New Women and Eugenic Fictions
by Chris Waters

Angelique Richardson, ***Love and Eugenics in the Late Nineteenth Century: Rational Reproduction and the New Woman***, Oxford University Press, 2003; xvii + 264 pp.; £47.00 hbk; ISBN 0-19-818700-9.

In 1907 the popular writer Elinor Glyn, author of some twenty-two novels and numerous screenplays, essays and short stories during a prolific writing career that

spanned the period from the 1890s through to the 1930s, achieved sudden notoriety with her erotic tale of lust, seduction, adultery and exotic foreign adventure, *Three Weeks*. Published by Duckworth, the book sold 50,000 copies within three weeks of its initial publication. It was soon banned in Boston after being deemed obscene, gave rise to a parody by a so-called Ellova Gryn, *Too Weak*, became a Hollywood box-office success in 1924 and was reprinted in 1974 with an introduction by Cecil Beaton – that incurable romantic of a different persuasion. The novel was subsequently adapted for television and finally canonized as a modern classic by Virago in 1996. Glyn was, to borrow from the title of one of her biographers, 'addicted to romance': a point not lost on Barbara Cartland who would later condense several works by Glyn, including them in her own series, 'Barbara Cartland's Library of Love'. *Three Weeks* pushed the portrayal of sex to the limits when it appeared, scandalous for its celebration of an adulterous affair initiated by an older woman. For this it has been justly remembered. It is the story of Paul Verdayne, a young Englishman sent abroad by his aristocratic parents to break up an unsuitable match with a parson's daughter. In Lucerne he meets a mysterious woman, a Balkan queen on the run from her cruel, degenerate husband. They spend three weeks together enjoying passionate sex on a tiger-skin rug amidst exotic flowers. She leaves without revealing her identity, subsequently giving birth to a son and telling Paul that he is the father. Three years later she sends for him. Soon thereafter she is killed by her jealous husband, who is subsequently killed by her personal servants. The son, conceived out of wedlock, is proclaimed king, a healthy son from healthy English stock.[1]

If *Three Weeks* is a sensational novel of sex and adultery, it is also a eugenic novel, as both David Trotter and George Robb have pointed out. While a steamy tale of adultery might have been unacceptable to many readers in 1907, Glyn's focus was as much on racial regeneration as it was on sexual awakening: a significant part of the novel consists of the mysterious lady's lectures to Paul on the need to be true to his racial heritage. In short, Glyn advocated free love in her novel in eugenic terms: she glorified adultery as a eugenic act and celebrated the ways in which a strong-willed woman bypassed her own insane and degenerate husband in the pursuit of a viable heir, in this instance an heir ennobled by the infusion of aristocratic English blood.[2] Moreover, Glyn was not alone around the *fin-de-siècle* in addressing contemporary anxieties about degeneration and the need for eugenic remedies through her fiction. As Angelique Richardson argues in her recent study of the better-known New Women writers – especially Sarah Grand, George Egerton and Mona Caird – eugenic concerns pervaded their more highbrow fiction and essays as well. While the late Victorian and Edwardian New Woman has often been cast as a proto-feminist by scholars who have privileged issues of gender and focused especially on her struggle for independence and equality, Richardson argues that in so doing they have often overlooked the ways in which many New Women writers were deeply concerned with many other pressing social questions as well. In short, if the crucial eugenic subplot of Glyn's *Three Weeks* has rarely been dissected, neither, argues Richardson, have the eugenic enthusiasms of the New Woman.

At the heart of Richardson's book is a much-repeated insistence that the 'development of the idea of eugenics as rational reproduction in late Victorian Britain has been largely overlooked'.[3] She dismisses much of the secondary literature, arguing that feminist historians and literary critics alike have been reluctant to accept the role played by women in the early history of the eugenic

movement. She contends that their focus on the gendered politics of the New Woman obscures the extent to which that politics was 'cut through by national and imperial concerns', that Sarah Grand has been generally celebrated as an unproblematic feminist, her work removed 'from the issues of national health and class with which she was heavily engaged', and that Mona Caird's dissent from the social purity movement and her sustained attack on eugenic thought remains 'largely overlooked'. In short, asks Richardson, why has eugenic feminism 'been neglected?'.[4]

On a number of levels, Richardson is right to ask this question, given that early work on the New Woman was particularly keen on planting her firmly within a feminist tradition that remained deeply uncomfortable with any form of biological essentialism. A dozen years ago, for example, I could explore the attempts made by several women writers around the turn-of-the-century to articulate through their fiction both a radical socialist and feminist politics, while wholly overlooking the extent to which one of them – Jane Hume Clapperton – also championed eugenics.[5] Nevertheless, although some scholars have indeed been reluctant to consider their heroes' engagement with dubious, eugenic ideas, many works do explore the issues Richardson says have been ignored, works to which she sometimes refers in her notes but with which she rarely engages critically in her text. In his early work on the eugenics movement, for example, Richard Soloway examined the role played by suffragists in the Eugenics Society and argued that for many female champions of eugenic ideas 'the defense of their maternal role became an important weapon in guaranteeing them an essential place in a rapidly changing world'.[6] Soloway's work has been followed by a flood of important studies in the last decade, most notably Lucy Bland's. Carefully tracing the ways in which many purity feminists both appropriated and subverted the language of eugenics, Bland has explored the connections that were posited between genetic purity and moral purity, arguing that many activists saw in eugenics the potential for the scientific validation and reinforcement of their moral-purity beliefs.[7] Moreover, while neither Soloway nor Bland explores the ways in which a number of writers of New Woman fiction engaged with contemporary eugenic thought, this, too, has recently been the subject of careful investigation – especially by Teresa Mangum, who devotes a chapter of her study of Sarah Grand to questions of feminism and eugenics. Similarly, Carolyn Burdett has deftly explored the ways in which Olive Schreiner negotiated the eugenic thought of Karl Pearson, Francis Galton's protégé and the most important champion of serious eugenic research in Britain in the first third of the twentieth century, arguing that his romantic and idealist vision of the nation-state was integral to the arguments made by Schreiner and other turn-of-the-century feminists for women's emancipation.[8]

If the role played by eugenic ideas in a number of late Victorian and Edwardian feminist circles has been investigated in recent years, our picture of the period's New Woman is also more complicated than Richardson suggests it once was. It has been almost three decades since Gail Cunningham published her pioneering account of the *fin-de-siècle* New Woman and some fifteen years since Ann Ardis explored the ways in which the fictional writing of the New Woman had been excluded from genealogies of modernism and then proceeded carefully to reconstruct the New Woman's political and literary achievements.[9] For some time now it has hardly been the case that we have viewed the *fin-de-siècle* New Woman merely in terms of a narrow struggle solely for women's independence. As Sally Ledger has reminded us, the New Woman enjoyed multiple identities: she was at various times 'a feminist activist, a social reformer, a popular novelist, a suffragette playwright, a woman poet'. In addition, she was also 'a fictional construct, a discursive response to the activities of the late nineteenth-century women's movement'.[10] As Richardson herself admits, in the last two decades work by historians and literary critics alike has established the centrality of the New Woman to late Victorian culture, a claim she advances with Chris Willis in their superb co-edited collection of essays on the New Woman, many of which were first read at an important conference on the subject held at the Institute of English Studies at the University of London in 1988.[11] Both in this impressive volume and in her more recent, voluminous collection of historical sources, *Women Who Did: Stories by Men and Women, 1890–1914* (2002), Richardson has been in the forefront of expanding our knowledge of the complexities of the New Woman, of her politics and aspirations, and of the ideas that shaped the movement's fiction.

Given that Richardson is more than familiar with the extensive literature on the New Woman, it is curious and disconcerting that she should ignore or dismiss a good deal of it in order to carve out a space in which she can insist on the originality of her own claims. Those claims, however – about the role played by eugenic thought in the shaping of the maternalist politics of New Women writers – are important. Moreover, Richardson is nothing but thorough and systematic in her exploration of the work of those New Women writers (especially Egerton and Grand) who often articulated their concerns through the language of eugenics. Like the social purity campaigners Ellice Hopkins and Frances Swiney, Richardson argues, such women shared widespread contemporary anxieties about degeneration and the problem of urban poverty in *fin-de-siècle* Britain and called for new forms of socially regenerative motherhood, which they justified in eugenic terms. Advancing a new, maternalist agenda for the nation, the 'eugenic feminists' had as their central goal 'the construction of civic motherhood which sought political recognition for reproductive labour'. Moreover, in 'the wake of new biological knowledge', Richardson claims, 'they argued that their contribution to nation and empire might be expanded if they assumed responsibility for the rational selection of reproductive partners'.[12] Through a detailed examination of pre and post-Darwinian theories of evolution and an assessment of the eugenic ideas of both Galton and Pearson, Richardson explores the varied meanings that the 'new biological knowledge' could have for its feminist enthusiasts. Subsequently, she demonstrates how those meanings found their way into the texts of various New Woman writers – texts that sought to portray women as committed to social and biological progress, as the natural champions of empire, as crucially important to the regeneration of the race.

Eugenic feminism, according to Richardson, was about female empowerment. Swiney contended that degeneracy resulted from a 'selfish, lustful, diseased manhood'; she argued that the inevitable consequence of men's biological disposition for immorality was racial degeneration. By contrast, women were positioned as saviours of the race, granted agency on the grounds that only they were sufficiently race-aware to make responsible sexual choices. In short, Richardson argues, while degeneration was a masculine narrative, regeneration, which reversed its plot, was feminine. In her reading of the stories and novels written by New Women in the later chapters of *Love and Eugenics*, she carefully dissects those narratives, tracing the emergence of a racially regenerative and socially redemptive role for women, cast in biologically determinist terms. Particularly impressive in this respect is her reading

of Grand's later novels, *Adnam's Orchard* (1912) and *The Winged Victory* (1916), neither of which has received the same degree of attention as has been showered on *The Heavenly Twins* (1893). Richardson explores the ways in which these novels contrast the consequences of urban degeneration with the lives of those recently urbanized workers who, returning to the country, their health and vitality restored in the process, breed healthy children who live in harmony with the rhythms of nature. Moreover, Richardson skilfully relates Grand's tales of national rejuvenation to the contemporary rhetoric of the back-to-the-land and Garden City Movements (which Galton believed would produce optimum conditions for eugenic experimentation) and to the writing of Patrick Geddes, evolutionary biologist, sociologist and pioneer of a new civic communitarianism.

Elsewhere, however, the links between imaginative fiction and the broader world of social thought and practical politics are not adequately explored. The first chapters of the book trace the rediscovery of poverty in London's East End and the growth of the rhetoric of degeneration, borrowing heavily from well-thumbed accounts of these phenomena penned by historians ranging from Gareth Stedman Jones to Gertrude Himmelfarb. This is accompanied by a succinct history of the rise of eugenic thought in Britain. Both narratives serve as an important backdrop against which Richardson considers the fiction of eugenic feminists. But far too often connections that could be made between the two parts of the book are not. While Richardson charts the rise of eugenics, summarizes the ideas of those feminist writers who embraced eugenist thought, and explores the eugenic content of a number of works of fiction by New Women writers, seldom does she offer her readers much of a sense of how, precisely, those writers came to hold the eugenic views they did. There is for example, very little in her book on the Men and Women's Club, that institution in which a number of New Women writers encountered, debated, contested, negotiated and appropriated eugenic thought. Both Lucy Bland and Judith Walkowitz have noted the importance of the Club as a context for women's engagement with eugenics, as has Daniel Kevles, who has argued that in 'a sense, the eugenics movement was Karl Pearson's Men and Women's Club – with its determination to explore the relations between the sexes – enlarged to encompass the transatlantic educated community'.[13] Pearson's 1885 brainchild, the Club rehearsed many of the debates around sexuality that would take place in the subsequent three decades, debates in which Richardson's New Women were important players.

The nature of heterosexual love was one of the issues discussed in the Men and Women's Club; it is also the theme of two of Richardson's chapters, 'Science and Love' and 'Sarah Grand and Eugenic Love'. In his historical account of the origins of 'modern love', Marcus Collins has argued that it was during the *fin-de-siècle* that many progressive thinkers advanced new theories of private life and called for new forms of 'mutuality', for equality and mutual respect in heterosexual relationships. For them, a new type of love would emerge from the fusion of intimacy and equality, reason and passion, friendship and romance.[14] But for all of Collins's own romantic attachment to this moment of the birth of 'modern love', this was also the heyday of 'eugenic love'; it was a period in which the meaning of love was contested, in which a number of other love plots circulated and competed for attention and other stories about what love was *for* were advanced. For eugenic feminists, according to Richardson, rational reproduction was of crucial importance, the choice of a marriage partner to be determined less by romantic infatuations and more by

conscious sexual selection, the better to serve the state through rational, selective breeding. In short, the eugenic novel was to become a tool of responsible citizenship, 'redirecting the heart towards eugenic devotion'.[15] But for all their attempts to rewrite the conventional, romantic love plot, Richardson argues persuasively, eugenic feminists found it quite difficult to ground new aesthetic discourses in their own pseudo-scientific enthusiasms. Despite the fact that Elinor Glyn might well have disarmed some potential critics of the adulterous affair in *Three Weeks* by subordinating it to the higher goal of eugenic reproduction, many critics of eugenic fiction remained hostile to its didacticism. As Richardson argues, eugenic fiction had to be entertaining as well as didactic and 'eugenic ideology did not allow such flexibility'.[16]

Rational reproduction, rather like that other Victorian faith, rational recreation, did not survive past the 1930s – at least not in the eugenic form advanced by many New Women writers around the *fin-de-siècle*. To be sure, the rhetoric of reproductive morality, shorn of its more blatant eugenic underpinnings, remained central to the call for the endowment of motherhood in Britain. In addition, as Richardson demonstrates in her chapter on 'Gendered Citizenship and Civic Motherhood', the commitment to biological essentialism that was at the heart of the call for rational reproduction was also at the heart of new conceptions of citizenship put forward by eugenic feminists – 'a citizenship of *contribution* rather than political entitlement' that would also come to enjoy an existence distinct from its eugenic moorings.[17] But eugenic ideas became increasingly marginal to feminist thought – and marginal, claims Richardson, in the scholarship of those subsequent historians and literary critics who have studied the work of the New Women writers for whom it was so much more important. Richardson attributes this in part to the recent drift into 'philosophical relativism', which, she writes, 'must take some responsibility for the obscuring of eugenic fictions', an unnecessary and unsubstantiated assertion.[18] Yet despite such swipes at contemporary theory, overall her book follows through on its aim of untangling the complex, eugenic motivations of *fin-de-siècle* British feminist writers. In an article in which she rehearsed some of the ideas she would subsequently develop in *Love and Eugenics*, Richardson asks an important question: what do women want from biology? She insists that in order to answer that question for today, we need to understand how and why a much earlier generation of feminists articulated their demands through their engagement with biological determinism.[19] By demonstrating how feminists could deploy eugenic thought as part of a strategy to constitute new, decidedly imperial, forms of female public authority, Richardson enriches our understanding of the connections between feminist thought and Victorian biological science.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1 Elinor Glyn, *Three Weeks*, introduction to the Virago edition by Sally Beauman, London, 1996. See also Joan Hardwick, *Addicted to Romance: the Life and Adventures of Elinor Glyn*, London, 1994; Nikkianne Moody, 'Elinor Glyn and the Invention of "It"', *Critical Survey* 15: 3, 2003, pp. 92–104.

2 See David Trotter, *The English Novel in History, 1895–1920*, London, 1993, esp. pp. 182–3, 210–11; George Robb, 'The Way of All Flesh: Degeneration, Eugenics, and the Gospel of Free Love', *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 6: 4, April 1996, pp. 589–603.

3 Richardson, *Love and Eugenics*, p. xvii.

4 Richardson, pp. 8, 96, 182, 215.

5 Chris Waters, 'New Women and Socialist-Feminist Fiction: the Novels of Isabella Ford and Katharine Bruce Glasier', in *Rediscovering Forgotten Radicals: British Women Writers, 1889–1939*, ed. Angela Ingram and Daphne Patai, Chapel Hill, 1993, pp. 25–42. Another essay in the collection, however, dealt squarely with what Richardson terms 'eugenic feminism', albeit in the interwar period: Susan Squier, 'Sexual Biopolitics in *Man's World*: the Writings of Charlotte Haldane', pp. 137–55.

6 Richard A. Soloway, 'Feminism, Fertility, and Eugenics in Victorian and Edwardian England', in *Political Symbolism in Modern Europe: Essays in Honor of George L. Mosse*, ed. Seymour Drescher, David Sabean and Allen Sharlin, London, 1982, p. 129. More than a quarter of a century ago, in her pioneering study of *fin-de-siècle* ideologies of motherhood, Anna Davin also stressed the crucial importance of eugenics: Davin, 'Imperialism and Motherhood', *History Workshop Journal* 5, spring 1978, pp. 9–65.

7 Lucy Bland, *Banishing the Beast: English Feminism and Sexual Morality, 1885–1914*, Harmondsworth, 1995, chap. 6. See also Lesley Hall, 'Women, Feminism and Eugenics', in *Essays in the History of Eugenics*, ed. Robert A. Peel, London, 1998, pp. 36–51; George Robb, 'Race Motherhood: Moral Eugenics vs Progressive Eugenics, 1880–1920', in *Maternal Instincts: Visions of Motherhood and Sexuality in Britain, 1875–1925*, ed. Claudia Nelson and Ann Sumner Holmes, Basingstoke, 1997, pp. 58–74.

8 Teresa Mangum, *Married, Middlebrow and Militant: Sarah Grand and the New Woman Novel*, Ann Arbor, 1998, chap. 6; Carolyn Burdett, 'The Hidden Romance of Sexual Science: Eugenics, the Nation and the Making of Modern Feminism', in *Sexology in Culture: Labelling Bodies and Desires*, ed. Lucy Bland and Laura Doan, Cambridge, 1998, pp. 44–59; Burdett, *Olive Schreiner and the Progress of Feminism: Evolution, Gender, Empire*, Basingstoke, 2001. For the New Woman and eugenics in general, see also Sally Ledger, *The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the Fin de Siècle*, Manchester, 1997, chap. 3.

9 Gail Cunningham, *The New Woman and the Victorian Novel*, London, 1978; Ann L. Ardis, *New Women, New Novels: Feminism and Early Modernism*, New Brunswick, 1990; see also Ardis, *Modernism and Cultural Conflict 1880–1922*, Cambridge, 2002.

10 Ledger, *New Woman*, p. 1.

11 *The New Woman in Fiction and in Fact: Fin de Siècle Feminisms*, ed. Angelique Richardson and Chris Willis, Basingstoke, 2001, p. 11. Essays by many of the scholars who have written about the New Woman and who are mentioned in this essay (Ardis, Cunningham and Ledger, among others) are included in this collection.

12 Richardson, p. 9.

13 Daniel J. Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity*, Cambridge, Mass., 1995, p. 64. See also Bland, *Banishing the Beast*, chap. 1; Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London*, Chicago, 1992, chap. 5.

14 Marcus Collins, *Modern Love: an Intimate History of Men and Women in Twentieth-Century Britain*, London, 2003.

15 Richardson, p. 91.

16 Richardson, p. 215.

17 Richardson, p. 68. For a superb account of feminist renegotiations of citizenship during the long *fin-de-siècle*, see Laura E. Nym Mayhall, *The Militant Suffrage Movement: Citizenship and Resistance in Britain, 1860–1930*, Oxford, 2003. For excellent studies of eugenics, reproductive morality, female social action and citizenship in the United States, see Wendy Kline, *Building a Better Race: Gender, Sexuality, and Eugenics from the Turn of the Century to the Baby Boom*, Berkeley, 2001; Allison Berg, *Mothering the Race: Women's Narratives of Reproduction, 1890–1930*, Urbana, 2002.

18 Richardson, p. 215. In her hostility to recent theory, Richardson engages in a little eugenic fictionalizing of her own when she mentions the work of Eve Kosofsky Kristeva (p. 157, fn. 4), no doubt the intellectually precocious, eugenic love-child of Julia Kristeva and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick.

19 Angelique Richardson, 'Biology and Feminism', *Critical Quarterly* 42: 3, October 2000, p. 35.

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Book Reviews

Founding Mothers, Myths, and a Martyr

Lori D. Ginzberg. *Untidy Origins: A Story of Woman's Rights in Antebellum New York*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005. xiv + 222 pp. ISBN 0-8078-2947-1 (cl.); 0-8078-5608-8 (pb).

Linda J. Lumsden. *Inez: The Life and Times of Inez Milholland*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004. xii + 265 pp.; ill. ISBN 0-253-34418-2 (cl.).

Sherry H. Penney and James D. Livingston. *A Very Dangerous Woman: Martha Wright and Women's Rights*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2004. xiii + 315 pp.; ill. ISBN 1-55849-446-4 (cl.); 1-55849-447-2 (pb.).

Judith Wellman. *The Road to Seneca Falls: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the First Woman's Rights Convention*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004. xxii + 297 pp.; ill. ISBN 0-252-02904-6 (cl.); 0-252-07173-5 (pb.).

Nancy Isenberg

In recent years, popular biographers David McCullough, Ron Chernow, Walter Isaacson, and other nonhistorians have created an industry of books on the founding fathers. There is nothing new in Americans' desperate desire to envelop the story of national origins for the United States in a quasi-religious faith. Since the deaths of Benjamin Franklin and George Washington in the 1790s, eulogists immortalized the Revolutionary leaders for their singular genius and divine calling. David Edwin's painting *Apotheosis of Washington* (1800) gave the incomparable first president a halo, and made him into a "savior."

The same tendency exists among those who would construct a pantheon of founding mothers. Journalist Cokie Roberts received a large advance for her puerile homily on great women, *Founding Mothers*. As historian Gerda Lerner put it, in the past women's historians relied on compensatory history, recording women's achievements without any critical analysis.[1] How can such celebratory prose, often vapidly patriotic, be considered anything other than pseudohistory? There is no excuse for this kind of writing anymore.

Publishing for a popular audience presents certain dangers. It can lead experienced women's historians to adopt the heroic narrative. Judith Wellman has been researching and writing on the origins of the Seneca Falls

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convention for twenty-five years. Whether or not her book is designed as such, *The Road to Seneca Falls* is an homage to the Women's Rights National Historical Park. Her dedication is telling; she mentions not only the national park, but also the Elizabeth Cady Stanton Foundation, the National Women's Hall of Fame (in Seneca Falls) and "especially local historians," who collectively "keep the home fires burning for all of us."

The Road to Seneca Falls begins with an imaginative re-creation of Stanton's walk to the convention on 19 July 1848, and it ends with the grand opening of the Women's Rights National Park in July 1982. That final chapter is a strangely condensed summary of everything meant to have taken place between 1848 and 1982. The book is both a story of origins and a celebration of the movement's local origins. "Locally inspired," Wellman writes, "the Seneca Falls woman's rights convention attracted immediate national attention. Like a magnifying glass, it transformed widespread but unorganized public sentiment into a focused movement for change." Echoing what Stanton wrote in her *Autobiography*, Wellman asserts that the convention "initiated a crescendo of activism on behalf of women." Stanton is the star of the show, the movement's "main organizer" and "catalyst" (10–11, 13). Wellman's political agenda obliges her to uphold the sacred role of the Women's Rights National Historical Park as keeper of the flame.

Wellman's book is part biography and part community study. The first two chapters cover Stanton's childhood and life before the convention, while the latter chapters describe the social and reform environments she encountered when she moved to Seneca Falls in 1847. As a thorough social historian, she provides the reader with a detailed economic history of Seneca Falls and nearby Waterloo. She highlights the various reform influences in the area, such as Quaker dissent, antislavery, and efforts at legal reform in New York State. This meticulous local history is the best part of the book, because it reveals the social conditions that influenced those who attended the convention. Yet by setting forth a geographical boundary, the author downplays the fact that the reformers lived within a larger community, one shaped by the newspapers they read, the books they shared, and the language they used. *The Road to Seneca Falls* tells only one story, and its intense focus on locality means that other influences—changing definitions of rights, shifting national and party values, and diverse gender ideologies—are not explored.

The most frustrating feature of this book is the author's lack of objectivity with regard to Stanton. The opening chapter, which focuses on Stanton's first twenty years, relies heavily on her *Autobiography*, which was published in 1898. As every literary scholar acknowledges, autobiographies are inventive texts. Stanton's account was written as propaganda—it was intended to inspire young women to break free from their chains and

pursue their dreams. In biography and autobiography, the writer employs the narrative strategy of prolepsis; key events from childhood signal later adult accomplishments. There is nothing more mythic, inaccurate, and in need of historical objectivity than Stanton's autobiography, but Wellman refuses to interrogate Stanton's story with any rigor. Therefore, most of this chapter gives the misleading impression that Stanton acquired her feminist consciousness *sui generis*—without the influence of anyone else.

Wellman also refuses to engage with any scholar who might dispute her heroic fashioning of Stanton. In fact, she ignores most of the scholarship published between 1990 and 2004, indicating that this book is symptomatic of a generational divide among women's historians—a theme that has previously been addressed in *The Journal of Women's History*.[2] The generational divide pits those younger scholars who incorporate political theory, gender, and cultural analysis against the older generation who insist that women's history is the study of women's experience. But the real question is: Do feminists ignore a large body of scholarship and pretend there is nothing that can be learned from newer approaches to old topics?

Wellman seems to have no qualms in sidestepping recent scholarship. She does not contend with historian Kathi Kern's insightful book, *Mrs. Stanton's Bible* (2001), which discusses the "polemics" of Stanton's autobiography, and proves definitively that Stanton's family owned slaves. Communications scholar Susan Zaeske's innovative work on petitioning and women's political identity has no appreciable affect on Wellman, nor has historian Elizabeth Varon's study of women and Whig politics. Literary scholar Phyllis Cole's revealing article on Margaret Fuller's influence on Stanton is missing, and newer work on antislavery and masculinity is also ignored. One must presume that Wellman is uninterested in the cultural conditions of political identity and how they might have shaped the early women's movement. Virtually all the latest work on gender, race, law, language, and politics seems beyond her concern. And yes, in the interest of full disclosure, my *Sex and Citizenship in Antebellum America* (1998) is jumbled together with other studies in a single citation in the Prologue, but the author does not engage a single argument I raised. In my book, I treated Wellman's unpublished and published articles with more respect.[3]

But the point is not to make this review too personal. Wellman's book represents a lost opportunity to close the gap separating two scholarly generations. Others have done so. Wellman has the talent, but seems to lack the will to make Stanton's world both local and national. For that reason, *The Road to Seneca Falls* is an unsatisfying read. It would have been a pathbreaking book in 1989.

In their biography of Martha Wright, who was one of the organizers of the Seneca Falls Convention, Sherry Penney and James Livingston have

written a companion book to Wellman's. They make no attempt to challenge the story of origins, stating as authoritative truth what is really a matter of historical debate: "Historians recognize the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention, today the site of the Women's Rights National Historical Park, as the formal beginning of the organized woman's rights movement" (67). Neither Penny nor Livingston are professional historians. They have a personal reason for taking up this project: Martha Wright is Livingston's great-great grandmother, so that the volume is part biography, part family memoir. As a symbol of the early movement, Wright may best represent a "founding mother": She was six months pregnant, expecting her seventh child, when she, along with Stanton, Mary Ann M'Clintock, and Jane Hunt, planned the convention. The expectant mother is cast in bronze at the historical park.

Though the title is *A Very Dangerous Woman*, Martha Wright's story seems to belie that moniker. She was rebellious in her youth, falling in love with a man in uniform who was twenty-two years her senior. He was a non-Quaker, which caused her to be expelled from the Friends Society. The eighteen-year-old bride gave birth to her first child within a year of marriage, and by the next year, her husband died in Florida, where they had settled. The young widow then accompanied her mother, Anna Coffin, to Aurora, New York, where Coffin assumed the management of a Quaker school, Brier Cliff, and Wright became a teacher. Here, she fell in love with another military man, who died in a tragic accident. She finally met David Wright, a non-Quaker educated in Quaker schools, and married him after a brief courtship, in 1829. He became a prosperous lawyer, and the family moved to a seven-bedroom home in Auburn in 1841. With her growing family (seven children in all), Martha Wright was every bit the middle-class matron, overseeing a busy household with the help of two hired servants. Her family life was conventional, undercutting her daughter's claim, in a later memoir, that her neighbors considered her a "dangerous woman" (110).

Family is the centerpiece of Martha Wright's story. She was the younger sister of the famed Lucretia Mott, who was, in 1848, the most distinguished female speaker at the Seneca Falls Convention. Unlike Wellman's account, Penney and Livingston's biography of Wright shows that reformers were not bounded by geographical space; Martha's connections to activism had more to do with her family ties to Philadelphia (and to her sister) than with her proximity to Seneca Falls. It is just as obvious that Mott's appearance at the Seneca Falls Convention reflected her desire to visit her sister. This is important to note: Wright—not Stanton—was the crucial link to the convention's star attraction.

Though Wright was extremely close to her older sister, Lucretia, the two women had different styles. Mott was deeply philosophical, and enjoyed reading serious works, whereas Wright loved novels and developed a knack for satire. We get some sense of her humor in a spoof of domestic literature that she wrote, titled "Hints to Wives." It contrasted conventional sentimental prescriptions with the reality of women's household drudgery, and was signed appropriately, "An Old Maid" (80). But Wright's biting criticism of her fellow reformers in her correspondence is missing from this book. She wittily attacked Abby Kelley for rebuking Mott's lecture style, and she unhesitatingly wrote to her sister that Susan B. Anthony looked horrible in her bloomer costume. What we do not get from this biography is the distinctive role that Wright played in the women's movement: She was a political gadfly, keeping up the lines of communication between her famous sister in Philadelphia and her New York acquaintances. She would later assume the presidency of several women's rights conventions, acting as a surrogate for Mott. Wright was a facilitator, and every movement needs just such a person, who reinforced alliances, brokered disagreements, and healed wounded egos, as she did between Stanton and Anthony in the controversy over Victoria Woodhull in the 1870s.

Martha Wright's life tells us that her attraction to women's rights did not begin as a rebellion within the family hearth. She did not limit the size of her family, and the running of the household followed typical middle-class patterns of behavior. Her husband controlled the finances, and he actually opposed the 1848 Married Women's Property Act, because he felt that a wife should marry for better or worse, richer or poorer. Kinship ties reinforced Martha Wright's reform networks: her daughter, Marianna, married Lucretia Mott's son; another daughter, Ellen, married the son of William Lloyd Garrison, and another son married the niece of Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Although her two surviving sons were headed to Harvard, her daughters received no higher education. Her commitment to the bonds of family were so strong that she remained in contact with her first husband's family in Kentucky, despite the fact that they supported the Confederacy, and her son Willy served in the Union lines.

Family was a source of strength and, perhaps, a limitation in Wright's life. She did not believe in radical challenges to marriage such as "Free Love," though she endorsed the right of its advocates to speak freely about it. She recognized the conservative nature of religion in defining women's roles, but she never questioned her own class privilege. Martha Wright was an organizer rather than an intellectual leader, who juggled family and reform activism, and whose conventional personal life—despite her radical leanings—embodied the contradictions of early feminism.

Lori Ginzberg disputes the myth of origins, critiquing the Seneca Falls convention as the starting point of the movement. Suggesting that there may be more than one motivating source of women's rights activism, she has

decided to write the history of a petition sent to the 1846 New York State Constitutional Convention, two years before Seneca Falls. This petition in support of women's suffrage, signed by six women from Jefferson County, New York, is the focus of Ginzberg's creatively contentious *Untidy Origins*. Because so little information exists about the six signers of the petition (unlike the considerable extant sources for Stanton, Wright, and Mott), Ginzberg describes herself as a detective out to solve a "mystery," and she admits that much of her musings are "speculation, not to say fiction," because she is able to offer "few definite conclusions" (6, 11).

Her task is that of reconstructing the world that surrounded these women and their petition. She unearths what evidence remains with regard to the property these women or their husbands owned; two of the signers were sisters, one had no children. The sisters were separated in age by twelve years, which is remarkably similar to Lucretia Mott and Martha Wright, who were thirteen years apart. Ginzberg repeatedly suggests that these women were ordinary, and what tied them together were day-to-day conversations. Instead of grand ideas circulated in "convention halls, pulpits, and newspapers," Ginzberg imagines a world of "kitchen-table" conversations (12). This is where her speculation begins, because there are no records to inform us what any of these women might have talked about—or written—other than this one petition. Yet the metaphor of conversation serves as a rhetorical strategy; average women talked about rights, and despite her lack of evidence, the author argues that the silence in the record—the absence of ridicule against these women—can indicate that speaking about rights was not so radical or "unthinkable" (47). This is an interesting, but purely hypothetical notion.

Ginzberg does a lot of digging for clues, making all she can out of any tidbits she finds in Jefferson County, on the remote frontier near Lake Ontario. For instance, petitioner Anna Bishop's husband was a Baptist or Methodist clergyman turned Swedenborgian minister. Finding little on the religious backgrounds of the women who signed the petition, Ginzberg concludes that religion may not have exercised much influence on the residents of Jefferson County. But then, she also notes that Bishop's son became a Methodist clergyman, and so she is left to presume that Methodism endorsed reform, and Swedenborgianism offered "quirkiness" (90).

One of the more interesting events involving Jefferson County was a failed political revolt in lower Canada in 1837, which led many men to support a private invasion to "liberate" the Canadians. Some propertied women were allowed to vote in Canada, and the issue of woman's suffrage was debated in 1834. If the women in Jefferson County were "listening closely," Ginzberg surmises, they might have understood the revolution as a "wider shift in the political-sexual order" (101). This so-called Patriot War resembles the 1841 Dorr War in Rhode Island, which Ginzberg misses, because her focus is on Jefferson County. It is just as easy to speculate that women found the Canadian invasion scheme foolish, as men lost their lives, or were imprisoned—one of them confined to an asylum. There is much we do not know. Beyond such speculation, Ginzberg concludes that Jefferson County, as a contested national border, was at the center of national political debate.

Ginzberg also provides a detailed summary of the 1846 State Constitutional Convention, examining how the issues of women's and black suffrage were debated. Here is where the book tells the history of the petition, perhaps more than the petitioners or their conversations. This part of Ginzberg's study reminds us of how the rights talk among men in power could always quash the appeals of female petitioners. A Democratic delegate, Alpheus S. Greene, presented the women's petition; he was an unmarried physician, judge, temperance supporter, and Baptist, who endorsed married women's property rights, opposed extending full suffrage to black men, and proposed a literacy requirement for voting. He did not take a stand on women's suffrage. But his call for a literacy requirement had much in common with another New York Democrat, Elisha Hurlbut, whose *Essay on Human Rights* was published in 1845. Hurlbut made a convincing case for women's suffrage; he argued that women had the same capacity for intelligence, and saw literacy as one cause for excluding men from the vote. For Judge Hurlbut, if men and women had the same potential for reason and moral character, then a three-stage model justified gradually incorporating women into the polity as electors: first, allowing single women who pay taxes to vote; then all other adult single women; and eventually all women, single or married.

One of the problems with Ginzberg's approach is that she misses the obvious. While the women in Jefferson County may have discussed suffrage, the language they used in their petition distinctly echoed that of Hurlbut. The petitioners' major premise—that government should protect rights, and not make them—was a major refrain of Hurlbut's. He advocated this idea as early as 1841 in the *United States Magazine and Democratic Review*, and his *Essay on Human Rights* was published for the purpose of shaping the state constitutional convention. Ginzberg wonders if maybe a copy of the Federalist Papers (Madison's "Federalist N. 39") was laying around in one of these women's houses, when it was far more likely that Hurlbut's treatise, or his articles, might have fallen into their hands. Furthermore, the author goes too far in calling the Jefferson County petition "unconventional," as if this is needed to justify her enterprise of writing a complete history of one, seemingly obscure, petition (18). She need not have done so, because her monograph is intrinsically provocative and enjoyable to read.

If at times too speculative, it succeeds in poking more holes in Stanton's self-centered history and proves, once again, that there is more than one story of origins in New York State.

Linda Lumsden's biography of Inez Milholland (1886–1916) moves us into the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Milholland came to symbolize the ideals of the "New Woman," and became a martyr of the suffrage movement. While making a cross-country lecture tour in support of woman's suffrage in 1916, she collapsed before a crowd of one thousand in San Francisco, and died a month later.

As a journalism professor, Lumsden has selected a subject who was the darling of the press. More than a martyr, Milholland was a woman who lived and breathed politics, and seemed constantly in the limelight. She attended Vassar College, where she defied the president by organizing a suffrage meeting. She became known for her athletic prowess, as a captain of the field hockey team, who set records in track, and was awarded the college cup for best all-around athlete. This new generation of militant suffragists was lean, mean, sexually aggressive, and proud of their Amazonian feats.

Lumsden recognizes how Milholland became a publicity symbol, especially after her dramatic role in the 1914 suffrage parade in Washington. There, she rode a white steed, wore a flowing cape and diadem—as if she were Lady Liberty herself. This reader wishes that the author had explored more deeply the cultural meaning of Milholland's public performances. There is little reference to how much the politics of feminism had changed from the antebellum to the modern era. The Quaker matron or dowdy suffragist was replaced by the daring adventurer, epitomized by Milholland, whose body was athletic and whose life was marked by constant action. She was a precursor to Katharine Hepburn—at least the Hollywood image thereof—who would excel at sports as the star of *Pat and Mike*; and who became a New York City lawyer in *Adam's Rib*. Milholland came from a wealthy family, hobnobbed with the rich and famous, and yet refused to settle down, like Hepburn in *Holiday*. She traveled by ocean liner to Europe, for pleasure and politics, with her Danish husband Eugen Boissevain. She was a foreign correspondent, sent to cover World War I in 1915, returning to Europe the next year as a delegate in Henry Ford's Peace Expedition.

Lumsden does address Milholland's unconventional sexual politics. Her marriage was "open," in the sense that she flirted with other men, and told her husband all about it. Her marriage had political consequences; she lost her American passport because her husband was a foreigner—she was a victim of the Cable Act. Her husband was an unusual man, content to bask in the sunshine of his celebrated wife. After Milholland's death, he married another brilliant woman, Edna St. Vincent Millay, and again assumed the role of caretaker in the marriage.

Milholland led a spectacular life. Yet this book only suffers from its cliché-ridden language: "She drew the press like moths to a flame"; "as soon as she hit adolescence, men began buzzing around her like bees around honeysuckle"; "this intoxicating swirl of protest, socialism, and suffrage swept Milholland off her feet" (25, 48, 53). But the occasional cliché does not detract from the overall story. Lumsden captures the breakneck pace of Milholland's amazing life, and proves convincingly why she truly did embody—as a political activist and symbol—the credo of modern feminism.

All four of these books represent a welcome, continuing interest in the history of feminism, and yet all suffer from certain blind spots. Lumsden looks at a woman who actively embraced mythmaking, and assumed her role with style, but the author could have more effectively explored the myth itself. Conversely, Wellman and Penney and Livingston could learn something by recognizing that mythmaking and polemics constitute the rhetorical games of political actors, including feminists. Penney and Livingston's and Lumsden's books gloss over the tensions and divisions among suffragists. The heroic narrative leaves no room for counternarratives.

The question is: Do we still need feminist heroines and founding mothers? Maybe among the general public, or young readers, we do. Inez Milholland is certainly far more glamorous, and decidedly smarter, than teen idol Britney Spears. And the motherly Martha Wright refutes conservatives like Rush Limbaugh who sees all feminists as Feminazis. Ginzberg may appear to be the only one in the bunch to study ordinary women, but Wellman and Penney and Livingston wish to make women's rights activists into mothers, neighbors, and sisters.

Feminist writing needs a critical perspective. It does a disservice to the cause of good scholarship when the flaws and contradictions of historical actors are smoothed over or erased. Though Stanton's yarn—the story of origins—may be carefully guarded in Seneca Falls, hopefully, among women's historians, it is now, and will continue to be, the subject of lively debate.

Notes

[1]Gerda Lerner, *The Majority Finds Its Past: Placing Women in History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 145.

[2]See the forum entitled "Women's History in the New Millenium," *Journal of Women's History* 16, no. 4 (2004): 10–64, in which Gerda Lerner assessed the state of the field in "U.S. Women's History: Past, Present, and Future," and several younger scholars (Leslie Alexander, Kathi Kern, Jennifer Spear, and Jennifer Springer) wrote replies.

[3]See Kathi Kern, *Mrs. Stanton's Bible* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001); Susan Zaeske, *Signatures of Citizenship: Petitioning, Antislavery, and Women's Political Identity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Elizabeth Varon, *We Mean to be Counted: White Women and Politics in Antebellum Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); and Phyllis Cole, "Stanton, Fuller, and the Grammar of Romanticism," *New England Quarterly* 73, no. 4 (2000): 533–59; for works on antislavery, see Michael D. Pierson, *Free Hearts to Homes: Gender and American Antislavery Politics* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); and Jonathan H. Earle, *Jacksonian Antislavery and the Politics of Free Soil, 1824–1854* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); on Gerrit Smith, Stanton's cousin, who greatly influenced her radical thinking, see John Stauffer, *The Black Hearts of Men: Radical Abolitionists and the Transformation of Race* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); on masculinity, see Donald Yacovone, "Abolitionists and the 'Language of Fraternal Love,'" and Michael Grossberg, "Institutionalizing Masculinity: The Law as Masculine Profession," in *Meanings of Manhood: Constructions of Masculinity in Victorian America*, ed. Mark C. Carnes and Clyde Griffen (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990); and Bruce Dorsey, *Reforming Men and Women: Gender in the Antebellum City* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002). It is important to note that all of the books published after 2000 were available as dissertations in the 1990s.

Beyond Empire: The New Woman at Home and Abroad

Holly Pyne Connor, ed. *Off the Pedestal: New Women in the Art of Homer, Chase, and Sargent*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006. v + 158 pp.; ill. ISBN 978-0-8135-3697-2 (pb).

Iveta Jusová. *The New Woman and the Empire.* Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2005. vii + 221 pp. ISBN 0-8142-1005-8 (cl).

Mona L. Russell. *Creating the New Egyptian Woman: Consumerism, Education, and National Identity, 1863–1922.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004. xi + 237 pp. ISBN 1-4039-6262-6 (cl).

Martha H. Patterson

Although the phrase "New Woman" was not coined until 1894 in a debate between British novelists Sarah Grand and Ouida in the pages of the *North American Review*, the major elements of that debate appeared throughout the nineteenth century and well beyond a transatlantic context. Typically defined as white, educated, and middle class, the New Woman appeared as a suffragist, progressive reformer, and woman's club member, and, in the popular press, as the independent consumer or the bloomer-wearing bicyclist. But as three new critical studies on the New Woman demonstrate, the New Woman's genesis had, in fact, more complicated underpinnings and more diverse expressions depending largely on historical, class, and national context. Holly Pyne Connor's edited collection *Off the Pedestal: New Women in the Art of Homer, Chase, and Sargent*, Iveta Jusová's *The New Woman and the Empire*, and Mona L. Russell's *Creating the New Egyptian Woman: Consumerism, Education, and National Identity, 1863–1922* build on a growing body of New Woman critical literature to enrich our understanding of one of feminism's defining eras.

Originally published in conjunction with the Newark Museum exhibition in 2006, Connor's *Off the Pedestal* offers three essays on a wide range of visual art renderings of the New Woman in fine art, middle-brow engravings, low-brow woodcuts, and professional photographs that belie the much narrower title of the book. In "Not at Home: The Nineteenth-Century New Woman," Connor analyzes both fine and popular artists' depictions of New Woman figures that appear, as is literally the case in Winslow Homer's Civil War engraving for *Harper's Magazine*, holding the reins. Thirty-two years later, John Singer Sargent declares the arrival of

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the New Woman with *Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Newton Phelps Stokes* in which the assertive, shirtwaist wearing Mrs. Stokes overshadows her diminished husband. The chapter is fascinating, particularly in the way that Connor foregrounds the transgressiveness of images that ostensibly depict women in more traditional roles. What then at first seems merely a serene painting of a woman reading a newspaper becomes, after Connor notes the prior conventional representations of women and text that emphasized their literacy and piety, a significant image of cultural change. Mary Cassatt's *Reading "Le Figaro"* (ca. 1877–1878) depicts a woman, who, rather than being solely preoccupied with domestic concerns, is intellectually engaged in issues beyond the home. Likewise, in William Merritt Chase's *Park Bench* (ca. 1890), a woman sits alone in Central Park, pensive, starring into space with a yellow book on her lap. Connor's explanation that the yellow book implies the "romantic and risqué French books of the period" turns a pastoral image into an enigmatic, socially charged one (17).

In "Winslow Homer's Ambiguously New Women," Sarah Burns charts Homer's painting from the late 1860s to the 1870s and maintains that Homer acts as a "visual anthropologist, observing, recording, and interpreting the mores of American girlhood and young womanhood" (54). Burns concludes that Homer is ambivalent about women's changing roles. She reads, for example, Homer's *The Country School* (1871), where a young woman teacher appears holding a book before a room scattered with children, as both acknowledging women's new role as independent wage earners and questioning it. The woman appears distracted, her gaze afar, one hand open holding a book; the other is clenched in a fist, perhaps a sign of dissatisfaction with her new role.

Later in his career, Homer far more often characterized men and women as inhabiting separate spaces. *In the Mountains* (1877) features four women hiking without a male escort—seemingly a bold defiance of convention. Homer's commitment to women's greater physical freedom in nature, however, is mitigated when one considers other wilderness paintings where he clearly shows women as intruders in a male preserve.

Mary W. Blanchard's "The Manly New Woman" explores the anti-New Woman stereotype of the masculine woman, the bloomer-wearing, cigar-smoking, boss-of-the-house. Blanchard includes an analysis of a wide range of visual media from the late nineteenth century, including cartoons from the middle-class humor magazine *Life*, wood-engravings from the tabloid *The National Police Gazette*, and photographs by Frances Benjamin Johnson and Alice Austen. The tremendous scope of her essay, however, also points to its weaknesses. Blanchard neglects to consider such important scholarship as Carroll Smith-Rosenberg's *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (1985) and Laura Behling's *The Masculine Woman in America, 1890–*

1935 (2001), which would have deepened her readings of cross-dressing women as they reflected to many contemporary intellectuals an alarming increase in the number of sexually inverted women. In light of Guy Reel's recent work on the *Police Gazette*, Blanchard's reading of the periodical's illustrations also seems too sanguine and perhaps hastily sketched given the tabloid's relentless treatment of women as sex objects.[1]

In *The New Woman and the Empire*, Jusová examines how feminist, evolutionary, medical, and imperialist ideology converges in the work of four New Women authors: Sarah Grand, George Egerton, Elizabeth Robins, and Amy Levy. While Jusová's argument that the success of these writers' feminist ideology was sometimes predicated on marginalizing populations deemed Other is not new, she does offer thoughtful close readings of a wide range of these writers' works. In *The Heavenly Twins* (1893), Sarah Grand predicates the advancement of the English nation on greater educational opportunities for upper-class English women and criticizes men for their sexual promiscuity. As she does this, she employs evolutionary, domestic, and medical discourses that relegate the lower class and the non-English to the margins. In effect, the white English heroines of Grand's most famous novel become the "border guards controlling and sealing off the borders between cultures, classes, and also races" (33). While Grand's *The Beth Book* (1897) seems to endorse some border crossings, the poor and Irish characters cannot escape their inherent inferiority.

Unlike Grand, George Egerton (Mary Chavelita Dunne) was far less concerned about creating narratives that emphasized the need for national purity. Relying on Nietzsche's critique of middle-class culture to affirm the physical senses and instincts, Egerton, in her short story collections *Keynotes* (1893) and *Discords* (1894), endorses not only an antibourgeois female sexual desire but also a fluid conception of race that acts as a kind of "subversive hybridity," breaking down the symmetry and duality of self / other, inside / outside of colonial discourses" (76). Egerton's later works, however, represent the Irish stereotypically, falling back on a popular enthnocentricism used to justify British colonialism.

Elizabeth Robins, by contrast, gained her New Woman notoriety for her work first as an actress, especially in plays of the era's most famous feminist playwright, Henrik Ibsen, before earning recognition as a New Woman writer. Even though Robbins would complicate determinist evolutionary narratives in her literary work, she ultimately supported the English colonial mission and its accompanying racial hierarchies. Jusová reads Robins's *roman à clef*, *The Open Question: A Tale of Two Temperaments (1898)*, for example, as an explicit endorsement of eugenics; her travelogue, *The Southern Cross* (1907), offers readers a vision of Central American people as seen through the "ethnocentric perspective of a Western traveler," where

their different skin color, customs, and physiognomy denote their inferior evolutionary status (125).

Jusová ends with a reading of the Anglo-Jewish, middle-class writer Amy Levy, who emphasized the personal and passionate nature of experience as she criticized conventional marriage and Christian religious doctrines, a radical move given the pervasive anti-Semitism of the period. Jusová's most interesting close reading is of Levy's controversial novel *Reuben Sachs* (1888), which many have criticized for its inclusion of anti-Semitic stereotypes. According to Jusová, Levy uses narrative irony, in fact, to satirize these stereotypes, and ultimately to critique Zionism and British colonialism more broadly.

In *Creating the New Egyptian Woman*, Russell offers a fascinating cultural study into the myriad ways modernization affected nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century urban Egyptian women. Using a rich trove of archival evidence, including advertisements, political cartoons, and textbooks, Russell explores how consumerism and education proved to be both a liberating and restrictive force for Egyptian women.

She begins by exploring the reign of Ismail Pasha, Khedive of Egypt, who ruled from 1869 to 1879 but whose influence extended well beyond his reign. Ismail invested heavily in modernizing Egypt's infrastructure, importing western luxury items, and establishing a European-style educational system, including the education of women. While his expenditures precipitated his deposition and the British occupation of his country, he laid the groundwork for modernization that would be a hallmark of the Egyptian New Woman.

The New Egyptian Woman, however, was not simply an adoption of Western principles or fashions. The construct of the New Woman that emerged in Egypt depended on one's class privilege and often combined Western ideology, indigenous beliefs, and nationalist pride. Drawing on the British example, elite Egyptian women demanded greater rights in marriage and divorce, but they also made the argument that greater autonomy would help prepare the nation for self-government. In a similar move, advertisers hoping to sell European products appealed to Egyptian women's nationalism by making reference to their participation in the 1919 demonstrations. A female educational system that had been organized by the British to "tame, sanitize, and control the Egyptians," was frequently either rejected or supplemented by home instruction in the Quran, hadith, poetry, and Turkish language (138). Despite the fact that receiving a salary was frowned upon, new educational opportunities for women encouraged them to use their skills outside the home. Nevertheless, even though the Egyptian New Woman gained some victories after Egypt gained independence in 1922, her primary role was to be in the home.

Note

[1]Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Laura Behling, *The Masculine Woman in America, 1890–1935* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001); and Guy Reel, *The* National Police Gazette *and the Making of the Modern American Man, 1879–1906* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).