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Reproducing Women in the AWKWARD AGE

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"Reproducing Women in The Awkward Age"

At the close of Henry James's 1899 novel, The Awkward Age, Nanda Brookenham departs for a country estate, the ward of a man three times her age; her jaded brother Harold appears committed to a life of bachelorhood; the marriages of the Grendon's, the Cashmore's, and the Donner's totter precariously, and the newly debauched Aggie revels in adulterous union with Petherton, the barbaric aristocrat. The novel's final word, "tomorrow," echoes tensely in a society which offers little hope for generational continuity. James's portrait of an upper class in decline, stripped of its reproductive powers, is consistent with the perceptions of other social observers of his day. Anxieties about the distance between a revered ancestry, and a decadent modern society which had lost the ability to transmit traditional traits and values were voiced throughout turn-of-the century England, by literary authors, politicians, and intellectuals alike.

These concerns were at the forefront of debates on the developing social sciences.¹ In a letter to the English Sociological Society, one lady contended that the new discipline's most urgent task was the "training of girls for the resumption of a lost power of race motherhood, which shall make for their own happiness and well-being in using these for the benefit of humanity."² Lady Wellby's plea comes down to us as a confused cry in the wilderness of early sociology. But it should

remind us that English social science arose in a society actively engaged in redefining womens' roles.

The Awkward Age foregrounds what is only implicit in these social scientific debates: that an elite's ability to control feminine sexuality and reproduction is the test of its ability to control cultural transmission in general. The novel portrays an emergent feminine sexuality as requiring society's most elaborate forms of vigilance. Female adolescents possess the contradictory attributes of a group whose social purpose is both essential and unstable. In the preface they are innocents whose entry into society requires the purification of cultural habits. But in the novel proper a curious inversion takes place and the female adolescent becomes a threat to social mores. All attempts in the novel's society to preserve feminine innocence fail, and each failure is attributed to feminine nature rather than to social experience. As a principle of "difference,"³ the novel's female adolescents, and ultimately all of its women, embody nature's most threatening yet potentially exploitable aspects.

The great concern of English social science was the problem of nature versus culture. To what extent should natural, inevitable processes be allowed to take their course in government, economy, in society at large? Social Darwinist principles were under attack in this period, and the viability of organic factors as sources of order was being questioned. By identifying certain groups--women, 'natives,' the working classes--with a disordered nature, social scientists were able to

justify their special subjection to social engineering methods.

My argument is that James's fiction knowingly incorporates the social discourses with which it is in dialogue. It is no accident that the fields of English studies, which James's fiction and criticism helped to inaugurate, and social science were institutionalized at the same historical moment.⁴ His reviews of "social botanists" like Balzac, his relationship to his brother William, his library holdings and reading, his debates with H.G. Wells on aesthetic purpose illustrate his engagement with the principal assumptions of social science.⁵ But it was James's interest in women--female development in particular--which most clearly aligned him with social scientific concerns. James's well-known preoccupation with the construction of femininity was part of the same intellectual culture that produced countless evolutionary readings of woman's status from primitive to modern times. However, while Herbert Spencer, L.T. Hobhouse, and Emile Durkheim described the progressive improvement of womens' circumstances, James dramatized the persistence of what Spencer called "the traffic in women" in the historical present.⁶

This essay is unified by two claims: first, that the political crisis of late nineteenth-century English elites was resolved in part through an alignment with the instrumentalism of the developing social sciences, and second, that because this crisis was tied to reproductive facts--declining elite and bourgeois birth rates, rising lower-class rates, mass

enfranchisement--it was obsessively figured in feminine terms. The Awkward Age, whose titular type refers both to historical and biological transition, suggests a similar ideological conflation of social change and feminine disorder. But in The Awkward Age, what might be called "the feminine shadow" of English social science becomes the central image. I analyze the novel's feminization of social decline in relation to the evolutionary narratives of social scientists which sought to repair the condition of bourgeois and upper class women by casting them as maternal icons. I then show how the social anxiety of James's elite is formalized in a preoccupation with primitive kinship rites designed to regulate female adolescent sexuality. Finally, I trace from the shreds of these primitive romances the emergence of a new feminine type for the modern age whose effect is to detach the maternal principle from its biological moorings in the female body and relocate it (as social engineering) in the social body.

I

The Awkward Age is arranged as a series of perspectives on one central question: the marriageability of Nanda Brookenham, the adolescent daughter of the novel's central family. The crisis faced by the social circle which frequents the Brookenham parlour is how to integrate Nanda into society without ruining her with its scandalous talk. How can they preserve her innocence while allowing her the social visibility that facilitates marriage and motherhood? This question is

complicated by the fact that Mrs. Brookenham and Nanda are in love with the same man, Vanderbank, and the mother deliberately disables her daughter by exposing her to the most decadent aspects of society. It is further complicated by the appearance of Longdon, an elderly gentleman of immense wealth, whose unrequited love for Nanda's deceased grandmother (Lady Julia) supplies the novel's plot. Longdon's appearance complicates Nanda's destiny: her miraculous resemblance to her grandmother incites in him an overpowering desire to avenge the past. His obsession is expressed in a "plan" to bring about Nanda's marriage to Vanderbank, but James's conclusion pictures Vanderbank in retreat, and leaves Nanda with a permanent and ambiguous attachment to Longdon. The novel makes its way, with a relentless determination, toward sterility and division.

In keeping with its embattled character, the novel's elite views society as a swarm of Jewish moneylenders and debt collectors, nouveau riche, vulgar, profligate Americans, and other varieties of disreputable 'immigrants.' Of (presumably) pure descent themselves, they deplore the invasion of the new-
monied hordes, monstrosly imaged by "Baron Schack or Schmack, the Jew man, so gigantically rich. . . who has just taken Cumberland house." Yet the Brookenham circle is also withering away from within, a collective emblem of Max Nordau's "Degeneration." While Mrs. Brookenham has the requisite four children to ensure the perpetuation of upper class stock, her own children promise none.

The theme of elite decline is nowhere more pronounced than in the portrait of the circle's women. More like zoo animals than civilized humans, the women who frequent Mrs. Brookenham's drawing room don't seem to know whether to be natural or cultivated. Lady Fanny, characterized as a "tame tigress," becomes in a flight of Mrs. Brook's imagination, "a great glorious pagan," "purely instinctive," "some great natural poetic thing--an Alpine sunrise or a big high tide" (134).

Like the metaphor, "tame tigress," these images blend the idea of cultivation and predictability with the idea of wild nature. As a glorious pagan dominated by instinct, Lady Fanny suggests an immunity to human forms of mediation and control. As an Alpine sunrise or a big high tide, she becomes a picture of natural regularity: natural images so elevating that they are inherently cultivated, poetry without the intervention of craft. This description of Lady Fanny exemplifies the distinction between nature as an anarchic force, and nature as a socializing agent, that pervades the novel. She exudes the most threatening aspects of nature as well as their successful containment. Thus, the naturalist terms applied to Lady Fanny do double work. Implying wildness they justify her control, implying regularity and poetry, they signal the means for her reinscription into the culture.

All of these images are forms of typing. And Mrs. Brook assumes a special role in this regard, as one who can objectify her historical moment, and locate the evolutionary positions of

other women. As we shall see, typing can function as an exclusionary practice, assigning some social groups to the free exchanges of advancing civilization, and others to the object status of archaeological remains. Typed as a pagan curiosity, Fanny Cashmore has no rights, and no claims upon her society. Perhaps most significant here is the unequivocal line Mrs. Brook draws between Fanny and her husband. Her description opens with an image of Fanny "shriek[ing]" her unhappiness "on the house-tops" (134). Identified with an incoherent barbarism, Fanny occupies a different stage of evolution from that of her eloquent husband, the circle's Parliamentarian. Nor is Fanny's position unique; rather it applies to all of the circle's women at one time or another. As inarticulate primitives the novel's women are key objects of a culture of vigilance. But as Mrs. Brook's example shows, women can be agents as well as objects of social control. As society's main boundary makers, educators, and social typologists, women are the sociologist's dream: a threatening social group which serves as the source of its own regulation.⁷

The striking mobility of womens' roles foregrounds the link between naturalist ideals and the problem of agency. The Awkward Age pictures a society caught between a laissez-faire and an instrumentalist vision. Viewing potential action as dangerous and incriminating, characters deny their capacity to act. However, there are also signs of an emergent social ideology, a new conception of human agency, which some characters are capable

of exploiting. Longdon's subtle ability to make pacts with the decadent London world he enters; the Duchess' faith in the remaking of individuals; Mrs. Brookenham's sense of liberation from hereditary constraints; all suggest a commitment to the ways in which social facts can be reformed in the modern era. The novel features two views of society, as a realm of decline and disorder, and as a system of predictable, progressive laws.

The tension between these two views is introduced in the novel's first paragraph which concerns the subject of human habit: Vanderbank's strategies for meeting bad weather.

"Save when it happened to rain Vanderbank always walked home, but he usually took a hansom when the rain was moderate and adopted the preference of the philosopher when it was heavy. On this occasion he therefore recognized, as the servant opened the door, a congruity between the weather and the 'four-wheeler' that, in the empty street, under the glazed radiance waited and trickled and blackly glittered" (22).

At its most basic, this opening is about the human relationship to nature, describing rules of behavior that regularize nature's vicissitudes. Such rules, the passage implies, can fundamentally alter human experiences of the natural world, for Vanderbank's consciousness has converted his strategies for meeting nature into natural effects themselves. As the "congruity" between his hansom and the rain suggests, Vanderbank has harmonized his relationship to nature by positing his own and nature's forms as mutual causes. Thus, his vehicle appears as an equivalent variable in the scene, as inevitable as nature.

By implying the naturalization of human action, however, the scene records a certain alienation of human beings from their

actions. We have the spectacle of a man regarding his own habits as objective parts of a scene. This is the force of the sentence constructions which emphasize events over actors--characters are portrayed primarily as recipients of action ("Save when it happened to rain Vanderbank always walked home . . . ").⁸ This grammatical deflation of human agents is confirmed by the first descriptions of interaction. Vanderbank, seated in the carriage with Longdon, "became conscious of having proposed his own rooms as a wind-up to their drive." And Longdon voices his reluctant acceptance of "the queer . . . doom of coming back" (27-8). The characters seem to inhabit a dream world, blurting out invitations they are only conscious of retrospectively, considering themselves subject to actions toward which they feel little direct motivation. There is a sense in which these characters are too intent on pleasing, on achieving harmony and avoiding conflict, at the expense of their own wills.

Vanderbank's mode of reasoning in this opening resembles a prominent form of scientific logic in the mid- to late-nineteenth century. Correlative thinking described the essential interdependence of natural and social life. In experiments carried out at London's Kew Observatory, English meteorologists drew correlations between such disparate natural and social events as plagues and commercial crises. These meteorological studies were revitalized later in the century in the research of Eugenicists who studied links between head size and intelligence, height and criminality.⁹

One of the most significant of later attempts to establish a method of correlative thinking was the work of the sociologist L.T. Hobhouse. Dedicated to the idea of evolutionary progress, Hobhouse saw correlation theory as emerging triumphantly at the later stages of evolution. Correlation was a sign of progress, "a basis of classification" by which "the mind introduces order and establishes control." Human reason, according to Hobhouse, was an instrument of synthesis: "it embraces every element of experience, interconnects every feeling and thought . . . weaves of them all a tissue which is never ossified but always plastic and recipient."¹⁰ With the substitution of the word imagination for reason, these observations, written in the first decade of the twentieth century, could have been Henry James's.¹¹

Vanderbank's opening reflections suggest a new model of social observation, the allegorizing of social life in terms of predictable laws.¹² The gradual unfolding of this opening paragraph, from an instinctive habitual action, to speculation about action, to a reconception of nature's determinations, suggests the overall transformation in social thought that is dramatized by the novel. This transformation involves the recasting of a more traditional world view in which action is founded on received rules of conduct, to a more modern world view which sees action in rational instrumental terms. Human action in this modern view is itself a potential cause--equivalent to natural determinations. Such a perspective has a double effect. On the one hand it pictures human beings as powerful agents,

capable of altering their world as much as nature. On the other hand, it pictures them as beholden, like any natural object, to the web of action and consequence that is seen to comprise the social and natural world. Thus, the novel's characters exhibit contradictory tendencies of deliberateness and paralysis. Longdon is a ghost from an earlier era, an outsider at the mercy of the conniving London circle whose codes he only partially understands. Yet he is also the source of the novel's plot, the character whose wealth and emotional necessity structure all dramatic action. Vanderbank seems constitutionally passive, chained to the whims of Mrs. Brook and to some vague nostalgic ideal both of which make him incapable of present action. Yet he is also the man with everything, irresistible to women, Deputy Chairman of the General Audit with a "head" for figures in an era which prizes statistics as the key to intelligent social action. The tendencies of both express a faith in human abilities to shape social life and a recognition of the necessity for doing so. Yet they harbor anxiety about that prospect, about how far such effects could and should go.

They epitomize the dilemma of English intellectuals in the late nineteenth century, who saw human actors as more capable of controlling their world and also as more subject to its self-perpetuating processes. Indeed, this is the paradox of a "social science", a paradox which is built into the term itself. For a social science connotes a scientific, objective discipline whose practitioners are at once guiding subjects, and objects of their

own investigations. In the early years of social science, at the point of its institutionalization, this paradox was partially solved by the choice of research objects. The objects of social scientific study tended to be mainly alien or marginal social groups, immigrants, colonial populations, blacks, the urban poor. As I have argued elsewhere, a social scientific ideology which classified some individuals as knowledgeable experts, and others as naturalized objects often divided neatly along class, racial, and ethnic lines.¹³ The Awkward Age reveals how a naturalizing social scientific ideology was also divided along gender lines, with femininity symbolizing the threat of uncontrollable natural developments.

Though as James admits in the preface to The Awkward Age, "every age lives in an epoch of transition," there is good reason to insist, as James himself does, on the "notorious" instability of this late-Victorian/Edwardian period (12). English society confronted the biological and spiritual decline of its elites; the transformation of womens' status; mass enfranchisement, and the accompanying threat of socialism and anarchism; rising immigration rates (sufficient to inspire the restrictive 1905 Immigration Act); unfavorable trade balances; the Boer War and impending World War. The social sciences came to image these developments in terms of a disordered nature, whose antitype was a naturally unified modern social order.¹⁴

II

Widespread perceptions of the ills of English society in the

late nineteenth century helped to furnish a favorable climate for the reception of sociological ideas--a vision of rejuvenation through social rather than biological means. For views of a chaotic modern society, which they feared had radically broken with the past, sociologists substituted a tale of progressive evolution, which forecast the gradual emergence of a society based on what L.T. Hobhouse called, "our rational nature." Hobhouse's term suggests a key characteristic of late-nineteenth century liberal ideology. Despite its naturalist implications, Hobhouse's rationality was not an inherent quality, but consciously and deliberately assumed. The organic unity of modern society, according to liberal social scientists, required the instrumental control of human agents. Progress in the modern era depended more and more on the conscious direction of evolution. And social science (for Hobhouse sociology in particular) was the form for this new self-consciousness.¹⁵

These social scientists saw no contradiction between their organic, evolutionary ideas and their social engineering methods. Nor did they see a contradiction between their larger emphasis on modern rationality and their designation of modern women as wholly instinctive, natural beings. In the evolutionary tales that sociologists told, the climactic final stages of history pictured women as reified objects of human reproduction. I want to consider some of these evolutionary narratives in detail, but first let me sketch out the social climate (to continue the weather allegory) in which they were written.

The agendas of the era's omnipresent reform organizations indicate the cultural prominence of issues relating to feminine sexuality and reproduction during the period of social science's development. The National Vigilance Association, founded in 1885, was dedicated to reversing the decline of social morals. Growing degeneracy was envisioned primarily in terms of women: the fall in the elite birth rate; spreading use of birth control; the dissemination of 'pernicious literature' among a feminine reading public; the challenges to traditional divorce laws (which prohibited divorce except in the case of the wife's adultery). The organization railed in particular against foreign dramas (eg. Ibsen) which portrayed "dissatisfied married women in a chronic state of rebellion . . . against all the duties of wives and mothers."¹⁶

This final problem was of special concern to social scientists. The resistance among upper and middle class women to their 'natural' roles as reproducers was viewed as a cause of dangerous population imbalances, between elites and lower classes. The decline of favored biological productivity and the overall decline of social efficiency (as captured in best-sellers such as Made in Germany, 1896 and The American Invaders, 1901) seemed mutually reinforcing.¹⁷ In brief then, the categories which were at the forefront of social reform organizations--Heredity and Population; Social Degeneracy; Feminist Activism--reflect a growing tendency in this era to feminize and naturalize social decline.

From the 1870s through the opening decade of the 20th century, fears of the lower classes "multiplying like rabbits" dominated the popular press and elite journals. "The poorer they are," commented W.R. Greg writing for Fraser's Magazine, "the faster do they multiply." Herbert Spencer's theories on population corroborate these popular fears. For Spencer, reproductive rates are inversely proportionate to the degree of development: higher evolutionary stages feature lower rates of multiplication. Francis Galton's "new religion," Eugenics, confronted the obvious question raised by Spencer's theories on population.¹⁸ How could his Social Darwinist vision of species progress be reconciled with his ideas of population decline? The answer was that it couldn't be: for the Darwinist view of species progress, Galton substituted a view of species decline. These ideas took practical form in a plan for state monitoring of reproduction rates. He advocated the identification of "a select class x of young men and women . . . encouraging their intermarriage, and promoting the early marriages of girls of that high class."¹⁹ Galton's ideas were a thorn in the side of liberal social science because they brought to the surface one of its most troubling dilemmas. Was it morally acceptable and practically feasible to regulate the relative reproduction rates of social elites and "lower" classes and races?

T.H Huxley, a leading scientist and liberal intellectual who was engaged with the development of social science, confronted the issue of reproduction head on by labelling it:

"the political problem of problems." Its two causes, he wrote, are "internal by generation" (that of lower class "wage earners"), and "external by immigration." Over-population and the poverty to which it gives rise, can only be eliminated by restricting both.²⁰ Huxley's observations call to mind a Swiftian insight, that anxiety about over-population is always about the proliferation of certain types of people.

The naming of genetics and over-population as a "political problem" brings to the surface one of the deepest threats posed by reproductive issues in this era. The image of an educated elite no longer in control of the theories and facts about heredity and population corresponded to an elite no longer in control of its political destiny. The intellectual confusion of social elites was inseparable from the reality of mass enfranchisement. Unchecked lower class reproduction meant unlimited lower-class ballots; population imbalances and socialism went hand in hand.

The problem of population, then, was a key referent of liberal social science. The strongest evidence of this fact are the ominous details of natural and political decline which border the evolutionary studies of Benjamin Kidd, Herbert Spencer, T.H. Huxley, and L.T. Hobhouse, in the form of notes and appendices. Like some collective return of the repressed, these details exist as deliberately marginalized threads which threaten to unravel their whole optimistic enterprise. Kidd's book, for example, is appended with a demographic chart comparing the reproductive

rates of various races and classes, while Huxley's footnotes catalog the ominous hordes of "Chinamen and Hindoostan" which radical landowning schemes (ie. those of Henry George) must take into account. Likewise, the footnotes of Hobhouse's Mind in Evolution (1901) contain charts on the comparative "fertility" rates of "civilised" and "uncivilised" man.²¹

This intellectual borderland is the impetus for what Jurgen Habermas calls, "the structural transformation of the public sphere." In his book of this title, Habermas describes the historical moment when public opinion came to be perceived as a "tyranny." Liberal intellectuals turned against the idea of the public conscience and advocated that "political questions be decided not by a direct or indirect appeal to the insight or the will of an uninformed multitude, but only by appeal to views, formed after due consideration, of a relatively small number of persons specially educated for the task." From the ranks of this small elite of experts, came the recruits for a new category of social expertise--the disciplines of social science.²² Middle and upper class women, these social scientists believed, had their own expert role to fulfill in the modern era.

One of the most prominent forms of social scientific analysis in this period was the evolutionary survey, which invariably included a major section on women and marriage. For social scientists, the changing status of women, as reflected in courtship and marriage rites from primitive to modern times, revealed the progressive development of rational civilization.

History was a tale recounting the gradual emergence of patriarchal culture where women assume their rightful place as keepers of the hearth and species.

The progressivist bias of these social scientific narratives concealed a pernicious constant that might easily be overlooked. A persistent feature of womens' circumstances over time was the view of women as breeders. Feminine sexuality and reproductive powers were the possession of fathers and husbands, to be exchanged in primitive societies, and more subtly regulated in modern ones. Whether baldly seen as the utilitarian means of species preservation, or euphemistically termed a "sacred" calling, womens' reproduction was cultural capital too precious to be controlled by women themselves.²³

Throughout narratives like Spencer's Principles of Sociology and Hobhouse's Moral Evolution maternity is the guiding normative ideal. To Hobhouse, the maternal instinct is the eternal means of ordering chaotic sexual relations. The identification of the maternal instinct with order, an order that builds incrementally from primitive to modern times, has decidedly contemporary implications. Hobhouse's interest in the maternal instinct appears to be a projection of his worry over modern womens' roles. A stray footnote in another of his evolutionary studies makes this explicit. "Very few men have any natural aptitude with babies," he writes. Nevertheless, "it is almost a physical difficulty to refrain from picking up a small child who holds out its arms to one, and when he has caught it

up, a man is inclined to sway with it and dandle it, as women used to do before they had theories."²⁴

Spencer is similarly anxious about modern woman's resistance to her most 'natural' occupation. "Any extensive change in the education of women" he writes, "fitting them for businesses and professions, would be mischievous. If women comprehended all that is contained in the domestic sphere, they would ask no other" (769). Spencer goes on to list the dire consequences of feminine instincts at work in public affairs, among them the promotion of generosity over justice and individual protection over general social welfare (769-70).

Far from 'objective' analyses, Spencer's and Hobhouse's evolutionary surveys are elaborate justifications for the superiority of a new traditionalism. When Hobhouse describes the experiences of women as "property" in primitive societies, where their sexuality is offered to guests "as a matter of courtesy"--when he insists that her position even under "mother-right," was "as low as any misogynist could desire"--he is preparing the way for the idealized rationality that structures modern women's circumstances. Hobhouse makes a point of detailing the fortunes of women who treat their sexuality as their own. In some instances they are mutilated, in others caged. In one graphic example they are "chased to the sea, covered with dirt, and ducked" (159-60; 173-4). With equal ominousness, Spencer's introduction to his section on "the status of women" warns that: "the only limit to the brutality women are subjected to by men of

the lowest races, is their inability to live and propagate under greater" (725). In societies ruled by "the traffic in women," he writes, "the will and welfare of a daughter are as much disregarded by the father who sells her as by the husband who buys her" (728).

Yet their euphemistic emphasis on the sacredness of maternity, their hostility toward efforts to extend womens' roles beyond the home, suggest that "the traffic in women" had not subsided by the era of Spencer and Hobhouse. Womens' sexuality and reproductive powers were as much as ever the business of men. Indeed, Spencer ends his section on the status of women with a celebration of industrial societies where the relieving of women from taxing labor enables them to "produce more and better offspring," and thus assist their societies in the struggle for existence (743).

These descriptions of womens' degradation in primitive societies have an obvious moral: 'you never had it so good.' Less obviously, they suggest, as an historical constant, that womens' sexuality and reproductive powers are commodities to be exchanged by men.

III

From its opening pages, The Awkward Age is explicit about the commodification of women in the modern era. Feminine adolescence, Vanderbank tells Longdon, is the woman's point of entry into the marketplace. Like any new commodity which must rely on its packaging for saleability, the female adolescent is

wholly dependent on "beauty," the kind "that speaks to the crowd and crosses the foot-lights." Beauty "fetches such a price in the market that the absence of it, for a woman with a girl to marry," constitutes "a sort of social bankruptcy" (43). James's novel foregrounds a collective feminine condition that is repressed in contemporary social scientific accounts of that condition. In so doing, it reverses the logic of those accounts: womens' circumstances in the society of The Awkward Age are as bad as or worse than those of primitive women.

Female adolescents in James's world are marketable items, whose ability to attract a rich husband determines the fall or rise of their unstable elite families. Motherhood lurks in the background of these more immediate financial worries, as the instinctive index to the survival of the English upper class. The novel seems to go out of its way to press the similarities between primitive and modern societies. It depicts not only the irrational component of rational values, but the exploitation of instinctive, primitive ideals by a modern liberal society.

In an analysis of The Awkward Age, Dorothea Krook describes the speech of the novel's circle as that of a "homogeneous, closely-knit social group, sharing common standards, attitudes, forms of behavior."²⁵ What is striking about this homogeneity is that the characters are themselves so aware of it. James's fictional community has tenuous borders, and its members are vividly conscious of the need to create social bonds. Consider for example James's emphasis on the idea of the primitive.

Despite the fact that the circle's London inhabitants are if anything supercivilized, they are consistently imaged as having reverted to a primitive condition. Indeed, James claims in the preface an ideal primitive landscape as the source for the novel itself. He describes the "fostering tropic air" which nurtured his "germ," and left the author to "flounder in a deep warm jungle" (10).

What would be the attraction of the primitive to an observer of modern social life? In the work of classical social theorists like Spencer, Hobhouse, and Durkheim, all progressivists who privileged the modern stage of development, descriptions of primitive forms as ideal objects of research betray a certain nostalgia. As Durkheim writes, in primitive religion, ideas and practices "are shown in all their unity and offer themselves to an examination, it requiring only the slightest effort to lay them open. That which is accessory or secondary, the development of luxury, has not yet come to hide the principal elements."²⁶ Defined as more simple and even as more real, primitive forms project an ideal visibility. The romancing of the primitive in an increasingly heterogeneous and conflictual society was an effort by analogy to render modern social life transparent.

But these social scientists could not limit their fascination to method. The extension of England's colonial empire, the lingering interest in origins inspired by Darwinian evolutionary ideas, the search for fundamental values in an increasingly complex modern society, all fueled an obsession with

primitivism. Despite their conviction of primitive society's essential instability, and their faith in modern rationality, social scientists, as much as any single group contributed to the passion for the primitive. Primitive society symbolized the possibility of homogeneity, of spontaneous connections between homologous individuals. With this came the promise of human penetrability--that human beings could be known to one another.

Members of The Awkward Age's circle long for social cohesion, for instinctive social bonds. They are committed to an ideal of collective intimacy, reading each other's minds and participating in an invisible communication network. The variable ties and levels of understanding among circle members suggests an extended family or kinship structure. Mrs. Brook is the chief source of this metaphor; it is usually impossible to distinguish the "we" that designates the circle from the "we" that designates her family.

Hence the recurrence of the word "kind" throughout the novel, almost always connoting generic or species likeness. A representative instance comes in the final encounter between Vanderbank and Nanda. "Vanderbank," comments the narrator, "had not been in the room ten seconds before he showed that he had arrived to be kind. Kindness therefore becomes for us by a quick turn of the glass that reflects the whole scene, the high pitch of the concert--a kindness that almost immediately fills the place, to the exclusion of everything else" (347). Kindness here is more important for what it suppresses than for what it

signifies. Doubled by the mirror that "reflects the whole scene," Vanderbank's kindness projects a deceptive sense of magnitude. What could be meant by a kindness that excludes? What sort of kindness functions as a boundary? A kin/dness that is a rule of kinship. This scene, which dramatizes Vanderbank's final failure to propose to Nanda, suggests that his failure may be an expression of kinship rules. To Vanderbank, Nanda is taboo.

Let us recall, for a moment, an earlier conversation between Mitchy, the circle's nouveau riche "son of a shoemaker," and Nanda on the topic of hereditary prejudice. "My knowledge doesn't strike in you a single hereditary prejudice?" Nanda asks. "There's a kind of delicacy you haven't got," she continues, "some other kinds, certainly. But not the kind." Mitchy's lack of hereditary prejudice, Nanda suggests, is the sign of his marginality. This is consistent with a definition which James once gave of prejudice, as a "fatal obliquity of vision [that] inheres not wholly in any individual but in some indefinable property of the social atmosphere." The product of "birth, education, association," prejudice is a quality which defines a community's boundaries--insiders feel it, outsiders don't.²⁷ Though Mitchy describes himself in the very same dialogue as part of the circle "by my contacts, my associations, my indifferences" (262), his lack of hereditary prejudice stamps him irrevocably as an outsider.

There is a direct connection, I would suggest, to the

concept of "ancient prejudice" discussed in a work of English anthropology that James owned and undoubtedly read. J.F. McLennan's Primitive Marriage (1886) identifies among the clans who inhabited the Scottish Highlands, a prohibition against "marriages between members of the same primitive stock." He then goes on to speculate that "originally a man was not allowed to marry a woman of his own clan, and that, subsequent to the interfusion of the clans, the ancient prejudice remained; the rule for enforcing it--the question of degrees of affinity apart--would just be the rule of Menu."²⁸

McLennan's discussion of Scottish tribal rites has an uncanny appropriateness for a social circle made up of Brookenhams, Vanderbanks, Grendons, and Cashmores, who summer in the Scottish Highlands, and hunger for social ritual.²⁹ Vanderbank's resistance to marrying Nanda may imply an "ancient prejudice" that lingers long after the demise of the original primitive stock. As Nanda explains to Longdon in the novel's closing scene, "[Vanderbank] did his best, but he couldn't. And he's so right--for himself" (382). Like organic art, Vanderbank is true "to the law of his kind" (18). Yet another passage in Primitive Marriage complicates Vanderbank's resistance to courtship and marriage. This is McLennan's contemptuous account of the promiscuity and polyandry which characterize matriarchal societies. Male lineage in such primitive systems which give free reign to the feminine spirit, is indeterminate, so kinship ties can only be established through the female line. He

describes the wanton women of Patan, against whom the men had to adopt measures of "self-protection," and he takes as a sign of progress the developing "system of confining women--a system probably established by exogamy and the practice of capturing wives."³⁰ McLennan's alarmist tone suggests that the threat of feminine promiscuity is not unique to 'primitive' civilizations. Indeed, the idea of feminine independence from social institutions was a commonplace of late nineteenth-century social science. In a review of Emile Durkheim's Suicide (1897), Havelock Ellis remarks on Durkheim's conclusion that women are less dependent on marriage than men. Contrary to conventional wisdom, Durkheim finds, it is the widower, not the widow, the divorced man, rather than the divorced woman, who is more prone to suicide. A social institution that arose to protect women from the caprices of men, he observes, had an opposite effect.³¹

The practice of exogamy and capture, then, and the introduction of taboos on marriage, reverse a previous barbarism by transforming women from promiscuous subjects to passive objects of male lust. It is telling, in these terms, that Vanderbank is deeply offended by Nanda's efforts to facilitate their marriage (see, for example, p. 271). At once a lady-killer and a confirmed bachelor, a traditionalist and an expert statistician, Vanderbank is also the agent of a form of cultural control which both elicits and disallows feminine desire. But he is in fact beholden to the lust of one woman (Nanda), and controlled by the lust of another woman (her mother). Thus,

while progressive in form, the social circle of The Awkward Age harbors the perpetual threat of primitive sexual anarchy. The contemplation of lurking primitive dangers, this suggests, was an incitement for modern strategies of social instrumentalism.

IV

The feminine type favored by nineteenth-century social scientists is woman as natural reproducer, whose antitype is the transhistorical female pagan. But the feminine shadow of social science takes on a different cast at the turn of the century. These later social scientific discussions portray the ideal woman as a modern age Hester Prynne, social worker and agent of empathy.

The myth of social scientists which described women as maternal icons reflected a dominant cultural interest in circumscribing womens' roles at a time when their traditional roles were being challenged. Social scientists' revaluation of maternity also indicated their fears of rising reproduction rates among lower classes and colonial populations, and falling rates among England's "best classes." As the repressed borders of their analyses confirm, these social scientists wisely distrusted their own transcendent myths. Hobhouse's image of the man embracing a child to fill the gap of maternal feeling created by new "theories," Spencer's dark view of feminine principles infiltrating a modern state, at once lament the recession of biological nurture, and prophecy a new form of social nurture. Predictably, their alternative plan for social reformation also

involved the manipulation of feminine ideal types, this time the feminized typology of consolation.

The era's elites were haunted by the spectre of mass society with its accompanying threat of socialism and anarchism. This threat could be averted, they believed, by social welfare programs.³² Women had a special role to play in this kinder, gentler state. Historians have recently identified a turn-of-the-century discourse of maternalism, one that "exalted womens' capacity to mother and extended to society as a whole the values of care, nurturance, and morality."³³ I am not suggesting that these social scientists were deliberately appropriating the maternal principle. Here again, it took a woman speaking before the English Sociological Society to make this assumption explicit. "The woman, more obviously than the man, lives not for herself but for others," declared Sybella Graham, "and considers herself as part of a larger whole. The modern and womanly spirit of sympathy and oneness influencing men as well as women, drives us to grapple with the social problems of poverty and disorganisation."³⁴ The remarks of Lady Wellby and Sybella Graham together bracket the transformation of womens' status during the years of social science's development.

The Awkward Age dramatizes that ideological transformation. Implicitly, it traces the reproduction of women at the turn of the century from natural maternal icons to professional consolers, critical functionaries of a welfare state.

The volatility of womens' roles is captured by the

introduction of The Awkward Age's adolescent protagonists, Nanda and Aggie, as photographed images framed in natural materials. On the one hand, these images emphasize tactics of socialization, eerily foreshadowing the cataloging record of twentieth-century American public schools, a yearly photograph of the child as he or she is gradually absorbed into the social system. On the other hand the portraits, bordered respectively by "crimson fur" and "glazed white wood" (natural elements, artificially tinted "crimson," and "glazed") suggest the tension between culture and nature that haunts all the novel's women. Allan Sekula has described nineteenth-century photographic realism as "a system of representation capable of functioning both honorifically and repressively . . . providing for the ceremonial presentation of the bourgeois self" and "defining and regulating the criminal."³⁵ James's photographs of adolescent females, which are given to eligible bachelors as "gifts" (36), suggest yet another function of photographic realism: the mastery and exchange of female commodities.

In a later image of Nanda and Aggie, naturalizing details become the keynote. Longdon sees the pair as "lambs . . . one with its neck in a pink ribbon had no consciousness but that of being fed from the hand with the small sweet biscuit of unobjectionable knowledge, the other struggled with instincts and forebodings, with the suspicion of its doom and the far-borne scent, in the flowery fields, of blood" (181). Longdon's vision suggests a familiar contemporary fantasy about women. As one

feminist summarized it: "if a women has been made by nature to be a mother, so has a cow or a sheep . . . there is nothing to prevent this reasoning from running down-hill to its conclusion, namely, that the nearer a woman can become to a cow or a sheep the better."³⁶

In contrast to the photographs, this later view is a kind of composite image picturing feminine ideal types. Here, personal idiosyncracies disappear, and Nanda and Aggie are seen to embody two generic options of female identity. Predictably, these generalized types facilitate the positing of an authoritative and unchanging feminine nature.³⁷ And yet the very splitting of this feminine type (into innocent and knowledgeable) conveys the precariousness of Longdon's carefully wrought conception. Moreover, as the outcome of deliberate social engineering, the characters of these female beasts are decidedly unnatural.

One has been taught "unobjectionable knowledge," the novel's synonym for ignorance, while the other has been taught to know its doom. It is significant that the favored beast, the beribboned prize winner, is ignorant. Cloaked in cultural euphemisms--pink ribbon, sweet biscuit--the favored beast represents the culture's civilizing practices, and thus allows it to think well of itself. The raw, knowing beast, in contrast, by forcing an awareness of culture's underlying ruthlessness, demands expulsion. Knowing is thus represented as a source of danger. If learning ignorance is the means to womens' social survival, then the task of education becomes all the more

treacherous.

Nanda and Aggie are the products of two disparate educational systems. Aggie, the product of the Duchess' old world vigilance, is so innocent that she appears as one "to whom the language of her companions was unknown" (89). Nanda, the product of her mother's modern laissez-faire system knows everything, including the plan of her own education. Her mother, she observes, is "throwing me into the world" (118), a point repeated to a group of prospective suitors, "I didn't come in the carriage, nor in a cab, or an omnibus . . . I walked . . . Mother wants me to do everything" (111). Nanda has been let in on the theory which guides her socialization: what would be the point of apprising an adolescent of the process by which she "learns to become a woman?"³⁸

Critics have condemned Mrs. Brookenham's educational policy and the selfish immorality that brings her to so expose her daughter. There is no question that Mrs. Brook takes deliberate steps to undermine Nanda's social possibilities, nor that she is genuinely disturbed by the challenge to her own sexual prominence posed by the debut of an attractive daughter. Her insistence on the naturalness of her actions--that it was all "instinctive and unconscious" (331-2)--is well within the liberal ideology of the novel's circle. Yet there might in fact be a deeper logic to Mrs. Brook's actions, of which she herself is not entirely aware.

According to feminist psychoanalytic theory, the earliest development of subjective consciousness involves the

internalization of social norms. With language, the subject is bound to social law. Dislodging the force of these laws requires reexperiencing the process of socialization in all its constructedness.³⁹ Considered in these terms, the deeper logic of Nanda's education with all the strings attached may be to facilitate her questioning of social norms. Mrs. Brook, we might say, stages Nanda's education, foregrounding the method and purpose of what she is taught in order to reveal the culture's ritualized constraint of women.

In making her daughter knowledgeable and unmarriageable, Mrs. Brookenham rejects the interests of her social class. Nanda's reproductive capacities represent the hope of her elite society: her marriage to Vanderbank promises the four children that would confirm her class' reproductive power. As the Duchess remarks, "they're just the people to have, that blessed pair, a fine old English family" (189). Her prophecy, a family of "half a dozen," is statistically precise: in this era, four was the calculated minimum number of offspring required for a stock to maintain itself.⁴⁰ In preventing their marriage, Mrs. Brook realizes a social death wish.

But Mrs. Brook is no revolutionary; she also fulfills a socially sanctioned maternal image which she passes on to her daughter. While actively hostile to her own offspring, to society at large she is compulsively maternal. Like Hester Prynne at the end of The Scarlet Letter, Mrs. Brook is a consoler of women in a society which institutionalizes feminine grief and

consolation, just as it institutionalizes feminine wantonness and constraint. To become a wife in the novel's society is to enter upon a cycle of discontent, debauchery, and regulation. A social worker of sorts, Mrs. Brook's home is a clinic for the novel's parade of betrayed and dissatisfied wives. According to one husband, Mrs. Brook's circle is an "institution . . . resting on a deep human need," and Mrs. Brook is "wonderful for wives." As long as feminine sorrows persist, there will be a place for Mrs. Brook who "has helped so many before, and will help so many still to come" (367). Her social service has a primitive parallel in the elaborate kinship networks which returned runaway wives to their husbands in order to ensure the continued absolution of their debts.⁴¹

Nor is Mrs. Brook only an agent of consolation. She operates as a general force for social cohesion. And she transmits her organizational skills to her daughter. Nanda has her own circle where people "clutch" and "cling" to her. She performs the sympathetic acts of consolation and repair--"taking a pound of tea to her old nurse" or "going to read to the old women in the workhouse"--that form a part of woman's role in an emerging welfare state. Mrs. Brook, the modern mother, fashions Nanda as a new feminine type for the twentieth century.

Mrs. Brook and her daughter exemplify the professionalization of traditional women's activities, which in this era are extended beyond the home. Mothers have launched their maternal expertise into society in a bid for political

power. The other side of this development is the governmental assumption of roles traditionally accorded families. In a revealing moment, Mrs. Brook calls her family "a case" for an "investigating society" (209), registering the supplanting of familial rites of transmission by welfare agencies. As Jurgen Habermas observes, the family "increasingly lost . . . the function of upbringing and education, protection, care, and guidance . . . [it] lost power as an agent of personal internalization" (155-6). The boundaries between the domestic and public realms had blurred; the family had become permeable. But Mrs. Brook's remark is ironic, an allusion to her family's dwindling fortune and overall disarray. There is little chance that the Brookenham's will become the object of an investigating society, since the public supervision of families was designed for "lower" classes, races, and ethnic groups.⁴² By the novel's end, however, Mrs. Brook's formerly powerful position is entirely compromised. She becomes a target of collective reproach, with all the novel's men united against her (as she had always predicted). Meanwhile, Nanda is sheperded away to a life as the barren yet vital feminine influence in Longdon's welfare e/state.

James's 1899 novel explores a particular instance of womens' typecasting and regulation, which arises from their position in a threatened aristocratic society obsessed with its declining productivity. The circumstances of James's bourgeois and upper-class women seem to have been transcultural. In contemporary France, the United States, even Germany, all modernizing nations

with emerging social scientific disciplines, women were objectified in similar ways and censured for their resistance to maternity.⁴³ James's invocation of a primitive landscape suggests that male control of female sexuality and reproduction may be transhistorical as well. Indeed, as Spencer and Hobhouse imply, contemplating the bald methods of a primitive social order was both affirmative and educational.

The Awkward Age casts an historical, feminine slant on contemporary social science, and also meditates on the deeper continuities between primitive and civilized societies in their respective treatments of women.⁴⁴ Even modern welfare states which sought to incorporate feminine qualities of nurture within broader instrumental policies, and welcomed armies of female social workers, had a very mixed impact on women's political status. Maternalist politics marginalized women in essentialized roles. The ambivalence that turn-of-the century English leaders felt toward the state's "kinder, gentler" image was expressed in intermittent contempt for woman reformers and bureaucrats. But the most important reason for the decline of maternalist politics was that, like the earlier social scientific myth, it defined women against the new dominant ideology of scientific objectivity and expertise. Tellingly, it was abandoned by a post-World War I generation of feminists for being "unsystematic and unscientific."⁴⁵ In the final analysis, maternalist politics sustained rather than challenged a disciplinary doctrine that pursued woman as the naturalized type of social science.

In the theories of numerous social scientists of the era, the subject of women reveals an underlying commitment to repudiated biological categories. From William James's Principles of Psychology to W.I. Thomas' theories of race prejudice, womens' issues were the pivot for the return of a repressed essentialism.⁴⁶ Among the virtues of The Awkward Age is its exploration of the perceived "crisis" in womens' roles--the breakdown of traditional marriage and maternity rites--as a cultural construct, which is part of a more pervasive crisis of elite preeminence at the turn of the century. William James once noted "the tendency of [Henry's] personages to reflect on themselves and give an acute critical scientific introspective classification of their own natures and states of mind."⁴⁷ His remark would seem to suggest that his brother was something of a social scientist. And indeed Henry James may be said to have participated in the invention of its generalizing methods: typecasting, idealizing, categorization by groups. Yet he persistently questioned his affinity for these abstract categories, a questioning expressed both overtly, as in his debates with Wells, and more powerfully (if more obliquely) in the ambivalence his novels convey toward these categories as devices of social control. If The Awkward Age is finally resistant to social scientific methods, it is not because its author transcended them or denied their attractions, but because he so thoroughly understood them.

NOTES

1. I use the term "social science" to designate a field of inquiry which centered upon the tension between nature versus culture, and laissez faire versus interventionist forms of government. I focus largely on debates surrounding the emergence of sociology, but because of the tenuous borders between sociology, anthropology, psychology, etc. at this point of disciplinary origins, I use the general category. For an admirably lucid account of the "vogue" of sociology in this period, see Stefan Collini, Liberalism and Sociology: L.T. Hobhouse and Political Argument in England 1880-1914 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), especially pp. 189-234.
2. Sociological Papers (London: Macmillan, 1905), p. 78.
3. "The sometimes dreaded, often delayed, but never fully arrested coming to the forefront of some vague slip of a daughter," James observes in the novel's preface, introduces "difference . . . in certain friendly houses." The Awkward Age (New York: Penguin, 1981), p. 8. The text is from the New York Edition. All subsequent references to this edition will be included parenthetically in the essay.
4. On the institutionalization of English studies, see, for example, Terry Eagleton, Literary Theory (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), pp. 1-53; and Francis Mulhern, The Moment of Scrutiny (London: Basil Blackwell, 1979). For the

institutionalization of social science see Collini's Liberalism, as well as his "Sociology and Idealism in Britain 1880-1920," Archives Europeenes Sociologique XIX (1978), pp. 3-50; and Philip Abrams, The Origins of British Sociology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968).

5. James's reviews of French writers, which provide many insights on literary versus social theory have been collected in Henry James: French Writers, Other European Writers, The Prefaces to the New York Edition, ed. Leon Edel (New York: Library of America, 1984). James's relationship to his brother William's ideas has been explored by Sharon Cameron in an important new study, Thinking in Henry James (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989). James's library holdings include a considerable number of books on social theory. The evidence, from marginalia, letters, etc. that James read many of them should alter prevailing critical views of James's interests as exclusively belletristic. I mention here only those books most pertinent to my arguments in this essay. Walter Bagehot's, Biographical Studies (1881); Economic Studies (1888); and Literary Studies (1891); Leslie Stephen's Social Rights and Duties (1897); Herbert Spencer's Education: Intellectual, Moral, and Physical (1871), Illustrations of Universal Progress (1870), Essays: Moral, Political, and Aesthetic (1871), An Autobiography (1904); T.H.Huxley's Man's Place in Nature (1894), Method and Results (1894); E.L. Godkin's The Unforseen Tendencies of Democracy (1898); Arthur Balfour's The Foundations of Belief

(1895); John Morley's Walpole (1889), Oliver Cromwell (1900), The Life of Gladstone (1903); J.F. McLennan's Primitive Marriage (1886). For more on these holdings see, The Library of Henry James compiled and edited by Adeline Tintner and Leon Edel (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Research Press, 1987). Much of the James-Wells debate has been published in Henry James and H.G.Wells ed. Leon Edel and Gordon N. Ray (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1958).

6. Spencer's phrase is from his section on "The Status of Women" in The Principles of Sociology Volume I (New York and London: Appleton, 1910), first published in 1876.

7. In "Animal Sociology and a Natural Economy of the Body Politic, Part I," The Signs Reader (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), pp. 123-138), Donna Haraway complains that women "have challenged our traditional assignments to the status of natural objects by becoming anti-natural in our ideology." Women have worked against themselves "by agreeing that 'nature' is our enemy and that we must control our 'natural' bodies at all costs to enter the hallowed kingdom of the cultural body politic as defined by liberal theorists of political economy" (125). Implicit in Haraway's remarks is the powerful claim that an intellectually self-aware, revitalized essentialism might be the basis for a new feminist politics.

8. Seymour Chatman analyzes this grammatical submergence of agents as a characteristic of the late style. See The Later Style of Henry James (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1972), especially

chapters five and six.

9. Theodore Porter, The Rise of Statistical Thinking (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 272-292 and passim.

10. Quoted in Harry Elmer Barnes, Introduction to the History of Sociology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), pp. 617-618.

11. James's organic language in the preface to The Awkward Age--his reference to his work as "triumphantly scientific," with no part "disengageable," and claim for the "felicity" of his "synthetic whole," 23-4--like his frequent allusions to the imagination's "plasticity," parallels strikingly Hobhouse's description of reason. Like Henry James's, Hobhouse's life was split by a tension between his modernist intellectual interests and his traditional habits. As Hobhouse's son recalled, "Father was immensely conservative in some ways . . . he had the traditional instincts of the traditional country family, and these not being able to intrude on his thought, used to come out in little ways in his habits" quoted in Collini Liberalism, p. 170.

12. Theodore Porter in Statistical Thinking describes these social scientific models as "allegories of stability and lawlike certainty" (48). See also Herbert Spencer, The Study of Sociology (New York: Appleton, 1874).

13. "Cataloging the Creatures of the Deep: 'Billy Budd, Sailor' and the Rise of Sociology," Boundary 2 (Winter, 1990), pp. 272-304.

14. For a superb analysis of the economic and political decline of England during this period see Aaron Friedberg, The Weary Titan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), especially chapters two and three. Collini's Liberalism and "Idealism", provide excellent discussions of early English social science. See also, Abrams, Origins; Barnes, History, for detailed treatments of the major thinkers; and the social scientific journals which originated in this period, Mind, and Sociological Papers which became The Sociological Review. For an important sociological analysis of the emergence of an English professional class which internalized traditional forms of status stratification and legitimation, see Magali Sarfatti Larson, The Rise of Professionalism (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977), especially pp. 80-103.

15. Sociology offered a means for informed intervention into social processes, for understanding, in the words of Henry Drummond, "the rationale of social progress" Ascent of Man (1894), quoted in Collini, Liberalism, p. 188. Others took the view of sociology as an applied science, readily adaptable to contemporary social problems, to extreme lengths. As E.A. Westermarck observed, marking the new union of imperialist, humanitarian, and capitalist values, "I am convinced that in our dealings with non-European races, some sociological knowledge, well applied, would generally be a more satisfactory weapon than gunpowder. It would be more humane and cheaper too." Sociology as a University Study (London: Macmillan, 1908), p. 31.

16. See Samuel Hynes, The Edwardian Turn of Mind (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), especially chapters six, seven, and eight. For specific quotes see pp. 308-9.
17. For more on the problem of English efficiency in this era see Friedberg, Titan, pp. 21-88.
18. Quotes are from Greta Jones, Social Darwinism and English Thought (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1980), p. 102. Galton's Eugenics movement was so termed by the New York Nation, quoted in Sociological Papers, "Press Comments," p. 81.
19. "The Possible Improvement of the Human Breed Under the Existing Conditions of Law and Sentiment," lecture first published in Man (1901), reprinted in Abrams, Origins, pp. 260-264. George Bernard Shaw also endorsed a Eugenicist breeding program in a 1904 letter to the English Sociological Society, Sociological Papers, pp. 74-5.
20. Method and Result (London: Macmillan, 1893), pp. 428-30.
21. Benjamin Kidd, Social Evolution (London: Macmillan, 1894), pp. 331-348; T.H. Huxley, Method, pp. 381--2; L.T. Hobhouse, (London: Macmillan), pp. 426-7.
22. Habermas continues, "Against a public opinion that, as it seemed, had been perverted from an instrument of liberation into an agent of repression, liberalism, faithful to its own ratio, could only summon public opinion once again. Yet what was needed now was a restricted arrangement to secure for a public opinion finding itself in the minority an influence against the prevailing opinions that per se it was incapable of developing."

The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989), pp. 136-138 and passim.

23. Hobhouse uses this term directly to characterize the maternal role in Morals in Evolution (London: Chapman and Hall, 1906), p. 146. Spencer more often implies it, see Principles of Sociology, pp. 767-770. All subsequent references to these two works will be included parenthetically in the text. Gayle Rubin's arguments in "The Traffic in Women: Note on the 'Political Economy' of Sex," in Toward an Anthropology of Women, ed. Rayna Reiter (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975), pp. 157-211, are relevant to my analysis throughout this section. See also Ulla Vuorela's The Women's Question and the Modes of Human Reproduction (Monographs of the Finnish Society for Developmental Studies No. 1, 1987), a work of historical anthropology which distinguishes between "patriarchal modes of human reproduction" where women's "fertility and sexuality are controlled and manipulated by men," and "adhesive modes of human reproduction" where women's "ability to control their sexual power is manifested in their ability to adapt to nature through their knowledge of the reproductive functions of their bodies and socially in their ability to decide on child survival" (p. 40), and Thomas Laqueur, "Orgasm, Generation, and the Politics of Reproductive Biology," Representations 14 (1980), pp. 1-41.

24. Mind in Evolution, p. 473.

25. The Ordeal of Consciousness in Henry James (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), p. 151.

26. The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life (New York: George Allen and Unwin, 1915), p. 18 and passim. For more on the era's fascination with the primitive see John Vickery's The Literary Impact of "The Golden Bough" (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973).

27. James's definition appears in an 1863 letter to Thomas Sargeant Perry. It is quoted and discussed in Christopher Ricks's T.S. Eliot And Prejudice (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), pp. 101-103.

28. James's copy of Primitive Marriage in the Barrett Collection at the University of Virginia is autographed by James, and the pages are cut from page one through page ninety-seven. Significantly, these pages include both the description of the Scottish clans, and the nervous discussion of primitive matriarchies featuring widespread polyandry.

29. Most of the surnames in the novel's circle are of Scottish derivation. See, The Surnames of Scotland by George F. Black (New York: New York Public Library, 1946). Brook, p. 105; Cash, p. 141 and More, p. 617; Grendon, p. 328; Long, p. 437; Don, p. 214; and Van, p. 792. Placenames are also of Scottish origin. See "Brander," where Mrs. Brook sends Harold early in the novel, p. 99; "Buckham," p. 112 (the novel's "Buckingham Crescent"); and "Becc," p. 64 (the novel's "Beccles").

30. Primitive Marriage, pp. 95-96. For a valuable discussion of primitive matriarchies which addresses the 19th C. obsession with "Das Mutterrecht," see Joan Bamberger, "The Myth of Matriarchy,"

in Women, Culture and Society ed. Michelle Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), pp. 263-280. Both Spencer and Hobhouse are contemptuous of contemporary arguments for mother-right. See Principles, pp. 623-642; and Morals, pp. 159-178.

31. Ellis' review appeared in Mind VII (1898), pp. 249-253.

32. As the future prime minister Arthur Balfour asserted in 1895, "Social legislation is not merely to be distinguished from socialist legislation, but is its most direct opposite and its most effective antidote." Quoted in Friedberg, Titan, p. 97.

33. Seth Koven and Sonya Michel, "Womanly Duties: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States in France, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States 1880-1920," American Historical Review (1990), pp. 1076-1108. One of the strengths of this essay is the comparativist perspective. "In all four countries," they observe, "factors such as the 'anomie' of modernity, the social consequences of rapid industrial and urban growth, and the growing power of class-based movements threatened the foundations of bourgeois civil societies and created political climates that were receptive to social welfare initiatives." Yet maternalist programs "were more likely to be effective when their causes were taken up by male political actors pursuing other goals, such as pro-natalism or control of the labor force. The decades before World War I were supercharged with nationalist agendas and anxieties concerning depopulation, degeneration, and efficiency, as states vied for

military and imperial preeminence" (pp. 1079-1081).

34. Sociological Papers (London: Macmillan, 1909), p. 89. In his influential book, Darwinism and Politics (London: Macmillan, 1891), D.G. Ritchie emphasizes, against the tenuous ground of natural inheritance, the importance of what he calls, inheritance in "a sociological sense." Ritchie's arguments turn on the centrality of the mother as the key socializing agent. "Religious leaders," he writes, "have always learned that their success depends on the mothers of the race. When will political leaders learn the same?" Ritchie's book emphasized the necessity of redefining women's roles in a society which had begun to doubt the value of "cheap numerosity" (pp. 70-1).

35. "The Body and the Archive," October 39 (Winter, 1986), pp. 6-7.

36. Mona Caird, "A Defence Of The So-Called 'Wild Women' Nineteenth Century (May, 1892), pp. 817-818. Caird summarizes a range of naturalist arguments defending womens' exclusive status as reproducers, among them, the claim that women were uneducable, p. 819. Neitzsche had his own contemporary version of this idea: "Women are cats, birds, or at best cows" Thus Spake Zarathustra.

37. As Allan Sekula observes of Francis Galton's generalizing composites (the most successful of which, by Galton's own estimation, was "the Jewish type"): by refuting "nominalist approaches," they lent support to his "essentialist physical anthropology of race" (p. 51). Ruth Leys' "Types of One: Adolf Meyer's Life Chart and the Representation of Individuality"

Representations (1991), offers another fascinating treatment of social scientists' visual devices for representing human types.

38. This quotation is from Simone Du Beauvoir, The Second Sex (New York: Knopf, 1970).

39. See, for example, Juliet Mitchell, Psycho-Analysis and Feminism (New York: Vintage, 1975), Nancy Chodorow, The Reproduction of Mothering (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), Catherine MacKinnon, "Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: An Agenda for Theory," The Signs Reader.

40. W.C.D. Whetham, The Family and the Nation: A Study in Natural Inheritance and Social Responsibility (London: Longmans, Green, 1909), p. 60.

41. Rubin, "Traffic," p. 205.

42. This supervision of the family is exemplified by Charles Booth's Life and Labour of the People of London (1887-1903) which recorded the rapid expansion of an urban industrial class so distanced from English elites as to seem a foreign populace.

43. Koven and Michel detail the parallels between developing welfare states in this era. It is telling that James himself sets up a kind of international kaleidoscope in The Awkward Age's preface, where he compares feminine socialization rites in England, France, and the United States (pp. 12-13 and passim). The French parallel is especially significant given James's admitted dependence (see preface, pp. 14-17) on the French dialogue novelist Gyp, whose Durkheimian "social studies" so often concern the subject of women and marriage. James was also

profoundly engaged with the writings of the French "social botanists," Balzac and Zola. Indeed, in 1899 Zola published a novel called Fecundity, (which James reviewed) whose themes of feminine socialization, maternity, and race suicide parallel those of The Awkward Age. James's career-long interest in maternity seems to have been linked from the start to France. His early short story, "The Madonna of the Future," published in The Atlantic Monthly (March, 1873) and in Revue des deux Mondes (April, 1875), concerns a painter whose desire to create a modern madonna results in artistic paralysis. Not coincidentally, he find his "subject marvelously realised" in a beggar woman with her illegitimate child. Two complementary analyses of the ideology of decline in fin-de-siecle France are Robert A. Nye's Crime, Madness, and Politics in Modern France (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984) and Karen Offen's "Depopulation, Nationalism, and Feminism in Fin-De-Siecle France," American Historical Review 89 (June 1984), pp. 648-676.

44. In "The Use and Abuse of Anthropology: Reflections on Feminism and Cross-Cultural Understanding," Signs (Spring 1980), pp. 389-417, Michelle Rosaldo analyzes the stakes involved in this claim. "Unlike many anthropologists, who argue for the privileged place of women here or there," she writes, "my reading of the anthropological record leads me to conclude that human cultural and social forms have always been male dominated. By this, I mean not that men rule by right or even that men rule at all and certainly not that women everywhere are passive victims

of a world that men define. Rather, I would point to a collection of related facts which seem to argue that in all known human groups . . . the vast majority of opportunities for public influence and prestige, the ability to forge relationships, determine enmities, speak up in public, use or forswear the use of force are all recognized as men's privilege and right" (pp. 393-4). The task for Feminist scholars is to understand gender inequalities in relation to specific historical processes and social facts (such as racism and class conflict), to provide "new ways of linking the particulars of women's lives, activities, and goals to inequalities wherever they exist" (p. 417).

45. "Womanly Duties," pp. 1107-1108.

46. In The Principles of Psychology (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), pp. 1055-1056, William James endorsed the idea of the "maternal instinct," as did W.I. Thomas in "The Psychology of Race-Prejudice," The American Journal of Sociology (March, 1904), pp. 593-611).

47. The James Family: A Group Portrait, ed. F.O. Matthiessen (New York: Vintage, 1980), p. 323. This chapter as a whole, "HJ and WJ: On Each Other's Work" exemplifies what has been too often overlooked by Henry James's critics, that he was a dedicated reader of his brother's work. Henry also kept up with William's essays and reviews of his books in leading scientific journals such as Mind (see James Family, p. 324). Henry's reading of William's work would have made him as knowledgeable about the main tenets of social science as most intellectuals of his day.

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