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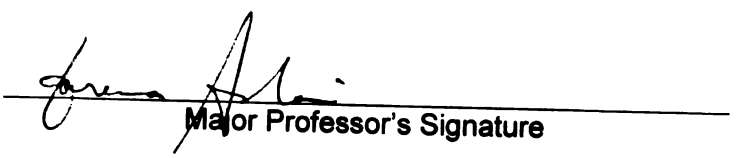

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"PREPOSTEROUS AND PARALLEL": REALIST DISORIENTATION IN MONA CAIRD'S *THE DAUGHTERS OF DANAUS*

By

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ABSTRACT

"PREPOSTEROUS AND PARALLEL": REALIST DISORIENTATION IN MONA CAIRD'S *THE DAUGHTERS OF DANAUS*

By

Katherine M. Whitney

Most scholarly attention to Mona Caird has focused entirely on Caird's feminist politics, particularly her views on marriage. Although laying the groundwork for feminist readings of Caird's novels, this criticism has ignored Caird's particular role in shaping *fin-de-siècle* realism. I argue that Mona Caird's novel *The Daughters of Danaus* (1894) employs a narrative strategy of realist disorientation that radically reorients readers to the interiority of the novel's heroine. As the heroine fails to actualize any of her proto-feminist desires, readers are meant to empathize with her struggle to escape traditional women's narratives. The emotionality of this novel, and its effect upon the reader, constitute its political agenda: *The Daughters of Danaus* seeks to change readers' opinions of women in hopes that a change in public sentiment will lead to changes in women's political and legal positions in society.

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Mona Caird's *The Daughters of Danaus* (1894) arrives at a particularly volatile moment in literary history. At the so-called end of Realism and on the cusp of Modernism, late-Victorian aesthetic movements grappled with major issues such as the political and social implications of the Industrial Revolution and England's decline as *the* Imperial power. As England's monopoly on the world's resources weakened, its monopoly on reality broke down. The attempt to create a unified narrative reality—arguably the project of mid-century realists—became more and more fraught with the question of *which* reality ought to be "represented" or created. Instead of asking the best way to represent *the* reality or even *a* unified reality, late nineteenth-century realists began questioning the nature of reality itself. The changing *experience* of reality became a preoccupation of novels like *The Daughters of Danaus*, in which one woman's experience of the pressures of domesticity keeps her from fulfilling her potential to be a musician. However, I would argue that this novel is not an aesthetic portrayal of political impotence—an argument frequently made by theorists about *fin-de-siècle* works; instead, in its very pessimism—and the narrative strategies used to convey the heroine's particular suffering—lies a complex political project.

The Daughters of Danaus emphasizes that there are many different realities and that it matters which reality one represents. Caird's narrator chooses to follow Hadria, a young woman with radical, proto-feminist ideas, but not without making us aware that there are other "realities" available: by supporting herself with paid work, Hadria's elder sister Algitha is able to leave home without first marrying. Hadria, the sister who seems (according to the logic of readerly expectation) to be the most likely character to choose a life like Algitha's, cannot seem to get outside of the conventional women's narrative. At

the same time, the narration of this story shifts from one disorienting mode to another—never seemingly able to settle on one successful mode of representing Hadria's particular negotiation of societal pressures. Both the plot and the narrative strategy of this novel beg the question: what does it mean to chronicle failure rather than catalog success? As Hadria repeatedly fails to actualize any of her proto-feminist desires, readers are meant to empathize with her struggle to escape the traditional women's narrative of domesticity, marriage and motherhood. The rest of this essay argues that the emotionality of this novel, and its effect upon the reader, constitute its political agenda; *The Daughters of Danaus* seeks to change readers' opinions of women in hopes that a change in public sentiment will lead to changes in women's political and legal positions in society.

In order to convey this political message, the novel employs several (shifting) narrative strategies, working within and in contradiction to earlier realist styles. In *The Realistic Imagination*, George Levine argues that realist novelists define their own realism over and against that of earlier realist novelists, making the definition of (an ever-shifting) Victorian realism elusive and disorienting. However, it is the self-consciousness inherent in this form that becomes realism's most recognizable "convention" (15). As a precursor to the Modernist rejection of a reality *to* represent, *The Daughters of Danaus* exploits this instability of realism and creates a certain multiplicity *within* the narrative self-consciousness of this novel that makes it hard to pin down. Both reacting against and borrowing from earlier realist narrative strategies, *The Daughters of Danaus* puts pressure on the one "convention" (of creating a style in reaction to earlier realist styles) that the realist mode can most easily claim. In other words, it not only matters that the narrator self-consciously respond to earlier realist styles, but it also matters what *sort* of

self-consciousness the narrator employs to convey the reality of Hadria's experience. The novel's altering self-consciousnesses create an atmosphere of confusion that encourages readers to respond emotionally to the narrative.

As I mentioned earlier, the common critical narrative associated with *fin-de-siècle* literature—that the late nineteenth-century realists were politically jaded and pessimistic about changing society via literary intervention—contradicts the argument I am making about the political agenda of this novel. Although quite different in their theoretical approaches to literature, Terry Eagleton and Nancy Armstrong point to similar trends in late nineteenth-century realism. Eagleton, in "The flight to the real," frames his argument in terms of historical and aesthetic trends towards the end of the century. Recognizing the inability to control or direct the social order, late-century realists committed a "kind of collective intellectual suicide" (17). In light of the failures of the Industrial Revolution or the various applications of the theory of evolution to resolve England's problems, *fin-de-siècle* artists could not conceive of their own, comparatively small, works as politically influential. Eagleton argues that this pessimism creates a stylistic combination of aestheticism and naturalism in the novel that manifests itself in apathetic determinism: "[I]f determinism is true, then consciousness can now only register rather than intervene. The point is to photograph the world, not to change it. Aestheticizing the unacceptable is a common *fin-de-siècle* pastime" (16). In *How Novels Think*, Nancy Armstrong locates a similar pessimism at the end of the nineteenth century. Where earlier novels created individuals (3) and mid-century novels "disciplined" the excesses of individualism (8), late-century novels "spelled out the conflict between the individual and some form of collectivity that obliterated individualism" (23). For the late-century novelist, the

individual is no longer able to enact social change. In other words, the late nineteenth-century novel seems to have lost its utopian longings, its aspirations to engender change in its readers and thereby society. In discussing the pessimism associated with late realism, both Armstrong and Eagleton describe an aesthetic movement divorced of its political ambitions. *The Daughters of Danaus*, in its narrative instability and description of Hadria's failure to avoid marriage, seems to follow this pattern of pessimism. However, this pessimism works on readers' emotions in an attempt to inform them of the injustices of women's inferior positions in society.

The few literary critics who have studied *The Daughters of Danaus* are largely concerned with Caird's political writings and how they might bear on readings of the novel.[1] Because the novel critiques marriage, domesticity and motherhood, scholars often read it as part of the political fervor of late 19th-century feminism, and even though it is fiction, literary critics often read it as a polemical feminist essay. For example, in the most extensive reading of *The Daughters of Danaus*, Margaret Morganroth Gullette maintains that "'Marriage" was the word—the system—[Caird] chose to deconstruct" (496), but Gullette seems more interested in marriage as a social institution rather than a trope in fiction. To argue this point, Gullette draws from *The Daughters of Danaus* as well as Caird's polemical essays, but she does not distinguish between these texts. The quotes *appear* all Caird's, even though Gullette is, at times, actually quoting the narrator of *The Daughters of Danaus*. Discussing the Greek myth to which the novel's title

[1] There is no doubt that the Victorian New Woman novel both shaped and was shaped by radical feminist politics. In fact, most critics of this *fin-de-siècle* phenomenon tend to equate fiction writing and feminism. Ann Heilmann argues that "New Woman fiction [...] constituted, and conceived of itself as, an agent of social and political transformation" (4), and as Sally Ledger points out, "writing itself is seen as a liberatory activity [for women writers]" (27). Although these critics have paved the way for feminist readings of New Woman fiction, it is important to keep in mind the artistic intervention of the novel into the political movement of feminism.

alludes, Gullette writes that "Caird saw [housework...] as 'the idiot's labour of eternally drawing water in sieves from fathomless wells'" (496). The quoted portion of Gullette's writing actually comes from a narrative description towards the end of the novel (467). It is *not* what "Caird saw" but what the narrator, describing Hadria's impression of another woman's lot, "saw." Effectively making narrator and author identical, Gullette's style of argumentation does not account for narrative mediation or the implications this mediation might have for the feminism of the novel. Her attention to Caird's feminism makes no distinction between Caird's nonfiction essays and her novels. Gullette's collapsing of Caird's essays and novels does not allow one to understand the complex and artistic ways Caird's fiction expresses feminist ideals. In other words, one cannot understand the feminist implications of *The Daughters of Danaus* without regarding the implications of its genre[2].

This is not to say that Caird's essays and fiction bear absolutely no relationship to one another. What we *can* glean from reading Caird's fiction in light of her essays is not a direct statement of political intent that crosses seamlessly from one genre to another but rather an awareness of the political discourses that underlie both works. Certain patterns emerge, particularly in Caird's interest in and use of Darwin, that give us clues about the political motivations of her fiction.

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[2] Reading through "The Morality of Marriage," I noticed a curious echo of a moment in *The Daughters of Danaus*. In the essay, Caird writes that women haven't "written Shakespeare's plays (as it is generally quaintly expressed)" because of "the weary detail of domestic duties, of the unending petty responsibilities" (6). Towards the end of the novel, a "callow youth" comes to dinner one evening and utters that quaint expression (371). The narrator paraphrases his words: "But it was so absurd to pretend that women could do work that was peculiar to men (Hadria agreed, with a chuckle.) When had they written one of Shakespeare's dramas? (When indeed? History was ominously silent on that point.)" (372). Hadria's parentheticals constitute an ironic commentary on the absurdity of the callow youth's logic; whereas the argument in Caird's essay directly confronts the difficulties of women creating art. Even at these moments, when novel and essay most obviously echo each other, generic contexts shift and complicate the effect each passage has. In other words, they cannot be said to say the same thing without grossly simplifying both.

The Morality of Marriage and other essays, a collection of Caird's political writings, is heavily influenced by Darwinism. In it, Caird describes human nature in a state of development, but she significantly does not equate this development with positive progress. She explores the complex interplay of "human nature" and "Nature," arguing that society has driven women to reproduce to a destructive extent. What Caird calls "human nature," we might call "culture"—since she describes it as the human intervention in natural processes. Because of the social value placed on women's reproductive capabilities, women's "whole nature is directed to hot-house cultivation, in such a manner, as to drive all the vital forces in one sole direction." This "creates innumerable miseries, and some of them seem to have become chronic, or hereditary, and from being so common have lost the very name of disease" (135). Caird almost describes the contemporary view of women's place in civil society as a genetic experiment gone wrong. She puts pressure on the Victorian use of the theory of evolution to justify the status quo: "to found a theory of society upon hereditary adaptations which they now find in an enslaved race [of women], is to found a theory of nature upon artificial and diseased development" (135). In other words, it is *un*natural for women to devote all of their energies to reproduction—it is a flawed and monstrous overdevelopment of only one aspect of woman's nature. At the same time that she critiques this development of human nature she also holds out the possibility for human nature to develop differently. She calls human nature "that most plastic material" and writes that it "is precisely the author and creator of all the changes that the world has ever seen or ever *will* see" (148).

In *Time Travels* (2005), Elizabeth Grosz echoes a similar understanding of the potential of Darwin's writings. Grosz goes against conventional feminist critiques of

Darwin and argues that Darwin's writing, in its "dynamic and open-ended understanding of the intermingling of history and biology," puts pressure on the "essentialism and teleology" that are usually attributed to it (17). In her reading of Darwin, Grosz accords humans—particularly feminists—some agency in shaping society. Over one hundred years before Grosz, Caird uses Darwin to implicitly argue for the same agency. But it is *how* human nature can change the way society treats women that has essential implications for the political valence of Caird's fiction.

Dedicated to the theory of evolution as a model for social change, Caird takes seriously the extreme slowness of evolutionary change. After discussing the ways women have been mistreated by men and society at large, she writes,

> But practically, what is to be done? How would a freer system work? We must face the unpalatable fact that a cut-and-dried scheme which will now seem plausible, is just as impossible as our present state of society would have appeared to the man of the Middle Ages. All that can be done, at any time in the world's history, is to indicate the next direction of development (148).

In order to point humanity in the right direction, Caird relies explicitly on sentiment. In the introduction to her collection of essays, Caird guides her readers' understanding of her mode of political intervention:

> It will be clear to any reader [...] that sentiments [...] rather than legal machinery, are relied upon as a method of reform; the law being regarded merely as the means of stereotyping the advance in sentiment when it is achieved; accompanying, not preceding, the change of feeling (2).

Under this reading, emotions are the root of political change. If we are to accord Caird's fiction a political motive, we might begin by examining its emotionality. This aspect of Caird's nonfiction can give us some insight into the choices she makes as a novelist. *The Daughters of Danaus* does not follow the pattern of other New Woman novels (for instance, George Gissing's *The Odd Women* or Fanny Fern's *Ruth Hall*, in which

heroines avoid marriage and/or support themselves through work) because she believes change does not begin with changing the rules of society (i.e. making it more legally possible for women to support themselves and remain single). The best way she can point her readers in the direction of change is to reach them emotionally. Thus Hadria's failures to achieve New Woman goals—which gives the novel its melancholic and disappointing resolution—arguably constitute the novel's feminist successes.

In order to understand the novel's feminism, it is necessary to look closely at the unique narrative strategies Caird uses to convey its melancholy plot. The narrative strategy of this novel is what I call realist disorientation. The moments I explore later in this essay are narrative passages that work within and against the conventions of realism in order to disorient the reader. What I will argue is that this project of disorientation attempts a radical reorientation of readers' interiority to that of women like Hadria, women who have the intellectual and creative potential to create complex works of art but cannot because of societal pressures to marry and produce children. The pessimism of this novel's dénouement may coincide with the *fin-de-siècle* artistic apathy discussed by Eagleton and Armstrong; however, this novel uses its melancholy to engender change in its readers' worldviews. The novel's attempt to change society can no longer be encompassed by the subject-making and subject-disciplining project of its realist ancestors. In light of the myriad conflicts engendered by the very projects that were meant to ameliorate society's woes—such as the technology of the Industrial Revolution or the concept of evolution—Caird's novel does not accept pure determinism and the helpless stance that goes along with it. Instead, *The Daughters of Danaus* re-envisions the role that a novel can play in shaping social structures. The narrative strategy of realist

disorientation involves plunging readers into objectively confusing moments so that the emotional saturation of these moments becomes the impetus for shifting readers' sympathies to the complex interior struggles facing late-Victorian women.

The opening passage of *The Daughters of Danaus* highlights the ways Caird's narrator deviates from earlier realist narrators and hints at the technique of realist disorientation Caird employs throughout the novel. Elements that at first appear to be *un*realistic become evidence of the particular realism Caird creates:

> It was only just light enough to discern the five human forms in the dimness of the garret; the rays of the moon having to find their way through the deep window-embrasures of the keep. Less illumination would have sufficed to disclose the ancient character of the garret, with its low ceiling, and the graduated mouldings of the cornice, giving the effect of a shallow dome. The house stood obviously very high, for one could see from the windows for miles over a bleak country, coldly lit by the rays of the moon, which was almost at the full. Into the half light stole presently the sound of some lively instrument: a reel tune played, as it were, beneath one's breath, but with all the revel and rollicking emphasis of that intoxicating primitive music. And then in correspondingly low relief, but with no less emphasis, the occupants of this singular ball-room began to dance. One might have fancied them some midnight company of the dead, risen from their graves for this secret revelry, so strange was the appearance of the moving figures, with the moonlight catching, as they passed, the faces or the hands. They danced excellently well, as to the manner born, tripping in and out among the shadows, with occasional stamping, in time to the music, and now and again that wild Celtic shout or cry that sets the nerves athrill (5).

The most striking aspect of this passage is the mood it evokes. A garret lit by moonlight, a bleak country, primitive music and the dancing dead all join to create an almost gothic scene that is mysterious and frightening. Striving to set "the nerves athrill," this beginning differs strikingly from those of earlier realist novels. Anthony Trollope's *The Warden* (1855), for example[3], begins with a rather conventional introduction to the main character of the book:

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[3] For another example, see Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886). The novel begins, "One evening of late summer, before the present century had reached its thirtieth year, a young man and woman,

> The Rev. Septimus Harding was, a few years since, a beneficed clergyman residing in the cathedral town of ---; let us call it Barchester. Were we to name Wells or Salisbury, Exeter, Hereford, or Gloucester, it might be presumed that something personal was intended; and as this tale will refer mainly to the cathedral dignitaries of the town in question, we are anxious that no personality may be suspected (1).

Not only does the narrator introduce us to the person around whom the story will revolve, but the narrator is also "anxious" to establish the parameters of the story—or its realism. We are assured at one and the same time that this story *is* fiction and will *seem* so real as to call to mind particular historical persons. It is not only this narrator's barely concealed argument for the story's superb realness but also the tone of assurance and explanation the narrator exudes that expose the extent to which Caird's narrator diverges from the more blatant self-consciousness of narrative intervention. The beginning of *The Daughters of Danaus* endeavors to *dis*orient rather than orient the reader, and it is emotionally provocative rather than matter-of-fact. Both of these characteristics mark clear divergences from earlier realist projects, and they attempt to plunge readers into the garret without allowing them the bearings they might retain from a more self-assured (meta-)narration.

The emotive and disorienting features of this first passage become *realist* when seen in the "half light" reiterated throughout this passage. It is "only light enough" to see that there *are* humans in this garret, but *who* they are is entirely unclear. And the "rays of the moon" have to "find their way through the deep window-embrasures of the keep." Personified, this moonlight illuminates the difficulties of Caird's realist project—as if the narrator were openly admitting the impossibility of *objective* representation. Instead, this

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the latter carrying a child, were approaching the large village of Weydon-Priors on foot" (3). This narrator establishes the time of day, the season, the historical moment and the location for the reader in the very first sentence, and the man, woman and child make much clearer and obvious figures than the barely distinguishable "five human forms" of Caird's beginning.

narrator will lead us through the confusing, unclear and *subjective* experience of emotion, particularly as the novel explores the complex interiority of its protagonist. But before entering the heroine's private thoughts and feelings, the narrator subtly establishes how imprecise and partial this journey will be. As a liminal space separating outside and inside, the window-embrasure is where the light gets lost, and it is this ability to look in on the story—and on the heroine's interiority—that this narrator finds most difficult. Whatever we see of this "ancient" house and "bleak country" will be at most "coldly lit," but this is not the narrator's attempt to dismiss the realism of this project. Actually, this opening passage is the artistically concealed defense of this project's realism: the passage implicitly argues that *The Daughters of Danaus* is more real than earlier novels because it works within, rather than against, the difficulties of representation. The passage calls attention to the limiting parameters of representation precisely because it wishes to suggest something beyond those limits—a *real* interior space. The garret, in this opening passage, is a metaphor for the real *experience* of interiority, the muddied confusion of recognizing both the radical split and interdependency of the outside of society and the inside of one's thoughts and feelings. Ironically, both Trollope and Caird implicitly argue for authenticity; however, the former argues for the authentic representation of the way things are, whereas the latter argues for the authentic representation of the way things are *experienced.*

Caird's narrator embraces the limitations of representation and seeks to capture the *emotional* aura of each moment rather than cataloging the finer, environmental details of the immediate surroundings. This is entirely unlike that confident assertion of verisimilitude in *The Warden*, and it operates in direct contradiction to earlier realisms.

In fact, the "half light" of this beginning can be read as an almost direct response to the beginning of George Eliot's *Adam Bede* (1859). The second paragraph of Eliot's novel evokes light to make much the same argument Trollope's narrator makes for *The Warden*'s authentic representation:

> The afternoon sun was warm on the five workmen there, busy upon doors and window-frames and wainscoting. A scent of pine-wood from a tent-like pile of planks outside the open door mingled itself with the scent of elder-bushes which were spreading their summer snow close to the open window opposite; the slanting sunbeams shown through the transparent shavings that flew before the stead plan, and lit up the fine grain of the oak paneling which stood propped against the wall (7).

In direct contrast to the moonlight in Caird's beginning, the afternoon sun in *Adam Bede* encounters *open* doors and windows rather than deep window-embrasures that block out the light. As the scent of pine-wood drifts over the invisible threshold, outside and inside mingle effortlessly, and the metaphorical frames of representation pose so little a problem for Eliot's narrator that even the workmen—minor characters—are "busy" at making and controlling frames. Unlike the barely discerning moonlight in *The Daughters of Danaus*, the light in *Adam Bede* is interested in *transparency* and clarifies fine details like the grain of the oak paneling. This light apparently sees all and orients us to this workshop environment, making Caird's beginning an almost parodic reversal of Eliot's. *The Daughters of Danaus* seems aware that the "*slanting* sunbeams" of *Adam Bede* are angled and skewed—only illuminating *part* of the setting. Where Eliot's narrator glides with ease from character to character, exploring freely different motivations and interiorities, Caird's narrator struggles to capture the tension between Hadria's interiority and the world that does not allow her any self-actualization. The narrator's difficulty in accessing this complex negotiation of inner desire and outer constraint mirrors Hadria's difficulty in avoiding the conventional narrative allotted to women. Caird's narrator, as a

reaction against earlier realist narrators, adopts an almost confessional stance toward the reader—rather than exhibiting the assurance of novels like *The Warden* and *Adam Bede*.

As the narrator delves deeper into the protagonists interiority, he she uncovers inner conflict and radical desires that do not seem able to manifest themselves; this rather depressing trajectory is not only part of Caird's *fin-de-siècle* realism but also a political intervention. According to the logic of this novel, the affect produced by Hadria's failure to actualize her radical dreams constitutes the work of the novel. In its pessimism, the novel works on the reader's desire to see Hadria become a new woman. In a novel like *Adam Bede*, characters are practically doomed to express their interiority: the country gentleman desires the farmer's niece, and it is inevitable that he will sleep with her. This kind of fate is nearly reversed for Hadria. However, she is not simply doomed to desire and never experience; there is a complex war between her thoughts and her words, her inner desires and her outward actions, her dreams and her reality. These realms, posed as opposites, bleed into one another, but, in the parlance of this novel, circumstance almost always triumphs over will.

These conflicts play out near the beginning of the novel in a particularly telling passage. As the dancing figures in the first passage come to a halt, we are introduced to Hadria Fullerton and the rest of the Fullerton siblings while they are engaged in a debate. "The Preposterous Society," as they call themselves, begin their discussion with a lecture from Hadria, but before Hadria commences her argument, she reads a passage from Emerson that champions human will over circumstance. Hadria, however, passionately disputes this assertion, claiming—despite the shock and disapproval of her siblings—that circumstances can trump even the strongest will (11). She states,

> There is nothing to prove that thousands have not been swamped by maladjustment of character to circumstance, and I would even go so far as to suggest that perhaps the very greatest of all are those whom the world has never known, because the present conditions are inharmonious with the very noblest and the very highest qualities (12).

Albeit melodramatic, this speech is also an eloquent argument utilizing the rational rhetoric of proof to make a claim against Emerson. That Hadria contradicts this argument within her thoughts illuminates some of the most tortured paradoxes of her character and, arguably, this novel's political intervention: "Her intellect, rather than her heart, had opposed the philosophy of Emerson. Her sentiment recoiled from admitting the possibility of such tragedy as her expressed belief implied" (17). Hadria's intellect recognizes a flaw in Emerson's argument; she knows—from her own experience of being conscripted within the domestic sphere—that there are people with "the very noblest and the very highest qualities" who do not have the power to act on them. But in order to make this argument, Hadria must silence part of her interiority. She must split her feelings from her rationality. Hadria's *heart*, however, allows her to dream of alternatives to circumstantial determinism; Caird seems to locate the radical possibilities of New Women *within* the private, emotional sphere—rather than the public sphere of formal debate. Following this logic, though, the sentiments Hadria expresses might allow her to break out of her domestic prison. Unfortunately, it is Hadria's spoken words rather than her secret emotions that accurately foreshadow the course of her own life.

To read this passage as politically radical in light of the remainder of the novel, one must understand the emotional work it performs upon the reader. It is not Hadria's heart that contains radical possibilities but the effect that the split between her heart and intellect has upon the reader that has the potential to alter women's social/political position. Hadria's siblings are outraged by her professed pessimism, mirroring the

outrage that readers are meant to feel upon discovery of that pessimism's ultimate truth. Hadria, despite ambitious and noble sentiment, does not overcome circumstance. And this, readers must feel, is preposterous.

On that note, allow me to take a preposterous digression. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, an older meaning of preposterous is "having or placing last what should be first; inverted in position or order." The narration that places Hadria's speech ahead of, and in contradiction to, her feelings in the passage discussed above is preposterous when read in light of this definition as well as Caird's professed opinion that emotions precede political change. The preposterous *society* is one in which legal change precedes a change in sentiment.

Another definition of preposterous that appears in the *OED* conjures different images however: preposterous can also mean "contrary to nature, reason, or common sense; monstrous; foolish, perverse[4]." Caird's decision to call this group the "Preposterous Society" demands one to ask what is preposterous about the Fullerton siblings debating contemporary issues. Of course, the debate that happens in private and among young people can seem preposterous when compared with the public sphere it mimics. Also, the women in this group—Hadria and her elder sister Algitha—have an equal voice within this mixed setting, which arguably creates an even more 'preposterous' chasm between this family group and the outside world of Victorian patriarchal society. One could argue that the name is an ironic nod toward the possibilities for equality this group entertains—possibilities that never come to fruition

[4] Both senses of the word were in use during the Victorian era. However, the OED includes two examples of the first use in the second half of the nineteenth century; both of these examples stress that the word must be read in its "exact sense" or "strictest sense." Therefore, there is some clarification about using the word's *older* meaning at this point, suggesting that the other meaning—monstrous—was used at the time without clarification.

within the novel. However, I think a more interesting interpretation involves reading the great gap between Hadria's thoughts/emotions and her speech as a frighteningly monstrous incongruity, a dismemberment of inner and outer forced by women's particularly frustrated political position.[5]

Later in the novel, Hadria mysteriously accepts a marriage proposal from Hubert Temperly. In a preposterous inversion of the teleology associated with evolution and "progress" during the Victorian era, Caird evokes the discourses of heredity and evolution in order to critique the ways those discourses are used to keep women in their "natural" place: the supposedly civilizing process of marriage, according to this passage in the novel, leads to death. Here, the disorienting narration of the beginning passage of the novel returns to create a morbid and confusing atmosphere in which marriage, death and heredity collide. During a ball at the Fullertons' home in Scotland, Mrs. McPherson[6], a "kindly old Scottish dame," plays a "strange old tune" that fires the "northern blood" of the dancers and allows Hadria to "recall [...] primitive experiences": "It seems almost as if I had lived before, among some ancient Celtic people, and now, when I hear their music—or sometimes when I hear the sound of wind among the

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[5] I find it interesting that preposterous begins with "pre" and "post." Smashing these two prefixes together, preposterous echoes this novel's relationship to "past" Realism and "future" Modernism. The conventional critical narrative reads the latter as a rejection of the former, but *The Daughters of Danaus*, in certain "Modernist" moments that I discuss later in the essay, could be read as an unstable—and preposterous—bridge between the two movements.

[6] Caird utilizes some minor characters, in addition to Hadria, to draw out a connection between Scotland and women. Mrs. McEwen, the mistress of the Craw Gill farm in Dunaghee, is "a fine example of the best type of Scottish character; warm of heart, honest of purpose, and full of a certain unconscious poetry, and a dignity that lingers still in districts where the railway whistle is not too often heard" (54). That she is unconscious of her "poetry" and lives outside the progress of the railway system implies an antique quaintness, endearing because of its ignorance. The patronizing nostalgia the narrator imbues her with indeed makes her a "character," and Mrs. McPherson constitutes another of her "type." The two 'Mrs. Mc's' husbands do not appear in the text, aligning Scotland with innocuous, antiquated, and *minor* matrons within the community, and the unprogressive oldness of these two Scottish characters, as well as their lack of individual development within the novel, blends these women into the ancient landscape Caird carefully constructs.

pines—whiffs and gusts of something intensely familiar return to me" (137). As the music connects Hadria to an autochthonous heritage and ancient Celtic traditions of that primitive people, Scotland comes to signify a discourse of heredity in this passage. But also, this reference to the "intensely familiar" past suggests the uncanny; it is as if, in Hadria's dancing, the ghosts of Celtic ancestors return to embody her. She is both herself and not herself in this passage. The music Mrs. McPherson plays puts Hadria "under a singular spell," allowing (and perhaps forcing?) her to accept a marriage proposal—despite her protestations and her "will" (137). The emotional quality of the music in this instance becomes dangerous, even though earlier in the novel, Hadria's mercurial emotions allow her to entertain the liberating possibility that the will can transcend circumstance. In this moment of extreme emotions, Hadria enters a state of near ecstasy, becoming almost beside herself: "[U]nable to wake out of the nightmare," Hadria's "sense of the importance of personal events had entirely disappeared. What did it all matter? [...] The graves would put it all right some day" (137). She is paralyzed by the ancient (ghostly?) music and the monstrous emotions it evokes. On the historical scale provoked by mention of ancient Celts, the "personal events" of one woman's desire to escape that long chain of women becomes so small as to be insignificant. The mention of death not only alludes to Hadria's morbid desire to die but also suggests that marriage, at least for some women, is a kind of death. Accepting this marriage proposal means the death of her will and her ambitions to become a musician. It may also allude to the literal death many women experienced in childbirth. What could be a conventional passage in a Victorian novel—a marriage proposal in a ballroom—begins to test even the boundaries of realism, as Hadria's emotions become completely out of her control and permit her

only the fleeting solace of waiting until death for the torment to end. It is ironic and troubling that the primitive—so closely linked to the discourses of heredity and evolution that inform Caird's political agenda—takes control over Hadria's actions and nearly forces her into accepting a marriage proposal.

To understand what the discourse of primitivism signifies in this passage, we must look at a related, and equally uncanny, moment that comes just after Hadria's emotional trance. Caird writes:

> The savage builds his mud hut to shelter him from the wind and the rain and the terror of the beyond. Outside is the wilderness ready to engulf him. Rather than be left alone at the mercy of elemental things, with no little hut, warm and dark and stuffy, to shelter one, a woman will sacrifice everything—liberty, ambition, health, power, her very dignity. There was a letter in Hadria's pocket at this moment, eloquently protesting in favour of the mud hut (138).

In this passage, the woman becomes the savage, exposing the novel's relationship to the evolutionary discourse around savages—one of the more problematic aspects of Darwin's writing. The third sentence, with all of its introductory clauses, leads one to expect the savage to be the subject of them, but instead, it is "a woman." Is it woman's savagery that forces her to marry? The passage may be arguing instead that it is the *un*civilized—indeed primitive—institution of marriage that keeps women from becoming civilized and able to support themselves in the economic sphere rather than the domestic sphere.

The figure of the savage also connotes the problematic application of Darwinian concepts to society and culture. In "Darwin's Savage Mnemonics," Cannon Schmitt exposes and troubles Darwin's own attempts to apply his theory of evolution to humans; in other words, he exposes Darwin's Darwinism. The savage, as a recurring figure in Darwin's writing, is essential to Darwin's project but also puts pressure on it. Darwin turns "to savages in remembrance of the origins of the civilized" (57). But in order to

feel civilized, he must also "forget the savage's kinship with the civilized" (57). This double gesture of remembering and forgetting the savage operates, according to Schmitt, like "a Darwinian version of Freud's repetition compulsion" in Darwin's writings (57). In Caird's narration, a married woman comes to represent the same trauma; the woman, stuck as she is with no options in this society, is an uncanny reminder of savagery. Caird maps the Darwinian anxiety about savages onto women, effectively troubling the Darwinist discourse about "the race" and the necessity of British women having as many children as possible. In this way, the novel uses Darwin differently from the social Darwinists of the Victorian era; it exposes the false logic of the progress of civilization. Women's place in civilized society is remarkably uncivilized: it is the place of the savage—both a reminder of humanity's origins and the abject animal ancestry that must be forgotten in order to feel civilized. The savage analogy, combined with the primitive spell that enchants Hadria out of her willpower, preposterously inverts familiar discourses, exposing the injustices of a marriage system that "naturalizes" women out of their dignity, humanity and free will. This proposal passage, with its reference to the savage, constitutes a monstrous disorientation of those orienting discourses of teleological evolution that were used to justify the exploitation of women's reproductive capabilities. What this passage also implies is that society makes women uncivilized—not allowed to civilize themselves by supporting themselves with paid work—in order ostensibly to "civilize" them via marriage to a (hu)man. Part I of the novel ends with Hadria's dubious acceptance of Hubert's proposal, leaving the reader in the dark about the outcome of that acceptance.

At this point, the novel moves from an obviously confusing passage full of magical, primitive, paralyzing music and monstrously savage women to one that is ostensibly ordered and understandable. Part II of the novel, at first glance, appears to begin with an ordinary description of English countryside; however, this "ordinary description" constitutes a shift in Caird's narrative technique used to disorient the reader. In this passage, a countryman greets a young woman as they walk down a road amidst the rolling English hills. As the countryman watches the woman pass, there is a description (partly from his point of view) of the woman's physical appearance. Following that is a description of the quaint little village of Craddock that the woman is "speeding towards" (145-6). What makes this uneventful passage extraordinary is its placement in the novel. We are one hundred forty-five pages into the novel, and it feels as if the narrative has started over; everyone is anonymous—a countryman, a young woman, a wayfarer—and the landscape is unfamiliar. Like Darwin's savage, this passage resembles an uncanny repetition compulsion, in which a beginning is recognizable but, because repeated, is also out of place. This place is unlike that of the first beginning and does not have the gothic mystery of the Scottish highlands.

> The road led gradually upward through a country blazing with red and orange for rolling miles, till the horizon closed in with the far-off blue of English hills.

Everything is clear: we can make out the horizon in the distance, and in the foreground, the road is "crisp" (145). It also seems as if the narrator has undergone some sort of personality change. This narrator sees the scene very clearly—a marked change from the first passage of the novel in which narrative doubt about the representation of reality is projected onto the description of the garret. But why does Caird "start over"? And what do these narrative changes suggest?

At this point in the novel, an orientation is out of place; this passage reads like a beginning that the narrator has thrust in the middle of the novel. I would argue that the uncanny is at work in this passage in order to subtly attune readers to the monstrous implications of marriage. After a page of description, we learn that the "young woman," "wayfarer," and "swiftly moving figure[7]"—one of the strangers in this passage—is Mrs. Temperly. Toward the end of this passage, two gossips mention her name, or rather her husband's name (146). Although we have never seen this name—Mrs. Temperly—before, it has a familiar ring to it. Could this perhaps be Hadria? It is almost as if this were a rumor that we must piece together. Has Hadria married Hubert Temperly? What happened between the mysterious acceptance of Temperly's proposal and this unmysterious description of English hills? Speculation alone can answer the reader's questions. We can assume that Hadria and Hubert *have* married; but the way she is named in this passage reminds us of the social/political importance of this union—that she has become Hubert's property, wife of Temperly. If it had come at the beginning of a novel, this passage might not be particularly striking; we might even call it conventional (but I'll side step that term for a moment). After 145 pages of intimate access to Hadria's interiority, we are made strangers again. And strangers—gossips and countryman—mediate our access now. Marriage inflicts this strangeness upon the familiar. We know Hadria; we might even guess that the young woman with "the look in her eyes of being fixed on objects beyond their owner's immediate ken" is she (145). Marriage, however, makes Hadria uncanny: she is now a stranger and thing (the property of her husband).

[7] This figure echoes the "moving figures" of the opening passage of the novel. Whereas darkness made that "midnight company of the dead" monstrous in the beginning, bright sunshine does not seem to shed any light on this mysterious figure—or the reasons why Hadria is suddenly being introduced to us as if we have never met her.

The Hadria that we knew has partly died, and the passage, echoing this sentiment, is marked by death. The epigraph to Part II references "happy men that have the power to die" (145), and Mrs. Temperly's walk into the village of Craddock leads her to the cemetery. At the beginning of the narrative, this passage would not seem so morbid and strange, but the *timing* makes it, and Hadria, monstrous: it is out of joint with the progress of the narrative and with our own expectations. It is as if the narrator has broken some sort of narrative promise.

I would argue that there are two related reasons for Caird's effort to estrange the reader at this point. Two major changes have taken place in the novel: Hadria got married, and she moved to England. But in a Victorian novel, these changes in a woman's condition are hardly out of the ordinary. The recognizability of this narrative set-up—its ordinariness made even more forceful by rampant anonymity—is precisely what seems out of place at this point in this novel. This narrator, who has confessed his/her dark secret to us in the garret, has become a cold and distant stranger—a regular observer. Observation without any self-conscious attention drawn to the problems of mediation is almost offensive to readers at this point. The ordinariness of this passage marks two key failures: Hadria's failure to escape the conventional marriage narrative and the novel's failure to live up to its reader's expectations. The two are intimately related and the latter is often considered the mark of a successful novel. But, in this instance, it is important that the reader *feel* this as a failure. What is created in this disappointment of readerly expectation is not the usual bittersweet "a ha" appreciation of novelistic twist. In fact, there is nothing new here. The disappointment is felt in this novel's failure, on some level, to be novel. In some ways, we could read this passage as a

meditation on the realist novel as a genre—it is always attempting to overcome itself, to the extent that this attempt, rather than a successfully "new" creation, is what makes it a novel. To call something a realist novel is, on some level, to call it a failure—at least of representation.

Caird's return to a familiar—even expected—narrative at an unexpected moment parodies this novelistic failure; this parody relies on readers' recognition of earlier forms of realist narration as well as recognition of the ways Caird is manipulating and changing those forms. In *The Realistic Imagination*, Levine outlines a trajectory of realist conventions that evolves from the mid-nineteenth century to the late-nineteenth century. He states,

> Realism in England belongs [...] almost provincially, to a "middling" condition and defines itself against the excesses, both stylistic and negative. [...] The programatic realism of the late century, with its pseudoscientific connections, its "experimental novels," its assumption that the norm of human experience is the extreme, was part of a rebellious movement against the mid-Victorian real and the art that projected it (5).

The beginning of Part II of the novel conforms to the mid-Victorian real; in its objective observation it avoids stylistic excess.

Understanding the affect of this passage, however, involves recognizing that "norm"—the use of earlier conventional modes of realist description—as an "extreme" rejection of those norms and an extremely disconcerting and disorienting disappointment of the reader's expectations. In some ways, this novelistic failure mirrors Hadria's own failure to reject the script given to her by her family and generations of scripted women. This rural scene in its sunny clarity mimics that realist narrative confidence we saw in *Adam Bede*, but placing it at the center of her novel, Caird exposes the critical blind spots of such "clarity." In this easy observation of "the way things should be," the realist

narrator glosses over the inward suffering that comes with such scripted obedience. That this is felt as a betrayal of the reader's confidence reveals the affective logic of this novel. What seems like neutral observation is really a manipulation of reader's emotions. What is contained in this rather cynical plot, then, is really the hope that readers will change their attitudes about women and marriage. This passage marks both a rejection of earlier realist conventions as well as an affirmation of the project those earlier novelists began, i.e. social change. What we have become accustomed to, as readers—narrative intimacy, a confessional tone, and an emphasis on the emotional aura of each moment—is taken from us. We are now being oriented toward the life of a married woman—sunshine and clarity on the surface but also marked by death and decay.

Hadria's move to England and the ensuing description of the landscape maps the "civilizing" process of her marriage onto the relationship between Scotland and England. In other words, that Hadria enters the married state and the English state at the same time is not coincidental. Caird's reaction against the traditional narrative of women's lives comes out in a reaction against the hegemony of England over Scotland.[8] If we look more closely at the specific language of this opening, we begin to see Caird subtly describing a peculiar aesthetic of decline. We can tell it is Autumn because the country is "blazing with red and orange for miles" (145). Blazing has obvious fire connotations,

[8] "A countryman" opens the second part of this novel and encompasses several meanings that bear differently on interpretations of this passage's relationship to nationalist discourse. There is a sense of unanimity in anonymity implied by "a countryman." No matter what quirks he might possess as an individual (a "stooping gait" for instance), he is part of a larger whole. He represents the nation. He is of this country, which we know is England by the "English hills" on the horizon. But he is also *in* the country, part of the rural landscape—a *country* man. That England is aligned with the rural here is not accidental; the backward village that Hadria lives in represents the backwardness of "civilized" English society. Also, he is a country *man*. He represents the male-coded patriarchal society that the novel wishes to critique, and his stooping gait could imply the unhealthy nature of such a society. It could also be a reference to his class status, marking him as part of the English "peasantry."

suggesting rapid destruction, but these bright colors also seem invigorating. This is not the fall of wet leaves and overcast sky: whatever may be dying in this country, it is doing so beautifully and invitingly. The paragraph describing the town makes this point even more obviously as it personifies the town's backwardness:

> The little village seemed as if it had forgotten to change with the rest of the country, for at least a hundred years. The spirit of the last century lingered in its quiet cottages, in the little ale-house with half-obliterated sign, in its air of absolute repose and leisure. There was no evidence of contest anywhere—except perhaps in a few mouldy advertisements of a circus and of a remarkable kind of soap, that were half peeling off a moss-covered wall. There were not even many indications of life in the place. The sunshine seemed to have the village street to itself. A couple of women stood gossiping over the gate of one of the cottages. They paused in their talk as a quick step sounded on the road (145-6).

This village "forgot to change" (145). It isn't stubborn; it just old and a bit forgetful. This personification suggests a quaint and welcoming atmosphere. Even though there are few "indications of life" in this village, loneliness does not cast a shadow here: The Sun—personified—has "the village street to itself" (146).

The "mouldy advertisements," however, seem to date this village; although it might have the "spirit of the last century," it is firmly of the century marked by the Industrial Revolution. But Nature has overgrown what evidence of progress there used to be; the only possibility for growth in this environment is the moldy growth of decay.[9] Although the horizon is new to Hadria, it is still "closed in" by English hills (145). Now that she is in England, Hadria is no freer to do as she pleases. The only difference is that in England, there is no debate about the will versus circumstance; Hadria's imprisonment as "Mrs. Temperly" is entrenched within the sunny, living dead of the landscape (the

[9] It is worth noting that the two advertisements are for the circus and soap, possibly representing two Victorian obsessions: spectacle and cleanliness. Of course, the soap ad could also be a reference to British imperialism, since many soap ads represented "natives" of the colonies—or, indeed, "savages"—the implication being that they are cleansed by their introduction to civilization.

district of Craddock even sports "a fine lot o' corpses" a few pages later). Eagleton's comment about *fin-de-siècle* authors "aestheticizing the unacceptable" seems to apply to this passage, but Caird has added a narrative twist to this formula, making it a particularly *English* project to "photograph the world, not to change it" (Eagleton 16). In this passage, Caird expands her argument about women's particular suffering to include a critique of nationalist discourse. The "marriage" of Scotland and England only "civilizes" Scotland in the way that marriage civilizes women. The description of rural England in this passage suggests that "civilization"—in the form of order, marked by scientific objectivity—comes at a cost. "Ordering" experience involves ignoring or simplifying the chaotic interaction between interior and exterior; "objective" description suggests that there is a direct and obvious correlation between what exists and how one experiences what exists—or, more theoretically, between ontology and epistemology. It is significant that we are no longer afforded access to Hadria's interiority in this passage. With its hopes, contradictions, (female) ambitions, and emotions, it has no place in the (male) ordered landscape of English civility.

Importantly, England is not the only place Hadria moves in the novel, and marriage is not the final failure she experiences. In a radical refusal of her marital "obligations," Hadria moves to Paris to pursue musical studies[10]. This alternative strategy—Hadria's effort to escape marital conscription—aligns Caird's novel with other New Woman novels, but Hadria's failure to sustain her career marks a deviation from those novels that sought to present self-actualizing women successfully pursuing careers

[10] Linda Colley remarks that it was popular in England during the long eighteenth century to characterize improper conduct as French (252). Although *The Daughters of Danaus* was written at the end of the nineteenth century, this British sentiment might still be persistent in the figure of a rebellious woman leaving her family to move to Paris.

outside the domestic sphere. Here, I am less concerned with Hadria's inability to sustain a musical career than I am with what the mobility of this move to Paris signifies. Earlier, I suggested that Caird's novel anticipates modernism; this gesture exposes itself most forcefully toward the end of the novel when the narrative strategy shifts yet again to disorient the reader. Part III of the novel begins on the train to Paris, and the narration of this passage disturbs the staid boredom of the English landscape. However, this disturbance dismantles Hadria's interiority in ways that seem to anticipate the Modernist destabilizing of the subject:

> The speed was glorious. Back flashed field and hill and copse, and the dear 'companionable hedgeways.' Back flew iterative telegraph posts with Herculean swing, into the Past, looped together in rhythmic movement, marking the pulses of old Time. On, with rack and roar, into the mysterious Future. One could sit at the window and watch the machinery of Time's foundry at work; the hammers of his forge beating, beating, the wild sparks flying, the din and chaos whirling round one's bewildered brain;--Past becoming Present, Present melting into Future, before one's eyes. To sit and watch the whirring wheels; to think 'Now it is thus and thus; presently, another slice of earth and sky awaits me'—ye Gods, it is not to be realized! (294).

Echoing the movement of the train, the narration rhythmically jumps from impression to impression. How can this experience be realized—be made *real*? The train provides the perfect opportunity for exploring the great paradoxes of realist representation. What seems to be a smooth trajectory—a narrative, a train's course—is experienced as overwhelmingly disconnected impressions. Although "Past," "Present," and "Future" fall in obvious order in this passage, the progression of verb tenses connotes a more fraught relationship to the futurity of train technology. The passage moves from the past tense ("speed was," "Back flashed field") to the subjunctive ("One could") to unconjugated infinitive ("To sit and watch," "to think") to negated present ("it is not"). It is also interesting that subject, verb and adverb in the second sentence—"Back flashed field"—

are inverted. It is as if the train moves so quickly that the sentences cannot keep up, that consciousness cannot stay on track.

Coming to grips with this technology creates a preposterous inversion of thought. It also causes some inward speculation: "One could" suggests the imagination forging possibilities from reflecting on the speed with which the world passes, is past. In other words, the fast past creates a future of possibilities, but these possibilities pile up so quickly that they cannot be processed into realities: they stagnate. And fragment: "On with rack and roar, into the mysterious future." An attempt to bring back the action—the verbs—turns into a stutter start of infinitives: "To sit and watch [...] to think." The quickness of thought that comes with watching a train's progress, of imagining technological advancement on such a large scale, cannot adequately be represented. "It cannot be realized!" Remark the articulated thought in quotation marks: "presently, another slice of earth and sky awaits me." Who is "me"? We can presume it is Hadria, but locating a clear narrative position is difficult in this passage, since the beginning seems to come from a more "objective" narrative voice. It is also telling that a cut—"slice"—radically separates the present ("presently") from the future ("awaits"). The attempt of consciousness to grapple with the train, the ability to move relatively great distances at relatively great speeds, disrupts the fluidity of time. Present cannot become future, no matter how quickly it moves. The technology of the train marks a historical shift in consciousness. Exemplified by this passage, the means of connecting worlds to one another is also the means of disconnecting one from the fluidity of one's thoughts. The self is not to be realized just as the future is not to be realized.

Part of this destabilization of the subject is revealed in the way the narrative imperceptively dips in and out of Hadria's consciousness. When the train stops at a country station, a little girl gets on and stares "fixedly" at Hadria with "singular persistence" (295). It is as if Hadria is a mysterious creature that the girl has never encountered. Her "gaze" is somewhat paralyzed, and the narration suggests this paralysis stems from the girl's perception of Hadria's disjointed thoughts. To readers, however, it is unclear which thoughts belong to whom and what constitutes the narrative voice. As the train takes off again, the fragmentation of narrative point of view comes into focus:

> The patient monster began to move again, with a gay whistle, as if he enjoyed this chase across country, on the track of Time. He was soon at full speed again, on his futile race: a hapless idealist in pursuit of lost dreams. The little girl watched the dawn of a smile on the face of the kind, pretty lady who had given her the flower. A locomotive figuring as an idealist! Where would one's fancy lead one to next? (296).

In watching the narrator watch the little girl watch Hadria who watches and comments upon her own thoughts, we are made aware of the multiple perspective of this moment. Hadria's smile indicates that she has been thinking the description of the train rather than simply being part of that description. But has this all been an internal monologue? Was the "patient monster" part of the narration or Hadria's "fancy"? If so, why do we need the watchful little girl to make us aware that these thoughts are Hadria's? It is the little girl's gaze that shows us Hadria's smile, giving us insight into her thoughts—indicating to us that this narrative description has not been straightforward.

But, more importantly, with whom are we meant to align ourselves in this passage? Are we supposed to sympathize with the little girl watching this monstrous collision of metaphors clashing in Hadria's interiority? Do we empathize with Hadria, feeling giddy and ecstatic, both in the moment and beside ourselves watching it? Do we

understand the train's point of view—both patient and rushing, monster and ideal(ist)? And what are we meant to make of Hadria's (or the narrator's) simultaneous personification of the train (as an "idealist") and dehumanization of it (as a "monster")? Disorientation—particularly via narrative instability—again puts readers in a state of confusion, but this disorientation, like the previous ones, does not obviously orient us toward Hadria's interiority. Instead, it exposes the instability of the categories of interior and exterior.

In contemporary theoretical debates, instability has become a catchword; it is often used to expose the possibility of stepping outside of rigid and imprisoning categories. The instability in this particular passage gives Hadria a certain freedom of thought—mirrored by the freedom of mobility and the movement of the train. For Hadria, this freedom is "intoxicating" (297). But the reality of her situation in Paris is sobering: the future (symbolized by the train) cannot escape the past no matter how quickly it moves. Even though she has escaped England, she quickly realizes that "the past is never past; immortal as the Gods, it lives enthroned in the Present, and sets its limits and lays its commands" (308). The disjointed consciousness narrated in this train passage points to yet another failure that Hadria encounters: technology, and the mobility it affords, do not allow Hadria self-actualization. The "progress" of "Science," without the corresponding progress of women's liberation, holds very little promise as an alternative to the domestic existence that Hadria wishes to escape. Even in Paris, "where she seemed so free, the peculiar claims that are made, by common consent, on a woman's time and strength began to weave their tiny cords around her" (322). Even in Paris, Hadria is still a woman. This novel rejects the possibilities for escape proposed by the

instability of the train passage. This passage may mark a moment of chaotic possibility—creative excess breaking away from convention—but it cannot permanently change women's historical conditioning. According to the logic of this novel, that sort of monumental change can only take place slowly and incrementally with changes in individual and, eventually, collective sentiment.

Before Hadria leaves Paris, her sister-in-law comes to persuade her back to England and to her duties as a wife. Refuting those duties, Hadria draws on an interesting analogy to argue that she agreed to marriage under false pretenses (namely, that Hubert Temperly promised her freedom and individuality to get her to agree to marriage). Speaking to her sister-in-law, Hadria says,

> Supposing a wicked bigamist had persuaded a woman to go through a false marriage ceremony, and when she became aware of her real position, imagine him saying to her, with grave and virtuous mien, 'My dear, why repudiate the duties of your position, since there your position *is*, an accomplished fact not to be denied (350).

When Hadria's sister-in-law calls this analogy "preposterous," Hadria replies, "It's preposterous and it's parallel." Hadria's analogy not only exposes what is preposterous—backward, illogical, monstrous, perverse—about the duties of a wife to her husband and children, but it also parallels the novel's appeal to readers' emotions. Like the wicked bigamist in her own example, Hadria is the novel's extreme example: her radical politics are preposterous in a social climate that restricts women to domesticity. But her failure to overcome those circumstances is also preposterous: monstrously disappointing to readers who are taught to sympathize with her politics and root for her liberation. This novel, in its manipulation of readers' emotions, attempts a preposterous intervention into the evolution of society, but it also codes those emotions as

a parallel response to the preposterously backward Victorian convention that refuses to see women as anything other than animals for breeding. Preposterous and parallel, the emotionality of this novel is crucial to its political agenda.

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