



Victor/Victorian: Gender and Aesthetic Idealism During the Italian Risorgimento

RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

Henry James' short story, *Last of the Valerii* (1874), articulates the author's final assessment of the Anglo-American style. The marriage between the American heiress and impoverished Italian nobleman expresses the transition in the American economy from rural agriculture to one driven by industrial wealth and the creation of large estates. By making the Italian aristocracy the protagonists of his Anglo-Italian novels, James also provides a cursive acknowledgement of the restoration of the Italian aristocracy which was at the heart of the revolutionaries' nationalist debate during the Italian Risorgimento. The creation of a unified and independent Italy in 1871 also included a king, Victor-Emmanuel II. The desire to acquire the habits and style of the genteel European nobility was grafted onto the new American interest in collecting the aesthetic treasures of Europe then being acquired by wealthy Americans to form the major museum collections of America. Towards the turn of the century, Anglo-Italian authors and artists lost their interest in the revolutionary cause of Italy and centennial America, and replaced this cause with a new pure aestheticism, lacking an underlying political and moral agenda. James' novels articulate a new crisis in marriage in which men declare their independence from their dependent women. James' reversal of the women's movement issue approaches domestic gender roles from the male perspective. His protagonists are educated aesthetes who long for escapism from the confines of societal gender and marriage roles. The new wealth acquired by Americans towards the end of the century during the Gilded Age, afforded such perversions of traditional male duties, without overtly supporting the women's suffrage movement and rehabilitation of women's employment.

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While the politics of the Risorgimento inspired a debate over the legacy of revolution and its eventual fulfillment in a social utopia in which universal equality and suffrage was achieved for all races and both sexes. Thus, the story of Victorian Anglo artists and authors in Italy rightly begins in France. Americans carried the heritage of the successful American Revolution and recent history of democracy to Europe where they examined European progress from the perspective of the success of America. Europe, by contrast, was still subjected in many respects to the experiment of revolution which continued to play out throughout the nineteenth-century. Thus, when Napoleon's nephew, Louis Napoleon, published his Napoleonic Ideas from exile in Brussels in 1839, he reared the head of the hydra once again. Like his uncle, he claimed that Napoleonic ideas were consistent with democracy. He guaranteed civil equality and he also claimed that he was a representative of the people. However, he reverted to the European tradition of monarchy when he claimed that imperial power was also hereditary. As such, he believed that adulation was the appropriate way to show respect for the emperor's authority and actions. Napoleon I had largely relied upon art as the most effective method for communicating his greatness to his subjects. This practice had forever changed the history of art in Europe, much like the way in which the empire set the stage for the Italian Risorgimento. Napoleon I and his family were commemorated in marble busts and sculptures as a means of appropriating the greatness of Imperial Rome. This joined the imperial family to the legacy of Italy and ancient Rome. They also employed the leading artists and sculptors to commemorate their legacy, including Antonio Canova. Thus, Americans, in particular, who sought to continue the practice of commemoration in neoclassical sculptures, had to first negotiate the recent history of both France and Italy from the perspective of the history of art. This is evident in both Margaret Fuller's *Dispatches* and Nathaniel Hawthorne's *French and Italian Notebooks* which are filled with references to the history of monarchy and empire in the nineteenth-century among references to historic landmarks in the histories of empire and monarchy.

By contrast, Victorian Anglo feminists who followed Fuller did achieve the practical side of the suffrage debate, such as Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing, was also eulogized with such stereotypes found in Margaret Fuller's *Woman in the Nineteenth-Century*. Like Fuller, she made a contribution to the history of feminism by working in an army hospital tending the wounded. Nightingale was named after her birthplace in Florence, Italy, while her sister was named after her birthplace in Parthenope, a Greek settlement near Naples. She trained nurses serving in the Crimean War (1853–56) and founded the first secular school of nursing at St. Thomas hospital in London. The cause of the Crimean War involved the issue of Christians in the Holy Land and the distribution of territory of the Ottoman Empire. The war impacted the Italian Risorgimento since it diverted attention from the ongoing occupation of Italy by Austria and France. The European super powers responded by coming to the aid of Christians and blocking what they perceived as Russian imperialism. Nightingale became known as the Lady with the Lamp after an article in the *Times* described her tireless efforts to tend to sick and wounded. The phrase was also borrowed by the poet Longfellow in his 1857 poem, "The Lady with the Lamp:"

Honor to those whose words or deeds
Thus help us in our daily needs,
And by their overflow
Raise us from what is low!

Thus thought I, as by night I read
Of the great army of the dead,
The trenches cold and damp,
The starved and frozen camp,--

The wounded from the battle-plain,
In dreary hospitals of pain,
The cheerless corridors,
The cold and stony floors.

Lo! in that house of misery
A lady with a lamp I see
Pass through the glimmering gloom,
And flit from room to room.

And slow, as in a dream of bliss,
The speechless sufferer turns to kiss
Her shadow, as it falls
Upon the darkening walls.

As if a door in heaven should be
Opened, and then closed suddenly,
The vision came and went,
The light shone was spent.

On England's annals, through the long
Hereafter of her speech and song,
That light its rays shall cast
From portals of the past.

A lady with a lamp shall stand
In the great history of the land,
A noble type of good,
Heroic womanhood.

Nor even shall be wanting here
The palm, the lily, and the spear,
The symbols that of yore
Saint Filomena bore. (Longfellow, lines 9–24)

The influence of Italy on Longfellow is apparent in his concern with female archetypes. Longfellow had visited Florence in 1828 where he visited the salon of Joseph Bonaparte's daughter, who played Yankee Doodle for him on the piano. He then traveled to Rome. He studied and translated Dante, and replaced Ticknor as the Dante lecturer at Harvard. According to one Italian critic, "Longfellow made America the new Ravenna of the poet" (Brooks 63–68). Longfellow said that "To the imagination, Italy always has been and always will be, the land of the sun and the land of song; and neither tempest, rain nor snow will every chill the glow of enthusiasm that Italy excites in every poetic mind. Say what ill of it you may, it still remains to the poet the land of his predilection, to the artist, the land of his necessity, and to all the land of dreams and visions of delight" (Samuel Longfellow 200). Longfellow follows the Victorian tradition of transforming women's accomplishments into a poem that celebrates the allegorical eternal feminine as an uplifting spiritual impulse that is complemented by women's natural inclinations. Anonymous, pure and ideal, Longfellow's "Lady with the Lamp" also continues the tradition of Antonio Canova and Ugo Foscolo's *The Graces*. She represents a pure and just military objective within a covert camp. Nightingale's epitaph by Isadoro del Lungo and sculpture by Francis William Sargent portraying the *Lady with the Lamp* were added in 1913 to Santa Croce Cathedral in Florence, her namesake city, in recognition of her affinity with Anglo-Italian circle. Lungo refers to her as "The Heroine of the Crimea" and "The Lady of the Lamp." She is represented in the neoclassical style wearing Grecian robes in a contrapposto pose and holding an oil lamp in one hand (Sison, "Florence Nightingale").

Elizabeth Barrett Browning, the quintessential Victorian woman, gave a voice to emerging feminist nationalism. She became a close friend of Fuller when the two met in Italy. Elizabeth never espoused the Roman Revolution that Margaret Fuller and her husband, Giovanni Ossoli participated in, but she did support the Risorgimento movement and the removal of Austrian ruler from Italy. Like Margaret Fuller, her writings are inspired by Italian art and literature, and emphasize ideal gender roles. She also believed like Fuller that revolution could and should impact the development or fulfillment of ideal gender roles. Unlike Fuller, she was married and shaped her life and her art around her role as a married woman in love. She perfected fulfilled Fuller's concept of the couple who are united in spirit by their common intellectual interests. Fuller, however, could not aspire to such an ideal. Her marriage to the younger Ossoli was fulfilled only their common revolutionary cause. He never mastered fluent English and was often taciturn with Fuller's literary colleagues. As a result, Fuller continued to experience genuine independence within her literary milieu since her husband was dependent upon her for social cues.

Barrett-Browning also differed from Fuller in her invalidism. Fuller, an active intellectual and presumably athletic woman, was free to implement her ideals by participating directly in the Roman Revolution as both a correspondent and a nurse in the soldier's hospital. By contrast, Elizabeth lived her life as an invalid. She epitomized the Victorian woman not only in her dependence upon her husband, but also her genteel manner and poetry which adulated male and female gender roles. Like her Anglo-Italian compatriots, she supported the liberal issues of the day, Italian independence and the abolition of slavery, and lived in the shadow of the Napoleonic era. Elizabeth's family's history, though British, also brought her closer to the abolitionist issue of the day since the Barretts had been plantation owners in Jamaica since the founding of the colony. The Jamaican plantations and property the family's principle source of wealth until her grandfather came to England where his will was contested; Elizabeth and her siblings were raised under reduced but affluent circumstances in England (Forster).

As the result of the riding accident as a teenager, Elizabeth developed a spinal injury that made her dependent upon opium for the remainder of her life. When she eloped to Italy in 1846 with her husband poet, Robert Browning, it was a bold romantic gesture which was opposed by her father since he believed her to be too disabled to marry. The couple settled in the Casa Guidi where she watched the drama of Italian independence unfold at her very doorstep which was across the street from the ducal Pitti Palazzo. The Brownings became the center of an Anglo-Florentine circle which was occasionally joined by friends from Rome, such as Fuller and Story (Treves). Fuller met the Brownings when she came to Florence following the fall of the Roman Republic in 1849. Both women were now married with young children. Fuller gave a Bible to Elizabeth's son, Penini, with an inscription, "In Memory of Angelo Eugene Ossoli" (Markus 217). The two women would have found much more in common as they toured Florence to find the traces of the era of Napoleon I and the circle of Stolberg and Alfieri. Dedicated to literature, they subscribed to a library, and met with other members of the Italian literati. Manzoni's son-in-law, Robert was also a patriotic author whose work Browning was familiar. The church of Santa Croce preserved the tomb monuments of the former revolutionary circle from the occupation of Italy under Napoleon I, which included Alfieri's tomb monument by Canova of a mourning allegory of Italy, as well as Stolberg's monument. The tomb monuments of Michelangelo and Galileo as well as those of the great Italian authors, Dante Alighieri, and Machiavelli, author of the *The Prince*, were further testaments to the important history of art and revolution in Italy. They imbued the Anglo-American community with a sense of shared history as they continued to write the book of human history and revolution in Italy.

Hiram Powers' clay model for his sculpture *The Greek Slave* was first exhibited in his Florence studio in 1843, and the marble version was completed a year later. It was wildly popular when it was exhibited in London at the Crystal Palace in 1851 and later in Paris. Based on the pose of the Greco-Roman Venus Pudica, the Greek Slave referenced the recent conflict between Turkey and Greece, as well as the issue of the slave trade and the abolitionist movement in the United States. She also references the women's movement which American and British writers flirted with in and out of the myriad of classical references that characterized aesthetics in the art and literature of the romantics (Metzinger 88–108). Barrett Browning's poem, "The Greek Slave" is based on her response to the statue which she saw in the artist's Florence studio in 1847; her poem was published in 1850:

They say Ideal beauty cannot enter
The house of anguish. On the threshold stands
An alien Image with shackled hands,
Called the Greek Slave! as if the artist meant her
(That passionless perfection which he lent her,
Shadowed not darkened where the sill expands)
To so confront man's crimes in different lands
With man's ideal sense. Pierce to the centre,
Art's fiery finger! and break up ere long
The serfdom of this world. Appeal, fair stone,
From God's pure heights of beauty against man's wrong!
Catch up in thy divine face, not alone
East griefs but west, and strike and shame the strong,
By thunders of white silence, overthrown. (Poetical Works III:302)

This practice was reinforced by neoclassicism, the dominant stylistic movement of the revolutionary age and art that focused on allegory and deities as exemplars of ideal social values, and especially democracy. Applied to women, however, it had a regressive effect which reduced their accomplishments to flat allegories and ephemeral ideals of beauty and femininity. Thus, women, who like Barrett-Browning, continued to extoll the virtues of ideal forms as synonymous with the women's movement, perpetuated Victorian gender stereotypes. Barrett Browning's "The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim's Point" (1848) alludes to the pilgrim ancestors whose whiteness was also committed to marble in writing the history of the new nation. The whiteness of the pilgrim is contrasted with the blackness of the slave who is also raped by white men and smothers her infant son as a result. The inferiority of the slave is contrasted with the power of the pilgrim, but also the gender inequity which pervades federal period classicism in the arts and literature of the nineteenth-century. The female slave cries: "I'm not mad: I am black." The original title of the poem was "Mad and Black at Pilgrim's Point." Barrett Browning was supported in part by Jamaican slavery. Her position on the topic was of imminent concern to other members of the Anglo-American community who supported liberal politics as well as Italian independence. The dependency of slaves could be compared to the dependency of women and in particular, to invalid women like Elizabeth herself. Relatives who lived on the plantations had taken African slaves as lovers and produced children by them who were adopted, becoming wards of later descendants (Markus 92-94). Barrett Browning's idolization of the Greek slave captures the sentiment of the abolitionist movement from the perspective of the gender ideal captured in the artist's medium of marble. She denounces the practice of slavery as a moral crime, but speaks from the authority of a classical statue who represents allegorical virtues: "Appeal, fair stone, From God's pure heights of beauty against man's wrong!" Barrett Browning references the growing women's movement with her literary themes that also focus on strong female role models. For example, in her companion poems, "The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim's Point" and "A Curse for a Nation," she addresses the abolition theme of slavery. These poems were published first in an abolitionist anthology publication entitled, *The Liberty Bell* before her private collection appeared. But the allegorical role models, which had their origins in the neoclassical allegories of the French Revolution and Early Republic, continued to serve as reference points for female identity and democratic values through the mid nineteenth-century and beyond.

Sandra Gilbert writes that "Crossing the Anglo-Italian frontier represented by the Casa Guidi windows, Barrett Browning gains her strongest voice in Italy" (Gilbert 216). The Brownings occupied the *piano nobile* of the Casa Guidi from which she derived the title of her collection of poems, *Casa Guidi Windows* (1851). Living directly across from the ducal residence at the Pitti Palace during the most tumultuous phases of the revolution that Fuller participated in directly, Barrett Browning crafted her poems as a challenge to authority. Duke Leopold II is the primary recipient of her castigations, while Napoleon III receives her praise. Her first political poem, "Napoleon" (1840) acknowledging the transfer of the emperor's remains to France serves as a touch stone that establishes her role as a spectator of history, who like Byron recognizes the cycle of empire and war and devastating impact of one man on history. However, in her Casa Guidi Windows, and related poems, including, "An August Voice," the female poet now challenges that historical cycle and become a revolutionary activist who faces off against the tyrant who is literally at her doorstep. Molly Barnes has shown that the entire set of poems published under the title, Casa Guidi Windows, demonstrates the poet's interest in historiography and was inspired directly by two distinct phases of the revolution (Barnes 39-65). On September 12, 1847, Duke Leopold promised to support the creation of civic guard. On May 2, 1849, Leopold returned to Florence after having fled the city due to revolutionary turmoil. He joined the papacy in opposing the revolutionaries and was aided by Austria who invaded Tuscany and facilitated his return. Barrett Browning's response directly parallels Fuller's participation in the Roman revolution and her *Dispatches from Rome*. Both women actively and heroically call upon the people to support the revolution for the independence of Italy. When Barrett Browning attacks the cycles of history in the person of Leopold II, she becomes her Aurora heroine, an Amazon, who challenges both human fate and destiny through covert subterfuge. Her personal courage is every bit as remarkable as that of Fuller who stayed close to the front lines during the bombing of Rome, and who tended the wounded soldiers in the hospital, while seeking to provoke revolution through her public *Dispatches from Rome*.

In an “August Voice,” Barrett Browning scornfully mocks the timid Florentines who would allow the Grand Duke to return to his palace and seat of government:

You'll take back your Grand Duke?
My French fought nobly with reason
Left many a Lombardy nook
Red as with wine out of season.
Little we grudged what was done there,
Paid freely your ransom of blood:
Our heroes stark in the sun there,
We would not recall if we could.
You'll call back the Grand Duke? (IX)

Her adopting of Italy as her native land is apparent in her attitude towards Britain. She was critical of Britain's policies, writing in her letters that “much tired of the self-deification of the English nation at the expense of all others” and “I class England among the most immoral nations in respect to her foreign policies. And her ‘National Defence’ cry fills me with disgust.” (Camus 225–235; Kenyon II: 113, 359). In rejecting the British Empire, Barrett Browning embraces the national struggle of Italy as her own. Barrett Browning's political tone is established in the first stanza, in which a child sings, “Oh bella Liberta.” The heart of Italy beats in the child as well as the bird singing in the bush. The song is so enrapturing that it spreads like the movement for Italian freedom. She describes Italy as “enchained” and uses the metaphor of a woman who has been defiled for her beauty. She references Shakespeare's heroine, Juliet, imploring, “Juliet of nations, canst thou die as we?” Italy as a nation embodied her feelings about art and life. In a draft of an unpublished poem, Barrett Browning wrote “Italy! Italy!/Beautiful, if no more free.” This couplet expresses her feelings about herself as a woman and artist who cultivated beautiful sentiments and lofty liberal gender and political goals, but who remained chained to her mortal frame, bound by time and place (Stone 35–57; Moine 123–136).

As a couple, the Brownings projected their love and devotion to one another. As poets, they did the same. Their poetry celebrated their ideal union as a husband and wife and gender was the primary topic. Robert Browning published his collection of poems, “Men and Women,” in 1855, which featured 51 poems about gender. Thus, their approach to politics and the politics of the Italian Risorgimento was through gender. For example, his poem, “Love Among the Ruins,” features a male lover who chooses his female love over material riches. The lyric poem written in trochaic rhyming couplets begins by the describing the setting of the material prince who rules over the lives of men and women, and ends with the conclusion that “Love is best”:

Where the quiet-coloured end of evening smiles,
Miles and miles
On the solitary pastures where our sheep
Half-asleep
Tinkle homeward thro' the twilight, stray or stop
As they crop---
Was the site once of a city great and gay,
(So they say)
Of our country's very capital, its prince
Ages since
Held his court in, gathered councils, wielding far
Peace or war.

Elizabeth's patriotic Italian poems take the same approach. They posit an ideal love relationship between men and women which form the basis of moral judgments about just or unjust political institutions. Thus, the little boy who sings liberty becomes Juliet, Shakespeare's heroine, who is willing to die for her cause since she chooses ideal love and death over material well-being. Italy is described as a woman whose brothers “curve her beauty.” She is a Cybele or Niobe “laid corpse-like on a bier.” (Barrett Browning, “Casa Guidi Windows” Part I: stanza II: line 20). Men are devoted to conscience and need to be awakened by pity to the wrongs they have imposed. Browning also references Michelangelo's marble sculptures of *Night and Day* at the base of the Duke of Nemours tomb monument in the Medici Sacristy of San Lorenzo. These works also

inspired Hawthorne for the same reason: they represent an ideal man as day and woman as night. The reference to the marble trough of Juliet is echoed in the marble effigies and masks, personifications of love and trust which have been violated. The soul responds by saying: "I do not need a principedom and its quarries.../for if I write, paint, carve a word.../The same is kept of God who taketh heed" (Part I: IV: 30). The metaphor of love for the Italian Risorgimento was first promoted by Alessandro Manzoni in his novel, *The Betrothed*. First written in 1827, the novel was revised and published again in 1842. The new edition of the novel would have been of interest to the Brownings in Florence since it also helped to establish the Tuscan dialect as the official language of Italy. In addition, the historical setting of the early 17th century when Italy was under Spanish rule serves as a veiled metaphor for the contemporary domination of Italy under Austrian rule. The hero and heroine are an ideal couple, Renzo and Lucia. The young couple are in love and want to be married by the priest, Don Abbondio, but the ceremony is forestalled by the unscrupulous baron, Don Rodrigo who has lustful designs on the young Lucia after making a bet with his cousin, Count Attilio. As a result of local corruption which has carried over into love, the couple are separated and become the object of a political conflict between two cities, Milan and Bergamo. A famine strikes followed by the Thirty Years' War which ravages Italy and further prevents consummation of the marriage. This calamity is followed by an outbreak of plague. The couple ultimately survive, are reunited and marry. The theme of ideal love thus forms an important trope in the Risorgimento literature which inspired Elizabeth Barrett Browning. A similar analogy exists between the poet's aspirations and sculpture. Sculpture immortalized the Victorian ideals that were unattainable in ordinary life.

Henry James' short story, *Last of the Valerii*, (1874) provides a gender assessment of the Anglo-American style as male-female relationships superimposed onto the relics of antiquity. The obsession with the artifacts of Ancient Rome inspired Sir William Hamilton as more than a simple cultural activity. He initiated a dialogue with the past that encompassed aesthetics in the making of modern art history, and his obsession extended to contemporary art commissions of his muse, Lady Emma Hamilton. In James' analysis of the new preoccupation with the past, he questions how the engagement of the past impacts the existential engagement with the present. The marriage between the American heiress and impoverished Italian nobleman expresses the transition in the American economy from a rural agriculture to one driven by industrial wealth and the creation of large estates. By making the Italian aristocracy the protagonists of his Anglo- Italian novels, James also provides a cursive acknowledgement of the restoration of the Italian aristocracy which was at the heart of the revolutionaries' nationalist debate. Story's 40 room apartment was located on the piano nobile of the lavish Barberini palazzo where he entertained fashionable guests, such as the heir to the Medici dynasty, Simone Peruzzi de Medici, who married Story's daughter, Edith in 1876. The Medici prince served as chamberlain to the Italian king, Victor Emmanuel II. The marquis was also descended from the Renaissance Florentine Medici banking dynasty, and the Peruzzi chapel commissioned by his family for Santa Croce in Florence was decorated by Giotto (Phillips 184). This marriage between Story's daughter and the later day Medici descendent likely inspired the "Last of the Valerii" and the novel, *The Golden Bowl*, by his biographer, Henry James (Davis 17-34). James' character, Amerigo, an Italian prince who wants to restore his family's historic Renaissance palazzo, marries the American heiress and daughter of the millionaire philanthropist, Verver, who assembles a collection of Italian art for his new American museum. James, thus, acknowledges the preservation of the Italian aristocracy by the Risorgimento.

The creation of a unified and independent Italy in 1871 also included a king, Victor- Emmanuel. The desire to acquire the habits and style of the genteel European nobility was grafted onto the new interest in the aesthetic treasures of Europe then being acquired by wealthy Americans to form the major museum collections of America. By the turn of the century, Anglo- Italian authors and artists lost their interest in the revolutionary causes of Italy and America and replaced them with revolutionary and romantic preoccupation with pure aestheticism, but one lacking an underlying political and moral agenda. As an art form, James' novels articulate a new crisis in modern marriage in which men declare their independence from their dependent women. James' reversal of the women's movement approaches domestic gender roles from the male perspective. His protagonists are educated aesthetes who long for escapism from the confines of societal gender and marriage roles. His inspiration, however, was closer to home. The penniless Italian noblemen in need of American capital to refurbish his decaying estate

was modeled after Story's daughter who married a descendent of the Florentine Medici. This union combined the Anglo-Italian interest in history with art. The Anglo-Italian culture was dependent upon such associations for its aesthetic legitimacy while Americans struggled to define their unique national characteristic and the British languored in historicism.

In *The Last of the Valerii*, the Italian nobleman illustrates this search for historic patriation when he rejects his young American wife for a marble statue of Juno, or Hera, the goddess of marriage, on his estate. He also becomes a Jamesian male protagonist who exchanges his marital duties for new aesthetic rituals. The narrator is an American and the godfather of the young woman who marries Count Valerio. He describes the Count as having facial features like one of the busts in the Vatican, and as familiar as the bust of Caracalla, with his eternal scowl: "His large lucid eyes seem to stare at you like a pair of polished gates" (92). But the appreciation of the classical style soon turns to a contemplation of death and ghosts: The villa is described as romantic and "haunted by the ghosts of the past...It was filled with disinterred fragments of sculpture...The statues used to stand in the perpetual twilight like conscious things, which made it deliciously solemn. I used to linger near them, half expecting they would speak and tell me their stony secrets – whisper hoarsely the whereabouts of their mouldering fellows, still unrecovered from the soil" (98). The count at first protests against digging up ghosts: "I can't bear to look at statues in the face. I seem to see other strange eyes in the empty sockets...I call the poor old statues ghosts" (104). The cemetery-like ambience is consistent with the Anglo-Italian circle who looked to the example of Santa Croce and then to the Protestant Cemetery in Rome as evidence of their direct participation in the romantic and revolutionary cycles of history. The recovery of the statue of Juno has a profound effect on the American narrator: "Her finished beauty gave her an almost human look, and her absent eyes seem to wonder back at us" (107). The Italian nobleman falls in love the statue of Juno recovered from the archaeological excavations on his estate. His pragmatic wife rectifies the new inequity in her marriage by reburying the statue. The bust of Juno was important to James as a trope of Italy. She is the mirror image of Stolberg's *Muse* by Canova, and an image that was repeated in the Napoleonic busts of the queens of Italy. A similar female bust made by an American sculptor working in Rome, was also present in the James' home in Italy (Tuttleton 72; James *Italian Hours* 27). Juno also recurs in his novel, *Roderick Hudson*, as an impression in his sketches of the artist's lover, Christine. According to James' *Italian Hours*, Christine's villa is based upon one owned by the morganatic wife of King Victor Emmanuelle II, Rosina (Hendin).

Thus, Juno, a queen of Italy, whose presence, like a ghost, is perpetuated through the later inhabitants of time and memory. Count Valerio becomes possessed by the goddess' charm, and as aesthetes, James and his protagonist, Count Valerio, reject Christian marriage in favor of pagan worship, by placing the bust of Juno in a silver box resembling a reliquary (Naiburg 151-165).

James' novels continually illustrate this subplot of gender role reversal in the male protagonist, who, instead of falling into demoralizing cycles of vice, chooses art as a social outlet for marriage. Even his novel inspired by women's suffrage, *The Bostonians* (1886), takes the most vigilant feminist and makes her the puppet of male desires when she reverses her original commitment to overthrow male dominance and chooses marriage instead. James' protagonists identify female weaknesses and exploit them to attain their own willful independence from the burden of supporting their female dependents. This tendency is illustrated in the *Golden Bowl* (1904) where the Italian nobleman, Amerigo, risks his relationship with his wife, Maggie, and his patron, Maggie's father, a wealthy philanthropist and art collector, Adam Verver, to have an affair with Maggie's best friend, Charlotte. The same subplot is evident in *Portrait of a Lady* (1881) in which the American heiress to a British estate, Isabel Archer, become the victim of the art collecting American expatriate and dilutant, Gilbert Osmond, who desires her estate to refurbish his Roman villa, but who also conspires to have his daughter marry Isabel's former suitor, Lord Warburton. The new wealth acquired by Americans towards the end of the century during the Gilded Age, afforded such perversions of traditional male duties, without overtly supporting the women's suffrage movement and rehabilitation of women's employment.

Aestheticism attracted the wealthy and *aficionados* alike to the field of art history which traced its origins to Italy and the Renaissance. Vernon Lee's novel, *Miss Brown*, and her feminist theoretical writings, also established a distinctly feminist tone in Anglo-Italian historiography

and aesthetics. Her novel, *Miss Brown*, builds on the tradition of Staël's *Corinne*, by creating a heroine who is half Scottish and half Italian, on her mother's side, but is also directly inspired by James' "Last of the Valerii." Miss Brown is mentored by an esthete who discovers her rare classical beauty. Published in 1884, the same year as her biography of Stolberg, *The Countess of Albany* and *Euphorion*, Lee dedicated her novel to Henry James, though his criticism of it indicates that he did not believe her to be as capable an author as himself. Brown is discovered by a wealthy dilutant who takes her under his wing and creates a Pygmalion story by transforming his subject into a beautiful educated and accomplished woman. The education of Miss Brown draws upon the education of historic feminists, such as Staël and Stolberg, as well as Lee's own development. However, her descriptions of Anne Brown are inspired by subplots in Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel, *The Marble Faun* (1859) in which the character, Donatello, bears a close resemblance to Praxiteles' sculpture of a faun. Another parallel is found in descriptions of Hawthorne's character Miriam, and the sculptor Kenyon's sculpture of Cleopatra, which is based on William Wetmore Story's sculpture. But most importantly, Miss Brown's classical beauty is worshiped like the bust of Juno from James' *Last of the Valerii*. Transforming the male concept of ideal beauty into a new feminist ideal of independence is an enduring theme of the Anglo-Italian style. Miss Brown's benefactor and mentor, Hamlin, muses over the beautiful specimen he has discovered:

The complexion was of a uniform opaque pallor, more like certain old marble than ivory; indeed you might almost imagine, as she sat motionless at the head of the table, that his was no living creature, but some sort of strange statue – cheek and chin and forehead of Parian marble, scarcely stained a dull red in the lips, and hair of dull wrought-iron, and the eyes of some mysterious greyish-blue, slate-tinted onyx: a beautiful and somber idol of the heathen. And the features were stranger and more monumental even than the substance in which they seemed carved by some sharp chisel, delighting in gradual hollowing of cheek and eye, in sudden cutting of bold groove and cavity of nostril and lip. The forehead was high and narrow, the nose massive, heavy, with a slight droop that reminded Hamlin of the head of Antinous. (Chapter 1 25–26)

Antinous was the male lover of Emperor Hadrian. His ideal portrait features were known from his frequent portrayal in marble busts. Hamlin's worship of Miss Brown's ideal features approaches the deification of the Jamesian queen, *Juno* and Stolberg's *Muse*, an immortal queen whose essence takes shape in various human forms. As a result of her marriage to Charles Stuart, the Last Pretender, Stolberg became a queen without a crown. Like a sculptor, Hamlin describes Miss Brown as more Jewish and Ethiopian than Latin or Greek, and approaching the "mournful and sullen heads of Michelangelo." The well-educated model, Miss Brown, begins to challenge the authority of her male suitor and maker and rejects him as unworthy of her. The radical feminism of Miss Brown aligns it with the authors Staël and Stolberg who expressed their feelings about the restrictions of society and the Napoleonic Empire. In Lee's later essay, "The Economic Parasitism of Women," she articulates the economic gender biased social inequities of women which lead to their economic dependence upon men which she regards as a parasitical relationship (Zorn 76–79). The strong feminist strain in Anglo-Italian writing is attributable largely to the tradition established by Staël and Stolberg, who reacted against the male conqueror, Napoleon, and the restrictions of society. Yet, at the same time, the placement of Napoleon's sisters upon the thrones of Italy encouraged this feminist movement by demonstrating the administrative capabilities of modern women in the art of statecraft. Florence Nightingale had addressed this same feminist theme in her book, *Cassandra* (1860). Nightingale deplored the social inequities of women which prevented their active and professional contributions to society. The Crimean War, in which she pioneered modern nursing, was also a conflict relevant to the Italian Risorgimento since the Italian Kingdom of Sardinia joined the French and British side of the conflict, and Cavour as Prime Minister, used it as pretext for promoting the cause of Italian independence at the Peace Conference which followed. Lee's *Miss Brown* also contextualizes the accomplishments of Anglo-Italian authors and those of the French Second Empire. Lord Byron. At Hamlin's country estate in England, Victor Hugo may be found "walking quite casually in to tea, -- or the ghost of Byron mistakes this for Westminster Abbey" (II: 5–6). Dante is as important as Shakespeare, and Petronius is as obscene as Walt Whitman.

When Anne enquires about teaching medieval literature at Marjorie's college, she is confronted with the reply: "There is too much of that sort of thing already.... Everyone wants to teach literature. What's the use of telling them about a parcel of Provencal and old French and German and Italian people, when they don't know the difference between Voltaire and Moliere, and Goethe and Frau von Hillern" (II: 39). Instead, Marjorie recommends that she teach political economy, in response to a "blind impulse to harass an aesthete." While the British authors, such as Lady Morgan, marveled at the Renaissance palaces in Italian travelogues, Lee and Staël return the Anglo-Italians to their roots in the estates of the British aristocracy to make cultural comparisons. Wotton Hall, the estate of Hamlin, is compared to an Italian Renaissance palace. Like Barrett Browning's family fortune, Hamlin's estate was also funded by investments in Jamaican plantations. It is spacious with "vaulted rooms, gilded and stuccoed, marble floors and terraced windows; the furniture was all of the Napoleonic period; nothing could be more dignified or sadder" (II:47). Like Staël's half English and half-Italian heroine, Corinne, Anne Brown's darker complexion lends itself to an affinity with Italian culture over British. As they look at the portraits of Hamlin's ancestors, Anne notices her reflection in a mirror and is shocked by the contrast. Hamlin explains that his ancestors in Jamaica intermarried to avoid picking up the genetic strains of the local common racial mix. By contrast, Anne perceives her own reflection as being "half- Jewish and almost half Ethiopian beauty, by the side of that slight, fair, pale, aristocratic man with features sharp like those of a high-bred race-horse, nervous and wistful and dreamy, as if he were tired of having his family last so long (II: 48). Her reflection also suggests a recognition of the cycle of history and empire, such as the premonition Hawthorne's character, Miriam experiences in the *Marble Faun* when she sees her darkened reflection in moonlight at the Trevi Fountain and is startled by the unannounced arrival of Donatello whose reflection joins hers. She immediately recalls a similar scenario from Staël's novel, *Corinne*, in which Corinne and Oswald's reflections signal the continuity of time from the historical past to future and contemporary occurrences. War, revolution and class divide the characters but join them in the cycle of time and myth.

James "Altar of the Dead," written in 1895 in the year of William Wetmore Story's death concludes the history of the Anglo-Italian style. Story was buried in the Protestant Cemetery in Rome beneath the tomb monument of an angel grieving that he designed for his wife. James' short story reflects on the memories of the dead among the living who mark their anniversaries by lighting candles at an altar in a Roman Catholic Church. His protagonist, George Stransom, creates a "religion of the dead." James' story posits a subliminal awareness of the illustrious names in the Anglo-Italian circle of authors and artists who were added to the history of Risorgimento Italy as living saints who supported the cause of freedom and synthesized their political values with love for their partners. His short story focuses on a man and woman who share the same practice of lighting candles to commemorate their deceased loved ones and friends. His female friend mourns the loss of Acton Hague, a man who has done Stransom harm and who he can never forgive, not even in death. The short story ends when the protagonist experiences a vision of his deceased fiancée, Mary Antrim, in the church and senses his own impending death. A similar epiphany marks the conclusion of his novel, *The Wings of the Dove* (1902), in which the death of a young terminally ill heiress in Italy causes her friends to question their own morality when she wills her estate to them. As an epiphany in a Catholic church, Stransom's fiancé, Mary Antrim symbolizes the Virgin Mary, the goddess of Liberty and the living saints who were created among the Anglo-Americans, including Margaret Fuller and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, whose deaths were commemorated in Italy and so closely associated with the Risorgimento movement. The name Acton also has significance to the Risorgimento, since John Acton was the British commander who established the naval forces in Naples in 1780. Thus, the name Acton references the cycle of empire initiated by Anglo-Italians, and their participation in a century of revolution and Risorgimento in Italy.

When Stransom and his female friend begin to add a final candle to the altar, they realize that it is for him, and not Acton Hague. The interest in spiritualism which animated the séances of the Anglo-Italian circles is here transformed into a new Nietzschean existentialism in James' preoccupation with the presence of death, and the transference of marital duties onto aestheticized rituals. James likewise adopts a gendered approach to culture with clearly defined roles and duties documenting the habits of time and history. He acknowledges the feminist movement while decrying its burden, in order to promote the independence of men instead. Both fiercely independent, James and Lee discovered their strengths in the Anglo-Italian

movement which preceded them. In associating the feminist movement with the Italian Risorgimento, James and Lee, successfully established gender neutrality as a domain where individuals could explore their creative impulses by shedding the constraints of marriage roles. At the same time, they initiated a revolution in gender. Their final contribution would continue to reverberate well into the 20th century.

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The author has no competing interests to declare.

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