ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation:	REPARATIVE FORMS: POETRY AND PSYCHOLOGY FROM THE *FIN DE SIÈCLE* TO WWI.
	Lindsey Elizabeth Rotz O'Neil, Doctor of Philosophy, 2021
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"Reparative Forms: Poetry and Psychology from the *Fin de Siècle* to WWI" identifies an as yet-unrecognized body of poetry written by women and colonial subjects that shows those authors' engagements with early psychological writing. The years between the *fin de siècle* and the First World War saw the rebirth of psychology as a distinct discipline in contrast to its previous life as a vaguely scientific subset of philosophy. Across these decades, psychological discourse first engaged with and then finally overtook philosophy and poetry as the predominant framework for exploring the inner workings of the human mind. In tracing this history and the specific contributions of women's poetry at the turn of the century, my dissertation actively engages in interdisciplinary work, incorporating the histories of science and medicine, Indigenous studies, and colonial studies.

Women and colonial subjects employed the idioms of white male psychologists in order to represent both belonging to and estrangement from national identity. These writings constitute a greater British communal psychology whose characteristics scholarship has yet to account for. While some women and colonial subjects were bold iconoclasts, many more existed in an open-ended negotiation between their alliance to the nation and their alliance to themselves. While none of the texts resolve the conflicts and inconsistencies of poetry steeped in systems of sexism, imperialism, and nationalism, the framework of psychology is an important tool in order to navigate and make sense of the incomplete story of British nationalism. Questions of who can create, join, or destroy communities resonate with our current political and cultural moment. My dissertation traces a historical narrative that helps to make sense of our present moment in which the sovereignty of Britain is being renegotiated. More broadly, the anxiety surrounding the gradual decline of the British Empire and the literary reactions to this decline anticipate our current global political climate, including Euroscepticism, racially charged suspicions of immigrants, an increased emphasis on cultural integration, and a reinvigoration of nationalist rhetoric.

REPARATIVE FORMS:
POETRY AND PSYCHOLOGY FROM THE *FIN DE SIÈCLE* TO WWI.

by

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Graduate School of the
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Professor Jason Rudy, Chair
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Dedication

For Duane and Carolyn Rotz

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Table of Contents

Table of Figures

Introduction

Poetry, Psychology, Sex, and the British Nation

AN ANALYSIS OF LITERARY APPRECIATION[1]

By OLIVE A. WHEELER.

(From the Department of Psychology, University of Manchester.)

Figure 1. Table of contents of O. A. Wheeler's "An Analysis of Literary Appreciation." *British Journal of Psychology*. General Section 13.3 (1923): 229-242. 229.

Olive A. Wheeler's 1923 scientific study in the *British Journal of Psychology* begins with a declaration that could buoy any disillusioned English department meeting: "The recent Report on the Teaching of English has perhaps done more than any other publication to re-inforce [sic] the almost self-evident truth that the study of English literature should occupy the first place in the curricula of all types of English schools" (see the table of contents for Wheeler's study in Figure 1).[1] For Wheeler, the study of English literature was the study of English poetry. Using poets she thought epitomized "Englishness" –William Shakespeare, Thomas Gray, and Percy Bysshe Shelley – Wheeler's experiments attempted to unearth "[u]nder what general conditions is the

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[1] O. A. Wheeler, "An Analysis of Literary Appreciation." *British Journal of Psychology*. General Section 13.3 (1923): 229-242. 229.

reader best able to follow where the artist has led, to grasp what he has grasped, and to see with him into the inner life of things?"[2] To do so, Wheeler had University of Manchester students record their levels of enjoyment of the poetic imagery when read silently and aloud. Wheeler concludes, "the enjoyment of poetic rhythm, which is a kind of compromise between the metrical measure and natural speech rhythm, appears to depend on the rhythmic pulsation of human thought." In her estimation, "the psychological measure (not of course the metrical foot)" gives poetry its true "life" and attraction.[3] Good poets, according to this analysis, have an implicit understanding of this psychological measure, and are, however unconsciously, applying psychological methods through their prosody. In making this claim, Wheeler reflexively reaffirms the established (white, male, English) canon as constitutive of the mind's processes.

Sixty-eight years earlier in 1855, the (male) physician M. J. Rae argued in the *Journal of Psychological Medicine and Mental Pathology* that those "who have carefully studied the human mind, are the best qualified to undertake the charge and tuition of youth … [and] are also best fitted to discharge other and higher duties of life."[4] Like Wheeler, Rae equates understanding psychology to the appreciation of poetry. Also like Wheeler, Rae connects the appreciation of poetry to the advancement of the moral and mental superiority of English citizens and their "higher duties." This conjunction of experimentation, literature, and ideas of the English nation, along with Wheeler's subject

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[2] *Ibid*. 230.
[3] *Ibid.* 239.
[4] M. J. Rae, "On the Uses and Influence of Mental Philosophy." *Journal of Psychological Medicine and Mental Pathology* 8.31 (1 Jul. 1855): 379–390. 383.

position as a female psychologist in the twentieth century, bring together the key terms of this dissertation: psychology, poetry, nationalism, and gender.

Wheeler's psychological interest in poetry was not radical, but her publication in the *British Journal of Psychology* was. "Reparative Forms" argues that the birth of psychology as an institutionalized discipline functioned by transferring the authority of mental and emotional health, which had primarily been the social responsibility of women, to the empirical and objective sciences, the domain of men. This move was reinforced and undergirded by the specifically Victorian ideology of "separate spheres," in which women were believed to excel in the moral, emotional, and domestic, in order to discourage British women from directly participating in public debates on psychology and nation. Much work has been done on the role of women as the *patients* of psychologists, especially in relation to the later work of Sigmund Freud. Freud's introspective and interpretive method maps neatly onto literary studies and has provided many productive readings of social and sexual institutions as well as psychoanalytic criticism as a methodology. However, there is a larger story to be uncovered. My work offers another, more nuanced narrative, in which women take a more active role in earlier iterations of psychological theory.

Though women were restricted from obtaining degrees until late in the nineteenth century, they still contributed significantly to psychological discourse.[5] Poetry was one such place in which women could wrestle with the psychological questions that were

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[5] The first British woman to receive a PhD in psychology was Beatrice Edgell (1871-1948) in 1901; American Margaret Floy Washburn (1871-1939) was the first woman to receive a PhD in 1894; American Mary Whiton Calkins (1863-1930) studied under William James in 1890, but Harvard would not award her a degree.

closed to them in the field of science. Women's poetry during the period I cover here, roughly 1850 to 1939, responds to this usurpation of cultural power by questioning the reliability of psychological, poetic, and political conventions that claimed to be truths. As these poems questioned theories of consciousness, morality, and science, they simultaneously questioned theories of national character and communities, both their formation and dissolution. Poetry by women is especially important to the question of community, as women were the traditional guardians of the home and, in the Victorian frame, the emotional backbones of the nuclear heteronormative family unit. That women were believed to excel in the moral, emotional, and the domestic, lent legitimacy to women's writing that involved community. In this way, these women were working with and alongside the tradition of the Poetess, which Tricia Lootens defines as "[a] mythic, composite presence" who "thrives in a realm of shifting literary (and, of course, political) open secrets, uneasily located between the unspeakable and the all-too-familiar."[6] The importance of poetry to national character has a long and important history, explored most persuasively in Meredith Martin's *The Rise and Fall of Meter*.[7] The articulation of the English nation through overtly psychological terms, however, was a new but remarkably consistent phenomenon in the mid-nineteenth to early-twentieth centuries.

I argue that women and colonial subjects rewrote the idioms of white male psychologists through formal innovations in poetry to represent both belonging to estrangement from national identity. These "reparative forms" (literary forms that work

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[6] Tricia Lootens, *The Political Poetess: Victorian Femininity, Race, and the Legacy of Separate Spheres.* Princeton 2017. 3. See also Virginia Jackson and Yopie Prins, "Lyrical Studies." *Victorian Literature and Culture* 27.2 (1999): 521–530.
[7] Princeton, 2012.

to heal or offer comfort to readers and the nation) show how the concept of selfhood

adapted as the British Empire stretched across nations. New iterations of hybrid forms

like the dramatic monologue and the verse novel enabled poets to respond directly to

psychological theorists, offering readers immediate critiques of psychology during its

formative years. The women discussed in this dissertation all display different levels of

ambivalence towards Britain or "Britishness"; all display contradictory attitudes towards

the state. British poets of this era used hybrid forms to call attention to the personal

experiences and psychologies of colonial subjects while simultaneously promoting their

integration into a greater British communal psychology. Like the relationship between

poetry and psychology, between women poets and the patriarchal literary world, and

between colonial poets and "Britishness," hybrid genres like the dramatic monologue and

the verse-novel function through repeated collisions, in this case, between verse and

prose.

In considering the shifts in poetic genre alongside psychology, the British Empire,

and gender, my work engages deeply with important scholarship in each of those fields of

study. In particular, Eckbert Faas (*Retreat into the Mind*) connects the growth of

psychology to an evolution in poetry which, in his mind, underwent "a gradual shift from

imitation of the external world toward expression of the inner world."[8] Gregory Tate (*The

Poet's Mind*) considers the same question as this dissertation, but through a different

lens.[9] Using canonical, and almost exclusively male, poets, Tate also draws important

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[8] Ekbert Faas, *Retreat into the Mind: Victorian Poetry and the Rise of Psychiatry*.
Princeton, 1988. 15.
[9] Gregory Tate, *The Poet's Mind: The Psychology of Victorian Poetry, 1830-1870*.
Oxford, 2012.

connections between psychological discourse and poetry in the nineteenth century. Indeed, the development of the philosophy of mind into what we now understand as the science of psychology occurred almost completely within the nineteenth century. In *An Intellectual History of Psychology,* historian and psychologist Daniel N. Robinson writes that "[t]he problems that consume the energy of the contemporary psychologist were either set forth explicitly in the nineteenth century or were introduced by those whose educational and cultural backgrounds were provided by the unique perspective of the nineteenth century."[10] Similarly, Rick Rylance's *Victorian Psychology and British Culture: 1850-1880* shows how psychology's focus in the nineteenth century slowly shifted from the metaphysical to the empirical.[11]

Conceived more broadly, Benjamin Morgan (*The Outward Mind*), David Sweeney Coombs (*Reading with the Senses in Victorian Literature and Science*), and John Holmes (*The Pre-Raphaelites and Science*) reveal the intersections between science and varying aesthetic forms.[12] Investigations of scientific thought in the twentieth century by Christina Walter (*Optical Impersonality*), Robert Michael Brain (*The Pulse of*

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[10] Daniel N. Robinson, *An Intellectual History of Psychology*. Wisconsin, 1995. 259.
[11] Rylance tracks the trajectory of psychological thought through four overlapping frameworks: the discourse of the soul, the discourse of philosophy, the discourse of biology, and the discourse of medicine. *Victorian Psychology and British Culture: 1850-1880.* Oxford, 2000.
[12] Benjamin Morgan, *The Outward Mind: Materialist Aesthetics in Victorian Science and Literature*. Chicago, 2017; David Sweeney Coombs, *Reading with the Senses in Victorian Literature and Science*. Virginia, 2019; John Holmes, *The Pre-Raphaelites and Science*. Yale, 2018. For scholarship with a more medical rather than scientific bent, see Matthew L. Newsom Kerr, *Contagion, Isolation, and Biopolitics in Victorian London*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2018; Jennifer Wallis, *Investigating the Body in the Victorian Asylum: Doctors, Patients, and Practices*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2017; Rohan Deb Roy, *Malarial Subjects: Empire, Medicine and Nonhumans in British India, 1820–1909*. Cambridge, 2017.

Modernism), and Meghan Marie Hammond (*Empathy and the Psychology of Literary Modernism*) inform the second half of this work.[13] Nasser Mufti (*Civilizing War*) and Nandita Sharma (*Home Rule*) have investigated the institution of nineteenth century national character through imperial and colonial violence, while Jed Esty (*A Shrinking Island*) and Rebecca Walkowitz (*Cosmopolitan Style*) have traced how this national character resituated itself within a global context as the Empire waned.[14] Finally, my claims build upon the work of the members of the Historical Poetics reading group, specifically Meredith Martin, Jason Rudy, and Tricia Lootens.[15] These scholars have shown the vital importance of poetry to British identity, whether it be through Martin's negotiations of metrical conventions, Rudy's negotiations of belonging, or Lootens' negotiations of gender and politics.[16]

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[13] Christina Walter, *Optical Impersonality*. Johns Hopkins, 2014; Robert Michael Brain, *The Pulse of Modernism: Physiological Aesthetics in Fin-De-Siècle Europe*. University of Washington, 2015; Meghan Marie Hammond, *Empathy and the Psychology of Literary Modernism*. Edinburgh, 2014.

[14] Nasser Mufti, *Civilizing War: Imperial Politics and the Poetics of National Rupture*. Northwestern, 2017; Nandita Sharma, *Home Rule: National Sovereignty and the Separation of Natives and Migrants*. Duke, 2020; Jed Esty, *A Shrinking Island: Modernism and National Culture in England*. Princeton, 2004; Rebecca Walkowitz, *Cosmopolitan Style: Modernism Beyond the Nation*. Columbia, 2006. Jodi A. Byrd and Priyamvada Gopal explore more overt examples of resistance than generally encountered in this dissertation. Jodi A. Byrd, *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism*. Minnesota, 2011; Priyamvada Gopal, *Insurgent Empire: Anticolonial Resistance and British Dissent*. Verso, 2019.

[15] I am especially grateful for the opportunity to attend the "Orienting/Orientalizing Historical Poetics" meeting at Princeton (17-18 September 2019).

[16] Jason Rudy, *Electric Meters: Victorian Physiological Poetics*. Ohio, 2009 and *Imagined Homelands: British Poetry in the Colonies*. Johns Hopkins, 2017; Meredith Martin, *The Rise and Fall of Meter: Poetry and English National Culture, 1860-1930*. Princeton, 2012. Tricia Lootens, *The Political Poetess: Victorian Femininity, Race, and the Legacy of Separate Spheres*. Princeton 2017.

My work will take these works as a starting point and follow two poetic forms through their evolutions, using them, in psychological terms, as longitudinal case studies. In doing, I will show how the poetic forms of the dramatic monologue and the verse-novel developed alongside psychological discourses, and how attending to both types of writing, psychological and poetic, offers a more complete picture of each. I do not mean to assert a teleological claim about the disciplinary development of psychology or poetry. Instead, I bring attention to the ways in which the thinking of psychologists and poets are often in conversation.

In what follows, I will give a brief gloss of each stage of psychological thought and their corresponding poetic forms. Many of these introductory poetic examples will be canonical works authored by white men to establish a context that my later chapters on women will complicate and develop further.

History of Psychology via Dramatic Monologue

In the first decades of the nineteenth century, roughly until 1850, the spiritual and the metaphysical kept a strong foothold in texts on the mind and human behavior. Parapsychological practices like mesmerism and phrenology or physiognomy circulated throughout both academic and popular circles. Taking mesmerism as a representative example, Sir John Forbes, a Scottish physician, published a scathing rebuke of the practice of the practice in 1845.[17] Yet, just five years later, the "principle magnetizer" of the London Mesmeric Infirmary in Bedford Square published a helpful and well-received

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[17] Dr. John Forbes. *Mesmerism true - mesmerism false: a critical examination of the facts, claims, and pretensions of animal magnetism*. John Churchill, 1845.

instructional manual for the practice.[18] Surprisingly, mesmerism was also partially

supported by organized religion as made clear through Rev. George Sandby's defense of

the practice as modern miracles in 1844.[19] Mesmerism and similar practices engendered

two distinct responses: either fear of a loss of bodily control or excitement over a

connection with the metaphysical realm. These opposing responses were taken up in the

late 1830s and 40s by the Spasmodic school of poets, specifically Alexander Smith and

Sydney Dobell. According to Kirstie Blair, these poems see uncontrollable bodily

responses "as a key feature of the natural world, as instances of physical or spiritual

connection to wider forces, and as a constituent part of poetic form and rhythm."[20] As the

body became a site of knowledge production, Jason Rudy argues, "reading poetry in the

mid-Victorian period seems no longer an intellectual endeavor, but a full-bodied,

physiological experience."[21] Much like the *"fluide qui pénètre tout"* that supposedly

flowed through the mesmeric patient, (according to Franz Anton Mesmer in 1779), poetic

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[18] Thomas Buckland. *The hand-book of mesmerism, for the guidance and instruction of all persons who desire to practise mesmerism for the cure of diseases, and to alleviate the sufferings of their fellow creatures. To which is annexed the rules and regulations of the mesmeric infirmary*. London: Hippolyte Bailliere, 1850.

[19] George Sandby, *Mesmerism and Its Opponents: With a Narrative of Cases*. Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1844. For more criticism on Victorian pseudosciences, see William Hughes. *That Devil's Trick: Hypnotism and the Victorian Popular Imagination*. Manchester, 2015; Lara Pauline Karpenko and Shalyn R Claggett, eds. *Strange Science: Investigating the Limits of Knowledge in the Victorian Age*. Michigan, 2017; Jen Cadwallader, *Spirits and Spirituality in Victorian Fiction*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2016; Alison Winter, *Mesmerized: Powers of Mind in Victorian Britain*. Chicago, 1998.

[20] Kirstie Blair, "Spasmodic Affections: Poetry, Pathology, and the Spasmodic Hero." *Victorian Poetry* 42.4 (Winter 2004): 473-490. 474. See also Kirstie Blair, *Victorian Poetry and the Culture of the Heart*. Oxford, 2006; and Charles LaPorte and Jason R. Rudy's "Editorial Introduction: Spasmodic Poetry and Poetics." *Victorian Poetry* 42.4 (2004): 421-427. For a recent work on Victorian sensation in the novel, see David Sweeney Coombs, *Reading with the Senses in Victorian Literature and Science*. Virginia, 2019.

[21] Jason Rudy, *Electric Meters: Victorian Physiological Poetics*. Ohio, 2009. 12.

rhythm could overwhelm the intellect or will.[22] Though now considered to be

pseudosciences, these predecessors to contemporary psychology asked the same question

that would structure later psychology as a discipline: what exactly is the relationship

between the mind and the body?

A new poetic form emerged within and alongside this Spasmodic school. In 1842,

Tennyson published *Poems* and Robert Browning published *Dramatic Lyrics*. Readers

were treated to an abundance of poems that would later be called dramatic monologues:

Tennyson's "Oenone," "The Lotos-Eaters," "St. Simon Stylites," "Rizpah," and

"Ulysses"; and Browning's "My Last Duchess," "Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister,"

"Porphyria's Lover," and "Johannes Agricola in Meditation."[23] In an 1842 review of

Tennyson's monologues, John Sterling classifies these poems under the heading of

"fancies" or "all those poems relating to distant and marvelous circumstances and persons

such as we can only conceive, and that very imperfectly, by a conscious removal of our

thoughts into regions of which we have no experience, and which seem to us half

impossible." The distance and marvelousness is not only connected to the sometimes

mythic characters, but also to what Sterling calls the "awful consciousness of a

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[22] Franz Anton Mesmer, "*Mémoire sur la découverte du magnetisme animal*." Didot, 1779. 6.

[23] Because this was a new, innovative form, they were not yet named as such. George Eliot first refers to Browning's poems as "what we may call the dramatic-psychological kind" in her 1856 review of *Men and Women*. "*Belles Lettres.*" *Westminster Review* 65 (Jan.-Apr. 1856): 294. Similarly, in his review for a collection of Browning's poetry published in 1863 and his 1864 *Dramatis Personae,* Gerald Massey referred to these poems as "dramas of mental conflict" and "portraits of mental photography." [Review of Robert Browning's Poems.] *Quarterly Review* 118 (July-Oct. 1865): 77-105. Pages 91 and 105, respectively. Justin Sider cites earlier terms used pre-1870s: "prosopopoeiae, dramatic lyrics, lyrical monologues, dramatic idyls, laments, ballads… featuring the speeches, songs, or mental divagations of fictional characters." "Dramatic Monologue, Public Address, and the Ends of Character." *ELH* 83.4 (Winter 2006): 1145.

supernatural somewhat within our homely flesh."[24] This theme of the unconventional, whether framed as an unfamiliar remoteness or too-familiar bodily occupation, reveals a similar uneasiness around a loss of agency or a sense of self as found the following decade in the Spasmodic mode.

In a foundational essay, Herbert Tucker argues that dramatic monologues both "unravel character by exposing it as merely a tissue of affiliations" and present a "monomaniacal manifesto."[25] This unmade self – either through unraveling or mania – may be created through society's overwhelming pressure to conform (unfamiliarity) or a descent into egotism and madness (overfamiliarity). In either case, whether the character's loss of agency is produced by society or a diseased mind, these early monologues positioned the individual *against* society. Tucker's statement holds whether we read the dramatic monologues as ineffective ravings, as does Matthew Campbell (*Rhythm and Will in Victorian Poetry*), or as transcendently affecting rhetoric, as does Cornelia Pearsall (*Tennyson's Rapture*).[26] Tennyson's eponymous lotos eaters forsake their honor to essentially become addicts; Ulysses abandons his country to gallivant around with his aging sailors; Oenone is more upset by her lover's betrayal than the violence that will result; and both the monk of Browning's "Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister" and Tennyson's "St. Simeon Stylites" betray the values of the religion to which

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[24] [John Sterling,] "Poems by Alfred Tennyson." *Quarterly Review* 70 (1842): 385-416. 400.

[25] "Dramatic Monologue and the Overhearing of Lyric." *Lyric Poetry: Beyond New Criticism*. Ed. Chaviva Hošek and Patricia Parker. Cornell, 1985. 230 and 228, respectively.

[26] Matthew Campbell, *Rhythm and Will in Victorian Poetry*. Cambridge, 1999. Cornelia Pearsall, *Tennyson's Rapture: Transformations in the Dramatic Monologue.* Oxford, 2008.

they have devoted their lives. In a review of the 1832 version of *Poems*, Arthur Henry

Hallam claims that modern poetry had turned to "the habit of seeking relief in

idiosyncrasies rather than community of interest." Hallam goes further, declaring that

though English poetry historically "went along with the general impulse of the nation, in

these [times] it is a reaction against it."[27] In the same manner but 150 years later, Dorothy

Mermin sees these early poems as evidence of Tennyson's and Browning's

"ambivalence" towards the influence the reading audience had over the poet.[28] These

early monologues ruminate on the power of society to control; the next iteration

necessarily takes a different approach for a different psychological framework.

    The mid-Victorian period, from about the 1850s to the 1870s, saw psychological

theory shift away from the self and more towards the social. Questions about the structure

of the mind preoccupied classical Liberals like John Stuart Mill, Herbert Spencer, and

George Henry Lewes. Schools of thought like evolutionary psychology and

associationism debated the extent to which individual mental abilities could be

manipulated or "improved" for the good of British society. This period also saw the

publication of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859), which heavily

influenced psychological thought to reject the metaphysical and to pivot towards the

methodology of natural science.[29] More specifically, the theory of natural selection

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[27] Arthur Henry Hallam, "On Some of the Characteristics of Modern Poetry, and on the Lyrical Poems of Alfred Tennyson." *The Writings of Arthur Hallam*. Ed. T. H. Vail Motter. Oxford, 1943. 184.

[28] Dorothy Mermin, *The Audience in the Poem: Five Victorian Poets*. New Brunswick, Rutgers, 1983. 8.

[29] George Lewis Levine's *Darwin and the Novelists: Patterns of Science in Victorian Fiction* (Harvard, 1988) was one of the first to argue for a united discourse between science and novelists that went beyond direct incorporation of scientific themes or

widened the purview of psychology from the isolated individual to individuals across

generations; longitudinal studies no longer measured one lifetime, but many. In essence,

the focus of psychological thought shifted to debating the question of nature versus

nurture, a new, more empirical manifestation of the mind/body problem.[30]

As psychology became more community-minded, so did hybrid forms like

dramatic monologues and verse-novels. Henry Sidgwick's 1869 review of Arthur Hugh

Clough's hybrid *Amours de Voyage* (written 1849; published 1858) argues:

> His point of view and habit of mind are less singular in England in the year 1869
>
> than they were in 1859, and much less than they were in 1849. We are growing
>
> year by year more introspective and self-conscious: the current philosophy leads
>
> us to a close, patient, and impartial observation and analysis of our mental
>
> processes: and the current philosophy is partly the effect and partly the cause of a
>
> more widespread tendency.[31]

In contrast to the one defining occasion of the early-nineteenth century, mid-century

poetry was more interested in the process, the "close, patient, and impartial observation

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imagery and revealed the latent change in cultural perspectives towards objectivity and experimental ways of thinking. Scholars such as Gowan Dawson and Jonathan Smith have gone further to show how this relationship between scientific discourse and poetry informed and reproduced both Victorian and Modern cultural norms. Gowan Dawson, *Darwin, Literature and Victorian Respectability.* Cambridge, 2007; Jonathan Smith, *Charles Darwin and Victorian Visual Culture*. Cambridge, 2007. Anne DeWitt has pushed back against the belief that the collaboration between scientific and literary realms was completely harmonious, showing how they vied for precedence in Victorian culture. *Moral Authority, Men of Science, and the Victorian Novel.* Cambridge, 2013.
[30] The first British journals were established during this period as well: the aforementioned *Journal of Psychological Medicine and Mental Pathology* (est. 1848) and *The Asylum Journal of Mental Science* (est. 1853).
[31] Henry Sidgwick, "The Poems and Prose Remains of Arthur Hugh Clough." *Westminster Review* 42 (October 1869): 363-387. 363-364.

and analysis" of the mind. As Sidgwick argued, Clough's *Amours* more closely fits this time period as it features physical, textual evidence through letters sent over a long period of time, in the style of a longitudinal study. The epistolary form also complicates the division of private and public, making Clough's letter writer seemingly more readily accessible to his silent auditor.

Similarly, while earlier monologues explored the psychology of a transgressive, psychologically singular speaker, these later iterations move to portraying more communal negotiations. We can see this difference even in titles: Browning's 1842 monologue subheading "Madhouse Cells" emphasizes the insular and private; the 1855 collection is more collectively titled *Men and Women*. George Meredith's *Modern Love* (1862) expands the sonnet sequence, a close relative of the verse-novel, from the traditional two lovers to four. Likewise, *The Ring and the Book* (1868-69) features multiple speakers and revolves around a public judicial case with the Pope, representative of Christianity as a whole, as adjudicator. Like Clough's letters, the framing of *The Ring and the Book* as a collection of written statements lend an empirical bent to an otherwise salacious tale of murder. According to Melissa Valiska Gregory, this framing "allowed Victorian readers to experience and appreciate the poem's rhetorical intensity without the disturbing fear that they would be sympathetically swept away by its darker elements" as in earlier monologues about the murder of a woman, "Porphyria's Lover" and "My Last Duchess." The journey from the lone madhouse cell to the populated courtroom simultaneously "demands a social response extending beyond reader identification."[32]

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[32] Melissa Valiska Gregory, "Robert Browning and the Lure of the Violent Lyric Voice: Domestic Violence and the Dramatic Monologue." *Victorian Poetry* 38.4 (Winter 2000): 491-510. 503 and 501, respectively.

The move to reach beyond personal identification became absolutely necessary for the next phase of psychological thought.

With the expansion of the British Empire as a worldwide project, British psychology at the *fin de siècle* became, by necessity, an investigation of collective psychological norms rather than individual idiosyncrasies; by the early twentieth century, the British public was firmly engaged in constant negotiations of collectivity. Three distinct schools of psychology emerged at this time – structuralism, functionalism, and, eventually, behaviorism – each with a differing balance of subjectivity and objectivity (each school will be covered, respectively, in chapters two through four). In general, these psychologists were still arguing whether psychological discourse should be primarily a philosophical or scientific endeavor; however, experimental methods were beginning to surpass introspective methods. In Britain, the first experimental psychology labs were established in Cambridge and University College, London in 1897, and the British Psychological Association and the *British Journal of Psychology* were founded in 1901 and 1904, respectively. On a global scale, the first four International Congresses of Experimental Psychology also occurred in this period (1889, 1892, 1896, and 1900). Psychology was interdisciplinary, international – and hotly contested. Major participants from Germany, America, and Britain contributed to a vigorous exchange of ideas ranging from the social, the sexual, and the scientific.

The assertion that the study of poetry improved the quality of the mind stayed consistent across the mid-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries even as psychology became more akin to science than philosophy; poetry was featured in these scientific journals from their beginnings. In addition to the two examples that opened this

introduction, French psychologist F. H. Paulhan simultaneously recited and wrote

different poems that he had memorized to prove that the mind could perform multiple

tasks at once.[33] Similarly, British and American psychologists Henry Maudsely and

William James used the process of recalling memorized poems and prose to explain

automatic cognitive processes more fully.[34] In 1921, the *British Journal of Psychology*

published an account of professors at Harvard and Yale who were locked in a no-doubt

enthralling dispute over quantitative or accentual pronunciation of poetry (see the table of

contents for the study in Fig. 2).[35]

THE NATURE OF VERSE.

By E. W. SCRIPTURE.

I. *The controversy originating this inquiry. 'Quantity verse' and 'stress verse' (pp. 225, 226).*
II. *Apparatus employed and analysis of the record obtained. 'Enunciation verse' and 'melody verse' (pp. 226–231).*
III. *Conclusions as regards the controversy. Their general validity (pp. 231–233).*
IV. *Verse as a product of human activity (p. 233).*
V. *Fallacy of the 'metric' theory of versification (pp. 233–235).*

Figure 2. Table of contents of E. W. Scripture's "The Nature of Verse" *British Journal of Psychology.* General Section, 11.2 (1921): 225-235. 225.

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[33] From the original French: "J'ai commencé simplement par écrire des fragments de certaines pièces de vers, tout en récitant des fragments d'autres pièces. Peut-être devrais-je m'excuser auprès des poètes de faire servir ainsi des vers à des usages profanes; mais si j'ai pu m'en servir ainsi, c'est que je les savais par cœur pour les avoir lus et relus sans préoccupations scientifiques." F. H. Paulhan, "Psychologie: La simultanéité des actes psychiques." *Revue Scientifique* 39 (28 May 1887): 685-689. 685.

[34] William James, "On the Function of Cognition." *Mind* 10.37 (Jan. 1885): 27-44. Henry Maudsley, "The Physical Conditions of Consciousness." *Mind* 12.48 (Oct. 1887): 489-515.

[35] E. W. Scripture, "The Nature of Verse" *British Journal of Psychology.* General Section, 11.2 (1921): 225-235.

Edward Wheeler Scripture, sole founder of the Yale experimental psychology

laboratory and one of the founders of the American Psychological Association, turned his

attention to resolving this conundrum through measuring puffs of air and vibrations of the

larynx through an apparatus with a mouthpiece and tuning fork (see Fig. 3 for the photo

of this apparatus and Fig. 4 for a similar instrument in use). Perhaps unsurprisingly to

those who study poetry, Scripture concluded that "[e]ach of the professors was quite right

as far as he went" because English verse, he concluded, was both quantity and stress-

based. He also claimed to have uncovered another option, what he called "enunciation

verse"; tragically, neither the Harvard nor Yale professor corroborated his discovery.
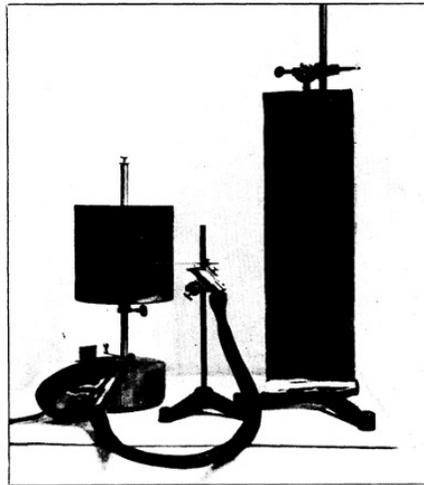
Figure 3. Yale apparatus, probably a version of a kymograph. Mouthpiece at bottom left; tuning fork in center. E. W. Scripture. "The Nature of Verse" *British Journal of Psychology.* General Section, 11.2 (1921): 225-235.
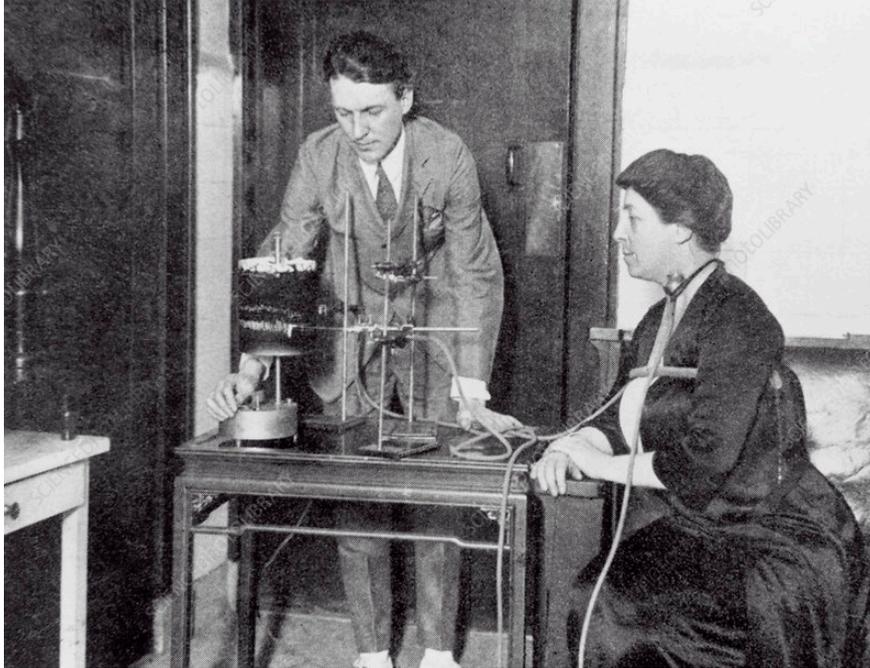
Figure 4. Kymograph in use measuring the pulse at the neck and the expansion of the lungs through the belt around the chest. The woman is a psychic medium being measured during a séance by the Society for Psychical Research, London. "Physiological measurement using a kymograph." 1920s. *SciencePhotoLibrary.*

Outside the psychology lab, early twentieth-century poets were doing their own experimentation. Carol T. Christ's classic *Victorian and Modern Poetics* (1984) draws important connections between the Victorian dramatic monologue and the mask or persona of Modernists like T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and William Butler Yeats.[36] Christ, and, more recently, Sharon Cameron, conceive of impersonality along the same lines as Eliot in "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919). This traditional version sees impersonality as the rejection of individuality in favor of a mythic (white) universality.[37] Thus many of the Modernist hybrid forms are explorations of flat archetypes or the breakdown of relationality. Eliot's dramatic monologues "The Love Song of J. Alfred

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[36] Carol T. Christ, *Victorian and Modern Poetics.* Chicago, 1984.
[37] Sharon Cameron, *Impersonality: Seven Essays*. Chicago, 2007.

Prufrock" (1915) and "Gerontion" (1920) famously depict men (or possibly the same man at different points in his life) unable to forge connections with others. Pound's *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* (1920) takes autobiographical feeling and transforms it into an archetypal poetic failure. Ironically, many of the poems featuring failures of personality are eponymous with personality they purport to reveal. Christ points out that Yeats consistently titled his poems after the archetype he was attempting to convey; Yeats himself noted that personas Hanrahan, Michael Robartes, and Aedh from *The Wind Among the Reeds* (1899) were meant "more as principles of the mind than as actual personages."[38] The privileging of universality – or the desire for it -- over individuality and a return to archetypes parallels the extreme empiricism favored by a significant number of psychologists in the interwar period. Quantitative measurement became the paramount in traditionally qualitative categories like poetic feeling, as in Scripture's experiment, or in understandings of identity and character, as we will see in my final chapter.[39]

Much work has been done on the ways in which Victorian women, especially the New Women, rewrote poetic conventions to reflect a more feminist viewpoint.[40]

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[38] Cited in Christ 39.

[39] In this dissertation, I explicitly engage with Modernists who are directly connected to Freud: H.D. as a patient and Woolf as a publisher of his works. However, I will not be centering Freud's theories in relation to either writer. Psychological discourse was and is much more expansive than the school of psychoanalysis and needs to be taken into account in nineteenth- and twentieth-century studies.

[40] In addition to Dorothy Mermin's work, Cynthia Scheinberg argues that women's dramatic monologues function differently than men's in "Recasting 'sympathy and judgment': Amy Levy, Women Poets, and the Victorian Dramatic Monologue." *Victorian Poetry* 35.2 (Summer 1997): 173-191. Marion Thain and Charles La Porte investigate the New Women's rewriting of science and religion. Marion Thain, "'Scientific Wooing': Constance Naden's Marriage of Science and Poetry." *Victorian*

Similarly, more recent work by Christina Walter and Rochelle Rives has shown how twentieth-century women produced a more comprehensive version of Modernist impersonality that expanded the possibilities of identity rather than rejecting it.[41] While some women and colonial subjects were bold iconoclasts, many more existed in an open-ended negotiation between their alliance to the nation and their alliance to themselves. The true relationship between Britain and her second-class citizens was, and is, much more nuanced than a simple binary opposition; and the complex poetry that emerged when women and colonial subjects actively contributed to dominant British culture is integral to understanding how national characters are born and raised.

This project as a whole has implications beyond the discourses of psychology and poetry. The psychological literatures examined here help navigate the incomplete story of British nationalism. Questions of who can create, join, or destroy communities resonate with our current political and cultural moment. "Reparative Forms" shows that the anxiety surrounding the gradual decline of the British Empire and the literary reactions to this decline anticipate our current global political climate, including Euroscepticism, racially charged suspicions of immigrants, an increased emphasis on cultural integration, and a reinvigoration of nationalist rhetoric.

Poetry 41.1 (2003): 151–169; Charles LaPorte, "Atheist Prophecy: Mathilde Blind, Constance Naden, and the Victorian Poetess." *Victorian Literature and Culture* 34.2 (2006): 427–441. Emily Harrington's *Second Person Singular: Late Victorian Women Poets and the Bonds of Verse* is perhaps the most comprehensive overview of New Women poetic innovation. Virginia, 2014.
[41] Rochelle Rives, *Modernist Impersonalities: Affect, Authority, and the Subject*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2012; Christina Walter. *Optical Impersonality*. Johns Hopkins, 2014.

Overview of Chapters

In tracing this history and the specific contributions of women's poetry at the turn of the century, my dissertation is a necessarily interdisciplinary project, combining literary formalism, the histories of science and medicine, Indigenous studies, and colonial studies. I situate Victorian and Modernist poets alongside the canonical writers of early psychological theory, including John Stuart Mill (1807-1873), George Henry Lewes (1817-1878), Edward Titchener (1867-1927), Alexander Faulkner Shand (1858-1936) and John B. Watson (1878-1958). In contrast to the all-white, all-male panel of psychologists, the poets I examine are women, both from the metropole and colonies: Mohawk-Canadian poet Tekahionwake/E. Pauline Johnson (1861-1913) and American ex-patriate H.D. (1886-1961), bookended by canonical writers Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806-1861) and Virginia Woolf (1882-1941). My chapters are arranged chronologically in order to follow both the deviations and connections between psychological schools of thought. Each chapter follows a similar structure. First, I give a brief contextual overview of the psychological discourse featured. Second, I explore the connections between this discourse and the poetic innovations of the poets. Finally, I offer political implications of these connections, both within their historical contexts and within our own.

My first chapter brings together Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh* (1856) and John Stuart Mill's *A System of Logic* (1846). Bridging the spiritualism of the early-nineteenth century and the sociality of the mid-nineteenth century, EBB's concept of the poet's "double-vision" takes up a project similar to Mill's associationist thought. Both *Aurora Leigh* and *A System of Logic* encourage their readers to examine their own

biases and preconceived ideas, though through different methods. Mill's inductive

reasoning sought to teach British citizens how to recognize the difference between an

objective truth and a subjective tradition, while EEBB's formal innovations in the verse-

novel encourage her readers to question their understandings of generic and narrative

conventions. The "double-vision" of the poet functions in a similar way as the practice of

the associationist psychologist; they teach others to reflect on mental processes. Mill and

EBB saw a meritocracy led by the poet and the psychologist as the best way to invoke

radical social change.

The next two chapters focus on the dramatic monologues of Tekahionwake/E.

Pauline Johnson and H.D. I argue that these writers shift their dramatic monologues from

individual to communal speakers in order to better represent the experience of

nontraditional British subjects. In the first of these chapters, "The Dramatic Monologue

and Tekahionwake: Double Poem as Double Wampum," I connect George Henry Lewes'

Problems of Life and Mind (1873) to Tekahionwake's public performance of her

monologues, specifically "Ojistoh" and "A Cry from An Indian Wife," from 1895's *The*

White Wampum. In contrast to Mill's introspection of the individual, Lewes believed that

psychology must study what he called the "general consciousness," or the psychology of

a group. As a performer and a biracial woman, Tekahionwake is well-suited to explore

the complex intersections between the different groups that made up the Dominion of

Canada. Drawing parallels between Isobel Armstrong's "double poem" and the

Haudenosaunee tradition of wampum, I show how Tekahionwake reworks the Poetess

tradition to draw attention to the moral superiority of Indigenous peoples even as she

celebrates the British imperial project. Through both her texts and her public

performance, Tekahionwake invited her primarily white, Anglo-Canadian audience to see intercommunal sympathies and to construct a new understanding of "Canadian" that could encompass multiple communities.

The second of these paired chapters on the dramatic monologue focuses on the American ex-patriate H.D. "Sympathy and Empathy: H.D., the Dramatic Monologue, and the Great War" continues to track the communal turn of the dramatic monologue. While the chapter on Tekahionwake focused on her understanding of "sympathy,,"this third chapter looks at the transformation of the idea of fellow-feeling into twentieth-century "empathy." To do so, I look at H.D.'s *Sea Garden* (1916) alongside Edward B. Titchener and the structuralist school of psychology, specifically his understanding of the mind's laws of attention. I argue that through the hybrid forms of the poems of "Prisoners" and "Cities," we can see H.D.'s ambivalence around the uses of empathy for the purposes of war. Tekahionwake saw the nineteenth century's "sympathy" as a method of unification; H.D. worries that "empathy" is simply a tool for patriotic manipulation and the abstraction of the horrors of the First World War.

My final chapter, "Antifascism and the Modern Function of Character: Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*" turns to a different kind of hybrid form: in Woolf's words, a play-poem. Like H.D., Woolf has a much more ambivalent relationship with Britain than either EBB or even Tekahionwake. This chapter claims that *The Waves* (1931) pushes back against what Woolf considers to be the oppressive move to the quantitative measurement of character as found in British fascism and the new psychological school of behaviorism. Instead, she presents a more fluid, process-based understanding of character through her use of caricature and soliloquy. This fluidity is also found in the

functionalist school; Alexander Faulkner Shand's *The Foundations of Character* (1914) emphasizes the incompleteness and continuous activity of the mind that would later be taken up through the movement of Woolf's waves. Finally, I argue that the caricatures of Percival and Bernard in *The Waves* are two examples of possible relations to the nation and to others. Percival, usually read as the embodiment of imperialism, is also an embodiment of British fascism; Bernard is Woolf's hope for the future of British of national character.

As a whole, these chapters claim that women's poetry simultaneously questioned and upheld patriarchy just as colonial poetry simultaneously questioned and upheld British culture. These hybrid forms constitute a significant contribution to a British communal psychology whose characteristics scholarship has yet to account for. To be clear, I am not making the argument that these poets or hybrid forms were simply reflecting or embodying psychological discourse. Rather, this dissertation shows how the same questions of self and community structured both poetic and psychological thought. Olive Wheeler, the psychologist opening this introduction, argued that poetic pedagogy should be "an imperfect sketch requiring constant retouchings in the light of a more extensive knowledge."[42] In the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, the effort to answer questions of belonging became the common thread running through both poetry and psychology. Innovations in poetic and psychological methodologies led to a more nuanced understanding of British national character – one that acknowledged its "constant retouchings."

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[42] O. A. Wheeler, "An Analysis of Literary Appreciation." *British Journal of Psychology*. General Section 13.3 (1923): 229-242. 230.

Chapter 1

"[R]unning in the midst of our conventions":
Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh* and Associationism

> If we mix
> Two colours, we lose both, and make a third
> Distinct from either. Mark you! to mistake
> A colour is the sign of a sick brain,
> And mine, I thank the saints, is clear and cool:
> A neutral tint is here impossible.[43]

Strip the misogynistic nonsense from the beginning of the *Saturday Review*'s assessment of *Aurora Leigh*, and what remains is essentially true: "A novel in blank verse, containing twelve thousand lines, is in itself alarming to an ordinary reader."[44] Much of the contemporaneous criticism of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's verse novel considers its existence a near impossible feat – partially because of the sex of its author, but mostly because of its genre.[45] The verse novel relies upon the interrogation of several social and literary conventions, not the least of which is the presumed binary of verse and

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[43] Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *Aurora Leigh* 5.740-45.

[44] *Saturday Review* 2 (December 27, 1856): 776.

[45] Though there were also Romantic verse novels, these hybrids were still considered under the umbrella of either the epic or the romance; not until *Aurora Leigh* was the verse novel demarcated as a distinct generic category encompassing smaller sub-genres. In his chapter on the verse novel in *A Companion to Victorian Poetry*, Dino Felluga explains that this particular hybrid was not set apart and classified until the mid-century. After the 1860s, the verse novel became an umbrella genre, comprised several different forms: romantic cycle in Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* (1859/1885), sonnet sequence in George Meredith's *Modern Love*, and dramatic monologues in Robert Browning's *The Ring and the Book* (1868/9). On the other hand, in her essay "The Verse Novel as Genre: Contradiction or Hybrid?," Catherine Addison questions the designation of "verse novel" as a distinct genre from the long narrative poem, asking, "Why then should we bother with a new taxonomy for these texts, when a perfectly good old one exist?" (540). For the purposes of this chapter, I argue that understanding why Victorians began to use this designation rather than the term "long narrative poem" will help us also understand how they conceived of the relationship among prose, poetry, and different versions of truth.

prose. Through *Aurora Leigh*, EBB plays with the assumptions and expectations of both poetry and prose audiences. Her use of generic and narrative conventions in unconventional ways impels readers to be active participants in reading; to understand the text, readers must constantly renegotiate their own inherent expectations of genre.

This methodology of renegotiation echoes the methodology of associationist psychology that arose in the mid-century, dominated by John Stuart Mill's ethical induction and rejection of *a priori* truth. I argue that Mill's associationism functions alongside *Aurora Leigh*'s hybrid genre in order to question the *a priori* status of both literary and political possibilities. By doing so, the philosopher and the poetess could, as EBB described it, "analyz[e] humanity back into its elements, to the destruction of the conventions of the hour. That is – strictly speaking... the office of the poet, – is it not?"[46]

The first half of this chapter considers the theory of associationism and how it helps us to understand what EBB called the "philosophical dreaming & digression (which is in fact a characteristic of the age)."[47] First, I cover Mill's version of inductive reasoning and argue that both Mill's philosophy and EBB's *Aurora Leigh* were methods of exerting what EBB referred to as "double-vision," the ability to negotiate a hybrid truth made from both the natural and the spiritual.[48] Second, I will show how Mill's psychological thinking coincides with EBB's belief in the poet-as-prophet that affects

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[46] "To Robert Browning." 27 Feb. 1845. *The Browning Letters.* Baylor Digital Collections.

[47] "To Mary Russell Mitford." 30 Dec. 1844. *The Browning Letters.* Baylor Digital Collections.

[48] My understanding of EBB's merging of the spiritual and the physical is heavily indebted to Jason Rudy's *Electric Meters*, specifically the conclusion. Rudy argues that EBB's spiritual core "relies for its power on the physiological" (180). I hope to build on his argument by adding Mill's associationism as a historical framework for understanding this dynamic.

social change.[49] Finally, in the second half of this chapter, I contend that the text of

Aurora Leigh embodies associationist psychology as praxis, encouraging readers to

confront and reflect on their assumptions about literature, politics, and social norms.

Reading contemporaneous reviews show us how EBB, in disrupting generic expectations,

compelled readers to think critically about their own uninvestigated biases. In this way,

Aurora Leigh becomes a significant contributor to the evolution of philosophical thought

that would eventually coalesce into the practice of psychology.

The Apple of Life

John Stuart Mill's *System of Logic: Ratiocinative and Inductive* was the

preeminent book on modern philosophy from its publication in 1843 through the mid-

nineteenth century, waning in its influence only around Mill's death in 1873.[50] Mill's

Logic was participating in a larger early- to mid-nineteenth century discourse around the

best kind of logical reasoning to establish scientific facts. Mill was especially concerned

with establishing an effective form of inductive reasoning, formulating the most accurate

generalizations from empirical data.[51] While thinkers such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge

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[49] For more on EBB's investment in the poetess-as-prophet as well as the relationship between Christianity and mid-century Victorian poetry as a whole, see Charles LaPorte's *Victorian Poets and the Changing Bible.* Virginia, 2011.

[50] Mill's *Logic* was widely used in Oxford and Cambridge for logic, mathematics, moral science, and the classics through the whole of the mid-century (Laura J. Snyder, *Reforming Philosophy: A Victorian Debate on Science and Society.* Chicago, 2006. 99). Outside of academia, the book enjoyed a popularity that necessitated eight different editions, with constant revisions by Mill. Due to his moral and political beliefs, Mill also produced a cheaper printing for the benefit of the working class.

[51] *Logic, CW* 7.306. "Induction properly so called […] may […] be summarily defined as Generalization from Experience. It consists in inferring from some individual instances in which a phenomenon is observed to occur, that it occurs in all instances of a certain class;

and William Whewell claimed that inductive reasoning could uncover types of *a priori* truths, Mill rejected any truths that could not be observed by the senses and argued that even scientific "facts" should be continually tested with new data and variables.

However, while Mill believed that no knowledge could be intuited from invisible universal laws, he also criticized the purely empirical method of Jeremy Bentham and his father James Mill.[52] Mill believed that empiricism as an epistemology was both the more scientific and most productive methodology; however, he had a few fundamental criticisms. Mill believed that utilitarianism overlooked both the social environment *in which* the mind worked and the nuances of *how* the mind worked. Instead, he conceived of the mind as much more embedded and implicated in society than Bentham, who prized detachment above all else.[53] In this, Mill appreciated the philosophy of Coleridge as a necessary supplement to empiricism.[54] Mill meant for his inductive method to bring together the empiricism of Bentham and the philosophy of Coleridge, arguing that

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namely, in all which *resemble* the former, in what are regarded as the material circumstances."

[52] Mill famously suffered a nervous breakdown in his youth that impacted his view on Bentham's version of utilitarianism rigidly applied by his father. Most likely motivated by his personal difficulties with utilitarianism, Mill, perhaps ungenerously, claimed that Bentham's philosophical shortcomings stemmed from a personal shortcoming: "Knowing so little of human feelings, he knew still less of the influences by which these feelings were formed. All the more subtle workings both of the mind upon itself, and of external things upon the mind, escaped him; no one, probably, who, in a highly instructed age, ever attempted to give a rule to all human conduct, set out with a more limited conception either of the agencies by which human conduct *is* or of those by which it *should* be, influenced." "Bentham." *CW* 10.89.

[53] Mill argues that Coleridge believed that "the very fact that any doctrine had been believed by thoughtful men, and received by whole nations or generations of mankind, was part of the problem to be solved, was one of the phenomena to be accounted for." "Coleridge." *CW* 10.120.

[54] *Ibid.* 10.121. "In every respect the two men are each other's 'completing counterpart:' [sic] the strong points of each correspond to the weak points of the other."

"[w]hoever could master the premises and combine the methods of both, would possess the entire English philosophy of their age."[55] In his view, an effective logical methodology would answer both Bentham's empirical query, "Is it true?" *and* Coleridge's interpretive query, "What is the meaning of it?"[56] Rather than portraying the mind as completely objective and rational like Bentham or as striving to access a supernaturally provided *a priori* knowledge like Coleridge, Mill's inductive reasoning would seek empirical data *within* its social context.[57]

In effect, Mill was calling for what EBB, through her titular heroine Aurora Leigh, calls "a double vision" used "[t]o see near things as comprehensibly / As if afar they took their point of sight, / And distant things, as intimately deep, / As if they touched them."[58] In *Victorian Poetry: Poetry, Poetics, and Politics*, Isobel Armstrong argues that the many Victorian poems actually consist of dual discourses, one subjective and the other objective. This double poem is in constant dialogue with itself, both asserting the

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[55] *Ibid.* 10.121.

[56] The example questions are Mill's own. "Coleridge." *CW* 10.119. Mill makes the external/internal binary explicit on the same page: "[Bentham] took his stand outside the received opinion, and surveyed it as an entire stranger to it: [Coleridge] looked at it from within, and endeavoured to see it with the eyes of a believer in it."

[57] Laura J. Snyder provides two contemporaneous critiques by John Bowring and James Fitzjames Stephen, respectively, who disapproved of Mill's questioning of objectivity: "[Mill] was most emphatically a philosopher, but then he read Wordsworth and that muddled him, and he has been in a strange confusion ever since." Reported by Caroline Fox, *Memories of Old Friends* 113; Cited in Snyder 12; "I am falling foul… of John Mill in his modern and more human mood… which always makes me feel that he is a deserter from the proper principles of rigidity and ferocity in which he was brought up." Cited in Snyder 12. Laura J. Snyder, *Reforming Philosophy: A Victorian Debate on Science and Society.* Chicago, 2006.

[58] *Aurora Leigh* 5.185-188. EBB's understanding of the "double vision" integrates nicely with Armstrong's later criticism. We can see the development of both Aurora's character and her poetic aesthetic throughout the course of the verse novel; in this way, the text both exists as an example of the "double poem" in its own construction as well as the "double vision" through its aesthetics.

truth of the subjectivity of the speaker as well as revealing all the ways the speaker is questioning his or her own selfhood. "By seeing utterance both as subject and as object," Armstrong argues, "it was possible for the poet to explore expressive psychological forms as simultaneously as psychological conditions *and* as constructs, the phenomenology of a culture, projections which indicate the structure of relationships."[59] Armstrong's "double poem" can be seen not only as a literary critical tool for analysis, but also in relation to an early psychological method. I argue that, for EBB, associationism was the method used to investigate this "phenomenology of culture."

Though not an explicit utilitarian or associationist text, EBB's verse novel *Aurora Leigh* (1856) contributes to the larger nineteenth-century debates around types of truth and the methods for accessing that truth. EBB's "double vision" structures her verse novel formally, narratively, and politically. Both Mill and EBB come to the conclusion that hybridity is crucial to fully represent truth. In *Aurora Leigh,* Aurora opines:

> We divide
>
> This apple of life, and cut it through the pips,–
>
> The perfect round which fitted Venus' hand
>
> Has perished utterly as if we ate
>
> Both halves. Without the spiritual, observe,
>
> The natural's impossible; – no form,
>
> No motion! Without sensuous, spiritual
>
> Is inappreciable; – no beauty or power![60]

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[59] 13, emphasis in original.
[60] *Aurora Leigh* 7.769-776.

Though working in different discourses, Mill and EBB are fundamentally engaging with the same binary. Where Mill understands the binary as empirical versus contextual, EBB regards it as natural versus the spirit. These different paired terms express the same dichotomy between the physical and the ideal.[61] Most importantly, both writers insist that the two halves of these binaries must always be considered together in order to apprehend the full scope of truth. Like Bentham and Coleridge or two sides of the same apple, the sides of this binary are part of the same process. EBB ultimately saw this binary of "the different planes of sensuous form /And form insensuous" resolving itself through the lens of her Christianity.[62] The ending of *Aurora Leigh* figuratively "marries" the unification of Romney and Aurora to a vision of the unification of the earthly world with the spiritual in a New Jerusalem.

However, EBB's belief in the ultimate victory of a reunion with God did not preclude her from engaging substantively with more earthly concerns. For both EBB and Mill, this somewhat esoteric debate on mental processes and "finding truth" was a means to more concrete political action. Laura Snyder calls Mill's *Logic* a "radicalization of induction" in that Mill used his new methodology to question whether conservative values were actually "true" or simply comfortably familiar.[63] Attending to the contextual, or spiritual, alongside the empirical, or natural, allowed science to progress alongside the cultural norms of its practitioners. Aurora argues (inductively, I might add) for poetry to

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[61] Mill, however, uses this binary in his essay on poetry in which he anticipates Aurora's argument: "Whom, then, shall we call poets? Those who are so constituted, that emotions are the links of association by which their ideas, both sensuous and spiritual, are connected together." "The Two Kinds of Poetry." *CW* 1.356.

[62] *Ibid.* 9.920-921.

[63] Snyder, *passim*.

encompass the political sphere "[i]n art, in morals, or the social drift."[64] In this framework, the triumphal ending can be read as a celebration of the unification of the scientific or empirical, represented by Romney, and the social or contextual, represented by Aurora. In *Aurora Leigh*, Romney's philanthropic goals fail until he reads Aurora's book; and Aurora only counts her book successful after it has led Romney to change his views. In returning the two sides of the apple of life to its perfect round, Mill and EBB strove to lead society to a more accurate understanding of how both science and society worked, and in doing, "witnessing for God's / Complete, consummate, undivided work."[65]

But how to affect this change? Of course, Mill was still invested in utilitarianism; however, Mill's primary critique of Bentham was his lack of context. One aspect of this lack arises as Bentham's claim that all of mankind's actions could be attributed to a single impetus – personal interest, or the maximization of pleasure and the minimization of pain. Instead, Mill claimed that there was another motivation that was more influential – the adherence to social norms and conventions:

> I do not speak of the influence of a sense of duty, or feelings of philanthropy, motives never to be mainly relied on… I insist only on what is true of all rulers, *viz.*, that the character and course of their actions is largely influenced (independently of personal calculation) by the habitual sentiments and feelings, the general modes of thinking and acting, which prevail throughout the community of which they are members; as well as by the feelings, habits, and

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[64] *Aurora Leigh* 7.765.
[65] *Ibid.* 7.784-785.

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modes of thought which characterize the particular class in that community to which they themselves belong. And no one will understand or be able to decipher their system of conduct, who does not take all these things into account.[66]

Mill argued that even when someone believed they were working solely in their own best personal interest, they were implicitly and unconsciously shaped by their previous experiences with both the physical world and their social circle. EBB depicts just this failure of understanding when she describes the social consequences of Romney's philanthropy.

Both of Romney's two major failures, his marriage to Marian Erle and his classless utopia at Leigh Hall, stem from his lack of understanding of "the habitual sentiments and feelings, the general modes of thinking and acting" of those he is attempting to assist – and, ultimately, his misunderstanding of his own. To Romney, it is surely preferable to marry into a higher class in order to do good works than to marry for love and stay working class. Only after Leigh Hall is burned and, more importantly, after he has read Aurora's book, Romney is able to reflect on his ten years of failure:

> Harken, dear;
>
> There's too much abstract willing, purposing,
>
> In this poor world. We talk by aggregates,
>
> And think by systems; and, being used to face
>
> Our evils in statistics, are inclined

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[66] *Logic, CW* 8.891.

> To cap them with unreal remedies
>
> Drawn out in haste on the other side the slate.[67]

Like Bentham, Romney sees human beings in the abstract and assumes that they will always act "logically," or in their own best material interest. Romney could only come to "unreal remedies" that relied too heavily on the empirical, here represented by "aggregates," "systems," and "statistics," because he was ignorant of both the context in which the poor live and his own intellectual biases.

The practice of psychology was, for Mill, a practice of the confirmation or rejection of these intellectual biases through an examination of mental associations: "The subject, then, of Psychology, is the uniformities of succession, the laws, whether ultimate or derivative, according to which one mental state succeeds another; is caused by, or at least, is caused to follow, another." [68] Mill laid out three Laws of Association that describe how thoughts or ideas can evoke subsequent, different mental states and ideas. The rather straightforward first Law is that "similar ideas tend to excite one another." Building upon this, the second Law states that "when two impressions have been frequently experienced (or even thought of) either simultaneously or in immediate succession, then whenever one of these impressions… recurs, it tends to excite the idea of the other." In other words, if someone is often in the habit of eating red apples, they are likely to assume anything red is an apple in glancing into their fruit bowl. Finally, the third, and most interesting Law:

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[67] *Aurora Leigh* 8.799-805.
[68] *Logic, CW* 8.852.

When many impressions or ideas are operating in the mind together, there

sometimes takes place a process of a similar kind to chemical combination. When

impressions have been so often experienced in conjunction, that each of them

calls up readily and instantaneously the ideas of the whole group, those ideas

sometimes melt and coalesce into one another, and appear not several ideas, but

one. [69]

In keeping with the apple example, the voracious red apple consumer may become

confused when they see a green apple, assuming that it is a different type of fruit.

Essentially, impressions or ideas may merge into one larger impression, which he calls a

Complex Idea, whether or not it is founded in any actual empirical truth. Because of this

third Law, Mill argued that these larger Complex Ideas based on associations are often

confused for objective fact; *e.g.* red apples are the only *true* apples.[70]

Not only does the mind create these Complex Ideas based on individual

experiences and contexts, it then filters all new information through these established

Ideas: "A great part of what seems observation is really inference," Mill states, "[f]or in

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[69] *Logic, CW* 8.852. Also described as a "greater intensity in either or both of the impressions, is equivalent… to a greater frequency of conjunction."

[70] *Ibid.* 6.854. Mill contended that the logical processes of the mind function more akin to a chemical reaction: "[T]he Complex Idea, formed by the blending together of several simpler ones, should… be said to *result from,* or *be generated by,* the simple ideas, not to *consist* of them." By "generating" rather than "consisting," the logical process will result in a "Complex Idea" that is more than the sum of its parts, or, if we continue in the vocabulary of chemistry, its elements. Mill made a clear distinction between verbs in order to differentiate his "Complex Idea" from Whewell's "Fundamental Idea." Whewell explained that the Fundamental Ideas are "not a consequence of experience, but a result of the particular constitution and activity of the mind, which is independent of all experience in its origin, though constantly combined with experience in its exercise." *The History of Scientific Ideas*. Vol 1. John W. Parker, 1858. 91. Consequently, the mind is an active participant in our attempts to gain knowledge of the world, not merely a passive recipient of sense data.

almost every act of our perceiving faculties, observation and inferences are intimately

blended. What we are said to observe is usually a compound result, of which one-tenth

may be observation, and the remaining nine-tenths inference."[71] All inferences are

unavoidably based in previously formed associations; in essence, Mill conceived of the

mind as built to be conservative. In this way, Mill's associationist psychology was born

from his radical induction and inherited its insistence on the importance of both the

empirical and the contextual. Mill believed that many, if not all, problems could be

solved through following and deconstructing beliefs based on supposed factual

observations that were actually false inferences.

However, inference itself was not necessarily an evil. Chains of inferences or

associations are foundational to the inductive method of logic.[72] Certainly, the core of the

Logic was Mill's Methods, an attempt to categorize and standardize approaches to

inductive reasoning. Rather than instructing people to reach for a false objectivity, Mill

simply wanted people to recognize their own assumptions and teach themselves to

interrogate them: "all that can be said is, that when we do so we ought to be aware of

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[71] *Logic, CW* 6.858, and *Logic, CW* 4.641–2, respectively. While Mill's associationism is still based completely in sensation and observation, he also allows for the mind to be involved in its own processes beyond simple cause and effect reactions. Part of Mill's goal for *Logic* was to give an empirical bent to inductive reasoning in order to more fully represent the human experience.

[72] Mill describes the process of creating and following associations thusly: "These ideas, or secondary mental states, are excited by our impressions, or by other ideas, according to certain laws which are called Laws of Association. Of these laws the first is, that similar ideas tend to excite one another. The second is, that when two impressions have been frequently experienced (or even thought of) either simultaneously or in immediate succession, then whenever one of these impressions, or the idea of it, recurs, it tends to excite the idea of the other. The third law is, that greater intensity in either or both of the impressions, is equivalent, in rendering them excitable by one another, to a greater frequency of conjunction. These are the laws of ideas." *Ibid. CW* 6.852.

what we are doing, and to know what part of the assertion rests on consciousness, and is therefore indisputable, what part on inference, and is therefore questionable."[73] By following chains of associations and critically analyzing them, Mill believed that individuals would able to deconstruct their own false beliefs and improve their own individual characters for the betterment – or radicalization – of society as a whole.[74]

One possible problem with this method of personal and social betterment was the tendency for the mind to guard itself by confirming its own established associations. Mill saw this as especially pressing problem for "minds not very highly cultivated" which, to Mill, was unfortunately the majority. While Mill is now often considered a hero to twenty-first century libertarians, historian Laura Snyder has shown how Mill's primary

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[73] *Logic*, *CW* 5.782.

[74] Mill's opinion of personal betterment and education was deeply influenced by his experience with the utilitarian pedagogy enacted upon him by his father. Though still decidedly regarding sensation and experience as the basis for all knowledge, Mill also recognized the importance of emotion and spiritual feeling in the impetus for personal change. This disagreement with his father stemmed from Mill's reading of Romantic poetry and the emotional responses it called from him: "What made Wordsworth's poems a medicine for my state of mind was that they expressed, not outward beauty but states of feeling, and of thought coloured by feeling, under the excitement of beauty. They seemed to be the very culture of the feelings which I was in quest of. By their means I seemed to draw from a source of inward joy, of sympathetic and imaginative pleasure, which could be shared in by all human beings, which had no connexion with struggle or imperfection, but would be made richer by every improvement in the physical or social condition of mankind. I seemed to learn from them what would be the perennial sources of happiness when all the greater evils of life should be removed. And I felt myself at once better and happier as I came under their influence… I wanted to be made to feel that there was happiness in tranquil contemplation. Wordsworth taught me this and not only without turning away from, but with a greatly increased interest in, the common feelings and common destiny of human beings. And the delight which these poems gave me, proved to me that with culture of this sort there was nothing to dread from the most confirmed habit of analysis." *Autobiography, CW* 151-2, *sic.* James Mill only conceived of objective knowledge and analysis as education, but his son expanded upon the term to encompass emotional sensations and their training.

concern was actually the "tyranny of the uncultivated masses."[75] EBB portrays just this scenario at Romney's failed marriage to Marian Erle. After Marian leaves Romney at the altar because of the machinations of Lady Waldemar, the lower-class guests turn on the disappointed groom:

> A woman screamed back, – 'I'm a tender soul;
>
> I never banged a child at two years old
>
> And drew blood from him, but I sobbed for it
>
> Next moment, – and I've had a plague of seven.
>
> I'm tender; I've no stomach even for beef.
>
> Until I know about the girl that's lost,
>
> That's killed, mayhap. I did misdoubt, at first,
>
> The fine lord meant no good by her, or us.
>
> He, maybe, got the upper hand of her
>
> By holding up a wedding-ring, and then…
>
> A choking finger on her throat, last night,
>
> And just a clever tale to keep us still,
>
> As she is, poor lost innocent. 'Disappear!'
>
> Who ever disappears except a ghost?

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[75] "Like [Alexis de] Tocqueville… Mill worried about the 'tyranny of the majority' over the individual. He and Tocqueville, in fact, identified a new challenge to freedom: rather than worrying only about the oppression of society by tyrants and aristocrats, they were concerned as well about the domination of the individual by society" (Snyder 208). See also Ross Harrison's "John Stuart Mill, mid-Victorian" which outlines misreadings of Mill's "On Liberty" and puts it in context with his other works. *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Political Thought*. Eds. Gareth Stedman Jones and Gregory Claeys. Cambridge, 2011. 295-318.

And who believes a story of a ghost?

I ask you,–would a girl go off, instead

Of staying to be married? a fine tale!

A wicked man, I say, a wicked man![76]

This particular passage illustrates several layers of associations: the associations of Romney, the associations of the poor, and the associations of EBB herself: Surprisingly, Romney and the poor are in agreement in this instance; neither could imagine that Marian would reject Romney. However, while Romney may expect commiseration, to the poor it is much more likely that Romney is a murderer than an innocently jilted man. The deep distrust of the rich derives from working-class life experiences, the associations that have been built up over time through the interactions against which Romney is trying to work. Yet EBB frames this reasonable suspicion with menacing descriptions. In lines that have long drawn critical attention, EBB describes the attendees as a "crammed mass" "All ruined, lost" that "clogged the streets… oozed into the church / In a slow dark stream like blood." [77] The unnamed woman accusing Romney of murder begins her speech with a description of her sadness upon physically abusing her own child. The classism – and thinly-veiled racism – is clear. However, EBB partners these accounts with a corresponding report of the upper classes viciously gossiping amongst themselves, ending with an entreaty for class segregation.[78] The two sides of the church physically

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[76] *Aurora Leigh* 4.821-838.
[77] *Ibid.* 4.571, 583, and 553-554, respectively. Many references to the lower classes are racialized within *Aurora Leigh*. Chief among these images is the figure of the ambiguously racialized Marian Erle herself: "She was not white nor brown, / But could look either" 3.810-811. "The hair, too, ran its opulence of curls / In doubt 'twixt dark and bright, nor left you clear / To name the color. Too much hair perhaps…" *Ibid.* 3.813-815.
[78] *Ibid.* 4.608-699.

embody two Complex Ideas – in twenty-first century terms, the stereotypes of "the rich" and "the poor" – and all the associations that go with them. Neither side of the church is able to come together through the marriage because of their inability to see beyond their own established associations.

This, in Mill's mind, is where the psychologist appears. Mill resolves the issue of association bias through a class-based version of *noblesse oblige* based in his Radical politics, what Gregory Claeys calls a "radical meritocracy."[79] In Mill's words, "[i]t is right that [a man] should follow his reason as far as his reason will carry him, and cultivate the faculty as highly as possible. But reason itself will teach most men that they must, in the last resort, fall back upon the authority of still more cultivated minds, as the ultimate sanction of the convictions of their reason itself."[80] Mill's understanding of personal freedom is the ability for anyone to educate and better themselves regardless of class or sex, decidedly *not* freedom from all social and political consequences. Since not all people are willing or able to master all social and moral sciences, Mill wants to establish an "authority of still more cultivated minds," most likely of middle- and upper-class individuals. While this radical meritocracy is now understood as a way of consolidating conservative, middle-class values, both Mill and EBB saw personal education and conditioning as the best method to promote social and political progress.[81]

As highly educated and socially active upper-class citizens, the obvious choices to fulfill this radical meritocracy in *Aurora Leigh* are Lord Howe, Lady Waldemar, and

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[79] Gregory Claeys, *Mill and Paternalism*. Cambridge, 2013. 16 and *passim*.
[80] "Spirit of the Age II." *CW* 22.244.
[81] For more on EBB's perspective on and interaction with nineteenth-century women's education reform, see Sheila Cordner's "Radical Education in *Aurora Leigh*." *Victorian Review* 40.1 (Spring 2014): 233-49.

Romney. EBB directly follows her descriptions of the upper- and lower-class wedding guests with a picture of the rather amoral, affably indifferent Lord Howe, "[a] born aristocrat, bred radical, / And educated socialist, who still / Goes floating, on traditions of his kind."[82] Howe, as a politician, is *too* contextual, not empirical enough. "Whatever he believes," Aurora muses, "and it is much, / But no-wise certain, now here and now there, / He still has sympathies beyond his creed, / Diverting him from action."[83] Like Howe, though she is far less affable, Lady Waldemar is "so self-possessed / Yet gracious and conciliating, it takes / An effort in [her] presence to speak truth: / You know the sort of woman, – brilliant stuff, / And out of nature."[84] Both Lord Howe and Lady Waldemar lack the ability to critique their own biases through empirical means; they are too contextualized. On the other hand, Romney, as discussed previously, leans too much to the empirical.

Instead of the upper-class, Mill ascribes a special ability to *artists* to be able to parse chains of associations:

> The universality of the confusion between perceptions and the inferences drawn from them, and the rarity of the power to discriminate the one from the other, ceases to surprise us when we consider that in the far greater number of instances the actual perceptions of our senses are of no importance or interest to us except as marks from which we infer something beyond them. It is not the colour and superficial extension perceived by the eye that are important to us, but the object, of which those visible appearances testify the presence; and where the sensation

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[82] *Aurora Leigh* 3.710-712.
[83] *Ibid.* 4.728-731.
[84] *Ibid.* 3.350-358.

itself is indifferent, as it generally is, we have no motive to attend particularly to it, but acquire a habit of passing it over without distinct consciousness, and going on at once to the inference. So that to know what the sensation actually was, is a study in itself, to which painters, for example, have to train themselves by special and long-continued discipline and application.[85]

Two points from this long quotation. Firstly, and more obviously, Mill believes the artist is particularly well-positioned to be an interpreter of associations. By virtue of their craft, whichever media it may be, artists are used to "special and long-continued discipline and application," the bulk of which is involved in differentiating "between perceptions and the inferences drawn from them." Similarly, EBB explains the purpose of the poet is to "give [the spiritual] voice / With human meanings; else they miss the thought, / And henceforth step down lower, stand confessed / Instructed poorly for interpreters."[86] Secondly, and perhaps surprisingly given Mill's investment in British empiricism, the sensation is *less important* than the idea or inference in psychology; the empirical is insignificant "except as marks from which we infer something beyond them." In this, Mill seems to recreate in scientific discourse EBB's thesis of *Aurora Leigh*:

'It takes a soul,

'To move a body, – it takes a high-souled man,

'To move the masses… even to a cleaner stye:

'It takes the ideal, to blow an inch inside

'The dust of the actual: and your Fouriers failed

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[85] *Logic, CW* 4.784.
[86] *Aurora Leigh* 5.125-28.

42

'Because not poets enough to understand

'That life develops from within.'[87]

The purpose of psychologists and the purpose of poets are the same: to "move the masses."[88] To do so, they need to lead others towards a larger, communal purpose through a type of self-reflection akin to associationist psychology. "[P]sychologists" and poets, Mill may have added, "will always to inquire, what beliefs we have by direct consciousness, and according to what laws one belief produces another… to examine what objects we desire naturally, and by what causes we are made to desire things originally indifferent, or even disagreeable to us; and so forth."[89] In being able to delineate how our mind produces beliefs and desires, the investigation and interpretation of perceptions and inferences becomes not only an individual intellectual exercise, but also a political or national exercise:

> When the circumstances of an individual or of a nation are in any considerable degree under our control, we may, by our knowledge of tendencies, be enabled to shape those circumstances in a manner much more favourable to the ends we desire, than the shape which they would of themselves assume. This is the limit of our power; but within this limit the power is a most important one.[90]

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[87] *Ibid.* 8.430-436.
[88] *Logic, CW* 8.949. "Propositions of science assert a matter of fact: an existence, a coexistence, a succession, or a resemblance. The propositions [of art, including psychology] do not assert that anything is, but enjoin or recommend that something should be. They are a class by themselves. A proposition of which the predicate is expressed by the words *ought* or *should be*, is generically different from one which is expressed by *is*, or *will be*."
[89] *Logic, CW* 8.856.
[90] *Ibid.* 6.869-70.

Mill's conception of the mind meant that "the shape which [it] would… assume" was necessarily the conservative position. While the poet and the philosopher or psychologist were "limited" as the interpreters of truth, the lessons they would teach would become, in EBB's words "the expression of the nation…the expression of men's single lives, / The loud sum of the silent units."[91] The ultimate goal was for the reader or general audience to become an equal participant in the formation and development of their own radicalization and the radicalization of Britain as a whole. In "developing life from within," both poetry and psychology are "[s]elf-magnified in magnifying a truth / Which, fully recognized, would change the world / And shift its morals."[92]

Aurora Leigh as Praxis

Accordingly, in order to achieve this moral shift, EBB turned to "the writing of a sort of novel-poem – a poem… running into the midst of our conventions, & rushing into drawing-rooms & the like 'where angels fear to tread'; - & so, meeting face to face & without mask, the Humanity of the age, & speaking the truth as I conceive of it, out plainly."[93] *Aurora Leigh*'s text encompasses poetry, prose, epistolary, epic, biography,

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[91] *Aurora Leigh.* 8.874, 877-878.

[92] *Ibid.* 7.834-57.

[93] Just before this quotation, EBB also recounts her idea for a dramatic monologue, further connecting her aesthetic with hybrid forms: "And then, I have in my head to associate with the version,… a monodram [sic] of my own – not a long poem,… but a monologue of Æschylus as he sate a blind exile on the flats of Sicily and recounted the past to his own soul, just before the eagle cracked his great massy skull with a stone." 27 February 1845. Browning, Elizabeth Barrett to Browning, Robert. Funnily enough, this is also one of the few of her letters that directly addresses Mill. EBB never explicitly references Mill in *Aurora Leigh*, though she assuredly knew of him in general and, perhaps most infamously, as a harsh critic of her husband's first published work, *Pauline* (1833). In a letter to EBB, RB recounts Mill's comment that 'the writer possesses a deeper self-consciousness than I ever knew in a sane human being'" – To which EBB

diary, social critique, literary criticism, romance, dramatic monologue, and

Kunstlerroman. By writing a hybrid that blends these genres together, EBB manipulates

readers' generic expectations and destabilizes their reading experience. In reframing the

act of reading as a generic interrogation, readers would practice constantly questioning

both supposed unimpeachable aesthetic traditions as well as their own interpretations of

texts based on those traditions. In essence, EBB teaches readers to follow their chains of

associations backwards to their origin. There are several, wide-ranging traditions that

Aurora Leigh takes on: the relationship between poetry and prose, the nineteenth-century

feminist novel, the male epic, and the romanticization of Italy by British authors and

public. As in a Complex Idea, the associations made within these traditions are much

more intertwined than at first glance.

The first major assumption that EBB took on was the supposed estrangement

between poetry and prose. "And now tell me, —" EBB wrote as she was contemplating

Aurora Leigh, "where is the obstacle to making as interesting a story of a poem as of a

prose work—Echo answers where. Conversations & events, why may they not be given

as rapidly & passionately & ludicly in verse as in prose — echo answers why."[94] EBB

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replies a day later: "Of course you are self-conscious -- How cd [sic] you be a poet
otherwise? Tell me – Ever faithfully yours EBB – And was the little book written with
Mr Mills [sic] pure metaphysics, or what?" 26 February 1845. Browning, Robert to
Browning, Elizabeth Barrett. Browning incorrectly refers to Mill's comment as being in
response to *Pippa Passes* (1844), when, in fact, it is in the marginalia to *Pauline* (1833).
The comment can be found in a volume of Robert Browning's *Pauline* (1833) containing
commentary by Mill and responses by Browning discussed in William S. Peterson and
Fred L. Standley's "The J. S. Mill Marginalia in Robert Browning's *Pauline*: A History
and Transcription." *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 66.2 (1972):
135–170. Mill's marginalia can also be found as Appendix E of Volume 1 of *Complete
Works* (596-598).
[94] "To Mary Russel Mitford." 30 Dec. 1844. *The Browning Letters.* Baylor Digital
Collections.

specifically singles out "conversations and events" as those aspects of prose which are considered antithetical to poetry. Similarly, in his essay "What is Poetry?" (1833), Mill famously named the difference between prose and poetry as the difference between being "heard" and "overheard."[95] However, where Mill accepts this boundary, EBB pushes against it.

In *Aurora Leigh*, EBB's heroine separates poetry and prose in both her mind and her life – but with a twist. Aurora writes prose "for cyclopædias [sic], magazines, / And weekly papers" to establish her reputation in order to give her "breathing room / For body and verse."[96] As in Mill's poetic theory, Aurora's prose is connected to public "eloquence," while poetry is saved for artistic creation in isolation:

> I learnt the use
>
> Of the editorial 'we' in a review,
>
> As courtly ladies the fine trick of trains,
>
> And swept it grandly through the open doors
>
> As if one could not pass through doors at all
>
> Save so encumbered..[97]

Aurora is "encumbered" by both the editorial conventions of prose and its reliance on the communal "we." Taking on the perspective of a group is akin to dragging the heavy

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[95] "What is Poetry?" *CW* 1.292-306. Also called "Poetry and its Varieties." What is Poetry?" *CW* 1.346.

[96] *Aurora Leigh* 3.309-10, and 3.326-7, respectively.

[97] *Ibid.* 3.312-317. Later Aurora will return to this image of the train when discussing Romney's assertion that female poets are necessarily more emotional and unable to think or write universally: "We miss the abstract, when we comprehend! / We miss it most when we aspire, … and fail. / Yet, so, I will not. – This vile woman's way / Of trailing garments, shall not trip me up." 5.57-60.

weight of a train, "encumbering" her. This seems to map neatly onto the idea that the poet

is meant to be solitary. However, this distrust of the "tyranny of the masses" and the "fine

trick" of popularity also appears in her critiques of poetic forms. In Book Five, Aurora

reviews and critiques the poetic forms that she has used in the past. Specifically, she

references the ballad, the pastoral, and drama – and finds fault with each:

> the ballad's race
>
> Is rapid for a poet who bears weights
>
> Of thought and golden image. He can stand
>
> Like Atlas, in the sonnet…
>
> But then he must stand still, nor take a step.[98]

The ballad, because it leans on narrative and popular culture, does not allow for full

introspective abilities of poetry. The sonnet, on the other hand, is impeded by its very

specific formal rules. Similarly, where the pastoral is too esoteric, the drama is too

pedestrian. When speaking of her pastoral, Aurora admits that "the prospects were too far

and indistinct," and although the critics liked it, "[t]he public's right / A tree's mere

firewood, unless humanised."[99] Conversely, drama "[m]akes lower appeals, defends more

menially, / Adopts the standard of the public taste /… and learns to carry and fetch / The

fashions of the day to please the day."[100] All of these forms are rejected because they rely

too heavily on one side of the binary between empirical and contextual – either too reliant

on their form or too reliant on popularity, what Mill called "the tyranny of the

uncultivated masses." However, where Mill sees these masses as "uncultivated," Aurora

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[98] *Aurora Leigh* 5.84-7, 9.
[99] *Ibid.* 5.91-95.
[100] *Ibid.* 5.269-273.

looks to "humanise" her verse to connect with "the public"; she fears the cultivated. An

1857 review of *Aurora Leigh* in the *Westminster Review* gives credence to this anxiety:

"It would be fortunate if, in revolting against restraint, we were never led to transgress

those laws of rhythm and construction which, fixed by Nature herself, are never forgotten

but with offence to harmony, taste, and sense." Elsewhere in the review, the critic, John

Nichol, recognizes that the rules of poetry are changing, he will not allow for the

possibility of the unity of a new form and clings to the belief in supposed "Natural"

generic laws, "That it may become a story, it sometimes ceases to be a poem."[101] In

contrast to this adherence to the critic's "Natural," EBB, when thinking about writing her

verse-novel, declares, "people care for a story—there's the truth! And I who care so

much for stories, am not to find fault with them."[102] Aurora and EBB's wariness of

tyranny, then, seems to be less centered around the general audience and more on the

critical establishment. In this, EBB actually surpasses Mill's radical politics.

Instead of relying on historically or culturally mandated forms handed down by

critics, Aurora decides:

> Let me think
>
> Of forms less, and the external. Trust the spirit,

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[101] John Nichol, "Aurora Leigh." *Westminster Review* 12 (October 1, 1857): 400.
Similarly, *Blackwood's Magazine* opined the terrible trend of originality: "Once and
again, whilst perusing this volume, have we experienced a sensation of regret that one so
admirably gifted should have wasted much of her power upon what are, after all, mere
artistic experiments, when by adhering throughout to natural sentiment and natural
expression, she might have produced a work so noble as to leave no room for caviling or
reproach. The tendency to experiment, which is simply a token of a morbid craving for
originality, has been the bane of many poets" (39).
[102] "To Mary Russel Mitford." 30 Dec. 1844. *The Browning Letters.* Baylor Digital
Collections.

As sovran [sic] nature does, to make the form;

For otherwise we only imprison spirit

And not embody. Inward evermore

To outward, — so in life, and so in art

Which still is life.[103] 5.223-229.

In emphasizing "embodying" rather than "imprisoning," Aurora underscores her commitment to organic growth and change, a "living art, / Which thus presents, and thus records true life."[104] While Aurora herself is invested specifically in the forms of poetry, this belief coincides with EBB's larger generic project. Interestingly, Mill also uses the image of the human body when discussing genre: "All this is no bar to the possibility of combining both elements, poetry and narrative or incident, in the same work, and calling it either a novel or a poem; but so may red and white combine on the same human features, or on the same canvas."[105] This depiction of the movement of blood beneath the skin recalls Aurora's image of the nineteenth century as "[t]he full-veined, heaving, double-breasted Age."[106] In both descriptions, EBB and Mill see the blood of "[t]hat bosom seems to beat still, or at least / It sets ours beating."[107] For both Mill and EBB, a

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[103] *Aurora Leigh* 5.223-229.

[104] *Ibid.* 5.221-222.

[105] "What is Poetry?" *CW* 1.347. Further: "Poetry, when it is really such, is truth; and fiction, if it is good for anything, is truth: but they are different truths. The truth of poetry is to paint the human soul truly: the truth of fiction is to give a true picture of life." This binary, yet again, maps neatly onto the understanding of the interior soul and the exterior body. "What is Poetry?" *CW* 1.346.

[106] *Aurora Leigh* 5.216.

[107] *Ibid.* 5.220-221. In this, both Mill and EBB are working within the spasmodic tradition in which poetry is universalized and democratized through embodiment. In *Electric Meters,* Jason Rudy writes: "Poetry in the spasmodic model seems no longer limited to an elite few but is directed instead to the human body and universal

type of truth is already found within all forms, each in a different shape and for a different purpose.[108] While these forms may tell different types of truths, they are not antithetical. Instead, together they make the complete human body. Hybridity allows for a fusion of different methods of revealing truth in order to present the full experience of humanity. By resisting classification as a fusion of verse and prose, the verse novel textually embodies the ideology of questioning conventions found in both EBB and associationism.

Alongside her questioning of generic conventions, EBB also invites her readers to examine their biases around acceptable narratives. Two foundational narrative traditions associated with *Aurora Leigh* were the novel, especially Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847), and the epic. The similarities between Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and EBB's *Aurora Leigh* were obvious from the first reviews of the verse-novel. Indeed, both are Künstlerromans with some suspiciously similar plot points. EBB tried to distance herself from the novel, claiming that "I certainly don't think that the qualities, half savage & half freethinking, expressed in Jane Eyre, are likely to suit a model governess or

experiences." (80). Rudy also uses Mill's poetic theory to explore how Tennyson's *The Princess* (1847)*,* which shares many narrative similarities to *Aurora Leigh*, navigates the relationship between bodily and poetic expression. *Electric Meters: Victorian Physiological Poetics.* Ohio, 2009.

[108]The "incidents" and "outward circumstances" of the novel recalls the measurable empiricism of Bentham, while the "feeling" and "human sensibility" of poetry recalls the social embeddedness of Coleridge. Just as both Bentham and Coleridge give forms of reality through logic and scientific inquiry, so too does prose and poetry give forms of reality through genre. Mill would err on the side of nature while EBB would err on the side of spiritual, but they generally meet in the middle. See Mill's critique of his own essays in his autobiography (*CW* 1.225-226) and Aurora Leigh's assertion that "For the truth itself, / That's neither man's nor woman's, but just God's" *Aurora Leigh* 7.753-754.

schoolmistress; & it amuses me to consider them in that particular relation."[109] Aurora

was a more genteel heroine to EBB, but reviewers seemed to consider them comparable

in their lack of traditional femininity: "Aurora's self-consciousness repels—her

speculations do not much interest us; her genuine human feeling is reserved for the

closing scene."[110] Similarly, Aurora's relationship with her cousin Romney was

compared to Jane's relationships with St. John, and the romantic resolutions of the two

texts were considered suspiciously similar.

Interestingly, EBB focused her defense on the specific medical causes of

Rochester and Romney's blindness rather than a complete denial of similarities between

the two plot points. While maintaining that she did not quite remember the narrative of

Brontë's novel, EBB argues that Rochester's blindness was caused by physical trauma at

the time of the fire, while Romney suffered from "a blow," "a shock of nerves," and a

subsequent fever.[111] Romney's emotional trauma and fever distinctly recalls the

nineteenth-century generic trope of the hysterical illness. These illnesses were usually

brought about because of mental or emotional "overexertion," usually in response to

intensely gendered and restricting social roles. While most embodiments of this trope

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[109] "To Mary Russell Mitford." 18 Feb. 1850. *The Browning Letters.* Baylor Digital Collections.

[110] *Westminster Review* 12 (October 1, 1857): 409. Similarly, the *Blackwood's Magazine* commented that "[t]he extreme independence of Aurora detracts from the feminine charm, and mars the interest which we otherwise might have felt in so intellectual a heroine" (33).

[111] EBB's claim of ignorance of the plot of *Jane Eyre* is one of the best and most subtle examples of "shadiness" in the nineteenth century: "I cant leave this subject without noticing (by the way) what you say of the likeness to the catastrophe of Jane Eyre. I have sent to the library here for Jane Eyre (but have'nt [*sic*] got it yet) in order to refresh my memory on this point—but, as far as I do recall the facts…" "To Anna Brownell Jameson." 26 Dec. 1856. *The Browning Letters.* Baylor Digital Collections.

were the heroines of novels of realism, EBB inverts this tradition for her verse-novel.[112]

Instead of Aurora, it is Romney who suffers from a psychosomatic illness. In both the

Saturday Review's and *Blackwood Magazine's* explication of the plot, the reviewers

ignore the fact that Romney kept his sight until his illness, instead focusing on the more

"masculine" trauma of the blow from the wooden beam.[113] The *Westminster Review* calls

Romney's blindness a "mutilation (which we consider in every point of view offensive)"

and suggests that it is only included in order to move the plot along to the more

traditional and expected "triumph of love which are already familiar to most readers."[114]

All three major reviews of *Aurora Leigh* refuse to associate the hero with the feminine

emotional overexertion and illness and instead focus on the generic traditions that they

are able to process more easily.

Conversely, reviewers *were* able to distinguish the difference between Jane's

relationship with St. John and Aurora's relationship with Romney: "There is some show

of resemblance between them," the *Westminster Review* writes, "but the difference as to

the essential question is infinite. St. John thought of Jane as a mere missionary; he would

as willingly have had her go with him as a sister, were it not for public opinion. Romney

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[112] See Marianne Dashwood in Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*; Jane Eyre, Caroline Helstone, and Lucy Snowe in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, *Shirley*, and *Villette*, respectively; Catherine Earnshaw in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*; Mary Barton and Bessie Higgins in Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* and *North and South*, respectively; Esther Summerson and Lady Deadlock in Charles Dickens' *Bleak House*; Louisa Gradgrind in Charles Dickens' *Hard Times*. For a more in-depth look at how the interpretation of "women's illnesses" by men impacted the growth of psychiatry and psychology, see Elaine Showalter's important *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture, 1830-1980*. Virago, 1985.
[113] *Saturday Review* 2 (December 27, 1856): 777. *Blackwood's Magazine* 81 (1857): 32.
[114] *Westminster Review* 12 (October 1, 1857): 411.

loves Aurora far more deeply than she deserved."[115] Romney is considered the better

lover because he fulfills the generic requirements for the romantic hero "for, with all

deference to Mrs. Browning, and with ideas of our own perhaps more chivalric than are

commonly promulgated, we must maintain that woman was created to be dependent on

the man, and not in the primary sense his lady and his mistress."[116] Though Aurora is still

considered a bad heroine, the overall generic structure of redeeming and transcending

love is sustained, and critics and readers are appeased.

In addition to a rewriting of the feminine Gothic, *Aurora Leigh* was also

associated with the male-dominated epic.[117] EBB's Aurora is undoubtedly a heroine on a

quest, but rather than one of military conquest or exploration, hers privileges self-

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[115] *Ibid.* 406. On the other hand, *Blackwood's Magazine* found both Aurora and Romney to be bad examples of the heroine and hero types. Romney is called a "decided noodle," and Aurora is less amusingly called "not an attractive character" (32-33).

[116] *Blackwood's Magazine* 81 (1857): 33.

[117] Two contemporary reviews cite the epic: *Saturday Review* 2 (December 27, 1856): 776. *Westminster Review* 12 (October 1, 1857): 399. EBB herself categorized her work as an epic in the mode of Byron's *Don Juan*. "To Robert Browning." 27 Feb. 1845. *The Browning Letters.* Baylor Digital Collections. In criticism, Herbert Tucker calls attention to EBB's "sampling and incorporation of generic conventions" through her mixing of traditional epic structures such as the hero's quest with popular nineteenth-century trends such as the first-person narration and the spasmodic closet-drama. *Epic: Britain's Heroic Muse, 1790-1910.* 378. In "Two Clocks: *Aurora Leigh*, Poetic Form, and the Politics of Timelessness," Mary Mullen argues that part of EBB's ethic of "double-vision" necessitates the synthesis of the historical form of the epic and the modern form of the novel. *Victorian Poetry* 51.1 (Spring 2013): 63-80. Similarly, in "Gender and Genre Anxiety: Elizabeth Barrett Browning and H.D. as Epic Poets," Susan Stanford Friedman claims that the "double-vision" of past and present requires a blend of generic conventions, though she focuses on those of the epic and the lyric. Friedman also argues that EBB specifically wrote against some of Tennyson's epics, especially *The Princess.* In Tennyson's narrative, the titular princess eventually sacrifices her vocation as leader of a women's university in order to marry the hero; in EBB's rewrite, it is Romney who is sacrificed. *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 5.2 (1986): 203–228.

actualization through art and personal relationships. The *Saturday Review* was

particularly provoked by Aurora's lack of traditional heroism:

> The details of authorship probably possess a professional interest for those whom
>
> they concern; but life at a college, in a hospital, or in a special pleader's chambers,
>
> would furnish more interesting pictures to the world at large. The poets with
>
> whom Dante dealt were accepted heroes—Homer, *l'altissimo poeta*, and the
>
> sacred Virgil, and Statius, traditionally rescued from Paganism and from its
>
> doom; but neither the Latin guide nor his Tuscan follower is employed in making
>
> verses, or in talking about verse making.[118]

Indeed, her quest may not be conventional, but it is still in the national interest and

inherently political. Notice that all of the *Saturday Review*'s suggested "acceptable"

occupations were not available to women at the time.[119] Tellingly, the reviewer goes on

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[118] *Saturday Review* 2 (December 27, 1856): 776. Similarly, the *The Westminster Review* reviewer wrote: "A considerable portion of the book is devoted to a minute and not very profitable analysis of the process of making verses. There is surely some 'playing at art' here, and science too." *The Westminster Review* 12 (October 1, 1857): 403.

[119] Most critical examinations generally attribute Barrett Browning's difference in perspective on the epic or poetry only to her sex. Much has been written on Barrett Browning's complicated relationship with the nineteenth-century Woman Question. These important and foundational essays have proven that the changing role of Victorian women and the complex public identity of the Poetess for women writers deeply influenced Elizabeth Barrett Browning's depiction of the development of Aurora from young imitator to self-actualized, and economically independent, poetess. It is indisputable that her life experience as a woman had an impact on Barrett Browning's politics and poetics. However, Barrett Browning is well known for having a classical education and participating in traditionally masculine spheres; we can and should see Elizabeth Barrett Browning's work epitomizing a larger conversation in Victorian philosophical and political circles as well as Victorian society as a whole. While the focus on "the Poetess" is a fruitful and necessary analysis, it can impede investigation into other equally viable and interconnected explanations in favor of gender essentialism. If we take her at her word, Elizabeth Barrett Browning's aspiration for *Aurora Leigh* was

to say that "[w]hen Aurora forgets that she is a poetess— or, still better, when she is herself forgotten—the troublesome machinery which had been interposed between the writer and reality is effectually removed." Beyond the narrative of Aurora as a poetess, the reviewer's larger, more philosophical problem is with "the erroneous theory that art is the proper subject for itself." [120] Ostensibly a call for accessibility or approachability, this critique is a particularly blatant bid against the kind of self-reflection and questioning proposed by associationist psychology.[121] Taken as a whole, the negative reviews of *Aurora Leigh* are almost to a man (and I use that idiom deliberately) grounded in protecting uninvestigated aesthetic and political biases based in tradition. In these reviews, questions of genre and form (What is it?) are directly allied to questions of politics and progress (What does it mean?). In critiquing EBB, these critics are confirming the success of her ambition to "analyz[e] humanity back into its elements, to the destruction of the conventions of the hour."[122] I am not suggesting that Elizabeth Barrett Browning deliberately based her poetry on psychological texts by associationist psychologists. Instead, I argue that these epistemological methodologies were circulating throughout both the philosophical and popular cultures in the early Victorian period and that EBB was an important agent in this social and scientific discourse.

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not necessarily to defy gender expectations, but instead to create a totally modern work. Certainly, conventions of sex and gender can and should be part of this conversation, but it was not Barrett Browning's sole, or even primary, mission.

[120] *Saturday Review* 2 (December 27, 1856): 777.

[121] "[T]he speaker's approbation is no sufficient reason why other people should approve; nor ought it to be a conclusive reason even with himself. For the purposes of practice, every one must be required to justify his approbation: and for this there is need of general premises, determining what are the proper objects of approbation, and what the proper order of precedence among those objects." *Logic, CW* 8.949.

[122] "To Robert Browning." 27 Feb. 1845. *The Browning Letters.* Baylor Digital Collections.

In this dissertation as a whole, I argue that generic experimentation like *Aurora Leigh* may almost always be seen as a form of political radicalism – and almost always run alongside contemporaneous psychological thought. Spasmodics' unruly meter reflected both their investment in "physical force" Chartism and the same tension between the spiritual and physical as found in EBB. Looking forward, Emily Pauline Johnson's refashioning of the dramatic monologue reveals both her investment in Canada as an independent nation and an awareness of the beginnings of social psychology; H.D.'s imagist poetry responds to both EBB and Johnson's political goals, but with a new twentieth-century understanding of attention and fellow-feeling; Finally, Virginia Woolf's "play-poem" responds both to British fascism and the new school of behaviorism. The generic and formal conventions of poetry – the structure of meter and the patterns of prosody – were and are inextricably linked with both the structure of government and the patterns of the workings of the mind.

Neither EBB nor Aurora nor Mill were able to completely unseat their culture's belief in biased inferences they believed were empirical facts – whether generic or political. Both writers, inscribed within the limitations of nineteenth-century liberalism, believed themselves to be working towards a radical politics even as they more solidly entrenched middle-class notions of respectability and meritocracy. However, both nonetheless imagined a future in which more British citizens, regardless of class or gender, could participate more fully in the creation of their own characters and the character of their nation. This imagined future became more salient as different British colonial citizens began writing their own poetry, a subject I will explore in the next chapter of the dissertation.

Chapter 2

The Dramatic Monologue and Tekahionwake:
Double Poem as Double Wampum

"A Cry from An Indian Wife" launched E. Pauline Johnson's career, but as a

performer, not a poet. Though she had already been published prior to her first public

recitation of her work in 1892, Johnson (1861-1913) enjoyed a much larger celebrity after

she began performing her poetry for audiences. She eventually became Canada's most

well-known and beloved poetess.[123] The daughter of English immigrant Emily Susanna

Howells and Mohawk chief George Henry Martin Johnson, Emily Pauline Johnson

celebrated her mixed heritage in her chosen name, Tekahionwake. Johnson adopted her

Haudenosaunee name from her great-grandfather, another hereditary chief of the Wolf

clan, and she signed her publications with both names from 1886 onward.[124] Translated

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[123] Pauline Johnson has become part of the general consciousness of Canada herself due to her own fame. Along with her grave and memorial stone in Vancouver's Stanley Park, the centennial of her birth was memorialized on a commemorative stamp and envelope set by Royal Mail Canada (now Canada Post) in 1961. *The Native Voice* also released a special edition dedicated to Johnson in 1961. Johnson has had two separate candy companies named after her: one from 1925-69 (The Pauline Johnson Candies Company) and one still in business and using her photograph (Pauline Johnson Confectionary). More recently, the Vancouver Museum featured Pauline Johnson as their headliner for their International Women's Day program in 2003. The Vancouver Museum currently holds much of Johnson's memorabilia, including the costume she wore whilst performing and flowers and foliage from her funeral procession. Some of her poetry was included in the opening ceremony for the Vancouver Winter Olympics in 2010. Finally, an opera based on Johnson's life was produced by City Opera Vancouver in 2014 and featured a libretto written by Canadian author Margaret Atwood.

[124] Johnson tended to use her Anglo name in personal communications with friends and family. This was perhaps due to the matrilineal construction of the Haudenosaunee society. Technically, none of George Henry Martin Johnson's children were members of the Wolf clan as all rights and privileges were transferred through the mother in Haudenosaunee culture. Furthermore, Johnson should not have been able to choose her own name. Traditional or hereditary names were given to children at birth by family

as "double wampum" or "double life," Tekahionwake announces Johnson's commitment

to both her identity as a biracial woman and her self-appointed role as a representative for

the Haudenosaunee people.

Johnson also entitled her first poetry volume *The White Wampum*, but the texts

seem to run counter to her project of representing both her Anglo and Haudenosaunee

identities. The 1895 publication included several dramatic monologues with

Haudenosaunee women as the primary speakers and Haudenosaunee and Canadian

national themes. The addition of "white" in the title called attention to Johnson's identity

as a biracial woman, and her ability to pass for a Euro-Canadian. Associating herself with

whiteness seems to work against Johnson's own personal branding and identification as

spokeswoman for her people. Indeed, "A Cry from An Indian Wife" seems celebratory of

the coming of the British Empire.[125] Within this dramatic monologue, Johnson's

Indigenous speaker admonishes her husband:

> Revolt not at the Union Jack,
>
> Nor raise Thy hand against this stripling pack

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members or appointed clans people rather than chosen by the individual. However, some
names were passed on after a traumatic event, usually for the purpose of avenging the
dead. For a contemporaneous ethnographical overview of the Brant County or Grand
River Haudenosaunee culture, see A. A. Goldenweiser's "On Iroquois Work, 1912."
*Summary Report of the Geological Survey Branch of the Canadian Department of Mines
for the Calendar Year 1912.* (Ottawa): 464–75.

[125] In *Colonial Literature and the Native Author: Indigeneity and Empire*, Jane Stafford
calls the speaker "shifting" and "contradictory," but allowed that this makes for better
theater and a more sympathetic audience (159). She also notes that none of Johnson's
own heroines "steps outside the narrowly defined set of characteristics she is so scornful
of," which proves the effectiveness of Johnson's persuasion and subtlety (161). Jane
Stafford, *Colonial Literature and the Native Author: Indigeneity and Empire*. Palgrave
Macmillan, 2016.

Of white-faced warriors, marching West to quell

Our fallen tribe that rises to rebel.

They all are young and beautiful and good;

Curse to the war that drinks their harmless blood.

Curse to the fate that brought them from the East

To be our chiefs—to make our nation least

That breathes the air of this vast continent.[126]

Upon first glance, Johnson's dramatic monologue seems almost to commend the

Canadians for being part of the British Empire and colonizing Indigenous lands. She

entreats her husband, "[r]evolt not at the Union Jack" because "their new rule and council

is well meant," and she refers to them as the new "chiefs." The Wife calls colonization

"fate" and she speculates that "[p]erhaps the white man's God has willed it so,"

presenting the Indians' plight as cosmical or preordained and therefore useless to resist or

oppose.

Although not as conspicuously exculpatory, the dramatic monologue "Ojistoh,"

also found in *The White Wampum*, represents Indigenous culture as inherently violent and

barbaric. While Ojistoh is heroic, she is also "uncivilized." This monologue portrays the

historic feuds between the Haudenosaunee and the Wyandot, or Huron Nation, and

includes kidnapping, murder, and threats of rape. The Wyandot are cowardly and

conniving, "councilled long/ With subtle witchcraft," and they ultimately decide to attack

the Haudenosaunee chief's wife because they cannot defeat him in battle. When Ojistoh

is kidnapped, she escapes her captor through sexual deception: "One hand caressed his

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[126] "Cry" 11-19.

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cheek, the other drew / The weapon softly—'I love you, love you,' / I whispered, 'love you as my life.'/ And— buried in his back his scalping knife."[127] If Johnson's life's work was to advocate for Indigenous people through her poetry, the dramatic monologues of *The White Wampum* seem to counteract her ambitions. The printed word was not the only perplexing text of Johnson's available for public consumption; Johnson's performances – her literal embodiment of her monologues – suggest a shift towards the communal in dramatic monologue as a genre. Through her monologues, Johnson in effect becomes a figure for multiple communities: the Haudenosaunee, Indigenous peoples as a whole, and Euro-Canadians, combining all of these identities into one collective "Canadian." While her dramatic monologues on the page did not present a hybrid form like *Aurora Leigh*, her performances of them certainly did.

Dramatic Monologue and General Consciousness

From 1892 to 1909, Johnson toured in Canada, the United States, and England, reciting her own original poetry. In order to connect her recitations to the Haudenosaunee orator tradition rather than portray herself as an actress, Johnson primarily used personal homes and churches as her venues. When not performing, Johnson donned both the manners and the dress what the periodical *Saturday Night* called an "accomplished lady," allowing her to even more easily pass for Anglo-Canadian.[128] In contrast, when performing "her own fiery compositions on the wrongs suffered or heroism displayed by

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[127] *Ibid.* 56-9.
[128][Review of Johnson performance.] *Saturday Night* 6.2 (3 December 1892), 8. Cited in Strong-Boag and Gerson 70; *Winnipeg Free Press*, December 30, 1897, 5. Cited in Jones and Ferris 144.

her Indian race, she [became] the high-spirited daughter of her warrior sires."[129] Johnson

began her recitations dressed in stereotypical "Indigenous" costume as Tekahionwake,

but finished in traditional upper-middle class European dinner dress. Canadian,

American, and British audiences seemed charmed by both costumes, even in some cases

preferring the Native. Like a performance or recitation, the dramatic monologue,

traditionally understood, relies upon an interaction between the speaker and the reader in

which both are altered by the relationship through varying experiences of sympathy and

judgment.[130] Partially because of this relationship, the dramatic monologue is often

credited with uncovering and presenting subjectivity as continuously in need of

historicization and contextualization.[131] The early speakers of dramatic monologues

reveal their own interiority through the narration of their own personal psychology in

relation to an event that is temporally and culturally specific.

　　Tennyson's and Browning's 1842 volumes, along with Tennyson's 1856

monodrama "Maud," pit the individual against society with the implicit lesson that

society is morally superior. With Ulysses' irresponsible abandonment of Ithaca, St.

Simeon Stylites' hypocritical (and physical) elevation of the self, and the morbidity of

Maud's "lover," Tennyson inversely portrays society as moderate and stable by

comparison. In Browning's dramatic monologues, he portrays society as a kind of

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[129][Review of Johnson performance.] *Saturday Night* 6.2 (3 December 1892), 8. Cited in Strong-Boag and Gerson 70.
[130] Robert Langbaum, *Poetry of Experience*. W.W. Norton, 1957.
[131] Herbert F. Tucker famously differentiates between the careful positioning of the dramatic monologue and the "freer" traditional lyric: "The charmed circle of lyric finds itself included by the kind of historical particularity that lyric genres exclude by design, and in the process readers find themselves unsettlingly historicized and contextualized as well." "Dramatic Monologue and the Overhearing of Lyric." *Lyric Poetry: Beyond New Criticism*. Ed. Chaviva Hošek and Patricia Parker. London: Cornell, 1985: 228.

protective shield from the violence of men, as his speakers are only able to commit their crimes when the women are isolated.[132] While the reader may be intrigued by Browning's Duke or feel pity for Tennyson's hero in "Maud," the function of each work is to evoke a feeling of judgment or superiority, solidifying the reader's adherence to the mores of society.

In a review for *Belles and Pomegranates*, the volume in which Browning's dramatic monologues first appeared, critic and philosopher of the mind George Henry Lewes chastises the poet for his lack of clarity in his quest for individuality. "Originality, therefore," he writes, "will not be shown in startling the public with a novelty; but in producing that which is at once novel yet familiar: like many other things, and yet distinctly individual, and having such an air of ease and obviousness, that people will wonder it was never done before."[133] In order to reach the audience, the poet must adhere to the typical forms that make sense to them. In this, the poet is akin to the actor in that "[i]t is not enough for [him] to feel, he must represent. He must express his feelings in symbols universally intelligible and affecting" (*On Actors* 18-19). The speakers of early dramatic monologues, such as "Porphyria's Lover," "Maud," "St. Simeon Stylites," and

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[132] Porphyria is only able to be strangled after she leaves society or the "gay feast" (27) for the solitary home of the speaker; the Duke not only attempts to estrange his wife from society during her lifetime, but also hides her portrait behind a curtain after her death or sequestration in a convent.

[133] George Henry Lewes, "*Bells and Pomegranates.* By Robert Browning. E. Moxon, 1841-46." *British Quarterly Review* 6 (1847): 507. "The words spoken are not his creation, yet he, too, must appropriate them by what may be called a creative process before he can understand them. What his tribe speaks he repeats; but he does not simply echo their words, he rethinks them. In the same way he adopts their experiences when he assimilates them to his own. He only feels their emotions when his soul is moved like theirs; he cannot think their thoughts so long as his experiences refuse to be condensed in their symbols." *Problems* 3.1.160-1.

"My Last Duchess," though both theatrical and expressive, deviate too far from the typical social mental landscape. In contrast, the speakers of the later monologues attempt to maximize their social impact; they must represent a community.

Language is integral to the creation of a community. For the Victorians generally, to refer to community consolidation and construction meant turning to the realm of poetry. In a review for Tennyson's 1830 *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical,* for example, W.J. Fox argues that poetry has a significant role in the establishment and continuance of nationalistic feeling:

> [Poets] can influence the associations of unnumbered minds; they can command the sympathies of unnumbered hearts; they can disseminate principles; they can give those principles power over men's imaginations; they can excite in a good cause the sustained enthusiasm that is sure to conquer; they can blast the laurels of the tyrants, and hallow the memories of the martyrs of patriotism; they can act with a force, the extent of which it is difficult to estimate, upon national feelings and character, and consequently upon national happiness.[134]

Similarly, for Lewes, signification through language is simultaneously the result of and necessary for establishing community: "Without Language, no Society having intellectual and moral life; without Society, no need of Language. Without Language, no Tradition; without Tradition no elaboration of the common arts and skill which cherish and extend the simplest products of the community; and without Tradition, no Religion, no Science, no Art."[135] Poetry was thus integral to the production and conservation of "British" as an

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[134] *Wesminster Review*. 14 (January 1831): 224.
[135] *Problems* 3.1.80.

identity both at home and, as Jason Rudy has established, throughout emigrant

communities and colonial spaces.[136] Moreover, as Michael Cohen and Meredith Martin

have shown, the ballad form had a unifying effect through its communication of history

and culture.[137] In Martin's words, within the ballad, "the peripheral is elevated as the

primitive and brought into the whole fabric of the nation as an imagined common past of

the colonizing nation."[138] While Martin writes specifically of colonial spaces as

peripheries, we can expand this to peripheral identities or individual psychologies. Early

monologues had tended towards the portrayal of madmen, murderers, and other unsavory

persons on the periphery of British society who were ultimately punished or assimilated.

Rather than communicating a racial or cultural message of unification, the dramatic

monologue continued in the Victorian period to attempt a mental or affective

normalization in inviting its readers to define themselves against an exceptional other.

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[136] *Imagined Homelands: British Poetry in the Colonies*. Johns Hopkins, 2017.
[137] Cohen's description of ballad reading can be extrapolated to the dramatic monologue as well: "Ballad reading made certain assumptions about the objects it encountered: among them, that the poems indexed particular times, places, and cultures; that they both narrated and constituted popular, social history; and that they created in readers a sense of identification with the collective spirit embodied in the poem. Although the cultural practice of ballad reading continued through the end of the nineteenth century, "the ballad" was not a stable term, and the consensus about which poems were true popular ballads changed constantly over time." Michael Cohen, "Whittier, Ballad Reading, and the Culture of Nineteenth-Century Poetry." *Arizona Quarterly: A Journal of American Literature, Culture, and Theory* 64 (2008): 1-29; See also Michael Cohen, "Getting Generic: An Introduction." *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 71.2 (2016): 147-55 and Meredith Martin, "Imperfectly Civilized": Ballads, Nations, and Histories of Form." *ELH* 82.2 (Summer 2015): 345-63. Cohen and Martin are building upon Virginia Jackson's theorization of the lyric as a reading practice in *Dickinson's Misery: A Theory of Lyric Reading*. Princeton, 2005. See also *The Lyric Theory Reader: A Critical Anthology*. Eds. Virginia Jackson and Yopie Prins. Johns Hopkins, 2013.
[138] "'Imperfectly Civilized': Ballads, Nations, and Histories of Form." *ELH* 82 (Summer 2015): 348.

In *Victorian Poetry: Poetry, Poetics and Politics,* Isobel Armstrong expands upon this affective definition to situate the dramatic monologue in the tradition of what she calls the "double poem." While double poems of any genre "struggle with the play of ambiguity and contradiction," the dramatic monologue encompasses much more than doubleness: "The monologue brings into being a quadruple hermeneutic relation at the very least, between speaker, listener, text, reader. There is an infinite regress of possible interpretive instability as the reader's own reading process is implicated in hermeneutic difficulty."[139] Through the portrayal of the interiority of the speaker, we as readers are invited to investigate ourselves as well. We are encouraged to classify the identities and experiences of the speaker as analogous to or different from our identities and experiences. Whether the speaker is being "truthful" in his recounting of his experience is less important to the function of the dramatic monologue than our learning how his mind works, and, by extension, our own.[140]

This type of reading affords political valences beyond whether we consider ourselves sympathetic to or judgmental of the ethical framework of the speaker or even the political intentions of the author. An affective experience like sympathy or judgment has the power to separate and distill reading publics, creating communities that exist only to be in opposition to other reading publics. For example, Cynthia Scheinberg finds dramatic monologue's supposed definition too constrictive for women authors. As

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[139] Armstrong 10.

[140] In "Dramatic Monologue, Detective Fiction, and the Search for Meaning," Britta Martens outlines a compelling correlation between the rise of the dramatic monologue within poetry and the concurrent rise of the detective novel. Martens argues that both of these genres necessitate a type of reading that investigates the same types of contextualization and historicization of subjectivity found in this chapter. *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 66.2 (2011): 195-218.

Scheinburg points out, though Langbaum's theory of reading dramatic monologues is predicated on empathy, it is a disembodied empathy that universalizes all readers into a uniform or "correct" reading based on the supposedly objective work of disregarding personal morality and instating an appreciation for power and radical individualism; Langbaum's theory presupposes the writer, speaker, auditor, and audience to be heterosexual white men. By reframing his empathetic experiences as the "normal" reading that everyone experiences, Langbaum is enforcing the dominant ideology through the reading practice of identification.[141] Armstrong's and Langbaum's explications of the dramatic monologue are foundational to our understanding of the genre in the early part of the nineteenth century. Later in the century however, the dramatic monologue continued to enact the contest between sympathy and judgment, but it abandoned the footing in the contest between an individual and society. Instead, I will

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[141] "Recasting 'sympathy and judgment': Amy Levy, Women Poets, and the Victorian Dramatic Monologue." *Victorian Poetry* 35.2 (Summer 1997): 188. This counteridentification of reading publics not only confers the status of an object upon the speaking subject, but also upon those readers who differ with their reading. In most cases, this objectification is most easily accomplished upon those already marginalized or Othered in the dominant ideological discourse. For example, Dorothy Mermin and Patricia Riggs argue that there are formal differences in the monologues written by men and women. Mermin finds a structural difference in women's monologues in which the emotional distance between the speaker and the auditor or audience is diminished which, in turn, lessens the extent of objectification that one might see in men's monologues. "The Damsel, The Knight, and the Victorian Woman Poet." *Critical Inquiry* 13.1 (Autumn 1986): 75. Building upon these arguments, Patricia Riggs claims that women's "dramatic monologues" should actually be classified as monodramas in order to better delineate the definition of different forms of dramatic poems. "Augusta Webster: The Social Politics of Monodrama." *Victorian Review* 26.2 (2000): 75-107. Similarly, Dwight D. Culler posits that Langbaum's construction can only be accurately applied to the ironic dramatic monologues of Browning; those works that came out of the tradition of monodrama do not signal either our sympathy or judgement. "Monodrama and the Dramatic Monologue." *PMLA* 90.3 (May 1975): 367.

argue, the speaker of the monologue stands for a group; the dynamic shifts to a conflict between groups.

In addition to his criticism of the dramatic monologue as a genre, Lewes provides a helpful paradigm for understanding the social and scientific context of this shift towards the communal. In contrast to Mill's anxiety surrounding mob rule as described in the first chapter of this dissertation, Lewes argues that psychology is, by necessity, an investigation of the collective norm created by a community rather than an investigation of the idiosyncrasies of one mind in a vacuum.[142] Lewes contends that the more complex functions of the human mind require social interaction to develop.[143] The ultimate result of this mass social interaction is essentially a massive communal mind. "The experiences of many…do not all perish with the individual," Lewes explains; "much survives, takes form in opinion, precept, and law, in prejudice and superstition. The feelings of each are blended into a general consciousness, which in turn reacts upon the individual consciousness. And this mighty impersonality is at once the product and the factor of

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[142]*Problems of Life and Mind,* passim. Up to this point, theories of the mind were generally more concerned with the effect of the individual upon the dynamics of the group; Mill consistently portrays individual humans as the agents of society. In his chapter "General Considerations on the Social Science," Mill defines "social life" as "the actions of collective masses of mankind, and the various phenomena" and refers to groups as "surface" to the individual "agents." *Logic* 6.875. Even more definitively, Mill later states that "[a]ll phenomena of society are phenomena of human nature, generated by the action of outward circumstances upon amasses of human beings: and if, therefore, the phenomena of human thought, feeling, and action, are subject to fixed laws, the phenomena of society cannot but conform to fixed laws, the consequence of the preceding." *Logic* 6.877. In contrast, Lewes is more interested in the impact of societal pressures upon individuals.

[143] *Problems* 3.1.79. "Let us suppose our knowledge of the organism to be enormously extended, it would still be incompetent to furnish an explanation of moral sentiments and intellectual conceptions, simply because these are impersonal and social, arising out of social needs and social conditions, involving, indeed, the organism and its functions, but involving these in relation to experiences only possible to the collective life."

social evolution."[144] Lewes argues that the true labor of the psychologist is not to investigate the physiological or even the mental processes within one mind. Instead, it is to follow this general consciousness, or the process by which social norms become seen as *a priori* knowledge.[145] To do so, the psychologist must put aside "his idiosyncrasies, peculiarities belonging to his organism and education" or "he will greatly err in making himself the standard, and by it interpreting the motives of others."[146] The individual or individual introspection can no longer be the standard because "[h]e will find in his mental structure organised [sic] judgments that seem elementary principles, which, nevertheless, he may learn to be entirely absent from the minds of men reared in other times and countries; what are intuitions for him are inconceivable to them."[147] Lewes' conception of psychology functions on epistemology as collectivity or a mixed assemblage of diverse experience in order to obtain a form of objectivity.[148] Because of

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[144] *Problem* 3.1.80.

[145] *Problems* 3.1.96. "He will find in his mental structure organised judgments that seem elementary principles, which, nevertheless, he may learn to be entirely absent from the minds of men reared in other times and countries; what are intuitions for him are inconceivable to them."

[146] *Problems* 3.1.96. Lewes cites Kant in a footnote: "'Many conceptions,' says KANT [sic], 'arise in our minds from some obscure suggestion of experience, and are developed to inference after inference by a secret logic without any clear consciousness either of the experience that suggests or the reason that develops them.' Until those beliefs that have grown up in the dark recesses of the soul have been brought into the light of conscious reason we can have no confidence in their validity. And very often there is a certain reluctance to such a critical operation, especially in the case of conceptions that have grown with our growth, and become, as it were, an essential part of our habits of thought. Hence it is that the profound philosopher so often 'becomes a sophist to defend the illusions of his youth.'" *Problems* 3.1.96-7.

[147] *Problems* 3.1.96.

[148] Lewes is functioning within, as Amanda Anderson states, "a prevalent Victorian preoccupation with distinctly modern practices of detachment, a preoccupation characterized by ambivalence and uncertainty about what the significance and consequences of such practices might be" (4). Anderson uses George Eliot as a primary

the inherently psychological nature of the dramatic monologue, poets working with the genre were compelled to respond to this evolution in the psychological investigation and epistemology from the individual to the communal.

Wampum and Authenticity

Johnson's dramatic monologues are exemplary of this shift towards the communal and its cultural context. To represent her culture more effectively, Johnson capitalized on the "general consciousness" of the Euro-Canadian conception of Indigenous peoples. However, while earlier dramatic monologues portray an individual subjectivity, Johnson's monologues reflect her own investment in "Tekahionwake" or the wampum assemblage. In her poems, the "infinite regress" of hermeneutics, as Armstrong describes it, widens even further as the audience is encouraged to interpret the text as another collective of individuals rather than just the speaker herself. Where EBB evinces distaste for the communal "we" in *Aurora Leigh*, Johnson celebrates this shift to the communal in the prefatory note of *The White Wampum*:

As wampums to the Redman, so to the Poet are his songs; chiselled alike from

that which is the purest of his possessions, woven alike with meaning into belt

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representative in her explanation of "detachment" and its literary, political, and scientific implications. Though Anderson does not mention him by name, Lewes, Eliot's longtime partner, was one of the novelist's fundamental collaborators and sounding boards for her ideas. Lewes and Eliot undoubtedly influenced each other in their writing on detachment and psychology. Anderson's chapter on Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*, is especially pertinent as it explores the struggle between the idealization and cosmopolitanism of an oppressed race who has lost a homeland – in this case, the Jewish people. *The Powers of Distance: Cosmopolitanism and the Cultivation of Detachment*. Princeton, 2001.

and book, fraught alike with the corresponding message of peace, the breathing of tradition, the value of more than coin, and the seal of fellowship with all men.

So do I offer this belt of verse-wampum to those two who have taught me most of its spirit—my Mother, whose encouragement has been my mainstay in its weaving; my Father, whose feet have long since wandered to the Happy Hunting Grounds.

E.P.J.[149]

Wampum, a type of bead made from white or purple shells and strung in singular strands or woven into belts, is integral to the creation of Haudenosaunee culture in religious and political ceremonies as well as the documentation and recital of their history. Used to raise chiefs, identify representatives, and record their history, the wampum belt was originally a method of intracommunal messaging between the member groups of the Six Nations; later, these belts would also become a method of intercommunal messaging between the Six Nations and European colonists.[150] Haudenosaunee orators or "wampum readers" used these records to advocate for the rights of their people. Shawnee hero and Confederacy Chief Tecumseh used a wampum belt to recount the story and shame the British for abandoning the indigenous peoples in the American Revolution in order to call for their aid in the War of 1812, asserting that "[t]he Great Spirit gave the lands which we

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[149] Emily Pauline Johnson ["Tekahionwake"], Author's Note. *The White Wampum*. London, John Lane, 1895.

[150] Perhaps the two most famous wampum belts were used to memorialize the creation of the original Haudenosaunee Confederacy as well as the Two Row Wampum Treaty between the Five Nations and Dutch colonists in 1613. Manina Jones and Neal Ferris suggest that Johnson's choice of name is "a deliberate political reference" to this last treaty (128). For a contemporaneous account of the usage of wampum, see Harriet Maxwell Converse's "The Wampum-Records of the Iroquois." *The Monthly Illustrator* 4 (1895): 342-7.

possess to our fathers; if it be his will, our bones shall whiten on them; but we will never quit them." [151] Essentially, wampum functions both as an archive and manifesto, both recalling the past and executing the future.

Wampum operates by synecdoche both in language and symbolism, embodying the communal identity of the tribes in both cultural and civic arenas; each individual wampum bead is unique, but the stringing or weaving of them creates a new, cohesive assemblage. Invoking this tradition, Johnson exhorts her audience to "[f]orget that I was Pauline Johnson, but remember always that I was Tekahionwake, the Mohawk that humbly aspired to be the saga singer of her people, the bard of the noblest folk the world has ever seen, the sad historian of her own heroic race."[152] By naming herself as well as

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[151] The full account runs: "The rest of the assembly seemed to wait with the deepest attention for the delivery of his answer, whilst, holding in his hands a belt of wampum, or beads which, by, their colours [sic] and arrangement, form the Indian record for past events, from the association of idea produced on seeing them, - he proceeded to address the British General in a torrent of vehement and pathetic appeal, for which the wild oratory of savage tribes is often so remarkable. His speech, of which a translation was preserved, is too long for insertion in this place. The chief began by recalling from his wampum the events of the war in which they were engaged; and alluded, in a strain of violent invective, to a circumstance twenty years before, wherein the Indians conceived that the British, after encouraging them to hostility against the Americans, had deserted them in the hour of need; and he inferred that there was now a similar design. In the name of his nation he positively refused to consent to any retreat; and closed his denial with these words: - 'The Great Spirit gave the lands which we possess to our fathers; if it be his will, our bones shall whiten on them; but we will never quit them.'" "Memoir of an American Chief." *The New Monthly Magazine* 14 (Nov. 1, 1820): 522. Tecumseh seemed to be a particular hero of Johnson's older sister Helen Charlotte Eliza "Evelyn" Johnson who attempted to raise money in order to erect a memorial statue to the chief. Guy St-Denis, *Tecumseh's Bones.* McGill, 2005: 64-5. Evelyn and Pauline's paternal grandfather and son of the "original" Tekahionwake, Smoke Johnson, was well known for both his oratory and his loyalty to the British in the War 1812, for which he was made chief of the Pine Tree tribe at their behest. E.M.C. Johnson, "Chief John Smoke Johnson," *Papers and Records of the Ontario Historical Society* 12 (1914): 102-13.
[152] Ernest Thompson Seton, Introduction. *The Shagganappi,* by E. Pauline Johnson. Ryerson, 1913): 1-9. 9.

her poetry after wampum, Tekahionwake takes up its metonymic commission to stand for her people – both recounting their history and advocating for their present.

Like her wampum belt, Johnson's dramatic monologues are a woven pattern, an archive, that invites interpretation. Compare Johnson's self-nomination as the poetic voice of her community to Lewes' case for psychology as a field of study:

> Man is by his constitution forced to live for others and in others. The welfare of his family, his tribe, his nation, and at last the welfare of Humanity at large, is felt or discerned to be interwoven with his own welfare. His life is part of a social life, aided and thwarted by the needs and deeds of fellow-men, which thus become external conditions of his existence, on a par with cosmical conditions, and must be studied with equal solicitude.[153]

Much as the wampum reader is able to interpret whole histories and legislative documentation from the contextual placement of individual beads, the psychologist can interpret signs of the general consciousness in the unique actions of an individual. By thinking with Lewes on the connection between psychology and communal feeling, we can better appreciate how Johnson's dramatic monologues are a record of the relationship between communities and the formation of a new communal national identity.

Johnson's poetry expands upon the already well-known and respected customs of British literature by reworking these tropes through a distinctly Indigenous lens. In doing, she constructs a system of diverse but shared cultural touchstones that work together to create a sense of belonging to a larger and more diverse communal conception of Canada. Within her dramatic monologues, Johnson exploits allusions and direct imitations of

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[153] *Problems* 3.1.41.

canonical white male poets both to benefit from their respectability and to call into question foundational political assumptions of British culture. Stafford notes that Johnson's poetry follows in the tradition of Longfellow and Tennyson as "emphatically dignified and rhetorical," not intended "to challenge or disturb the mainstream Canadian audience."[154] Johnson's poetry, according to Stafford, may be read as "a mechanism for putting the memory of the Indigenous past somewhere safe – into officially sanctioned and sanitized history, and into literature, consigned to the poetic and the archaic."[155] This official history was not only the history of Canada, but also the history of the British Empire, its literature and stories, and the literature and stories of those it conquered.

To take as one example "A Cry from An Indian Wife," we can see the poem's navigation of multiple formal and cultural histories. The heroic couplet used in the poem is the same form that helped establish an English-language literary culture through Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (1400), that made the career of John Dryden, the first English Poet Laureate, and that offers a sense of structure to many of Shakespeare's plays. The couplet also had the vital benefit of being easily understandable and memorable when heard, a necessity for a performance piece, especially if that performance piece was meant to be recalled and analyzed later by the audience.[156] The poem's title calls to mind Britain's "poet-advocate" Elizabeth Barrett Browning and her 1843 poem "The Cry of the Children," thereby establishing Johnson as a successor to the

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[154] Jane Stafford, *Colonial Literature and the Native Author: Indigeneity and Empire.* Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. 153.
[155] *Ibid.* 149.
[156] For more on the importance of the memorization or recollection of poetry, see Catherine Robeson's *Heart Beats: Everyday Life and the Memorized Poem.* Princeton, 2005.

poet's activism.[157] Content-wise, the poem gestures to the tradition of Shakespearean wives like Lady Macbeth and Cleopatra, featuring an unnamed Indian wife who vacillates between rousing her husband for war and imploring him to stay with her.

Similarly, Johnson's dress emulated the popular illustrations of Longfellow's heroine Minnehaha from *Song of Hiawatha* (1855) in order to create a touchstone to the general consciousness of Euro-Canadian audiences. Jones and Ferris point out that Longfellow's poem is also constructed from a heterogenous selection of stories from Indigenous peoples across the United States and Canada.[158] Thus, Johnson emulates not only the image of Longfellow's heroine, but also Longfellow's writing methodology. By associating herself with both the ultimate literary Indian maiden and her creator, Johnson performs both her identity as an Indigenous woman and her identity as a North American poet, simultaneously connecting these identities with two titans of the Canadian general consciousness. However, when Johnson changed costume from her Indigenous dress to her fashionable upper-class gown, she specifically called attention to the numerous diverse identities that made up the nineteenth century Indigenous woman. In 1894, Canadian critic Hector Charlesworth grumbled: "It was unfortunate, to my mind, that the exigences of a popular performance should have necessitated a change from the strikingly picturesque Indian dress in which she appeared during the first part of the evening to modern evening costume, for the effect was destructive of a highly poetical illusion."[159]

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[157] [Elizabeth B. Barret], "The Cry of the Children." *Blackwood's Magazine* (August 1843): 260-2.

[158] Manina Jones and Neal Ferris, "Flint, Feather, and Other Material Selves: Negotiating the Performance Poetics of E. Pauline Johnson." *The American Indian Quarterly* 41.2 (Spring 2017): 125-57. 146.

[159] Hector Charlesworth [Touchstone], "Baton and Buckskin" *VP* (6 October 1894): 486.

This illusion Charlesworth complains of was of the pure Indigenous woman, untouched by colonialism or the Anglo-Canadian realm. Indigenous dress gave Johnson's embodiment of her Haudenosaunee speakers legitimacy but simultaneously gave the impression of fantasy.

Rather than performing an untouched Indigenous character, Johnson performed as a *Canadian* with all the intersecting identities that entailed. Consider Johnson's close friend and champion Ernest Thompson Seton and his memorial in the introduction of her posthumous collection *The Shagganappi*:

> How well I remember my first meeting with Tekahionwake, the Indian girl! I see her yet as she stood *in all ways the ideal type of her race,* lithe and active, with clean-cut aquiline features, olive-red complexion and long dark hair; *but developed by her white-man training* so that the shy Indian girl had given place to the alert, resourceful world-woman, at home equally in the salons of the rich and learned or in the stern of the birch canoe, where, with paddle poised, she was in absolute and fearless control, watching, warring and winning against the grim rocks that grinned out of the white rapids to tear the frail craft and mangle its daring rider.[160]

While Seton's rhetorical framing still places the white man as the "developer" of the Indigenous people, I suggest that Johnson saw the blending of Indigenous with Euro-Canadian identities as a liberating event for both. Johnson herself argues in an 1892 essay, "A Strong Race Opinion," that "[e]very race in the world enjoys its own peculiar

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[160] Ernest Thompson Seton, Introduction. *The Shagganappi,* by E. Pauline Johnson. Ryerson, 1913: 1-9. 7. Emphasis mine.

characteristics, but it scarcely follows that every individual of a nation must possess these

prescribed singularities, or otherwise forfeit in the eyes of the world their nationality."[161]

Across her work, Johnson resists the idea that the separation of Indigenous and Euro-

Canadian identities makes each more authentic or superior than those who are "at home

equally in the salons of the rich and learned or in the stern of the birch canoe."[162] Rather

than fetishize the past, Johnson wants to represent the current state of the Haudenosaunee

people as Canadian above all, and Canadian as a combination of Indigenous and

Anglo.[163] To do so, Johnson turned to the dramatic monologue which was undergoing a

metamorphosis as a genre to better represent the movement toward the late nineteenth-

century's interest communal representation.

 Hearing Johnson recite her dramatic monologues would undoubtedly have a

greater impression on her audience if she were dressed as the heroines themselves.

However, the combination of this costume and monologue creates a representation of an

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[161] Johnson complains, "The American book heroine of today is vari-coloured as to personality and action. The author does not consider it necessary to the development of her character, and the plot of the story to insist upon her having American-coloured eyes, an American carriage, an American voice, American motives, and an American mode of dying; he allows her to evolve an individuality ungoverned by nationalisms—but the outcome of impulse and nature and a general womanishness." E. Pauline "Tekahionwake" Johnson, "A Strong Race Opinion: On the Indian Girl in Modern Fiction*." Toronto Sunday Globe*. 22 May 1892.

[162] I am not suggesting that Johnson saw the stakes for the two identities as equal. Indeed, she specifically calls out the disproportionate effects of independent identities in the same essay, rather humorously: "The term 'Indian' signifies about as much as the term 'European,' but I cannot recall ever having read a story where the heroine was describes as 'a European.'" E. Pauline "Tekahionwake" Johnson, "A Strong Race Opinion: On the Indian Girl in Modern Fiction*." Toronto Sunday Globe*. 22 May 1892.

[163] In *Imagined Homelands,* Jason Rudy argues for a similar universalization of "Canadian" through Johnson's later volume *Canadian Born* (1903). Rudy traces the movement of Canadian patriotism from a celebration of Anglo, and specifically British, culture to a celebration of all of those born within the confines of the nation, whether Indigenous or white. Johns Hopkins, 2017. 178-86.

idealized and ultimately impossible Indigenous heroine representing an idealized and ultimately impossible Indigenous community untouched by Empire.[164] In order to combat this fantasy of the "authentic" or unadulterated Indigenous woman, Johnson created a costume that, while ultimately "inauthentic," better represented the modern Indigenous woman and her experience within colonialism. By moving between and performing many different identities, Johnson invites her audience to see the similarities and underlying common humanity between them.

Misunderstanding her appeal to the general consciousness, scholars in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have gently censured Johnson for her "inauthentic" Native dress, and, indeed, she is recorded as having purchased elements of her costume rather than exclusively using inherited familial items. Although her costume included her great-grandmother's silver brooches, her father's hunting knife (which was theatrically used to act out the murder in "Ojistoh"), and a Huron scalp acquired by her grandfather, a great portion of her performing dress was "inauthentic." In an 1892 letter, Johnson asked

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[164] The desire for "authentic" dress exposes a present-day fetishization of Indigenous culture. It also ignores Johnson's grasp and exploitation of the British general consciousness. In her discussion of Indigenous characters on the stage, Rosemarie K. Bank rightly argues that twenty-first century readings of these characters offer much the same ideological structure as the supposedly less enlightened nineteenth century writers themselves. While we generally see contemporary scholarly work as recuperating a racist past, Bank points out that both present and past criticism function on an exclusionary binary which "(despite authorial intentions to the contrary) reinscribes a 'true real'--an absolute Indian (victim or villain) and an absolute white man (victimizer or hero) - that continues to empty out the 'Indian,' reinscribe the myth of the omnipotent state, and reinsert the white man as the center of the reading (even though it concerns red men or women)." By insisting upon "authenticity" in dress and elsewhere, modern scholars misunderstand Johnson's project, requiring adherence to a set of standards that neither Johnson nor her audience would have endorsed. Johnson was more invested in creating what Jones and Ferris call "Indigenous cosmopolitanism," or a pastiche of Canadian experience. "Staging the 'Native': Making History in American Theatre Culture, 1828-1838." *Theatre Journal* 45.4 "Disciplinary Disruptions" (Dec. 1993): 461-486. 462.

author and friend W.D. Whitehall to acquire what appears to be almost the entirety of her

Indigenous costume:

> I want a pair of moccasins, worked either in colored moose hair, porcupine quills,
> or very heavily with *fine colored beads*, have you seen any such there? I have
> written to Chief [Jacks?] about getting some bead work done on my dress, and to
> several N.W. Reserves, for bears teeth necklaces, etc., but if you see anything in
> Montreal that would assist me in getting up a costume, be it, beads, quills, sashes,
> shoes, brooches or indeed anything at all, I will be more than obliged to know of
> it. My season begins Oct 20th, so I must have my costume by that date, but I want
> one that is made up of *feminine* work.[165]

Johnson would eventually purchase her buckskin dress, leggings, and moccasins from a

department store, not being able to acquire any from a Six Nations vendor. She

embellished these with furs, eagle feathers, dentalia, and animal teeth from various

sources, including from other Indigenous clans. These items, while "inauthentic" as a

representation of Haudenosaunee traditional dress, were thus an excellent portrayal of

respectable Indigenous culture as a whole.

Like her dramatic monologues, Johnson incorporated a selection of disparate

components to her dress that, together, would represent a cohesive narrative of a

communal "Canada" – beyond even the Indigenous peoples (see Fig. 5). Jane Stafford

notes that Johnson's identity as a biracial woman made her a perfect candidate to

represent both the communal Canada and her Haudenosaunee heritage: "[O]wnership of

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[165] McGill University Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, Lighthall Papers, Johnson to Lighthall (18 September and 2 October 1892, emphasis in original).

the legendary material is passed from the Indigenous sphere to the general but it is passed by means of Johnson whose dual identity and interpretive authority can, it is implied, act as a safeguard… the material is not just preserved but is given a place in a more general global and modern system of signification."[166] Johnson pinned her father's Free Mason badges as well as some brooches from Scotland alongside her great-grandmother's silver.

Figure 5. Pauline Johnson's dress. AG 27a-b. Museum of Vancouver. Buckskin and red cotton dress with red blanket. Also including forty pieces silver, ermine, and bear claw necklace.

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[166] Jane Stafford, *Colonial Literature and the Native Author: Indigeneity and Empire*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. 169.

The Canadian Boy Scouts gifted her a necklace of bear claws, and the same department store from which she purchased her base costume gifted her an ermine. Perhaps the most complex signifier Johnson employed was the inclusion of the red broadcloth blanked draped over her shoulders during performances. This blanket had been part of her father's dress when performing his office as a translator and chief. Though Johnson could not take part in Haudenosaunee politics because of the matrilineal structure, she could still capitalize on the blanket as a type of "badge of office" in circles beyond Haudenosaunee meetings. Her blanket had also been used to induct Queen Victoria's youngest son, Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught, as honorary chief of the Wolf Clan in 1869.[167] The Duke would later become Governor General of Canada during the time Johnson was touring North America, bestowing even more cultural caché upon the blanket, and, by extension, Johnson herself. Calling on the respectability of national institutions and organizations like the Boy Scouts and Free Masons and highlighting her British ancestry and relation to the British crown freed Johnson from the one-dimensional pattern that both her audience and modern critics expected of Indigenous characters and offered a new communal identity.

Just as her Indigenous costume and narrative tropes present a merged history and culture, Johnson's embodied performance brings together the Indigenous and Euro-Canadian in order to close the distance between these groups. In *Paddling Her Own Canoe*, Veronica Strong-Boag and Carole Gerson survey all of the known surviving contemporaneous responses to the poet, concluding that "[Johnson's] ability to play to her audience resulted in a wide range of characterizations by those who met her, their

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[167] Prince Arthur was inducted 1 October 1869.

reportage based in turn on their individual expectations and motivations."[168] According to

Jane Stafford, one of the only similarities among Johnson's audiences was the disregard

of her political message in favor of admiration for her performance.[169] Akin to the

discourse around her dress, we see a modern insistence on a form of authenticity of

identity over artfulness. We, as present-day critics, may read the emotional responses of

the audience as less important or distracting from Johnson's "true" identification of

herself as a biracial Indigenous woman.[170] However, this appeal to pathos was an integral

part of Johnson's rhetorical technique and shows her implicit understanding of her

audience's needs. An 1897 review focuses on this affective response:

> Miss Johnson, as an elocutionist, brings out to the last degree and with the
>
> greatest effect the meaning of the selections. So natural are the motions to the act

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[168] Veronica Strong-Boag and Carole Gerson*, Paddling Her Own Canoe: The Times and Texts of E. Pauline Johnson (Tekahionwake)*. Toronto, 2000. 114.

[169] Jane Stafford, *Colonial Literature and the Native Author: Indigeneity and Empire*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. 161-2.

[170] In his 1875 *On Actors and the Art of Acting*, Lewes separates the idea of naturalness or truth from what we would now call authenticity: "naturalness in acting means truthful presentation of the character indicated by the author, and not the foisting of commonplace manner on the stage" (115). Lewes's definition of "naturalness" includes both performance, or, in this case, "presentation," and a preceding intention and plan that must be followed. When used as a contrast to naturalness as a pre-designed construct, the use of "commonplace manner" seems to indicate a thoughtless, perhaps we could say, "undeveloped" or "authentic" identity. We see a similar definition of naturalness in Johnson's "A Strong Race Opinion." In her criticism of modern depictions of Indigenous women, Johnson calls for writers to portray Indigenous women as "distinct, unique and natural" and laments the belief that these characters are "obliged to continually be national first and natural afterwards." In the context of her essay, Johnson uses "national" to indicate a stereotypical and one-dimensional adherence to the identity of "absolute Indian." For both Lewes and Johnson, the unadulterated or pure identity is not the ideal identity. Instead, the ideal is a cultivated persona that evokes the type of affective response that we have seen from both Charlesworth and Seton. Submitting to the "development" of the white man and fulfilling his aesthetic and emotional needs does not sound particularly revelatory, but it is an effective rhetorical technique for Johnson's larger project.

that they are scarcely noticed; the listener following only the trend of the play. But more striking than the elocutionary power is the train of thought that is awakened… when the anger of the Indian maiden, feeling from experience the sufferings of her race, is depicted in every line; dull indeed is the man that cannot be aroused by Miss Johnson's recitations.[171]

The anger of women, and especially of women of color, is generally not received with such approbation. However, Johnson has cultivated a sense of empathy through her martialing of what might be considered a Canadian general consciousness. Notice that the audience member specifically describes Johnson's performance as "natural" even as he describes his being emotionally manipulated. Though his emotions are provoked from another, external individual, not "authentically" derived, they still feel "natural" to him. The effect of this appeal through the lens of the general consciousness is the shifting of the standards of what is considered external. Previously, "external" had indicated anything outside one's individual mind, even one's own body, for Lewes the only "external" was another general consciousness or community.[172] By engaging the general

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[171] McMaster University Library, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections, Johnson Papers, 'Elocutionary Entertainment. By Miss E. Pauline Johnson,' *Emerson Journal* (17 December 1897), clipping; Cited in Strong-Boag & Gerson 107.
[172] Generally, Victorian theorists of the mind adhered to mind-body dualism, the belief that one aspect of the binary of the mind and the body dominated over the other. Empiricists, led by John Stuart Mill, leaned heavily on the rational position, whilst later evolutionary psychologists like Herbert Spencer preferred the biological. George Henry Lewes disposes of this hierarchical understanding of the relationship between the mind and body. Lewes insists that the body and mind are actually indistinguishable within the relationship; focusing on either of the singular members in order to discern their individual abilities or relational hierarchy is ultimately unproductive. The "body" and the "mind" are "the antithetic terms for one and the same fact. Their separation into two different facts, and the consequent search for the *link* connecting them, we must dismiss as illusory." *Problems* 3.1.24, emphasis in original. In this double-aspect theory, mind

consciousness through both her dress and embodied performance, Johnson transcribes the emotional response of the Indigenous community from a subjective or external locus onto an objective or internal one. Lewes describes this kind of transcription as a bodily performance evoking emotional empathy: "I observe other beings closely resembling me in all objective relations; and observing these beings act, gesticulate, speak as I do, I conclude that they are moved by similar feelings."[173] The "objective relations" Johnson performs with in her dress – the Canadian patriotism, the integration of Euro Canadian objects – blur the boundaries between her Indigenous identity and her Canadian identity and allow her to establish herself as part of the audience's community.

Perhaps the most powerful appeal to the general consciousness Johnson's dramatic monologues capitalized on was the cultural admonition for the spiritual and emotional superiority and purity of women. The cultivation of sympathy or empathy was especially important for those Victorians invested in epistemological distance in order to balance the tendency towards insensitivity.[174] Paradoxically, this claim of superior empathy can be seen most effectively in the narrative of sexual deception and violence:

> I smiled, and laid my cheek against his back:
>
> "Loose thou my hands," I said. "This pace let slack.
>
> Forget we now that thou and I are foes.
>
> I like thee well, and wish to clasp thee close;

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and body are inseparable, the only binary is that of internal and external. Perhaps more importantly, instead of the "external" simply referencing the physical body of the individual, for Lewes, the term refers to society as a whole.

[173] *Problems* 3.1.69.

[174] Amanda Anderson, *The Powers of Distance: Cosmopolitanism and the Cultivation of Detachment*. Princeton, 2001. 11.

I like the courage of thine eye and brow;

I like thee better than my Mohawk now."

He cut the cords; we ceased our maddened haste.

I wound my arms about his tawny waist;

My hand crept up the buckskin of his belt;

His knife hilt my burning palm I felt;

One hand caressed his cheek, the other drew

The weapon softly—"I love you, love you,"

I whispered, "love you as my life."

And— buried in his back his scalping knife.[175]

Though she has just murdered a man, albeit her would-be rapist, Ojistoh declares in the lines that follow, "My hands all wet, stained with a life's red dye, / But pure my soul, pure as those stars on high— / 'My Mohawk's pure white star, Ojistoh, still am I.'"[176] Calling up the image of what seems to be the "absolute Indian" before the encroachment of colonialism seems antithetical to Johnson's project of communal integration. But the narrative of "Ojistoh" highlights adherence to what Johnson's Anglo-Canadian audience would believe were the Anglo institutions of family, marriage, and traditional femininity.

"Ojistoh" occurs in a nebulous time before colonial encroachment, or, at least, the poem's narrative does not directly reference the Indigenous experience of colonization. In contrast, "A Cry from An Indian Wife" faces this experience head on and interacts directly with the defining Victorian ideology of separate spheres. Within the context of

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[175] "Ojistoh" 46-59.
[176] *Ibid.* 68-70.

the larger British Empire, Tricia Lootens tells us, "the men imagined for this model [of separate spheres] move freely between the public and private realms. The women, in contrast, remain within the innocent, pacifist, apolitical heart of the military State. As custodians of that divine, historically suspended law which at once grounds, defies, and defines the law of the State, they redeem that State by serving as its 'internal enemies.'"[177] Justification for the project of colonization rested upon the moral superiority of the British wives and mothers who both resisted the personal sacrifice of their men and supported the communal enterprise of the nation as a whole.

An example of both separate sphere ideology and the Poetess tradition, Felicia Hemans' "The Spitzer's Wife" (1828) is one of Tekahionwake's primary references. A retelling of the Swiss emancipator William Tell, "The Switzer's Wife" imagines the moment of nationalistic conviction and impetus of the rebellion.[178] Hemans's poem argues that the true heroism found within the tale belongs to Tell's wife rather than the hero himself. When she finds her husband mulling over the decision to rebel against the tyrannical rule of the Habsburgs, Hemans's Wife is the one who tips the scales towards political change:

I know what thou wouldst do: And be it done!

  Thy soul is darken'd with its fears for me.

Trust me to Heaven, my husband!–this, thy son,

---

[177] *The Political Poetess: Victorian Femininity, Race, and the Legacy of Separate Spheres*. Princeton, 2017. 87.
[178] Lootens and many historians identify the historical personage of Werner Stauffacher as the main inspiration for the legend of William Tell. However, Hemans never refers to Stauffacher but does include as an epigram a supposed quote from "Willholm Tell." This is another example of the mythological and nationalistic importance taking precedence to historical accuracy for a Victorian audience.

The babe whom I have born thee, must be free!

And the sweet memory of our pleasant hearth

May well give strength–if aught be strong on earth…

Go forth beside the waters, and along

  The chamois paths, and thro' the forests go;

And tell, in burning words, thy tale of wrong

  To the brave hearts that midst the hamlets glow.

God shall be with thee, my belov'd!–Away!

Bless but thy child, and leave me:–I can pray![179]

Hemans's Wife leverages her gendered position as keeper of the home and protector and nurturer of future generations – her rightful sphere – to call for revolution in order to protect their rights to their home and culture. As Lootens puts it, Hemans's Swiss Wife "speaks as one for whom selfhood, home, and home country are one." In contrast is African American poet Francis Ellen Watkins Harper's rewrite, "The Fugitive's Wife" (1854) in which the Switzer's Wife's counterpart, an enslaved black Wife "is, by definition, married to loss, absence, exile."[180] Harper's Wife differs from her literary inspiration in that her "home" is not her or her community's place of origin or birthright. Rather than calling for her husband to take what is rightfully his, she must call for him to leave and imagine a new future:

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[179] "Switzer" 79-84, 90-96.
[180] *The Political Poetess: Victorian Femininity, Race, and the Legacy of Separate Spheres*. Princeton, 2017. 186.

"Bear not," I cried, "unto your grave,

The yoke you've borne from birth;

No longer live a helpless slave,

The meanest thing on earth!"[181]

Though she does not have the same power over her home and children as an enslaved

black woman, Harper's Wife also wields the symbolism of future generations, beginning

the poem with a domestic scene with her children and ending with a repudiation of the

"yoke… borne from birth." Both Hemans's and Harper's Wives encourage their

husbands to political revolution and assert their essential human right to live in freedom.

Additionally, as Lootens illustrates, Harper's rewrite pushes back against the widespread

colonial assumption that races who were enslaved or colonized had an essentially

subservient or complacent constitution.[182]

As another reworking of Hemans, Johnson has some important differences from

both the original poem and Harper's rewrite. Within "A Cry from An Indian Wife," the

titular speaker repeatedly accuses the Canadians, and specifically the Canadian women,

of lacking in empathy, neither praying for nor even considering the feelings of the

Indigenous inhabitants of the land. "Your wife?" cries the Native American woman,

addressing the white colonizers, "Ah, what of that, who cares for me? / Who pities my

poor love and agony?"[183] Against these unfeeling neighbors, the Wife devotes a whole

passage to exploring an empathetic connection with her colonizing counterparts:

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[181] "Fugitive" 24-8.
[182] *Ibid.* 185.
[183] "Cry" 31-2.

> …my heart is not the only one
>
> That grieves the loss of husband and of son;
>
> Think of the mothers o'er the inland seas;
>
> Think of the pale-faced maiden on her knees;
>
> One pleads her God to guard some sweet-faced child
>
> That marches on toward the North-West wild.
>
> The other prays to shield her love from harm,
>
> To strengthen his young, proud uplifted arm.
>
> Ah, how her white face quivers thus to think,
>
> Your tomahawk his life's best blood will drink.[184]

The Wife claims, and rightly, that "[the white woman] never thinks of my wild aching breast, / Nor prays for your dark face and eagle crest / Endangered by a thousand rifle balls, / My heart the target if my warrior falls."[185] Johnson's Indian Wife has no children to use in her appeal for freedom, underscoring the mythos of the Indigenous as a dying race. For the Indian wife, the loss is not just her individual husband, but the loss of a whole community. The audience, in turn, is compelled to measure the loss of one soldier against the loss of a nation. Harper's Fugitive's Wife has been torn from her original home, but the poem itself speaks to the political resistance of flight rather than immovable defiance. Hemans's Switzer's Wife celebrates this type of defiance and will ultimately be victorious and reclaim political power. In contrast, Johnson's Wife

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[184] *Ibid.* 41-50.
[185] *Ibid.* 51-54.

understands her own birthright and its ultimate impotency in the face of British

colonization:

> They but forget we Indians owned the land
>
> From ocean unto ocean; that they stand
>
> Upon a soil that centuries agone
>
> Was our sole kingdom and our right alone.
>
> They never think how they would feel to-day,
>
> If some great nation came from far away,
>
> Wresting their country from their hapless braves,
>
> Giving what they gave us—but wars and graves.[186]

The red broadcloth blanket draped over her shoulders when reciting the line "[c]urse to

the fate that brought them from the East" was part of the 1869 induction ceremony of

Prince Arthur, who was concurrently given the Haudenosaunee name "Kavakoudge," or

"the sun flying from east to west under the guidance of the Great Spirit." [187] This belief in

the predestination or inherent morality of the colonial project was a comforting trope for

Johnson's audiences, built on the supposed objectivity of cultural hierarchy.

Johnson questions the assumption of the general consciousness that the British

colonists have heavenly approval whether through their inherent righteousness or from

the prayers of their women. Rather than heavenly support due to moral superiority of the

British Empire or physical superiority of the white race, the Wife seems to indicate that

only an act of God, and overwhelming numbers, could have ensured the victory of the

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[186] *Ibid.* 21-28.
[187] *Ibid.* 17.

colonial forces. The guidance of the Great Spirit takes on a much more violent form from the Wife as she portrays the prayers of the colonizers as "swell[ing] the ranks" in contrast to her "poor nation."[188] Subtly, she also makes sure to call attention to the status of the Canadian soldiers as "volunteer[s]."[189] The Canadian soldiers can "volunteer" because the existence of their homeland and people does not rest on the failure of colonization unlike the Indian husband and wife.

When referring to the Canadian soldiers as individuals instead of *en masse*, the Wife compares them to the traditional prey of bison and cattle and consistently portrays them in condescending language, calling them "stripling[s]."[190] These linguistic associations with the flora and fauna of North America were usually reserved for the descriptions of Indigenous peoples. In her essay on the Indian girl, Johnson specifically points out language that refers to Indigenous women as "'doglike,' 'fawnlike,' 'deer-footed,' 'fire-eyed'" as something she finds particularly distressing. In response to this, Johnson's Wife describes the Canadian soldiers as "white-faced" with "harmless blood" to reflect not only on their lack bravery but also their racial constitution.[191] Johnson flips the racial script in order to subtly question its validity – both aesthetically and politically. Rather than the colonized peoples being compliant and submissive, Johnson portrays the soldiers of the colonial enterprise as such. When considering these reversals in context, the comment that the soldiers are "all young and beautiful and good" confers less of a compliment than a patronizing tone.[192] Perhaps the most grievously incorrect

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188 *Ibid.* 35 and 37, respectively.
189 *Ibid.* 34.
190 Ibid. 6-8 and 12, respectively.
191 *Ibid.* 13 and 15, respectively.
192 *Ibid.* 15.

presumption of excellence, at least according to the judgment of the Indian Wife, is the

supposition that the Canadian or British wives have a moral superiority to the Indigenous.

While she does plainly waver between rebellion and resignation, the Wife never wavers

in her subtle judgment of the moral and cultural fortitude of the colonizers in the ideals

that they supposedly both share. In essence, "A Cry from an Indian Wife" is a struggle

for empathetic, and therefore ethical, dominance in the ideology of separate spheres.

As the century progressed, the project of imperial integration gained greater

importance as some of the territories became self-governing, achieved Dominion status,

or established commonwealths.[193] The British Empire, and, more importantly, British

culture, had to contend with coherent groups of people in varying places and with varying

cultures and make these groups legible to themselves. If these other, supposedly lesser

communities were able to overtake or simply obscure what was imagined to be the purity

of traditional British culture, the imperial cultural project would be a failure. Johnson's

speakers assert their feminine legitimacy and, by extension, their own and their nation's

moral superiority. Though her husband will ultimately fail and the Indigenous peoples

will be consumed by the Canadian culture, the Wife has essentially bested Empire at its

own ideological game. When she performed this monologue, Johnson evoked feelings of

nostalgia, patriotism, and mourning, essentially transferring the allegiance of her

audience from the British homeland to the new assemblage of Indigenous and Euro-

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[193] Canada was given the status of Dominion in the Canadian Confederation of 1867. All Australian colonies but Western Australia established responsible government in the 1850s, though they did not federalize until 1901. Western Australia established responsible government in 1890 and was part of the Federation of Australia in 1901. New Zealand became self-governing in the 1850s but was not considered a Dominion until 1907. The Cape of Good Hope instituted responsible government in 1872, and South Africa as a whole became a Dominion in 1910.

Canadians that she represents. These late-century monologues still enact the contest between sympathy and judgment, yet they abandon the earlier footing in the contest between an individual and society. Instead, the speaker of these monologues stands for a group; the dynamic of the genre shifts to an intercommunal relationship. Because of its effectiveness in reasserting the values of the community as a whole, the dramatic monologue is a productive genre in which to see the development of the general consciousness or identity politics of a society. Bridging the disciplinary gap between psychology and poetry, the spatial gap between metropole and colony, and the racial gap between English and Haudenosaunee, E. Pauline Johnson's late-Victorian performances of dramatic monologues challenged Anglo-Canadian audiences to confront their understanding of themselves as a British colony.

Chapter 3

Sympathy and Empathy:
H.D., the Imagist Dramatic Monologue, and the Great War

In 1915, a year before H.D. published her first volume of poetry, *Sea Garden*

(1916), a German U-boat sank the RMS Lusitania, killing both British and American

civilians. That same year, H.D.'s only daughter with her husband Richard Aldington was

stillborn; H.D. believed the news of the Lusitania tragedy was the cause. The same

tragedy has also largely been read as one of the causes the compelled United States to

finally join the Allied Powers of the First World War in 1917.[194] H.D.'s individual

personal trauma reflected a larger global trauma. Because of her status as an American

expatriate in London and her personal losses around the First World War, H.D. was

perfectly positioned to rethink what it meant to affectively identify with a single nation or

as a globalist.[195] Similarly, as the representative genre for sympathy versus judgment, the

dramatic monologue was perfectly positioned to embody the constant negotiations that

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[194] Other crucial events leading to America's involvement were: the Black Tom
explosion, in which German agents destroyed munitions to be shipped to Russia by
bombing the New York Harbor (30 July 1916); and the Zimmerman telegram, in which
Germany courted an alliance with Mexico and promised to cede land when America was
defeated (January 1917).

[195] H.D. also had a well-documented interest in psychology, most famously undergoing
psychoanalysis with Sigmund Freud in 1933 and 1934. H.D. first encountered Freud
through passages translated by Frances Josepha Gregg in 1909. H.D.'s lover Bryher
(Annie Winifred Ellerman) was a fan of psychoanalysis as well: "Freud! All literary
London discovered Freud about 1920…To me Freud is literary England… after the first
war." (Quoted in Susan Stanford Friedman's *Psyche Reborn: The Emergence of H.D.*
Indiana, 1987. 17-18). I do not mean to negate the impact of Freud on H.D. or on literary
London as a whole; however, all signs point to Freud's largest impact on both occurred
after H.D. had already written *Sea Garden*. On a larger scale, this dissertation establishes
a different narrative around psychology that attempts to decouple psychology from
psychoanalysis and expand the meaning beyond Freud within literary studies.

national feeling or globalism required.[196] Though not traditionally classified as a dramatic

monologist, I argue that H.D.'s imagist poetry functions on a similar affective plane. As

described in the previous chapter on Tekahionwake's *fin-de-siècle* monologues, the

tension between sympathy and judgment was a key component to the form. In the

twentieth century, the impending breakdown of British imperial control coincided with

the breakdown of sympathy as a structuring principle of communal feeling. Therefore, if

H.D. wanted to explore the same problems of community and nation-making, she needed

to respond to this new iteration of empathy.

H.D. closes *Sea Garden* with a powerful collective dialogue among several voices

entitled "Cities":

You are useless. We live.

We await great events.

We are spread through this earth.

We protect our strong race.

You are useless.

Your cell takes the place

of our young future strength.[197]

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[196] Though Langbaum's sympathy/judgment theory was meant for earlier dramatic monologues of the nineteenth century, contemporaneous twentieth-century understandings of the form also understood it through a similar lens. In 1904, Charles Mill Gayley explains that "the interest [of the dramatic monologue] consists not only in revealing the character of the speaker, but also in suggesting the effect which his arguments or appeals make upon the imaginary hearer." Gayley does not call out any specific emotional responses as Langbaum would later, but the emotional response in general is paramount. Charles Mills Gayley. *The Principles and Progress of English Poetry.* MacMillan 1904. 55.

[197] "Cities" 60-66. I will be using "voice" rather than "speaker" as in my chapters on EBB and Tekahionwake to reinforce H.D.'s investment in disembodiment and

This short passage epitomizes the themes of this chapter. Undifferentiated voices join together and break apart according to similarly undifferentiated affiliations, pointing to H.D.'s ambivalence towards categorization and communal feeling. The ambiguous use of pronouns that could be either singular or plural complicates our understanding of H.D.'s voices even further. Finally, the ominous, often accusatory tone and references to "great events" and "cells" reflect the tensions between nations and allies in global traumas. "Cities" will serve as this chapter's touchstone through two different sections. The first reads the poem as a representation of the nineteenth-century sympathy and twentieth-century empathy. The second section considers the psychologist Edward B. Titchener's concept of attention and its inclination towards being manipulated. More broadly, this section explores H.D.'s misgivings about empathetic connection through a study of "Prisoners," her rewriting of Tennyson's "Maud" (1855). In conclusion, I return to "Cities" to propose that H.D. was working towards fine-tuning the concept of empathy through her poetry in order to mitigate her fears.
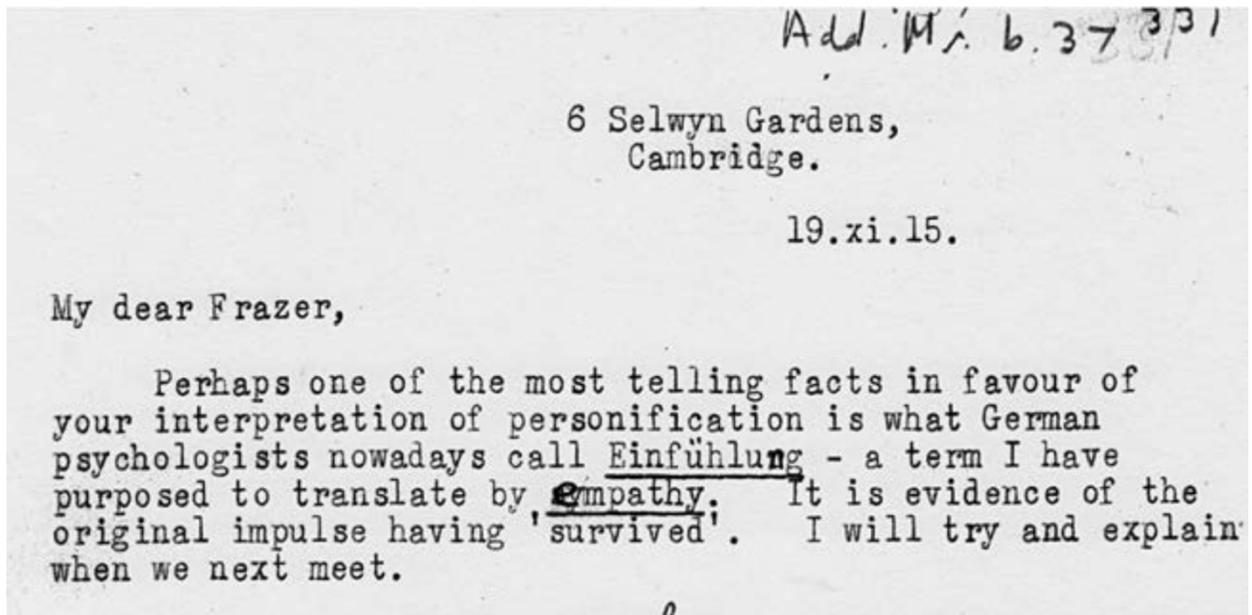
Figure 6. Facsimile of letter written by James Ward and sent to James Frazer, November 19, 1915. Trinity College Archive, the Master and Fellows of Trinity College Cambridge. Reproduced in Susan Marie Lanzoni. *Empathy: A History*. Yale, 2018.

A few months before H.D. published *Sea Garden*, English psychologist James Ward wrote to Scottish social anthropologist and friend Sir James Frazer with a conspicuous typo. In drafting his letter, Ward accidentally used the nineteenth century word "sympathy" for "empathy" as a translation of the German *einfühlung* (see Fig. 6). Ward's mistake illustrates the near interchangeability of the two terms at the beginning of empathy's emergence as a psychological term. Though Ward's letter claims that he translated the German *einfühlung*, the English "empathy" had been in use for several years. The now-accepted origin of the term occurred in 1909, when English psychologist Edward B. Titchener translated German psychologist Theodor Lipps term *einfühlung* or "feeling-into" into the English "empathy." "Feeling-into" had both psychological and aesthetic implications. Originally, empathy only applied to objects; Titchener first describes it as "aesthetic effects" resulting from "reading of our own activities into the

world about us," following from Lipps' second volume of *Aesthetik* (1905).[198]

Eventually, this new psychological term expanded to include the reading of the self into others – but at a critical distance. Ward's short note, as an interchange between an English psychologist and a Scottish anthropologist about a term from German aesthetic philosopher translated by an Englishman who would eventually emigrate to the United States, epitomizes the cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary beginnings of empathy as a concept. Even in its etymology, empathy functioned as a negotiation across difference and distance.

Both "sympathy" and "empathy" attempt to name the phenomenon of fellow-feeling, of being aware of the internal responses of another being. We now typically think of "feeling," "sympathy," and "empathy" as denoting an emotional state and use these terms interchangeably in casual conversation. The "feeling" involved in both nineteenth century sympathy and twentieth century empathy is better understood as "sensation" rather than "emotion." In fact, rather than a necessary component of sympathy, emotions were seen as unequivocally harmful to sympathetic connection. To understand this nineteenth-century distrust of emotion, we turn to the preeminent theorist of both the Victorian novel and of sympathy, George Eliot.[199]

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[198] *A Text-Book of Psychology*. New York: Macmillan, 1910. 105.

[199] For more on Victorian sympathy see Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth, ''George Eliot's Conception of Sympathy,'' Nineteenth-Century Fiction 40.1 (1985): 23–42; Suzy Anger, *Victorian Interpretation*. Cornell, 2005; Audrey Jaffe, *Scenes of Sympathy: Identity and Representation in Victorian Fiction*. Cornell, 2000; Susan Lanzoni, "Sympathy in *Mind* (1876–1900)." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 70.2 (April 2009): 265-287; and Adela Pinch, *Strange Fits of Passion: Epistemologies of Emotion, Hume to Austen*. Stanford, 1996. For more on Eliot's conception of sympathy, see Ellen Argyros, *Without Any Check of Proud Reserve: Sympathy and Its Limits in George Eliot's Novels.* P. Lang, 1999; Ilana M. Blumberg, "Sympathy or Religion? George Eliot and Christian

In "The Natural History of Human Life," George Eliot expresses concerns over the growing interest in detachment and objectivity that she believed would negatively impact the capacity for sympathy.[200] For Eliot, the most important role of art is its "mode of amplifying experience and extending our contact with our fellow-men beyond the bounds of our personal lot."[201] Her argument is essentially an argument for realism; her concern, at least in the "Natural History" essay, is the accurate and realist portrayal of the English working classes:

> The thing for mankind to know is, not what are the motives and influences which the moralist thinks *ought* to act on the laborer or the artisan, but what are the motives and influences which *do* act on him. We want to be taught to feel, not for the heroic artisan or the sentimental peasant, but for the peasant in all his coarse apathy, and the artisan in all his suspicious selfishness.[202]

Idealized versions of humanity, she argues, are less likely to evoke sympathetic feelings. Instead, realistic portrayals render the imagined feelings of the workers more easily accessible to the middle-class audience, effectively and affectively close the distance between upper and lower classes. Sympathy in the nineteenth century almost completely depended upon these appeals to the middle-class – appeals to, as Rae Greiner has argued,

Conversion." *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 74.3 (2019): 360–387; Audrey Jaffee, *Scenes of Sympathy: Identity and Representation in Victorian Fiction*. Cornell, 2018. For Eliot and psychology, see Michael Davis, *George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Psychology: Exploring the Unmapped Country*. Ashgate, 2006; and Henry Staten, *Spirit Becomes Matter: The Brontës, George Eliot, Nietzsche*. Edinburgh, 2014.
[200] George Eliot, "The Natural History of Human Life." *Westminster Review* 66 (July 1856): 28-44.
[201] *Ibid*. 30. Amanda Anderson also uses this passage in her discussion of Eliot's negotiation of detachment in *The Powers of Distance: Cosmopolitanism and the Cultivation of Detachment*. Princeton, 2001.
[202] *Ibid*. 30.

the mediocre.[203] Repeatedly focusing on the ordinary in realist novels reinforced the legitimacy of the normative and transformed the average into the ideal. Thematically, realism created a common point of reference for the social experience of fellow-feeling. Formally, the mediation inherent in third-person narration allowed Victorian audiences to observe the emotions portrayed without actually experiencing them. Victorian sympathy functioned on what Amanda Anderson would call a "cultivated detachment," an attempt to transcend the particular and find the universal.[204] However, the universal, or at least, the global, became visceral in 1914.

The trauma of the First World War consolidated a new construction of fellow-feeling that had been evolving through the late nineteenth-century; the average had become the exception. Nineteenth-century *sympathy* had focused on the peasantry easily accessible on the British isle as seen in Eliot. Johnson similarly focused on the similarities and familiarity between the Indigenous and Anglo communities living together in Canada. In contrast, twentieth-century *empathy* needed to contend with soldiers from the metropole and colonies all deployed elsewhere. In essence, the mental distance that Victorian realists coveted became physically embodied. Likewise, the experience of the soldier on the front was much more difficult to contort into something resembling the average. To be effective, empathy had to embrace these already existing alienations rather than create its own distance as sympathy had done. The trauma of war

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[203] *Sympathetic Realism in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction*. Johns Hopkins, 2012. Greiner's understanding of sympathy derives from the writing of philosopher and economist Adam Smith in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759).
[204] *The Powers of Distance: Cosmopolitanism and the Cultivation of Detachment*. Princeton, 2001.

orchestrated a shift in the nature of sympathy to empathy, a shift from the average to the abnormal.

"The *characteristic of strangeness*" Titchener explains, "…is often interfused with an experience which might, at first sight, seem incompatible with it; the '*feeling*' of *our own concernment* [sic] in the imagined situation."[205] Rather than cultivating the appearance of the pedestrian, empathy's celebration of strangeness allowed for the affective encounter of fellow-feeling even across disparate life experiences. This foundational shift manifested itself formally as well. In contrast to third-person narrators in realist novels, the first-person perspective of the dramatic monologue allowed readers to intimately suffer the same experience portrayed in the text.[206] H.D.'s modernist verse transmutes the mediocrity that Victorians believed would bring about social and national well-being into the disease plaguing the body politic.

Even within the genre of the dramatic monologue, the values and aims shifted. Johnson saw the bringing together of cultural ideals through the general consciousness as a victory; H.D. portrays the mediocrity and homogeneity of nineteenth century realism as "waste" causing and caused by "disgust."[207]The labyrinthine new city portrayed within "Cities" is formed out of the Victorian methodology of sympathy and the assimilation it attempts to achieve; the "street after street, / each patterned alike … crowded into one

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[205] *A Beginner's Psychology*. New York: Macmillan, 1915. 198.
[206] Some Victorian novelists used free indirect discourse for their narration which, like the dramatic monologue, provided a more visceral experience due to the integration of the first-person narration alongside the third-person. Jane Austen, George Eliot, and, to a certain extent, Charles Dickens, were the primary users of free indirect discourse before Modernist writers. My project focuses on Victorian poetry, but I would argue that Austen and Eliot's preference for free indirect discourse makes sense alongside women's poetry focusing on the communal, hybridity, and multiple voices.
[207] "Cities" 3 and 4, respectively.

garden-space" merges the individual inhabitants into one coherent but monotonous whole. Formally, the uniform line length of the stanzas mirrors the imagery of the honeycomb, with its repeated pattern of identical, contiguous hexagons. In its prosody, too, the assonance of these lines mimics the droning of swarms of bees around a hive. By achieving a true "general consciousness" the city has become dull and flat.[208] Instead of encouraging freedom of movement between classes through fellow-feeling, the homogeneity imposed through sympathy creates a feeling of being choked or controlled for everyone. "[S]treet after street/each patterned alike" and "the hundred [houses]/crowded into one garden-space" of the city merge into an indistinguishable mass.[209]

To drive this point home, the poem invites us to compare this lifeless accretion with what came before:

the beauty of temple

and space before temple,

arch upon perfect arch,

of pillars and corridors that led out

to strange court-yards and porches

where sun-light stamped

hyacinth-shadows

black on the pavement.[210]

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[208] It makes sense that Eliot would adhere to a similar set of beliefs regarding collective sympathies as they were both intellectual colleagues and the mid-century's power couple.
[209] *Ibid.* 5-6 and 8-9, respectively.
[210] *Ibid.* 14-21.

Unlike the uniformity of the stanzas in which the new city is described, the contrast between long and short lines allow more space to appear both within and at the end of lines on the page, echoing the larger and more varied dimensions of the old city's architecture. The dim gray light of the new city was preceded by the "sun-light stamped/hyacinth-shadows/black on the pavement" chiaroscuro of the old. Though there is repetition, "arch upon perfect arch," it creates feelings of distance and space "[leading] out/ to strange court-yards [sic] and porches" rather than an overwhelming sameness. The strange light and strange spaces of the old city embody difference as beauty and expansion.

The distinct contrast between the new and old cities seems to suggest that the poem is fully invested in the "characteristic of strangeness," and, by extension, empathy. However, H.D.'s understanding of fellow-feeling is ambivalent; the old city also overwhelms its inhabitants, albeit in a different way. Even before the assimilation and monotony, the poem argues, "the maker of cities"

> …had crowded the city so full
>
> that men could not grasp beauty,
>
> beauty was over them,
>
> through them, about them,
>
> no crevice unpacked with the honey,
>
> rare, measureless.[211]

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[211] *Ibid.* 30-35.

In this passage, the old city also discourages fellow-feeling – this time through exceptional, overwhelming beauty.[212] In making this comparison between cities, H.D. also makes the comparison between the functionality of sympathy and empathy: Sympathy attempts to establish fundamental similarities between people through a new, uniform structure which facilitates fellow-feeling. Empathy assumes difference between people and works to incorporate difference by imbuing individuals with fellow-feeling "over them, / through them, about them" in an involuntary infusion. "Cities'" comparison of sympathy and empathy as structure and infusion corresponds with contemporaneous psychological theory.

One year after the beginning of WWI, Titchener explains the difference between the two methodologies of fellow-feeling: "[the] tendency to feel oneself *into* a situation is called empathy, — on the analogy of sympathy, which is feeling *together with* another."[213] The distinction between feeling *into* and feeling *together with* maps directly onto Greiner's argument that, just as the linguistic difference between metonymy and metaphor produces the formal difference between prose and poetry, it also produces the affective responses of sympathy and empathy. Sympathy and prose function through the

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[212] Recall that many of the negative reviews of *Aurora Leigh* focused on EBB's choosing exceptional characters or inaccessible points of view.

[213] *A Beginner's Psychology*. New York: Macmillan, 1915. 198. Emphasis in original. Titchener argued that the three basic units of thought were sensations, images, and affections (or feelings). These three units combined together as elements in chemistry and, as a result, were often confused for each other. Thus, someone experiencing sympathy could have the same feelings as empathy; however, the ideas behind these feelings were different: "[E]mpathic ideas are psychologically interesting, because they are the converse of perceptions: their core is imaginal, and their context is made up of sensations, the kinaesthetic and organic sensations that carry the empathic meaning. Like the feeling of strangeness, they are characteristic of imagination." See also *A Text-Book of Psychology*. New York: Macmillan, 1910. 48.

contiguity of metonymy, while empathy and poetry function through the similarity of metaphor.[214] Sympathy's "feeling *together with*" creates a semblance of proximity through the construction of a false average. In contrast, empathy's "feeling *into*" creates a sense of absorption or infusion through the construction of a false equivalence. Rather than presenting fellow-feeling as a means to overcome difference and incite change, H.D. sees empathy as a possible tool of further objectifying and abstracting citizens for the "greater" purposes of a nation and a people. Just as realism created a false average, so too could empathy abstract the feelings of those it purported to represent. "Cities" and the other imagist poems of *Sea Garden* explore the benefits and dangers of empathetic connection.

Are You Paying Attention?

In order to appreciate H.D.'s understanding of empathy as a tool of control by a nation, we need to appreciate the ways psychological theorists of her period conceived the crucial component of attention. Attention became an important area for psychological investigation around the *fin de siècle* – and for good reason.[215] Psychologists such as

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[214] *Sympathetic Realism in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction*. Johns Hopkins, 2012. Greiner uses the linguistic theorist Roman Jakobson. "The Metaphoric and Metonymic Poles." *Fundamentals of Language*. Ed. 2. Mouton, 1971. Jacques Lacan would later connect Jakobson's linguistic theories with Sigmund Freud's explanation of two methods of the psychological processes of cathexis. "The Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious or Reason Since Freud." *Ecrits*. Norton, 1999. 412-444. Condensation, or when an idea or image stands in for something else, coincides with metaphor; displacement, or when an idea or image is substituted for another. *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*. Norton, 1989.

[215] In the same essay in which she rejects idealization, Eliot argues that "the greatest benefit we owe to the artist, whether painter, poet, or novelist, is the extension of our sympathies. Appeals founded on generalizations and statistics require a sympathy ready-

Titchener and William James determined that controlling one's attention was prerequisite for any meaningful conscious experience. "[If] there were no such thing as attention," Titchener writes, "…[w]e should be at the mercy of every stimulus, internal or external, which was strong enough to arouse a conscious process… [C]onsciousness would be a mixed medley of sensations and affections, strung together as the accidents of stimulation determined."[216] Attention was therefore almost synonymous with perception—and perception with identity.

In 1908, Titchener outlined seven laws of attention, the final four of which could be considered a roadmap to manipulation. The law of prior entry, the law of limited range, the law of temporal instability, and the degree of clearness work in tandem to make experience comprehensible but also become an access point for external control. The fourth law of prior entry describes the experience of being able to recall items or experiences that we have already paid attention to in the past more easily, while the fifth law of limited range states that we can only pay attention to a certain number of things at

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made, a moral sentiment already in activity; but a picture of human life such as a great artist can give, surprises even the trivial and the selfish into *that attention to what is a part from themselves, which may be called the raw material of moral sentiment* (30), emphasis mine. Eliot herself connects the idea of fellow feeling with the importance of attention. For an extensive selection of *fin-de-siècle*-psychologists' writing on attention in order of date published, see Jonathan Crary's *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture*. MIT, 1999.

[216] *Outline* 125. Similarly, in William James' *The Principles of Psychology* (1890), James includes an entire section on an explanation of the mental exercise that is the foundation for all consciousness: "*My experience is what I agree to attend to*. Only those items which I notice shape my mind - without selective interest, experience is an utter chaos. Interest alone gives accent and emphasis, light and shade, background and foreground - intelligible perspective, in a word. It varies in every creature, but without it the consciousness of every creature would be a gray chaotic indiscriminateness, impossible for us even to conceive." James 402, emphasis in original.

a time.[217] While the first pair of laws deal with the object of attention, the final pair deal

with the subject. The "law of temporal instability" claims that the state of attention

fluctuates but never ceases; this is the law of what William James would call the "stream

of consciousness."[218] The seventh and final law, "the degree of clarity," suggests that the

movement of attention requires different levels of effort from the individual, moving

towards the understanding of passive and active attention.[219] By understanding and using

these laws together, attention could be diverted towards the path of least resistance.

Combining these laws creates the experience of a sort of "attention confirmation bias";

since we only have a finite amount of attention, we are more likely to pay attention to

new things or experiences that we have already encountered and can understand with the

least amount of effort.[220] Integral to this process is the interplay between levels of

attention, specifically the passive attention.

 Titchener differentiates between two types of attention: active and passive. Active

attention is a force of will: when we apply ourselves to a certain task. Passive attention is

the automatic response of the body and mind to stimuli: when we are forced away from a

task against our own will.[221] Passive attention is controlled primarily by what Titchener

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[217] The fourth law appears in pages 251-59 and the fifth on pages 259-263 of *Lectures on the Elementary Psychology of Feeling and Attention*. MacMillan, 1908.
[218] *Ibid.* 263-76.
[219] *Ibid.* 276-82.
[220] "The stimulus for which we are predisposed requires less time than a like stimulus, for which we are unprepared, to produce its full conscious effect. Or, in popular terms, the object of attention comes to consciousness more quickly than the objects that we are not attending to." *Ibid.* 251.
[221] *An Outline of Psychology*. Macmillan, 1896. 128.

refers to as "tendencies."[222] To this point, Titchener is basically reframing Mill's associationism. However, while Mill looked to an educated leader that would expose false cultural assumptions, Titchener claims that understanding tendencies *requires* social structures.

To show this necessary social component, Titchener uses the example of a sequestered and zealous botanist. Because of his intense interest, the botanist's passive attention would be drawn by any new plant or growth, no matter how small. Because the botanist had never met another human, he would believe this heightened sensitivity to plant life normal, essentially equating "'botanic consciousness' and 'human consciousness.'"[223] Only by comparing minds can we come to understand our own:

> We know what various interests different people have; we know what radically
>
> different opinions two sane persons, the one 'emotionally' and the other
>
> 'rationally' minded, will draw from the same set of arguments; we know the
>
> 'professional attitude' of the lawyer and physician and clergyman to the
>
> questions of the day. There are thus ample materials from which the idea of

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[222] Titchener is obviously influenced by the thought of Charles Darwin, rejecting the *tabula rasa* of Locke: "The reasons why certain things or attributes of things compel the attention, while others are left unnoticed, are, in the last resort, biological reasons. Some of them are of a general nature, applying to all living organisms alike. The animal which is to survive must attend to movement, contrast, very intensive impressions, etc. Hence we all attend to these; attention to them is ingrained in our nervous constitution. It is a more special reason, of course, which accounts for the entomologist's attention to the beetle. Here we have a particular animal with particular tendencies; tendencies in the first place natural, and now confirmed by education and habit" *Ibid.* 128. For more on Darwin's influence, see Robert J. Richards, *Darwin and the Emergence of Evolutionary Theories of Mind and Behavior*. Chicago, 1987.

[223] *Outline* 115.

tendency may be formed, and good reasons for its persistence when it has once

taken shape.[224]

The inclusion of various forms of labor in Titchener's example of the limits of

introspection shows that tendencies not only define individual attentions but categorize

groups and focus their attention as well. Passive attention is the cornerstone of both

individual and communal interest: "[W]hen we say that an 'interesting' thing catches the

attention," Titchener writes, "we are really speaking tautologically. A thing is

'interesting' when it is 'a thing to be attended to.'"[225] Just as botanists have tendencies

that point them towards plants, nascent lawyers, physicians, and clergymen find that their

tendencies push them towards joining certain groups based on their established

tendencies.

More importantly, these tendencies can be trained. "[H]abit may become second

nature," Titchener explains, "a tendency engrafted on the organism from without may

come to such a growth as entirely to overshadow its natural or hereditary leanings."[226] In

contrast to the individual training of introspective logic found in Mill and EBB, this

"training" is based in the social realm: "[W]e are sorted out, during childhood, into

classes which show how our mental constitution is regarded by parents and teachers, —

into 'good ' and 'naughty,' 'scatter-brained' and 'plodding,' 'ingenious' and 'awkward.'"[227]

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224 *Ibid.* 114-15.
225 *Ibid.* 133.
226 *Ibid.* 111.
227 *Ibid.* 114-15.

In comparing and categorizing children against each other, institutions like the

educational system could learn to train tendencies and, by extension, passive attention.[228]

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[228] At the same time that attention became the trend in psychology, new technologies arose around the last few decades of the nineteenth century that created anxiety around regulating attention. Jonathan Crary has argued that the increasing ease of communication and the globalization of consumer culture appeared to connect but instead isolated individuals: both from each other and from themselves. Time that had previously been used to self-reflect was now encouraged to be made productive for the state. In this way, as Crary states, "attention [became] key to the operation of noncoercive forms of power" (74). For examples of studies on attention, consumption, and labor, see Crary 72. For examples on popular media, cosmopolitanism, and modernism, see: Nancy Armstrong, "Modernism's Iconophobia and What It Did to Gender." *Modernism/modernity* 5.2 (1998): 47-75; Faith Binckes, *Modernism, Magazines, and the British Avant-Garde: Reading Rhythm, 1910-1914*. Oxford, 2010; Andreas Huyssen, "Mass Culture as Woman." *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism*. Indiana, 1986; Mica Nava, "Cosmopolitan Modernity: Everyday Imaginaries and the Register of Difference." *Theory, Culture, and Society* 19.1/2 (2002): 81-99; Mark A. Wollaeger, *Modernism, Media, and Propaganda: British Narrative From 1900 to 1945*. Princeton, 2006. We can also see this anxiety around the control of attention reflected in the poetic movement of Imagism. "Go in fear of abstractions," Pound commands in 1913's "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste," "Use no superfluous word, no adjective, which does not reveal something" [*Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*. 1.6 (March 1913): 201.]. Imagism's obsession with preventing excess mirrors psychology's interest in the filtering and refining aspects of attention. Over half a century earlier, Eliot noted the importance of the mental image in her discussion of realism and sympathy: "It is an interesting branch of psychological observation to note the images that are habitually associated with abstract or collective terms—what may be called the picture-writing of the mind, which it carries on concurrently with the more subtle symbolism of language. Perhaps the fixity or variety of these associated images would furnish a tolerably fair test of the amount of concrete knowledge and experience which a given word represents, in the minds of two persons who use it with equal familiarity" ("Natural History" 28-9). In a serendipitous turn, Titchener essentially rewrites Eliot's quotation, but from the opposite viewpoint: "Contrariwise, an author whose thought is not susceptible to my visual arrangement appears to me to be obscure and involved; and an author who has an arrangement of his own, which crosses the pattern that I am forming in my mind, appears to me difficult and, to that extent, unenjoyable… A writer may be discussing a highly complicated question; but if he is what I call clear, I can follow and understand him; his pattern is complex, but it may be traced. On the other hand, a writer may be discoursing in the easiest popular fashion; but if he is what I call obscure, if I cannot trace his pattern, I am baffled by him. I must then go to my friends, or to printed reviews of his work, and try to pick up a pattern at second hand." *Experimental Psychology of the Thought-Processes*. MacMillan, 1909. 10-11.

By training passive attention, institutions, here represented by education and labor, could also effectively mediate affective response. Titchener explains: "We find, as a matter of fact, that it is only when we attend to impressions that we feel them to be pleasant or unpleasant. Impressions which are not attended to are indifferent. If we can 'forget ' our toothache, *i.e.*, find something more interesting and absorbing, and so cease to attend to the tooth, the unpleasantness vanishes."[229] A toothache is a limited example of the larger truth*: Attention can literally regulate the perception of pain, both our own and others'.* In this way, attention and fellow-feeling are inextricable. Those who could train tendencies and control the passive attention could also create affective groupings based on different categories of fellow-feeling. Sympathy between groups with the same tendencies is easier to achieve. Similar groups have similar interests and stimuli for their passive attention. By organizing these groups, institutions can organize the interests of its citizens and, in doing, control national interest. In contrast, empathy requires difference to overcome, and difference can only be noticed by a concerted, active attention to something overlooked by the passive attention.

"Can we believe– by an effort…" So H.D.'s "Cities" begins, summing up the purposeful labor of empathetic connection in its very first line. The primary voice of "Cities" repeats this plea methodically throughout the poem but is never definitively answered.[230] Instead of the lengthy testimonies of a strong personality like Andrea del

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[229] Titchener elaborates, "[i]t is not that the pleasantness or unpleasantness comes first, and that we then attend to the impression: the two parts of our experience, the affective and the attentive, are simultaneous. In popular parlance, we attend because the thing is interesting; in psychological language, the interest and the attention are two sides of the same experience." *Outline* 133.
[230] "Cities" 10, 37, and 51.

Sarto or St. Simeon Stylites, "Cities" contains three intertwined short monologues. As I've argued in the preceding chapter, the voices of the dramatic monologues of the *fin de siècle* shifted to represent a community rather than an individual. H.D.'s first voice extends this late nineteenth-century's dramatic monologues' need to represent a community into a *literal* "we."[231] H.D. uses the plural pronoun in eight of the poems of *Sea Garden*, over one quarter of the total volume.[232] The first communal voice of "Cities" is organized by beauty and art, comprised of those whose task is to "recall the old splendor, /await the new beauty of cities."[233] This voice is portrayed in both short and long stanzas with varying prosody and punctuation recalling the shade and light of the old city. The second voice, reflecting "not honey but seething life" is short and to the point, using anaphora to emphasize its interest in replication and extension or growth.[234] Though the interests of the two voices are in opposition, the transition between the two is trivial. Readers would be unused to looking for a second voice in a monologue, especially without an obvious chapter break, such as those in EBB's *Aurora Leigh* (1856) or Robert Browning's *The Ring and the Book* (1868). Unlike the obvious delimitation of italicization for the third voice, the colon that demarcates the beginning of the second is easily overlooked and mistaken for the same voice. By refusing to use the traditional

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[231] *Ibid.* 1-60, 68-77.
[232] H.D. uses the collective we in "The Helmsman," "The Shrine," "The Wind Sleepers," "Loss," "Huntress," "The Cliff Temple," "Sea Gods," and "Cities." Eileen Gregory notes that the collective voices of *Sea Garden* extend beyond those poems that use the "we" pronoun: "the 'I' dissolves within the pervasive sense of generalized suffering and exaltation, like the single voice of the chorus of tragedy." "Rose Cut in Rock: Sappho and H.D.'s *Sea Garden*." *Signets: Reading H.D.* Eds. Susan Stanford Friedman and Rachel Blau DuPlessis. Wisconsin, 1990. 129-54. 139.
[233] "Cities" 76-77.
[234] *Ibid.* 45.

moves that signal another voice, H.D. first allows the reader to fall into the trap of their own assumptions and the "impressions which have ceased to attract the attention." Only through the cognitive dissonance of the content can the reader be shaken out of a passive state and into an active one. In making this uncanny experience of misreading so visceral, H.D. underlines the weakness of her reader's attentive abilities.

Though H.D. is encouraging the exercise of active attention in "Cities," she is not as fully committed as we may expect to situating empathetic connection as the salvation of nation. The effort of active attention and empathy comes with an underlying strain and danger. Crary writes that "[t]he roots of the word attention in fact resonate with a sense of' 'tension,' of being 'stretched,' and also of 'waiting.' It implies the possibility of a fixation, of holding something in wonder or contemplation, in which the attentive subject is both immobile and ungrounded."[235] Active attention, and its product, empathy, can imprison both their subject and the object. Turning to another dramatic monologue found in *Sea Garden* allows us to see this imprisonment literalized.

"Prisoners" relays the final account of a doomed captive and their attentive fixation upon their fellow prisoner. Very little is known of the voice's biography; there are no concrete markers for gender, age, socioeconomic status, role in society, or how they came to be incarcerated. It is not even clear whether the other prisoner returns the voice's affections; the only certainty is that the voice is infatuated with the "beloved." "It is strange that I should want / this sight of your face," the voice begins the monologue, "we have had so much."[236] This "so much" sets readers up to expect a long story of their

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[235] *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture*. MIT, 1999. 10.
[236] "Prisoners" 1-2 and 3, respectively.

relationship. Instead, we receive descriptions of the voice's dreams of public cultural

rituals presented as recollections.[237] There are no concrete indications that this love, or

possibly obsession, is reciprocated. All encounters between the two described within the

text of the poem have been from afar: in battle and in imprisonment.

     This deluded love juxtaposed with war calls to mind Tennyson's "Maud" (1855).

Like H.D.'s voice, Tennyson's hero constructs a romance from afar with no intimate

personal interactions. His obsession with Maud turns violent when her brother

disapproves of the voice as a possible lover. The voice spends a majority of the

monologue expressing disdain for the general public; his antisocial behaviors culminate

in killing Maud's brother in a duel.[238] His attitude doesn't change after he flees, until he

eventually turns to imagining the pain of his Maud's father when he realizes that his only

son is dead.[239] This connection with someone he apparently hasn't seen since his

boyhood leads to his connection to his country as a whole and awakens his patriotic spirit

in comparison with his previous selfishness: "I swear to you, lawful and lawless war /

Are scarcely even akin."[240] Again H.D. rejects the conventions of the dramatic

monologue; but this time, instead of voice, she transforms the narrative structure.

     "Prisoners" is an inversion "Maud." Instead of the voice joining a war to find

redemption from his mental imprisonment, H.D.'s voice finds redemption *within* political

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[237] The rituals all seem to center around a combination of the pagan festival of May Day and the Christian remembrance of John the Baptist in St. John's bonfires. Both of these festivals transcend nation and time period, emphasizing the globalism of the poetry. St. John's bonfires specifically were thought to bring unity and fellow feeling to participants.
[238] Within "Maud," the voice seems to have no have no bias against any socioeconomic status; he hates everyone equally. This again highlights his inability to feel sympathy as he finds no one similar to himself (other than his delusions of Maud).
[239] "Maud" II.324-26.
[240] *Ibid.* II.332-3.

imprisonment. "I am glad enough to depart" the voice professes as he is led to his death, "though I have never tasted life / as in these last weeks."[241] We might anticipate that this statement would precede tales of military exploits or romantic interludes between the voice and the beloved. However, what we receive instead are descriptions of the voice's dreams during his imprisonment. Like the hero of Tennyson's "Maud," H.D.'s voice dreams repeatedly of the object of his obsession. Unlike the hero of Tennyson's "Maud," these dreams do not evoke a straightforward reaction. "Maud's" hero is stricken with grief upon waking and remembering his "love" is dead.[242] "Maud's" hero experiences a sympathetic "deathlike type of pain…/ the blot upon the brain / That *will* show itself without."[243] "Prisoners'" voice also dreams of death, but from the distance afforded by metaphor. The cultural rituals and flora described in the dreams are all connected with death; the ceremonial burning of flowers recall ancient spring festivals of death and rebirth, and both the elder wood and spear-flowers are associated with the underworld. This distance allows a room for the play of interpretation rather than simple reaction as in "Maud."

Instead, "Prisoners'" voice wavers between comfort and fear: "So many nights / you have distracted me from terror" the voice claims – then undermines this assertion with the admission that "even last night / you startled me from sleep."[244] This new conflicted formulation of the relationship between the voice and the beloved is much like H.D.'s understanding of empathy as both vital and constrictive. The voice is asserting his

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[241] "Prisoners" 29-31.
[242] "Maud" II.184-201.
[243] *Ibid.* II.198, 200-01; emphasis in original.
[244] "Prisoners" 60-1 and 56-7, respectively.

active attention to seek out the beloved; this hope for the object of the attention is the only thing keeping the voice going. However, this obsession is also keeping the voice imprisoned: "I am weak—weak— / last night if the guard / had left the gate unlocked / I could not have ventured to escape / but one thought serves me now / with strength…your eyes and my eyes *may* meet."[245] The conditional auxiliary verb allows for multiple possibilities; and it is these possibilities, not the actual experience of fellow feeling, that sustains the voice. In fact, contrary to the surface of the poem, "Prisoners" voice actively works against a direct connection with the beloved. The voice repeatedly begs to see the beloved's face, but also repeatedly commands the beloved to be silent. The monologue actually begins and ends with this same supplication:

> stand near the gate,
>
> do not speak—
>
> only reach if you can, your face
>
> half-fronting the passage
>
> toward the light.[246]

All three instances command the beloved to be silent and the first instance requests a partial view only of the beloved's face. Though H.D.'s voice longs for the beloved, they also meticulously regulate their own access to the beloved. "[D]o not speak, / you may yet be released" the voice warns in the second; and in the final, the voice explains "I was first on the list— / They may forget you tried to shield me / as the horsemen passed."[247] These warnings are based on the assumption that the beloved will show some kind of

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[245] *Ibid.* 40-6, 49; emphasis mine.
[246] *Ibid.* 5-9.
[247] *Ibid.* 27-8 and 71-3, respectively.

anguish upon the imminent demise of the voice, and that this obvious connection between the two will place the beloved in danger with their captors. Thus, by mediating their interaction, the voice is able gain a form of control over *their own death* even while *their life* is under power of the jailers. Empathy is a reciprocal recognition of difference and a mindful choice to bridge that distance. Though the voice nominally gives all power to the beloved, the beloved is really subsumed into the voice's purpose. When the voice idealizes the beloved, the agency and purposefulness of empathy can be perverted into control through abstraction. But so too can that control through abstraction work for the state, through the dehumanization of war.

During the First World War, the British government encouraged comradeship between soldiers.[248] At Britain's entrance to the conflict in 1914, War Secretary Lord Herbert Kitchener, General Sir Henry Rawlinson, and the Edward Stanley, Earl of Derby instigated the formation of "Pals battalions," believing that men would be more likely to volunteer if they could serve with friends and neighbors, or their "pals." In so doing, Kitchener, Rawlinson, and Stanley attempted to call upon the sympathetic tendencies of their citizens – those who shared a similar "normal" or "average." However, sympathy no longer functioned as it should. Pals battalions essentially allowed the massacre of all of the military-aged men in a local area in a short period of time.[249] Though they tried to

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[248] For more on how male friendship is used by the state, particularly during the early twentieth century, see Sarah Cole's *Modernism, Male Friendship, and the First World War*. Cambridge, 2003.

[249] Military history publisher Pen & Sword have published several individual histories of Pals battalions, a selection provided here: David Bilton, *A History of the 10th (Service) Battalion the East Yorkshire Regiment, 1914-1919*. Pen & Sword Military, 2018; Terry Carter, *Birmingham Pals: 14th, 15th & 16th (Service) Battalions of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment: A History of the Three City Battalions Raised in Birmingham in*

avoid it, the remaining soldiers would be reassigned to a unit of strangers, but this time

with the additional experience of having seen all of their friends killed. Soldiers needed

to be able to experience empathy with their new comrades in order to serve the nation,

recalling the narrative of Tennyson's hero in "Maud." Tennyson's hero shifts his

allegiance from the individual to the communal; H.D.'s voice shifts from the communal

to the individual, picking the beloved out from what we can assume are a group of other

comrades in arms. At the same time, the voice is careful to prevent a true connection with

the beloved and prefers to keep them abstracted. For H.D., the traumatic experience of

war obstructs both sympathy and empathy.

In *War at a Distance: Romanticism and the Making of Modern Wartime*, Mary

Favret claims that "the epistemology of modern wartime is an epistemology of

mediation."[250] The physical distance between home and front in the Great War created a

psychological and affective distance between noncombatants and soldiers. Because of

this distance, the experience of war becomes an abstraction to those left at home. In

Titchener's words, "[i]mpressions which have grown habitual, *i.e.*, whose affective

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World War One. Pen & Sword, 1997; Jon Cooksey, et al. *Barnsley Pals: The 13th & 14th Battalions York & Lancaster Regiment*. Pen & Sword Military, 2008; John Sheen, *Durham Pals: 18th, 19th, & 22nd (Service) Battalions of the Durham Light Infantry: A History of Three Battalions Raised by Local Committee in County Durham*. Pen & Sword Military, 2007 and *Tyneside Irish: 24th, 25th, 26th and 27th (Service) Battalions of Northumberland Fusiliers*. Pen and Sword, 2010; John Steven, *The Carmarthen Pals: A History of the 15th (Service) Battalion the Welsh Regiment, 1914-1919*. Pen & Sword Military, 2009; William Turner, *Pals: The 11th (Service) Battalion (Accrington), East Lancashire Regiment*. Pen & Sword, 1998; and Roni Wilkinson, *Pals on the Somme 1916: Kitchener's New Army Battalions Raised by Local Authorities during the Great War*. Pen & Sword, 2008.
[250] Mary A. Favret, *War at a Distance: Romanticism and the Making of Modern Wartime*. Princeton, 2010. 12.

attribute has worn off, are impressions which have ceased to attract the attention."[251] On

the other hand, the intimate experience of war can also become too tangible and concrete,

overwhelming and paralyzing the ability to connect. Paradoxically, war is both an

opportunity for national unification and national annihilation.[252] War functions on the

same dichotomy as empathy, an equal opportunity for community or control; and, as

H.D. illustrates in both "Prisoners" and "Cities," war usually brings a combination of

both.[253] Likewise, as an American expatriate and as a woman, H.D. is both invested in

nation and distanced from it.[254] H.D. famously rejected a straightforward national

identity, refusing to live in America, though she did return to collect a literary award, but

also refusing to completely settle and integrate into another national consciousness.[255]

Annette Debo argues that H.D.'s continuous movement informed her "psychological

aspect of nation" in which she conceived of national feeling as an embodied feeling

rather than a conscious choice or a performance; loyalty to nation as a *conscious choice*

was an unknown concept for H.D. personally. Refusing to fully commit to one identity

allows H.D. to acknowledge some difference more readily.[256]

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[251] *Outline* 133.

[252] Jahan Ramazani, "'Cosmopolitan Sympathies': Poetry of the First Global War." *Modernism/Modernity* 23.4 Johns Hopkins (2016): 855-874. 856.

[253] Meredith Martin uses Wilfred Owen as her example of "the trauma of meter" in WWI poetry. Martin argues that the false belief in metrical stability or absolutism was both therapeutic and triggering. *The Rise and Fall of Meter*. Princeton, 2012.

[254] For more on H.D.'s conflicted relationship with the male canon, see Paul Smith's "H.D.'s Flaws." *Iowa Review* 16.3, H. D. Centennial Issue (Fall 1986): 77-86.

[255] For more on H.D.'s conflicted relationships with America and, more broadly, national feeling, see Annette Debo, *The American H.D.* Iowa, 2012.

[256] In *Optical Impersonality*, Christina Walter argues that early H.D. poetry "focused on the particular embodiment of the human subject and on the way that gender, sexual, and racial identities are muddled when the privilege of objectivity underwriting key social hierarchies comes unhinged. She appealed to the imagist school of poetry, in particular its

In this respect, H.D. embodies the mode of fellow-feeling that Susan Stanford Friedman calls "cosmopolitanism from the side." According to Friedman, this type of cosmopolitanism rejects the traditional dynamic of nation versus periphery and instead "recognizes shifting power relations, especially in times of war, and the contradictory subject positions that people often occupy—privileged in some ways, outsiders in others, seldom fixed as fully one or the other."[257] H.D. holds many of these "contradictory subject positions"; in early twentieth-century psychological terms, H.D.'s natural tendencies were composed differently—perhaps we could say, from the side.

"Prisoners" literalizes these differing orientations of tendencies on the walls of the voice's cell:

> It is a strange life,
>
> patterned in fire and letters
>
> on the prison pavement.
>
> If I glance up
>
> it is written on the walls,

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adaptation of both contemporary science and abstract art, to emphasize a seeing subject that was circumscribed by its material limits and whose embodied identity was both constructed and constraining" (82-3).

[257] Susan Stanford Friedman, "Wartime Cosmopolitanism: Cosmofeminism in Virginia Woolf's Three Guineas and Marjane Satrapi's Persepolis." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 32.1 (Spring 2013): 23-52. 27.

[257] For more on cosmopolitanism and the struggle between above/below or old/new, see: Tanya Agathocleous, *Urban Realism and the Cosmopolitan Imagination in the Nineteenth Century: Visible City, Invisible World.* Cambridge, 2011; Carol A. Breckenridge, Sheldon Pollock, Homi K. Bhabha, and Dipesh Chakrabarty, introduction to *Cosmopolitanism.* Duke, 2002; Vinay Dharwadker, *Cosmopolitan Geographies: New Locations in Literature and Culture.* Routledge, 2001; Paul Gilroy, *Postcolonial Melancholia.* Columbia, 2005; Rebecca Walkowitz, *Cosmopolitan Style: Modernism Beyond the Nation.* Columbia, 2006.

it is cut on the floor,

it is patterned across

the slope of the roof.[258]

The "strange life" that the voice leads makes possible the "characteristic of strangeness" that Titchener argues is the basis for empathetic connection. The different orientations of this life allow for the discursive space for interpolation. The story of H.D.'s prisoner recalls the Biblical story of another prisoner, the prophet Daniel.[259] In one episode of Daniel's legend, he is called upon by his captor, Babylonian king Belshazzar, to interpret divine fiery writing that appeared on his palace wall when the king's own magicians have failed.[260] The message is eventually revealed to be a warning of the imminent deposition of the king for disrespecting God. The message that Daniel called upon to translate is מנא מנא תקל ופרסין or "mene, mene, tekel, parsin." Belshazzar's men are unable to translate because of their inability to move on from their established perception and tendencies. In written Aramaic, only consonants appear, requiring surrounding text to give the letters meaning. Because there was no surrounding text, Daniel read the four words twice – once

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[258] "Prisoners" 32-9.
[259] Daniel appears as the main protagonist in the aptly named Biblical book, *Daniel.* He is also alluded to as a central Old Testament historical figure and folk hero in *Ezekiel*, *Ezra*, and *First Chronicles.* The name Daniel means "God is my judge" in Hebrew, which seems uncannily applicable to H.D.'s "Prisoners" and the British Empire as a whole.
[260] While the Bible does not specify that the writing on the wall at Belshazzar's feast appeared as fire, Rembrandt portrayed them as such in his early seventeenth-century painting *Belshazzar's Feast*. A similarly named painting by English painter John Martin appeared in 1821 and also featured letters on fire or glowing. The present author also distinctly remembers the writing as being on fire in Sunday school lessons in the early 1990s which she believes was a Moody Bible Institute curriculum from the 1950s.

as nouns and then as verbs.[261] Daniel needs to perceive each word in two different ways in order to construct a unified and coherent context.

In essence, both H.D.'s voice's writing on the cell wall and Daniel's double reading is an exercise in active attention and the resulting *einfuhlung,* "reading… into the world about us."[262] Like H.D.'s prisoner, Daniel is a stranger in the land whose status as a political prisoner necessarily precludes fellow feeling: Daniel will remain captive no matter what his translation turns out to be or who is in power. Though they both exercise attention and acknowledge difference, neither Daniel nor the voice of "Prisoners" enter into a true empathetic connection with their audiences. Rather than a victorious ending in which the empire is saved, as in Tennyson's "Maud," Daniel's translation announces the toppling of Belshazzar's empire. Tennyson's hero encounters a sympathetic reaction with his fellow countrymen that allows all of them to "[awake], as it seems, to the better mind… [feel] with my native land …embrace the purpose of God, and the doom assign'd."[263] In contrast, Daniel does *not* experience the emotional responses of Belshazzar and maintains distance. Similarly, H.D.'s voice never assimilates into the culture imprisoning them. These two failures seem to signal a hope that empathy could be

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[261] Choon Leong Seow, "Belshazzar and the Handwriting on the Wall: *Daniel* 5:1-31." *Daniel*. Westminster John Knox, 2003. 80. Seow explains the translation: *Mene* is the "Aramaic equivalent of the Jewish talent, the *mina*" then read as the verb "numbered," corresponding to Daniel's translation that "God has numbered the days of your reign" (Daniel 5:26). *Tekel* is the "Aramaic equivalent of Hebrew *shekel"* then read as the verb "weighed," corresponding to "You have been weighed and found wanting" (Daniel 5:27). *Parsin* or *peres* is read as the verb "divided," corresponding to "Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians" (Daniel 5:28). Seow also states that *"parsin*'s final position in the trilogy may be explained not in terms of its value but because of the wordplay with the term for 'Persians'" (83).
[262] *Text-book* 151.
[263] "Maud" II.398, 400-40.

used as a tool of resistance to war and nationalism, a repudiation of the ending of Tennyson's "Maud."

Such an encouraging reading requires us to ignore that H.D.'s prisoner is led away to be executed by the state and that Daniel remains a captive for the rest of his life. As we established earlier, empathy must be reciprocal to truly function at its highest level. Acknowledgement of difference and distance is required from both the subject and the object of the empathy or the power balance will disproportionately favor one side. H.D.'s allusion to the story of Daniel brings the failure of reciprocity in "Prisoners" into sharper focus. While both H.D.'s voice and Daniel have the correct "strange" tendencies to assert their active attentions and maintain the distance needed for empathy, they lack the reciprocity from those in power over them. Though they can defy the state through empathy, by refusing to adhere to the passive attention or by making intimate connections with fellow prisoners, the state will ultimately use this empathy for its own purposes. The differences of the voice and Daniel, what was supposed to make them shake off the control of the state, instead ties them more closely to its purposes. In this way, the state uses empathy to bolster its legitimacy. Rather that joining a larger global community, the state makes it seem as though that community exists at home – and under its power.

However, H.D. does not end on this pessimism. "Cities" is the final poem in *Sea Garden*, and the final voice that ends "Cities" offers a third way forward in its italicized stanzas:

The city is peopled

with spirits, not ghosts, O my love:

Though they crowded between

and usurped the kiss of my mouth

their breath was your gift,

their beauty, your life.[264]

Like "Prisoners," we have a voice with no defining physical characteristics and a beloved. Also like "Prisoners," the voice of this portion of "Cities" celebrates the life of the beloved even at their own expense. However, the relationship portrayed in this section of "Cities" is very different than the obsession between the voice and the beloved in "Prisoners." The voice of "Cities" does not seem to idealize their beloved, describing the usurpation of power that caused the beloved's existence. Both the voice and the spirits have lost a vital force in the creation of the beloved, represented by their breaths. Though the voice recognizes this loss of power, they still celebrate the beloved. The give-and-take of the kiss between the spirits and the voice illustrates an intimate reciprocity between them. Rather than defy the state, represented by the city itself, the old and new citizens entrust some of their power to each other in order to create a new way of working within it. This ending to *Sea Garden* calls to mind a similar ending to EBB's *Aurora Leigh.* However, though both EBB and H.D.'s generic experimentation called for their readers to recognize social pressures, EBB's poetess echoed the "radical meritocracy" of Mill, H.D.'s disembodied voices are more reflective of Titchener's awareness of the

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[264] "Cities" 78-83, original italicized.

influence of others on self-categorization. The Great War necessitated international cooperation and the building of fellow-feeling between nations. Institutional powers, specifically those that encourage war through propaganda and patriotism, could mediate fellow-feeling and control affiliations among citizens and among nations. H.D. draws attention to the possibility – even probability – of dehumanization and manipulation of the individual "for the greater good." Seeing this danger, H.D. reworks a poetic genre that historically had been used to reproduce social norms and bolster national feeling. In her hands, the dramatic monologue becomes a site for dramatic *dialogues*, for reciprocal exchange. Rather than searching the unity found in sympathetic connection, the dramatic monologue became a vehicle for the precarity and estrangement of empathy.

Chapter 4

Antifascism and the Modern Function of Character:
Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*

The two decades between 1920 and 1940 saw a 300 percent increase in

appearances of the term "character" in the Society's *British Journal of Psychology*.[265] As

specific psychological experiments and analyses transformed, so too did the larger milieu

in which the question of "character" was being examined. The notion of *national*

character was of especial concern as the Balfour Declaration (1926) and Statute of

Westminster (1931) converted many former colonies into sovereign Dominions within a

larger, more equal Commonwealth. The loss of international legislative power galvanized

interest in maintaining national identity amid shifting power relations. At home,

unemployment in Britain more than doubled in one year, from slightly over 1 million in

1929 to 2.5 million at the end of 1930.[266] This dizzying escalation and the government's

ineffectual response inspired Member of Parliament Sir Oswald Mosley (1896-1980) to

leave Labour in 1931 and create the New Party, which, one year later in 1932, would

become the British Union of Fascists (BUF). "Britain can only become great and virile

once more if [the British Union of Fascists] is British to the core," *The Blackshirt*, the

BUF's newspaper, argued in 1933. "It must bring all the finest qualities of British

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[265] Between 1900-1919, there were 136 instances of "character"; between 1920-1939, there were 403. In the next two decades, 1940-59, instances dropped to 307, and have continued to decrease since. The British Psychological Society was originally founded under the name "The Psychological Society" in 1901 but was renamed five years later. In 1914, the association acquired the *British Journal of Psychology*, established in 1904 by founders James Ward and W.H.R. Rivers.
[266] *Trends in British Society Since 1900: A Guide to the Changing Social Structure of Britain*. Ed. A.H. Halsey. Macmillan, 1972.

character back into their old place of honour."[267] The uncertain future of Britain and supposed decline in national character, paramount for the British Empire as a whole, find particular elaboration in Virginia Woolf's 1931 *The Waves*, the subject of this chapter.

The Waves is a reaction against the authoritative positivism of generic conventions, British fascism, and the emerging field of behavioral psychology. By repeatedly crossing and merging forms and genres, Woolf represents character as a living organism constantly in flux. The text of *The Waves* combines poetry, prose, and drama in a hybrid form that more closely resembles what Woolf understood as human nature's fundamental pliability. In this way, the generic and formal hybridity of *The Waves* Woolf's novel is a successor to Barrett Browning's verse novel and Tekahionwake's performed monologues, and sets it in conversation with H.D.'s imagist monologues. The chapter is split into three sections. The first connects Woolf's famous assertion that "character changed around 1910" with the political and psychological discourses around "character."[268] The second section brings together *The Waves* and functionalist psychology to understand more fully how Woolf understood character. The final section reads *The Waves* as an attempt to work against the rise of British fascism.

Hybridity

The Waves is a novel. And yet, in her diaries, Woolf repeatedly turns to the language of poetry and drama to make sense of her formal ambitions for the work. "I am

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[267] *Blackshirt* 8, 1 June 1933. *The Blackshirt* ran from 1933-1936. Cited in Julie Gottlieb. "Body Fascism in Britain: Building the Blackshirt in the Inter-War Period." *Contemporary European History* 20.2 (May 2011):111- 136.
[268] Virginia Woolf, "Mr. Bennet & Mrs. Brown." *Hogarth Essays.* Hogarth, 1924. 4.

not trying to tell a story," Woolf stresses in 1929; then, a year later: "[I]t might be a gigantic conversation."[269] Woolf repeatedly expresses her dissatisfaction with the traditional conventions of prose, what she calls "this appalling narrative business of the realist: getting on from lunch to dinner."[270] Instead of what is "false, unreal, merely conventional," she aims to create "books that relieve other books: a variety of styles & subjects."[271] Woolf ultimately decides to call her new form the "play-poem," which she constructs of "dramatic soliloquies" and interwoven interludes.[272] Woolf was struggling with what she would call "the furtherest development so far" of the form she began in *Jacob's Room* (1922), *To the Lighthouse* (1927), and *Orlando* (1928).[273] Central to this aesthetic struggle was the question of "character."

Woolf makes her famous case for the importance of character in Modernist aesthetics in her 1924 essay "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown":

> I want to talk about what we mean when we talk about "character" in fiction…
> My first assertion is one that I think you will grant — that every one in this room
> is a judge of character. Indeed it would be impossible to live for a year without
> disaster unless one practised character-reading and had some skill in the art. Our

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[269] *Diary* 3.229 *Tuesday 28 May 1929; Diary* 3.285, *Sunday 26 January 1930.*

[270] *Ibid.* 3.210 *Wednesday 28 November 1928.* See also entries expressing a more general critique of generic conventions: *Diary* 3.229 *Tuesday 28 May 1929; Diary* 3.285 *Sunday 26 January 1930; Diary* 3.339 *Saturday 20 December 1930; Diary* 3.343 *Tuesday 30 December 1930.*

[271] *Ibid.* 3.210 *Wednesday 28 November 1928* and *Diary* 3:203, *Wednesday 7 November 1928*, respectively.

[272] Mentions of "play-poem": *Diary* 3.139 *Saturday 18 June 1927, Diary* 3.203 *Wednesday 7 November 192*; Mentions "dramatic soliloquies": *Diary* 3.312 *Wednesday 20 August 1930*; Describes the organizational effect of the interludes: *Diary* 3.285 *Sunday 26 January, 1930.*

[273] *Diary* 3.300 *Wednesday 9 April 1930.*

marriages, our friendships depend on it; our business largely depends on it; every

day questions arise which can only be solved by its help. And now I will hazard a

second assertion, which is more disputable perhaps, to the effect that on or about

December 1910 human character changed.[274]

Woolf goes on to criticize what she sees as the staid, false conventions of Edwardian

novelists that "tell us facts about rents and freeholds and copyholds and fines…

hypnotize us into the belief that, because he has made a house, there must be a person

living there…[but] has never once looked at Mrs. Brown in her corner… never at her,

never at life, never at human nature."[275] Here Woolf depicts Edwardian form as the literal

bureaucratic "forms" that make up modern life and the inanimate physical structure of a

house, and she juxtaposes them to the "life" of Mrs. Brown.[276] For Woolf, conventional

forms lead to a hollowness of character. Through her formal innovations in *The Waves*,

Woolf attempts to more accurately map the new human character as it was understood by

her contemporaries.[277]

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[274] Virginia Woolf, "Mr. Bennet & Mrs. Brown." *Hogarth Essays.* Hogarth, 1924. 4. Also appeared as a paper read to the Heretics, Cambridge, on May 18th, and in *The Criterion* as "Character in Fiction" in July 1924. Published as the first of the *Hogarth Essays* series by Hogarth Press in October of the same year.

[275] "Mr. Bennet & Mrs. Brown" 16.

[276] This argument is heavily indebted to Nathan Hensley's argument that literary forms have a special power "to stage, enact, or otherwise perform" the politics and violence of Empire. I hope to enlarge upon his argument by bringing it forward into the twentieth century. *Forms of Empire: The Poetics of Victorian Sovereignty.* Oxford, 2016.

[277] Woolf's connection with Freud and psychoanalysis has been well-documented by Modernist scholars. While psychoanalysis was a leading framework in the early twentieth century, this dissertation shows that there were multiple psychological discourses at play. For a concise synopsis of Freud's impact on Woolf, see Sanja Bahun's "Woolf and Psychoanalytic Theory." *Virginia Woolf in Context.* Eds. Bryony Randall and Jane Goldman. Cambridge, 2012. 92-109.

Woolf's assertion that character had changed follows the trajectory of British

psychological discourse. As covered in the last chapter, the primary mode of late

nineteenth-century psychology was structuralism. Structuralists like Edward B. Titchener

were invested in examining and delineating elements of consciousness, like passive and

active attention, and how they interact within the mind. While physical response was also

of note, it was primarily so only in conjunction with what it could tell psychologists about

consciousness itself. In order to unearth these elements of the mind, structuralists needed

to be fully trained in a specific, highly regimented type of introspection from which they

could extrapolate larger hypotheses. In the 1920s and 30s, a new methodology emerged.

Behaviorists, true to their name, were completely disinterested in the inner workings of

the mind. Instead, behaviorism was focused only in recording the responses of the

physical body as automatic. Essentially, behaviorists believed that what people call

"consciousness" – our preferences, emotions, attachments, thoughts, and even language –

were not mental at all, but instead either automatic physical reflexes or trained behaviors.

For example, to a behaviorist, the "love" one might feel for their parent originates from

the repeated positive experience of receiving food and physical care from them.

According to "Psychology as the Behaviorist Views It" (1913), a harsh critique of

structuralist methodology by John B. Watson, the true aim of psychology was to measure,

predict, and control behavior regardless of intent or individual variance. By focusing on

measurable, repeatable responses, Watson argued, psychology could leave the trappings

of philosophy and ethics and become a true objective science akin to chemistry or physics.[278]

Following this line of thinking, in the first few decades of the twentieth century, the *British Journal of Psychology* consistently published, and seemed to prefer, studies on character based on the measurement of involuntary physical response and replete with tables and graphs.[279] Through tests and their chartable results, behavioral psychologists claimed to abandon the dependence on consciousness and interiority.[280]

Consider two representative examples of this new methodology. In a 1923 analysis of elementary school boys in London, psychologists found a correlation between the "will-qualities," or character, of the boys and automatic reflex. [281] By measuring the

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[278] Watson's chief critique was with the reliance on personal introspection as the primary method of measurement of psychological states. He believed, and credibly, that no form of introspection could be reproducible in the way that science required for objectivity: "If you fail to reproduce my findings, it is not due to some fault in your apparatus or in the control of your stimulus, but it is due to the fact that your introspection is untrained. The attack is made upon the observer and not upon the experimental setting. In physics and in chemistry the attack is made upon the experimental conditions. The apparatus was not sensitive enough, impure chemicals were used, etc. In these sciences a better technique will give reproducible results. Psychology is otherwise. If you can't observe 3 - 9 states of clearness in attention, your introspection is poor. If, on the other hand, a feeling seems reasonably clear to you, your introspection is again faulty. You are seeing too much. Feelings are never clear." John Watson, "Psychology as the Behaviorist Views It." *Psychological Review* 20 (1913): 158-77. 163.

[279] J.W. Pinard, "Tests of Perseveration: I. Their Relation to Character." *British Journal of Psychology* 23.1 (Jul. 1, 1932): 5-19. See also Jean D. Cummings, "Variability of Judgement and Steadiness of Character." *British Journal of Psychology* 29.4 (Apr. 1, 1939): 345-69.

[280] Most early behaviorists still believed interiority existed, they just were not interested in parsing what was almost certainly unmeasurable. Later in the 1930s, B.F. Skinner began promoting "radical behaviorism" which took the next step in arguing that thoughts and emotions were also based in physical response to stimulus rather than a traditional understanding of interiority.

[281] The experiment purported to evaluate thirty distinct character qualities. First, two teachers gauged the boys on their personalities over a few weeks. The boys were then

changes in the conductivity of electricity on the boys' skin, researchers believed that they

could isolate and distinguish different character traits – including, but not limited to, their

overall "[g]eneral excellence of character" (see Fig. 7). Similarly, in 1925, psychologist

Mary Collins reviewed four more psychological tests that purported to measure

character.[282] In her assessment, Collins exhibits a definite preference for the June-

Downey Will-Temperament Test, which measured automatic physical responses in

writing such as: speed of movement, size of letters, reactions to interruptions, tendency

towards rechecking work, and imitating or disguising specific penmanship. In doing, the

test claimed to classify and gauge traits like aggressiveness, patience, adaptability, and

self-confidence (see Fig. 8). Both of these tests, and many others not included here,

attempted to pin down specific mental or behavioral responses to their corresponding

specific stimuli in a one-to-one function. The presentation of findings as graphs, tables,

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given a physical stimulus, such as being surprised with a loud noise, threatened with a pin poke, or offered sweets. This method measured the psychogalvanic reflex, or the automatic bodily fluctuation in electrical conductivity of the skin. W.S. Brown, "A Note on the Psycho-Galvanic Reflex considered in conjunction with Estimates of Character Qualities." *British Journal of Psychology* 16.2 (Oct. 1, 1925): 130-35.

[282] The first three tests, Koh's Ethical Discrimination Test, the Brotemarkle Comparison Test, and the Pressey X-O Test, measure physical response and social evaluations; the final example, the June-Downey Will-Temperament Test, assesses only involuntary changes in physical behavior. Koh's presented participants with a spectrum of responses to imagined ethical situations: "Praise, Nothing, Scold, Jail, Prison, Kill." Collins argued that both Koh's and the Brotemarkle test really measured intelligence in moral situations, not morality itself and, as such, needed alteration. The Pressey test was based on associationism – participants were to cross out unpleasant words and circle the most unpleasant in each row – which Collins deemed acceptable but less empirical and objective. The June-Downey was used writing method as its primary measure: speed, size, reactions to interruption, rechecking work, and "imitation or disguise." All of these tests were scored by deviation from the norm on moral issues or morally inflected vocabulary except the June-Downey, which used patriotic texts.

and factoids transformed the character into a set of measurable data points rather than the essence or interiority of a human being.

In short, the first few decades of the twentieth century saw psychological research shift from a qualitative to a quantitative framework, most explicitly in the investigation of character. In chapters two and three, I explored the nineteenth-century psychological understanding of attention and empathy, showing how these concepts changed alongside cultural and literary transformations. As these chapters show, both of these psychological

134   *Note on the Psycho-Galvanic Reflex*

A closer examination of the figures in column four, however, gives certain interesting indications.

Arranging the figures in column four in order of magnitude we get the following:

	Quality	Correlation between Estimates and Psycho-Galvanic Reflex	
1.	Desire to excel	·32	(greater than three times p.e.)
2.	Rapidity of decision	·25	
3.	Soundness of bodily constitution ...	·23	
4.	Mental work on games	·22	
	Common-sense	·22	
6.	Excitability	·21	(greater than twice p.e.)
	Persistence as opposed to changeability	·21	
8.	Bodily activity in school work ...	·20	
	Quickness of apprehension	·20	
10.	Tenacity of decision	·19	
11.	Persistence in face of obstacles ...	·18	
	Bodily activity in games	·18	
13.	Influence on fellows	·17	
14.	Eagerness for admiration	·16	
16.	Profoundness of apprehension ...	·12	
	Recovery from anger	12	
	Imposing will on others	·12	
17.	Intelligence	·09	
18.	Mental work on studies	·085	
19.	Originality of ideas	·06	
20.	Cheerfulness	·05	
	Will-power	·05	
22.	Trustworthiness...	·005	
23.	General excellence of character ...	− ·04	
24.	Fondness for companionship	− ·05	
25.	Sense of humour	− ·06	
26.	Emotionality	− ·08	

Figure 7. Table of results of the characters of elementary school boys. W.S. Brown. "A Note on the Psycho-Galvanic Reflex considered in conjunction with Estimates of Character Qualities." *British Journal of Psychology* 16.2 (Oct. 1, 1925): 130-35. 134.

The profiles obtained have been remarkable in their accuracy, revealing marked characteristics of the individuals they represent. Below are appended six sample profiles with a short description of each.
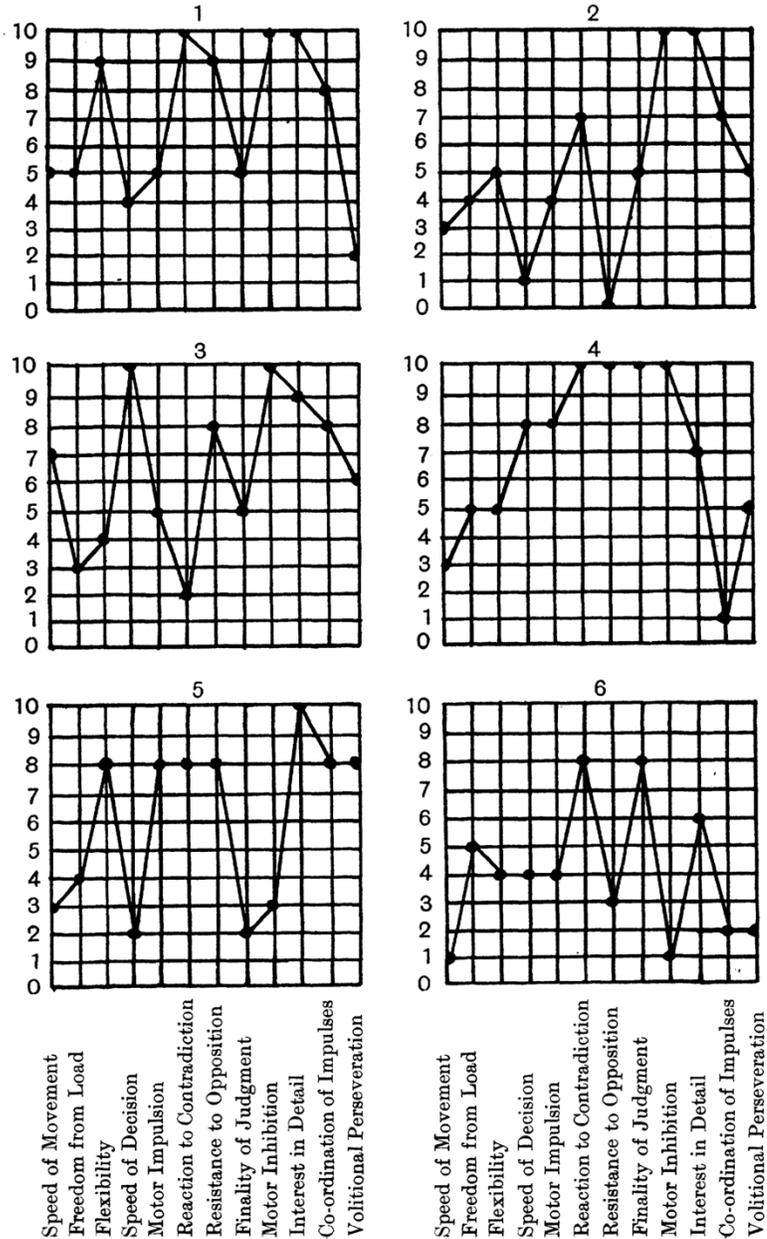

Figure 8. Graphs of character profiles created using the June-Downey Will-Temperament Test that strove to scientifically prove the existence of a defined "character pattern." Mary Collins. "Character and Temperament Tests: A Preliminary Report." *British Journal of Psychology* 16.2 (Oct. 1, 1925): 89-99. 94.

qualities were, and are, effective tools for regulating national feeling, a crucial aspect of building the network of affiliations called "national character." As the last chapter established, both attention and empathy are based on relations to others – to whom do we pay attention, to whom do we relate, with whom do we chose to ally ourselves? Qualitative research functions through this relationality, observing and interpreting first-hand experiences, preferably in a natural environment. In contrast, quantitative psychological research, like that found in behaviorism, revolves solely around discrete, measurable results recorded in a controlled environment. This preference for quantitative over qualitative research can be seen in Collins' review of the four character tests. The first three tests, so inferior to the June-Downey Will-Temperament Test, were judged to be so because of their inclusion of the subjects' interpretations or evaluations in addition to their automatic physical responses.

The early-twentieth-century psychological debates on "character" outlined here arose alongside of what historian Duncan Bell calls "the rupture in Victorian national self-confidence."[283] What would the future "national character" become? The looming menace of the non-scientific, the subjective, and the individual worried behaviorists and supposedly threatened the ability of psychology to control and homogenize multiple populations into a larger British national character.[284] In the last few decades of the nineteenth century, the constantly shifting definition of what would constitute a "Greater

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[283] Duncan Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain: Empire and the Future of World Order, 1860-1900*. Princeton, 2007. 12.
[284] In his chapter "Reform Fiction's Logic of Belonging" in *Forms of Empire*, Hensley uses sensation fiction to reveal how the British government attempted to "manage… populations conceived as data" in what he argues was a "new kind of sovereign power" (101; 103). *Forms of Empire: The Poetics of Victorian Sovereignty*. Oxford, 2016.

Britain" revealed deep-rooted anxieties around both race and economics. Politicians, journalists, and prominent thinkers both applauded and feared the self-government of Britain's English-speaking settler colonies. Some saw the eventual independence of the colonies (Australia in 1901, New Zealand in 1907) as establishing an ideological rather than political or military empire. Others saw the withdrawal of British control as a rejection of the moral imperative to spread democracy, free-market economics, and the "superior" Anglo-Saxon culture.[285] This debate continued in the first few decades of the twentieth century – this time with a psychological counterpart.

In 1932, the year after *The Waves* was published, Sir Oswald Mosley titled his philosophical handbook for the BUF, *The Greater Britain*. Mosley, like many fascists, imagined the economic decline of Britain as a disease of the body politic, and he repeatedly used images of a virile body to promote his views. [286] The racial polity of "English blood" found in late nineteenth-century Greater Britain discourse takes on a more overtly violent tone in the Anti-Semitic fascist rhetoric of the 1930s. Concurrently,

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[285] In *Imagined Homelands*, Jason Rudy reveals how poetry in the settler colonies navigated the often-competing loyalties to the concept of a Greater Britain and the poets' new nations. Johns Hopkins, 2017. Meredith Martin has shown that Anglo-Saxon "rhythm" structured both literary education and national pride in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. The belief in universal reading practices only came about with New Criticism in the 1920s *The Rise and Fall of Meter: Poetry and English Natural Culture, 1860-1930.* Princeton, 2012. 187.

[286] "It is this machinery of central direction which the Corporate State is designed to envisages, as its name implies, a nation organized as a human body." Mosley, *The Greater Britain* 26. For more on the connection of British fascism and embodiment, see Jessica Schiff Berman's *Modernist Fiction, Cosmopolitanism, and the Politics of Community*. Cambridge, 2001; Gary Love's "'What's the Big Idea?': Oswald Mosley, the British Union of Fascists and Generic Fascism." *Journal of Contemporary History* 42.3 (Jul. 2007): 447-468; and Petra Rau's "The Fascist Body Beautiful and the Imperial Crisis in 1930s British Writing." *Journal of European Studies* 39.1 (Mar. 2009): 5–35. 14.

the scientific positivism of the behaviorists made "character" into "the body." To control

the new character of Greater Britain, psychologists no longer needed to detangle the

complex layers of affiliations and empathies of citizens, as Emily Pauline Johnson and

H.D. manifested in their dramatic monologues. Instead, behaviorists could simply

provide physical positive and negative reinforcements to modify behaviors. Perhaps

unsurprisingly, much fascist rhetoric, including that of Nazi Germany and the BUF,

focused on the physical training of young people in order to ensure both superior bodies

and a superior character.[287] Mosley also unequivocally connects his vision of a Greater

[Fascist] Britain to modernism, calling British fascism "The Modern Movement."[288] Thus

the early twentieth-century dispute over the best form of psychological measurement,

quantitative or qualitative, was foundational to the larger dispute that Woolf outlined in

"Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Brown" – What is modern character?

Woolf's *The Waves* specifically wrestles with this shift from qualitative to

quantitative national character, both thematically and generically. Bernard famously

collects and measures language in phrases and consolidates human beings as discrete

"pellets," mimicking points on a graph or cells in a chart. The self-acknowledged

commitment to the "concrete in everything" hampers Bernard's ability to transform his

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[287] Petra Rau, "The Fascist Body Beautiful and the Imperial Crisis in 1930s British Writing." *Journal of European Studies* 39.1 (Mar. 2009): 5–35. 14. Rau's essay shows the similarities between Nazi Germany and the muscular Christianity of British imperialism, including a preoccupation with bodily imagery. Both nations prioritized physical education and directly connected a healthy and strong physical body with a healthy and strong character, and, by extension, a healthy and strong nation. For more on muscular Christianity and its importance to nineteenth-century British national character, see Donald E. Hall's collection *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age*. Cambridge, 1994.
[288] Oswald Mosley, *The Greater Britain*. London, 1932. 29.

phrases into cohesive and nuanced prose and his "collection of valuable observations…[running] to many volumes, embracing every known variety of man and woman," never comes to fruition.[289] Unlike his infamous Victorian predecessor, Edward Causabon, Bernard recognizes the inherent infeasibility of his project:

> Who and what are these unknown people? I ask. I could make a dozen stories of what he said, of what she said — I can see a dozen pictures. But what are stories? Toys I twist, bubbles I blow, one ring passing through another. And sometimes I begin to doubt if there are stories. What is my story? What is Rhoda's? What is Neville's? There are facts, as, for example: 'The handsome young man in the grey suit, whose reserve contrasted so strangely with the loquacity of the others, now brushed the crumbs from his waistcoat and, with a characteristic gesture at once commanding and benign, made a sign to the waiter, who came instantly and returned a moment later with the bill discreetly folded upon a plate.' That is the truth; that is the fact, but beyond it all is darkness and conjecture.[290]

Through Bernard, Woolf presents the distinction between story and fact as the same as the distinction between qualitative and quantitative research; stories are inherently subjective and interpretive, while facts are irrefutable truth. Character and story are intertwined for Woolf; Bernard can observe Neville's behavior "at once commanding and

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[289] *The Waves* 48. Bernard describes his process before he is ultimately frustrated: "The bubbles are rising like the silver bubbles from the floor of a saucepan; image on top of image. I cannot sit down to my book, like Louis, with ferocious tenacity. I must open the little trap-door and let out these linked phrases in which I run together whatever happens, so that instead of incoherence there is perceived a wandering thread, lightly joining one thing to another." *Ibid.* 34.

[290] *Ibid.* 104-5. "Story" has an inherent connotation of unreliability and subjectivity that is usually reserved for poetry rather than prose.

benign," yet still wonder at Neville's story, the source of that "characteristic gesture."

"[S]tories that follow people into their private rooms are difficult," Bernard complains, "I

cannot go on with this story. I twiddle a piece of string; I turn over four or five coins in

my trouser pocket."[291] Obstructed by psychological depth, he returns to the ephemera

collected around the body, much like the behaviorist measuring the electricity found on

the surface of the skin.[292] Thus, Bernard's notebooks are filled only with phrases, which,

to him, "have an independent existence."[293] Though he appears to be the most

sympathetic and amiable of Woolf's speakers, getting along famously with strangers and

"talk[ing] to the barmaid about the nature of human destiny," Bernard lacks the ability to

truly reproduce the elusive impression of "character."

Neville, "[t]he handsome young man in the grey suit" whom Bernard describes

later as his oldest friend, takes up the antithetical position to Bernard's phrases. "Nothing

should be named," he argues, "lest by so doing we change it. Let it exist."[294] Both

Bernard and Neville struggle with their writing in their young adulthood, though in

different forms. It is worth citing at length this soliloquy by Neville:

> Now begins to rise in me the familiar rhythm; words that have lain dormant now
>
> lift, now toss their crests, and fall and rise, and fall and rise again. I am a poet,
>
> yes. Surely I am a great poet… I see it all. I feel it all. I am inspired. My eyes fill
>
> with tears. Yet even as I feel this, I lash my frenzy higher and higher. It foams. It

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[291] *Ibid.* 34-5. The imagery of rooms and houses as representations of character echoes Woolf's imagery of Edwardian housing in "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown" 16.
[292] For more on the intersection between poetics and physiology in the nineteenth century, see Jason Rudy's *Electric Meters: Victorian Psychological Poetics*. Ohio, 2009.
[293] *The Waves* 48.
[294] *Ibid.* 59. Bernard calls Neville his oldest friend in the final section (201); the first direct address from one speaker to another is Bernard to Neville (8).

becomes artificial, insincere. Words and words and words, how they gallop—how they lash their long manes and tails, but for some fault in me I cannot give myself to their backs… There is some flaw in me—some fatal hesitancy, which, if I pass it over, turns to foam and falsity. Yet it is incredible that I should not be a great poet. What did I write last night if it was not good poetry? Am I too fast, too facile? I do not know. I do not know myself sometimes, or how to measure and name and count out the grains that make me what I am.

'Something now leaves me; something goes from me to meet that figure who is coming, and assures me that I know him before I see who it is. How curiously one is changed by the addition, even at a distance, of a friend. How useful an office one's friends perform when they recall us. Yet how painful to be recalled, to be mitigated, to have one's self adulterated, mixed up, become part of another. As he approaches I become not myself but Neville mixed with somebody—with whom?—with Bernard? Yes, it is Bernard, and it is to Bernard that I shall put the question, Who am I?'[295]

Both Bernard and Neville struggle with artificiality and insincerity in their writing: Bernard struggles accessing the interiority of his characters' "stories" in prose; Neville struggles harnessing the words galloping in "the familiar rhythm" of poetry. Neville had previously criticized his friend for a covert selfishness, claiming that Bernard "tells our story with extraordinary understanding, except of what we most feel. For he does not

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[295] *Ibid.* 59.

need us. He is never at our mercy."[296] Unlike Bernard, not only does Neville "see it all," he also "feel[s] it all." This overflow of feeling "becomes artificial, insincere" as it attempts to inhabit language, eventually dispersing into a foam of "[w]ords and words and words." Where Bernard's success as a prose writer is impeded by his concrete materiality, Neville wrestles with an overwhelming profusion. Both prose, here represented here by Bernard, and poetry, represented by Neville, struggle with representing character: Bernard, the character of others, and Neville, his own. For Woolf, neither prose nor poetry – neither fact nor story – can fully apprehend the character. Instead, Woolf provides an example of prose, represented here by Bernard, and poetry, represented here by Neville, "adulterated, mixed up." Because Bernard knows "how to measure and name and count out the grains" and thereby recall Neville to himself, he can answer Neville's "Who am I?"[297]

This insistence on commingling of genre and character continues throughout the text, both within its repeated insistence that the six speakers are, in Bernard's words, "a many-faceted flower," and the interweaving of several forms to create one text. Woolf's multiple speakers and formal hybridity present character as *both* story and fact, both poetry and prose, both qualitative and quantitative. Woolf's formal flexibility allows her to mimic this hybridity, and, in doing, present a third option to the question of the modern character situated somewhere between the qualitative and the quantitative. In order to

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[296] *Ibid.* 49. Neville repeatedly accuses Bernard, arguably the most sociable of the speakers, with a lack of empathy: "But what did Bernard feel for the plumber?" Neville asks, "Did he not only wish to continue the sequence of the story which he never stops telling himself? ...We are off; he has forgotten us already; we pass out of his view; we go on" *The Waves* 50.
[297] In the final section of *The Waves*, Bernard turns to Neville to recall himself when he is shaken when he recognizes that the "true order of things… is our perpetual illusion." 202.

present the modern character faithfully, Woolf rejects what she sees as the "artificial" or "insincere" generic boundaries among poetry, prose, and drama.

Fluidity

Just as the BUF had an ally in behaviorism, however unwittingly, Woolf's understanding of character as both qualitative and quantitative had an ally in the realm of psychology: the theory of functionalism. In 1914's *The Foundations of Character*, Alexander Faulkner Shand, the functional psychologist primarily featured in this chapter, argued that "[i]f we are to have a complete science of the mind, this will include a science of character as the most important part of it."[298] Shand goes on to define character as the "organizing activity" of "those mental processes which are the ever-changing material… brought into touch with changes of the environment, and warned to adjust themselves to them."[299] Rather than separating and defining the contents of the mind as the structuralists, or separating and defining the responses of the body as the behaviorists, functionalists endeavored to understand how the mind works *with and alongside* the body – how mind and body function *together*.[300] Behaviorists would only measure the physical responses of the body, but functionalists retained some agency for the mind, looking at

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[298] Alexander Faulkner Shand, *The Foundations of Character*. London: Macmillan, 1914. 1.

[299] *Ibid.* 26.

[300] Watson argued that functionalism was too similar to structuralism: "The last fifteen years have seen the growth of what is called functional psychology… I have done my best to understand the difference between functional psychology and structural psychology. Instead of clarity, confusion grows upon me… It seems illogical and hardly fair to criticize the psychology which the systematist gives us, and then to utilize his terms without carefully showing the changes in meaning which are to be attached to them."165.

the self-reported emotions, motivations, and affiliations in conjunction with bodily reactions. The goal of functionalists was to create a systematic knowledge of character in both senses of the term "system" – *both* knowledge gained through methodical, quantitative means *as well as* knowledge of the qualitative functions of the full, complex system itself. Both Woolf and functionalist psychology looked to the "fact" of quantitative measurement and the "story" of the complex, qualitative system.

The difference between functionalists and behaviorists is borne out in the ways they each talked about the body. In contrast to the defined separation of behaviorism, functionalism only works through a reliance on organic mutability. Shand writes:

> For as in the body there are certain "anabolic," and "katabolic" processes in constant operation, the one building up and the other breaking down its organic structure, so in the character there are certain tendencies working toward a higher form of organisation, and others working toward a lower form of organisation. Hence the common belief that we are never stationary, but always getting either worse or better. [301]

The functionalist's descriptions of the mind's activity, expressed as "growth and decline" and, in more scientific terminology, "'anabolic' and 'katabolic' processes," expresses a different kind of organicity than that in behaviorist discourse. The acts of building up and breaking down in functionalist discourse emphasize a continuous movement rather than the mechanistic linearity and reciprocity of behaviorism. Rather than static data points, the functionalist understanding of character can be depicted as a cycle or wave constantly

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[301] Shand 62.

in motion. Ironically, then, for functionalism, organic fluidity (lack of fixity) becomes the only fixed aspect of character.[302]

Functionalism's blurring of the boundaries between the mind and the body in order to understand character, finds its literary corollary in Woolf blurring of generic and formal boundaries. To reflect this fluid and multidirectional process of character, Woolf turns to a hybrid form that she calls "an abstract play-poem."[303] Woolf describes in her diary her objective for the organization of the text:

> What it wants is presumably unity… Suppose I could run all the scenes together more? – by rhythm, chiefly. So as to avoid those cuts; so as to make the blood run like a torrent from end to end—I dont [sic] want the waste that the breaks give; I want to avoid chapters; that indeed is my achievement, if any here: a saturated, unchopped, completeness; changes of scene, of mood, of person, done without spilling a drop.[304]

Woolf pursues a visceral form that could embody her understanding of character while still maintaining its hybridity and fluidity. Earlier in her diaries, Woolf connects the same coveted "saturation" with poetry over prose: "Why admit any thing to literature that is not poetry—by which I mean saturated? Is that not my grudge against novel[ist]s—that they select nothing?"[305] However, as established in the first section of this chapter, poetry for

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302 Pearl S. Brilmyer makes a similar argument about Eliot's characterization in *Middlemarch* but connects this fluidity to the concept of plasticity in physics and, later, neurology. "Plasticity, Form, and the Matter of Character in *Middlemarch*." *Representations* 130.1 (2015): 60–83.

303 *Ibid.* 3:203, *Wednesday 7 November, 1928.*

304 *Ibid.* 3:343, *Tuesday 30 December, 1930.*

305 Throughout *The Waves*, Bernard collected and recorded fragments of life and character like a behaviorist. Near the end of his summing up, he abandons his entire

Woolf is too limiting to fully embody the living process of character; "The poets

succeeding by simplifying," Woolf writes in the same entry, "practically everything is

left out. I want to put practically everything in; yet to saturate… It must include

nonsense, fact, sordidity: but made transparent. I think I must read Ibsen & Shakespeare

& Racine."[306] Drama, here represented by Ibsen, Shakespeare, and Racine, is something

between poetry and prose that allows for "blood run[ning] like a torrent… without

spilling a drop" of fluid character.

Woolf frequently uses the vocabulary of drama in other diary entries on *The*

Waves, referring to her collection of "dramatic soliloquies" as having "scenes" and, in

other entries, "acts."[307] Blurring the generic boundaries and assimilating drama into her

already hybrid form allows Woolf to "include nonsense, fact, sordidity" of soliloquies

"but made transparent" through the careful selection of particular acts and scenes. Acts

and scenes can more easily "select poetry," or what is "saturated," without being

encumbered by what Woolf calls "appalling narrative business of the realist: getting on

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project, realizing that he has, indeed, 'selected nothing': "What is the phrase for the moon? And the phrase for love? By what name are we to call death? I do not know. I need a little language such as lovers use, words of one syllable such as children speak…I need a howl; a cry. When the storm crosses the marsh and sweeps over me where I lie in the ditch unregarded I need no words. Nothing neat. Nothing that comes down with all its feet on the floor. None of those resonances and lovely echoes that break and chime from nerve to nerve in our breasts, making wild music, false phrases. I have done with phrases." *The Waves* 219.
[306] *Diary* 3:209-10, *Wednesday 28 November, 1928.*
[307] Woolf refers to *The Waves* as "dramatic soliloquies." *Diary* 3:312, *Wednesday 20 August, 1930;* "I want to avoid chapters; that indeed is my achievement, if any here: a saturated, unchopped, completeness; changes of scene, of mood, of person, done without spilling a drop." *Diary* 3:343, *Tuesday 30 December, 1930;* "… I have just finished correcting the Hampton Court scene" *Diary* 4:35 *Tuesday 14 July, 1931;* "I am not trying to tell a story… How am I to make one lap, or act… more intense than another; if there are only scenes?" *Diary* 3:229 *Tuesday 28 May, 1929.*

from lunch to dinner."[308] On the other hand, the dramatic structure grants Woolf space to expand upon what she saw as the oversimplification of poetry.

Take, for example, Neville's experience as flâneur of Shaftesbury Avenue as he makes his way to dinner with his friends at Hampton Court, the last time all of the speakers will be assembled together:

> Here's the fool, here's the villain, here in a car comes Cleopatra, burning on her barge. Here are figures of the damned too, noseless men by the police-court wall, standing with their feet in fire, howling. This is poetry if we do not write it. They act their parts infallibly, and almost before they open their lips I know what they are going to say, and wait the divine moment when they speak the word that must have been written. If it were only for the sake of the play, I could walk Shaftesbury Avenue for ever.[309]

In this passage, Neville envisions the city scene as the stage of a theater, transforming London's citizens into actors in traditional dramatic roles. Neville calls this transformation of humans into archetypes "poetry if we do not write it," recalling Woolf's claim that the written word, or "facts," of realist prose clot the organic flow of character.[310] Perhaps unsurprisingly, early readers of *The Waves* noted a lack of humanity

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[308] *Diary* 3:209-10, *Wednesday 28 November, 1928.*
[309] *The Waves* 143.
[310] Shand also opines the inadequacy of "a poor collection of detached qualities we often reduce the living characters of men," giving examples of most-used types of qualities: "Such a man we judge, has a strong will, is energetic, is industrious; but reserved, disobliging, and unsociable. Another is complaisant and sociable; but weak and insincere. These summaries of men's natures are chiefly of use for practice. For as with those whom we are asked to employ, we want to know first whether they are honest, sober, industrious, and understand the work they profess to do; so we expect to be helped by knowing something of those with whom we are likely to be brought into contact." 26.

in Woolf's speakers, calling them "shadows" or "essences" of people "free from taint of personality."[311] Woolf's contemporaries tended to flatten her speakers into positions that are empty or archetypical: Bernard: the everyman, prose, realism; Jinny: sexuality, pleasure, the city and society; Louis: the working middle class, the colonies; Neville: the upper class, the academy, poetry; Percival: muscularity, masculinity, empire; Rhoda: the mind, isolation, otherness; and Susan: fertility, productiveness, nature and the country. Each speaker appears to inhabit a distinct point of view, almost always in opposition to the other perspectives. These distinctive oppositional positions allow the reader to believe they can anticipate the reactions of each speaker akin to Neville in Shaftesbury Avenue – or the behaviorist predicting the behavior and reactions of the body. Like Neville and the behaviorist, Woolf's contemporaries assumed that reactions are the sum total of the characters, leading them to claim that Woolf's creations are empty.

The flatness or archetypical leanings of the caricatures *do* lend themselves to a type of literary universality. Flatness eases comprehension in a shorthand that allows readers to anticipate the caricatures' reactions. However, rather than an emptiness, Woolf aimed to represent "nonsense, fact, sordidity: but made transparent."[312] Woolf's project in *The Waves* was to "[give] in a very few strokes the essentials of a person's

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[311] Unsigned review of *The Waves*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 6 December 1931; and Gerald Bullett, Review of *The Waves*. *New Statesman and Nation,* 10 October 1931, respectively. Similarly, L. P. Hartley. writes that they "dimmed the sense of their own identities" Review of *The Waves*. *Week-end Review*, 24 October 1931.; and Louis Kronenberger believed they were simply different versions of Woolf herself: "Mrs. Woolf does not give us her characters as men and women; she gives them to us clearly in seed… and in seed they remain throughout the book… The are not six people but six imagist poets, six facets of the imagist poet that Mrs. Woolf is herself…" Louis Kronenberger, Review of *The Waves*. *New York Times Book Review*, 25 October 1931. Unsigned review of *The Waves*. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 6 December 1931.
[312] *Diary* 3:209-10, *Wednesday 28 November, 1928.*

character…boldly, almost as caricature" as part of her larger goal "to saturate every

atom" and "give the moment whole; whatever it includes."[313] For Woolf, these objectives

of transparency *and* saturation are actually synonymous. Caricatures are, by nature, not

realistic. Far from being contained static points or a lifeless list of qualities, caricatures

distort and exaggerate dimensions.[314] In so doing, caricatures call the attention to the

physical, the norm, and the ease of their transgression.[315] Presenting "empty" caricatures,

in fact, draws the reader's attention *both* to the expectations of her audience *and* to her

characters' ability (at least in her own hands) to transcend, transgress, and saturate.[316]

Rather than an emptiness or lack, caricature, for Woolf, is a visceral overflow.

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[313] *Ibid.* 3:300 *Wednesday 9 April, 1930*; *Diary* 3:209-10. "I think even externality is good; some combination of them ought to be possible. The idea has come to me that… what I want now to do is to saturate every atom. I mean to eliminate all waste, deadness, superfluity…" *28 November 1928.*

[314] Woolf specifically argues that authenticity or direct representation is not the aim of the well-written character. In "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown," she invites her readers to "think of some character who has seemed to you so real (*I do not by that mean so lifelike*) that it has the power to make you think not merely of it itself, but of all sorts of things through its eyes" "Mr. Brown" 11, emphasis mine.

[315] Susan, the patron of the natural and the norm, recognizes that even nature can be ideologically polluted. She differentiates between "real" and false nature and agricultural work based on their proximity to civilization, as represented by school: "But already these are not school fields; these are not school hedges; the men in these fields are doing *real* things; they fill carts with real hay; and those are *real* cows, not school cows." *The Waves* 43.

[316] Woolf portrays this overflow specifically using the vocabulary of saturation in the relationship between Neville and Bernard, recalling the hybridity of poetry and prose in the first section of this chapter: "Swelling, perpetually augmented, there is a vast accumulation of unrecorded matter in my head. Now and then I break off a lump, Shakespeare it may be, it may be some old woman called Peck…So we shared our Pecks, our Shakespeares; compared each other's versions; allowed each other's insight to set our own Peck or Shakespeare in a better light; and then sank into one of those silences which are now and again broken by a few words, as if a fin rose in the wastes of silence; and then the fin, the thought, sinks back into the depths, spreading round it a little ripple of satisfaction, content." *The Waves* 201-202.

Perhaps the clearest instances of the phenomenon I am tracing arrive in the descriptions of Susan and Jinny, which complicate our assumptions about a strict division between caricatures. Susan's and Jinny's worldviews appear to be in direct opposition as representatives of the country and the city, of traditional motherhood and emancipated sexuality, respectively. This perspectival divergence takes physical form when the two girls leave school, traveling in opposite directions to the countryside and to London. The girls describe their very different experiences of the train journey, matching their positions as country and city. Susan harshly critiques anything related to the city or school, directly contrasting them to the eminently superior countryside. For Susan, the countryside, where "women kiss each other and help with baskets," is welcoming and open, while the city is an alienating and lonely place in which "[p]eople… shoot through the streets silently… [looking] at nothing but shop-windows."[317] She accuses those in the city of looking towards the commercial and the material instead of the natural and human, calling to mind Woolf's critique of the Edwardians. But in focusing her attention to the landscapes outside the train, Susan partakes in the Edwardian fallacy, ignoring the passengers beside her. Though Susan portrays the city as materialistic, remote, and cold, it is Jinny who notices the others in her cabin, aware of their approval or disapproval. It is Jinny who uses the plural "we" versus Susan's singular "I," and it is Jinny who uses organically inflected language, giving the impression of her body as an unfolding flower or strange sea creature with frills and billows, opening and shutting.[318] Neither Susan nor Jinny is therefore as straightforward in her archetypal positions as she may first appear.

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[317] *The Waves* 43.
[318] *Ibid.* 45.

An earthy nature more expected from Susan appears in Jinny's social interactions, and

the rigidity and distance of the society which supposedly defines Jinny shows itself in

Susan's judgments.

Just as the caricature reveals the intermingling of character qualities, the

vocabulary of drama emphasizes both the communal aspect of character and reveals

society as ultimately performative; the play-poem is peopled by a cast of caricatures

interacting, not a monologue of a one-man show. In her diary, Woolf makes this

distinction explicit, referring to *The Waves* as "dramatic soliloquies" rather than

monologues.[319] "Dramatic soliloquy" makes sense, given that the fluidity of character

Woolf establishes in *The Waves* functions in ways distinct from character as generally

practiced in the nineteenth-century dramatic monologue.[320] This choice of "soliloquies"

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[319] *Diary* 3:312, *Wednesday 20 August, 1930.* The dramatic monologue is a notoriously hard form to pin down. Most scholars agree that to be a "true" monologue, there should be a silent auditor. However, famous exceptions exist. T.S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (1915) seems more akin to a soliloquy than a monologue, and the title of Robert Browning's "Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister" in *Dramatic Lyrics* (1842) specifically calls attention to the grumpy monk's lack of audience. I argue that the true difference between how Woolf understood a monologue versus a soliloquy comes down to their differing power dynamics. Woolf's diaries reveal her investment in the speakers' "oneness" and "completeness" that can only be found through a complimentary generic hybridity. 3.285 *Sunday 26 January, 1930; 3.*343 *Tuesday 30 December, 1930; 3.*35-6 *Friday 17 July, 1931.*
[320] Literary scholarship has turned towards exploring the ways in which Victorian writers challenged the understanding of character as only psychological depth. As these accounts show, nineteenth-century authors consistently emphasized the lack of a centralized and coherent subject, offering instead points of contact between individual, society, and the material world that worked together to create a "character" through a network of affiliations. Different networks may include physical sciences, moral education, literary genre, and even everyday turns of phrase; but all of these nineteenth-century networks, whether cultural or linguistic, focus on the natural malleability of the character. Foundational works in this line if thinking are Deidre Lynch's *The Economy of Character: Novels, Market Culture, and the Business of Inner Meaning* (Chicago, 1998), and Alex Woloch's *The One vs. the Many: Minor Characters and the Space of the*

rather than "monologues" suggests Woolf's investment in a different understanding of

character with a different power dynamic and re-emphasizes her commitment to the

blurring of generic boundaries. The dramatic monologue, as a form of narrative poetry,

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Protagonist in the Novel (Princeton, 2003). Lynch argues that rise in the belief in character interiority directly correlated with anxieties around the private and public lives of nineteenth-century consumers. Woloch takes a more structural or narratological approach to the same interactions between the audience, literary characters, and nineteenth-century British society as a whole. More recently, the importance of "character" to nineteenth-century life is reflected in the need for two entries on the term in *Victorian Literature and Culture*'s 2018 special double issue of the keywords of Victorian studies as a discipline: Jonathan Farina, "Character." *Victorian Literature and Culture* 46.3/4 (Fall/Winter 2018): 609-12; Jill Galvin, "Character." *Victorian Literature and Culture* 46.3/4 (Fall/Winter 2018): 612-16. In an earlier introduction to a special issue of *New Literary History* on character, Rita Felski acknowledges that the general reader associates the term with "a world of backbones and stiff upper lips, of Victorian rather than modern or postmodern thought." Felski compares the Victorian character with more recent idioms of personality or identity." *New Literary History: A Journal of Theory and Interpretation* 42.2 (Spring 2011): v. As both of these special issues and a wealth of scholarship show, Victorian understanding of "character" was far from being synonymous with interiority and morality. S. Pearl Brilmyer's and Shalyn Claggett's works on George Eliot, who stands for the ultimate example of the Victorian investment in the interiority of characters, reveal her as one of the foremost challengers of this false perception. S. Pearl Brilmyer, "Plasticity, Form, and the Matter of Character in Middlemarch," *Representations* 130.1 (2015): 60–83; and "'The Natural History of My Inward Self': Sensing Character in George Eliot's *Impressions of Theophrastus Such*." *PMLA* 129.1 (2014): 35-51. Shalyn Claggett, "George Eliot's Interrogation of Physiological Future Knowledge." *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 51.4 (Autumn 2011): 849-864; Sara Ahmed analyzes the reciprocal creation of the individual and general will through the enforcing and reenforcing of habits to create a "good character." Sara Ahmed, *Willful Subjects*. Duke, 2014. See also: Athena Vrettos. "Defining Habits: Dickens and the Psychology of Repetition." *Victorian Studies* 42.3 (Spring 1999-2000): 399-426; In considering habitual turns of phrase, Jonathan Farina's *Everyday Words* (2017) argues that character functioned as an epistemology dependent on the relationship between the individual and their community. Jonathan Farina, *Everyday Words and the Character of Prose in Nineteenth-Century Britain*. Cambridge, 2017. For earlier in the eighteenth century, see Susan Manning's *Poetics of Character: Transatlantic Encounters 1700-1900*. Cambridge, 2013; Erica Haugtvedt's essay on "transfictionality" asks what characters in the Victorian serialized novel can tell us about how their audience understood the stability of character or personality. Erica Haugtvedt, "The Victorian Serial Novel and Transfictional Character." *Victorian Studies* 59.3 (Spring 2017): 409-418.

exposes the inextricability of fact and story or qualitative and quantitative knowledge, but it also resembles the behaviorist school in important ways.[321] In *Parting Words: Victorian Poetry and Public Address* (2018), Justin Sider argues that the dramatic monologue is "the paradigmatic poetic genre of character" as an act of "retroactive self-constitution."[322] As Dorothy Mermin has shown, this self-constitution relies on the ambiguous, and often contentious, relationship between the speaker and the silent auditor.[323] The auditor of the dramatic monologue is essentially evacuated of all personhood, only there to be addressed.[324] In essence, the dramatic monologue invites us to enter into

[321] The dramatic monologue is perhaps the best formal reflection of a nineteenth-century understanding of character. Victorian readers of the genre found a poem with a distinct narrative, solidly grounded in history and social context, expressing a mental perspective that is not the poet's own. Robert Langbaum's *Poetry of Experience* (1957) determined the animating spirit of the nineteenth-century genre of the dramatic monologue as the tension between sympathy and judgment. This push and pull between sympathy and judgment calls attention to the multiplicity of internal motivations, external influences, and future possibilities that work together to produce a speaking subject. In essence, readers are called upon to decide between story, sympathizing with the character, and fact, judging the character dispassionately according to accepted social mores. *The Poetry of Experience: The Dramatic Monologue in Modern Literary Tradition*. Chatto and Windus, 1957.

[322] Justin Sider, *Parting Words: Victorian Poetry and Public Address.* Virginia, 2018. 80, 83.

[323] The foundational work on the relationship between the dramatic monologues speaker and auditor is Dorothy Mermin's *The Audience in the Poem: Five Victorian Poets*. Rutgers, 1983. Justin Sider calls the self-justification the defining feature of the dramatic monologue, connecting the retrospective quality of the dramatic monologue with the tradition of valediction and memoriam. *Parting Words: Victorian Poetry and Public Address.* Virginia, 2018.

[324] We can see this particularly strongly in the passage in which Neville wishes for "someone whose mind falls like a chopper on a block" as he watches another boy play cricket. He (it doesn't matter who "he" is, as long as he is unavailable) is there only so Neville can understand himself and impose this understanding onto the world. Thus Neville's yearning for Percival is not only a charming attraction to his opposite, but an attempt to assert his own perspective on the world, achieving "the obscure, the mystic sense of adoration, of completeness that triumphed over chaos." Neville specifically calls out the fact that he is unseen at this moment, underlining the superfluity of others'

the world of the speaker and to see from their overwhelming point of view: to be

dominated by their perspective. Though the speaker is ostensibly pleading for

understanding, the narrative, and therefore the relational power, is completely in the

speaker's voice.

At first glance, the interaction between Woolf's speakers appears to function

similarly. In the final meeting of all of the speakers, Neville observes:

> There is always somebody, when we come together, and the edges of meeting are
>
> still sharp, who refuses to be submerged; whose identity therefore one wishes to
>
> make crouch beneath one's own. For me now, it is Susan. I talk to impress Susan.
>
> Listen to me, Susan…[I]t is true, I do not want to hurt you; only to refresh and
>
> furbish up my own belief in myself that failed at your entry.[325]

Like the relationship between the dramatic monologue's speaker and auditor, Neville

addresses Susan only as a way to understand himself rather than as a true attempt at

dialogue. However, unlike the dramatic monologues of the nineteenth century, Susan

makes the same demands of Neville: "[L]ook, Neville," she orders, "whom I discredit in

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perspectives. *The Waves* 35-36. In this particular instance, Neville seems most akin to
what Langbaum sees as the eighteenth-century Romantic hero – a description that Neville
would probably enjoy. "Like the object of the dramatic lyric, the incidents and the other
characters seem half to materialize out of the need of the hero to learn objectively what
he already knows potentially…[Antagonists] appear because the heroes want them to,
and articulate the reasoning and doubting, the eighteenth-century element of the heroes'
minds." Langbaum 60-61. For more on the power dynamics in the lyric and dramatic
monologue, see Melissa Valiska Gregory, "Robert Browning and the Lure of the Violent
Lyric Voice: Domestic Violence and the Dramatic Monologue." *Victorian Poetry* 38.4
(Winter 2000): 491-510; Helen Luu, "A Matter of Life and Death: The Auditor-Function
of the Dramatic Monologue." *Victorian Poetry* 54.1 (Spring 2016): 19-38; and David W.
Shaw. "Lyric Displacement in the Victorian Monologue: Naturalizing the Vocative."
Nineteenth-Century Literature 52.3 (Dec. 1997): 302-25.
[325] *The Waves.* 155, 156.

order to be myself."[326] Both Neville and Susan attempt to justify their own perspectives through another's: "(We battle together like beasts fighting in a field, like stags making their horns clash.)"[327] Read separately, each speech appears to be identical to earlier dramatic monologues, portraying separation and conflict.

Reading the uninterrupted flow of Woolf's play-poem, however, shows a different relationship. Neville begins a thought process and Susan takes it up in her own mind:

> 'But there was another glory once, when we watched for the door to open, and Percival came; when we flung ourselves unattached on the edge of a hard bench in a public room.'

> 'There was the beech wood,' said Susan…[328]

Susan's immediate incorporation into and continuation of Neville's speech reveals Woolf's critical intervention in the poetic genre; Neville and Susan's individual "monologues" transform into unbroken soliloquies. Rather than giving a voice to the dramatic monologue's silent auditor, Woolf sidesteps the binary of speaker and auditor altogether. Because the speaker of the soliloquy is talking to themselves, the direct address of the dramatic monologue is denied. Rather than one overpowering voice with a silent auditor, the addition of the genre of drama through the soliloquy allows the speaker

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[326] *Ibid.* 157. The closest nineteenth-century examples of multiple dramatic monologues and precursor to Woolf's project would be from the Brownings. Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh* (1856) features a secondary monologue in books six and seven from Marian Erle. Robert Browning's *The Ring and the Book* (1868) is defined by its multiple speakers. However, both of these predecessors retain the power dynamic of overwhelming speaker and silent auditor.
[327] *The Waves.* 157.
[328] *Ibid.* 157.

to respond to themselves, revealing the internal ebbs and flows of character. Instead, she

presents several speeches comprised of several different forms and genres, as she says,

"running homogeneously in & out, in the rhythm of the waves."[329] Waves are both

discrete processes as well as one part of a larger action; both individual and collective.[330]

Though the wave becomes a thing unto itself, it is never truly separate from the larger

pull of the tides and it eventually merges with its next iteration.

This focus on incremental change and amplification is also borne out in Shand's

vision for functionalist theorization:

And thus the future science [of character] may be regarded from this point of view

as dependent on the progressive definition of an initially vague and abstract

conception, and its transformation into conceptions that become ever more

adequate to the wonderful and intricate object represented by them. And this will

be an essential feature of our method: this working conception that grows with

and adapts itself to the knowledge of the facts. For here no one could formulate a

true and adequate conception all at once.[331]

In contrast to the antagonism of the dramatic monologue and the separation and

distinction of behaviorism, both functionalism and the soliloquy take on the organic

character of unbroken waves. In joining together through their soliloquies, Woolf's

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[329] *Diary* 3:312, *Wednesday 20 August, 1930.*

[330] Originally, Woolf envisioned this work to be titled *The Moths.* We see the change in title in 1929, at the same time she is struggling with the form of the text, directly connecting the waves with her poetics: "Six weeks in bed now would make a masterpiece of Moths. But that wont be the name. Moths, I suddenly remember, don't [*sic*] fly by day. And there cant [*sic*] be a lighted candle. Altogether, the shape of the book wants considering--& with time I could do it." *Diary* 3.254 *Monday 16 September, 1929.*

[331] Shand 26-27.

speakers share the process of character between themselves. "Now we have clashed our antlers," Susan appraises her interaction with Neville, "This is the necessary prelude; the salute of old friends."[332] The idea of a "prelude" implies an invitation into a process rather than one specific event. The prelude, the antagonistic struggle, is only one event in the larger fluctuation. In the next wave of the process, both the speakers, Neville and Susan, and their recollected events, the last shared lunch with Percival and childhood in Elvedon, coalesce into a larger character through the soliloquy.

There is some fluidity or seepage in the soliloquy and play-poem that does not, and, I argue, *cannot*, appear in literary forms that remain fixed to just one generic tradition: poetry, prose, or drama. Frank Swinnerton's contemporaneous review, though critical, described exactly this effect of the soliloquy and play-poem: "[T]he book itself is not very interesting to read," he tersely reported, "Partly this may be because all the six characters whose thoughts are communicated to us seem to think in the same tone, so that it is hard to remember which of them is which… the incessant chanting effect grows monotonous, and I found my attention distracted or exhausted as I read."[333] The tonal uniformity in "incessant chanting" that Swinnerton and other critics sensed in *The Waves* was intended instead to represent the repetitive reunion and dispersal of the waves of character.[334] Through the use of the soliloquy, the cast of caricatures repeatedly come together and separate in the play-poem as one constantly shifting characterization. For

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[332] *The Waves* 158.

[333] Review of *The Waves*. *Evening News,* 9 October 1931.

[334] "And then Neville, Jinny, Susan and I, as a wave breaks, burst asunder, surrendered… We drew apart; we were consumed in the darkness of the trees, leaving Rhoda and Louis to stand on the terrace by the urn." *The Waves* 206.

Woolf, truthfully portraying the modern character requires an aesthetic "oneness" and "completeness" that can only be found through generic and formal hybridity.[335]

Aggregate and Congregate

The year after Woolf published her "manifesto" on fluid character, *The Waves*, Oswald Mosley published his fascist manifesto, *The Greater Britain*. Woolf and Mosley, in significantly divergent ways, were participating in the larger conversations around both psychological discourse and the future of British national character.[336] There are surprising similarities in the thinking of Woolf, the BUF, and the psychological school of functionalism. Mosley, almost certainly unwittingly, uses the terms of functionalism in describing his vision for Britain going forward: "It is this machinery of central direction which the Corporate State is designed to envisage, as its name implies, a nation organized as a human body. Every part fulfils its function as a member of the whole…. The whole body is generally directed by the central brain of government."[337] Not only does Mosley specifically draw on the language of "function[s]," the description of the independent yet central organizing principle also recalls Woolf's seventh petal of the many-faceted flower, the "machinery of central direction" of the silent Percival.

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[335] *Diary* 3.285 *Sunday 26 January, 1930; 3.343 Tuesday 30 December, 1930; 3.35-6 Friday 17 July, 1931.*

[336] According to her diaries, Woolf was aware of fascist activity, though all direct mentions of them occur after the publication of *The Waves*. Woolf specifically mentions Mosley and the BUF symbol in 1935, and accidentally accepts *The Blackshirt* newspaper from a man in 1936. *Diary* 4.337 *Wednesday 4 September,* 1935; Diary 5.35-36. *24 November, 1936.* As a member of the League of Nations, Leonard Woolf was certainly aware of Mosley, and he recounts Hitler's use of virile body imagery in *Quack Quack!* (1935).

[337] Mosley, *The Greater Britain* 26.

156

Though we as readers never get to hear Percival's voice, his character organizes

the text of *The Waves*. Percival's strongest presence occurs directly at the center of the

text at what will be his "last supper": "'It is Percival,' said Louis, 'sitting silent… who

makes us aware that these attempts to say, "I am this, I am that," which we make, coming

together, like separated parts of one body and soul, are false.'"[338] This unifying ability

extends beyond the speakers to the world around them.[339] Compare Neville's description

of the restaurant waiting to host Percival's farewell luncheon to Rhoda's description of

India waiting to "host" Percival:

> Already the room, with its swing-doors, its tables heaped with fruit, with cold
>
> joints, wears the wavering, unreal appearance of a place where one waits
>
> expecting something to happen. Things quiver as if not yet in being.[340]

> [L]ook--the outermost parts of the earth--pale shadows on the utmost horizon,
>
> India for instance, rise into our purview. The world that had been shrivelled,
>
> rounds itself; remote provinces are fetched up out of darkness… part of our proud
>
> and splendid province.[341]

Neither the restaurant in London nor the colonies – India, specifically – exist without the

"organizing activity" of Percival. As Neville declares, "without Percival there is no

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[338] *Ibid*. 99.
[339] This ability to connect works beyond the speakers, structuring the form of the text as
well. Through this passage, Percival connects *The Waves'* soliloquies to its interludes.
Woolf's interludes, italicized passages appearing at the beginning of each act or scene,
depict the flora and fauna of the seaside from dawn to dusk. The singing birds and
cracked snail-shells Bernard uses to describe the experience of the speakers duplicates the
imagery of the immediately preceding interlude. *Ibid.* 78-79.
[340] *Ibid.* 88.
[341] *Ibid.* 99.

solidity. We are silhouettes, hollow phantoms moving mistily without a background."[342]

Just as Percival defines the midpoint or heart of the physical text and solidifies his

environment, his presence "centers" or anchors the other speakers: "[l]ike minnows,

conscious of the presence of a great stone," Rhoda explains, "we undulate and eddy

contentedly."[343] While the speakers continue in their fluidity, Percival is repeatedly

associated with the hardness and bulk of inanimate stone. "He sees nothing; he hears

nothing." Neville comments when they are at school, "He is remote from us all in a pagan

universe."[344] The fluidity between the speakers is clogged by the stony, unyielding

Percival's crushing presence.

Percival is, unmistakably, a personification of imperialism, embodying Edmund

Burke's claim that "an empire is the aggregate of many states under one common

head."[345] He also embodies the BUF's vision of fascist corporatism. This connection is

perhaps to be expected, as Mosley openly allied his fascism with British imperialism. The

goal for the BUF, according to Mosley, was

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[342] *Ibid.* 88. For more on the importance of locality to Modernism, see John Marx, *The Modernist Novel and the Decline of Empire*. Cambridge, 2005.

[343] *Ibid.* 99. Percival's gravitational pull reached beyond the speakers, reinforcing his association with militancy, empire, and patriarchy: "He is conventional; he is a hero. The little boys trooped after him across the playing-fields. They blew their noses as he blew his nose, but unsuccessfully, for he is Percival. Now, when he is about to leave us, to go to India, all these trifles come together. He is a hero." *The Waves* 88-89.

[344] The larger quote and a supplementary example of Percival's "heaviness": "I shall see Percival. There he sits, upright among the smaller fry. He breathes through his straight nose rather heavily. His blue and oddly inexpressive eyes are fixed with pagan indifference upon the pillar opposite… He sees nothing; he hears nothing. He is remote from us all in a pagan universe." *Ibid.* 24; "Look now, how everybody follows Percival. He is heavy. He walks clumsily down the field, through the long grass, to where the great elm trees stand." *Ibid.* 25.

[345] "Second Speech on Conciliation." *Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke.* Ed. P. Langford. Clarendon, 1981–2015. iii. 193.

the maintenance and development of the heritage of Empire, in which our race has

displayed peculiar genius and which in our vast experience we may pursue not

only without fear of racial detriment but with the sure knowledge that in this

arduous duty the finest and toughest characteristics of the English are developed,

and that the smallest contribution which an effective British Empire can make is

the preservation of Peace over one quarter of the earth's surface for one quarter of

the earth's population.[346]

Mosley saw the BUF as the natural heir of imperialist Britain, seen both through this

quotation and the naming of his manifesto. Likewise, Mosley's economic plan of

corporatism followed the system of the aggregate that defined Empire. As mentioned in

the introduction of this chapter, Mosley's turn to fascism partially arose from his

dissatisfaction with the Liberal party's response to the crash of 1929. Mosley envisioned

a restructuring of the British government in which different industries band together in

larger corporate groups – such as agriculture, technology, education, etc. – that would

advocate for their members within a larger national committee.[347] The national

government could either be a member of this committee, or, as in Mussolini's fascist Italy

and in the BUF proposal, the ultimate authority.[348] In this way, Mosley's corporate state

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[346] Oswald Mosley, "The World Alternative." *The Fascist Quarterl*y 2.3 (July 1936): 384.

[347] For a definitive outline of Mosley's corporatism and a comparison of his British fascism to continental movements, see Gary Love's "'What's the Big Idea?': Oswald Mosley, the British Union of Fascists and Generic Fascism." *Journal of Contemporary History* 42.3 (July 2007): 447-468.

[348] L.P. Carpenter gives examples of several other prominent British supporters of corporatism that proposed the "brain" as either a way to limit state interference in industry or put the state in control. "Corporatism in Britain, 1930–45." *Journal of Contemporary History* 11.1 (1976): 3–25. 4-6.

follows the system of aggregates – many individual actors organized by a common brain. Aggregation is necessarily quantitative, connoting a mathematical adding together and recalling the charts and graphs of the behaviorist.

Woolf presents an alternative more in line with functionalist theory.[349] Compare Mosley's "machinery of central direction" to Shand's description of character as the "organizing activity" of "those mental processes…brought into touch with changes of the environment, and warned to adjust themselves to them."[350] Both Mosley and Shand understand the body, whether physical or political, in relation to an influential "mind" – with an important difference: "[O]ur personality," Shand qualifies, "does not seem to be the sum of the dispositions of our emotions and sentiments. These are our many selves; but there is also our one self. This enigmatical self which reflects on their systems, estimates them, and, however loath to do it, sometimes chooses between their ends, seems to be the central fact of our personality."[351] The "many selves" are not added together to create a new "one self," but brought together in a reflexive relationship in which the object and subject are the one and the same. This organizing process of character appears to be a separate, autonomous entity, but is in fact the self-regulating function of the multiple processes of the mind. Because the reflection and weighing of mental functions is never concluded, the overflow of character can best be understood as

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[349] Jessica Schiff Berman also connects Woolf's water and wave imagery to a sense of community that works against fascist ideology "creating a feminist narrative that swirls water against fascist boots." *Modernist Fiction, Cosmopolitanism, and the Politics of Community*. Cambridge, 2001. 141.
[350] *The Waves* 26.
[351] *Ibid*. 66.

160

a *congregate* rather than a sum or aggregate.[352] Using Woolf's oceanic vocabulary, just as the tide is *both* comprised of *and* shapes the movement of the waves, the character is *both* the mental processes themselves *and* the organizing principle by which they function, "our many selves… also our one self."

The quantitative is finally merged with the qualitative in Bernard's "[i]mmeasurably receptive, holding everything, trembling with fullness, yet clear, contained" fluid character.[353] In contrast to Percival's solid rock, Bernard's messy, overflowing, "organizing activity" is a quivering droplet. Bernard's ability to organize is based not on his power or his control, but in his receptiveness, his ability to talk "to the barmaid about the nature of human destiny" and "half [know] everybody."[354] This partial knowledge, incompleteness, allows for the continuation of the process of the waves; "this is the eternal renewal, the incessant rise and fall and fall and rise again."[355] Bernard's finale, Woolf writes in her diary, "is also to show that the theme effort, effort, dominates: not the waves: & personality: & defiance."[356] Again Woolf portrays character as *not* a static, defiant personality, but instead a process of nonstop activity and change in congregate.

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[352] "congregate, v. *reflexive* and *intransitive*. To flock or assemble together; to meet in a large body"; "aggregate, v. *transitive*. To add (numbers, scores, etc.) together; to find the sum total of." *OED Online*. Oxford, December 2020.

[353] *Ibid.* 216.

[354] *Ibid.* 88 and 50, respectively.

[355] *Ibid. 220.*

[356] *Diary* 3:339, *Saturday 20 December, 1930. "*It occurred to me last night while listening to a Beethoven quartet that I would merge all the interjected passages into Bernard's final speech, & end with the words O solitude: thus making him absorb all those scenes, & having no further break."

When Woolf begins the final section "[n]ow to sum up" and chooses Bernard to speak, she lampoons this aggregation, inviting us to see its ineffectiveness. Throughout *The Waves*, Bernard collected and recorded fragments of life and character in aggregate like a behaviorist. Near the end of his "summing up," he abandons this entire project, leaving his book of phrases on the floor for the charwoman.[357] Through Bernard's rejection of aggregation as represented by his discarded notebook of quantified prose phrases, Woolf underscores her commitment to fluidity and hybridity in both character and generic conventions. "And now I ask, 'Who am I?' I have been talking of Bernard, Neville, Jinny, Susan, Rhoda and Louis. Am I all of them? Am I one and distinct? I do not know."[358] Bernard is, as his fellow speakers recognize, a less commanding version of Percival:

> And then, unlike the rest of us, he comes in without pushing open a door, without knowing that he comes into a room full of strangers. He does not look in the glass. His hair is untidy, but he does not know it. He has no perception that we differ, or that this table is his goal. He hesitates on his way here. Who is that? he asks himself, as he half knows a woman in an opera cloak. He half knows everybody; he knows nobody (I compare him with Percival). But now, perceiving us, he waves a benevolent salute; he bears down with such benignity, with such love of mankind (crossed with humour at the futility of "loving mankind"), that, if it were not for Percival, who turns all this to vapour, one would feel, as the others already feel: Now is our festival; now we are together.[359]

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[357] *The Waves* 219.
[358] *Ibid.* 214.
[359] *Ibid.* 87-88.

Percival, in his brutality, metaphorically evaporates the fluidity of the speakers; Bernard joins them as an equal, both, or, more accurately, half-loving and half-hating. When Bernard asks both "Who am I?" *and* "Who is that?" he is making the same query; he is both part of and organizing the congregate.

As I have argued throughout this dissertation, hybrid forms are one way poets like Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Tekahionwake, and H.D. could make sense of evolutions in psychological theory and take part in questions of community and belonging. As Britain approached what would be the Second World War, such questions became paramount. Though *The Waves* is a novel, its fluidity marks it as a fitting successor to their explorations of form, community, and nation. As it takes part in this longer history, Woolf's aesthetic and formal oneness of character simultaneously offers an alternative to the unity through quantitative measurement and aggregation found in the emerging fascist movement in Britain.

Conclusion

"[T]he problems of their own time"

"[T]he best compliment that we can pay *Aurora Leigh*," Virginia Woolf wrote in 1935, "is that it makes us wonder why it has left no successors. Surely the street, the drawing-room, are promising subjects; modern life is worthy of the muse… The conservatism or the timidity of poets still leaves the chief spoils of modern life to the novelist. We have no novel-poem of the age of George the Fifth."[360] Woolf's patronizing but ultimately deferential review claimed that *Aurora Leigh*'s success was in the accurate portrayal of "a sense of life in general, of people who are unmistakably Victorian, wrestling with the problems of their own time, all brightened, intensified, and compacted by the fire of poetry."[361] Woolf's admiration stems from what she sees as the suitability of *Aurora Leigh*'s content, "the street, the drawing-room," to its form, the "novel-poem." This hybrid form allows for "a brilliance and a continuity, owing to the compressions and elisions of poetry, which mock the prose writer and his slow accumulations of careful detail" and culminates in the accurate portrayal of life. [362]

Similarly, in *Victorian Poetry: Poetry, Poetics, and Politics* (1993), Isobel Armstrong argues that nineteenth-century poetry was intensely concerned with the "link between cultural complexities and the complexities of language." [363] This dissertation has traced one dominant "cultural complexity": the continuous struggle to understand the mind's functions and the application of that understanding to the larger project of British

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[360] Virginia Woolf. "Aurora Leigh." *The Second Common Reader*. Hogarth, 1935. 202-213. 213.
[361] *Ibid.* 212.
[362] *Ibid*. 212.
[363] Armstrong 11.

nationalism and imperialism. This dissertation identifies a body of poetry written by women in both Britain and British colonial spaces that shows those authors' engagements with psychological writing. For all the women represented in this dissertation, hybrids like the verse-novel, dramatic monologue, and the "play-poem" were the best forms to explore and question the psychological and literary paradigms that constituted "the problems of their own time."

In our time, March 2021, the government of the United Kingdom issued a report by their Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities that claimed:

> [D]espite the UK comparing well internationally there is still a powerful current of unease and even anger that bubbled up in last summer's BLM protests. Minorities, even after several generations, often feel a detachment and unease relative to majorities and tend to remain sensitive to their group's relative status in the society. Notwithstanding what we have argued about the relative openness of British society, the Commission accepts the scholarly consensus that a 'psychological asymmetry' unavoidably characterises majority-minority relations across different cultures, including in the UK.[364]

The use of psychological terminology provides a scientific objectivity to the governmental report and reframes social justice as an overly "sensitive" cognitive bias. "Psychological asymmetry," also called "asymmetric insight," denotes a particular cognitive bias. This bias assures us of two "facts": We believe that we know ourselves

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[364] United Kingdom, Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities. "Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities: The Report." 31 March 2021. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-report-of-the-commission-on-race-and-ethnic-disparities.

better than others know us, and, more importantly, we believe that we also know *others* better than they know *themselves*.[365] In attempting to address generational trauma, the report assumes that the trauma has ended, citing "the UK comparing well internationally" and "the relative openness of British society."[366] The 2021 government report implements the cognitive bias that it presumes to correct in others; it assumes the objectivity and positivism of psychological terminology allows a knowledge that surpasses embodied, daily experiences. Though the report may be trying to fix structural problems, its methodology is based on a false sense of objectivity provided in part by psychological theory. As this dissertation shows, the goal of producing objective psychological knowledge can be admirable and useful – to a certain extent. Lived experiences, however, belie the notion that social phenomena like national feeling can be considered objectively. Instead, a more fruitful and accurate methodology would consider hybrid forms of knowledge that take both the reasoning mind and lived bodily experiences into its account.

  EBB's manipulation of generic expectations, Johnson's rewriting of the Poetess as wampum reader, H.D.'s handling of voice and attention, and Woolf's generic volatility use the same psychological theories that upheld British nationalism to formally resist it. The discourses that have structured this dissertation, those of self-knowledge, empathy,

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[365] Emily Pronin, et al. "You don't know me, but I know you: the illusion of asymmetric insight." *Journal of personality and social psychology* 81.4 (2001): 639-56.
[366] There have been several testimonies that the report was not researched properly. Several of the academics, historians, and scientists cited have asked for their names to be removed from the report or have claimed to be misquoted. For more, see Aamna Mohdin, "Experts cited in No 10's race report claim they were not properly consulted." *The Guardian* 1 April 2021; Aamna Mohdin, et al., "No 10's race report widely condemned as 'divisive.'" *The Guardian* 31 March 2021; Aubrey Allegretti, "Equality watchdog raised concerns about UK race report, documents show." *The Guardian* 22 April 2021.

and belonging, are not simply facets of history, but part our ongoing, post-colonial present. By attending to the intersections among nineteenth- and early twentieth-century psychological writing, poetry, and national character, we can better understand our current time, in which psychological discourse is again serving to prop up nationalism.

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