smile then. (845)
But responsibility creeps up. "There were phases of this thing, the tangles and doubts involved in that dark, savage plot of him, as he now saw and brooded on it, which were not so easily disposed of" (845).

Regardless of what Oberwalter had said there at the trial in regard to his swimming away from her—that if she had accidentally fallen in the water, it was no crime on his part, supposing he refused to rescue her,—still, as he now saw it, and especially when taken in connection with all that he had thought in regard to Roberta up to that moment, it was a crime. (845)

A moral crime or a legal crime? Certainly intention in legal terms cannot be reasonably disputed. Even Clyde would yield on this issue. Is Clyde still scheming to find a legal loophole through which his moral transgression might be allowed to slip? I don't think so, for he follows this deliberation with "Wouldn't God—McMillan—think so?" (846). The issue is moral accountability to another. Had Roberta been Sondra, Clyde acknowledges he would have tried to save her. What might be the consequence of Clyde's confession of this weakness to McMillan?

Chapter 32 offers the only real soul searching in Book Three as Clyde, provoked by the continual presence of McMillan, negotiates his transgressions with what passes for his conscience. The consequences for others beyond himself are evident finally—"He could see how terrible all this was now—how much misery and heartache, apart from the death of Roberta,
he had caused" (846)—, but Clyde cannot voice them without risking losing whatever slim hope for freedom he retains. He rationalizes his silence by figuring that God can see into his heart anyway and that Rev. McMillan and his mother have a clearer channel to God through their prayers than he does. Whatever internal or external voice pushes him towards disclosure, it is far meeker than the Efrit who spoke in such distinct terms in Book Two, leading him to temptation.

To talk out and thereby "solve his true responsibility" (850) relative to his crimes, Clyde requests and receives a new cell for a tete-a-tete with McMillan. After admitting for the first time his true actions relative to Roberta, Clyde asks for reassurance, not forgiveness but a moral reprieve:

But now, did the Reverend McMillan, considering all that went before and all that came after—the fact that the unintentional blow still had anger in it—angry dissatisfaction with her—really—and that afterwards he had not gone to her rescue—as now—honestly—and truly as he was trying to show—did he think that constituted murder—mortal blood guilt for which spiritually, as well as legally, he might be said to deserve death? (852)

Note that Clyde asks not whether he is guilty but whether any potential guilt warrants a death sentence: he still cannot directly confess wrongdoing and responsibility. "Clyde sat there, trying honestly now to think how it really was (exactly) and greatly troubled by his inability to demonstrate to himself even--
either his guilt or his lack of guilt" (853). Demonstration is key, for the ritual of confession and absolution, either through legal or religious institutions, confirms a willingness to make public a recognition of failing a standard with repercussions beyond the self.

"Tst! Tst! Tst! You felt no sorrow? No shame?", McMillan says to force the issue, but Clyde answers without conviction: "Yes, shame, maybe. Maybe sorrow, too, a little. I knew it was terrible. I felt that it was, of course. But still—you see—" (854), evoking silently the spell of Sondra. Maybe, but not certainly, recognizing if not feeling it was terrible, Clyde cannot speak to a contrition he does not accept.

McMillan departs after Clyde’s disclosure, burdened by what he has learned, and "Clyde was left to brood on all he had said—and how it had affected McMillan, as well as himself. His new friend’s stricken mood. The obvious pain and horror with which he viewed it all" (855). What’s telling here is that the Clyde’s attention is on someone other than himself; he seems to accept responsibility for his words to McMillan.

Yet he skirts his judgment a week later. Those who might judge him had not been tortured as he had by Roberta with her determination that he marry her and thus ruin his whole life. They had not burned with that unquenchable passion for the Sondra of his beautiful dream as he had. They had not been harasses, tortured, mocked by the ill-fate of his early life and training, forced to sing and pray on the streets as he
had in such a degrading way, when his whole heart and soul cried out for better things. How could they judge him, these people, all or any one of them, even his own mother, when they did not know what his own mental, physical, and spiritual suffering had been? (857)

The defense sounds thin next to his actions with Roberta, but they are the very words Dreiser might trot out to aid his naturalist protagonist. While within the philosophical world of determinism free will is illusionary, Weatherford would remind us that free will's absence does not absolve us from responsibility. The mistake is believing responsibility can only spring from freedom of choice. A broader reading of the term can recognize that, even if springing from an apparently arbitrary belief system or from innate drives, accountability to other members of that community is necessary for the ongoing survival of that community.

Such a reading fits with what Lorenz argues about Darwinism: not survival of the fittest one, but survival of the fittest subgroup. Individual variation only endures when (1) it proves to have an adaptive advantage over the prevailing paradigm and (2) it can replicate itself through progeny, which it has an instinct to protect. Beyond family, tribal allegiance are no less real because we seem to have no choice about belonging (witness loyal sports fans, who cheer despite their better judgment). Species allegiance means, for instance, that adult dogs do not attack pups, even in so visually disjunctive cases as an old fox terrier overseeing a baby St. Bernard (Lorenz 122).
Denial of in-group rituals marks a transgressor, but not as one who cannot be reintegrated. Reintegration requires first, however, recognition of violation of the standards of the group. A felt sense of transgression requires believing in the rules enough to feel bad about violating them. Clyde's bad feeling springs almost completely from self-interest. Understandably he does not want to die, and he measures his admission of accountability against that deadline. But the value of life, even as conceived by Clyde, is not in isolation, no matter how reoccurring are Clyde's flight fantasies (another shame marker). If an imagined judging other in choice situations might find us wanting, the imagined judging other can also be pleased. For Clyde, this judge is an idealized version of Sondra.

Confession signals to the representative of the community that the transgressor has self-recognition and sees the consequences beyond just the walls of the self. Here again is where shame and guilt diverge. Shamed selves cannot separate their behavior and their essence; to repudiate the action means to deny the core self; unable by design to take such a step, the shamed self imagines retreating. "[A]ssuming himself to be acquitted thereafter, he could go far, far away—to Australia—or Africa—or Mexico—or some such place as that, where, under a different name..." (841). Clyde thinks as he wards off the assault to confess from McMillan. Flight has driven him from Kansas City in Book One and into the woods in Book Two, but after the failure of the legal appeal no such option remains in Book Three.
The ritual of confession separates wrong action from its agent. The forgiveness of sins, a central Christian tenet, recognizes the essential worth of individuals against their worst impulses and actions. One atones for sin, reaffirming one's place in the religious community. Understood this way, morality is essentially social, not abstract or philosophical.

Only after failing his final appeal and facing the last two weeks of his life can Clyde creep close enough to this moral/social recognition. "Would no one ever understand—or give him credit for his human—if all too human and perhaps wrong hungers—yet from which so many others—along with himself suffered?" (864), he thinks, still only dimly sensing the nature of the social world. Affective suffering sparks sympathy, as tears well in our eyes when we see another's tears. The failures do not drive us away from human community, but affirm our connections within it. But shamed individuals who refuses to admit fallibility because their core essence is fused to their action risks never being reintegrated, because they cannot bear facing the reintegration ritual of confession/absolution.

Troubled by what she learns from Rev. McMillan, Elvira Griffiths presses her son to confess in a fuller social sense. In answer to his defense that he has confessed to God and Rev. McMillan, his mother says, "You have told the world that you are innocent. But if you are not you must say so [publicly]" (865). Such a gesture makes sense once morality and social
accountability are wed. This same logic might explain the mission work of Clyde’s family: morality needs to manifest itself in a public context.

"But if my conscience tells me that I am right, is not that enough?"

"No, not if God’s word says differently, Clyde," replied Mrs. Griffiths nervously—and with great inward spiritual torture. (865)

Clyde’s isolation prevents him from finding even in his mother the sympathy and understanding he craves, though he does credit her efforts. Although she

was seeking to aid him with all her strength in her stern and self-sacrificing way,—still he could not turn to her now and tell her, his own mother, just how it all happened. It was as though there was an unsurmountable wall or impenetrable barrier between them, built by the lack of understanding—for it was just that. (866)

The wall cannot be surmounted unless and until Clyde confesses, for that ritual acknowledges an accountability beyond the self, evokes sympathy in the potential judging other, and permits the possibility of reintegration.

As Samuel Johnson observes and Wallace Stevens glosses, death concentrates the mind wonderfully. Days before his execution, the practice of prayer finally makes perfect, with Clyde "himself coming at last to believe, not only must he have faith but that he had it—and peace—complete and secure" (867). The subordinate syntax buries any sense of epiphany suggested by the event and undercuts the sincerity of the public statement that Clyde crafts
with McMillan's help. The statement leaves unsaid the crime and the request
for forgiveness, declaring instead, "God knows where I stand" (868).
Although meant to be a public acknowledgment, these instructional words
read instead as a refusal of any relationship beyond "God knows" what.

And so Clyde takes the death march, buttressed by the hopeful words
of McMillan and Mrs. Griffiths. As with much of Book Three, readers see
more of what Clyde wrought than his own reactions. Wandering the streets
after the execution, McMillan ruminates for hours about how much he did to
save Clyde before joining Mrs. Griffiths in prayer in the company of other
believers.

As does much of the action of Book Three, this last scene and the
"Souvenir" that closes the narrative both proceed without Clyde, whom we
see increasingly from an emotional distance. We learn far more of Rev.
McMillan and Elvira Griffiths than we do about their reclamation project. Even
Clyde's last days in prison are turned by Dreiser into an opportunity to decry
the institution of prisons. We do not even witness Clyde's execution.

If there is a message, it is that Clyde is the hub around which the
wheels of certain subcultures develop. If he himself feels isolated, his
existence brings about certain communion, from the prosecution to the
defense to Rev. McMillan and Mrs. Griffiths, and the community of inmates on
death row whom Clyde comes to know. If the first two books tell the story of
Clyde, Book Three tells the story of institutions: the law, the surrounding New
York rural communities, the world of journalists, the prison, all of which are somewhat beyond Clyde's ken. But they have a momentum to them, a slow grinding functionality that belies Dreiser's uncertainty regarding them. And there's something encouraging there: in the face of a naturalist universe, people can band together and create their own meaning and structure, however unsanctioned by universal authority. Yes, such institutions can crush individuals, but within this narrative those incarcerated are not shown to be without guilt; none of the inmates who die before Clyde is apparently wrongly imprisoned.

The practical result of legal ostracizing, the felt sense of shame, is imprisonment, which does isolate Clyde from those who care about him. On the other hand, he does form a new community in prison, however fleetingly. Erving Goffman's discussion of stigma helps explain the results of ostracizing. The stigmatized largely accept the judgment of the "normals," resulting in feelings of isolation and insecurity. While the stigmatized may find the support of intermediaries, "the wise" with sympathy to the stigma (for example, Rev. McMillan), more often the stigmatized construct their own separate charter and rules. Thus are born organizations such as Alcoholics Anonymous or, more darkly, the Hell's Angels.

Such subgroups avoid the sacrifices implied in allowing their social and personal identities to be dictated by the group of normals, retaining instead control over their ego identities. Individuals must decide whether the benefits
of this subgroup outweigh their limited acceptance within the larger group of normals. A measure of surrendering of ego identity is necessary for any inclusion in an in-group, which does not mean, Goffman insists, that an individual sacrifices a genuine individual voice. Rather, individual identity is sharpened by an awareness of itself relative to social group identity.

Criminals do not always have the option of even tentative acceptance by the group of normals. The subculture that evolves inside and outside of prisons inspires some sermonizing from Dreiser in Book Three, but the mechanics of the criminal subculture are not explored.

Criminologist John Braithwaite advances Goffman's argument further in *Crime, Shame, and Reintegration*, wherein he blueprints a model for shaming to check crime, predicated on keeping criminals from subcultures that full stigmatizing might provoke. Above all, shaming must not really be about core shaming at all. Transgressors must be reincorporated within the legal mainstream by distinguishing for them the agent from the action. By so doing, their stigma of criminal activity and punishment will not result in banishment or retreat because of a core essence threat. The community successfully reintegrates by not passing the responsibility onto a separate legal system from which it keeps its distance, for such a move signals metaphorically to the offenders a linguistic rather than a dialectic difference between transgressors and abiders. Such efforts to reinforce species
identification with all community members help bind citizens together through higher social expectation (moral in Braithwaite’s terms).

Communitarianism, a social web born of mutual obligation, trust, and group loyalty, is the center of Braithwaite’s ideal, for the fabric of connectedness more likely ensures that individuals will not slip through a seam in the system. Witness Clyde’s absence of a support group, which contributes to his complications with Roberta. Residential mobility greatly affects communitarianism, according to Braithwaite. The prosecution uses his transience as a tool against Clyde in court, suggesting that Clyde is not part of the community and thus more likely to trespass its rules and less in need of reintegration as an active community member.

The fragmentation into subgroups born out of some stigma contributes to a loss of social cohesiveness, argues Braithwaite. The problem rests on an overdeveloped belief in rugged individualism, which helped to develop an early capitalist system but which today is at odds with institutional structure within which people work increasingly as teams. Even apart from committee work, intellectual and artistic work increasingly operates within the support structure of government grants and research universities. Braithwaite laments the resistance toward larger structures by people wrapped up in their zealous commitment to individualism. Braithwaite agrees with David Bayley that such individualism makes group sanctioning especially difficult. Such individuals feed off their resistance and cannot be corralled by a consensual set of
beliefs. Individualism helps create a "sanctioning vacuum" (Bayley 124; Braithwaite 170), within which peer sanctioning does not hold because of disjunctions between subcultural norms and larger state norms.

Braithwaite might argue at a slant against Dreiser's representation of the monolithic legal system and its ancillary, the prison system. Such institutions would not be so formidable if citizens were more accountable to each other. So long as individualism thrives in a heterogeneous society, peer shaming pressure can work only when the individual's value system bears some relationship to the state's social/moral rules. The relentless isolation that marks Clyde in Book Two permits him to follow his worst impulses.

Nor does Book Three offer a reprieve. While Clyde organizes the rest of the community in groups, he himself remains removed from a peer group, even removed from the reader's sight. His impulse is to retreat, alone in his prison cell: "How blessed to be able to conceal his face upon a pillow and not let any one see" (797). But in creating his own value system apart from the state's and the community's, Clyde must face only himself as company: "Now there was no one here—no one—in whom he was interested. He could only sit and read—and think—or pretend to be interested in what these others said, for he could not really be interested in what they said" (833-34).

Goffman and Braithwaite warn about criminal subcultures, but no such conspiratory feeling consistently envelops those on death row in Dreiser's narrative. While Dreiser takes pains to draw a few personal sketches of the
men who share Clyde's fate and show how games can be played within the island of their respective cells, Clyde feels removed from whatever communion exists:

Clyde did not care for cards—or for these jibing and coarse hours of conversation. There was for him—and with the exception of the speech of one—Nicholson—alone, too much ribald and even brutal talk which he could not appreciate. (827)

Moreover, the closer each moves toward execution day, the more removed each becomes from the tenuous prison community. The first example that Clyde sees is Pasquale Cutrone, whose imminent execution date isolates him with worry, as he is left behind in frantic prayer while the others assemble in the yard for exercise. His execution draws each man into his own thoughts. With the subsequent execution of Nicholson, Clyde is alone until Rev. McMillan appears.

The prison community, built from rebels and social deviants, provides a dystopian model of the bad society. Even with people who share a willingness to transgress state law, their collective voice is cacophonous, because they share only resistance to a standard rather than a standard of their own. Braithwaite suggest that such a group demands strong state authority, because no peer code sufficiently binds them together. Whatever community exists breaks down as each prisoner confronts the trauma of his own execution.
The communitarian model of Braithwaite uses conscience to replace shame and employs family as the agent of social education. Subsequently, peer groups are created from classmates and coworkers. In all cases, the community takes the first steps to keep violators in line by reinforcing the value of staying connected to the other members of the community.

In the absence of a universal belief system and free will, Dreiser's naturalism supposes a floundering among us, as we are weighed down by factors beyond our control: temperament, class, state institutions, base instincts. But there is a sunny side: we can play our own games, create our own set of rules. As long as we can get people to agree to these rules, their moral authority is ensured, for understood this way morality is first and foremost social. Characters operating in a naturalist world are by habit drawn from the lower classes, Maggies ripe for the picking. But as Weatherford argues, Lorenz sustains, and Braithwaite and Goffman amplify, we don't usually destroy each other. Instead, we work responsibly within a social belief system that permits enough consensus so that the wildest of us can express ourselves. And when we make mistakes, we strive neither to shrug our shoulders nor to flee, but to recognize that the world larger than our own ego has room to take us back when we fail.

Dreiser might or might not accept this sanguine picture. While he rails against the social institutions made of people intent on individual advancement (thus the concern about Clyde's trial in an election year),
suggesting some of the naturalist optimism of Garland and Norris, Clyde does perish. But we all die. Garland and Norris’s optimism is for the community, not necessarily for the individual. Clyde's death is an occasion for creating community, from the lawyers hovering around a crime to Mason empathizing for Titus Alden to the journalists charmed by Elvira Griffiths’s insistent will to the Christian vigil of the last chapter.

Earlier I noted Mitchell’s attention to Dreiser’s repetition in style, reinforced in plot as well. The Clyde who flees at a tragedy in Book One gives birth to the young man who flees at a tragedy at the close of Book Two. Pizer evokes Carrie's rocking chair, moving but not progressing, a judgment consistent with a reading of naturalism constraining individual liberty and self-determination. I suggested then that the movement was less circular than gyral. Just as a falcon’s path changes modestly but retains its pattern far above the falconer’s arm, so the course of Dreiser’s narrative returns again to the same social contexts. Individually such a return reinforces Clyde’s social obtuseness, his refusal to accept social accountability. But just beyond the individual lies the familial level, the place where we first found Clyde, a place where Dreiser returns in the narrative’s closing bookend.

"Souvenir," as Dreiser names this last vignette, suggests titularly an acceptance of remembering, of history, from which we may or may not learn. The street corner preaching looks much the same as the opening bookend, but the older members have been swatted by experience, sadder if not yet
demonstrably wiser. Elvira Griffiths wears a face "seamed with lines of misery and suffering" (871), while her grandson Russell from "some sympathetic understanding" stays close to her side. The collection of believers are met by the uncertain eyes on the street. If we are tempted to read their reaction as indifference, Dreiser's description should stop us:

And as they sang, the nondescript and indifferent street audience gazed, held by the peculiarity of such an unimportant group publicly raising its voice against the vast skepticism and apathy of life.... Of the group, the wife stood out in the eyes of the passers-by as having the force and determination which, however blind or erroneous, makes for self-preservation, if not real success in life.... A kind of hard, fighting faith in the wisdom and mercy of the definite overruling and watchful and merciful power which she proclaimed was written in her every feature and gesture. (873)

Once off the street for the night, Russell runs to the corner store, while his grandmother wonders: "She must be kind to him, more liberal with him, not restrain him too much, as maybe, maybe, she had--She looked affectionately and yet a little vacantly after him as he ran. 'For his sake'" (874).

The oughtness Elvira Griffiths feels here is not abstract, born of allegiance to Christian principles, but experiential, born of the pain of her past. In short, her morality is functional because it is social. Unlike her son, whose stubborn insistence on his own absence of accountability resulted in his
retreat from any communal oughtness and ultimately in his own death, Elvira, like Isabel Archer and Ellen Montgomery before her, recognizes a social accountability beyond herself. Dreiser does not declare it openly, but Clyde's mother shows the awareness of guilt. By so doing, she may rise up out of Carrie's rocking chair and grow in heroic ways suggested by Pizer, even within the confines of naturalism. Determined not to make the same mistakes with her grandson as she did with her son, she does not retreat from the recognition. She remembers.
Notes

1. This issue of prison reform is discussed in greater detail beginning on page 219. I note John Braithwaite's theory of reintegrative shame and the failed communal model of prison subculture. Note also Pizer's discussion of the "extraordinary and excessive" below.

2. Pizer does not resolve the apparent contradiction of heroic action enduring without moral accountability. It may be that characters need to be brave enough to defy the boundaries so that the strengths of the boundaries may be reinforced to the reader. Thus the narrative focuses on Clyde who strikes out on his own rather than on his more contained sister. If heroism resides in Carrie's rocking chair, it may lie in continuing to move even when possibility of progress have been undercut. The social mission of naturalism, which found room for optimism in Garland and Norris, may also be in evidence here. See for instance the end of the narrative, where Dreiser returns to Elvira Griffiths preaching on street corners. See note 3 on progress through experience.

3. Recall that Lee Clark Mitchell sees a similar pattern of linguistic repetition suggesting the futility of reading naturalist experience as a progression. At the close of this chapter I argue that the shape may less a circle and more a falcon's gyre: change comes incrementally through experience. The child may be father to the man, but the man is sometimes different from the father. See page 224.

4. Elvira Griffiths's faith is more functional than this presentation in Book One suggest, but not until the end of the narrative do we see its full political and social strength—and its limitations.

5. Compare this nonunion with the fearful isolation in the prison at the end of Book Three, when each condemned man surrenders the game playing as their trip to the chair grows imminent.

6. John Braithwaite argues that the community uses gossip as a shaming device to keep members of the community in line. Shame controls citizens by instilling fear about the loss of societal approval and by building consciences which control members internally without the presence of external punishment—what we see in Ellen Montgomery as the development of conscience. Gossip is part of the mechanism: private talk among members of the community about the sin with public efforts to reaccept the family of the offender. In response to those who argue against the value of gossip, Braithwaite points out that the gossip needs to be accompanied by reintegrative gestures. Gossip also works by allowing members of the
community to compare their own behavior against the violated standard. "Through listening to and participating in secretive gossip directed at others we learn the circumstances by which people suffer loss of reputation through gossip. Thus, when we engage in comparable behavior ourselves we know that others will be gossiping about us even though we do not hear it directly. We have learnt the culture" (76).

7. Note the echoes of gender-associated size and strength in this encounter, consistent with Kaufman's description of gender scripts and ideologies. If Clyde is to risk being judged for his indiscretion, he needs to have the consolation of superior masculinity. Such a construction suggests that the potential judging other is working with a shame model rather than a guilt model, since behavior admits to modification but size does not. I may have done something wrong (guilt/action), but I am still more of a man than you are (shame/core essence). Clyde confirms this association between physical power and value with Sondra, in whose company he shows his natural talent for waterskiing and tennis and whom he first impresses when they dance together at a winter ball.

8. Ellen Moers clearly traces Dreiser's religious background, reinforcing the idea that though he left faith behind he could not dismiss it. The model for Asa Griffiths was Dreiser's own father. According to Moers, Sarah Dreiser, the model for Elvira Griffiths, showed a Christian charity that accepted moral and worldly failure in her family and the larger world. Moers sums up:

The life utterly dominated by faith was not something Dreiser bought and then in turn sold to his readers; it was something he accepted with wonder, for he had seen it lived by his father and by a series of eccentric 'religionists' who crossed his path. He knew it brought peace, that it made trouble, that it spread charity, that in the American context it was ineffectual and thoroughly ridiculous (18).

Even in a world without free will, Moers argues that Dreiser presents two paths, "clearly marked: one that leads to salvation, and one that leads the other way" (19). Moers wisely does not suggest a clear resolution to the conflict, but she does make clear that however uncertain Dreiser was about his religious baggage, he did not pick up his pen without it.
EPILOGUE

When people start condemning all forms of shame, Miss Manners worries. How are people supposed to feel when they have been rude? "Proud," many would say. When they trample on others' feelings, they don't feel ashamed—but proud of asserting themselves. When they insult others to their faces, they feel proud of having been honest, or charitably instructive.¹

This project has aimed to trace shame in character across a century's worth of representative American narrative writing. I don't mean to suggest that these are the best or only texts for my study. Even in their representativeness, they fall short of definitiveness. Hawthorne's version of romance has, for example, more complicating wrinkles than Cooper's more streamlined version had. Although both find a usable past to situate romance, Hawthorne anticipates the greater psychological complexities of realistic fiction in the second half of the century. Leon Wurmser recognizes in Hester Prynne a useful model for discussing shame, though he wrongly credits her with details of affective response unavailable to her. For all the
brooding moral ambiguity of *The Scarlet Letter*, lingering affective reactions are not part of these characters' range. Compare for instance the confrontation scene between Isabel Archer and Madame Merle in *The Portrait of a Lady* to the confrontation between Chillingworth and Dimmesdale near the end of Hawthorne's narrative:

> The physician knew, then, that, in the minister's regard, he was no longer a trusted friend, but his bitterest enemy. So much being known, it would appear natural that a part of it should he expressed. It is singular, however, how long a time often passes before words embody things; and with what security two persons, who choose to avoid a certain subject, may approach its very verge, and retire without disturbing it. Thus, the minister felt no apprehension that Roger Chillingworth would touch, in express words, upon the real position which they sustained towards one another. Yet did the physician, in his dark way, creep frightfully near the secret. (151-152)

Rather than show the response, Hawthorne tells us, explaining it in a way that James does not. The illusion of character choice is decreased by Hawthorne's authorial gloss, as he reinforces the role these characters play in the parable he is presenting to readers.

> The ambiguity that a lighter authorial touch permits remains the realm of more realistic fiction. While Harold Kolb notes that the moral ambiguity of *The Scarlet Letter* allows for a greater kinship to realism than otherwise would
be present, he notes that enthusiasts for realism stopped short with certain features of Hawthorne's text. Yes, the ambiguity created a space for psychological complexity, but Hawthorne filled that space with elements of the supernatural that might also be read psychologically. Most noticeably, the last chapter of *The Scarlet Letter* records the observations of interested onlookers to Dimmesdale's bared chest, which may or may not have shown a parallel letter to Hester's embroidered one.

"May or may not" hallmarks Hawthorne's version of the romance, seen through the moonlight, a description included in "The Custom House" as well as many short stories ("My Kinsman, Major Molineux," for instance). Although Hawthorne is careful to avoid declaring the actual against what is perceived, this ambiguity acknowledges the supernatural in a way at odds with more established realistic fiction.

Yet the supernatural makes more sense than a deeper psychological reading when we remember that Hawthorne's appeal is to representative rather than particular souls. We ruminate about the minister's black veil as a device that says something about the human condition rather than about the actual person who would don such garbs. The psychological complexity lies in moral ambiguity, resulting not in psychologically complex characters but psychologically complex parables.

The constraints of genre for Hawthorne's characters mean coming to terms with their degree of perceived choice and the limits of character
mutability. Reading themselves as essentialist means reading in their actions a sense of doom, evident in Dimmesdale's inability to accept the value of good deeds. Certainly the scarlet A on Hester's chest is meant to connect to essence. It marks her not as acting sinfully but as being a sinner. Nor does Hester initially resist this representation of herself.

"The Market-Place" chapter presents an apparently perfect shame scene, with Hester and her baby on the scaffold in front of the towns people. The willingness of the community to forgive and reintegrate the transgressor signals the degree to which they read her sin as revealing her core inadequacy. On a literal level, Hester must accept their judgment, in that they have incarcerated her. Still, for the material judgment to manifest itself internally, Hester must accept that the judgment rendered against her is correct; her internal judging other must coincide with the external actual judgments. She answers their look with "a burning blush, and yet a haughty smile" (39)—a conditional but resistant acceptance. Hawthorne adds that despite her smile Hester feels the weight of their judging eyes upon her: "It was almost intolerable to be borne" (41).

Even as Hester feels the oppressive weight of the crowd, so strong that she feels a urge to throw herself from the scaffold or go mad, another part of her rises up and transports her and the reader to another time and place, her upbringing in England. "Yet there were intervals when the whole scene, in which she was the most conspicuous object, seemed to vanish from her eyes,
or at least, glimmered indistinctly before them, like a mass of imperfectly shaped and spectral images" (42). Hawthorne gives Hester and us imagination as a shield against internalizing the crowd's judgment. By so doing, he creates a space for the romance writer, less fettered by allegiance to actual history--compare this gesture to Cooper's *Notions of the Americans*, for instance. But the imagination in Hawthorne's romance can also deceive characters into visions and judgments at odds with the larger community.

Hawthorne wants us to understand the power and the limitation of communal judgments. Internal or private judgments can be more overwhelming. Aptly, Hawthorne turns to "The Recognition" shared between Hester and Chillingworth, who catches her eye from the back of the crowd. Anonymous judgments matter less than his, and when their eyes meet in "so fixed a gaze, that, at moments of intense absorption, all other objects in the visible world seemed to vanish, leaving only him and her" (46). The crowd now ironically shields her from too intense a confrontation with her husband:

Dreadful as it was, she was conscious of a shelter in the presence of these thousand witnesses. It was better to stand thus, with so many betwixt him and her, than to greet him, face to face, they two alone. She fled for refuge, as it were, to the public exposure, and dreaded the moment when its protection should be withdrawn from her. (46)

A consecration of its own, and a violation of its own: the narrative continually forces us to see the conflict between private and public judgments
and the degree to which the individual must accept the larger judgment for it
to have a lasting psychological effect.

Developing the psychology in specific detail remains outside of
Hawthorne's interests. "The Interview" between estranged husband and wife
has none of the affective markers of psychological realism nor even the
intensity of condemnation that Hester herself fears. Both read as actors, not
as individuals. If Chillingworth subsequently dons the robes of the avenging
husband, Hester remains a metaphor walking among the townspeople:

the accumulating days, and added years, would pile up their misery
upon the heap of shame. Throughout them all, giving up her
individuality, she would become the general symbol at which the
preacher and moralist might point, and in which they might vivify and
embody their images of woman's frailty and sinful passion. (55-56)

As surely as her husband relishes his new role, Hester seems to
accept hers, since she surely could leave Boston rather than remaining on the
edge of the community. Yet she herself imagines no release; "The chain that
bound her here was of iron links, and galling to her inmost soul, but never
could be broken" (56). Bound to the community, she nonetheless feels
forever estranged from it:

Every gesture, every word, and even the silence of those with whom
she came in contact, implied, and often expressed, that she was
banished, and as much alone as if she inhabited another sphere, or
communicated with the common nature by other organs and senses than the rest of human kind. (59)

By the end of the narrative, Hester is perceived differently. She herself believes that her suffering gives her a greater capacity for empathy—"a sympathetic knowledge of the hidden sin in other hearts" (61)—but it isn’t until later that townspeople share her recognition: "people brought all their sorrows and perplexities, and besought her counsel, as one who had herself gone through a mighty trouble" (177).

Suffering generates empathy but also change. Hester’s ability to recreate herself results in the townspeople rereading her role:

Such helpfulness was found in her,—so much power to do, and power to sympathize,—that many people refused to interpret the scarlet A by its original signification. They said that it meant Able; so strong was Hester Prynne, with a woman’s strength. (110-111)

This change is paramount as well read in terms of shame and guilt, for Hester has shaken off the restrains of romance’s essentialist vision for characters, and insisted on the possibilities of reeducating herself, much as she earns the right before the governor to raise Pearl to transcend her mother’s sins. In choosing "Able" as her new moniker, the community is according Hester the ability to move from a judgment rooted in essence, in being, towards a judgment rooted in doing, in action.

235
Hester encourages Dimmesdale in like fashion in the forest, pleading with him not to be paralyzed by his shame but to act: "Preach! Write! Act! Do anything, save to lie down and die! Give up this name of Arthur Dimmesdale, and make thyself another, and a high one, such as thou canst wear without fear or shame" (135).

Dimmesdale sees his failure as intractable, and so processes his transgression as shame rather than guilt. Nonetheless, Hawthorne points out that his sin has created an empathetic understanding similar to Hester’s:

But this very burden it was, that gave him sympathies so intimate with the sinful brotherhood of mankind; so that his heart vibrated in unison with theirs, and received their pain into itself and sent its own throb of pain through a thousand other hearts, in gushes of sad, persuasive eloquence. (98)

Conversely, Chillingworth’s actions have recreated him in a fashion that suggests the lingering essentialism of romance. Seven years after beginning his torment of Dimmesdale, Chillingworth “was a striking evidence of man’s faculty of transforming himself into a devil, if he will only, for a reasonable space of time, undertake a devil’s office” (116).

Chillingworth does not become evil, he becomes the devil, the letter difference that separates an action model from an essence model. Nor as child does Pearl seem to rise above her allegorical purpose, even in the forest as Hester and Dimmesdale reunite. Even if we allow the uncertainty of
perception to erase the mark on Dimmesdale's chest in the last chapter, we must come to terms with his death from the experience, a hyperbole consistent with the comet across the sky that starred in the second scaffold scene. Such melodrama lies outside the bounds of psychological realism.

Stubbornly, romantically, Dimmesdale also may be endurably bound by shame, so that when he adopts a new belief system of the forest, he transgresses openly against the townspeople, because he doesn't recognize a social duty to them; he imagines his imagination is all. In this respect, he misses morality as rooted in social rather than private duty. In contrast, Hester has moved from an Anne Hutchinson antinomian vision of a private morality to a recognition of a public duty and morality.

While Hester Prynne individually remains allegorical, she models some psychological change in the course of The Scarlet Letter. Reconfiguring the A on her chest suggests that its mark is less a tattoo (in contrast to Uncas) than a changeable garment. While locating the psychological complexity of the text in its characters is a less certain task, nonetheless Hester's movement heralds a shift from essentialism to mutability, from shame and retreat to guilt and social accountability. As such, Hawthorne's romance amounts to a critique of the conventions within which he is writing, although he is not willing to move beyond them.
Shifting from romance to the bildungsroman enables the possibilities of character reconfiguration further, as we have seen in the growth of Ellen Montgomery from willful individual to domesticated future wife. If the romance has largely static characters, the bildungsroman insists on the possibilities of self-improvement, if sometimes at the painful prodding of external disciplinarians. This urgency towards correcting immature behavior demands an evolution from the self-involved retreat of shame to the socially responsive expression of guilt, which seeks corrective action against the wounded other.

One aspect of maturation in Warner's world involved putting away novels in favor of more didactic books. Instruction may be silly for predestined characters but not for ones who can make their own fate. Likewise, the edict against reading novels in *The Wide, Wide World* has its counterpart in other texts designed less to delight than to instruct. Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* aims higher than the pleasure of tracing its parallel plots. Topsy is the flip side not simply of Eva but Ellen Montgomery, a child who needs instruction to be rehabilitated. Note that rehabilitation is possible: Topsy's recklessness does not mark her permanently as incorrigible, just as the South itself might be turned from its immoral stubbornness. And so Ophelia takes Topsy under her wing, to test the possibilities of the bildungsroman. "[S]o thoroughly efficient was Miss Ophelia in her conscientious endeavor to do her duty by her eleve, that the child rapidly grew in grace and in favor with the family and neighborhood"
Stowe informs us as she ties up the strings of her narrative. "[T]he same activity and ingenuity which, when a child, made her so multiform and restless in her developments, is now employed, in a safer and wholesome manner, in teaching the children of her own country [that is, Africa]" (612).

Duty and discipline are manifest in Stowe as surely as in Warner; both posit the growth of character; both see that such maturation takes a firm hand. Stowe describes Ophelia as part of an efficiency ensemble:

[O]ther are women who have an extraordinary talent for command, and tact in educating. Such are enabled, with apparent ease, and without severity, to subject to their will, and bring into harmonious and systematic order, the various members of their small estate. (308-309)

The movement towards correctable character requires throwing off the yoke of people as property, as exchangeable commodities. Discipline as sport has been condemned in Mr. Saunders in The Wide, Wide World, and likewise Stowe condemns the killing of Prue in her narrative. Without autonomy, without freedom of choice, what is the incentive for correcting action? And for the masters, without consequence, where is comeuppance?

The conversation that Prue's death sparks between Augustine and Ophelia might read differently if we suppose their talk pits the genre of romance, with static characters, against the genre of the bildungsroman. Defending essentialism, Augustine answers his cousin:
"If low-minded, brutal people will act like themselves, what am I to do? they have absolute control; they are irresponsible despots. There would be no use in interfering; there is no law that amounts to anything practically, for such a case. The best we can do is to shut our eyes and ears, and let it alone. . . If we are to be prying and spying into all the dismalness of life, we should have no heart to anything. 'T is like looking too close into the details of Dinah's kitchen." (328)

Ophelia in turn pleads for him to do something and stop defending slavery: "Of course, you defend it,—you all do,—all you Southerners. What do you have slaves for, if you don't?" But Augustine will have none of it: "Are you such a sweet innocent as to suppose nobody in this world ever does what they don't think is right? Don't you, or didn't you ever, do anything that you did not think quite right?" (329). St. Clare refuses to accept the admonishments of his cousin, because he reads his situation as essentialist and thereby irrelevant to guilt. The corrective action of solving the Gordian knot of slavery requires a larger sword than he can imagine.

All talk and no action, Augustine finally does right by interceding in a knife fight between two drunks, though he dies in the process. Whether the action means that Augustine has answered his natural self or grown as a character under the tutelage of Uncle Tom, little Eva, and Ophelia remains uncertain, however. In his regret, Augustine suggests some of the intractability and essentialism of shame. He reads the institution of slavery
and the South's role in it as incorrigible. "The thing itself is the essence of all abuse!" (332), he declares to his cousin. Caught up still in the luxuries slavery provides, he cannot shake his stupor, despite his self-recognition.

Although he writes up papers to free Tom, St. Clare waits too long. His death in turns brings about Uncle Tom's death. St. Clare's problems are embodied in his effete servant, Adolph, whom Stowe describes as "Thoughtless and self-indulgent, and unrestrained by a master who found it easier to indulge than to regulate" (306).

Stowe's mission is like her minister father's, evangelical (small wonder that the heroine's name echoes evangelism). Evangelism seeks not simply right thinking but social action. We can imagine in a parallel world an irate Eva saying to her father that all his talk is idleness when there is corrective action to be done, precisely the speech that Ophelia does give her cousin.

Despite her sermonizing, Stowe is not simply providing a jeremiad for readers. Her presentation is more complicated, suggesting a nod to the realistic novel, metaphorically represented by Dinah's kitchen, whence comes food whose prepatory logic is not easily deduced.

But it was very seldom that there was any failure in Dinah's last results. Though her mode of doing everything was peculiarly meandering and circuitous, and without any sort of calculation as to time and place,—though her kitchen generally looked as if it had been arranged by a hurricane blowing through it,—yet, if one would have patience to wait

241
her own good time, up would come her dinner in perfect order, and in a style of preparation with which an epicure could find no fault. (311)

The detailed description of Dinah's kitchen is circuitous but pleasurable, in a certain way unregulated, with narrative cubbyholes that make for interesting reading. Those otherwise resistant to Stowe's message may be lulled, then, by the intricacies of plot. Moreover, the moral ambiguities of slavery—Adolph is perversely very comfortable—need to be played out within a less didactic form than romance affords. By permitting a lingering look at individual suffering, Stowe makes her larger moral point more persuasive.

Like Ophelia in conversation with her recalcitrant cousin, Stowe will not settle for the nonaction turning away of shame. She wants the reading public to see the transgression as rooted in guilt, which can be corrected with right social action.

These two readings suggest other texts that can be illuminated by the application of the shame model detailed in the body of this dissertation. Not all narratives fit neatly into genre categories, but in their resistance, distinctions about character choice and accountability are often brought into relief. Other naturalist texts, for example, may read the genre restraints differently from Dreiser. Edna Pontellier in Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* may ponder how to negotiate issues of choice in a world that from her perspective, swimming out for the territory, may seem naturalistic, although
we as readers need not surrender the realistic reading that the body of the narrative has already established. We may reasonably be frustrated by her failure to accept the measure of apparent choice available to her; we may wonder why she cannot find a corrective social action that treats her malaise as responsive to action. Such a reading posits the text as realistic, as one in which character can take action that has a social weight. Conversely, if we classify her struggle as naturalistic, we may see the global sense of failure that accompanies her apparent sense of surrender as logical, a shamed response to an essentialist universe.

I do not mean to be anachronistic in my application of twentieth-century medicine to nineteenth-century wounds. We are late twentieth-century readers looking at representations of experience that endure in large part because their conflicts are, like shame, universal. As Silvan Tomkins demonstrates, shame triggers may differ, but all of us feel shame. Literature exists to be coopted; we take on experience beyond ourselves and our time.

I do think that these texts show not that genre definitions bound authors, but that the texts these writers created establish precedents for the genres that over time became more than habits. The possibilities of choice that writers allow their characters in part reflect the openness of the readers whom these writers imagine. Shame is a useful tool because it presses up against the edge of what is permissible, a traditionally American impulse.
Whether American individualism is qualitatively different from individualism throughout Western culture remains a source of contention. Certainly American literature borrowed completely from Europe throughout the 1800s. There was no compelling reason not to. That said, the son sees matters differently from the father, as Harold Bloom's *The Anxiety of Influence* suggests. The weight of history and culture in Europe on developing American culture understandably threatened American writers, even as they freely consumed European culture as models. Robert Weisbuch argues that American writers looked to Britain but with uncertainty, with a mixture of resentment and denial, trying to find a way to escape its domination. British writers for their part snubbed American culture. And American writers looked for alibis for the lack of a developed national literature. It was in response to contemporary writers that nineteenth-century writers were most threatened, for they looked to Shakespeare et al as part of their shared past. One method for dealing with the weight of European culture was to deny it altogether, to run away.

This impulse to flee, in characters from Natty Bumppo to Clyde Griffiths, may not be exceptionally American, though the acceptability of expressing this impulse may be, if not exclusively American, then at least tellingly American. Close quarters force compromises and concessions that wide open spaces do not, as Ellen Montgomery demonstrates. We laud the myth of the American cowboy because some part of us respects running
away rather than staying and compromising, a retreating impulse that some
批评家，例如John Braithwaite，认为这种做法过于个人主义。我们
也赞赏这个神话，因为逃跑的结果使西部对定居者开放。拥有逃跑的空间是
我们的地理学提供的奢侈，而欧洲则不能。那些定居美国的人，从某种意义上说，
是到一个允许他们表达的空间。我们的文化表扬这种逃跑的冲动，通过追随Huck Finn
与Jay Gatsby、Rabbit Angstrom和Isadora Jong。然而，不清楚这种版本的美国个人主义
是否可以被任何其他有空间的殖民文化，如澳大利亚，感受到。

作为一个新兴的国家，与英国和欧洲站在对立面，美国展示了一些特征
性的羞辱自我，对自身的不足进行深思。Cooper认为，只有通过历史的行动，美国
能够摆脱这种本质主义的自我认识。在缺乏历史的情况下，如Weisbuch所指出的，
其他如浪漫主义等类型，通过想象，找到了支持。由于浪漫主义允许更大的退缩，
美国可能比欧洲更慢地产生令人信服的现实主义小说。

尽管Cooper对美国文学文化表示担忧，但Cooper到Dreiser的一个世纪
只是美国丰富文学历史的一个核心样本。尽管如此，今天仍然存在
浪漫主义。也存在历史小说。

245
naturalism, and instructional fiction (most young adult fiction qualifies, as does The Turner Diaries, to cite a notorious recent example). Looking beyond the end date of my study, we can see why character-driven psychological fiction marks this century’s standard. The loss of consensual belief systems (the loss of the belief in technological progress, God, the progress of history) is stylistically represented by a fracturing of coherent collective representation, encouraged by Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle. Consequently, we get several voices in The Sound and the Fury, Ulysses, The Waves, and Rashomon, because sophisticated readers can no longer trust the universal claims of authorial perspective.

The consequence for any application of shame psychology is that these increasingly niched characters fail to find a sense of communal connection to which they might make themselves accountable. While guilt and shame both require an internal judging other confirming any external judgment, it is nonetheless true that guilt posits more clearly a trespass in action, an experiential event that apology or confession can rectify. Guilt is at root communal, shame is at root isolating. On the other hand of shame’s failure to establish reliable community is the binary excess of hubris, wherein characters, freed of accountability, can universalize their solipsism, becoming their own Yahweh (Robert Coover’s Universal Baseball Association). By losing an omniscient authorial point of view, much twentieth-century fiction admits to the arbitrariness of community, at the cost of valorizing individual
perspective. The polyphony in Faulkner, for example, is largely cacophonous.
All the Bundrens may be traveling together to town in *As I Lay Dying*, but each travels alone in their own perspective.

Among the areas of shame inquiry only suggested by my study is shame's relationship to physical and imaginative space away from community, evident in the romance tradition of Cooper and even the remote New York lakes where Clyde plans to drown Roberta. Richard Poirier finds in this space opportunities for rhetorical stylistic freedom. Frederick Turner's thesis about the western movement into the frontier defining American thought speaks to this impulse to leave behind civilization and history. Americans can imagine a place away from their community in large part because America literally has the space for such flights of fancy. Turner defines the frontier as "the meeting point between savagery and civilization" (qtd. in Smith 251), a metaphor that works for shame as well—those who exist on the edge of decorum define the parameters for the rest of us.

Henry Nash Smith questions a foundation of democracy built with the receding sandstone of Turner's frontier. With the settling of the West, American democracy would not have the nourishment of nature to feed itself. Nor does Turner's agrarian vision accommodate the growing industrialization of America. In its retreating impulse and willful blindness to the new American order, the frontier thesis showed the markers of a shame response,
refusing to face and negotiate a system that threatens to change a core conception of itself. Smith adds that the refusal of community had global consequences: an agrarian vision helped sustain isolationism, whose blinders made it difficult to imagine a connection to a larger world. In choosing to look inward towards its rural interior rather than to its European roots, in perpetuating, in Turner's own words, a "contemptuous indifference" (qtd. in Smith 260) to the social forms of Europe, agrarianism showed America as the stigmatized other, too fearful of its own inferiority to confront the judging other of European culture and history. Weisbuch's portrait of American resentment and denial suggests a similar shame response.

Americans are made up of people who left their home lands, who were willing to choose individual liberty over communal duty. We may be less willing to take on the hard business of swallowing our own desires for more communal ones. Accountabilities involve coming to terms with people one cannot run away from. The space to run away helps perpetuate narcissism by not fencing in ego impulses. The cowboy and the farmer can be friends only if they accept a communal allegiance to each other.

A related avenue for exploration relative to shame, suggested in the last image of Elvira Griffiths and Isabel Archer, is its relationship to history. A perfect memory means many grudges. A place of second chances, that can reclaim Richard Nixon more than once and offer a haven for Madame Merle, is a cultural community also with a shallow sense of history. It means that we
forgive largely because we forget. A shallow history helped sustain an American cultural inferiority complex, noted by Irving and Cooper among others, one that endures in pockets today. Claiming history required more history, specifically shared history, even shared wounds, as with the South. We may feel guilt for deeds we have done, but at least this history gives us a locus for our feelings. Claiming history also means recognizes a connection to our European roots, against our retreating agrarian impulses.

In writing about the fictive narrative form, I am conscious as well that even its evolution might be read with this shame model. The romance novel was considered beneath the station of serious writers. Hawthorne notes in "The Custom House" the scorn that his antecedents might place upon him because of his profession:

No aim, that I have ever cherished, would they recognize as laudable; no success of mine . . . would they deem otherwise as worthless, if not positively disgraceful. 'What is he? . . . A writer of story-books! What kind of a business in life,—what mode of glorifying God, or being serviceable to mankind in his day and generation,—may that be?'

(9-10)

The Puritanism against which Hawthorne constructs The Scarlet Letter still endured mid-century when Hawthorne wrote his narrative. The apologies made by characters in Warner and James suggest that the novel remained throughout the century a source of some embarrassment and uncertainty,
largely because of its perceived nonutilitarianism, its apparent refusal of social
duty.

I think we might be willing to progress towards a more socially dutiful
guilt if we could just figure out to what party we should make our confession.
The heteroglossia of America undercuts some of our ability to create
consensus, without which belief systems becomes that much more obviously
arbitrary. An intractable belief system, however misguided, is a powerful
binding force. As Americans, we are bound by the abstractions of freedom.
We are free to recreate ourselves if we're involved in killing a child in Kansas
City, as Clyde Griffiths is. Without the weight of strong communal ties, we
are more likely to skirt our human responsibilities to one another. Internally
consistent belief systems don't by themselves create community. One reason
we see a resurgence in popular attention to shame, from cover stories in
Newsweek to John Bradshaw seminars, is that we don't know the
reparational steps needed to deal with feelings of inadequacy.

Implicit in the apparently shameless is their defiance or ignorance of
the conventions that ought to make them ashamed. We marvel at the guests
on Jerry Springer and at Orenthal Simpson's enduring smile, because of their
alienness to what we understand to be the range of acceptable human
behavior. This phenomenon is at the root of our interest in shame, and family
values. The transgressors will always ironically help define our own sense of
community by negation. As Miss Manners observes, we ought to call them
on their transgressions and ask them to recognize a larger interest and allegiance than themselves.

But Braithwaite, Goffman, Scheff and Retzinger all warn us not to mark transgressors as tattooed outcasts. So does Hawthorne. The shame that returns as rage can be diffused if we offer the means of reintegration through a separation of deed and agent. Despite the temptation, we ought not let the shamed retreat, whether that self is others or ourselves. We ought not to forget the failure, but we ought to work to forgive it. This same lesson has been offered in the evolution of Hester Prynne and Uncle Tom and Elvira Griffiths after them. In remembering the past and excusing it, we show ourselves equal to the task of mercy.
Notes


2. See endnote 6 in chapter one. Cooper was concerned with the inability of American writers to match the established culture and history of Europe. In the absence of such specific conventions and history, American writers filled in the spaces with imagination. See also my discussion of Robert Weisbuch's *Atlantic Double-cross*, below.
WORKS CITED


256


257


258


