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HENRY ADAMS AND THE FORMS OF HISTORICAL EXPLANATION

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Henry Adams and the Forms of Historical Explanation

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Henry Adams' thinking began and ended with forms, the models he was given that no longer worked, and the new forms he sought that might shape a future, or project its pattern. Dismayed by the experience of accelerating change, he tried to use history to identify and explain the forces at work. This dissertation explores Adams' search for an adequate explanation as a series of experiments in form. An examination of his major works, the *History of the United States*, *Democracy* and *Esther*, the *Memoirs of Arii Taimai*, *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres* and *The Education of Henry Adams*, reveals the extent to which Adams always wrote as a historian and yet in resistance to the prescriptions of history. His experiments started with inherited models, which he tried to remake for a new age, but what Adams usually produced was not a reformation, but a proliferation of forms. Whatever their genre, Adams's texts continually rebel against expectations. By resisting a conventional emplotment, which is action fitted to historical time, in effect they rebel against history. Adams' experiments end in impasse, uncertainty, and questions, but his failures authorize new investigations. Adams' writing is full of irreconcilable elements and dialectics that can never be resolved; foremost

among these is sexual difference. Treated as alternating polarities of form, these conflicts can be a source of creative tension and imaginative possibility. Adams insisted on history as both art and science despite the uneasy coexistence of the two. What scientific history meant to him shifted from a belief in a Rankean methodology, to the adoption of the explanatory language of the social and physical sciences, to the dream of a great generalization putting all human history under law. The legacy of his name made him a historian, yet one with an orientation to ultimate ends rather than origins. For Adams, history was written with a civic purpose. Questions of form could not be separated from that purpose, nor the vexed problem of finding an audience.

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Introduction. On Form and the Escape from Form

> Did you ever read the Confessions of St. Augustine, or of Cardinal de Retz, or of Rousseau, or of Benevenuto Cellini, or even of my dear Gibbon? Of them all, I think that St. Augustine alone has an idea of literary form,—a notion of writing a story with an end and an object, not for the sake of the object, but for the form, like a romance. I have convinced myself that the thing cannot be done today. The world does not furnish the contrasts or the emotion.
>
> —Henry Adams[1]

Henry Adams' thinking began and ended with forms, the models he was given that no longer seemed sufficient or appropriate, and the new forms he sought that might shape a future, or if not shape it, project its pattern. When Adams spoke, as he did above, about writing a story for its form, his aim was never simply aesthetic pleasure. As he conceived it, art was an instrument for asserting and assessing the force of ideas. The form Adams discusses here, the didactic autobiography he adopted from Augustine, cannot be separated from its function.[2] By calling attention to his model, Adams is insisting on the didactic intent of *The Education of Henry Adams.* The task for both authors was to turn the self-confessed failures of a life lived in history and through history into an accomplishment of a higher order, the creation of a great generalization, but for both Adams and Augustine the model failed to cohere.[3]

That "the thing cannot be done today" calls attention to Adams' motivation to write. Dismayed by the experience of accelerating social, political, and economic change, he turned to history to identify and explain the forces at work. His comments about "contrasts" and "emotions" reflect his earlier projects. Adams' *History of the United States* had found a contrast to the fledgling republic in old Europe, but predicted that the homogeneous field of democratic national character would require a new kind of history. Since then, increasing standardization and mechanization had only accelerated the leveling effects of a mass society, as the *Education of Henry Adams* demonstrated, while

Mont Saint Michel and Chartres celebrated and attempted to recover the imagination and emotion that modernity had discarded.

Understanding what had happened was not enough; Adams insisted on explanation. He conducted his search for an adequate explanation as a series of experiments in literary form, a lifelong process, if not a progress through the letter, journalism, book review, historical monograph, biography, novel, grand narrative history, social history, ethnography, travel narrative, art history, literary history, intellectual history, essay, poetry, and autobiography. An "adequate" explanation would demonstrate a pattern, some kind of regularity underlying human events. This dissertation examines Adams' major works, most of which, characteristically, incorporate more than one of these forms.

Adams' historicist orientation, his assumption that the present was best understood as the product of past forces, was inseparable from his attitude to form. He could not escape his inheritance. Rooted securely in a significant history by his name, this legacy of past-mindedness made him a historian, yet one with an orientation to ultimate ends rather than origins. His experiments start with some grounding in form, something given, which he tries to reformulate for a new age; historical time moves in one direction. In 1878 he insisted that historians needed to begin with an organizing principle, an idea that could be developed: "Unless you can find some basis of faith in general principles, some theory of the progress of civilization which is outside and above all temporary questions of policy, you must infallibly think and act under the control of the man or men whose thought, in the times you deal with, coincides most nearly with your prejudices" (L2:333).[4] The more Adams wrote, the less likely he was to begin with a theory of

progress, but he retained a concept of stages or levels of civilization. He and his brother, Brooks Adams, were relatively unusual among contemporary historians for their interest in theories and laws of history. The one exception in his works to the rule of given form, the Tahitian *Memoirs of Arii Taimai,* is unsuccessful on structural grounds, but its composition shows his cast of mind. Adams imagined he would be chronicling the life and times of the last queen of Tahiti, but what his informants gave him was a mass of legends, songs, poems and stories. With no precedent for organizing such material, Adams finally hit on the line of inheritance itself—genealogy became the organizing principle that both Adams and his collaborators could recognize.

First to last, Adams wrote history. His first major articles as a journalist debunked the mythology of Pocahontas' rescue of John Smith and analyzed British monetary policy after the Napoleonic Wars with an application to the post-Civil War United States. However much *The Education of Henry Adams* may obscure its resolution, the question of Adams' vocation is settled when the "manikin" finally becomes "the historian." The author of the final speculative essays refers to himself as the "teacher of teachers of history." The didactic intent of the *Education* cannot be separated either from the experience of the life lived in and through history, or Adams' attempt to come up with something like a Dynamic Theory of History as its culmination.[5] History for Adams was social thought, written with a collective purpose. It was part of his patrimony as an Adams, received and transmitted, his civic role. However, beyond his circle of friends the identity of his readers was none too clear; most often the question of his audience was deferred to "posterity."

Adams believed in the power of forms, not merely to reflect the societies of which they were the product, but possibly to change them, and certainly to prefigure new modes of social life. His great-grandfather, after all, had signed the Declaration of Independence and written the constitution of Massachusetts. Adams' *History of the United States* begins with the Constitution of the uncertainly-United States, and during the course of his narrative its capacity to institute a workable system is severely tested. By the conclusion of the *History*, the survival of the Constitution is no longer in doubt, but its meaning remains disputed and indefinitely put off. Adams complains not so much that its original meaning was circumvented in response to the realities of governing a nation, but that there was no written confirmation of the changed reality to forestall future difficulties.[6]

As a less problematic display of the power of forms, *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres* concludes with a very loose interpretation of the construction of the *Summa Theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas as the intellectual analogue of the cathedral. Its reformulation of the idea of the Church in response to the recovery of classical learning would endure for centuries, although its creation indicated the coming transition from faith to reason. One explanation why Adams considered *Chartres* and specifically the Aquinas chapters his best may be that they allowed him to construct vicariously a great intellectual system. Finally, having lived through the effects of the dissemination of Darwin's theory, Adams had a vision of similar possibility for history. He speculates in "The Tendency of History" that "four out of five serious students of history who are living to-day have, in the course of their work, felt that they stood on the brink of a great generalization that would reduce all history under a law as clear as the laws which govern

the material world" (127).[7] Adams himself, in *The Education of Henry Adams* and subsequent speculative essays, tried to imagine what that generalization might look like.

What Adams usually produced as a result of his experiments was not a reformation under a new dispensation, but a proliferation of forms. Adams' impulses led him to order and to an escape from order. Whether writing novel or history, Adams's texts continually rebel against expectations. By resisting the conventional emplotment, which is action fitted to historical time, in effect they rebel against history. In the conclusions of the novels, Adams' heroines reject marriage and cast themselves adrift. In the *History*, Adams seems to be setting up a dramatic contrast between 1800 and 1817 that will lead to a triumphant declaration of nationality. Yes, the war with England is over, the continent is secured, a national character has been formed, and yet Adams seems to end the text twice, once with an image of democratic equilibrium that looks suspiciously like inertia, and finally with a set of unanswered questions that cast doubt on the way the new national character is going to develop. In *Chartres* the narrative of pilgrimage denies the conversion that the form seems to promise. The culmination of the *Education*, the Dynamic Theory of History, is a grand generalization that expresses skepticism about the very possibility of formal design. Adams' thinking and writing are full of unreconciled, perhaps irreconcilable elements, and dialectics that can never be resolved, like unity and multiplicity. Their polarities can be entertained in alternation as a source of creative tension to propel the writing. Adams' experiments end in impasse, suspension, uncertainty, doubt, and questions, but his failures authorize a re-examination of the question on different grounds.[8] This is self-reflexive history in the ironic mode. Adams doesn't move forward, precisely, but he keeps generating new responses

collaterally. Given the moral and intellectual standards Adams' had internalized, failure may have been implicit in the scope of his ambitions.

The traditional distinction between historical discourse and literature is its referential commitment to actualities. Thus, the historian has to recreate his or her subject out of the traces of the past. The historian has to select and organize the matter of history, the evidence, to formulate its facts and to recount them in a meaningful way. The relation between history as events, and history as the recounting of events was particularly fraught in the late nineteenth century, when the Rankean version of scientific history tried to downplay the part of literature, tainted by its relation to fiction, and isolate literary history from scientific history. Adams, at the juncture of old and new historiography, insisted on the identity of history as both art and science. He was self-conscious enough of history as a literary construction to see that the formation of facts, assumed to be a transparent process, was inescapably informed by the narrative that informants as well historians intended to tell. The conflicting demands of art and science remain an unresolved element in his writing. His U. S. *History* is a hybrid form in which quantitative and qualitative criteria, fact and value, coexist uneasily as separate elements.

Adams' reliance on the explanatory power of science was based on the historical presumption that science had succeeded religion as the locus of engagement with the great questions of existence. Only science was capable of conceptualizing an ordered universe in the modern era, or if not ordered, at least intelligible. In the *History* science is the modern way of investigation that enlarges the mind, the experimental attitude of "a speculating and scientific nation" that was going to preserve its democratic advantage over Europe through means other than war (J: 53). Adams never relinquished the idea of

practicing scientific history, but his belief in the explanatory power of science took a number of forms throughout his career, from his original veneration of Rankean methodology, to his use of the social and physical sciences as adjuncts to historical explanation, to the ahistorical hope of a great generalization that would subsume all human history under law. The study of timeless regularities, the human mind observed "like a crystal," might be considered the end of history rather than its reinvention for a new age.

He did not employ science systematically, but as a stimulus to thought, a theory against which to pose his own possible ideas. The writing of scientists often frustrated him with their expressions of ignorance, contradictions and unwillingness to generalize, when he wanted certain theory. In the odd, late speculative essays Adams seems to be using the Rule of Phase and the Second Law of Thermodynamics not so much as models to adopt, but as goads to historians to develop their own generalizations and to reframe a university education around historical thinking.

When Adams studied particular actors in specific historical events, what the Rankean interrogation of documents demonstrated was an incomprehensible confusion of motives and interests rather than purposive human behavior. Science failed in its promise to yield a grand generalization, but at least gave him a deterministic vocabulary with which to conceptualize the effects of the mysterious forces behind events, which denied humans any but limited agency. While writing the *History* Adams disparaged the "free will dogma" of historians, which obliged them to write as though humans were effective agents, when as he describes it, even the most famous men were "borne away by the stream, struggling, gesticulating, praying, murdering, robbing; each blind to everything

but a selfish interest, and all helping more or less unconsciously to reach the new level which society was obliged to seek" (J: 1135). Here he is using the imagery of Herbert Spencer, but in *Chartres* Adams preferred to use physics, and in discussing the "First Motor" of Thomas Aquinas compared men to machines without motive force of their own. Adams assumed that all sciences were equally applicable to the human case, at least metaphorically. In the *Education* Adams recuperated a bit of free will, and described humans as having some weak force of their own to react to stimuli and expand themselves in response. Depending on the demonstration, Adams drew his analogies from biology, astronomy and physics: humans were like spiders, pouncing on passing sources of energy, or comets, "man-meteors" exempt from law. Race and sex were posed as problems of inertia and momentum.

Since he had trouble conceptualizing the process of historical causation, Adams frequently used that Spencerian image of water finding its level. Because of his interest in forms, he tended to see change in terms of successive Comtean stages. Adams depicted history as a series of analogies with the movement between them implicit. At the same time, he wanted to follow the line of development—he wanted to realize not only sequence but causation. In the *History*, the aquatic metaphor seems to lead to a dead end. When the United States arrives at the "new level" of democratic nationhood, the stream drains into a vast democratic ocean in which individual atoms may be vibrating, but no movement, let alone direction, is discernable. In his later works Adams jumps from century to century, episteme to episteme. His conceit was that he could simply plot a course following the line of force from twelfth century France to 1900 and on into the future, but the text doesn't actually do this. Instead it offers vivid images to symbolize the

polarities of power and prefers to alternate the figures of Virgin and Dynamo. Because his imagination tended to a series of synchronous stages, Adams doubted the Darwinian model of uniform and continuous development over time, preferring a conception marked by catastrophe and discontinuity.

Throughout his writings, Adams focuses on mentality as mental disposition and capacity, shading into *mentalité,* the collective mental projection of a people and their values in the world. Adams wrote of his attempts in journalism and historiography to "impress a moral on the mind" of the American public; his conclusion in the *History* is the creation of a nation, identified as a national character. In both *History* and novels Adams is concerned with and by an assessment of the intellectual and moral values of the nation. In the Tahitian *Memoirs* and *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres* he attempts to enter into alien ways of thinking and feeling; the emphasis on feeling as well as thinking is a critique of his own society. This interest raises special problems of evidence for a scientific historian. In *Chartres* and the *Education,* Adams uses his own mind to register the effect of the force he seeks and creates symbols to make visible these occult influences. As Adams' level of generalization kept increasing, his object of study diminished until in the *Education* he was left with his own mind, while in the same text he proposes a Dynamic Theory of History and a Law of Acceleration. In the latter, assuming that all forms of energy were essentially the same, including mental energy, Adams used statistics on the rate of coal output to project a geometrical increase in material energy and to infer a similar future leap in mental ability, or at least the need for a leap.

As a final aspect of the way Adams' preoccupation with form influenced his writing and thinking, appropriately segregated, women provided the ultimate example of irresolvable difference. Adams proclaimed that sexual differentiation was the irreparable "blunder" of nature. While he bemoaned the incomprehension between men and women, their inability to come to an understanding, in his novels, the idea of irreconcilable polarities became a useful conceptual tool. Questions about women's place in nature and in history run through Adams' writing from his early lecture-turned-essay "The Primitive Rights of Women." In this work Adams makes a distinction between sex and gender, discussing, for example, how the Church forced women into a subservient cultural position, but often he prefers to forget the distinction in later works. It seems no accident that Adams' assertion of the illusory nature of all forms of historical representation occurs when he is discussing the three queens of *Chartres.* Women in history are unknowable, but women are essentially known as the inertial reproductive force of history. When the *History* and the *Education* call for a "new order of man," this is not a category that embraces the eternal Woman. Women (or "Woman" as Adams reverted to a mythic simple past tense to describe her) were crucial as a source of alternate values of taste, self-sacrifice, maternity and love, in a world where men were increasingly consumed by the imperatives of a runaway commercial and mechanical society.

Yet, because of that alterity, when Adams created female protagonists they could embody his resistance. The heroines of Adams' novels rebel against the conditions of nineteenth-century America, but their power is limited to refusal. A much greater female creation is the Virgin, Adams' radiant symbol of organic unity, who "trampled on conventions" and is his sublime figure of revolt. "Mary concentrated in herself the whole

rebellion of man against fate; the whole protest against divine law; the whole contempt for human law"; she was humanity's only chance of escape (C596). [9] Not surprisingly, Adams had difficulties with the New Woman. In what he considers in the *Education* to be a perilous experiment, some twentieth-century women seemed determined to rebel against maternity.

Chapter I examines Adams' relation to his American patrimony in the *History of the United States of America during the Administrations of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison* (1889-91). Adams aimed for a monumental history in the grand style, the story of the rise of a great nation, but in the discrepancy between principle and practice, which was both Adams' subject and his experience of Gilded Age society, democratic history could be written only in an ironic mode. Adams attempted to modernize the traditional grand narrative of political, diplomatic and military history framing it with two surveys of American society, one in 1800, one in 1817, to conform to the requirements of Rankean scientific methodology and the history of a democracy. New and old history are yoked together as competing claims of fact and value. Problems in the representation of agency and historical causation are connected to questions about the purpose of the work and the way it imagines its audience. Adams asserts that his own hybrid form was no longer adequate to the demands of its democratic subject. History as a domain of knowledge would become a study of the regularities of a mass society and require some new, as-yet-unimagined scientific form. In this autotelic projection, history seemed completed before it began, as movement across continental space became more important than movement

in time. At the same time, he notes the public's adherence to the old heroic history that allowed them what Adams considered a necessary sense of idealism, if too often skewed to admire the wrong men.

Chapter II investigates Adams' two novels, *Democracy: An American Novel* and *Esther: A Novel*, which are not historical novels in the traditional sense of being set in a past that responds to present concerns. As the work of a historian exploring an alternate feminine and popular genre, they grow out of what is missing in the *History* and address what it cannot, all the qualitative questions about American objects, interests and values with which the opening and closing chapters of social history conclude. Adams uses his two female protagonists as instruments to assess the state of American society in its politics and its search for higher aspirations. In these anonymous and pseudonymous works, he gives vent to the present disappointments and frustrations that compelled the writing of the *History*, but even in fictive form Adams cannot write himself into an improved model of social understanding.

Chapter III discusses history as seen from the vast distances of the Pacific. Adams tried travel as an escape from the labors of his *History*—and found history of another sort, whose aristocratic appeal was a refreshing change from the prosaic United States. Adams experienced the cultures of the Pacific as living museums, and came to consider travel in space as travel in time. The matter of history was Arii Taimai herself, "the last great archaic woman," and a collection of legends, poems, songs and stories that encompassed what Adams considered archaic and historical time. In this new/old world, Adams had no established form from which to work. He constructed a framework of genealogy and a strange first person sometimes singular, sometimes plural, which

eventually questions its own voice. As a text the *Memoirs of Arii Taimai*, an unstable combination of memoir, auto-ethnography, and critique of European culture, falls apart, given the divergence of Adams' two audiences and the limits of his identification with the Tahitians. Tahiti did give Adams the experience of composing unconventional history, writing from another place, inhabiting its alternative point of view and seeking a form analogous to its worldview. In recognizing difference, in writing aristocratic history in contrast to democratic history, in encountering "the archaic woman" and realizing that sexual differentiation was an irrevocable divide, Adams began to consider that these separate categories, inadequate in themselves, were valuable as alternating spaces of imaginative possibility.

In Chapter IV, whose subject is *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres*, Adams begins with a more conventional narrative of travel, the summer tour of cathedrals by an uncle and his niece. As the evidence with which to imaginatively recreate the mind of the Middle Ages, Adams chose cultural treasures, architectural, artistic, literary and philosophical. Written as a study of three centuries, they are organized as three distinct mentalities, each with its own monument: Mont Saint Michel exemplifies Church and State Militant; Chartres cathedral and its patron, the Virgin of Chartres, stand for the feminine principle as depicted in art and religion; and finally, the *Summa Theologiae* expresses a resurgent masculine principle through medieval philosophy. Once the physical travel has stimulated dormant emotion and imagination, the tour can move to a survey of literature and philosophy. Adams tests the expansive designation of "travels" through a number of sub-forms: the use of the conventions of travel-writing and the tourist as a figure of historical inquiry and contemporary social critique; a return to the

issues of sexual difference and genre, investigating the place of women in history and nature through the symbol of the Virgin and the nieces who are his putative audience; an exploration of the pilgrimage, broadly conceived, as a vehicle of personal, artistic and social renewal; and finally his reconstruction of a third monument, the Church Intellectual, or more generally, a study of the artist as system-builder. The ground of the text shifts from place to place, century to century, identification to detachment, male to female values, forms whose differences can be solved, to the extent that they can be solved, only by the transformations of time, rather than an integrative synthesis.

Chapter V examines Adams' experiment in didactic autobiography, *The Education of Henry Adams*, presented with the object of fitting youths "to be men of the world, equipped for any emergency." Adams tries to recreate himself as the matter of history by introducing a "manikin" named "Henry Adams" as he continues his inquiry into the nature of historical change. This chapter looks at the way Adams conceived a life in history in four respects: as an experiment in autobiography; as a continuation of Adams' investigation into the place of women in nature and society with women seemingly at the crux of social change; as an inquiry into the making of history as experience and text; and as an attempt to formulate a theory of history. The *Education* and the theory are the culmination of the life and work, the product of his education and the justification of his pedagogy. They seek to capture the forces of attraction at work on a representative mind, forces that could not be controlled in the life. In the conclusion, Adams plays the historian as prognosticator, triangulating the future, and formulating a Dynamic Theory of History and a Law of Acceleration. Because of the nature of the

history as experience and text, there can be no final unified vision; form and content are divided, contradicted and questioned.

The late works, *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres* and *The Education of Henry Adams*, are best known. Because of the peculiar circumstances of their publication, Adams' writings experienced a posthumous success. The *Education* was written in 1907 but published in 1919 after Adams' death; its cultural critique suited a postwar generation who read the work as a prophecy of a world in which technological forces outstripped the human capacity to control them. Readers, the few who have read the *History,* may make a distinction between early and later works, some finding the thinking in the latter corroded by pessimism and self-pity, or marred by over-generalization. *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres* and *The Education of Henry Adams,* often dismissed by historians for their disregard of professional historiographic norms, were recuperated by literary scholars as incandescent works of art. Since the turn to study the social sciences as written texts, the analysis of science as itself a historical phenomenon, and the rise of historical disciplines that correspond more closely to his preoccupations, Adams' work needs to be reappraised as history that explores the limits of what history can do.

Critics have often found it difficult to separate the man from the work. In the 1930s Henry Steele Commager praised Adams' work, but claimed "what he was is more significant than what he wrote." Taken as a symbol, "whether we confine ourselves to the mere outward aspects of Adams' career or embrace the history of the entire family which he recapitulated, or penetrate to his own intellectual and psychological reaction to that

generation, we find that Adams illuminates better than his contemporaries, the course of American history."[10] As a symbol, Adams has been criticized as the epitome of the ivory-tower intellectual who detached himself from the lives of the people and continues to lead others astray with the seductive appeal of exclusivity. He has been presented as the solitary literary artist alienated from an indifferent society, not unlike Adams' portrait of the poet George Cabot Lodge. His failure to achieve a public career has been charged against the society that could find no place for his talents. Others refuse to see Adams as an emblem of anything but his own ego. He inspires antipathy as a dilettante who failed to make use of his advantages, who blamed American society for his personal failures. My thinking is in accord with more recent analysis, which looks past Adams' deliberate reticence on the subject to place him as a member of a family, a generation, and a particular social elite. The breadth of Adams' multiple experiences is demonstrated in the richness and complexity of his writings. While I am a contextualist who feels that form needs to be understood in its relation to particular circumstances of its making, I put the texts first.

Adams' style can engender a reaction in readers irritated by his strategies of mystification: authorial practices of anonymity and pseudonymity and the private circulation of texts; within the texts, a manipulative use of first and third person and the alternation of excessive self-effacement and self aggrandizement; the creation of poses like the perennial failure, the posthumous person, the avuncular tourist, the stablemate to statesman, the manikin who "must be treated as though it had life;—Who knows? Possibly it had!" (Edu 722). Adams' desire to control the responses of readers is complicated by his difficulty in imagining an audience. Reading Adams can be a

perplexing experience. The irony which throws a ring of exclusivity around his writing and reinforces the bonds of a group of intimates can be hard to discern a century later. Some readers reject his writing, because they feel his irony is an elaborate jape directed against them. Adams' letters, like the rest of his writings only more so, are the facets of a prism, sometimes contradictory but all true, directed to the initiation and maintenance of particular relationships.

As for the form of my own writing, since I came to envision Adams' work as a series of experiments, the texts needed a chronological order of examination. Because Adams seemed to approach each work with similar preoccupations, it was especially important not to begin by considering the work as a body outside of time and sequence, but to approach each work in turn. Then, too, literary people have been accused of reading all of Adams' writings through the late pessimism of *The Education of Henry Adams*. Unlike Adams I did not begin with a great theory. My approach was simply to start with the texts, including an exploration of less-examined regions like the Tahitian *Memoirs* and the final chapters of *Chartres* and the *Education* that Adams considered so important to his thinking. This accounts for the discursive form of my dissertation. Adams' writings displayed a preoccupation with form to start, yet as I considered what Adams' attention to form allowed him to do and what it refused, the texts kept falling into multiple sub-forms. What I found was a preoccupation with form that seemed inseparable from Adams' historical-mindedness, a historicism that tended to speculation about futurity, and yet a refusal to accept the expectations of form. This manuscript may have the effect of a garden of forking paths at times. In part this is because Adams' works

tend to devolve into an unresolved multiplicity, but also because as I wrote I wanted to retain an exploratory perspective that left discussion open to other directions.

Chapter I. History and its Conventions: *History of the United States of AmericaDuring the Administrations of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison* (1889 Vols. I and II; 1890 Vols. III to VI; 1891 Vols. VII to IX)

Henry Adams' *History of the United States during the Administrations of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison* is history on an epic scale, but written in an ironic mode that befitted its author and its subject. It attempts to combine a grand narrative of statecraft—political, diplomatic and military—with with the requirements of a democratic society and the newer scientific history. Adams' nine volumes, two for each President's two administrative terms plus an extra volume to cover the war of 1812, exhibit the objective pose, exhaustive research in the archives of five nations, and scrupulous attention to documents of the professional historian, as well as an attention to literary values that recalls the time when history was still considered a branch of letters. Yet this monumental work ends in suspension, doubtful about the form and purpose of a democratic history and uncertain about the significance of its narrative. This chapter will look at the ways that Adams attempted to conceive a democratic history, even in a hybrid form, particularly his approaches to problems of representation and causation and the question of an audience.

Adams brought a varied historical experience to his task. As the grandson and great-grandson of presidents, he was well-acquainted with the ironies of history. The success of the project of nation-building that had made the family name widened the average American's horizon of expectations, while narrowing it for the Adams men themselves. Adams himself had participated in the making of history as secretary to his father, Charles Francis Adams, who as minister to Great Britain during the Civil War had

successfully struggled to keep the British neutral during the conflict. Hoping that the end of the war had brought a new reformist spirit to America, Adams embarked on a career as an investigative journalist in Washington. An early published article debunking the story of the rescue of John Smith by Pocahontas indicated Adams' interest in historical and political correction. By presenting a side-by-side comparison of the earliest historical sources, he was able to cast aspersions on an English hero, spoil a picturesque myth of the old South, and criticize current historiography by revealing the degree of romantic embellishment that George Bancroft's *History* had added to the original unsubstantiated claim. [11]

Since the prospects for political reform during the Grant administration looked increasingly remote, Adams accepted the somewhat unlikely offer to become Harvard's first professor of medieval history, while the editorship of the *North American Review* allowed him to keep his hand in politics. At Harvard Adams participated in the movement to professionalize American history as one of the first Americans to implement the new "German method," the methodology of scientific history attributed to Leopold von Ranke.[12] In the seminar room, which possessed all the clinical atmosphere of a laboratory, scholars engaged in the critical analysis of documents, established the facts of the past, and reported them as they actually were, the often-repeated "*wie es eigentlich gewesen.*" Generalization was to be avoided under the assumption that the significance of the facts, presented with rigorous detachment in the proper sequence, would be self-evident. [13]

Adams supervised Harvard's first crop of doctorates in history and published their collaborative efforts as *Essays in Anglo-Saxon Law*, the first scholarly book on the

subject in America. Through his interest in the study of primordial institutions, he had become attracted to the Teutonic germ theory of history, the idea that the ancient germ of democracy originated among freedom-loving tribes of Germany, migrated to England with the Anglo-Saxon invasion, and endured somehow the tribulations imposed by English monarchism until it came to its final flowering in the villages of North America. As Adams describes it:

> The student of history who now attempts to trace, through two thousand years of vicissitudes and dangers, the slender thread of political and legal thought, no longer loses it from sight in the confusion of feudalism…but follows it safely and firmly back until it leads him out upon the wide plains of northern Germany, and attaches itself at last to the primitive popular assembly, parliament, law-court, and army in one; which embraced every free man, rich or poor, and in theory at least allowed equal rights for all. (1) [14]

Assumptions about the primitive German origins of liberty were not new: Jefferson had espoused them, for one, and the romantic historians noted the German influence in the peoples they studied.[15] But as the providential model of history no longer seemed credible, Anglo-Saxonism provided an alternate secular model of continuity, which retained the model of the fulfillment of an essential truth rather than a break with the past. As Adams practiced it, it was more a search for primitive analogies to American political institutions, a sort of typology that justified democracy as an essential stage in human development, and less the celebration of racial Anglo-Saxonism conducted by others.[16] Following the German thread may have justified the present, but seemed to lead nowhere beyond. As the subject of Adams' teaching and research advanced chronologically to American history, he turned his thinking to historical projects with more immediate relevance. Adams' primary interest when he returned to Washington in 1877 as an

independent scholar was an inquiry into the nature of American democracy with the idea of its reformation.

In Adams' thinking, the proper scientific orientation was necessary, but not enough: "The historian must be an artist. He must know how to develop the leading ideas of the subject he has chosen, how to keep the thread of his narrative always in hand, how to subordinate details, and how to accentuate principles" (115). [17] In insisting that his history answer the requirements of both science and art, Adams was a transitional figure: a scientific historian in his use of primary documents as well as his interest in the power of scientific generalization, he was also a gentleman of letters who wrote grand narrative history in the older tradition of his New England predecessors George Bancroft and Francis Parkman. [18]As he wrote his publisher, "In truth the historian gives his work to the public and publisher; he means to give it; and he wishes to give it. History has always been, for this reason, the most aristocratic of all literary pursuits, because it obliges the historian to be rich as well as educated" (L3:131).[19] Professionalization for Adams, whose authority as a historian was as much personal as official, may have been a diminution of status.[20]

Leading directly to the *History*, Adams lectured on the early national period at Harvard before he left in 1877; he proposed unsuccessfully to teach the class together with Henry Cabot Lodge, so their students could get the benefit of both "radical and Republican" (Adams) and "conservative and Federalist" (Lodge) points of view. He produced *Documents Relating to New England Federalism* (1877) in response to Lodge's *Life of George Cabot*. In 1879 he published *The Writings of Albert Gallatin*, and *The Life of Albert Gallatin*, whose subject was Adams' model of a statesman. He wrote

biographies of *John Randolph* (1882) and Aaron Burr (never published), whose subjects emphatically were not. Henry and Marian Adams spent 1879-80 researching in the archives of London, Paris and Madrid. Adams privately printed and circulated for comment six copies of Volumes I-II in 1884, Volumes III-IV in 1885, and Volumes V-VI in 1888, but printed Volumes VII-IX directly.[21] During this period of preparation and actual writing, Adams also wrote two novels, *Democracy* (1880) and *Esther* (1884) which have a direct bearing on the *History* and will be discussed in the next chapter. In 1885 he suffered the catastrophe of his wife's suicide, and began to refer to his subsequent life as "posthumous."

Adams' project in the *History* is the foundational story of the nation, which, as he conceived it, was born only in 1815 with the formation of a national character and the consolidation of a national government through the experience of war. His history required a transatlantic perspective because the nation that he asserts as an entity is visible often only in its international relations, in the official and unofficial exchanges between Americans and the representatives of England, France and Spain, and in the promise the United States offered the world as the democratic polity of the future. In the domestic context, Americans are always identified with their region and faction. In choosing the unusual periodization of 1800-17 as formative, Adams had a clear field and no competitors. With the fledgling nation required to maneuver its way among hostile European powers, the era offered the opportunity to write a history of diplomacy, which Adams with his practical expertise and privileged access to archives was prepared to do. History is always recreated for a particular present, and in the post-Civil War years a story of the way the United States conquered the forces of disunity had considerable

interest. Burr's Western conspiracy and the Essex Junto showed that the South was not the only region susceptible to treason. But the *History* also justified the Union cause: when the Virginia school of republicanism relinquished its states'-rights principles for the exercise of power, even conducting a war for the sake of national self-respect, it set a precedent that, as far as Adams was concerned, made any future reversion to states' rights invalid.

Also, while John Quincy Adams was active during this period, no Adams was too prominent, allowing Adams to avoid either the appearance of filiopiety or its opposite. He begins the narrative with the inauguration of Jefferson, thus omitting his grandfather's electoral defeat.[22] Critics tend to read the work under the rubric of family business: from one perspective, the *History* demonstrates the intellectual interests and standards of achievement of the Adams family;[23] from another, it was written as an act of vengeance against family enemies.[24] Once in power, Jefferson and Madison, the drafters of the Kentucky and Virginia resolutions, were forced by circumstances to pursue nationalist policies for which they had criticized their Federalist predecessors, an irony Adams never fails to point out. Here he condemns the catastrophic effects of Jefferson's embargo, which went beyond merely replicating Federalist policies:

> He had undertaken to create a government which should interfere in no way with private action, and he had created one which interfered directly in the concerns of every private citizen in the land. He had come into power as the champion of States-rights, and had driven States to the verge of armed resistance. He had begun by claiming credit for stern economy, and ended by extending the expenditures of his predecessors. He had invented a policy of peace, and his invention resulted in the intensity of fighting at once the two greatest Powers in the world. (J:1239)

Jefferson is an unusual figure in the text, because he is both the type of the Virginia Republican and the universal democrat, whose party base covered the South,

Pennsylvania, and in varying degrees New York, but whose aspirations included all humanity. When he acted against strict Virginia principles as a democrat in pursuit of some national interest like buying Louisiana, he was a unifying figure, who attracted moderate Federalists to his party. Here, though, the moderate position is somewhere between the sets of antitheses. As a summary of a presidency it is devastating; the use of anaphora and the unusual (for Adams) use of the past perfect have the effect of pronouncing a sentence. Jefferson has lost the support of the people. Paired antitheses present the effect of balance and objectivity, while allowing Adams' interest to gravitate to extreme positions, as it generally does, to Massachusetts and Virginia rather than prosaic democratic Pennsylvania. In the introductory chapters the one quality which Adams claimed Americans needed most was "a speculating and scientific nature," but here the spirit of invention has led to public disaster.

In a similar reversal, the extreme Federalists were forced for the sake of opposition to adopt the Virginia position of strict construction. Adams estimates that a pendulum swing brought a new alternating impulse of political energy every twelve years, but here the pendulum has swung too far, stimulated by Jefferson's experiment in "peaceable coercion." John Quincy Adams was no great hero: for the sake of action he rushed into support of Jefferson's disastrous unlimited embargo, although he behaved creditably in insisting, to no avail, on the need to set up a Constitutional justification for the Louisiana Purchase. He achieved a diplomatic victory "Napoleonic" in its sweep by showing up in Russia precisely at the moment when the Czar was ready to break with Napoleon (my assumption is that the adjective "Napoleonic" is ironic, although some critics think it used seriously to score a point against Madison, humiliated by Napoleon's

diplomacy). [25] J. Q. Adams' "repellent" temper and lack of judgment made him unsuited to his position as leader of the negotiating team at Ghent, but Albert Gallatin, the model of Adams family statesmanship beyond any member of the Adams family, saved the negotiations by taking the lead. [26] And yet, despite all the unintended consequences and mistakes, by the end of the narrative the United States has became a nation after the larger optimistic Jeffersonian vision—another irony, carried out on the scale of the entire work.

Adams may well have felt gratified that some of the policies of his ancestors, once vilified, had been vindicated by history. It may even be that John and John Quincy Adams were fortunate in having had so many and varied enemies, Republican and Federalist, that the settlement of old scores looks like impartiality. But the scope of the narrative, and the complex interconnectedness of the events it describes, militate against a reading that sees the irony directed only at family enemies. One of the effects of watching events unfold over nine volumes is to see how little agency any one individual possesses to pursue a course of action, (which is not to say that Adams exempts anyone from the requirement to act honorably). While working on the *History*, Adams complained that Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe "appear like mere grasshoppers, kicking and gesticulating, on the middle of the Mississippi River. There was no possibility of reconciling their theories with their acts, or their extraordinary foreign policy with dignity. They were carried along on a stream which floated them after a fashion without much regard for themselves" (L2:491).[27] In the discrepancy between the ambitions of human actors and their ability to actually effect them, Adams finds a cosmic irony.

Despite the rise of the monograph as the professional form, the multivolume history remained the standard for Adams. The connection of the monumental scale of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, the greatest of all histories, with the image of the historian was irresistible. The moment when Edward Gibbon discovered his vocation left an indelible impression on his would-be successors: "It was at Rome, on the 15th of October, 1764, as I sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol, while the barefooted friars were singing vespers in the Temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the city first started to my mind" (160). As I discuss in a later chapter, in *The Education of Henry Adams* Adams pictures himself as a twenty-three-year-old traveler in Rome obsessed by the riddles of history: "Rome was actual; it was England; it was going to be America" and yet "not an inch had been gained by Gibbon,—or all the historians since,—towards explaining the Fall" (Edu 803-04).[28] In the opening chapters of Adams' *History* the personal ambition of the historian and the public aspiration of the nation coincide in the figure of the Capitol.

The ambitious plan of the city of Washington stands for the nation, the nation for a continental empire and perhaps a destiny beyond. But it took an act of faith to see it. The city was "a fever-stricken morass" of half-finished buildings overlooking a vista of swamps, where the unhappy men of Congress and the Executive were condemned to live in boarding houses "like a convent of monks" (J:23-24). Adams makes Gibbon's indelible moment his own in identifying, and identifying with, America's rising power:

> A government capable of sketching a magnificent plan, and willing to give only a half-hearted pledge for its fulfillment; a people eager to advertise a vast undertaking beyond their present powers, which when completed would become an object of jealousy and fear,—this was the impression made upon the traveler who visited Washington in 1800, and mused among the upraised columns of the Capitol upon the destiny of the United States. (J:24)

If Adams' readers in the 1880s knew the outcome of those ambitions, he stresses the improbability of their fulfillment in 1800. Adams, who has been read by political theorists as the last of the civic republicans,[29] might be concerned about the dangers of empire to the American ideal, but the imperial reference seems to be more than a simple tribute to Gibbon: it speaks to Adams' own ambitions for himself and for the United States. Adams wrote his opening chapters with the intention of a Gibbon in reverse. For Gibbon scenes of order and prosperity hid decay, for Adams scenes of provincial desolation hid the hope of the world.

In considering how to begin his work, Adams consulted the earlier models of Gibbon and Thomas Babington Macaulay: "I do not fancy Introductions. I see that most historians had the same feeling. Gibbon ran his introductory chapters into his narrative, and Macaulay actually broke off his narrative to insert his introductory chapter" (L3: 161). Not only is there no formal introduction to Adams' *History*, there are no prefatory remarks to ground the text in the present, orient the reader, introduce the historian or explain his intentions. Only a declarative sentence in a simple past tense, as though the work narrated itself: "According to the census of 1800, the United States of America contained 5,308,483 persons" (J:5). [30] Adams signals that he is practicing social science and not romance. The omniscient third person of the Rankean historian removed the necessity of self-presentation, which may have been a relief to Adams. But however much he adopted an objective pose in his writing, his intimacy with the facts rested first on his familial identification with the American past. The closer the subject was to Adams personally, the more he adopted a pose of detachment, to an extent which was itself notable.[31] The self-conscious effacement behind the authority of statistics calls

attention to the author and draws the implication, unfair perhaps, that he thought his name was all the authority he needed. In service of this self-effacement, Adams restricts, but hardly eliminates the direct expression of opinion. Frequently he attributes his criticism to the opinions of unspecified "observers," "many," "a shrewd observer," or "Americans" when it comes to reading foreign reports. It is always "the Federalists" or unnamed Boston newspapers who ridicule the mixed metaphors in Jefferson's state messages, for example.

Adams' paragraphs weave together paraphrase and citation of primary documents: inaugural addresses, annual messages, treasury reports, records of Congressional and Parliamentary debates, proclamations, diplomatic memoranda, census data, economic statistics, travel narratives, letters private and official, reports of courts-martial, naval engagements, state papers, official dispatches, treaties and their drafts, newspapers, diaries, memoirs, and poetry. Occasionally he uses secondary sources: in describing naval engagements, he may use Cooper's or Roosevelt's histories for facts and figures; or he might quote letters published in biographies. Richard Vitzthum, who has studied Adams' use of sources, reports that he nearly always uses primary documents even in his unsignaled paraphrases.[32] For the amount of citation and paraphrase Adams does, his pages seem under-footnoted, but the range of his research in the archives of the United States, France, Britain, Canada and Spain remains a model for diplomatic historians.[33] Adams has the documentation to depict the same event through multiple perspectives, whether American and British accounts of a naval battle, Federalist and Republican debates, or English, French, Spanish and American versions of the etiquette wars in Jefferson's White House.

Time in the *History* is both synchronous and diachronic. Six introductory chapters fix time at 1800 and analyze the United States in terms of physical conditions, demography, geography, and their economic impact; popular characteristics: diet, amusements. manners and morals; the intellect of New England; the South; and the Middle States (characteristically Adams omits the West); and American ideals, in which Adams searches for a never-quite-articulated expression of the America dream. In 147 chapters the narrative follows events from 1801 to 1816. The final four chapters recapitulate the introductory subjects in 1817, except that the regional chapters have been consolidated into one, now that, as Adams claims, the experience of war has molded a national character to substantiate the forms of national government: economical results; religious and political thought; literature and art; and American character.

The opening chapters present a world in which the American republic is a risky and improbable experiment. The United States represented a political advance over Europe, but a people divided by geographical obstacles lacked the resources to overcome them. Adams' picture of America is replete with historical comparisons that demonstrate American backwardness, (although Europe was none too advanced either). While the eighteenth century "reigns over all," material conditions approximate, variously, the time of Charlemagne, eighth century Saxons, the Antonines, Tubal Cain, the Aryan exodus, even, perhaps, the state of nature: "Nature was rather man's master than his servant, and the five million Americans struggling with the untamed continent seemed hardly more competent to their task than the beavers and buffalo which had for countless generations made bridges and roads of their own" (J:7). Not for Adams the romance of the frontier: "Great gains could be made only on the Atlantic coast under the protection of civilized

life." The Lewis and Clark expedition was a single "feat" of American enterprise, but couldn't compare to the New York City men "bringing the headwaters of the western rivers within reach of private enterprise and industry"(J:752).

No civilized country had yet dealt successfully with such problems of sectional isolation and political faction; no civilized country had begun with greater ambitions: "The contrast between the immensity of the task and the paucity of the means seemed to challenge suspicion that the nation itself was a magnificent scheme like the federal city" (J:23). The greatest obstacle to American development was mental, the attitude that "what had ever been must ever be" (J:52). Scientific knowledge was necessary if Americans were to solve their problems, yet in 1800 popular attitudes to innovations like the turnpike and steamboat were apathy and contempt. "The task of overcoming popular inertia in a democratic society was new." Yet it was necessary for the U.S. to become "a speculating and scientific nation," to learn "to love novelty for novelty's sake," and to "risk great stakes and accumulate vast losses in order to win occasionally a thousand fold" (J:53). While American pretensions to superiority vis-à-vis Europe could be ridiculed as the product of ignorance, the successful acquisition of American power is understood, without nudging the reader or necessarily regarding the present as the triumph of all that has gone before. As a dramatic enhancement for the reader who presumably knows the happy outcome of its story, the introductory chapters offer the prospect of a historical time in which no outcome seems certain, not the survival of the republic, still less the possibility of a continental empire.

Adams' introduction poses a set of questions about the problems faced by a democratic society, questions for the reader to ponder through the volumes to come:

> Could it transmute its social power into the higher forms of thought? Could it provide for the moral and intellectual needs of mankind? Could it take permanent political shape? Could it give new life to religion and art? Could it create and maintain in the mass of mankind those habits of mind that had hitherto belonged to men of science alone? Could it physically develop the convolutions of the American brain? Could it produce, or was it compatible with, the differentiation of a higher variety of the human race? Nothing less than this was necessary for its complete success. (J:125)

These questions might seem rhetorical, designed to flatter the self-regard of readers ninety years and more after the events Adams describes. Allowing for the hyperbole of "permanent," the traditional fears about the sustainability of republics hadn't been fulfilled, and it might be argued that people had grown smarter and more moral. But Adams demands "complete success"—a new brain for a new man, a scientific populace inspired by a regenerated art and religion. Anxieties about the direction of the future stimulate his writing about the past, a past that is conceived in the image of a present crisis. The questions reflect on Adams' present project as well. If science is the route to innovative thinking, can a scientific history generate social power? Could a scientific history, defined as the critical analysis of documents arranged in sequence so they explained themselves, motivate the people to a higher understanding of their unity and purpose? Could the habit of critical objectivity give new life to religion and art? In framing the questions at a level of generalization which concerned itself with the future of mankind, and assuming the social scientific language of Comte and Spencer, Adams seems to recognize implicitly the inadequacy of Rankean science.

The People

Adams may have abandoned the providential worldview of his predecessors, but his secular perspective relocated American exceptionalism in the democracy that placed

Americans a hundred years in advance of the rest of the world. "If they were right in thinking that the next necessity of human progress was to lift the average man upon an intellectual level with the most favored, they stood at least three generations nearer to their common goal. The destinies of the United States were certainly staked, without reserve or escape, on this doubtful and even improbable principle" (J:108). Although the title of Adams' *History* is precise in insisting that its organizational structure is based on administration, Adams seems to acknowledge that the history of a democratic nation requires something more with the sociological focus of his opening and closing chapters.

These chapters show the influence of Macaulay's famous third chapter of social history in his *History of England During the Reign of James II*, which interrupts the narrative for a survey of population, transportation, religion, places, manners and customs, work and leisure in 1685. [34] Macaulay's excursion into the past can display the self-congratulatory present-mindedness decried by critics of Whig history: "The more carefully we examine the history of the past, the more reason we shall find to dissent from those who imagine that our age has been fruitful of new social evils. The truth is that the evils are, with scarcely an exception, old. That which is new is the intelligence which discerns and the humanity which remedies them" (329). On one level, Adams, too, assumes his readers have emerged at another, better level of "differentiation" (using Spencer's term) or he would not feel compelled to insist that life in 1800 was primordial and strange. The difference is in the level of gratification each author expresses with the present. Adams is always conscious of the discrepancy between actuality and aspirations; he still wants the "complete success," while being skeptical of its achievement, or even the terms on which it might be achieved. In concluding his tour of British society,

Macaulay admits that "one subject of the highest moment still remains untouched." He has said nothing of "the people," as he defines them, "the most numerous class," nor can he say much. Beyond a discussion of wages, actual and relative, they remain unknown (324-25). [35]

Like Macaulay, Adams begins with a picture of backwardness and low prospects: "Nearly every foreign traveler who visited during these early years, carried away an impression sober if not sad…what could be hoped for such a country except to repeat the story of violence and brutality which the world already knew by heart, until repetition for thousands of years had wearied and sickened mankind" (J:107).[36] Starting with the expectation that a divided continent would replicate the "slaughter-house" of Europe, Adams charts the eventual rise to a united republic, although through a series of uncertain developments and with a recognition that the most important things could not be charted. "The growth of character, social and national,—the formation of men's minds,—more interesting than any territorial or industrial growth, defied the tests of censuses and surveys" (J:31). It takes only a chapter for Adams to contradict the positivism of his opening. This conflict between fact and value, quantitative and qualitative criteria persists, indefinitely deferred rather than resolved.

Unlike Macaulay, Adams' explicit contrast is between his bookends of 1800 and 1817, not 1800 and the present.[37] In effect Adams starts with the Constitution as an intellectual construct to be tested and never looks back to the divisiveness of the Revolution. He may describe the war of 1812 as the creation of a national character, but he approaches the subject more as an analogy than an origin. For a historian whose formative experiences occurred during the Civil War, there were obvious parallels

between the period of his *History* and his present, the war that recreated a nationality, the peace that rejected principle for more material benefits. Adams might have planned writing a story about how the factiousness of American sections in 1800 had been obliterated by a war with England, which created an overriding national identity; however, as we shall see, the actualities of the narrative are more complicated. In the 1860s Adams had imagined a " national school of our own generation" to revitalize society after the war: "We want a national set of young men like ourselves or better, to start new influences not only in politics, but in literature, in law, in society, and throughout the whole social organism of the country." Even this proposition ended in doubt about its practicality: "we have no means, power, or hope of combined action for any unselfish end" (L1:315). [38] Adams wrote his *History* from a position of present disenchantment and with the implicit hope of discovering some new ideology to animate the "social organism" to a higher understanding.

After Macaulay, another important if less immediate influence was Alexis de Tocqueville, whose survey of the life and manners of Americans had impressed Adams, as he wrote in 1863: "I have learned to think De Tocqueville my model, and I study his life and work as the Gospel of my private religion" (L1:350). [39] In his opening survey, Adams adapts the perspective of the musing time-traveler more sympathetic to what he sees than the travelers he quotes. Also, in a rehearsal of his own survey, when editor of the *North American Review* Adams had commissioned articles to assess the state of the United States one hundred years after independence in similar categories such as politics, religion, science, education, and the law. [40]

Adams' friend, the British historian J. R. Green, provided a more recent example of social history in his *Short History of the English People* (1875), a work that Adams, writing in the *North American Review*, praised for its felicity of style and sound judgment.[41] Green's style is "a curiously happy vein of picturesque, yet unaffected narration," incorporating the social into the narrative rather than isolating it in a separate chapter as Macaulay did (216). Green announces that his narrative will be a course of social development, not "drum and trumpet" history, or a "record of butchery," but "the incidents of that constitutional, intellectual, and social advance in which we read the history of the nation itself" (iii). Green proclaims himself more interested in the conditions that instigated the Peasants Revolt than the "sham romance" and caste exclusivity of that French import, chivalry, more disposed to explicate the triumphs of peace in the Elizabethan age, the civil administration that brought about the first Poor Laws and the intellectual freedom that fostered the arts, than its naval victories. At the time, Adams was still an adherent of the Teutonic germ school of history. Green's work confirmed his thinking and allowed Adams to assert the historical primacy of democracy: "it stamps the whole theory of monarchy as understood in the high-prerogative period, as a mere historical blunder, and establishes beyond further question the historical truth of the principal that, at least in the Teutonic race, the people always have been the rightful source of political power" (Adams 219).

By the 1880s Americans were writing social history of their own. In a clear echo of Macaulay's opening, John Bach McMaster's *History of the People of the United States from the Revolution to the Civil War* (1883-1914) proclaims the necessity of combining social and political history to tell the one-hundred-year story of "such a moral and social

advancement as the world has never seen before"(I:2).[42] Compared to Adams' sectional survey of 1800, McMaster's chapter entitled "Town and Country Life in 1800," has the loose form of a catalog in which the subject changes every couple of pages. Following the inauguration of Jefferson, Republicans accused Federalists of "pyrotechny," just as Federalists had seen a Republican conspiracy behind every conflagration in 1797. Surprisingly, McMaster reports newspaper accounts of suspicious occurrences and calls for public vigilance only from the earlier period. But then the subject of pyrotechny seems like a device to discuss fire-fighting, the duty of every householder, which leads to a discussion of the fire-bucket and a brief history of fire insurance. After this it seems useful to describe the modest houses protected by that insurance and the homely amusements enjoyed there like tea parties and ballad singing. Of course, some people only liked French opera, and so McMaster discusses the vogue among Republicans for French manners and French fashion. He briefly adopts a Republican voice to ridicule "old fogy" Federalist style, but then his modern voice joins the older derision at outlandish French styles. Wearing those clothes people visited assembly rooms and the theater, where programs were long and players and audiences took liberties unthinkable today. Cheaper amusements abounded: exotic animal shows, electrical displays, automata, balloons, museums.

Country people took the turnpike home. Turnpikes provoked controversy at first, but eventually the Lancaster pike was the pride of the state, while German farms were the pride of Lancaster for their neatness and thrift. The lives of the redemptioners (bond servants) are described, then farm wagons, stage coaches and the dirt and lack of privacy at inns. The New England inn was different and orderly, as was the practice of the New

England Sabbath, which leads to descriptions of life in fishing villages, children's chap-books, the lives of the pioneers, the rise of Troy, New York, and the camp meetings at Cane Ridge, Kentucky.

Occasionally the topics of Adams and McMaster overlap, but their treatments differ. For McMaster, description and the grouping of details seems enough. His chapters devoted to social history have a democratic capaciousness, infinitely expandable like one of Whitman's lists, although they lapse at times into ethnographic timelessness. The decline of religious practice and New England Puritanism is the one place where McMaster sounds like Adams in discussing a social change. Adams also discusses the resistance to turnpikes, but in the context of a general mental conservatism that obstructed improvement. Both repeat the same traveler's account of an inn, but Adams provides some context to evaluate the report. In contrast to McMaster's lack of emphasis, Adam's examples are always ordered in service of an idea. McMaster's extended coverage of the rise of religious revivalism in Kentucky is valuable in its specificity and points out an interesting social development that Adams neglected to see.

In one respect, Adams seems more democratic, his frequent use of quotation. He may begin with free indirect discourse in the mind of a Federalist, for example, but a quotation emerges from the paraphrase. McMaster prefers paraphrases that sound like quotations. Sometimes he throws his voice in the middle of a paragraph, for a sentence or two supposedly in the voice of the people he is discussing, but without quotation marks. Sometimes the paraphrase of speech can go on for pages, when for example, he creates a composite campaign speech from the Republican point of view, written in simpler language and anchored by footnotes to a few speeches or editorials. [43] In order to create

immediacy McMaster sometimes uses the present tense, summarizing Aaron Burr's trial in a series of eleven scenes each beginning with "We can see…"(III:80-81). The use of the present tense by historians was a practice that drove Adams wild, compared to his standard use of the imperfect.

The last of the introductory chapters, "American Ideals," is interesting for what Adams cannot say, as he searches in vain for an articulation of American ideals, as well as the curious mix of idealism and naturalism in which he approaches the task. A chorus of European travelers reported that vulgarity and rapacity were the primary traits of American character—and yet felt a mysterious something more, "beyond the range of their experience, which education had not framed a formula to express" (J:113). The mystery is beyond an educated American's ability to express either. In what is the closest Adams comes to a preface, he admits the problem of conceptualizing the role of the people in a democratic history: "Of all historical problems, the nature of a national character is the most difficult and the most important. Readers will be troubled, at almost every chapter of the coming narrative, by the want of some formula to explain what share the popular imagination bore in the system pursued by government"(J:120).

Throughout Adams' career, he comes back to the subject of mentality. National character becomes a question of popular imagination. What relation do "the people" bear to "the United States of America," his titular subject? By the conclusion the people have somehow thought, felt, suffered themselves into a nation and the nation seems identical with the political entity, but the popular imagination doesn't often intersect with the statecraft that is exercised in its name. People vote; they decline to enlist; they hold public meetings. At times the narrative has to wait for the next election to find out what

the people think, since Adams is skeptical about the degree to which newspapers actually reflect popular thought.

He can infer the essence of America only from the reaction of foreigners, and for Adams, evidently, English contempt still rankles:

> To their astonishment and anger, a day came when the Americans, in defiance of self-interest and in contradiction of all the qualities ascribed to them, insisted on declaring war; and readers of this narrative will be surprised at the cry of incredulity, not unmixed with terror, with which Englishmen started to their feet when they woke from their delusion on seeing what they had been taught to call the meteor flag of England, which had burned terrific at Copenhagen and Trafalgar, suddenly waver and fall on the bloody deck of the "Guerriere." (J:114)

Adams has had enough opportunities to experience the varieties of British contempt, actually and virtually, to raise a suspicion that he embarked on his project for the pleasure of writing a sentence like this, vindicating the national honor in one angry exhalation. Adams is no longer interested in establishing Anglo-Saxon continuities, although his former colleague, the popular historian John Fiske, was still insisting that the American revolution "only made it apparent to an astonished world that instead of *one*, there were now *two* Englands, prepared to work with might and main toward the political regeneration of mankind" (584).[44] As Adams conceives it, the war of 1812 was the true birth of the nation. He might well agree with Hegel on repetition as confirmation: "in all periods of the world a political revolution is sanctioned in men's opinions, when it repeats itself…By repetition that which at first appeared merely a matter of chance and contingency, becomes a real and ratified existence" (313).[45] Adams needed to start with something given; it was much easier for him to write about the friction between two distinct structures than try to document the process by which one society developed into two. A study of Anglo-Saxon replication would fail to account for the existence of a

national character. If Americans had been molded by democracy, Adams argues that years of war had brutalized British character, making it unable to recognize any claims but those of force.

Against European fear masked as contempt of the new social forces, Adams tried to measure the attraction of America. “No one questioned the force or scope of an emotion which caused the poorest peasant to see what was invisible to poet and philosopher,—the dim outline of a mountain-summit across the ocean, rising high above the mist and mud of American democracy” (J:116). In this light, the absent things in American life, church, aristocracy, family, army, were “artificial barriers” to personal fulfillment. What America offered was the stimulant of power, which few could resist: “the elements of power were to be had in America almost for the asking. Reversing the old-world system, the American stimulant increased in energy as it reached the lowest and most ignorant class, dragging them and whirling them upward as in the blast of a furnace” (J:109). The forms of power were economic and, for the more intelligent, political. Here Adams the naturalist could watch the effect of a stimulus on a body unhampered by any mediating influences.

But Adams still wants to insist on the centrality of American ideals to structure that power. Unfortunately, “Nothing was more elusive than the spirit of American democracy.” The historian has to create his object from the evidence, but the archive is also a record of what is lacking. A search of Jefferson’s writings shows that he “seldom or never uttered his whole thought,” yet the record showed that he was feared and condemned as a man of illusions. Therefore, “if this view of his character was right, the same visionary qualities seemed to be a national trait, for everyone admitted that

Jefferson's opinions, in one form or another, were shared by the majority of the American people" (J:117). Adams, at least, is displaying a speculative bent. In the absence of absolute documentary proof, if Jefferson was seen as an idealist, if Jefferson was criticized for being the type of democracy, then so must Americans be idealists. Adams, like his Americans, "seems to require a system which gave play to their imagination and their hopes" (J:117).

When Adams searches the archives he finds a fragment which might indicate a clue. But his discovery throws doubt on his earlier search, because it seems to speak much more to Adams' Gilded Age preoccupations than Jefferson's vision. In a letter Jefferson wrote, "I fear from the experience of the last twenty-five years that morals do not of necessity advance with the sciences" (J:122). If Jefferson, according to contemporaries, envisioned the promise, Adams saw the problems. While Adams' thinking is speculative, he is more anticipator than speculator: he wants to know what is going to happen.

Unable to find what he is looking for in the history, and therefore unable to articulate himself an ideal that might re-establish America on a footing more congenial, Adams created two figures. One is an image of power. The American, as yet unformed (except in a regional mold), unencumbered by European social prescriptions, was ready for action: "Stripped for the hardest work, every muscle firm and elastic, every ounce of brain ready for use, and not a trace of superfluous flesh on his nervous and supple body, the American stood in the world a new order of man" (J:109). Adams has shifted from asserting the necessity for Americans to create a new man to affirming his existence. Adams' boosterism is surprising, given his usual irony. Certainly no individual in his

narrative matches this figure of physical and mental possibility, but perhaps that is why Adams offers it. The other figure is a character, the American speculator:

> Even on his practical and sordid side, the American might easily have been represented as a victim to illusion. If the Englishman had lived as the American speculator did,—in the future,—the hyperbole of enthusiasm would have seemed less monstrous. "Look at my wealth!" cried the American to his foreign visitor. "See these solid mountains of salt and iron, of lead, copper, silver and gold. See these magnificent cities broadcast to the Pacific! See my cornfields rustling and waving in the summer breeze from ocean to ocean, so far that the sun itself is not high enough to mark where the distant mountains bound my golden sea. Look at this continent of mine, fairest of created worlds, as she lies turning up to the sun's never failing caress her broad and exuberant breasts, overflowing with milk for her hundred million children. (J:118)

Adams' uncharacteristically rhapsodic language may be a substitute for the poetry he was unable to find from European commentators. In his romantic search for the meaning of America, even Wordsworth was a disappointment. This creation of a character for the effusion of some strong emotion is a technique Adams uses more in his later unconventional histories. The immigrant, the "unconscious poet," responds to an atmosphere Adams describes as "moral." The foreign tourist can see only desolate wastes and sickening people, and suspects a swindle. Adams may have distanced himself from the sentiment by calling the hyperbole "monstrous," but in an 1896 essay, Frederick Jackson Turner cited the rest of the passage (from "Look…") as a depiction of the idealism of the frontiersman. Adams, who saw no especial virtue or significance to frontier life, simply describes it an example of American futurism, whether motivated by imagination or greed.[46] (With his frontier hypothesis Turner succeeded in doing what Adams was unable to do here and elsewhere in his *History*, create a historical generalization that captured the American imagination.) The evocation of the continent as great mother is interesting as a reflection of Adams' interest in the position of women in

primitive institutions, including the role of goddess. It also points out the absence of women in the volumes of his *History*, and the way Adams tended to categorize genres by gender, a subject for discussion in the next chapter.[47]

On a more elevated level, there were indications that "the average American was more intelligent than the average European, and was becoming still more active-minded" (J: 123). Along with figures like Franklin, Eli Whitney, and Robert Fulton, Adams' proofs of native energy and ambition include his unnamed great-grandfather: "the actual President of the United States, who signed with Franklin the treaty of peace with Great Britain, was the son of a small farmer, and had himself kept a school in his youth"(J:123). Diplomacy was apparently his greatest achievement, and the signing of another peace treaty with Great Britain by his son will be the effective conclusion of this history. But Adams isn't willing to put a limit on American ambitions. If the American of 1800 couldn't even conceive an artistic ambition, "leaders like Jefferson, Gallatin, and Barlow might without extravagance count upon a coming time when diffused ease and education should bring the masses into familiar contact with higher forms of human achievement, and their vast achievement, turned toward a nobler culture, might rise to the level of that democratic genius which found expression in the Parthenon" (J:125). Adams discreetly stakes his claim in this least objective of his chapters.

In England during the Civil War Adams had caught a reflection of American ideals in attending a "democratic and socialist meeting" on behalf of the North and abolitionism:

> I never quite appreciated the "moral influence" of American democracy, nor the cause that the privileged classes in Europe have to fear us, until I saw how directly it works. At this moment the American question is organizing a vast mass of the lower orders in direct contact with the wealthy. They go our whole platform and are full of the "rights of man." The old revolutionary leaven is working steadily here in England. You can find millions of people who look up to our institutions as their

> model and who talk with utter contempt of their own system of government…I will not undertake to say where it should stop, but were I an Englishman I should feel nervous. We have strength enough to shake the very crown on the Queen's head if we are compelled to employ it all. (L1:339)

Adams needs the quotation marks to maintain a certain ironic relation to American ideals, a proprietary attachment which is somewhat detached from the over-familiar democratic lexicon. His personal identification seemed to rest with the uneasy privileged class. Given the time it took Adams to find a place in British society, this association with the people might have been slightly embarrassing but highly gratifying nonetheless. It's not clear who's in charge here: the "we" with youthful bravado may refer to Adams and his father, the ambassador, or their British allies, who ostensibly are able to direct rather than be submerged in this mobilized mass, but the "American question" seems to be doing the organizing.[48] Turning his attention westward to his own country, Adams loses his ironic tone: "The conduct of the affairs of that great republic which, though wounded itself almost desperately, can yet threaten to tear down the rulers of the civilized world, by merely assuming her place at the march of democracy, is something to look upon" (L1:339-40). Adams needed distance, the distance of an ocean, the distance of a European point of view, to see America whole. Even in the 1860s he was quite conscious of the emergence of American power in relation to Britain, a subject that will become an occasion for triumph in *The Education of Henry Adams.*

Near the conclusion of the narrative, there is an episode in which the popular imagination intersected with statecraft, much to the surprise of the people's elected representatives. Throughout the narrative, the Republicans had been hampered by a lack of talented men in the executive, and still more the legislature. The Republican party, strong in numbers, was so weak in leadership "that the weakness amounted almost to

helplessness." Unlike the Virginia Republican, the Northern Democrat was a follower: "a man disqualified for great distinction by his want of the habits of leadership; he was obliged, in spite of his principles, to accept the guidance of aristocrats." For New Yorkers the inability to command seemed to be a lack of social skills: they "could not write or speak with perfect confidence…or enter a room without awkwardness" (J:180). Pennsylvanians, who came closest to living a democratic ideal, were simply not interested in power: "Perhaps their democracy was so deep an instinct that they knew not what to do with political power when they gained it; as though political power were aristocratic in nature, and democratic power a contradiction in terms" (J:81).The etiology of a democratic "instinct" remains as occult as the American ideals Adams sought to verbalize.

Not until 1815 "under the stress of war," did the people select the ablest and best for office. "Since Federalist times no Congress had felt such a sense of its own strength, and such pride in its own superiority; none had filled so fully the popular ideal of what the people's representatives should be" (M:1276). In that spirit of self-confidence, Congress voted itself a pay raise, the first since 1789, and changed its compensation to a regular salary like the other branches of government. This behavior, which Adams certainly seems to support after a series of Congresses which he describes as irresponsibly vacillating and weak to "imbecility," raised new questions about the possibility of democratic leadership. [49] After silently enduring war, embargo, taxation, national debt and constitutional violations, the people rebelled against the pay raise. According to Adams, "the people" perceived their own petty weaknesses mirrored in their public representatives:

> The people in truth, however jealous of power, would have liked in imagination, though they would not bear in practice, to be represented by something nobler, wiser, and purer than their own average honor, wisdom, and purity. They could not make an ideal of weakness, ignorance, or vice, even their own; and as they required in their religion the idea of an infinitely wise and powerful deity, they revolted in their politics from whatever struck them as sordid and selfish. The House reflected their own weaknesses; and the Compensation Act seemed to them an expression of their own less agreeable traits. (M:1273-74)

What does it mean for the people to turn against the most popular organ of government? Adams himself is evidently not one of "the people" here, nor were the astonished representatives themselves. This indicates a fundamental question about representative government as Adams saw it: does the representative lead, act as "leaven," or is he merely the embodiment of his constituents' attitudes and instincts? The new men refused to bow to authority, "even of the people, but rather looked upon the task of government as a function of superior intellect. They proposed to correct what they considered mistaken popular tendencies" (M:1255). In an 1875 review Adams quoted approvingly the distinction between Andrew Jackson and George Washington as representative men: "As Washington was the incorporation of the best traits of the popular American character, Jackson was the incorporation of *all* its typical traits" (Von Holst in Adams 181).[50] The tendency of the people seemed no longer to accept correction, even for the sake of superior public service. They "would not bear" another Washington, or another Adams for that matter.[51] They seemed to require a representative who pandered to their weaknesses, either unconsciously replicating them, or consciously playing on their self-deceptions to rule them. And yet, they could imagine something better—if their imaginations could only be released from their resentments, as they had been under the necessity of surviving the war.

When McMaster looks at this episode in his people's history, he seems perplexed. He feels a need to justify public criticism, but can't approve the display of public anger. McMaster describes the Compensation bill as an act of "odious character," not because it raised compensation—representatives should have earned more than they did in 1789—but because of the argument made by supporters that the replacement of per diem payments by a lump sum would make Congressional sessions shorter and more efficient. It is not clear why this is so odious, since the debate he and Adams reports covered wider grounds than this. McMaster's account expands on Adams' in presenting specific instances of public reaction, meetings, legislative resolutions, petitions, fourth-of-July toasts, as well as the election returns. He concludes, "The punishment was unreasonable, and, as is so often the case in great outbursts of public anger, was harmful" because it voted out the "ablest and most useful" of Congresses (IV:362). [52] This episode is a puzzle that appeals to Adams' ironic temper, since the problem during the war years had been the inability of the executive and Congress to inspire and organize popular energies. But the display of public anger was troubling because of what it said about the nature of the public mind, that it sought its own level and no further. Adams ponders a remark by John Calhoun, "Of all the machinery created by the Constitution, the House alone directly reflected and represented the people; and if the people disliked it, they disliked themselves" (M:1272). What would it take to stimulate them out of mediocrity, beyond the emergency of a war? There is little trace of the "omnivorous ambition" of the public mind, seeking and responding to the stimulus of something better that Adams postulated in the chapter on "American Ideals."

Types and Characters

Questions of heroism, even leadership, seemed to belong to another, earlier, kind of history. As Adams saw it, history evolved with the society it studied. National character became the proper subject of a democratic history, and the proper model of a democratic history was scientific. In contrast to the heroes of European aristocratic history, the individual in American democratic history had relevance only as a type. "American types were especially worth study if they were to represent the greatest democratic evolution the world could know. Readers might judge for themselves what share the individual possessed in creating or shaping the nation; but whether it was great or small, the nation could only be understood by studying the individual" (M:1335). Adams justifies his focus on the persons of Jefferson and Madison particularly, since "individuals retained their old interest as types of character, if not as sources of power" (M:1335). Adams is hedging here, justifying his focus on the individual while turning heroes into types. In effect, he continues the form of the old history, using individuals for dramatic interest, answering the demands of art as well as science. He can classify his approach to history as hybrid in form to apprehend an age that was transitional in nature. After all, Jefferson, Madison, and Gallatin were aristocrats, whose characters had been formed before the Revolution. In the language of "type," the perfect specimen of the social scientist retains a vestige of a moral lesson for the descendant of Puritans. Adams imagines Jefferson's vision of democratic progress to be both physical and intellectual, but the question of "the New Englander," who saw something missing from Jefferson's vision, may well be his own: "What will you do for moral progress?" (J:122). Adams' types and characters are judgments as much as descriptions.

While he leaves it up to the reader to decide the individual share in "creating and shaping the nation," Adams failed to see individual agency to any great extent. During the writing of the *History,* he asserted, "The element of individuality is the free-will dogma of the science, if it is a science. My own conclusion is that history is simply social development along the lines of weakest resistance, and that in most cases the line of weakest resistance is found unconsciously by history as by water"(L2:491)[53] Free will had to be held as faith, because as far as Adams was concerned, it wasn't proven by experience. That individuals influenced events remained a historiographic convention, for how else could a historian show the process of social development, but Adams at least insisted his individuals were types of some larger social formation. In his final chapter, "American Character," Adams repeats the image of water following the path of least resistance, which, as Ernest Samuels points out, was borrowed from Herbert Spencer, to assert that history in future would be a science of society.[54]

It is no surprise, then, that Adams rejected the great man theory of history.[55] As he wrote to William James, "With hero worship like Carlyle's, I have little patience," but Adams was evading James' own argument about the "fermentative" effect of geniuses on social evolution. Carlyle's heroes were divinely-touched individuals, whose superior qualities manifested themselves variously depending on the requirements of the age, and who were valuable for the hero-worship they inspired and directed.[56] James was making an argument that social change occurred, "due to the accumulated influences of individuals, of their examples, their initiatives and their decisions," against Herbert Spencer's argument that men were products of their environment (442). Adams responded that "In history heroes have neutralysed each other, and the result is no more

than would have been reached without them. Indeed in military heroes I suspect that the ultimate effect has been retardation." Adams seems to admit the possibility of individual geniuses, but finds elites more significant:

> Nevertheless you could doubtless at any time stop the entire progress of human thought by killing a few score of men. So far I am with you. A few hundred men represent the entire intellectual activity of the whole thirteen hundred millions. What then? They drag us up the cork-screw stair of thought, but they can no more get their brains to run out of their especial convolutions than a railway train (with a free will of half an inch on three thousand miles) can run free up Mount Shasta. Not one of them has ever got so far as to tell us a single vital fact worth knowing. We can't prove even that we are. (L2:466)

Presumably he is generalizing from experience, since in his letters Adams assumed that he and his friends know everyone worth knowing. Adams grants the possibility of free will, (the vivid specificity of the pseudo-fact, "half an inch on three thousand miles," can't climb "Mount Shasta" is typical of his writing), but is more interested in the constraints against it, which he expresses not in the language of social Darwinism, but in terms of inadequate mental constructs. The path of the "cork-screw stair of thought," implying a movement more lateral than vertical, might be progress, but seems to lead nowhere. The solipsistic convolutions of the brain are too curved, the mechanical train track too straight; facts are irrelevant; proof is ineffectual. Instead of trusting to the process, the cork screw play of thought, Adams anticipates: he wants to know the pattern and its end in advance.

It is no wonder, then, that Thomas Jefferson's principles went awry when he tried to put them into application. Jefferson makes brief appearances in all the opening chapters to illustrate some of the obstacles to a concept of nationality. [57] By the time Adams stops to examine Jefferson's character in the chapter "Intellect of the Southern States," he has already called him "the philosopher" enough times to invite derision.[58]

Jefferson and Madison, (who is always presented as Jefferson's follower), are introduced as the authors of the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions, the twin creeds of the states-rights, strict-constructionist Virginia school, which considered the union "a question of expediency, not obligation"(98). This fact sets up the action of the narrative, in which the theory of minimal government is tested by the acquisition of power.

In back-handed fashion, Adams admits, "According to the admitted standards of greatness, Jefferson was a great man," rendering Jefferson's greatness dubious, and asserting his own superior powers of discrimination at Jefferson's expense. However, Adams' tone changes: "After all deductions on which his enemies might choose to insist, his character could not be denied elevation, versatility, breadth, insight and delicacy; but neither as a politician nor as a political philosopher did he seem at ease in the political atmosphere that surrounded him" (J:99). The aspects of Jefferson's character that made him "singularly out of place" as the leader of a democracy were those most appealing to Adams. [59] In all its "fascinating" contradictions, Jefferson's character presented an artistic challenge:

> A few broad strokes of the brush would paint the portraits of all the early Presidents with this exception, and a few more strokes would answer for any member of their many cabinets; but Jefferson could be painted only touch by touch, with a fine pencil, and the perfection of the likeness depended upon the shifting and uncertain flicker of its semi-transparent shadows. (J:188).

As Adams classified them, Jefferson was a character worthy of Beaumarchais, John Adams came from Sheridan, while Aaron Burr was straight out of *The Beggar's Opera*.

Many readers have seen elements of self-portrait in Adams' depiction of Jefferson as a man of "excessively refined" tastes for his time.[60] "His instincts were those of a liberal European nobleman…The rawness of political life was an incessant torture to him,

and personal attacks made him keenly unhappy. His true delight was in an intellectual life of science and art" (J:99). Jefferson avoided crowds and cities, never made speeches if he could help it, and preferred the company of intimates. "His writings often betrayed subtile feeling for artistic form,—a sure mark of intellectual sensuousness. He shrank from whatever was rough or coarse, and his yearning for sympathy was almost feminine" (J:100). In truth, "with all his extraordinary versatility of opinions, he seemed during his entire life to breathe with perfect satisfaction nowhere except in the liberal, literary, and scientific air of Paris in 1789" (J:100-01). Adams, too, has been criticized for being overly theoretical, for generalizing "without proper analysis," for being "superficial in his knowledge, and a martyr to the disease of omniscience"(J:100).The fact that such a man could become President once, but no longer, spoke to Adams' imagination.

A closer look at the way Adams introduces Jefferson in the first chapter "The Inauguration 1801," provides a useful demonstration of Adams' principal methods of exposition in the narrative, quotation and paraphrase. The first sentence begins, "The man who mounted the steps of the Capitol, March 4, 1801, to claim the place of an equal between Pitt and Bonaparte, possessed a character which showed itself in acts; but person and manner can be known only by contemporaries…" Adams begins the chapter with Jefferson mounting the steps, stops the action for a physical description of the man, and then moves into a paragraph of direct quotation from Senator Maclay, which confirms the details Adams has just given and adds new ones. Adams stops to contextualize his source, reporting that the Senator, who cited Jefferson's unexpected "laxity of manner" in 1794 before a Senatorial committee, was "not unfriendly" to Jefferson, being an early member

of his party. Then Adams adds another description of Jefferson's appearance by a British diplomat in 1804.

Adams uses an anecdote from Cardinal de Retz to stress the importance of small things to mark personality, (the new pope remarked that he had used the same pen for two years), as well as an allusion to Carlyle, to justify calling attention to Jefferson's dress and hint at its future political significance. He notes that "the Federalists newspapers never ceased ridiculing the corduroy small-clothes, red-plush waistcoat, and sharp-toed boots with which he expressed his contempt for fashion," and then launches into the passage below:

> For eight years this tall, loosely built, somewhat stiff figure, in red waistcoat and yarn stockings, slippers down at the heel, and clothes that seemed too small for him, may be imagined as Senator Maclay described him, sitting on one hip, with one shoulder high above the other, talking without ceasing to his visitors at the White House. His skin was thin, peeling from his face on exposure from the sun, and giving it a tettered appearance. This sandy face, with hazel eyes and sunny aspect; this loose, shackling person; this rambling and often brilliant conversation, belonged to the controlling influences of American history, more necessary to the story than three-fourths of the official papers, which only hid the truth. Jefferson's personality during these eight years appeared to be the government and impressed itself like that of Bonaparte, although by a difference process, on the mind of the nation. (J:127)

Clearly this is no statesman in the heroic mold, but individual character is revealed over time and in relation to others. Adams begins by setting up the international context of Pitt and Napoleon to dramatize the presumption of the American in this unequal contest. He establishes his own veracity as paraphrase and quotation are mutually reinforcing. The "loose, shambling" person, the "red waistcoat" (mentioned for the third time), "rambling" conversation, every detail except the "tettered" skin, are distilled from the quotations, and chosen for vividness and specificity; literary and scientific goals converge here. The literary allusions establish Adams' own cultural authority, while licensing his

fascination with Jefferson's dress. There is an undertone of incredulity at Jefferson's flouting of proper form—that the President should allow himself to be seen as a simple rustic—that links him with Napoleon. [61]

After signaling his fidelity to representing the past as it was, Adams capitalizes on the trust he has accrued and moves to his own assessment of Jefferson. He asserts Jefferson's vast importance to the story, while leaving the nature and degree of his agency obscured. The face, person, conversation "belonged to the controlling influences of American history." This is ambiguous. Jefferson may be a member of the category of "controlling influences"; he may be a part of those influences, their adherent, or their creature. There are occasional intimations in the text of large historical forces mysteriously at work behind events, but Adams may be operating on a lower level of causation. In any event, it's not clear how things happen or how far Jefferson is responsible. Is it the individual or the type, who is "more necessary to the story than three-fourths of the official papers, which only hid the truth"? Literary history trumps scientific, when the necessities of the "story" diminish the significance of the archive. That Jefferson's personality "appeared to be the government" is one of the ironies of history. The more Jefferson attempted to reduce the scope of the federal government for the sake of his republican ideals, the more important he himself became as the leader of his party; his foreign policy was personal.

But "appeared" seems to point in a different direction—the conduct of government for the next eight years is going to be loose and shambling with odd flashes of brilliance. Beyond any administrative role, Adams has introduced Jefferson as the embodiment of number of types, the visionary, the universal democrat, a more parochial

Virginia Republican, the aristocrat, the scientific investigator, as aspects of a complex personality There is a hidden play on words, if the action of Jefferson's personality is regarded not as the action of forceful individualism, but as an article of "type" "impressing" itself on the character of the people; the influence is mutually reinforcing and cannot be separated. The spirit of American democracy manifests itself in this shambling visionary and he somehow forms a nation in his ramshackle image. Any impressments in the martial sense, seizing and forcibly enlisting the popular imagination, seem more in Napoleon's line. This brief description presents Jefferson as a figure of endless variety and ambiguity, and therefore endless interest, but demonstrates the difficulty of reconciling the demands of art and science. The "truth," here at least, lies in the symbol.

One more observation about Adams' technique. The paraphrase "the Federalists newspapers never ceased ridiculing the corduroy small-clothes, red-plush waistcoat, and sharp-toed boots with which he expressed his contempt for fashion" has no citation for support, but the new detail, "sharp-toed boots" has the effect of referentiality. In similar sentences, especially when the source is less partisan, the impression is that Adams either finds a source that expresses his own point of view or invents one. For example, the implication is that a sentence like "shrewd observers, little affected either by emotion or by interests, inclined to the belief that the government was near exhaustion," lacking supporting citations, speaks for Adams (M:1058). Because Adams consistently uses the simple past tense, it is always difficult to establish precisely when he is asserting his own point of view by proxy while maintaining the stance of objectivity.

This passage is followed by similar ones comparing Jefferson, Madison and Gallatin, the three friends, "the most aristocratic of democrats," who are at the center of government. Then Jefferson enters the Senate chamber to take the oath in the presence of two enemies, John Marshall, "of all aristocrats the most democratic in manners" and Aaron Burr, "an aristocrat imbued with the morality of Lord Chesterfield and Napoleon Bonaparte" (J:31-32). Seen through Marshall's eyes as a dishonest man, Jefferson fell short of Marshall's standard of probity.[62] Compared to Burr's corruption, Jefferson was pure in character. As the context widens to Europe, Talleyrand, Godoy and Napoleon take the practice of duplicity to cultivated and shameless heights and Jefferson seems like an innocent.

In his inaugural address Jefferson described America as "the strongest government on earth," because her strength was located in the power of society. Adams comments somewhat acerbically that "if he meant to practice the idea by taking the tone of 'the strongest government on earth' in the face of Bonaparte and Pitt, whose governments were strong in a different sense, he might properly have developed the idea at more length, for it was likely to prove deeply interesting" (J:137). This failure to explain is a frequent criticism Adams makes about Jefferson's relation to the public (and reflects, perhaps the frustration of the historian who wanted to know). Privately Jefferson was troubled by the constitutional contradictions of the Louisiana purchase, but never addressed them in public; the embargo like all his foreign policy, was formulated in secrecy, then voted into law in a single day without explanation for the necessity of such a severe measure; in general, Jefferson failed the public in not articulating a new theory,

still less a new vision, for the national government he was creating in practice to supersede his old principles.

Adams criticizes the Louisiana Purchase as a turning point in American history, because Jefferson simply gave way to the will of the majority. Jefferson "bought a foreign colony without its consent and against its will, annexed it to the United States by an act which he said made blank paper of the Constitution." Then the republican who feared the monarchism of the Federalists, "wielded over it, against its protests—the powers of its old kings." Jefferson believed in his good intentions and denied that Louisiana set a precedent. Adams is emphatic:

> Such an experience was final; no century of slow and half-understood experience could be needed to prove that the hopes of humanity lay henceforward, not in attempting to retain the government from doing whatever the majority should think necessary, but in raising the people themselves till they should think nothing necessary but what was good. (J:389)

The reader doesn't have to be the descendent of a Massachusetts Federalist to recognize that impossibility.

The special relationship Jefferson bore to the people led him to compromise rather than risk his popularity: "Jefferson clung with touching pathos to the love and respect of his fellow-citizens (J:1058). As Adams describes it, Jefferson's sensitive nature made him particularly attuned to the attention of the public. "Jefferson's nature was feminine he was more refined than many women in the delicacy of their private relations. He was sensitive, affectionate, and, in his own eyes, heroic. He yearned for love and praise as no other great American never did." It is unclear whether Adams is still describing the type here or the individual, whether an extreme receptivity to public opinion made an aristocrat a popular leader. Perhaps it was this receptivity alternating with sensitivity that

allowed Jefferson to impress his personality on the mind of the nation, if the spirit of a democratic public should be imagined as feminine compared to the virtus of a republic.[63] Adams describes the Virginia attitude as "kindly sympathy," and later in life would identify the South with feminine traits, although he usually preferred to use feminine symbols in that case.[64] Adams criticizes the lengths of deception and self-deception to which Jefferson was willing to go to preserve his popularity, but there was something idealistic about Jefferson's relation to the public that was not true of others like William Henry Harrison, whom Adams presents as calculatedly starting an Indian war to improve his electoral prospects. Devastated by the loss of public support during the embargo, Jefferson effectively retired from public life.

Jefferson's faults cannot be separated from his virtues, a Niebuhrian irony in which the excess of virtue leads to vice.[65] His idealism in the service of peace led to the political, economic and social disaster of the embargo:

> The essence and genius of Jefferson's statesmanship lay in peace. Through difficulties, trials, and temptations of every kind he held fast to this idea, which was the clew to whatever seemed inconsistent, feeble, or deceptive in his administration. Yielding often, with the suppleness of his nature, to the violence of party, he allowed himself to use language which at first sight seemed inconsistent, and even untruthful but such concessions were momentary; the unswerving intent could always be detected under every superficial disguise; the consistency of the career became more remarkable on account of the seeming inconsistencies if the moment. He was pliant and yielding in manner, while steady as the magnet in aim. (J:299-300)

While the intention is to defend Jefferson, the defense is qualified by the list of faults Adams is supposedly rejecting. It's not clear whether there is something about an adherence to peace that requires this kind of defensive maneuvering, or it reflects Jefferson's personality. What seems like cowardice can be a higher morality: Jefferson doesn't fight duels. Still, this is the heroism of the weak, pliant but unyielding. Although

Americans as individuals were brave, competitive, risk-taking and self-sufficient, “as a political body the American people shrank from tests of its own capacity,” evading competition at home and abroad. (As future chapters will demonstrate, in international affairs, at least, Adams felt this trait still true in 1890: the United States did not realize her power, whether theoretically or practically.) “War, which every other nation in history had looked upon as the first duty of a State, was in America a subject for dread, not so much because of possible defeat as of probable success”(J:1072). Adams seems to weigh options impartially in this sentence, typical in its balance, “duty” versus “dread,” and the paradoxical “defeat” vs. “success” yet his judgment is clearly on duty. Adams insists on the fundamentally pacific nature of democracy, but at the same time concludes that war in this case was a necessary stimulus to building a nation. Americans had to prove their ability to fight, not least to themselves, before they could choose to do otherwise. After the evasions, equivocations, and humiliations of peaceful coercion, war was unavoidable to establish national independence and self-respect.

Perhaps reflecting the perspective of his own time, Adams doesn’t take the fear of an organized military very seriously. Reporting Congressional debates, he is impatient with the republican argument against war, “the time-worn moral” taken from Greece and Rome, “as though the fate of warlike nations proved that they should have submitted to foreign outrage, or as though the world could show either arts or liberty except such as had sprung from the cradle of war”; he considers that the actual motive for opposition to fighting was a lack of self-respect combined with greed (M:138). The “first stage of national character” consisted of “the open avowals by Congress in 1808 of motives closely akin to fear,” which Adams counters with the claim that the worst the United

States would have had to fear in a war with one or two European powers was "the burning of a few small wooden towns" and temporary occupation, on the unexamined assumption that England nor France could afford permanent conquest. However, "so thoroughly had the theory of peaceable coercion taken possession of the national character that men of courage appealed to motives such as in a private dispute they would have found degrading"(J:1185). "Taken possession" sounds like more than the impress of Jefferson's personality; he and they are acting in the service of some wider influence.

Adams does perceive the American attitude to war as an evolutionary development that indicated the next stage of civilization:

> The unfailing mark of a primitive society was to regard war as the most natural pursuit of man; and history with reason began as a record of war…The chief sign that Americans had other qualities than the races from which they sprang, was shown by their dislike for war as a profession, and their obstinate attempts to invent other methods in attaining their ends; but in the actual state of mankind, safety and civilization could still be secured only through the power of self-defence. Desperate physical courage was the common quality on which all great races had founded their greatness; and the people of the United States, in discarding military qualities, without devoting themselves to science, were trying an experiment which could succeed only in a world of their own. (J:1020)

Like Tocqueville, Adams considered democracies to be essentially peaceful, scientific and commercial. However, being first, America had to prove her right to be an exception. Centuries of war had created the English character, "which might be brutal, but was not weak," and blunted its moral sense. England judged others by the same standard and, dismissing Jefferson's theories, took reluctance to fight as cowardice: "England required America to prove by facts what virtue existed in her conduct or character which should exempt her from the common lot of humanity, or should entitle her to escape the tests of manhood,—the trials, miseries, and martyrdoms through which the character in mankind had thus far in human history taken, for good or bad, in vigorous development" (J:978).

Behind the expression of contempt for their unmanly "prey," Adams projects fear at what the United States could become. He sees no simple story of Anglo-Saxon continuity, but an echo perhaps here of the evolutionist history of John Fiske, the vigorous disciple of Herbert Spencer.[66] Fiske's studies in American history were grounded in his early work on a "cosmic philosophy," a narrative of increasing human perfectibility in which physical evolution was superseded by moral and intellectual development. If Adams understood an American aversion to war to be a facet of democratic character extending back to a traditional republican distrust for military establishments, Fiske considered it as proof of the highly evolved state of American institutions from the "military" to the "industrial" phase of civilization.[67]

The second stage of American character accepted the need to fight, to demonstrate their break with the inherited standard by their willingness to assume it, once. Adams takes pleasure in American victories, pleasure perhaps in being able to depict action rather than stasis, but certainly gratification at being able to document through a careful analysis of numbers fought, killed and wounded, the superior intelligence, both technological and moral, of Americans. War offers the world and the historian a field for comparison. By the conclusion of the *History*, the nation has returned to peaceful ways and effected "a world of its own," a continent ready for expansion, free from the external influences that might compromise democratic principles. As far as Adams is concerned, the end of war (oddly, he ignores continental conflicts) marks the end of an age of diplomacy, and the end of old forms of history. The nation is free to devote herself to science and to become herself the object of scientific study as a rare experiment in social development.

Like Marx in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte,* Adams has an eye for the ridiculous in the replay of a revolutionary conflict conducted in less than heroic mode. But this is Adams' own history; he wouldn't describe it as farce. Certainly the war had its ludicrous moments: fought years after the desire for combat had faded on both sides, initiated at a time when conciliation seemed possible, and conducted with incompetence and political grandstanding to spare. Adams considered the ramshackle conduct of the war to be an outgrowth of democracy. The occasional moments of brilliance were all the more striking because they emerged so unexpectedly, from individuals who represented the best qualities of the American character. "Only by slow degrees the country learned to appreciate the extraordinary feat which had been performed, not so much by the people as by a relatively small number of individuals" (M:1237). The war was fought for the people rather than by them. Adams' text makes an implicit claim for diplomats as well as warriors in that small number. In the end Adams defines the war as "a social rather than political contest" with England, in which the superiority of the average American won the day.

Adams is not altogether happy about the abandonment of traditional tests of manhood in exchange for a vista of endless content:

> If war made men brutal, it at least made them strong; it called out the qualities best fitted to survive in the struggle for existence. To risk life for one's country was no mean act even when done for selfish motives; and to die that others might more happily live was the highest act of self-sacrifice to be reached by man. War, with all its horrors, could purify as well as debase; it dealt with high motives and vast interests; taught courage, discipline, and stern sense of duty. (M:1118)

The embargo created no heroes, turning citizens into smugglers and collaborators. This can also be read as a tribute to the men who fought in the Civil War when Adams did not; those losses could not have been in vain. But it reflects Adams' wish for higher ideals to

motivate the public to aspire to more than an improved standard of living—something like William James' "moral equivalent of war." The study of "high motives and vast interests" sounds like the foundation of a national epic, the story Adams might like to write but could not, given his times and his subject.

Throughout his life, Adams found the military hero an incomprehensible throwback as a type, from his encounter with Garibaldi in Palermo, to his description of Grant in the *Education*. As he wrote to William James, "in military heroes I suspect the ultimate effect has been retardation" (L2:466). In a letter to his publisher Adams claimed he had included plenty of maps for the battle of New Orleans, not because of the battle's significance, but for public interest: "I regard any concession to popular illusions a blemish; but just as I abandoned so large a place to Burr—a mere Jemmy Diddler—because the public felt an undue interest in him, so I think it best to give the public a full dose of General Jackson" (L3:237-38).[68] Adams recognizes Jackson's military ability, and demonstrates his energy and resourcefulness, but finds him without respect for law. Jackson is introduced as a type of the West, a man of "courtesy and dignity," yet "the fights in which he had been engaged exceeded belief" (J:40). [69] (Frontier fighting is assumed to be a temporary phase on the way to civilization.) Jackson was heavily entangled in Burr's conspiracy, probably because he hoped to drive out the Spanish. He secretly denounced the conspiracy even while supporting it, building boats and recruiting men, then appeared at the scene of Burr's trial to denounce the government. His policy of extermination in the war against the Creeks was reprehensible. For the sake of pursuing his own adventures against the Spanish, Jackson was derelict in his responsibility to defend New Orleans. Adams' criticism of his grandfather's enemy tends to be indirect.

At New Orleans, he continually creates parallels with General Winders' disastrous behavior in defense of Washington, but unlike Winder, Jackson acted expeditiously at the last possible moment, and then was saved by British delays that allowed him time to fortify his position.[70]

Adams does appreciate professionalism, however. He sets up the British General Isaac Brock as an exemplary standard of leadership early in the war. The American military eventually developed a new generation of commanders to the point where Winfield Scott showed that Americans could prevail against a comparable force under a reputable commander, while the engineers trained at West Point demonstrated the value of a scientific education. (Adams doesn't consider the common soldier as a type, although he uses American victories as evidence of the superior intelligence of the average American.) In recounting the sea battles, Adams seems as absorbed in the heroic deeds of his naval commanders as any practitioner of the old history, but he compensates by including plenty of comparative statistics about the ships, their weapons and crews. In his conclusion, the superiority of American ships and guns furnish his estimates of American national character to a large degree.[71]

Jefferson's ideal of peaceable strength couldn't escape the fact of unrestrained, irresponsible force embodied in Napoleon. Like Jefferson, he seemed to demand an artistic representation, although with a much broader brush. As Adams introduces him, "Most picturesque of all figures in modern history, Napoleon Bonaparte, like Milton's Satan on his throne…sat unapproachable on his bad eminence; or, when he moved, the dusky air felt an unusual weight," the description owes little to science (J:327). Adams is not afraid to strike up an atmosphere, introduce a literary allusion, and with the word

"picturesque" evoke the kind of historiography ambitious professionals would have liked to forget. But two sentences later, Adams mentions the archive, the thirty-two volumes of letters and writings that presumably inform his appraisal of the quality of Napoleon's mind:

> Ambition that ground its heel into every obstacle; restlessness that often defied common-sense; selfishness that eat like a cancer into his reasoning faculties; energy such as had never before been combined with equal genius and resources; ignorance that would have amused a school-boy and a moral sense which regarded truth and falsehood as equally useful modes of expression,—an unprovoked war or secret assassination as equally natural forms of activity,—such a combination of qualities Europe had forgotten since the Middle Ages, and could realize only by reviving the Eccelinos and Alberics of the thirteenth century, had to be faced and overawed by the gentle optimism of President Jefferson and his Secretary of State. (J:227)

This is a characteristic construction for Adams, the long compound sentence with its relentless catalog of qualities, personified and ascending in intensity, punctuated by a comment or example, and with an inversion of the standard subject and object to provide a contrast of both form and content. Adams' writing displays a certain verve when he deals with extreme cases; his writing tends to hyperbole ("most" picturesque, "every" obstacle, "never before" combined), or understatement, which may make him less than ideal as the historian of the prosaic. Given his portrait of Napoleon, Adams might have agreed with Emerson that "there is a certain satisfaction in coming down to the lowest ground of politics, for we get rid of cant and hypocrisy," at least satisfaction for the historian writing with access to the archives. While American diplomats could assume Napoleon acted purely in self-interest, his thinking was a riddle and his shifts were quicksilver.[72]

If the personality of Bonaparte, like that of Jefferson, "appeared to be the government, and impressed itself,…although by a different process, on the mind of the

nation," Napoleon's representative quality was founded on the forceful individualism which marked him as the most extreme creation of the old European system of war and social differentiation (J:127). Surprisingly, Adams tends to present Napoleon not as a modern figure, but as a throwback to medieval tyrants like Ecellino, known for his military prowess and ferocious pursuit of personal glory.[73] Adams describes Napoleon as a "product" of the revolution who hated republicanism in all its forms. Unlike other nineteenth century observers, Adams was careful not to associate Napoleon with democracy. Carlyle, for example, saw the young Napoleon as "a true Democrat," whose faith demanded that he establish order to save democracy from anarchy, but his early ideals were perverted by "the fatal-charlatan element" of his personality, the self-deception that led him to compromise with the Pope and think he could start his own dynasty.[74] Emerson, too, saw Napoleon as the modern "incarnate Democrat." Whether the hungry young radical or the old conservative, he was the representative of the middle-class business man as supreme materialist. Napoleon was "the idol of common men because he had in transcendent degree the qualities and powers of common men" (727-29). For the purposes of his *History,* and its depiction of a transitional period in which the style of leadership was still republican, Adams preferred to identify as his democratic type the elusive idealist who was Jefferson.[75] Napoleon represents the old world system of arbitrary force, not the gentleman but the adventurer, all selfish will to domination (in this respect Adams portrays Hamilton as Napoleonic). As Adams tells it, Napoleon began his career as Talleyrand's instrument in destroying the republic on the Eighteenth Brumaire. Talleyrand's dream of restoring the colonial empire in North America had the tacit approval of all Europe in curbing the last refuge of democracy, but he overestimated

his ability to control Napoleon, a "freak of nature," a genius of energy outside the rules of ordinary civilization (J:228). When the people of Spain revolted against Napoleon, they followed the current of history towards "the new level which society was obliged to seek," whereas Napoleon's resistance was retrograde (J:1135).

The forces at work remained mysterious and followed no simple path, but democracy was that next level. The end of the old European system of politics was signified by an event, July 4, 1776 for Britain, July 14, 1789 for France, and May 2, 1808 for Spain, when "the least progressive people in Europe became by necessity democratic":

> The workings of human development were never more strikingly shown than in the helplessness with which the strongest political and social forces in the world followed or resisted at haphazard the necessities of a movement which they could not control or comprehend. Spain, France, Germany, England, were swept into a vast and bloody torrent which dragged America, from Montreal to Valparaiso, slowly into its movement; while the familiar figures of famous men,—Napoleon, Alexander, Canning, Godoy, Jefferson, Madison, Talleyrand, emperors, generals, presidents, conspirators, patriots, tyrants, and martyrs by the thousand,—were borne away by the stream, struggling, gesticulating, praying, murdering, robbing; each blind to everything but a selfish interest, and all helping more or less unconsciously to reach the new level which society was obliged to seek…even a child could see that in the ruin of a world like the empire of Spain, the only nation certain to find a splendid and inexhaustible booty was the Republic of the United States. To President Jefferson the Spanish revolution opened an endless vista of democratic ambition. (J:1135)

This is one of the few places in the text where Adams attempts to conceptualize historical causation, although in later years the mysterious force at work behind the incidents of history would become the explicit object of his investigations. Again Adams uses the imagery of water finding its level to visualize the process by which society arrived at its next stage of development, Again the stream demonstrates the helplessness of any individual to buck the current. In the long run, "the splendid and inexhaustible booty" is

the promise of democracy to raise all humanity to a higher level of understanding, and the United States, because of the peculiar circumstances of her situation, has a head start on the rest of the world. The irony here is that, in the immediate sense, the "endless vista of democratic ambition" does not refer to the visionary Jefferson's assumption of the leadership of the world's democratic movement. "Jefferson, in his pursuit of Florida, lost what was a thousand times more valuable to him than territory,—the moral leadership which belonged to the head of democracy" (J:1160). In another ironic reversal, the reactionary Essex Junto's support of Spain as the ally of Britain made them the "champions of popular liberty."

Jefferson, and the United States generally, forfeited that role for the sake of a more material ambition, the greed for Spanish territory. This is not an obsession that Adams shares, or his model public servant, Albert Gallatin. As an affliction of the South and West, it led Monroe and Livingston to delude themselves after the fact that they had bought West Florida as part of Louisiana. It impelled Jackson to neglect the defense of New Orleans at a critical movement for the sake of adventuring in Florida. It drove the United States to collude with Napoleon in contradiction to their democratic ideals, putting America on the wrong side of history, until, presumably, the current drew her back. Later Adams will imply that the acquisition of the continent saved democracy, allowing the nation to survive her growing pains without external interference.

If every individual is "helping more or less unconsciously to reach the new level," this would seem to absolve the actors of all culpability. Social Darwinism is rarely explicit in the text—it tends to inhere in the water imagery—but Adams makes an exception in the case of the Native Americans. William Henry Harrison's account of

Indian affairs "offered an illustration of the law accepted by all historians in theory, but adopted by none in practice; which former ages called 'fate,' and metaphysicians called 'necessity,' but which modern science has refined into the 'survival of the fittest.' No acid ever worked more mechanically on a vegetable fibre than the white man acted on the Indian" (M:343). In practice Adams grants his historical figures free will to be the agents they imagine themselves to be, and then judges them accordingly. But he becomes increasingly interested in determining the laws that constrain them, that would also seem to constrain history as anything but a narration of the fore-ordained.

The Narrative

Since the *History* was a work more admired than read even during the life of its author, a brief summary of the narrative seems useful. However, as events extend over nine volumes, brevity is relative. The length of the text cannot be ignored as a formal element. A monumental scale is only appropriate to the dignity of its subject, the rise of a great power, (and yet, the events the narrative describes so rarely have the dignity of that subject). Form on this scale has to be understood not as a static model that could be diagrammed and captured at a glance, but as a process of extension for the reader as well. Reading partakes of the temporal experience that is history's ground. In the *History*, time stops at beginning and end, but in between the passage of time is not merely summarized or assumed between the lines, sped up or slowed down as exposition requires—it has to be experienced. For Adams' subjects as well as his readers, duration seems to stand in for causation. From the evidence of the narrative, Adams' disparate regions became a nation more by enduring than anything else.

Organized by administration, the narrative is anchored in time by domestic politics, the regular repetition of inaugural addresses, annual messages, treasury reports and Congressional sessions. Except for the pathos of Jefferson's retirement, this organizational structure seems calculated not to be dramatic, compared, for example, to a similar time frame organized around elections.[76] But in Adams' discussion, electoral politics are important as they influence governance: Presidential rivals disrupt the Cabinet; politicians wage war to regain their popularity; policies are changed to influence a coming election, and so on.

Faced with the problem of ordering complex, collective, sometimes synchronous events into a linear discourse, Adams emphasizes the continuity of his story. In the *Education*, he describes historical events as a "tangled skein," but his narrative is shaped as an immense braid. The action is roughly chronological, following one strand for a chapter or two, or five in the case of Burr's conspiracy, before picking up a new strand or returning to an old one, a diplomatic mission or a Congressional debate, while Adams maintains the regular size of his chapters. These strands are Adams' effective organizational units; the inaugural addresses et al. mark the time and are important for the record, but are of varying significance. Adams links his strands and avoids the charge of mere storytelling through continual comparative analysis, but the constant parallelism of character and situation sometimes has the effect of endless repetition.[77] Adams' story of the Jefferson administrations has a clearer narrative line as he sets up Jefferson's republican principles to be tested by experience, and circumstances induce great success in one term, followed by great failure in the next. Ultimately there is a "revolution," if not

the one Jefferson anticipated, as his larger democratic vision prevails in Adams' final chapters, but this requires the nine volumes to be read as a unit.

Madison's administrations continue Jefferson's policies without the interest of Jefferson's personality and vision, although the malevolent genius, Napoleon, persists. The recurrent theme of Madison's tenure is stasis at best, and more frequently indecision, incompetence and dissension. The union survives, somehow. The political process sends a new generation of leaders to Washington; the experience of war finally produces young capable officers. The rising action of the war story is checked temporarily when it converges with the stasis of the administrative story in the invasion of Washington. Adams celebrates the American successes at sea, but these seem to have been achieved despite the administration. The rule of mediocrity leavened by flashes of intelligence and energy may reflect a stage in the national development, or may be the inevitable result of democratic government, but it lacks the narrative excitement of Old World history.

After the six-chapter survey of the United States in 1800, the narrative opens with the inauguration of Jefferson and his intended political revolution: "The history of his administration will show how these principles were applied, and what success attended the experiment." Adams reads the Inaugural Address, in which Jefferson tried to conciliate his enemies, against his letters, which proclaimed his intention to put his republican principles into effect, shrinking government, removing internal taxes and reducing the influence of a federalist judiciary. The address was not duplicitous in Jefferson's eyes, since he assumed that the people, with the exception of some New England incorrigibles, soon would be won over to his democratic republicanism. In the first of Jefferson's contests with the judicial branch, (as he conceived it, a nest of

Federalists led by his special enemy, Chief Justice Marshall), Jefferson succeeded in abolishing the circuit courts. But except for removing an apparently insane judge, this would be the limit of his success in restricting judicial power. In the first of many executive reversals, decisions to end internal taxation and reduce the Navy had to be repealed, when the President for whom "Peace is our passion" couldn't avoid a war with Tripoli (J:300).

Volume Two describes a series of triumphs that did violence to Jefferson's principles of strict construction. Because of Napoleon's control over the Spanish government, France was important to the U.S. even before it received the retrocession of Louisiana, since Spain blocked the territorial ambitions of the Southern states. Napoleon planned to reestablish a colonial empire in North America, starting with the recovery of Haiti, but in Toussaint Louverture he had an opponent in many ways like himself. Adams thinks Toussaint could have succeeded had he taken to the hills with his people, but it was the announcement of the decrees reinstituting slavery that motivated their fight: "the prejudice of race alone blinded the American people to the debt they owed to the desperate courage of five hundred thousand Haytian negroes who would not be enslaved" (J:316). Faced with the destruction of his armies in Haiti, Napoleon cut his losses, and offered Louisiana to the Americans who had sought to buy New Orleans and Florida.

Jefferson worried that without the authorization of the states, the purchase of Louisiana made "blank paper" of the Constitution, but cabinet and Congress were unconcerned. Constitutional problems were brushed aside in the interests of expediency; the only question was whether the new territory would follow Federalist theory as a colony, or Republican policy as a state. For the first time in U.S. history, "all parties

agreed in admitting that the government could govern" (J:379). The movement to reduce national government had already reached its limit and was reversing itself with the passage of the twelfth amendment and changes in funding practices. Adams is critical of the Republicans' abandonment of principles, while approving of the effect, the trend to nationality. By 1804 the principles of states' rights, strict construction, and the diminishment of executive power were being wielded by extreme Federalists and diehard republicans against Jefferson's administration. New England Federalists began their intrigues to dissolve the union, waiting for the moment of crisis they knew would come. (As Adams describes them, at times they seem to envision a catastrophe in which the nation as a whole returned, chastened, to Federalist rule; at other times they seemed to imagine a smaller, better unit composed of New England and New York.) They allied themselves with Aaron Burr, but to little effect beyond the sequence of events that led to the death of Alexander Hamilton.

Jefferson took his second election as a personal triumph, and exercised his authority in foreign affairs to disrupt friendly relations with Spain and Britain, an international conflict that was waged in Washington society on the field of etiquette. Infected by the South's unquenchable desire for Florida, the Louisiana negotiators convinced themselves, despite the evidence, that they had bought West Florida as well. The administration looked to the resumption of war in Europe for an opportune moment to seize the territory from Spain. With another war imminent, Jefferson and Madison decided that from its outset they should take a high tone with England on the rights of neutral trade. The Federalists found a new ally in Anthony Merry, the insulted British minister. Volume Two concludes with the success of the Tripolitan war. In a typical

ironic reversal, “the greatest triumph to be hoped then from Jefferson’s peace policy was the brilliant close of his only war.” The “chief result was to improve the navy and give it a firmer hold on public sympathy,” an anticipation of battles and sympathies to come (J:598).

In contrast, Volume Three details diplomatic frustrations and political rebellion. Jefferson’s second inaugural address strayed so far from original principles as to call for a course of internal improvements: once the national debt was paid off, surplus income could accrue as a permanent fund, used in times of peace to build an infrastructure, and in case of war to pay for military needs. After his diplomatic triumph in the purchase of Louisiana, James Monroe suffered the indifference and contempt of Spanish, French and British governments in turn. Negotiations with Spain over American pretensions were doomed from their outset, but wasted months. Spain’s ally, France, then undercut American claims by declaring West Florida was not part of Louisiana. Monroe returned to his post in England only to discover William Pitt’s government engaged in a direct attack on American commerce. As the U.S. Cabinet vacillated, Spanish ships seized American vessels and Spanish troops raided from Texas and Florida. Britain’s seizures of ships and men “could be properly met by no resistance short of a declaration of war.” Jefferson entertained a plan to seize Texas, which did seem to be part of the Louisiana Purchase, assuming first that he made an alliance with Britain. (Adams considers this plan a reasonable one in hindsight and sees its dismissal as a turning point in Jefferson’s rule.)

Then mysterious intermediaries suggested France could arrange the sale of Florida and Texas for a price. When a new Congress, remarkable for its poverty of talent,

convened, Jefferson decided to play a double game unsuited to his temperament and the weakness of the American position, sending a warlike message to Spain in public, while secretly requesting purchase money to send to France. John Randolph, the ablest man in Congress despite his eccentricities, vituperated against the Administration and his colleagues, but Jefferson was able to muster his forces and silence open resistance. Congress voted the secret funds as well as a Non-Interference Act more suited to Jefferson's policy of "peaceable coercion," using the weapon of American commerce. In effect the Republican position was to tolerate the outrages of foreigners, for fear Americans might destroy their own liberty through the inevitable corruptions war would bring. On his fourth diplomatic attempt, Monroe sought a treaty from the short-lived government of Charles James Fox, but in order to make an agreement disregarded all the ultimatums in his instructions and accepted a compromise "no self-respecting country could admit." Jefferson boldly rejected the treaty without even referring it to the Senate. Napoleon lost interest in arranging an American-Spanish agreement and instead issued the Berlin Decree, prohibiting all intercourse with Britain.

John Randolph's resistance to the growing "nationalizing instinct" was nothing to Aaron Burr's ambition to create a western empire in the Mississippi Valley. Burr's schemes were surprisingly public, as he courted Gen. Wilkinson of the Louisiana Territory, Louisianans unhappy about U.S. domination, and adventurers who wanted to seize Florida and Mexico. Unsuccessful in its attempts to gain British or Spanish backing, the conspiracy began to look like a giant swindle. The response by the federal government was surprisingly tolerant considering the warnings it received. Burr was already en route west when Wilkinson denounced the plot, although in ambiguous

terms.[78] Burr's hearing was conducted by Chief Justice Marshall, who appointed John Randolph the foreman of the grand jury. The defense attacked the administration by throwing suspicion on Wilkinson and his motives; Jefferson was unable to repudiate the man he unaccountably thought worthy to govern the Louisiana Territory (and who turned out to be in the pay of Spain). Marshall threw out the salient evidence on legal grounds, although "laymen" are left with considerable presumption of Burr's guilt (the one flaw in the "great" Marshall was his hatred of Jefferson). A mortified president considered pursuing Marshall's impeachment, but the prosecutor came to admit his belief in Wilkinson's guilt. As the next volume will demonstrate, "The days of Jefferson's power and glory had passed forever" (J:927).

The final volume of Jefferson's presidency begins with the outrageous attack of the British frigate *Leopard* on the American frigate *Chesapeake* to force a search for British deserters: "For the first time in their history" people learned "the feeling of a true national emotion" (J:946). In Adams' analysis, the blame heaped on the American Commodore who failed to get off more than a single shot before striking his colors should have been shared by the President and his administration for their niggardly attitude to and negligent oversight of military appropriations, as well as the Congress and people who "accepted their own feebleness as the necessary consequence of a system which acted through other agencies than force" (J:932). Gallatin thought the "awakening of nobler feelings and habits than avarice and luxury" would more than compensate for the temporary ill effects of a war. Jefferson followed the popular impulse by making preparations for war, but delayed calling Congress into session to lessen war's possibility.

In binding reparations for the *Chesapeake* outrage to the wider issues of impressment and the rights of neutral ships, the administration made any settlement impossible, even before the reactionary new British government issued the 1807 Orders in Council, a maze of regulations which in effect made any American ship liable to seizure if it sailed for a port that excluded the British. Every communication of Foreign Secretary Canning was a sneer, but he reflected the attitudes of the navy, the merchants, the colonies and the public, who in contempt and fear were ready for war with the U.S.. Meanwhile, Napoleon invaded Spain and issued the Milan Decree, authorizing the capture of any ship headed to or from a British possession; any ship which had survived any contact with British authority, even to being searched, was by definition "English." In an attempt, perhaps, to relieve the successive humiliations of the narrative and connect it to the framing chapters of social history, Adams announces an event which heralded a "new era," which "separated the colonial from the independent stage of growth"—the first voyage of the steamboat *Clermont*. Had the American public but known it, the "medieval barbarisms" of Napoleon and the British mattered little to their destiny. Once steam navigation was a reality, "America could consider herself mistress of her vast resources" (J:1019).The future of America rested in science, not war.

By the time Congress convened, American courage had faded. Jefferson's power was still "supreme," but Adams attributes "the secret of Jefferson's strength, of his vast popularity," to Gallatin's financial management: "The American people pardoned everything except an empty Treasury. No foreign insults troubled them long, and no domestic incompetence roused their disgust; but they were sensitive to any taxation they directly felt" (J:1029). Secure in this popular and fiscal strength, Jefferson was convinced

that an embargo would work, starving Europe into concessions while protecting his people from contact with societies where force and the corruptions of force were the rule. On his recommendation, "without warning, discussion, or publicity, and in silence as to his true reasons and motives," the permanent embargo was proposed and passed by Congress in a single day, a dangerous precedent for a nation of free men.

"The embargo was an experiment in politics well worth making"—clearly this statement reflects Jefferson's perspective, but Adams' attitude is more ambiguous. Generally, Adams favors the experimental approach to problems, but there is no doubt that he considered the unlimited embargo a disaster in effect. Economically, it drained the treasury and bankrupted businesses and people. Constitutionally, it overrode every specified limit on arbitrary power. To enforce the embargo, Jefferson used the newly enlarged navy and army against his own people, "carrying the extremest principles of his Federalist predecessors to their extremest results" (J:1114). If the Republicans could no longer argue for states-rights or strict construction with any credibility, the Federalists of New England threw the language of the Kentucky and Virginia resolutions in their faces. Even worse, "Morally, it sapped the nation's vital force, lowering its courage, paralyzing its energy, corrupting its principles, and arraying all the active elements of society in factious opposition to government or in secret paths of treason" (J:1125). Finally, it didn't work. While the embargo might have had an effect extended over years, the union would have destroyed itself first. America slowly began to realize "that she must bear the common burdens of humanity, and fight with other races in the same bloody arena; that she could not much longer delude herself with hopes of evading the laws of Nature and the instincts of life."

When the people of Spain revolted against Napoleon, Jefferson failed to support, let along lead, the world movement to democracy, because he still hoped to acquire Florida, either through Spanish weakness or French consent. Jefferson's final annual message looked forward to a great scheme of national improvements, while Gallatin's treasury report was "an invitation to war" with both England and France. Jefferson's popularity vanished—it would be twenty years before his reputation recovered from the debacle of peaceable coercion—and he withdrew from effective leadership. Feeling "mortification such as no other president ever suffered," Jefferson signed the repeal of the embargo before he left office (J:1045). The volume concludes with Jefferson's retreat to Monticello and his grateful and dignified response to his neighbors' welcome: "On your verdict I rest with conscious security."

The repeal of the embargo gave President Madison some domestic calm, as Volume Five begins, but chapters entitled "Executive Weakness 1809," "Legislative Impotence 1809-1810," and "Incapacity of Government 1809-1810" indicate the condition of his administration. Madison's cabinet was riven by conflict from the beginning. Except for Gallatin its members were incompetent, as the condition of the army and navy demonstrated. Intending to make Gallatin Secretary of State, Madison was forced to accommodate Gallatin's enemies by giving the post to the venal and incompetent Robert Smith instead. While Adams thinks little of Madison's talents as a leader, (he sees him as a "cardinal," an inside operator), the problem of executive authority was systemic: "Madison's embarrassments rose from causes that only time could cure, and were inherent in American society itself" (M:116). Congress was weak, vacillating and factious. The stopgap Non-Intercourse Act was ineffective abroad while it

impoverished Treasury and people, but its successor, the second Macon bill, was even weaker: trade was resumed, with the President granted authority to prohibit it with either England or France, whichever nation failed to revoke its edicts against neutral commerce. Gallatin lost his best weapon to manage the debt when, by a single vote, Congress declined to renew the National Bank. For Adams "nothing could be more dangerous to the Americans than the loss of self-respect" (M:149).

As chief executive, "Madison had remained so passive before domestic faction while so active in foreign affairs, that the functions of government promised to end in confusion" (M:249). David Erskine, the friendly British minister, disregarded essential points of his instructions to make an agreement with Smith. Madison, eager to prove that the embargo had worked, then prematurely lifted the Non-Intercourse law, only to be embarrassed when Canning repudiated the settlement. Erskine's replacement, Francis James Jackson, was infamous not merely for his involvement in the British bombardment of neutral Copenhagen, but for the insolence with which he had carried out his duties. Madison reimposed the Non-Intercourse Act without the explicit authority to do so. (Government by proclamation is a troubling symptom of his administration.) In the general atmosphere of misunderstanding and bad faith, the president first decided to communicate with Jackson only in writing, and then declined to communicate with him at all. Jackson spent the rest of his term touring the U.S., feted by the Federalists of Boston and New York.

The international situation was "confused, irritable, and hard to understand." Napoleon's motives and policies towards the U.S. shifted with the fortunes of his campaigns, his need to destroy Britain, his desire to punish the U.S.; he seemed to

encourage trade and then seized ships for ready money. His increasingly restrictive decrees, published and secret, seemed to make trade with France impossible, but were enforced arbitrarily. In response to the Macon Act, the 1810 Cadore letter declared that the Decrees of Berlin and Milan were revoked, "it being understood that in consequence" the British Orders in Council were revoked, or that the U.S. enforced her rights against the British (M:180). A careful reading should have shown this message committed the French to nothing, but again, Madison acted recklessly in assuming the decrees had been revoked and thus proclaimed the resumption of restrictions against the British. Months later, he was reduced to insisting that the decrees had been revoked despite all evidence to the contrary. Madison also acted precipitously when a group of residents seized Baton Rouge from the Spanish. He issued a proclamation taking possession of West Florida, which Congress upheld on the same grounds it had upheld the acquisition of Louisiana. Adams concludes: "Fate willed that every measure connected with that territory should be imbued with the same spirit of force or fraud which tainted its title" (M:224).

The government "reached, March 4, 1811, the lowest stage of its long decline" (M:249). Congress had just "expired, leaving behind it, in the minds of many serious citizens [namely, Henry Adams], the repute of having brought Government to the last stage of imbecility before dissolution" (M:248). Then Gallatin forced Madison to act against the Smith brothers and their allies by handing in his resignation; Madison brought his former rival, James Monroe, back into the government to replace Smith. Barely noticed in the gloom, a speech by the new senator, Henry Clay, announced the coming generation of leaders, "drawing elevation of character from confidence in itself, and from devotion to ideas of nationality and union" (M:135). Clay was not the only man to

advocate war ("The conquest of Canada is in your power") but his "energy and courage" indicated "a new and needed habit of command" (M:134). In an attempt to recover American honor at sea, the *President* defeated the *Little Belt*, a victory disputed because of the inequality of the combatants.

The volume concludes with a surprising diplomatic success, "Napoleonic in its magnitude and completeness" (M:290). John Quincy Adams arrived as envoy to Russia just as the French-Russian alliance was beginning to fracture. As Napoleon's interest turned eastward, a major source of conflict was Russia's need for neutral, i.e. American, trade. The Czar upheld American interests against Napoleon's decrees, even against the prospect of war. "Of all the caprices of politics, this was the most improbable,—that at the moment when the Czar of Russia and the King of Sweden were about to risk their thrones and to face the certain death and ruin of vast numbers of people in order to protect American ships," Madison's government was still claiming the Napoleonic decrees had been revoked (M:295).

In Volume Six, the "diplomatic insolvency" continued. In London, two capable diplomats, the American Charles Pinkney and the Marquess of Wellesley, were unable to come to terms. Given the stalled policy of a weak Tory government and the specious grounds under which he was forced to argue his case, Pinkney felt he had no option but to take his leave. Monroe, who had thought he could reform foreign policy, found himself forced to follow Madison's line. Madison kept to his insistence that the decrees had been revoked, not because he believed it, but because he wanted peace, and still clung to the principle of peaceful commercial coercion. [79]

The social “convulsion” which ended with the fall of Napoleon was felt first on the borders where control was weakest, in the American wilderness. Adams admires Tecumthe and his mission to preserve Indian lands through an inter-tribal confederacy, but assumes the doom of the Indians was as inexorable as a chemical law. Even Jefferson’s “philanthropic” approach, teaching Indians the ways of agriculture, included enticing them into debt so they would have to sell their lands. Gov. William Henry Harrison considered an Indian war the way to recoup his political ambitions. He had made himself unpopular by attempting to introduce slavery into the territory. Having forced the more “depraved” chiefs into a new land cession, he had, in effect, strengthened the influence of Tecumthe and the British, and made war inevitable. Harrison disregarded Madison’s orders to avoid hostilities against the demands of the settlers that he attack. He still wanted a provocation for war, which Tecumthe avoided giving. As Adams tells it, Tippecanoe was not a great victory: Harrison waited until Tecumthe was away, hesitated to attack his village, (Adams projects a guilty conscience), and when he encamped instead, failed to take ordinary defensive precautions. A small force, described by Tecumthe as “a few of our young men” acting on their own, attacked Harrison’s camp, and the Indians fled the village. When Harrison’s actions were criticized, his fellow Republicans felt compelled to celebrate his victory and support him as the “necessary leader of any future campaign. That result, so far as it was good, was the only advantage gained at Tippecanoe” (M:370).

The war of 1812, which seems “as just and necessary as any war ever waged” to Americans of another generation, “was chiefly remarkable for the vehemence with which, from beginning to end, it was resisted and thwarted by a very large group of

citizens who were commonly considered, and who considered themselves, by no means the least respectable, intelligent, or patriotic part of the nation" (M:449). Modern readers who retrace the thread of negotiations "can partially enter into the feelings" of past citizens who felt the time for war had passed. "In 1808 America was almost unanimous, her government still efficient, well supplied with money, and little likely to suffer from war; in 1812, the people were greatly divided, the government had been weakened, and the treasury was empty" (M:449). At the height of her arrogance in 1807, Britain would have welcomed a war, but in 1812 was ready to modify policy for peace. Adams details the Parliamentary debates that led to the revocation of the Orders in Council, unfortunately issued a day before the American declaration of war. Only French "monomania" continued unabated, and once hostilities commenced against the British, moral Americans felt they were being forced into honoring a contract with the "Anti-Christ." "Probably four fifths" of the people agreed with Gallatin in 1812 that war might be avoided.

Adams estimates that a pendulum swing brought a new impulse of political energy every twelve years. The Jeffersonian Republicans reacted to Federalism, while the war Republicans in the twelfth Congress had their own revolution: "the youthful energy of the nation, which had at last come to its strength under the shelter of Jefferson's peaceful rule, cried out against the cowardice of further submission, and insisted on fighting if only to restore its own self-respect" (M:375). Only now did the issue of impressments, which Adams considers "the worst of all American grievances," take priority as a matter of principle over the concerns of property. "The process by which a scattered democracy decided its own will, in a matter so serious as a great and perhaps

fatal war, was new to the world"; it was not a very salutary sight (M:377). Perhaps one third in Congress actually favored war, a third were Federalists voting war in hopes of overthrowing the Republicans, and the rest saw more evil than good in war. How could they reconcile republican beliefs with measures like a standing army of thirty-five thousand men, a navy, and the financing necessary to pay for them? Yet the war party asked them "to create a new government, and invest it with the attributes of old world sovereignty under pretext of the war power" (M:412).

Madison aided the war party by publishing the letters of John Henry, a British agent sent to Boston to foment discontent and resistance. Congress passed a limited embargo preparatory to a declaration of hostilities, but in every effective way government remained unprepared. Madison failed to remove his incompetent secretary of war, at the time "ransacking" the country for officers, supplies, and an army of men "who could not be found." The Federalists who controlled capital refused to support government loans. New York and Massachusetts voted for Federalists. "The experiment of thrusting the country into war to inflame it…was in truth the only excuse for a course otherwise resembling an attempt at suicide…perhaps the United States were first to force themselves into a war they dreaded, in the hope that the war itself might create the spirit they lacked" (M:439). Madison's message to Congress included all the indisputable British outrages against American sovereignty, but did not explain why these complaints, suffered so long on grounds of expedience, now made war expedient. So incompetent was he in making the case for war that he made England look like the victim and a symbol of liberty.

The acquisition of Canada was assumed to be, in Jefferson's words, "a mere matter of marching" to Quebec one year, Halifax the next, and then the English would be expelled from the continent (M:528). Such expectations simply confirmed the absence of martial training, organization, or experience in America. There was no overall strategy for conducting the war or coordinating forces. Officers were generally unfit, either relics of the Revolution or political appointments. Troops were never recruited in the numbers needed. Commands mixed regular forces and militias, with lines of authority unclear and animosity on both sides. Militias turned out to be "Excessively expensive, wasteful, insubordinate, and unsteady" (M:570). They left when their enlistment was up, balked at crossing the Canadian border, or refused to leave their own states at all. Logistical problems included a lack of supplies and the difficulty of establishing supply lines across vast distances.

The first campaign for Canada displayed all these problems. Governor Hull of Michigan expressed his concerns about the safety of Detroit and was pressed into military service despite his age and inclinations. He began his campaign with commendable energy, but was not fast enough. In typical fashion, the War Department sent word that war had been declared by ordinary post; the British, who had express notice, seized the ship carrying Hull's supplies and personal papers. At Detroit Hull received vague orders to invade Canada and proceeded to do so, warning the secretary of the importance of having a force at Niagara to draw the enemy. As Adams describes them, the letters from the Secretary of War "passed beyond bounds of ordinary incapacity, and approached the line of culpable neglect" (M:506). Gen. Dearborn, who should have been sending troops to Niagara, couldn't decide whether he was needed more in Albany or Boston. Ordered to

Albany, he read the letters ordering him to invade Canada (written three weeks after Hull's orders) and asked who was to have command of that operation so far away.

Across the border at Fort Malden, Hull faced a nearly equal force, heavily fortified, with ships to lend them support. Notified that British reinforcements were on their way and an Indian force was headed to Detroit, fearing that his supply lines were cut, Hull fell back to Detroit, and would have retreated further, but the Ohio militia refused to move. (Adams considers retreat an intelligent response to the situation.) Adams sets up the British commander, Isaac Brock, as the model of a professional soldier, who, despite a recalcitrant local population, had prepared for war, knew how to deploy his limited resources, and never hesitated to attack when the opportunity presented itself. Besieged at Detroit without adequate supplies or communication, (Brock acted in advance of an armistice which Hull knew nothing about), Hull wavered, much to the disgust of the militia. Knowing his resistance was limited, and fearing the massacre of his daughter and the rest of the women and children by Indians, as Brock had threatened, he surrendered.

The public considered Hull a coward and a traitor who had lost them a province, but Adams considers him and his surrender "the natural products of a system" which had "shut military efficiency from the scope of American government" (M:528). The Niagara campaign fared little better. Dearborn waited for sufficient troops to head north, but when they arrived, General Philip Van Rensselaer of the New York militia quarreled with General Alexander Smyth of the regular army over tactics. Under multiple pressures to act, Van Rensselaer decided to attack Queenston on his own. An intrepid group of Americans gained the heights, killing General Brock when he attempted to reclaim them.

As British and Indian forces approached, Van Rensselaer crossed to river to speed up his reinforcements, but they declined to move and he was forced to watch as his troops on the other bank were crushed. Van Rensselaer resigned.

General Smyth's command was noted chiefly for his bombastic public pronouncements, challenging patriots to join him and announcing his plans in advance. He moved twelve hundred men to Black Rock and consulted his officers; since his orders were to cross the river with three thousand men, they decided against moving. Two days later, Smyth repeated the process with the same results. His army "dissolved." Four thousand men discharged their muskets: "They showed a preference for General Smyth's tent as their target, which caused the General to shift his quarters repeatedly" (M:547). Dearborn had sent him four thousand troops, but sickness "had swept away" over half. Taking the field himself, Dearborn marched his army within twenty miles of the Canadian border when the militia declined to go any further. He retreated to Plattsburg and offered his resignation.

Unlike their military counterparts, the navy officers were in the prime of life and experienced, having served as junior officers in the Tripolitan war. From the naval victory of Captain Isaac Hull, coming at the same time as the surrender of his uncle General Hull, the public learned that "Americans could still fight…the reaction of delight in satisfying itself that it still possessed the commonest and most brutal of human qualities was the natural result of a system that ignored the possibility of war." The beginning of the naval war was not auspicious. Commodores Rodgers and Decatur and their squadrons were ordered to port in New York. Disobeying orders, they decided to

follow the British West India convoy nearly to the Channel, thus missing a new order to protect incoming American shipping.

On her way to New York, the *Constitution* under Capt. Isaac Hull was chased by a British squadron but escaped to port. “Perhaps nothing tested American seamanship more thoroughly than these three days of combined skill and endurance in the face of an irresistible energy” (M:556). Setting back to sea, the *Constitution* fought the *Guerriere* to a victory. Hull had the better ship in every respect, but above all in the “moral superiority” of his crew. “No experience went to the heart of New England more than this victory, so peculiarly its own,” since the frigates were commissioned by Federalist Presidents and the *Constitution* built in Boston. While “small on the general scheme of the world’s battles, [the victory] raised the United States in one half hour to the rank of a first-class Power in the world” (M:558). The victory “taught the pleasures of war to a new generation, which had hitherto been sedulously educated to think only of its cost. The first taste of blood maddens” and the public was eager for more (M:559). The government revised its orders and gave its captains the liberty to annoy British ships or protect American shipping as they wished.

Adams takes pleasure in recounting the victorious sea battles, the *Wasp* against the *Frolic*, the *United States* against the *Macedonian*; the *Constitution* against the *Java*, before continuing the more familiar narrative of political weakness and administrative paralysis in chapters titled “Discord 1812” and “Executive Embarrassments 1812.” Out of seven million people, not ten thousand entered the military. Under the guise of patriotism, New England Federalists made profit of every national disaster. The war party demonstrated a lack of discipline when a mob in Baltimore destroyed a Federalist paper

and a second attack killed and maimed the paper's supporters: "Democracies in history always suffered from the necessity of uniting with much of the purest and best in human nature a mass of ignorance and brutality lying at the bottom of all societies" (M:578). As for the mass of people, "The true sentiment of the people, if capable of expression, was one of fretful discontent" (M:580). The founders of the Constitution, who created the Presidency to carry out the wishes of the legislative power, had not foreseen that Congress would "prove imbecile." During the war Congress demonstrated "one of the commonplaces of history,—no merely legislative body could control a single, concentrated Executive," even one as weak as Madison's (M:599). As an election-year concession, Madison sacrificed national character and tacitly admitted impressment by signing a bill prohibiting foreign seamen from American ships. His first term ended, "leaving the country more than ever distracted, and as little able to negotiate as to conquer" (M:613).

Volume Seven begins by picking up the thread of foreign diplomacy. In the gloom of the war news and a declining economy, England was aggrieved that the U.S. had "stabbed [her] in the back" at her time of greatest peril, but that attitude changed to anger as Napoleon's fortunes fell. The British instituted a blockade that calculatedly left New England open. When the Czar offered his services to mediate between England and the U.S., Madison accepted with alacrity; Bayard and Gallatin (who saw the end of war as the only way to mend finances), were dispatched to join J.Q. Adams. The new Congress was compelled to vote for the formerly-unthinkable—direct taxes.

Adams presents the Federalists' puzzled perspective. Their prophecies had come true: the Republican party had been forced to abandon its principles, had adopted a

Federalist concept of government, and still had failed "in credit and character." This was the moment of crisis Federalists had been expecting: "the democratic movement had ended in such disgrace and helplessness as few governments had even outlived, and such as no nation with a near and powerful neighbor could have survived" (M:666). The catastrophe was at hand, and yet society made no effort to save itself by calling on them. "The Federalists were greatly and naturally perplexed at discovering the silent under-current which tended to grow in strength precisely as it encountered most resistance from events" (M:666). As Adams explains it, and his explanation seems grounded more in his experience of the Civil War than anything he shows in the narrative, the public was roused not so much by victory as by defeat, "the grinding necessity of supporting government at any cost of private judgment. At such a moment any success was keenly felt, and covered any failure. The slow conviction that come what would the nation must be preserved, brought one man after another into support of the war" (M:667).

On the Western frontier, William Henry Harrison's putative success at Tippecanoe had won him the leadership of the Kentucky militia, who enthusiastically expected him to win back Detroit. Too ambitious not to take the job, he realized its impossibility. The federal government furnished him with a commission and an army, but Harrison "found himself helpless to advance or retreat, or to remain in any fixed position" (M:672). It was impossible to supply ten thousand troops or to hold Detroit without control of Lake Erie, but he allowed he might attack Ft. Malden if the river froze. A blunder by General Winchester relieved him of making a decision. While waiting for Harrison, Winchester decided to assist some settlers on the river Raisin; an advance group took the town, and Winchester followed in support. He could have prevailed in the

subsequent British attack, given the efficiency of his Kentucky riflemen, had he organized and fortified his camp. Captured by Indians, Winchester surrendered to the British commander, Col. Proctor, who then rushed back to the safety of Ft. Malden. Proctor probably could have taken the weakened Harrison had he attacked; worse, he abandoned the wounded American prisoners to massacre. The two commanders were a matched pair in risk-aversion: "If Proctor was afraid of Harrison, with more military reason, Harrison was afraid of Proctor" (M:688).

Madison's new Secretary of War, William Armstrong, showed his ability in deciding that any military stance should be defensive until a fleet was built on Lake Erie. "Then the value of [the promoted] General Proctor to his enemy became immense," since "he had not the energy or the knowledge to profit by his opponents' exposed and defenseless condition" (M:691). The Americans had time to fortify their positions and resupply. When Proctor finally attacked Fort Meigs and then Fort Stephenson (defended against Harrison's orders), he was repulsed. As a contrast, Adams seems gratified to describe the intelligence, enterprise and courage displayed in the naval battle on Lake Erie. "More than any other battle of the time, the victory on Lake Erie was won by the courage and obstinacy of a single man" (M:706). If Oliver Perry was chiefly responsible for winning Lake Erie, Adams makes less of his agency than his luck: his luck in having Proctor as enemy, in moving his ships into deep water before the British arrived; in surviving without injury when four-fifths of his crew were dead or wounded; in performing "a feat almost without parallel in naval warfare" (M:706). The statistics indicate that Perry's fleet was superior, yet he nearly lost the battle when his other

commanders failed to coordinate their actions. Losing his own ship, Perry leapt to another to continue the close action and win the day.

Having lost control of the lake, General Proctor evacuated Detroit and Malden. Harrison was in no haste to pursue him, but was propelled by the energetic efficiency of R. M. Johnson's mounted troops to fight. The battle of the Thames was a disgrace for the British army, and with the death of Tecumthe marked the end of Indian hopes. As Adams viewed it, "the English counted for little in the northwestern territory, except as Tecumthe used them for his purposes." Tecumthe's death "was no subject for regret; but the manner chosen for producing this result was an expensive mode of acquiring territory for the United States. The Shawnee warrior compelled the government to pay for once for the lands it took" (M:716).

The conquest of upper Canada remained a problem, with control of the St. Lawrence the key. Secretary Armstrong plotted the capture of Kingston, then York, as the beginning of a campaign against Montreal. General Dearborn, however, preferred to attack York first; once he shifted his attention from Kingston and control of the St. Lawrence his campaign was "a record of failure." The conquest of York cost more than it was worth. Of little military importance, the burning of its public buildings was cited as precedent for the burning of Washington and many were killed in a munitions explosion. Americans won the battle at Fort George but failed in their primary mission to destroy the British force under General Vincent. The American troops sent to pursue Vincent encamped and were attacked by Vincent instead, with results "equally disgraceful." The British lost more men, while both American generals were captured and boats and

baggage lost. An American colonel with five hundred men, surrounded by Indians in the woods, surrendered to a force half his size.

While Dearborn was attacking Fort George, the British commander, Sir George Prevost, assaulted the naval station at Sackett's Harbor. Had the British acted with energy, they "must' have succeeded, but given the alarm the Americans had time to group under Jacob Brown, a local militia general. Prevost's men were forced to retreat under blistering fire. Adams cites the American battle reports as proof that British and Canadian criticism of Prevost was unfair. Jacob Brown, an example of raw military talent, won a regular commission for his success. The greatest American losses were self-inflicted, when a naval lieutenant, told the battle was lost, set fire to the shipyard, barracks and stores.

Finally the ailing Dearborn was forced to retire, but the army had not yet exhausted its supply of older generals. James Wilkerson was named Dearborn's successor. Since the Burr trial, he had survived investigation into his relations with the Spanish government, as well as a charge of insubordination. His next-in-command, General Wade Hampton, had feuded with him for years, and Armstrong had to promise Hampton that he could bypass Wilkerson to deal directly with the war department. Armstrong himself came to Sackett's Harbor, and argued with Wilkinson about strategy. Adams points out that neither Armstrong nor Wilkinson expected to capture Montreal, their ostensible goal; for one thing, Armstrong would have accompanied the troops if he actually expected the two feuding generals to conduct a joint campaign. Instead it seemed clear to both generals that the secretary intended to blame them for the inevitable failure. On his way north, Wilkinson was too ill to lead his troops against the British at

Chrysler's farm: "This defeat was the least creditable of the disasters suffered by American arms during the war" (M:752). Two thousand regular troops were beaten by eight hundred and for once Adams doesn't bother to describe a battle: "The story had no redeeming incident" (M:753).

Hampton did better than expected, holding a risky position that threatened Montreal and interfered with British communications and supply. But when he received a message from the war department about building winter quarters, he realized no attack on Montreal was intended, retreated to Plattsburg and offered his resignation. Wilkinson then moved his troops into winter quarters and the circle of recriminations began among Wilkinson, Hammond and Armstrong. While the American troops were diverted to the St. Lawrence, the British saw their chance, and retook Fort George. The retreating Americans burned Newark and Queenston. Then the British seized Fort Niagara by rushing through its front gate: "Nothing could be said on the American side in defense of this disgrace" (M:763). The British "let loose" their Indians and burned Black Rock and Buffalo.

The South saw the war as an opportunity to expand territory, but while Congress authorized the seizure of West Florida, it balked at East Florida, disappointing the Tennessee militiamen organized under Andrew Jackson. Gallatin objected that the conquest of Florida would make the peace negotiations more difficult. However, before he headed to the northern command, General Wilkinson acted with uncharacteristic swiftness and seized West Florida, the only permanent gain of territory in the war.

The second Southern sphere of operations concerned the Creek Indians. They were in a more precarious situation than the northern Indians; "their semi-civilization

rendered them a more perplexing obstacle to the whites" than a stance of active opposition (M:773). In 1811 Tecumthe visited the Creeks, inspiring "religious fanaticism of a peculiar and dangerous kind" among some young warriors. In 1812 a group of Creeks led by the Little Warrior, recently returned from the north and the massacre at the river Raisin, murdered two settler families. The murderers in turn were executed by order of the chiefs. Most of the Upper Creek towns then rose up against the men who had killed Little Warrior and friends. Peter McQueen used Little Warrior's letter from the English at Ft. Malden to obtain ammunition from the Spanish. An ad hoc group of "Americans," including Dixon Bailey, attacked Mc Queen and the "Red Sticks" at Burnt Corn. Adams notes the involvement of "half-breeds" like McQueen and Bailey as leaders on both sides. To the Indians, who had viewed the conflict as a civil war, Burnt Corn was considered "a declaration of war by the whites" (M:782). In search of Bailey and other antagonists the Red Sticks attacked Fort Mims and massacred all the inhabitants. After Fort Mims the Indians knew they could not retreat, but even before the death of Tecumthe their prospects were hopeless.

"Four thousand warriors who had never seen a serious war even with their Indian neighbors, and armed for the most part with clubs, or bows-and-arrows, were not able to resist long the impact of three or four armies, each nearly equal to their whole force" (M:783). The Tennessee militia was led by Andrew Jackson, "whose extreme energy was equivalent to an army" (M:784). His energy couldn't solve his supply problems, which Adams compares to Harrison's. His men destroyed a village at Talishatchee: if the town contained two hundred eighty-three Indians with perhaps one third warriors, two hundred Indians were estimated dead. Adams continually draws attention to the casualty figures:

"In every attack on an Indian village a certain number of women and children were necessarily victims, but the proportion at Talishatchee seemed high" (M:785).

Supplies finally arrived, just when the terms of Jackson's militiamen expired. When they attempted to leave, Jackson threatened to fire on them, but eventually relented. (Intimations of Jackson's autocratic methods will continue.) Admitting his campaign had failed, Jackson refused to leave the outpost. General Cocke meanwhile attacked and massacred the Hillabees, who were in the process of submitting to Jackson in promise of protection. The Georgia army under General Floyd attacked a hostile village at Autosee, which Adams compares to Tippecanoe to show the comparative weakness of the Creeks. These campaigns were little better than raids. Seven thousand men killed about eight hundred Indians with a loss of thirty or forty of their own men, "but this carnage had fallen chiefly on towns and villages not responsible for the revolt. The true fanatics were little harmed" (M:790).

With reinforcements of sixty-day militia Jackson started for the village of Emuckfaw, but before he arrived he was attacked twice in camp. Attacked a third time while crossing a creek, his men panicked, and Jackson had a close escape. After more conflicts with insubordinate militiamen, Jackson struck a decisive blow at an Indian fortress on the Horse-Shoe of the Tallapoosa. Perhaps nine hundred Indians were killed and five hundred women and children taken prisoner; fifty-one of Jackson's troops died. "'I lament that two or three women and children were killed by accident,' reported Jackson" (M:797). "Jackson's policy of extermination shocked many humane Americans and would perhaps have seemed less repulsive had the Creeks shown more capacity for resistance." Again, "A more serious criticism was that the towns thus exterminated were

not the towns chiefly responsible for the outbreak" (M:798). Most of the Red Sticks fled south to continue the fighting from Florida.

The peace treaty had a certain "irregularity of form." As a treaty of capitulation it should have been signed by the hostiles, but even if they had not fled, they had no organizational authority to make treaties or cede land. The friendly chiefs had not taken up arms against the U.S. but had joined it as allies. Jackson, rewarded with a commission in the regular army, presented the friendly Indians with the document of capitulation, which required the surrender of two thirds of their territory as indemnity for war expenses. When they refused to sign, he asserted that their refusal made them enemies: "the chiefs who would not sign might join the Red Sticks at Pensacola,—although, added Jackson, he should probably overtake and destroy them before they could get there" (M:800-01). A number of Creeks eventually signed.

No other aspect of the war affected so many Americans as the British blockade which covered the coastline with the exception of New England. Commodities were unsalable at their place of production and prohibitively priced everywhere else. The British made the Chesapeake their own, sailing up the Susquehanna, destroying anything that might promote the war, burning the town of Havre de Grace, and attacking the town of Hampton, where British troops "were allowed to do what they pleased with property and persons" (M:812). American seamen were frustrated by their failure to slip out of port during the blockade; Stephen Decatur charged that traitors were signaling the British with blue lights.

The narrative returns to Europe with the arrival of Gallatin and Bayard at St. Petersburg to take up the Czar's offer of mediation. They were obliged to spend six

months waiting, caught in the mysterious currents of Russian diplomacy. The British had rejected outright the Czar's offer of mediation but eventually, not wishing to offend him, agreed to direct negotiations instead. By then the diplomatic prospect had changed for the worse. As Adams reads the English newspapers, they exulted in the demonstration of their power everywhere but at Lake Erie. In the U. S. opinion drifted towards support of the war in the Middle States and against it in the East. Madison proposed and Congress passed a new embargo, whose practical effects would be felt in New England. But with the collapse of Napoleon, Madison recognized the complete failure of the system of commercial restrictions and withdrew it. Adams notes that the idea of the efficacy of restrictions persisted in the South, to be revived "at the next great crisis in their history" (M:881). The repeal of the final embargo "ended the early period of United States history, when diplomatists placed a part at Washington equal in importance to that of the Legislature or the Executive…Thenceforward the government ceased to balance between great foreign powers, and depended on its own resources" (M:892).

Slowly, necessity compelled Congress and people to follow Madison's lead "for good or for evil." Among his own party he no longer feared revolt, but he continued to have trouble finding qualified men for office. England would soon be able to replenish her troops in America, and go on the offensive; properly, the U.S. would need one hundred thousand troops in response. But while Congress had authorized an army of fifty-eight thousand, it had never raised half that number. A bill to encourage enlistments by increasing the bounty for recruits "terrified" a Congress afraid of mercenary armies, but passed. While the money needed to pay for the war was not excessive compared to the nation's resources, or its ability to pay in the Civil War, the government was on the

verge of bankruptcy. Without a national bank and with New England banks "financial agents of the enemy," it lacked capital and circulating money. Specie had drained to New England, given the rise of its manufactures and its freedom from blockade, but New England banks probably lent more to the British government than their own people.

Nothing demonstrated British acknowledgment of American seamanship more than the practice of ship duels. But given the blockade and the small number of American ships, "The first duty of a British officer was to take risks; the first duty of an American officer was to avoid them, and to fight only at his own time, on his own terms" (M:819). To their cost, two American officers couldn't resist the challenge. Captain Lawrence of the *Chesapeake* had developed a low opinion of the British navy after his easy victory over the *Peacock*. Leaving Boston with an inexperienced crew, he encountered the *Shannon*, whose commander had been haunting the waters off Boston waiting for such a chance. Lawrence didn't use his advantage of position, and after seven minutes fire his ship was "taken aback." The damage was simply bad luck. The disgrace, as the mortally wounded Lawrence reiterated, lay in allowing the ship to be boarded; here the superior British discipline proved itself. The defeat of the *Argus* and the shame of her boarding were blamed on the similar overconfidence of her captain and the fatigue of a crew that had captured a score of prizes in a month. The defeats shook confidence in the navy, "the single object of American enthusiasm which redeemed shortcomings elsewhere" (M:834).

Adams is at his most lyrical in halting the narrative for a chapter-long excursus on the privateer, its essentially American characteristics, its victories and drawbacks. Americans were deservedly proud of them, "for this was the first time when in

competition with the world, on an element open to all, they proved their capacity to excel, and produced a creation as beautiful as it was practical" (M:840). They were the "most conclusive triumph" of the war, based on British testimony, the "open-mouthed admiration" of captains who saw theses prizes laughingly slip through their fingers. Their disruption of shipping probably had more effect than the navy, but as instruments of war, they had their disadvantages. They didn't destroy their prizes, and many were recaptured. Essentially a "gambling venture," privateering didn't make much money and fell off when the difficulties increased. Worst, privateers drew experienced seamen away from the navy. Adams concludes that an expanded professional navy would have been preferable. Volume Seven ends with the reorganization of the army command under new vigorous commanders and the court-martial of General Hull for his surrender at Detroit. The selection of General Dearborn as presiding officer, hardly a disinterested party, was highly improper. The sentence of death was commuted, "but many thought that if Hull deserved to be shot, other men, much higher than he in office and responsibility, merited punishment" (M:906).

Before continuing with the war, Chapter Eight backtracks to consider the climate in Massachusetts. Half the people actually supported the war but were cowed by the other half. With "inert perversity" the Federalists vowed to fight only if their state was attacked. That attack seemed increasingly likely as the British were known to covet northern Maine and to begrudge U.S. fishing rights; they extended their blockade to New England. Timothy Pickering led the movement for open resistance to the Union and agitated for a convention. Madison resisted repeal of the last embargo long enough to insure that Massachusetts voted Federalist. In refusing to lend the Treasury money,

prosperous New England was “chiefly responsible” for the government’s desperate financial situation. Society was in a state of “morbid excitement.” In the Congregational Church, the absolute prescriptions of religion could never accord with the compromises of politics. The clerical attitude that “as the war was unnecessary and unjust, no one could give it voluntary aid without incurring the guilt of blood” was generally not intended as active resistance, “but it was fatal to the government and ruinous to New England” (M:922).

War in the north resumed with a new cast of generals. Jacob Brown with his seconds Winfield Scott and Eleazar Ripley fought against General Gordon Drummond, “the ablest military officer in Canada” (M:941). Adams approaches the campaign with the interest he has previously given to the naval battles. He drops his ironic tone and justifies his pride with statistical analysis: the numbers and kinds of troops, and numbers and types of artillery, are judged against the numbers of killed and wounded. He provides tables breaking down the brigades of Jacob Brown’s army by regiment and notes without comment that the regiments were raised in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Vermont, New York, and Pennsylvania, but the juxtaposition of this chapter to the previous one about the spirit of disunity in New England is an implicit rebuke. The battle of Chippawa was important because it gave the U.S. Army “a character and pride it had never before possessed.” Winfield Scott was outnumbered, but his victory was unequivocal, “the only occasion when equal bodies of regular troops met face to face in extended lines on an open plain in broad daylight, without advantage of position; and never again after that combat was an army of American regulars beaten by British troops” (M:938). Subsequent battles at Lundy’s Lane, Black Rock, and Fort Erie simply confirmed American

competence: “For the fourth time in six weeks a large body of British troops met a bloody and unparalleled check, if not rout, from an inferior force” (M:964). None of the battles had great military significance except that they drew out the British lines; finally General Drummond, his troops exhausted, declared a victory and retreated.

However, Lake Champlain was of great strategic significance to the British; it was the only location where a large British force could exist, considering the great problems of supply. Holding it was also necessary to insure the continuance of supplies from the U.S., since “two-thirds of the British troops in Canada were eating beef from Vermont and New York.” As the end of war in Europe released troops for the war in Canada, the British occupied Maine east of the Penobscot without American opposition. Anticipating attack, General Izard constructed fortifications on the lake at Plattsburg, but Armstrong, ignoring Izard’s warnings of the growing British presence, ordered him to Sackett’s Harbor. The British “had never sent to America so formidable an armament” as the eleven thousand men who marched on Plattsburg. Convinced of their “irresistible strength,” the British troops marched in column, ignoring the militiamen who fired on them. The British flotilla also had “unhesitating confidence” about its ability to sail where it pleased. The British ships had a decided advantage in their long-range guns, but the American naval commander, Captain Macdonagh, had the “intelligent forethought” to arrange the battle to his own advantage, fighting at anchor in a location where the British would have to enter in a narrow line and pre-arranging it so he could haul his ship about and fire a fresh set of guns when needed. Without naval superiority, the British commander declined to attack the fort and withdrew instead.

However, the rising confidence in American ability was shattered by the British occupation of Washington. Secretary of War Armstrong neglected to fortify the capital, and finally the Cabinet created a command to defend the city. When General Winder was chosen as commander over his own nominee, Armstrong washed his hands of the defense. As Adams sums up Winder's performance, no other American general "showed such incapacity as Winder either to organize, fortify, fight, or escape. When he might have prepared defences, he acted as scout; when he might have fought, he still scouted; when he retreated, he retreated in the wrong direction; when he fought, he thought only of retreat; and whether scouting, retreating or fighting, he never betrayed an idea" (M:1018). The British General Ross and Vice-Admiral Cochrane were ordered to create a diversion on the coast and exact "retributory justice" for damages to Canadian towns. For five days the British troops marched to Washington without meeting any resistance: "Such an adventure resembled the stories of Cortez and De Soto; and the conduct of the United States government offered no contradiction to the resemblance" (M:1002). Since Winder declined to attack the British on the road, military necessity required that he deploy his forces at Bladensburg, but he dithered and then had no time to organize the assorted troops. On the American side at Bladensburg, "nothing deserving the name of an army existed" (M:1010). The only professional discipline was provided by Joshua Barney and his company of sailors, firing the artillery salvaged from their gunboats.

Ross and Cochrane "burned the Capitol, the White House, and the Department buildings because they thought it proper, as they would have burned a negro kraal or a den of pirates. Apparently they assumed as a matter of course that the American government stood beyond the pale of civilization; and in truth a government which

showed so little capacity to defend its capital, could hardly wonder at whatever treatment it received" (M:1014). The popular reaction was outrage, exasperation and ridicule. After the battle, the conduct of Madison and the cabinet "was on the while creditable to their courage and character." The people were "rabid" against Armstrong particularly, although there was plenty of blame to apportion; Monroe, Armstrong's successor, may have colluded in the movement to remove him. The American troops fled inland, when they should have gone to Baltimore, as the next likely target. The citizens of Baltimore constructed entrenchments and batteries formidable enough that the British withdrew after a preliminary attack.

"Shrewd observers, little affected either by emotion or by interests" (the sort of construct Adams uses to express an opinion while effacing his presence) thought the government was near exhaustion. The capture of Washington exacerbated the constant problems of finding money and men. The treasury was bankrupt. Banks outside New England were forced to suspend specie payments. The Treasury had no way to transfer its bank deposits from one part of the country to another. Recruits continued to decline, while the dependence on militia threatened ruin. Only Jacob Brown seemed able to turn militiamen into soldiers. Worse, "The militia began by rendering a proper army impossible, and ended by making government a form" (M:1063). Massachusetts had a well-equipped militia of seventy thousand, which declined to participate in the war; it was called out only after the occupation of Maine. On the day when the federal government could no longer support an army, a day nearly at hand, the state army would be left standing. The Massachusetts legislature approved a report calling for a convention

to discuss the common defense and "to lay a foundation for a radical reform in the national compact" (M:1067).

Although the opinion of Virginia, namely Jefferson, argued that Massachusetts contributed little to the nation and that her defection would have little effect, Adams checks the revenue figures and concludes that Massachusetts contributed four times as much money as Virginia, largely owing to customs duties. When it came to the regular army, Massachusetts contributed as many soldiers as Virginia and the two Carolinas, not to mention her sailors. Jefferson in retirement reverted to Virginia prejudices, while Madison in the exercise of power abandoned them as unsuited for effective government. Jefferson thought the expansion of the regular army "nonsense," while Madison even proposed a draft as the only way to counteract the growing British forces. The most recent conditions under which Britain offered peace included U.S. territorial concessions: setting apart the Indian Territory in perpetuity as Indian country under the British; denying U.S, military and naval access to the Lakes; ending U.S. fishery rights; and ceding northeast Maine to Canada.

In New England, the defeat of Republicans "everywhere" in the elections of 1814 encouraged Federalists to support "the restoration of peace" and "the establishment of a new Federal Compact comprising either a whole or a part of the actual Union" (M:1109). According to the newspapers, the mission of the Hartford Convention would be to decide whether to use forcible means now or later to stop the war, but the delegates chosen for the convention, led by George Cabot, were "mostly cautious and elderly men, who detested democracy, but disliked enthusiasm almost as much" (M:1112). The secrecy of the convention seems to have been designed for the free expression of ideas without

"premature excitement and intrusion of public feeling," but it looked like conspiracy. Its recommendations followed the lines of the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions, insisting on the right of states to protect their citizens from conscription, to assume their own defense, and for state armies to be ready to support a New England Confederation. The single immediate issue was a demand that the federal government remit a portion of the taxes of Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island so they could provide for their own defense. The eighty-year-old John Adams, a supporter of the war, the unnamed "predecessor" of Jefferson in the early volumes, finally makes an appearance, vehemently attacking George Cabot and his ambitions. Government and people awaited some new disaster that might signal the collapse of Madison's administration.

Many feared that the disaster would be the fall of New Orleans. Adams describes the city in a state of unpreparedness comparable to Washington. For months, General Andrew Jackson was more interested in seizing Pensacola, despite increasingly urgent letters warning about the approaching British force. Jackson arrived in New Orleans with twenty days to spare but did little. No other American general "had allowed a large British army, heralded so long in advance, to arrive within seven miles unseen and unsuspected, and without so much as an earthwork, a man, or a gun between them and their object" (M:1147). Unlike General Winder he did act, gathering his troops, and assuming dictatorial powers: "Jackson needed to see his enemy in order to act; he thought rightly only at the moment he struck" (M:1149). Once again, Adams claims that that the eventual American victory was founded on their superior deployment of artillery: "British evidence on that point was ample, for their surprise and mortification were extreme; while the Americans seemed never fully to appreciate the extraordinary

character of the feat they performed" (M:1166). If Americans were forced to wage war, at least they waged it intelligently, in the most highly evolved way.

The final volume continues the narrative with a discussion of the Treaty of Ghent, which is out of chronological order but accords with the pacific aspect and wider perspective of the final volume—the European context brings American identity into focus. To the American representatives in Ghent, negotiation seemed hopeless with an England intoxicated by her success over Napoleon. Adams is amused by the excessive vituperation of the British newspapers. The only problem with the United States negotiators was their excess of strength. Although technically J.Q. Adams was head of the mission, Albert Gallatin's authority and judgment made him their *de facto* leader. The selection of the British negotiators showed the British tendency to underestimate American ability.

Originally the Americans had orders to resolve maritime rights, including ending impressments, while the British wanted to contract American territory; this evolved to a disagreement about returning to pre-war borders or retaining acquired territory. Once the news from America disappointed British expectations, the war no longer seemed worth the expense. The agreement nearly foundered over provisions of the 1783 treaty: Adams was determined to retain the fishing rights negotiated by his father, Henry Clay to withdraw British rights to the Mississippi. Ultimately the treaty ended hostilities while leaving claims open for future discussion. "Perhaps at the moment the Americans were the chief losers; but they gained their greatest triumph in referring all their disputes to be settled by time, the final negotiator, whose decision they could safely trust" (M:1219).

It's not clear whether this reflects the Americans' faith, the historian's hope, or merely his hindsight, but this is not the contingent time of the opening chapters.

The treaty was "probably the most popular" ever negotiated by the U.S. and the national government that had been in a shambles suddenly looked successful. The representatives sent to Washington by the Hartford Convention crept away. "In a single day, almost a single instant, the public turned from interests and passions that had supplied its thought for a generation, and took up a class of ideas that had been unknown or but vaguely defined before" (M:1237). Party distinctions eroded. If Madison was willing to abandon the old Republican principles when he called for a permanent army of twenty thousand, the Congressional debate showed that peace had relaxed some of the pressure for strong government. "In the process of national growth, public opinion had advanced since 1801 several stages in its development," but the amount of change was in doubt. After five years of financial disorder, the Republicans "reverted to the system of Washington" and voted a national bank. But the public rose up in rebellion, for once, when Congress voted itself a pay raise. The end of the war reversed economic positions: Massachusetts declined with the end of her monopoly on manufacturing and shipping, and its people began to head West, but with the revival of exports, especially of cotton and tobacco, the "stimulus thus given to the slave system was violent" (M:1246).

The narrative concludes with a final ironic reversal. Madison's farewell statement is his veto of a bill for internal improvements, building roads, canals and a national university, an idea which had been supported by Washington, by Jefferson, and by Madison himself. [80] From its opening pages, the *History* has left no doubt about the necessity for those improvements to pull the nation together and promote an intellectual

development commensurate with its political advance. Madison's gesture makes an equivocal end to the narrative. It could be read as a welcome return to republican principles and the Constitution as framed. The vote reflected in fact how far a Republican government had come in accepting the national idea, doing violence to the Constitution in accepting the purchase of Louisiana and the laws for its governance, the Bank, the Embargo and the seizure of West Florida as valid. A missed opportunity, Madison's veto looks to the past but has implications for the future, as the northern states instituted their own schemes of improvement, leaving the southern states behind. The *History* concludes with four chapters on the United States in 1817.

The Democratic Ocean

When Adams surveys American society in his final chapters, the future of America seems decided in its unity and in its divergence from Europe. By 1817, "American character was formed, if not fixed" (M:1332). The American was already "a new variety of man" in a political sense. Peace accelerated the social and economic changes. A study of census data and economic statistics revealed, with local variations, a steady rate of increase in both: "With almost the certainty of a mathematical formula, knowing the rate of increase of population and of wealth, they could read in advance their economic history for at least a hundred years" (M:1300). Adams notes the tendency to "escape the bonds of rigor and relax the severity of thought" in the new religious thinking (M:1308). No new ideas developed in politics: "The same tendency in religion which led to reaction against dogma, was shown in politics by general acquiescence to practices which left unsettled the disputed principles of government" (M:1309). There was no

definitive interpretation of the Constitution. In the arts, Americans showed that they were not artistic by instinct, but shared an intelligence "both quick and refined" (M:1330). Americans were quick above all, as their readiness to innovate demonstrated; they possessed "the disposition to relax severity"; they offered less scope for individuality; and in raising the average standard, they discouraged "excess" of either intelligence or morality (M:1343-45). Some of the opening questions have been answered: the nation has a permanent political shape, if the Civil war has to be taken as a confirmation of the fact; religion has new ideas, although they could seem like a retreat; America has emerging artists like Irving, Bryant, and Allston; but the "moral and intellectual needs of mankind" might be better served by a character not afraid of the "excessive" exercise of intellect and morality.

Adams' dual form, the narrative of administration framed by snapshots of social history, is not entirely successful. His concluding declaration of national identity is meant to be self-evident, but the preceding narrative of domestic politics has been one of dissension, not emerging unity. Adams' writing in the final chapters lacks the effusiveness of the opening, the willingness to think in mythic terms and images that might help a reader bridge the gap. Instead of a nation set free like the privateer to follow the wind where ever it takes her, the future seems foreclosed in the endless replication of the population across the continent "almost" according to formula, or in the stasis of the democratic ocean. This lack of affect may be due to personal reasons—he was exhausted and still suffering the after-effects of his wife's death—but in any event, in the conclusion Adams is unable to evoke the optimism-by-proxy of the opening.

The vividness of the picture of disunited sections compared to the harmonious whole of national character may rest on the tendency of Adams' thinking to organize discussions in terms of opposing categories. [81] The movement between these oppositions was not towards synthesis so much as alternation, like Adams' political pendulum. Often this tendency was minimized in the *History* because of its concrete particularity. Adams could abstract a "Massachusetts" and a "Virginia" as two polarities in American culture and politics, and inhabit their perspectives of mutual incomprehension for the purpose of irony: from Massachusetts, Virginians look like godless Jacobins, later modified to minions of Napoleon, while Virginians see clergy-ridden monarchists waiting to destroy the Republic. But Adams still has the Middle States as an intermediate category, personified by boring, contented Pennsylvania, whose democracy was so instinctual it declined power; the exception of the aristocratic émigré Gallatin proved the rule. Compared to John Randolph, Jefferson is not merely the pure expression of Virginia republicanism, but something more complicated and interesting.[82] War with England might seem to provide the simplified opposition Adams prefers, but even here France was the third term, a different variant on Old World arbitrary power, while domestically, war failed to unite the sections. As I have noted, Adams' fondness for alternate categories can be seen in his sentences, balanced in their dual oppositions—their weighing of alternatives can seem judicial. [83] There are sets of oppositions that run through the volumes, as recurring themes: energy and decisiveness are contrasted with impotence and confusion, idealism with materialism; speculation with greed; the future with the past, the New World with the Old, peace with the rule of force, science with ignorance, democratic with aristocratic history.

The framing surveys of American life in 1800 and 1815 provide a wider domestic context for a narrative that places a narrower range of actors, mostly government officials, in an international field. If the introductory chapters set up the problem of a weak, disunited confederacy on the edge of a continent, the conclusion seems to promise a solution, the energetic young nation with a continent to populate. [84] But these are images. Following a Rankean methodology, the careful arrangement of documents in sequence is supposed to reveal causation. What Adams seeks but is unable to discern in the complicated, multifarious stream of events is a model of historical process. In the final chapters narrative and frame remain largely dissociated in establishing causation between the recitation of actualities and Adams' conclusions. National identity is achieved more by decree than the events of the text. The narrative concludes in exhausted relief at the last-minute preservation of the union, when the news of the battle of New Orleans, reinforced by the Treaty of Ghent, arrives slightly in advance of the representatives of the Hartford Convention. Madison's veto of internal improvements seems to indicate that Virginia will cling to her old principles rather than accept the modern national future.

When Adams uses form to signify a change, omitting the sectional chapters in his 1817 survey on the grounds that national character has replaced them, readers can't avoid thinking of the sectional conflict of the Civil War. The America Adams describes in broad strokes would fit the post-Civil War era at least as well as 1817. With its old idealism expended, wary of the exactions of new ideals, post-bellum society preferred its material rewards. Adams' can't help signaling his present dissatisfaction in the final ambiguous image of the nation and his concluding set of questions.

Adams' method of connecting the social frame to the narrative relies more on the occasional metaphor in the narrative to echo the introduction than any particular events. He inserts the launching of the *Clermont*, for example, in the middle of the "anxious and restless" summer following the *Chesapeake* humiliation, the Burr trial and the attack on neutral Copenhagen. The voyage of the *Clermont* demonstrated the enterprise of a people who will become known for their scientific ingenuity. In contrast to the privateer, Adams places the steamboat in a domestic context; he asserts, "That the destinies of America must be decided in America was a maxim of true Democrats," thus managing to lecture the reader while seeming to detach himself from the lesson (J:1019). Adams celebrated the steamboat as the peaceful weapon that solved the problems of transportation and communication separating Americans: "for the first time America could consider herself mistress of her vast resources" (J:1019). Robert Fulton and his kind were products of typical American society and "their inventions transmuted the democratic spirit into a practical and tangible shape" (J:124).

If a traveler in 1800 would have expected little from a situation so backward and unproductive of a great people, the slow rise of the Capitol made the nation visible. When the House voted in 1807 in their newly-finished chamber, "no one could foresee the time when the central structure, with its intended dome, would be finished; but the new chamber gave proof that the task was not hopeless. With extraordinary agreement everyone admitted that Jefferson's and Latrobe's combined genius had resulted in the construction of a room equal to any in the world for beauty and size" (J:1031). Perhaps it is a bad omen that the acoustics were faulty.[85] After the burning of the Capitol, the chamber was rebuilt on a new "dignified and worthy" design, and the old columns

replaced with a novel material, “a conglomerate rock, containing rounded pebbles of various sizes and colors, and capable of being worked in large masses” (M:1279). The physical changes, the expansion of the territory and the building, are obvious, but the difficulty in discerning the mass psychology, much less its evolution, remains. It’s easier to imagine a collective American mind and an American character from a distance, which is why Adams’ occasional readings of the British newspapers are useful, if only in reaction to their prejudices about American pretensions.

If the image of the Capitol represented the slow accretion of American power and confidence that the nation would fulfill its imperial associations, Adams’ fullest embodiment of national character was not a representative man but an artifact. His depiction of the privateer or Yankee schooner anticipates his concluding description of American character as intelligent, quick, ingenious and peaceful. A “creation as beautiful as it was practical,” the schooner was built not so much for battle as for escape. Its celebration is a welcome break from the narration of inconclusive political debates and ineffectual military skirmishes. American exceptionalism is expressed as technical ingenuity: “Beautiful beyond anything then known in naval construction, such vessels roused boundless admiration, but defied imitators. British constructors could not build them, even when they had the models; British captains could not sail them.” When a captured vessel was adapted to use by the British navy the special spirit was lost: “She could not bear conventional restraints” (M:840).[86] Build to sail before the wind, and shift rapidly, they lost their special power in heavy weather.

Adams is scrupulous about reporting the material data for the naval vessels he discusses, their physical dimensions, rigging, crew, and especially, number, type and

arrangement of guns. But to the historian in search of factual information about the capabilities of the schooner, the ships remain as elusive as American ideals: "nothing precise was ever set down" (M:841). No logs were printed or saved in archives, and the newspapers were so exercised about the ability of Americans to fight, they neglected to investigate the ability to sail. The anonymity of her designers and the mystery of her history help to make the schooner seem like the pure product of popular intelligence. Adams can infer the ships' capacities only from the romantically imprecise descriptions of their engagements. The schooner did evolve during the course of the war. Its extreme lightness was modified until it was strong enough to capture prizes, but still fast enough for evasive maneuvers. By war's end it was unrivalled. [87]

"Sometimes the very perfection of the privateer led to dangers as great as though perfection were a fault," since its responsiveness to prevailing winds might lead it into danger (M:845). Its "perfection" for Adams, (and it is unusual for Adams to describe anything as perfect in a less than ironic way) doesn't rest in its efficacy as an instrument of war or even commerce. It is surprising to read that "Notwithstanding speed, skill, and caution, the privateer was frequently and perhaps usually captured in the end" (M:846). The privateer didn't make money. As a speculative enterprise it was an unprofitable form of "gambling" licensed by a government improvidently unwilling to build a navy. For Adams the perfection of the privateer as an American type rests on its elusive impracticality, rather than in spite of it.

In 1876, Adams tried to conceptualize the "national movement." Writing a book review that he jokingly called his "Centennial address," he avowed that the people "are quite right in believing that above all the details of human weakness and corruption there

will appear in more and more symmetry the real majesty and force of the national movement." He imagines the national movement beyond the reach of fallibility:

> If the historian will only consent to shut his eyes for a moment to the microscopic analysis of personal motives and idiosyncrasies, he cannot but become conscious of a silent pulsation that commands his respect, a steady movement that resembles in its mode of operation the mechanical action of Nature herself. As one stands in the presence of this primitive energy, the continent itself seems to be the result of agencies not more unlimited in their power, not more sure in their processes, not more complete in their result, than those which have controlled the political system. (361) [88]

This does have the aspect of a Centennial address in proclaiming a national movement unlimited in power, sure in process, and complete in result, and yet the political system in 1876 hardly seemed to be the product of such God-like agencies. Evidently the problem with the system rested with the individuals who inhabited it. The people can feel the pulsation, but it seems to be an energy outside them, just as Adams' vision of force in the *History*. That this occult force seems both organic and mechanical indicates Adams' interest in discovering the laws that govern human events, an interest he expressed as early as 1863: "But my philosophy teaches me, and I firmly believe it, that the laws which govern animated beings will be ultimately found to be at bottom the same with those which rule inanimate nature" (L1:395-96). [89] "National movement" rather than "nation" points to Adams' desire to discern tendencies and direction in history, but a pulsation, while it connotes a common experience—think a national heart beating in common—doesn't indicate direction the way that the water metaphors can, and also suffers from not being visual. Adams will learn the importance of a strong image to fix an idea. Again the historian has the problem of connecting such an abstraction to the world of personal motives. There is no intermediate ground.

Adams is susceptible to what Tocqueville suggests is a "dangerous" tendency for the historian who writes in democratic times:

> Once the trace of the influence of individuals on the nations has been lost, we are often left with the sight of the world moving without anyone moving it. As it becomes extremely difficult to discern and analyze the reasons which, acting separately on the will of each citizen, concur in the end to produce movement in the whole mass, one is tempted to believe that the movement is not voluntary and that societies unconsciously obey some superior dominating force. (Tocqueville 495) [90]

Whether the historian sees the disposition of a deity or a general law at work, he is tempted to see the "fixed destiny" of the nation and deny the individual freedom to change (496). Although individual acts can have some effect, to at least "delay or hasten the natural destiny of a people," in an age of equality they are more difficult to discern: "causes of this secondary and accidental nature are infinitely various, better hidden, more complex, less powerful, and hence less ready to sort out and trace" (494). Early in his career Adams seemed to characterize this unseen power as the people: he conducted his journalism with the expectation that all he had to do was rouse the public mind and the civil service would be reformed, or the power of corporations curtailed. By the time he wrote the history, some generalized force seemed to be at work, impelling democracy, impelling nationality. Yet Adams begins his text by emphasizing historical contingency.

If nothing had been settled in 1800, too much seems fixed in 1815. In the uncertainty of his opening chapters, Adams offers future time as the ground of possibility. For the 1800 nation in embryo, the implication was that old modes of history were not useful guides. American history had to be more than "past politics," since in a democracy politics couldn't be separated from society. [91] The revolution of 1800 was "chiefly political because it was social" to Albert Gallatin and his friends, which is why Adams felt compelled to add social history to the traditional subjects (J: 111). Even as the

nineteenth century, the great age of historical writing, amassed a variety of historical models, the process of change narrowed the field of useful experience, while the horizon of expectations continued to expand.[92]

In 1800 it wasn't clear whether the resources of the U.S. were equal to the physical obstacles they faced, nor was the "more interesting" question of the nature of the national character resolved. By 1817 conditions were set: a national character had been created and a continent secured on which a homogeneous population might expand and prosper "with almost the certainty of a mathematical formula" (M:1300). For Adams a "speculating and scientific" turn was crucial for history as well as society, and these are optimal conditions for scientific investigation. "Should history ever become a true science," and here Adams means a science with the power to formulate large scale generalizations with some power of prediction, "it must expect to establish its laws, not from the complicated story of rival European nationalities, but from the economical evolution of a great democracy" (M:1333). Somewhere in the background of Adams' thinking were the influences of Auguste Comte, Henry Thomas Buckle, Herbert Spencer and Charles Darwin and the idea that a scientific history might uncover the universal laws of human behavior. He also follows Tocqueville, who noted, "America is the only country in which we can watch the natural quiet growth of society and where it is possible to be exact about the influence of a point of departure of a state" (32). The problem here is that the mathematical certainty of a law removes the condition of historical time.

Writing to Francis Parkman in 1894, Adams suggested an affinity between democracy and scientific history, and implied his own historiography wasn't quite scientific enough:

> The more I write, the more confident I feel that before long a new school of history will rise which will leave us antiquated. Democracy is the only subject for scientific history. I am satisfied that the purely mechanical development of the human mind in society must appear in a great democracy so clearly, for want of disturbing elements, that in another generation psychology, physiology and history will join in proving man to have as fixed and necessary a development as that of a tree; and almost as unconscious. (L2:562-3)

A "purely mechanical development" might be measured by the population and economic statistics which could be plotted as a formula, but Adams' model of the national character doesn't allow for development so much as its spatial extension. Adams' desire for a history that could capture some of science's power of prediction forecloses on the possibility of history as qualitative rather than quantitative change. All that remains for the historian is to follow the fulfillment of a destiny that seems prescribed. Earlier, Anglo-Saxonism had offered a secular model of continuity to supersede the providential model of the Romantic historians. Now national character seems to replicate that model of history as the unfolding of an essential nature. Unlike his predecessors, Adams' point of origin is the War of 1812 rather than the Revolution, but he also seems to be describing what Sacvan Bercovitch identifies as "an indefinitely prolonged rite of passage into nationhood," an objective which is achieved but never completed. In Bercovitch's analysis nineteenth century Americans see themselves as a people forever in the process of becoming or emerging towards a state of millennial perfection (186).[93] Adams would secularize "perfection," but retain its moral valence.

In his conclusion, Adams implies that the history he has just completed to "Old-World standards" is no longer adequate to explaining the new social formation of democracy. While he might regret that fact, since "No historian cared to hasten the coming of an epoch when man should study his own history in the same spirit and by the same methods with which he studied the formation of a crystal," Adams is always interested in the possibility of prognostication. He wants to anticipate the future, if not necessarily to live in it. Nowhere else could science so profitably study human evolution in process, although he conceives of evolution at a level so abstract that it ignores contingency or chance. "The interest of such a subject exceeded that of any other branch of science, for it brought mankind within sight of his own end" (M:1334). "End" is ambiguously its termination, its aim, the fulfillment of its object.

The depiction of this national destiny culminates in a surprisingly ahistorical and frustrating image:

> Travellers in Switzerland who stepped across the Rhine where it flowed from the glacier could follow its course among mediaeval towns and feudal ruins, until it became a highway for modern industry, and at last arrived at a permanent equilibrium in the ocean. American history followed the same course. With prehistoric glaciers and medieval feudalism the story had little to do; but from the moment it came within sight of the ocean it acquired interest almost painful. A child could find his way in a river-valley, and a boy could float on the waters of Holland; but science alone could sound the depths of the ocean, measure its currents, foretell its storms, or fix its relations to the system of Nature. In a democratic ocean science could see something ultimate. Man could go no further. The atom might move but the equilibrium could not change. (M:1334-35)

Previously in the narrative, rivers have been the arteries of commerce and communication; technological achievements like the invention of the steamboat and the building of canals have had a practical nationalizing effect in uniting previously isolated regions. The ocean was "the only open field for competition among nations," the site

where American technical ingenuity of gun and sail triumphed over superior power (M:1336).[94] Here, though, compared to the previous image of famous personages carried away by the stream, the falling motion of the water seems more significant as it seeks the common level of democracy, and, ultimately, as the current disappears, the interest lies beneath the surface.[95] In this travel narrative that converts a journey through space into one through time and stages of social organization, the child, the boy, the traveler, can all follow the line of narrative to the sea, but the "almost painful" interest in the ocean is the dissolution of any obvious individuality or even sequence. The ultimate nature of this experience, which brings "mankind within sight of its own end," is deliberately ambiguous. Spencer, for example, describes this equilibrium as "mankind in sight of his goal" (360). Depending on the interpretation, democracy could be the ultimate stage of social organization. America could represent the terminal stage of history, or the conditions that free humanity to realize its purpose. Adams might be suggesting a limit to human progress or human comprehension. He merely says that without "the social distinctions that confused other histories," with all distinctions presumably dissolved in the democratic ocean, democracy offers possibilities to study "the evolution of a race."

The historian who professes both literary and scientific traditions expresses his situation in a narrative that is picturesque at first, but then the language of literature is superseded by the language of science. Instead of fulfilling its promise and delivering a generalization from which some useful prognostication might be drawn, science ends in a vision of a single vibrating atom "that could go no further. [96] Conventional history is at an impasse before such a phenomenon. Possibly this dead end, as far as historical time is concerned, involves an adjustment of temporality, requiring a longer *durée* to reveal its

meaning, the hundred years Adams requires in his conclusion to determine the results of the experiment. In what sense can history be considered to have reached a "permanent equilibrium" in 1817, or is it merely anticipating a new model? The Civil War, to name one event that considerably roiled the democratic sea, would seem to question the homogeneity of national character that Adams asserts rather than demonstrates.

What the democratic ocean could describe is social stasis, the inertia of a people without an external stimulus of competition to stimulate their potential. Pointedly, the vibration of atoms implies no sense of direction. In the early 1880s, in a letter to a British friend, Adams posited a slow upward movement of civilization: "The only trouble is that things move on such an eternally big scale that one can't see it. No one knows when the continent rises an inch, though the power is enough to lift the Alps to the moon" (L2:477). The discursive analyses that operate synchronically at the beginning and end of his work might be useful models as far as marking the water levels, but to sound the depths requires a new model.

Dorothy Ross cites this passage to suggest that the extreme scientism of Adams and American social science in general was linked to the ahistoricism of American exceptionalism, relying on the forces of natural law rather than the effects of human action (65).[97] Compared to his predecessors, George Bancroft and Francis Parkman, Adams doesn't locate American exceptionalism in a particular relation to the land. While he may be acknowledging their work in his early references to untamed wilderness, Adams deflates any heroic expectations.[98] Unlike the earliest stages of settlement, in 1800 "pioneers were at work, cutting into the forests with the energy of so many beavers and with no more express purpose than the beavers they drove away. The civilization

they carried with them was rarely illumined by an idea; they sought room for no new truth" (J:120). Adams pushed for the illuminating idea, the organizing principle.

For Adams colonization was the necessary concomitant of empire, but civilization resided in the coastal cities. The influence of environment on the developing society consists of the absence of foreign restraints that might distort the course of the experiment. While life on the frontier created new, distinctively American types in the interaction between Euro-American and native societies, Adams assures his readers that such barbarous types were no indication of American character and "must disappear" with succeeding generations. The transformative experience is not the frontier, the "crucible" of American nationality and the engine of democracy as Frederick Jackson Turner would argue two years later, but the free unfolding of a national character which is inseparable from a democratic political culture.[99] Adams' problem in imagining a scientific history was perhaps shared by Turner in his struggle to discover the "vital forces" that lie "behind institutions, behind constitutional forms and modifications…that call these organs into life and shape them to meet changing conditions" (Turner 31). Turner's thesis posed the problem of a new rationale for American exceptionalism, if the closing of the frontier now seemed to predict only devolution to the old European model of class distinction and social conflict. [100]

Adams never doubts that the democracy which confirmed at least a temporary exceptionalism on America was the pattern of the future. The United States in 1815 had evaded "the usual experience of history" by remaining a single nationality, despite the conspiracies that nearly spun off the New England and the West:

> One uniform and harmonious system appealed to the imagination as a triumph of human progress, offering prospects of peace and ease, contentment and

> philanthropy, such as the world had not seen; but it invited dangers, formidable because unusual or altogether unknown. The corruption of such a system might prove to be proportionate with its dimensions, and uniformity might lead to evils as serious as were commonly ascribed to diversity. (M:1331)

The promise of peace has been fulfilled, but in Adams' thinking as much as the American political system, the pendulum has begun to swing backward. Arriving at a state of harmony, he begins to see the faults in the system, the danger of peace that turns aside from principle, the risk of contentment that leads to mental and moral inertia, that led, in short, to the age of Grant. Tocqueville claimed that the effects of equality on the human mind made it difficult for intellectual revolutions to take place, difficult even to attract public attention "for any theory which does not have a visible, direct, and immediate bearing on the occupations of their daily lives" (642). The people that Adams insists must become above all a scientific and innovative may "become practically out of reach of those great and powerful public emotions which do indeed perturb peoples but which also make them grow and refresh them" as Adams claimed the experience of war had led to a confident new identification (Tocqueville 645).

The American Revolution, unlike so many European revolutions, seemed permanent, although Adams only approached it indirectly through its confirmation in the second war with Great Britain. Whereas a Frenchman of the nineteenth century, based on past experience, might anticipate the transformative change of revolution to install the new, or dream of counterrevolution to restore the old, American national character was inseparably identified with the success of democracy. As an Adams, the historian felt personally invested in its perpetuation, which is not to say that he put aside his skepticism about its consequences: "Opinions might differ whether the political movement was

progressive or retrograde, but in any case the American, in his political character, was a new variety of man" (M:1332).

In quantitative terms the future is visible, the population will double every twenty-three years, economic resources every twenty, but once again Adams turns away from the facts to return to the "more interesting" question of the development of human minds. Adams' final words are a series of questions about American values:

> The traits of American character were fixed; the rate of physical and economical growth was established; and history, certain that at a given distance of time the Union would contain so many millions of people, with wealth valued at so many millions of dollars, became thenceforward chiefly concerned to know what kind of people these millions were to be. They were intelligent, but what path would their intelligence select? They were quick, but what solution of insoluble problems would quickness hurry? They were scientific, and what control would their science exercise over their destiny? They were mild, but what corruptions would their mildness bring? They were peaceful, but by what machinery were their corruptions to be purged? What interests were to vivify a society so vast and uniform? What ideals were to ennoble it? What object, besides physical content, must a democratic continent aspire to attain? For the treatment of such questions, history requires another century of experience. (M:1345)

When Adams, writing in 1891, leaves his American subject and his readers in a state of suspension, the suspicion, given the terms in which the questions are framed, is that his soundings have failed to uncover much progress. [101]Again Adams uses anaphora as a kind of indictment, and in this case the balance of his sentences implies a characteristic virtue corroding into a vice, with the mechanical inevitability of the pendulum. The concluding set of questions addresses the possibility of revitalizing interests, ideals, and objects whose pursuit might offset the dangers of inertia.

Elusiveness, along with boundless ambition, seems to be an implicit national characteristic that Adams shares with his subject. The Yankee clipper was built for escape; a political culture has developed that abandoned its theoretical underpinnings

without formulating new ones, or acquiesced in practice while evading disputed principles; a new religious movement sought "a path of escape" from the rigors of doctrine (M:1309;1301). A reluctance to use power, to test one's capacity, to accept challenges, while hardly true of individual Americans was, according to Adams, an aspect of the way Americans imagined themselves as a political body: "'American systems' of politics, whether domestic or foreign, were systems for evading competition" (J:1072). What Adams calls "evasion" he attributes to a lack of American confidence in themselves en masse, a fear of success that will lead ultimately to self-destruction. If true democrats shy from power as Adams implies (and does he include himself in the implication?), at least there may be a reservoir of democratic sentiment unreflected in the conduct of public affairs that could be mobilized to reform that conduct. Adams himself declines to answer his questions or to recuperate with a reformulation of American ideals for the 1890s; his irony is the emblem of his lost faith.

The Wilderness of Facts

In 1879 as he began his *History*, Adams wrote, "one man may reasonably devote his life to the effort at impressing a moral on the national mind, which is now almost a void." [102] This is interesting, first, because Adams puts himself as a historian in the position of impressing a moral where Jefferson had impressed his personality; second, that the national mind was a void in 1800 might indicate an immature stage of development, but in 1879 the word "now" had a more negative connotation. Either the public was barely educable or its mind was vast, but Adams still thought he could have an influence. Then he defers the idea of his audience to the future: "The America of the

next century will be one of the greatest problems of all history. To reach one's arm over into it, and give it a shove, is at least an amusement. (L2:371). The shove is easier to visualize than the impress. Adams is joking, but even as he starts out, questions arise about how he imagines his audience, his relation to it, and what he thinks history can do. If Adams was looking to a future audience, the style of his work also becomes a problem: "Society is getting new tastes, and history of the old school has not many years to live. I am willing enough to write history for a new school; but new men will doubtless do it better, or at least make it more to the public taste" (L3:49). Questions about narrative were implicit: whether the coming history could be conceived in terms of narrative; whether history could be conceived as meaningful in any terms other than narrative.

Published between 1889 and 1891, the *History* sold perhaps three thousand sets in its first decade. Adams claimed again that he was writing for posterity, "for a continent of a hundred million people fifty years hence," but probably he hoped for the great success of a Macaulay or a Gibbon as well. (L2:535).[103] What Adams says of the extreme Federalist, Timothy Pickering, dreaming of the Presidency, may hold true for himself: "man, almost in the full degree of his antipathy to demagoguery, yearns for the popular regard he will not seek" (J:1204).

While soberly setting the record straight, his work was also an enterprise of historical speculation and democratic faith, set loose to find the superior readership that the text seemed to doubt could exist. Trained as he had been to the family model of statesmanship, Adams conceived the service of the historian to be broader than the professional idea. His *History* was written for the people in the largest sense, but was not written in a style that catered to a popular readership. Adams' expressions of

dissatisfaction with his work included a sense of the discrepancy between his purpose in writing and the form of scientific history, and yet his writing prescribed science as the intellectual leaven of society.

Contemporary reviews of Adams' *History* are worth considering, since they speak to the vocation of the historian and the question of his audience. From its inception the *History* was a work more respected than read, and read more by historians than the general public. Among historians, the text was monumental in effect as well as size, apparently inhibiting the historians who followed for decades.[104] Any effect was less noticeable on the general reader. When in 1890 *The Critic, a Weekly Review of Literature and the Arts* asked eighteen well-known authors to choose "The Best Five [American] Books of the Decade," among the historical works there were eight votes for Parkman's Histories, three for John Bach Mc Master's *History of the People of the United States*, three for John Hay and John Nicolay's *Abraham Lincoln: a History*, two for Adams' *History* (one from Francis Parkman, his only choice, and the other from Moses Coit Tyler), two for Justin Winsor's *Narrative and Critical History of America*, Henry Lea's *History of the Inquisition*, and Henry Tuttle's *History of Prussia*, one for John Fiske's *Beginnings of New England* (as well as one for his *Idea of God*), one for George Bancroft's *History of the Constitution*, and one for H. H. Bancroft's Histories.

Reviews were generally positive, although based as they were, usually, on only two or three volumes, they missed the full import of the work. *Lippincott's* announced that the American people had finally found a man qualified to be their "national historian" on the grounds of Adams' skill at research, his judicious style and his lifelike characterization. Adams brought new information from European archives, and to his

knowledge of facts joined "the latest results of sociological investigation." To the credentials of historical science he adds a reassuring style: "gracious and urbane, it has a distinguished ease as of high breeding; it eschews all startling rhetorical effects, all unnecessary passion and vehemence. Above all things, Mr. Adams is non-partisan: you could not guess his politics from his book" (143). Adams' portrait of the public and the private Jefferson engages: "He is not made a hero of; he is presented as a man; the historian has little respect for the dignity of history; he tells the plain, honest, familiar truth" (144). Readers recognize Adams' characters as men "of the same kidney as ourselves," part of the same society. "But this art—so far above the reach of the average historian—is skillfully concealed behind the elegant unpretentiousness of Mr. Adams's English" (144). [105]

The *Hartford Courant* regarded the second *Jefferson* volumes as an "unprecedented service to American history as well as American letters." Never before "such a minute, discriminating, dispassionate study of any American period and it seems as Mr. Adams unfolds it that there is no period of our history more interesting than the formative period." The reviewer emphasizes Adams' invisible touch in shaping his material: "By the author's skill and reticence, facts and movements and opinions seem to arrange themselves in the sequence of a novel," yet without a loss of "historical dignity." Adams brings out individual character, especially Jefferson's, yet he "uses no adjectives" and apparently does not attempt a portrait, while actually doing so. [106]

Adams' access to documents never before examined was of primary importance for the *New York Times*. Given such an opportunity, the *History* would have been a public misfortune in the hands of "a vulgar and pretentious writer or by a dull or confused

one." Happily, "It is in perfect taste." The introductory survey is "as amusing as it is exact and painstaking," as demonstrated by the portrait of a typical Congregational minister and his perception of democrats as Jacobins. The reviewer relies on extensive quotation of "picturesque" incidents, which often seems to involve shameless European corruption: King Charles' credulity at the rise of Manuel Godoy, one of the Queen's lovers; the Bonaparte brothers' argument about the sale of Louisiana, conducted in Napoleon's bath and so terrible that his valet fainted; the surprising parallels between the character and careers of Napoleon and Toussaint Louverture, and the latter's decisive influence on U.S. history. The characterization of Jefferson is notable: the author "strives very hard to be fair to him, but the estimate will seem to most persons cold, and perhaps grudging." Nor does Adams have much sympathy for Jefferson's "faith in democratic progress…It is not that Mr. Adams does not believe in democracy, but he does not appear to us to have quite 'put himself in his place.'" Most reviewers who mentioned it seemed to find Adams over-scrupulous in pointing out the constitutional difficulties caused by the Louisiana Purchase, but this review adopts his tone: the people "showed that they do not care much for constitutional theories when bent upon making a point." Two days later, a *Times* editorial objected to Adams' "decidedly disparaging estimate" of Jefferson." After enumerating Jefferson's accomplishments, the author finds Adams' "tone" is "scarcely appropriate" to describe so successful a man, but then, Adams prefers "the unfavorable to the favorable word," "temporizing" rather than "moderate," for example. As for Louisiana, "Jefferson did what any other sensible and, we may add, patriotic man would have done…and postponed theoretical consistency to a more convenient season." [107]

Adams' second Administration of Jefferson was judged by the *Times* the best writing on American political history, excepting Heinrich von Holst's work, and the best American history in general, excepting Francis Parkman's. Elements of Adams' work may provoke opposition: "He is rather more given to interpretation than many historians." His "passionate interest" may stimulate readers, but "We think, indeed, that he is overconfident. A historian does not speak with the less authority for a certain hesitation," especially when it comes to judging the motives of others. For Jefferson, Adams displays "a want of sympathy," even what looks like prejudice, in claiming Jefferson that "begged for mercy at the feet of a British Minister," accusing him of being motivated by a desire for popularity rather than the public good in seeking an agreement with Britain. For Burr, Adams may be overly severe in charging him with treason, since the prevalence of conspiracy and the feeble condition of the union his book describes have to be considered extenuating circumstances. For the American people, Adams misjudges them when he says their devotion to Jefferson was founded on their hatred of direct taxes. His style is "very conservative," which apparently means restrained, undemonstrative, unornamented: "He prefers to rely on the power of nervous, compressed statement." The *Times* praised "the remarkable combination of condensation with interest and vivacity" which left his work "full of nervous life." Fascinating eyewitness glimpses of Napoleon tempting his brother with the throne of Spain, King George III berating a diplomat for impudence to another king, and John Marshall's private opinion of Aaron Burr, make the volumes "as interesting as a novel." [108]

The *Chautauquan* also praised Adams' "graphic character sketches," in particular his "so just, accurate, and impartial an estimate of Aaron Burr" (504). From this

"complete, exhaustive, and philosophic work," the reviewer notes, first, the decline of American ideals, "blurred by avarice and selfishness" that needed to be rekindled by the new government and second, the Louisiana Purchase, as significant an event to Adams as the Declaration of Independence and the ratification of the Constitution. *Life* praised Adams for his "personal and social pictures," his difference from those writers who treat their actors like abstractions and history like a game of chess. Readers can recognize the personal forces and motivations at work in history from present experience. The reviewer is impressed above all by this New Englander's "most unprejudiced and just" tribute to the tolerant democratic nationalism of the Middle States. [109]

The *Atlantic's* praise was more grudging. The current "epidemic" of American histories is surprising when, not so long ago, American history "was eschewed as the dullest of topics" compared with the "picturesqueness" of other lands. However, the Civil War confirmed that the nation was not merely an unsuccessful experiment, while making the antebellum past seem remote enough to be interesting. Even amid this "flood" of books, the reviewer found the "overmuch expected" *History* "very nearly fulfilled" expectations: if Adams maintains the quality of the first volumes his work "will be almost great." This reviewer asserts that there are no new facts to learn about the period; the narrative detours to European courts and to Haiti are "unnecessary" but a gratifying change of scene. Adams' point of view can be perplexing, "impelled apparently by that strange vein of contradictoriness which too often sets him obliquely and very uncomfortably across the stream of received belief and universal opinion." His "carping, critical spirit" in the opening chapters, where "he likes to express the truth in negatives," depicts the people "as a sorry set of fellows, quite unfit for liberty," but then Adams,

"laying aside the rôle of historian for that of seer and orator, sketches the destiny of the nation "with a swelling enthusiasm which pleasantly offsets his earlier denying disposition."

What fascinated the *Atlantic* reader, as well as most other reviewers, was the ambiguous portrait of Jefferson. Adams' attitude towards Jefferson "becomes almost a psychological study" so peculiar is it. Clearly Adams "admires Jeffersonianism" and he constantly attributes "some fine quality to his hero, yet it is impossible not to remark how widely the Jefferson of his fancy differs from the Jefferson of his facts; for no sooner does he ascribe a trait than he seems to adduce evidence to disprove it" (275-76). For this reviewer the reiteration of "the undeniable assertion that Jefferson was a great man" followed by a failure to illustrate that greatness or the use of euphemism to cover Jefferson's seeming inconsistency and dishonesty is an indication of Adams' perversity rather than his irony. If Adams' treatment of Jefferson is irritating, his appraisal of Hamilton was unfair, and his portraits "disappointing" in general: Madison is a "mummy," Gallatin a "marionette" (277). Concluding, the reviewer pulls back from his or her own "critical temper" to reassert the high ability and importance of Adams' achievement—"the period will never be discussed more keenly or more profoundly" (278). [110]

The *Overland Monthly* praised the new scientific tone of historical investigation in which the simple narration of events had been succeeded by an analysis of the relations between them to trace the evolution of the nation. Adams' "comprehensive and appreciative" account concerns the important period when "the political life of the country may be said truly to have commenced." The Republicans learned the necessity of

developing a positive policy to replace opposition, and less happily, the need to reward partisanship with offices. The characterizations of prominent men are strong, particularly the controversial figure of Jefferson, although the author accounts for Jefferson's inconsistencies "with perhaps too favorable a construction." [111]

With later volumes, reviewers had less happy reading experiences. According to the *Literary World*, the "indispensable" story of Madison's first administration "has never been told so well before. But it is not in itself attractive, for it is a recital of the diplomacy of confusion." Still, the historian cannot be blamed for failing to make an absorbing narrative out of such unpromising matter. Adams' criticisms of individual incompetence are severe, but moderated by his explanation that the causes of the confusion were "inherent" in the society of the time. Two of Adams' assessments had contemporary relevance for the reviewer: his judgment that the battle of Tippecanoe, which made the reputation of two presidents, was in fact, as Tecumthe described it, an inconsequential "unfortunate transaction" with a few young Indians; and the fecklessness of the lame-duck Congress of 1809, chosen to support the embargo when the nation now wanted war. [112] Compared to the Revolution, the War of 1812 was "curious" and "almost trivial," the peace as inconclusive as the war. The reviewer's interest revives with the concluding chapters and their description of American character. "Toward a just understanding of itself by the American mind, Mr. Adams has made a most important contribution" (108). [113]

At first, the discontent of the *Nation* reviewer also seems rooted in the relentlessly dreary events of the Madison years. Madison himself was an uninteresting personality, a "closet statesman," and his times were dispiriting "A narrative history of the successive phases under which our diplomatic and political vacillations appear, disappear, and

reappear in this long period, is likely to be tedious just in proportion to the minuteness and fidelity with which the story is told," and Adams is all too faithful to his material. The "monotony" of the British aggressions was varied only by the similar aggressions of the French. "Yet the double-headed aggression did but set in stronger relief the executive weakness and the legislative impotence which it served to explain" (406). In assessing responsibility for government vacillation, Adams is not fair to Madison, even compared to the judgment of his own *Life of Gallatin.* The reader will "sometimes wish the author could have looked with as much complacency on the bright side as on the 'seamy side' of the character and conduct here described" (406).[114] The reviewer finds "one historical moral," based on family partisanship: in the practical administration of the government like ours, there is only a choice between the John Adams' war policy of 1798 and Jefferson's peace policy of 1801; in other words, "the truth of history seems to [Adams] an ample vindication of the Alien and Sedition Laws" (424-25). Even when Adams brings himself to praise Madison's courage, the reviewer interprets his praise as an indication that the most significant result of the war was vindication of the Federalist measures of 1798, rather than (as the reviewer judges it) the new relation of "mutual respect and courtesy" between Britain and the U.S. Adams is censured for being censorious: "we are sorry that he could not find more to approve in the character and conduct of the men and measures here passed under his critical review." The vacillation seems contagious: "There are times when Mr. Adams fails to make a due allowance for the difficulties of the statesmen whom he criticizes," but then, the reviewer admits, there are also times when Adams does acknowledge the difficulties (425). Adams' mixture of assertion and inconclusiveness clearly bothered some readers.[115]

Reviewing the final volumes, the *Critic* claimed that Adams' history "approaches nearer the standard of science than any extended historical work yet written on this side of the Atlantic" (106). Adams pays attention to "the little things, which, to the average historian, mean little, but which form the real leaven of history." He rejects "the dazzling, the dramatic, the sensational, the anecdotal, the episodic incidents exaggerated in art, oratory and popular schoolbooks, and devotes his chief energies to scrutinizing men." No works except Parkman's display such power. "If we find fault with the brilliant and somewhat cold-blooded truth-teller, it is that he does not perhaps fairly ponderate the difficulties with which his subjects have to contend," although the reviewer concedes that lack of sympathy is a common fault of historians. "For a New England historian, his breadth of view is as notable as his insight is profound." Adams' overturning of popular idols may have a salutary effect. No one has better insight into the British mind, plus Adams is factual and philosophical in analyzing war, diplomacy, politics, the arts. On American character he delivers "a masterly sketch of what cannot yet be completed as a portrait." [116]

In reviewing the final volumes, the *New York Times* took the occasion to compare Adams to another New England historian, the late George Bancroft (1800-1891), as an indication of American maturity, if maturity meant a tolerance of doubt and a willingness to face unpleasant truths. "Needless to say that [Adams] lacks that self-confidence, that belief in the God-given grandeur of the States, that calm or that blustering faith in the republican or the democratic system of government, which the older breed had to entertain or stay out of literature as well as politics." Adams "is a pessimist compared with Bancroft; a cold, unadorned writer, compared with the older historian's pompous

sentences. But when he becomes interested and animated his warmer passages tell better than any of Bancroft's." If the two had studied the same era, Adams would have gotten closer to the facts: "The doubting historian is likelier to hit the truth than the eulogist." The choice of period may signify a difference in attitude: Bancroft wrote about "the heroic and somewhat cloudy period of the Republic," Adams a period "concerning which Americans can less afford to be proud. Democracy may have been born with Jefferson and Madison, but what a disgraceful infancy it was! The gorge rises at the paltering, pettifogging character of our state and National Governments." In the present, more outspoken, age, "We can afford to weigh the past with more impartiality than heretofore and apportion with greater rigor of fairness the right of the old idols to a higher or a lower niche in the temple of fame."

Adams tries to be fair to North and South when he discusses New England tendencies to secession. For a New Englander and an Adams "to bring out this repulsive point as strongly as he does is certainly an evidence of moral courage which wins our respect. That he does not characterize it with violence may seem unfair to Southerners" but "for the most part he abstains from denunciation and allows facts to carry with them their own moral and charge." If New Englanders had joined the fight, they could have taken Canada as soon as war was declared, but instead they were "ugly and unpatriotic," refused to enlist, and supplied the British with supplies. Adams is "the reverse of a hero-worshipper," even when it comes to his grandfather. He "has at command a mood of satire and a mood of humor, or something that nearly approaches humor." If Madison cut a poor, dull bourgeois figure in fact, Adams finds amusement in the extremity of the invective he inspired in the British press. The patriot can heed a warning on the need for a

strong defense and admire Adams' treatment of the naval war. The review doesn't make much of the concluding chapters, merely quoting a paragraph on national character without comment; "whatever may be thought" of Adams' conclusions, as a writer "of the better sort," it is well that he is a historian.[117]

Although Adams described the review in the *New York Tribune* as "solid butter laid on with a shovel," it provoked the most sustained protest against his work in two long letters from "Housatonic," later published as a pamphlet (L3:226). [118] Housatonic charged that Adams was temperamentally unsuited to the role of historian, given his inheritance of family "passions and prejudices," and suffering from such familial traits as "selfish ambition, overweening vanity, and the rankling wounds of disappointed hopes" (5). History provided the opportunity for vengeance against family enemies, identified by Housatonic as Alexander Hamilton and those who supported him as party leader against John Adams, men designated "conspirators" by his great-grandson. [119] Their legitimate dissatisfactions are exaggerated into treasonable disunity, while Jefferson, whose doctrines were responsible for the Civil War, is treated gently because of his late friendship with John Adams and the willingness of his party to advance John Quincy's career.

According to Housatonic, Adams libels Hamilton, a man "pre-eminent for genius, for constructive power and administrative talents," when he claims that in response to an expression of democratic spirit, Hamilton replied, "Your people, sir—your people is a great beast!" (8-9; J:61). Here Housatonic may have a point about Adams' bias, whether its source was hereditary or not. Adams was less than scrupulous to use this unattributed quotation, which was not fictitious as Housatonic alleges, but based on a third- or fourth-

hand report. [120]Apparently he couldn't resist the way it encapsulated Hamilton's anti-democratic prejudices and those of his followers. Adams does quote with citation a letter in which Hamilton rejects "dismembering our empire," because it would provide "no relief to our real disease, which is *Democracy*; the poison of which by a subdivision will only be the more concentrated in each part, and consequently the more virulent"(J:428). Had Hamilton lived, Adams speculates that he would have parted company with his New England allies and "would have accepted the American world as it was" (J:428). Focusing on democracy, Adams sees the future as Jeffersonian. Yet the strength of Adams' reaction, if nothing else, would seem to belie the implication that time had made Hamilton and his ideas irrelevant.

To Adams, Hamilton was unscrupulous, "equally ready to support a system he utterly disbelieved in as one that he liked. From the first to the last words he wrote, I read always the same Napoleonic kind of adventuredom" (L2:267). [121]Adams' antipathy to Hamilton was relatively muted in the history. Apparently he deleted as much coverage of the "noxious" Hamilton as he could after John Hay, one of the first readers, thought Hamilton deserved "a fairer show" (L2:455-56). Housatonic complains of Adams' coldness: Hamilton's tragic death is told "with no more expression of feeling than a reporter puts into a paragraph for a modern newspaper relating the killing of a nameless tramp by a railroad train" (10). Adams does call the death and Burr's subsequent flight "the most dramatic moment in the early politics of the Union," but, befitting his subject, he discusses the effects in political, not personal, terms.

Other examples of prejudice from Housatonic included the glorification of John Quincy Adams and Albert Gallatin by suppression and misrepresentation. Adams

suppressed the truth when it came to his grandfather's responsibility for the embargo, and manipulated the words of his critics to their disadvantage, while he inflated his diplomatic triumphs in Russia. Adams misrepresented the West as underpopulated or populated only by barbarians. An "undercurrent of detraction" pervades the whole work.

The reviews raise questions about the purpose of history, questions which cannot be separated from questions about historical representation, or indeed about representation in general. Reviewers who found Adams too cold, too willing to topple heroes, too dreary, inconclusive, unsympathetic, with an excess of motives and too few directions for the reader, sound like the critics of literary realism, which by the beginning of the 1890s was losing favor with its audience. Adams himself shared some of their reservations about his prosaic history.

When it comes to depicting causation in history, Tocqueville makes a distinction between historians writing in aristocratic ages, who "generally attribute everything that happens to the will and character of particular men" and historians in democratic ages, "who attribute hardly any influence over the destinies of mankind to individuals, or over the fate of a people to the citizens"(493-94).[122] The first writers trace small causes, the motives of a few dominant persons, to the neglect of the large; the second group, in the absence of anything that looks like individual influence, seeks general explanations for what seems like the spontaneous actions of a whole society. Adams shifts this distinction from the situation of the historian to the society that is the historian's subject. The form of the writing would be homologous to the society it described, as societies developed through evolutionary stages. A democracy required a scientific history of national character. (Adams eventually tried his hand at writing aristocratic history.)

His U.S. *History* might be considered a hybrid of old historiography and new to reflect the transitional society it describes. Adams can focus on his main American characters, Jefferson, Madison and Gallatin, described as "aristocrats," with the assumption that the system of inequality under which they were born facilitated the development of individuality. This is an aristocracy of talent as well as birth: Gallatin could have assumed the title of "Comte" if he had wished, while John Marshall was a poor boy who followed the law to success. Adams further generalizes his personages as types, as if to justify his attention to character on grounds more scientific.

At the same time, these native aristocrats learned they could not escape the old European systems of arbitrary privilege and power so easily. Adams decided early that for maximum effect he would have to adopt a comparative approach: "I have pretty much made up my mind not to attempt giving interest to the society of America in itself, but to try for it by way of contrast with the artificial society of Europe, as one might contrast a stripped prize-fighter with a life-guardsman in helmet and breast-plate, jack boots and a big black horse. The contrast may be made dramatic, but not the thing" (L2:426-27). [123] Adams apparently agreed with Tocqueville's assessment of American society as "the most prosaic in the world" (278). Taking as his subject the formation of the nation, Adams found it hard to sustain his own attention, let alone that of readers, in a society where conditions more nearly approached equality for the white male population. The chapter on "Personalities" in the first volume reflects the personal hatreds that fueled political factions. As the narrative proceeds it presents fewer new vivid personalities, whether this represents Adams' exhaustion or signals the change to a more democratic

society is not clear. Even reviewers who considered the reports from the courts of Spain and France digressive welcomed the change of scene.

In a chapter entitled "Legislative Impotence," Adams notes a hopeful sign in Henry Clay's 1809 speech, his introduction of the two "rhetorical marks" of a new generation devoted to "national ideals of statesmanship": "The Union" and "the Fathers," symbols that became in time "fetiches and phrases," but effective because they were available to all parties and sections, less exclusive than Federalist and more comprehensible than Jeffersonian rhetoric (M:135). Clay called for "the presence and living example of a new race of heroes" to replace the founders and "animate us to preserve inviolate what they achieved." While Adams appreciates the effectiveness of Clay's technique and might share his aim to stimulate the public imagination, the scientific historian, unlike Bancroft or Parkman, could not adopt such tactics.

Readers who found Adams inferior to Francis Parkman were looking for something different.[124] Adams, writing as a critic, preferred Parkman's *The Old Regime in Canada* for its wider ideas, while admitting the public would find the earlier volumes of heroic exploits more exciting to read.[125] In studying the success of conservative legitimacy that formed the Canadian difference, the absorbing narrative was valuable in bearing wider implications for political science. Adams' description of Parkman's typical historiography with its virtues of "freshness and simplicity" outlines by its deficiencies the work Adams intended to write: "He prefers to follow action rather than to meditate upon it, to relate rather than to analyze, to describe the adventures of individuals rather than the slow and complicated movements of society" (175). Parkman's work was based on a similar exhaustive documentation, but in writing he absorbed the sources into his

narrative. For Adams the display of quotations on the page signaled the Rankean fidelity to sources and to the real that history posited as its reference.[126] As he advised a would-be writer: "Your task is only to give a running commentary on the documents in order to establish their relation" (L5:536). Parkman sought to create immediacy through the reader's emotional identification with the story, Adams through the eyewitness of the document.

It wasn't clear that the public, other than critics, appreciated the latter improvement. Democracy, "the steady growth of a vast population without the social distinctions that confused other histories,—without kings, nobles, or armies; without church, traditions, and prejudices,—seemed a subject for the man of science rather than for dramatists or poets." But a democratic audience objected to the idea of their history as a "mechanical evolution":

> They felt that they even more than other nations needed the heroic element, because they breathed an atmosphere of peace and industry where heroism could seldom be displayed; and in unconscious protest against their own social conditions they adorned with imaginary qualities scores of supposed leaders, whose only merit was their faculty of reflecting a popular trait. Instinctively they clung to ancient history as though conscious that of all misfortunes that could befall the national character, the greatest would be the loss of the established ideals which alone ennobled human weakness. Without heroes, the national character of the United States had few charms of imagination even to Americans. (M:1334)

Here Adams seems both a part of the people and distanced from them. He finds an idealistic excuse for the public's choice of defective men; they build leaders through their hopes (Jackson seems the obvious referent here) in a desire to rise above the leveling tendencies of the democratic ocean. The public response to the Compensation Bill seemed to indicate a narrow focus on petty economic issues, but also a certain frustrated aspiration. Adams' own search for American ideals returns through the unarticulated

ideals of the people, their "unconscious protest against their own social conditions" of peace and industry. It's not clear what the precise materialism of Rankean history has to offer them against vacuous contentment, still less the kind of history that treated mental development "in the same spirit and by the same methods" as the formation of a crystal. "No historian cared to hasten the coming of that epoch," yet nowhere else could science have such an opportunity.

The uses of history are in question here, which cannot be separated from their proper form. Adams, too, (or perhaps, Adams alone, since this passage has no obvious attribution) clings to the ennobling ideals that might stimulate a higher mental and moral growth. He admits the appeal of the old heroic history, but cannot go back. If the people would prefer an epic, he can at least give them a narrative of epic length. While he imagines himself writing in the spirit of scientific inquiry necessary to national development, perhaps for other scholars, he wants to impress a moral and seems to agree with the people that something was missing, After all, his history ended in impasse, or at best suspension. Adams used two terms, aristocratic and scientific history, but in Adams' search for form, his tendencies were both transcendent—he was looking for an ideal to reanimate and reestablish the nation, and deterministic—he was looking for the controlling forces at work under the surface of events. In either case the identity of his audience and his purpose in writing remained unresolved.

History by its referential nature would be the pre-eminent form of realist writing. To consider the *History* as a literary work, and return to the contemporary debates about the nature and purpose of literature, critics of realism tended to take the idealist or the naturalist position, but Adams encompassed both, while writing a work that might be

considered overwhelmingly in the realist mode. Adams referred to the *History* as "my dreary American history, which is to me what Emma Bovary was to Gustave Flaubert" (L4:157).[127] The criticisms of Adams' history often sound like the criticisms of realist fiction: too cold, dreary, inconclusive, scientific and skeptical, uninspired by imagination or faith. [128] Even William Dean Howells, the champion of realism in American letters, acknowledged that the realist novel seemed to be eclipsed in popularity, although in an argument about the relation of ethics and ideals to literature, Howells would by no means cede ground to the idealists. Howells positioned himself in the middle, essentially the middle-class, against too aristocratic and too popular tastes, in the pursuit of his vision of literary truth. [129]

Howells wrote appreciatively of Adams' third volume on the second Jefferson administration. With his realist interest in the common life, i.e. life as commonly lived, but also held in common, Howells identifies this stage of the national development as "the day of small things." In Adams' account of the Burr conspiracy, his "humorous perception of whatever was ridiculous in the situation" appealed to Howells. Where other readers felt a lack of sympathy, Howells saw Adams' "kindness" to Jefferson, who "is probably not the sort of man Mr. Adams would admire, and yet how unfailingly he lets his reader see when and where Jefferson was admirable! He could not have been charmed with that period of our national adolescence, and yet how faithfully he turns all its good points to the light"(968-69).[130] This doesn't quite capture Adams' critical tone: the "national character of the United States had few charms of imagination." The realist appreciates Adams' irony, but Howells the man, to whom democracy came more easily than Adams, has more of Jefferson's sanguine temper. Adams would not have

appreciated being known as the historian of small things. If they started small, their emerging greatness was understood: the irony rested in the discrepancy between past and present. Nor could Adams ever see himself in the middle position of Howells, or the easygoing middle position in general. The *type bourgeois Bostonien* was the mortifying identity from which he had tried to flee. Adams was willing give up on the project of writing Rankean history, but not on the idea of a scientific history. Science was the future, the field on which the essential questions of existence were being asked. At least in its ability to create grand generalizations, science retained an appeal to the imagination.

After completing his *History*, Adams announced his retirement. However, after great effort, John Franklin Jameson persuaded Adams to write for the inaugural issue of the *American Historical Review*. As the first professional historical journal in America, the *AHR* promoted a scientific paradigm of scholarly practice. Jameson might have expected Adams to provide an account of disciplinary progress and future challenge that the lead article by William Sloane, eulogizing the connection between "History and Democracy," actually did offer. Provocatively, Adams refused to be normalized. He had given up on the idea of writing conventional history and protested to Jameson that he had "forgotten what little history I ever knew," that the "best" he could do would be a correction of one of "the many blunders I have made in my history" (L4:286). The article he wrote, "Count Edward de Crillon," is hardly a celebration of the future of historical studies. Slight as it is, Adams shifts his own discontent with the problem of portraying the historical direction of a democracy to the problem of historical knowledge itself. As

an excursion into the errancy of the historical fact, Adams' article unsettles the foundation of the scientific history which historians professed to practice.

Adams begins by amending his documents. A "volume of the Archives of the French Foreign Office," previously "overlooked," revealed that the so-called Count de Crillon, who mysteriously appeared and disappeared in Washington in 1812, was not a French agent as a reputable source had described him, but a confidence man acting for motives of his own. "Crillon" was the patron of John Henry, who received $50,000 from the Madison administration for some not very revealing papers detailing his intrigues as a British agent. (The revelation that the British had been fomenting disunion among the New England Federalists was the last of the outrages that justified a declaration of war.) The mistake about Crillon could be corrected in a footnote, since it failed to change the outcome of the narrative or even the relations of the facts in the American story. Adams used the episode to make manifest the uncertainty and confusion lying behind the detachment of the historian, the fallen world of human error behind the impersonal authority of the historical text.

Even in the orthodox domain of diplomatic history and the relative stability of government archives, the presence of historical documents was incomplete and contingent. Partial human perspectives necessarily inflected what evidence did exist:

> According to mathematicians, every man carries with him a personal error in his observation of facts, for which a certain allowance must be made before attaining perfect accuracy. In a subject like history, the personal error must be serious, since it tends to distort the whole subject, and to disturb the relations of every detail. Further, the same allowance must be made for every authority cited by the historian. Each has his personal error, varying in value, and often unknown to the writer quoting him. Finally, the facts themselves carry with them an error of their own; they may be correctly stated and still lead to wrong conclusions. Of the reader's personal error nothing need be said. (Crillon 51)

If the quest of historians to professionalize their discipline rests on the assumption that the standards of scientific knowledge apply to the facts of the past, Adams invokes the certainty of mathematics to question it. While Adams assumes that, minus an allowance for the personal deviation of the observer, the direct observation of phenomena may be determined with mathematical precision, history has first to reconstitute its object based on its remains, which are themselves obscured as the product of imperfect human perspectives. The language of "distortion" and "disturbance" suggests that Adams holds his colleagues to the objective ideal of the historian as mirror held to past actuality. Friedrich Nietzsche, in his attack on the historical age and its "idolatry of the factual," imagined the historical man who "lets himself be emptied until he is no more than an objective sheet of plate glass" in his attempt to understand the past but Adams insists on the impossibility of transparency while still demanding historical certainty.[131]

Adams repeats the word "error" to a point that becomes puritanical in effect if not precisely moralistic, a series of defaults in the striving for a perfection that remains individualized. He doesn't conceptualize discrepancy in the neutral terms of experimental science which assumes that the progressive accretion of knowledge involves a scientific community, a succession of workers who refine, modify and complete an earlier conclusion.[132] Nor does Adams suggest a division of labor in which certain historians concentrated on the critical examination of documents, patiently accumulating factual data that later, more imaginative types could transform into a grand synthesis. Adams doesn't indicate the possibility of collective judgment, the idea of a community of scholars building a consensus like the eventual convergence of a socially-based truth through Charles Peirce's "community of enquirers."[133] There is only the individual

historian who at this point may be in a state of epistemological paralysis under the weight of Adams' blame.

To Adams a partial view of the facts seems to be not merely inconclusive but wrong, starting with the documents themselves and their limited as well as interested purposes. Adams had little good to say about the practice of politics. Humans "habitually deceive themselves" to begin with, and in political dealings with others even the best seem to lack "a moral sense." Adams inundates the reader with fault: "If to this confusion of error, the personal error of the historian is added, the result becomes an inextricable mess." Adams abstains from indicting his readers, out of delicacy perhaps: "Of the reader's personal error, nothing need be said" (52). The *AHR* reader, who is presumably a historian or a student of history, may be amused at Adams' rhetorical excess while in despair at the enterprise, or may resent Adam's ironic tone towards what is serious business.[134]

Within this wilderness of proliferating error every historian awaits the condemnation of posterity, if not of his peers.[135] No historian can recognize the biases of "his education, his society, and his age…but the best must always stand in terror of the blunders which no precaution and no anxiety for truth can save him from committing" (51).[136] There is no hope for historical perfectibility; all historians are lost. Adams' vantage point is that of both judge and convict, his concern with the historian's reputation rather than the reader led astray. If the best a historian can hope for is that "no one will read him—at least with too much attention," Adams, with his three thousand sets sold apparently had his wish. [137.] For all his self-deprecation, Adams has enough confidence in

the enduring qualities of his work to look beyond the immediate audience and worry about the response of future generations.

He pronounces sentence on the popular Thomas Babington Macaulay, who described facts as "the mere dross of history. It is from the abstract truth which interpenetrates them, and lies latent among them like gold in the ore, that the mass derives its whole value; and the precious particles are generally combined with the baser in such a manner that the separation is a task of utmost difficulty." [138] Macaulay celebrates the gold of history's precious lessons while appreciating the values of the novel; what would seem "incongruous" in fiction is "delightful" in history since the unexpected details of actual romance can teach something new. Now parodying the incontrovertibility of numbers, Adams supposes that any historian "can hardly expect that four out of five of his statements of fact shall be exact" and thus estimates that one fifth or thirty thousand assertions of "so-called" fact are "more or less inexact" in Macauley's work. Macaulay's *History* begins with personal assertions, "I purpose to write the history of England…I shall recount…I shall trace…I shall relate… " [139]Adams' own *History* signals its allegiance to facts by using a statistic in its first sentence: "According to the census of 1800, the United States of America contained 5,308,483 persons." But Adams' usage demonstrates that numbers are not value free. His initial claim, if not already questionable in its very specificity, becomes suspect when it is interpreted two sentences later as "the true political population consisted of four and a half million free whites," which is further reduced to "or less than one million able-bodied males, on whose shoulders fell the burden of a continent" (J:5).

In his “Crillon" article, Adams can use history’s dual meaning as event and story to play with the historians’ anxiety that their discipline will be dismissed as merely literary. He describes his unforeseeable error of identification as “one of those blunders, which is fortunately of so little consequence as to allow of attaching a story to it,” leaving it ambiguous whether the dubious quality of “story” rested with history in general, Crillon himself, or Adams’ own narration (52). Adams displays the disorder of multiple perspectives from which a narrative is usually constructed, the data usually swept up behind an impersonal narration or relegated to the paratextual footnote or preface. He presents translations of the hardly transparent documents with minimal commentary. The largest item is the putative memoir of the culprit Soubiron, aka Crillon, undated, apparently written in prison. Among the archival materials of official reports, letters from America registering cautious belief in Crillon’s story, notes of provincial police officials to the foreign ministry, Crillon’s own autobiographical account is central. A self-justifying tale of persecutions, romantic adventures, close escapes, mysterious machinations, fortunes gained and mostly lost, its fabulous elements recall the sort of romantic fictional narrative with which the newly professionalized historians were most anxious to avoid association. Adams does classify the document and its hero as to type: his reference to *Ruy Blas* and the “picaresque” indicates “a presumption of untruth.” But Adams has already said that Crillon’s account was true for American history, which was not concerned with his motives (55).

An article about such a rogue might be read as a sliver of microhistory, as an extraordinary episode that illuminates some larger social formation, or as one of the innumerable biographies that for Carlyle made up history. Adams simply leaves his

reader among the documents without interpretation, an enactment, perhaps, of the Rankean creed that documents will speak for themselves. Instead of Adams' self-consciousness investigation of a philosophy of history, readers might adopt Ranke's early nineteenth century, pre-Darwinian, pre-industrial faith in the intelligibility of evidence – which Adams seems to be implying is the attitude of his fellow historians. Their interests in setting the boundaries of the profession as a science were to assume consensus rather than attempt a possibly divisive examination of disciplinary assumptions. Adam was not so invested in professionalization as his fellows, and therefore not above causing some mischief in the wake of his own discomfort about historical meaning.

When Jameson pressed him for more material, Adams cited the "chaotic and unintelligible condition" of historical knowledge: "As History stands, it is a sort of Chinese Play, without end and without lesson" (Jameson 9).[140] The crisis in writing history, as Adams perceived it, was both on the level of the facts reconstructing the historical subject, given the chaotic nature of events and the attempt to apprehend them, and the absence of a present theory that might allow for the creation of an intelligible sequence. As Adams wrote in 1878 to Henry Cabot Lodge: "Unless you can find some basis of faith in general principles, some theory of the progress of civilization which is outside and above all temporary questions of policy, you must infallibly think and act under the control of the man or men whose thought, in the times you deal with, coincides most nearly with your prejudices" (L2:333). The two levels of fact and idea were connected, if the fact was seen not as autonomous but as situated within the intellectual presumptions of the observer.[141] The nature of its indirect observation made the

historical fact even more dependent on a system of knowledge to make it comprehensible than other facts.

Given his demonstration ad absurdum of the deficiencies of the factual, it is surprising that Adams didn't adopt the position that history was an art rather than a science, a matter of interpretation rather than explanation. Adams' satirical paralysis in the face of epistemological uncertainty was based in part on his insistence on continuing the claims of science to provide explanation and even a degree of prognostication. Then, too, while Adams insisted on the literary properties of history, he refused to give up the prestige of science. Science was tied to futurity in producing a world of unrecognizable novelty, but a science of history might be able to anticipate if not control a world based on science.

His attitude moved closer to that of Henry Thomas Buckle, who sought to discover the "principles which govern the character and destiny of nations," and whom Adams cited as an early influence (4). Buckle indicated that a science of history seeking to discover universal laws need not be mired in the uncertainty of particular facts. Certainty did not demand precision: "The real history of the human race is the history of tendencies which are perceived by the mind, and not of events which are discerned by the senses. It is on this account that no historical epoch will ever admit of that chronological precision familiar to antiquarians and genealogists. (600).[142] A larger scale would correct any discrepancy in detail. When Adams returned to writing history, this time of an unconventional type, he would be less concerned with facts than with their "ensemble," and more interested in scientific history as the formulation of grand generalizations that could explain the present bewildering prospect.

Chapter II: History Written in the Novel: *Democracy* and *Esther*

In an 1891 letter to Elizabeth Cameron, Henry Adams compared his recently completed *History of the United States of America during the Administrations of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison* to his novel *Esther:*

> There are not nine pages in the nine volumes that now express anything of my interests or feelings, unless perhaps some of my disillusionments. So you must not blame me if I feel, or seem to feel, morbid on the subject of the history. I care more for one chapter, or any dozen pages of Esther than for the whole History, including maps and indexes; so much more, indeed, that I could not let anyone read the story for fear the reader should profane it. (L3:409)

Adams' personal attachment to the novel may have been extraliterary, the product of guilt and grief over the 1885 suicide of his wife, Marian (Clover) Hooper Adams, who is commonly supposed to be the model for its heroine. He might have been expected, then, to feel "morbid" on the subject of *Esther* rather than the *History,* and to feel humiliated by the public notice of his private affairs occasioned by the nature of his wife's death. But in publishing the novel pseudonymously he had been curiously sensitive to its reception from the first, making any discovery of its merits a challenge to the public, while Adams' "disillusionments" with "his" American history as writing and as subject were intimately connected with his two ventures into the novel form. Both *Democracy: an American Novel* (1880) and *Esther: a Novel* (1884) are personal commentaries on the nature of society, its values and interests, written while Adams was in the process of composing his monumental *History.* [143] While the novels are a product of and a response to the problems of historical explanation that Adams experienced, they are not historical novels in the traditional sense of being set in a past that reflects present concerns. They do not depict a foundational story of the nation in the way of the *History*, but are part of

Adams' attempt to capture the tendency of American history since 1800. Their exploration of present conditions through the imaginative form of the novel anticipates and informs the sense of impasse with which Adams' *History* concludes, given his inability to reinvigorate the lines of an older civic faith or find the sources of a new one. For Adams, the novel also extended his longtime interest and concern about the place of women in nature and history, offering an opportunity to approach time and events through a genre and an alternative set of values, moral, aesthetic and social, which he identified as feminine. The novel offers another opportunity to appeal to the public mind, less directly than his journalism and his history, but perhaps more effectively for its popular form.

The concluding chapters of Adams' *History* asserted, more than they demonstrated, that a national character had been formed by war with Britain. Now that the continental expansion of that character had been assured through the purchase of Louisiana and the removal of encroaching foreign powers, its unfolding could be predicted simply by plotting rates of economic and demographic increase. After a concluding tour of the United States in 1817, the *History* suspends itself before the future, asking a set of questions about the nature of the American society to come, questions framed in the qualitative terms that Adams has just claimed that a scientific history cannot easily answer and that a mass society by its nature required a hundred years to ascertain:

> They were intelligent, but what paths would their intelligence select? They were quick, but what solution of insoluble questions would quickness hurry? They were scientific, and what control would their science exercise over their destiny? They were mild, but what corruptions would their relaxations bring? They were peaceful, but by what machinery were their corruptions to be purged? What interests were to

> vivify a society so vast and uniform? What ideals were to ennoble it? What object, besides physical content, must a democratic continent aspire to attain? (M:1345)

The absence of public outcry in response to the slashing political journalism Adams had written and then tried to foster as editor of the *North American Review* (1870-76) already seemed to indicate a disturbing inertia of the "vast and uniform" public mind. Through the form of the novel Adams could frankly evaluate any national development (and settle scores) without the fear of libel suits that had led him to publish his expose of "The New York Gold Conspiracy" in England.[144] *Democracy* speaks to the corrupt nature of the American political system and the absence of "ennobling ideals" since the end of the Civil War, while *Esther* explores "objects" and "interests" in more general terms, such as the competing interests of religion and science and the role of art in an American civilization. Both, by employing female protagonists, address the aspirations of women.

Adams' recourse to the more personal form of the novel has been read as an attempt at self-justification for his inability to achieve the high political status that might be expected of an Adams, the novels seen as early if less satisfying versions of that handbook to failure, *The Education of Henry Adams*.[145] The novels, like the *History*, are attempts to find a usable connection to the past, to find the germ of an ideology that might re-authorize an Adams and energize beneficial change. In 1883 Adams' friend, Henry James, posited the novelist as a historian: "It is impossible to imagine what a novelist takes himself to be unless he regard himself as an historian and his narrative as a history. It is only as an historian that he has the smallest *locus standi.* As a narrator of fictitious events he is nowhere" (1343). In his attempt to bolster the legitimacy of the genre, James argued that the novel was as real as history in its inquiry into the nature of society: "the only reason for the existence of a novel is that it does attempt to represent

life" (46).[146] But Adams wanted the novel for its historical illegitimacy: its charm was its rebellion against simple facticity. The literary mode and the use of female protagonists were useful to Adams in doing what scientific history could not do: provide access to the world of qualitative judgments, of imagination, discrimination, cultivation and faith that objective history excluded (and that eventually, in *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres*, Adams would celebrate as an alternative system of power).

The conditions of the novels' publication were themselves a test of public percipience. *Democracy* was published anonymously. Speculation about the identity of the author, added to the enjoyment of guessing the identities of the characters in what was assumed to be a roman à clef, helped make the book a success.[147] Reviewers generally admitted the cleverness of the work and the elegance of its style; if the author seemed an amateur as a novelist, he or she was an experienced writer. They admired the novelty of the local scene compared to the international subjects of Henry James and William Dean Howells. To some reviewers *Democracy* seemed to disprove James' claim about the thinness of American life when it came to finding subjects for literature.[148]

But American critics were defensive about the anonymous author's treatment of his or her subject, which dwelled too much on the "sordid" side of politics. According to the *Atlantic*, the novel lacked "the essential quality of the higher truthfulness": its protagonist (Madeleine Lee) was unqualified to examine and judge the political system, while Washington D.C.'s "masquerading character" shouldn't be taken for the nation (422). Not surprisingly, the reviewer for the more overtly political *Nation* was exercised: the novel "is as sensationalist in some regards as if it had a blackmailing intention" and the idea that such a corrupt politician as Ratcliffe could be a Republican candidate for

President was a "perversion" (313). *The International Review* critic adopted the pose of the insider and recognized the identities of the characters "at a glance," while the *Atlantic* critic admired the skill with which the characters suggested multiple identifications (209). Some Americans suspected that the author was English, perhaps an Englishwoman long resident at Washington, although English critics pointed to the characteristically American "sprightliness" of the dialogue or "peculiarities of diction" to assume an American author.[149]

British reviewers were amused to have their prejudices about democracy confirmed: the *Blackwood's* reviewer, for example, was quick to point out the hypocrisy of an educated class which considered itself the democratic equal to anyone in Europe while it was contemptuous of the natives at home and repudiated involvement in political affairs as morally and socially contaminating. [150] Adams' best reader, who was both sympathetic to the work and unusually perceptive in identifying Adams as author, based on her memory of an article he had written on civil service reform, was Mrs. Humphry Ward, who wrote that *Democracy* "solves the question as to whether a political novel is a legitimate performance" by combining artistic excellence with political purpose (78-9). If other reviewers found the depth of field somewhat shallow, she asserts that "A certain central spot in American political society stands revealed by a kind of lightning flash." If others complained of caricatures, she finds "the particular figures chosen by the artist…have a dainty individual grace or distinctiveness which entirely prevents your regarding them as mere properties and appurtenances" (80).

After the sensation of *Democracy*, Adams tried a different strategy with his second novel. *Esther* was published pseudonymously by "Frances Snow Compton"

presumably to ward off the curiosity stimulated by anonymity, as an "experiment," subsidized by Adams, to discover "whether authorship without advertisement was possible" (L2:568). *Publishers Weekly* noted it in passing as "quite unconventional in plot, characters and denouement" (Friedrich 298). But the absence of any other response by readers or critics prompted Adams next to test the value of English criticism. As he wrote Henry Holt, his publisher, "I care very little for readers, and dread notoriety more than dyspepsia; but I like the amusement of a literary conundrum" (L2:567). Barely advertised and briefly reviewed, the novel again failed to find an audience. *The Athenaeum* was patronizing: "It gives the reader the impression that the writer's chief object is to show that she is up to the mark in art, science, religion, agnosticism, and society. The reader is, therefore, more ready to compliment Miss Compton than to thank her; she has proved her ability, but she has not interested him" (109). [151] More favorably, the reviewer for *The Academy* wrote, "when Miss Frances Compson once gets to her subject, her development of the situation is certainly clever, and she has succeeded in imparting singular interest to it." [152] Both seemed to place *Esther* in the Howells-James school of literature, the *Athenaeum* describing it as "like many another American novel, clever and inconclusive," the *Academy* as "a novel of analysis of character and situation after the American fashion" with "very little narrative or plot." [153]Of one thousand copies printed in America, five hundred were sold and Adams bought back and destroyed the rest.[154]

Adams' choice to use the form of the novel could be seen as an extension of his political journalism, which saw public opinion as the most effective tool of reform and sought to motivate it by sentiments of moral outrage rather than reason. As he wrote in

his essay on Civil Service reform, “there is no way but to attack corruption in all its holes, to drag it up before the public eye, to dissect it and hold the diseased members up to popular disgust, to give the nation’s conscience no rest nor peace until mere vehemence of passion overcomes the sluggish self-complacency of the public mind” (128). The use of women as protagonists offers a more immediate access to that world of feeling as well as an opportunity to embody the moral revulsion presumably experienced by female keepers of the nation’s conscience. Womanly detachment from the world of practical affairs provides a relatively disinterested standpoint from which to make moral discriminations about competing value systems and through the marriage plot offers an occasion for deciding the direction of personal and national futures. In the novels the power of Adams’ heroines is presented as social, moral, and aesthetic, subsidized by personal wealth; the heroine of *Esther* is a painter and charity visitor whose aunt Mrs. Murray, “one of the half-dozen” women who “run” New York, is grooming her to take her place. Madeleine Lee is presented as the possessor of cultural and moral capital to a degree practically unknown to the ordinary denizens of Washington, if it is immediately recognized and appreciated by the diplomatic corps.

Adams might well imagine the audience of America en masse on which he is exerting “the vehemence of passion” is gendered female.[155] At this stage in his writing he could have dreamed of a success for his *History* beyond the popular acclaim accorded a Bancroft or a Parkman to the monumental popular and critical status of Macaulay or Gibbon. (The latter claimed in his autobiography, “My book was on every table, and almost on every toilette; the historian was crowned by the taste or fashion of the day.”)[156] Adams' aim in writing was not merely to trace the development of national character but

to stimulate it and direct it towards nobler objects—in which case he would desire the widest audience possible. Adams' statements about writing for posterity, (no Adams could help but think of posterity), or the few hundred people who mattered, were a premonitory shield against popular failure and a variant of his customary stance of self-deprecation.[157] The family's intellectual ambition set standards so high that deprecation was the appropriate response.

Publishing his novels anonymously and pseudonymously allowed Adams to employ a popular form and influence the widest audience while preserving his dignity. As the son of the Minister to England during the Civil War, Adams had suffered public ridicule, most notably from the *Times* of London, when an article he intended to be anonymous was attributed to him. In reviewing his friend Clarence King's *Mountaineering in the Sierra Nevada*, Adams questioned its publication as a misrepresentation of the true qualities of its author, a public if relatively unknown figure. He asks whether "as a matter of dignity, this book of sketches will rather injure than benefit" the author, who as head of the U.S Geological Survey was subject to Congressional criticism. As "slight" and "written to amuse," it was an agreeable work, but to appreciate the man, "a kind of young hero of the American type," one must read the five volumes of his report on the survey of the fortieth parallel.[158] Adams' social anxiety on behalf of his friend who still had a name to make was compounded by his own famous name. Anonymous publication of his novels to all but those select few in the know was clearly the prudent course.

Writing to John Hay, who was in on the secret of *Democracy* and who was to write his own anonymous novel, *The Breadwinners*, Adams claimed his "ideal of

authorship would be to have a famous *double* with another name, to wear what honors I could win. How I should enjoy upsetting him at last by publishing a low and shameless essay with smutty woodcuts in his name!" (L2:463). A double could accept the honors that were too vulgar to pursue and then be repudiated for and with "his" own baseness, but "Frances Snow Compson" doesn't sound like an author of a work illustrated by "smutty woodcuts.[159] The playful ambiguity of authorship extends to the gender of the author as well. Adams need not apologize, as a male writer, for taking up a weaker vessel, whether in terms of the novel or his female protagonists, unlike Henry James, for example, who felt the need to address the question of the "ado" he made of a heroine like Isabel Archer years after the publication of *Portrait of a Lady*.[160]

Adams' two novels redress the gender imbalance of his public work. For all its nine volumes, one element conspicuously lacking in Adams' *History* is the experience of women, focusing as it does on a traditional masculine narrative of statecraft. Even in the overviews of society in 1800 and 1817 that bookend the narrative, women are scarcely mentioned. Attending the second annual meeting of the American Historical Society in 1885, Adams objected to the presence of "female story-telling" (L2:625).[161] The professionalization of the discipline seemed to require a gendered hierarchy, in which history as science dissociated itself from mere history as story, although part of Adams' somewhat anomalous position as a historian was his insistence on both literature and science.[162] In later years Adams was to declare that the problem of American history was that there were no women in it. But compared to history, he seemed to regard the novel as a slighter, female form in counterpoint to the serious masculine work he was

composing.[163] Without great expectations, he was free to amuse himself and let loose his antagonisms and his disappointments.

The descendant, brother and husband of strong women, doting uncle to nieces both actual and "in wish," the holder himself of power that was moral, cultural and social rather than conspicuously commercial, Adams was sensitive to the problem of female talent that lacked a proper outlet. It would be difficult to recuperate Adams as a feminist; his letters, certainly, express a conventional denigration of female intellect and deprecated the women who attempted to exercise it.[164] Adams' take on the woman question was, not surprisingly, a historical one, and his researches simply confirmed his skepticism about a role for women that was not grounded in their generative role in the family. Adams' only public lecture, "Women's Rights in History," delivered at the Lowell Institute in 1876 and later revised for print as "The Primitive Rights of Women," disputed the commonly held view of the origins of marriage, that the wife's status was originally that of slave and that "her escape from this degradation assumed a gradual rise in the moral standard of civilized society, and finally attributed the complete triumph of women to the influence of Christianity, with its high moral ideals and its passionate adoration of the Virgin Mother" (336).[165] Adams' version is interesting because it contradicts a simple conventional narrative of progress and religious redemption. He denies that wives were ever slaves: a woman's father passed a right of "guardianship" on to her husband, not property, and she retained her membership in the native clan or gens.

Adams' version of archaic society was founded in part on the researches of Lewis Henry Morgan, whose work he enthusiastically printed in the *North American Review*. Morgan spoke to Adams' own republican prejudices in asserting the universal presence

of primitive democracy in the Americas and thus denying that monarchy was an inevitable stage of social development. [166] Morgan's work, filtered through Karl Marx's unpublished notes, was also the basis for Friedrich Engels *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State (*1884). Adams' essay emphasizes and celebrates legality, focusing on the retention of property rights and clan identity in married women and ignoring the circumstances of their lives, let alone the lives of female slaves. He does admit that the exercise of married women's legal rights to property or divorce usually required a powerful natal family to back them up. [167] Adams naturalizes private property as a human "instinct": "Both men and women were united in this,—that that whatever they loved best, they wished to possess" (338). Going further, he finds "the distinctions between races were to some small degree founded upon the difference of policy" about property (338). If Engels emphasized the power relations of which a system of law was merely the ratification, for Adams the conquering race that followed its "passions" for individuals and objects most vigorously was likely to exhibit the "natural instinct" for law. Here he diverged from Morgan as well, who asserted that "a mere property career is not the final destiny of mankind." If at present property is "an unmanageable power," it contains the elements of self-destruction: "Democracy in government, brotherhood in society, equality in rights and privileges, and universal education, foreshadow the next higher plane of society" (Morgan 552). Adams' usually speculative temperament fails to anticipate this prospect.

According to Engels, the significance of Morgan's work, as important in its field as the work of Darwin or Marx, was its discovery of the existence of a primitive matriarchal gens before the patriarchal organization of more civilized peoples, thus

allowing Engels to denaturalize the family as the changing product of historical processes. The overthrow of ancient mother right was the world historical basis for the subjugation of women. Monogamy was based not on nature but changing economic conditions, from subsistence to surplus economies and the concomitant rise of private property and inheritance, slavery and class. Within the monogamous family the economic supremacy of the husband meant that "he is the bourgeois and the wife represented the proletariat" (Engels 105). His picture of modern monogamy is incomplete without a consideration of the prostitution and adultery that accompany it.

Adams' examples of primitive female rights, taken from the *Odyssey* and the *Njalsaga*, are odd because what they seem to demonstrate above all is female irresponsibility, antisociality and a will to disorder. From the perspective of Telemachus, who sees his inheritance being eaten away by her suitors, Penelope is an irritatingly willful woman, whose refusal to choose a new husband or return to her father's house remains mystifyingly unmotivated. She has no sympathy for her son's plight or regard for the advice of her father and brothers, let alone the wishes of her suitors. When Engels looks at the *Odyssey*, he notes the way that Telemachus is able to silence his mother. Following Morgan, he sees a degraded status for women even in the heroic age. The presence of concubines erodes the respect once given the wife and mother, who becomes the chief servant over slaves where once the household had been her own. Adams' Hallgerda from the *Njalsaga* is even more willful than Penelope, exhibiting a greater agency than the right of refusal. Angered when her father makes a "bargain" for her hand without consulting her, she has her first husband murdered; when her second and third husbands slap her for her evil temper, she has the second killed and refuses to save the

third with strands of her long yellow hair for his bow. Thus she accumulates their estates while her father is forced to pay blood money in compensation for their deaths. There is an echo of this anarchic female power in *Esther* in the person of the estranged wife of the artist Wharton; her sudden arrival with its threat of mischief ends the "ecclesiastical idyll" of church painting among friends. The grand ruin of "a Medea, a Clytemnestra, a Semiramis" in appearance, her fury turns out to be merely "second rate theatrics," down to the stage dagger we are told she pulls on Wharton and herself. This wild woman is contained by the law: the police intimidate her, and lawyers buy her off, but she retains an imaginative power over the artist.

Most immediately instructive for Adams' listeners was his account of ancient Rome. When a reaction to the early extreme of patriarchal power led to an opposite extreme of female independence, the result was a "ruined family system and a debauched morality." Founded as it was upon "the familiar facts that the most powerful instincts in man are his affections and his love of property…that no other institution can be raised on the same or equally strong foundations;… the family is the strongest and healthiest of all human fabrics" (360). Adams' historical conservatism here, asserting that "Future history can hardly produce any new experience which has not its experience in the past. If modern society is destined to move at all, it can only move on the same lines which have already and repeatedly been followed out to their conclusions," contrasts with Morgan's position that the family has evolved through five forms already. "It is at least supposable that it is capable of further improvement until the equality of the sexes is attained," if the sixth form remains a matter of supposition at present (Morgan 492). From this Engels envisions the liberation of women as they enter into public forms of production and the

family is the economic unit no longer. Adams' conservative sense of history on this point seems to belie the claims of his own *History* about the exceptional success of American democracy, which the past could not have predicted. But Rome has already taken female independence to its "logical extreme," with pernicious social effects (360).[168] Presumably as a precaution against the propagation of American Messalinas, one Boston newspaper published the account of Adams' lecture directly beneath a report of a speech by Susan B. Anthony calling for women's suffrage.[169]

The most provocative element of Adams' lecture was its assertion that the Church had been responsible for degradation in women's position, considering their obedience more important than their protection, and fostering their dependence within the "petty absolutisms" of family, state and church. The comparison of the place of the Virgin in Christianity with the Egyptian conception of the trinity Osiris-Isis-Horus is implicit here but a subject to which he will return in *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres*. In place of "the proud, self-confident, vindictive woman" of a more heroic time, the Church offered Griselda as a model, "submissive to every torture her husband could invent, but more submissive to the Church than to her husband" (360). Not only does Adams' position contradict the claims of Christianity but it complicates the claims of evolutionist historians like John Fiske, who concluded that mankind was undergoing advances in moral evolution at least as significant as its earlier physical development.[170] Change may be constant and accelerating, but Adams' skepticism about the nature and direction of that change are a large part of his historical dilemma. After the suicide of his wife and his increasing alienation from contemporary models of masculine success, (which is beyond the scope of this chapter), Adams came to favorably re-evaluate female powers and prefer

the company of women, but he never seems to have questioned his initial determination as to what those powers might be, their aspects of irrationality and non-conformity, for example.[171] His late work pays less attention to gender as a socially constituted system and more to the intrinsic virtues of the eternal Woman. Timeless nature became a refuge, when he felt the need for a temporary escape.

The population of Adams' novels displays a striking absence of generativity. John Carlos Rowe describes Madeleine Lee's search for power "as an archetypal tale of America in search of its own father, its own energy" (1976:56).There are lost fathers in the novels; the trip to Mt. Vernon in *Democracy*, the death of Esther's father and her insistence that the voice of the falls at Niagara is male are indications of this. But in the context of absent reproductive power, the dearth of mothers is at least as significant. [172]Catherine Brooke is an orphan whose mother died when she was young. Esther Dudley has been mistress of her father's household ever since she was ten and her mother died. She tells stories in words and pictures to sick and dying children in the Children's Hospital; it is suggestive that Stephen Hazard, his interest in Esther already piqued by the comments of his friends, begins to fall in love when he observes her before the hearth in this quasi-maternal artistic role.[173] Her formidable aunt, Mrs. Murray, has no children, nor thankfully does the artist, Wharton, given the character of his wife. Madeleine Lee is a widow whose only child died suddenly, soon after the death of her husband; she is the guardian of her younger sister, Sybil. Only Mrs. Baker, the partner of her late husband Sam in the lobbying business, is shown with her ill-behaved daughter—apparently mediocrity and venality will people the continent.

In the novels the American woman is offered as a superior type, a type of the future in that she is accustomed to and exercises a greater freedom than the women of Europe. Esther is described by Wharton, the artist with whom she has studied, as an emblem of present day American womanhood. She is "one of the most marked American types I know" but he hesitates to assess its worth because "I never yet met any man who could tell me whether American types are going to supplant the old ones, or whether they are apt to come to nothing for want of ideas" (E199) which sounds a great deal like Adams' own ambivalence about the direction of American development. *Democracy* and *Esther* have been read as the same story: a woman in search of a vocation becomes entranced by a man who embodies power, either political or religious, but her scruples intervene, scruples that demonstrate both self-respect and self-abasement, and in a final confrontation she refuses to submit. Along the way she asks simple if vital questions like "Is America right or wrong?" or "Is religion true?" [174] For my purposes, looking at Adams' work as a series of literary experiments, it is more important to look at the two novels in sequence than to collapse their differ

Political Aspirations

Morris Speare, in his 1924 study, *The Political Novel*, describes *Democracy* as "the first true political novel written in America," a pioneering work in American literature equivalent in merit to Disraeli's novels in England and superior to some of them.[175] Mrs. Humphry Ward, too, considered *Democracy* to have a significance like Disraeli's work that transcended its own nationality: if Disraeli's works have greater historical importance, Adams' novel has lasting literary merit. While Trollope's

parliamentary novels focus on an institution that Englishmen find "deeply interesting," she is not so sure that Frenchmen, for example, would appreciate its "mysterious charm"(79). Speare makes claims for the political novel that seem too expansive, as a separate genre, and yet too narrow, in treating a specific inside milieu of politics never penetrated before Disraeli. A 1901 essay decrying the scarcity of the political novel subdivides the category between "the novels pure and simple, which pursue the proper end of fiction" and those like Disraeli's (and I would add Adams') which "although not limited to a single extraneous purpose, like the books one calls almost technically 'novels with a purpose,' have yet other objects in view than the telling of a story" (138).[176] Today when critics are more interested in uncovering the political unconscious of the novel *per se*, the claims of the political novel seem too limited in their conceptualization of the dynamics of power, but there were self-consciously political novels in the 1870s in the United States.[177]

In 1874 a reviewer in *The Literary World*, apparently appalled by the recent revelations of the Credit Mobilier scandal and the atmosphere of political corruption in general, called for an American political novel, "a photographic grouping of these evils, in which their naked hideousness can be seen in joint deformity," to arouse the public instinct to reform. A book which "applies the lash to faults and follies in which the great public has no opportunity of sharing, and consequently regards with uncompromising disapproval, is sure to be widely read, and not less sure to do good." As Adams' political journalism had asserted, the public could not be convinced by "dry reasoning" but needed an address to its feelings, for which "the novel is the most efficient vehicle" (168). The reviewer imagined its proper subject to be the career of a young Congressman—and was

gratified a few months later to see the publication of John De Forest's novel *Honest John Vane*, about a new congressman's slide into corruption, in the *Atlantic Monthly*.

Honest John Vane is a broadly-sketched version of *Pilgrim's Progress* in reverse. The eponymous hero may lose his soul to Mammon for the sake of stock in the great Subfluvial Tunnel project, but he retains his seat in Congress and acquires the additional sources of income so ardently desired by his wife Olympia in her dream of conquering Washington society. A year later in *Frank Leslie's Chimney Corner*, De Forest serialized *Playing the Mischief*, a novel about a young widow, Mrs. Josephine Murray, who goes to Washington to recoup her fortunes, lobbying Congress for restitution on behalf of a family barn torched during the War of 1812. The application of wit, charm, and beauty unbounded by scruple wins her an appropriation of a hundred thousand dollars and two Congressmen as fiancés, both of whom she sheds in victory. As the novel ends, she enters the house of the financier Simeon Allchin, and a level of iniquity to which, the narrator assures us, she, and by implication Congress, is not equal; we can assume a certain justice in that the fleecer of the public treasury will herself be fleeced.

In 1873, Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner published *The Gilded Age*, about "a time when all young men of [t]his age caught the fever of speculation, and expected to get on in the world by the omission of some of the regular processes which have been appointed from of old" (358). Covering a broad social and geographical field, among its female characters *The Gilded Age* includes Laura Hawkins, who is a successful lobbyist on behalf of the Knobs University Bill, appropriating three million dollars to build an industrial training school for freed blacks on family-owned wasteland in East Tennessee—successful at least until she murders the man who had robbed her of

her youthful virtue in a sham marriage, and her mentor, Senator Dilworthy, is so imprudent as to bribe a political rival personally during an election.

These three novels are grounded in the sordid details of political deal-making in a way that *Democracy* and its high-minded heroine are not. Like Tancred, Marquess of Montacute, the protagonist of Disraeli's *Tancred, or the New Crusade* (1847), a novel that "considerably amused" Adams in 1878, Adam's heroine, Madeleine Lee, is searching for "first principles," and she begins her search at the top.[178] For both protagonists participation in politics is a moral dilemma. Lord Montacute expresses an exalted spiritual yearning in rejecting the political position assured him as the heir to a dukedom; principle has turned to expediency in political, religious and social circles. His desire is to visit the Holy Sepulcher in the footsteps of his Crusader namesake, "to restore and renovate our communications with the most High" and ask: "What is DUTY and what is FAITH? What ought I to DO and what ought I to BELIEVE?"(55). Tancred's eventual encounter with "the angel of Arabia" is anticlimactic: the supernatural messenger merely confirms that Europe's discontent and despair can only be solved by a return to eternal Arabian principles and bids him "Announce the sublime and solacing doctrine of theocratic equality" (291). Tancred and the novel remain in the East where his aim "to penetrate the great Asian mystery" becomes speculation about the incorporation of divergent peoples into an empire through "a great religious truth" that would "revivify" Asia and "act upon" Europe (303). The novel's emphasis on the power of faith rather than intrigue, the great idea rather than the great man, (although for Disraeli the great idea seems to require its prophet), would be congenial to the Adams who searches in his history for the articulation of the American ideal. Adams' enjoyment of

the novel in 1878 is linked to his amused, supposedly disinterested observations on the Disraeli government's success at the Congress of Berlin, making peace between Russia and Turkey, winning control of the Suez Canal and occupying Cyprus.[179]

As a novelist Adams is an instructive figure in part because of his unusually sensitive and self-conscious individual perspective, in part because he offers a representative point of view of a somewhat beleaguered elite, who were queasy about engaging in the compromises necessary to participate in the political system. Adams has often been criticized for his fastidiousness in refusing to engage in the rough-and-tumble of party politics.[180] But the reviewers of political novels themselves embody the attitudes of the educated classes towards the contamination of involvement in party politics, even to their fictional representation. Henry James in reviewing *Honest John Vane* was willing to accept its sacrifice of subtlety in service of a good cause, "the important thing with tracts is that they be printed in big letters and be adapted for a plain man's comprehension," but he objects to "a penetrating aroma of what in plain English one must call vulgarity"(67). [181] For respectable American readers politics was not so much a milieu as a problem.

De Forest's narrator does separate himself from the world he is describing. His classical allusions reveal the fund of cultural capital he shares with his readers, if not his subjects, and his comments about generals turned politicians indicate his own authority as a former Union officer. James doesn't doubt that De Forest intended to repel his reader, who "may be excused for wondering whether, if this were a logical symbol of American civilization, it would not be well to let the phenomenon be submerged in the tide of corruption" (67).[182] The *Atlantic* reviewer of *Playing the Mischief*, George Parsons

Lathrop, found much to enjoy in the author's humorous exaggeration but fears the influence of his debased subject matter:

> he may have exposed himself to what must long remain a serious danger for the American novelist, when dealing with the vulgar phases of society. These phases cover such a wide area, and there is something so shameless, defiant, and unpicturesque about them, that they must be treated cautiously,—in glimpses only; or, if broadly exhibited, they should be accompanied by redress in the form of pictures of something better. (239)

This exposure to vulgarity is presented as an aesthetic problem which "probably" has a moral dimension as well. As for James' reaction to *Playing the Mischief*, he denied feeling "the slightest interest" in its protagonist, "a lying, thievish, and totally heartless jade, without the slightest vestige of a moral nature"(67). Certainly Josephine Murray lacks the kind of interiority worthy of the heroine of a James novel. De Forest presents his protagonist as a lady, if by the end of the novel she no longer receives invitations from the incorruptible permanent elite of Washington. Not as intellectually sophisticated as Madeleine Lee, who defends her reading of Darwin to Ratcliffe, Josie Murray is not quite sure what the controversy over Darwin entails. But Mrs. Murray has read her Trollope. When she inquires about the American equivalent of Plantagenet Palliser, the response of a Congressional notable unwilling to admit his ignorance complicates the plot while it signals De Forest's own literary indebtedness.

In 1887 H. H. Boyesen lamented the dearth of American political novels and worse, the American novelist's complete avoidance of serious topics like politics. (He considered *Democracy* a "distorting and malevolent satire" rather than a novel). Gender, not the indifference and distaste of the educated classes, was to blame for this lack. Boyesen located female power in America in its stranglehold on cultural production. The final arbiter of the American novel was that "Iron Madonna who strangles in her fond

embrace the American novelist; the Moloch upon whose altar he sacrifices, willingly or unwillingly, his chance of greatness" (619).[183] Boyesen takes the measure of American taste and finds intellectual attainment can achieve no level higher than the trivialities that appeal to the young girl who is the main consumer of novels and the magazines that serialize them.

The anonymous and independently wealthy Adams had no reputation to lose in writing his novels or fortune to win, yet he chose to write heroines. If he was attempting a female impersonation he seems to have succeeded. The *International Review* complimented the unknown author's knowledge of "the society both of fashion and politics" (209).The *Blackwood*'s reviewer may well be pointing to Marian Adams as the author who was "said to be an American lady closely connected with diplomatic circles, and in a position to know the "manners and habits" of the official world (578). *Scribner's* averred that "The author's cleverness is manifested in that charming colloquial and easy style which, with us, in conversation and books, is the woman, and by the power of rendering the usual 'society' novelist's lay figures interesting and pleasant" (474). An 1883 *Atlantic* article on "Social Washington" classified *Democracy* with two novels by women, Frances Hodgson Burnett's *Through One Administration* and Madeline Vinson Dahlgren's *A Washington Winter,* as works that unfairly characterized "the average woman of society" as ignorant and ill-bred and political life as having a degrading effect on individual and collective morality. Only the author of *Democracy* "has shown any familiarity with the customs of the best side of Washington; and even he (or she) has misrepresented or misunderstood the people whom that most deceptive of books assumes to portray" (820).[184]

Doubtless Adams enjoyed himself portraying the feminine world in such passages as the creation of a ball dress for Sybil Ross, Madeleine Lee's sister. Monsieur Worth, "the great genius of the nineteenth century," spends a sleepless night trying to conceive a gown that might fulfill the demand of "the reigning favorite of the King of Dahomey" that it "should annihilate and utterly destroy with jealousy and despair the hearts of her seventy-five rivals," until he opens the casement and beholds his inspiration:

> An imperious order brought to his private room every silk, satin, and gauze within the range of pale pink, pale crocus, pale green, silver and azure. Then came chromatic scales of color; combinations meant to vulgarize the rainbow; sinfonies and fugues; the twittering of birds and the great peace of dewy nature; maidenhood in her awakening innocence: "The Dawn in June." The Master rested content. (D144)

A week later Sybil writes him asking for an "original" dress "unlike any other sent to America" and with a glance at the map "and a generosity peculiar to great souls," Worth sends her a copy of his great creation (144-45). In Adams' quest to gauge the level of civilization in America, the American taste in dress, at least, seems to have evolved into a higher form. If the dress itself is described as a "Deity" and Sybil wearing it becomes "Hebe Anadyomene" does this mean that democracy has in fact produced "a higher variety of the human race, as Adams' *History* claims it must? The indication that the cult of genius has now devolved on the dressmaker provokes the suspicion that it may be at the expense of other less applied forms of artistic expression, perhaps the visual equivalent of Boyesen's complaint of trivialization. Even without machine reproduction, the singularity and autonomy of the art object has been compromised. Adams can afford to satirize the effort, expense and "genius" that go to maintain the American woman in her cultivatedly natural state, the "vulgarization of the rainbow" that asserts a delicacy of tone finer than the rainbow but leaves an aftereffect of vulgarity in its economy of excess

and intellectual pretension.[185] Adams seems to be making Veblen's connection between the similar interests of the leisure classes and the elite of the "upper barbarism" before the fact.[186] He manages to satirize and universalize female vanity and social ambition while touching on the unsettling mimicry of a Dahomean king, now contained within a global system of luxury commodities. [187]The discursiveness of this passage has an analogue in the narrator's interest in the pleasures of the table in *Tancred*, which judged by its opening chapter might be a novel about the caterer as underappreciated artist.

Another political novel much closer to Adams, personally, which also produced a public sensation, was *The Breadwinners*, published anonymously by Adams' good friend, John Hay. An attack on nefarious labor agitators like its villain, Ananias Offit, who inspires discontent among simple workmen, it also includes an appeal for respectable people to get involved in politics, as Hay himself was involved despite the compromises he had to make. The most memorable character, Maud Matchin, an ambitious carpenter's daughter whose strategic declaration of love to the wealthy hero, Captain Arthur Farnham, wins a kiss but not the hoped-for offer of marriage, is duly chastened by the consequences of association with a criminal labor organizer into a suitable marriage with her father's former apprentice.[188] Vernon Parrington cites *The Breadwinners* for its historical significance as "the first recognition on the part of literature that a class struggle impended in America" while finding its politics of "property-morality" appalling. Parrington criticized *Democracy* as well, in part because of its heroine. The idea of penetrating "the dark places of political jobbery through the eyes of a society woman" is "sufficiently absurd," but particularly because "the economic sources of political corruption are ignored and the evils are traced to the principle of democracy."[189]

For Parrington, Adams' interest in society and Hay's interest in social climbing deflected them from an investigation into the true locus of power. Still, Adams was hardly unaware of the power of money—his early journalism had warned against the corporation as an ungovernable "empire" within the nation.[190] Washington was not a center of commerce and industry, which was probably part of its appeal for Adams. The "power" that attracts Adams' heroine to Washington is presumably the political power of the mass; it seems an oddly vague and mechanistic entity, difficult for him to conceptualize in either history or novel. In the *History* Adams' conception of American character combined the acquisitive with the speculative, but it was the speculative tendency that sparked his inquiry.

The Breadwinners is a novel that never leaves its readers wondering what to think, whether the subject is the sanctity of property or Captain Farnham's taste in interior design. Its melodramatic portraits of greasy villains and its flower-like heroine have no hint of satire, so it is not surprising that Henry James despised the novel for an undeserved success. Friendship seems to have outweighed judgment in the praise of Henry Adams and William Dean Howells, who were privy to the secret of authorship. Adams wrote to Hay, disingenuously, praising not the novel's politics but its depiction of gender:

> As a work of art, I should not hesitate to put the "Breadwinners" so far as the story has gone, quite at the head of our Howell's-and-Jame's [sic] epoch for certain technical qualities…It also has one curious and surprising quality, least to be expected from an unknown western writer. Howells cannot deal with gentlemen or ladies; he always slips up. James knows almost nothing of women but the mere outside; he never had a wife. This new writer not only knows women, but knows ladies; the rarest of literary gifts…Under ordinary circumstances, there might be a doubt as to the sex of the writer, but here none is possible, for he also knows men and even gentlemen. (L2:513)

The shared secret of public authorship and the private circulation of letters and Adams' subsequent unpublished works were bonds linking the Five of Hearts, as they called themselves: Marian and Henry Adams, Clara and John Hay, who was then working as an Assistant Secretary of State and Clarence King, the Director of the U.S. Geological Society.[191]

The world of *Democracy* is very much circumscribed by the perspective of the Five of Hearts. It is a novel of manners as a progress report on the state of the American polity, a quest for the sources of power in the absence of political ideas, and a test of reform principles endangered by the amoral attraction of that power. As a political novel, *Democracy* seeks an experience of politics from which it ultimately recoils in disgust and disappointment. Its protagonist, Madeleine Lee, is a wealthy and cultured widow of thirty who, having lost her only child, seeks a purposeful life. She has tried a number of expedients: "she had read philosophy in the original German"; she had discussed Herbert Spencer "with a very literary-transcendental commission merchant"; she "plunged into philanthropy, visited prisons, inspected hospitals, read the literature of pauperism and crime, saturated herself with the statistics of vice until her mind nearly lost sight of virtue" (D3). New York and the accumulation of money don't interest her. Boston and the fostering of education have had no effect that she can see. Only Washington D.C. and the exercise of political power excite her interest, particularly in the person of the wily but unscrupulous Senator Silas P. Ratcliffe. Ratcliffe's intent to make Mrs. Lee his future first lady is deployed against the determination of the noble John Carrington, also in love with Lee, and his ally Sybil Ross, half in love with Carrington, to prevent him. When duty and Ratcliffe's machinations remove Carrington from the scene, Sybil intervenes to

prevent an engagement, supplying a letter from Carrington with confidential information from a dead client, the lobbyist Sam Baker, concerning a bribe paid to Ratcliffe.

Her disillusionment both personal and institutional, Lee takes flight: "I want to go to Egypt," said Madeleine, still smiling faintly; "democracy has shaken my nerves to pieces. Oh, what rest it would be to live in the Great Pyramid and look out for ever at the polar star" (D182). Her flight upward and away has an analogy to Adams' own career. As Carolyn Porter describes it, each time he was forced to "retreat," he became more a political observer and less a participant: "His sole consolation was that from the vantage point of even higher ground, the participants in the struggle he watched seemed to diminish in size and importance (178).[192] A final letter from Sybil to Carrington suggests a happy prospect for the romantic reader—in an insert she encourages Carrington to "try again" when she and her sister return to America, although perhaps she speaks more to her own inclinations. The reader more interested in the political plot may note the final words of the novel in which Ratcliffe's blindness to his moral deficiency is generalized. Madeleine's postscript is, "The bitterest part of all this horrid story is that nine out of ten of our countrymen would say I had made a mistake" (D184). A national romance of Eastern culture and Western energy is denied; indeed the West's crudity threatens to swamp civilization, such as it is.

Mrs. Lee's catalog of failed occupations might be taken as a sign of her lack of application if not of her seriousness, but this pattern of aborted experiment anticipates *The Education of Henry Adams* as well.[193] What Adams in the latter book describes as "failures" are anticipations of impasse, rejections or renunciations of projects projected as failures. As Madeleine Lee[194] says of philanthropy, "This path, too, seemed to lead

nowhere." Dennis Donoghue characterizes Adams' mind as having a particular "Socratic" turn leading to irony, a "determination that experience shouldn't take him by surprise." Adams' mind "trusted itself only for prediction and for setting the terms upon which experience would be received" (197). It "needed to discover patterns, types, and sequences before it could enjoy their constituents" (198).[195] An author who mistrusts the insecurity of exploration in a determination not to be surprised by experience is not best suited to writing novels. As R. P. Blackmur describes Adams' imagination, "Adams' set of intellectual instruments more or less *predicted* what he would discover" (316).[196] History became valuable to Adams in proportion to its power of prognostication. He never gave up on the idea of a scientific history, despite the inadequacies of present practice as he saw it, in hope of discovering a model that could diagnose social tendencies, if not the underlying patterns of society itself.

Mrs. Lee's "restlessness, discontent, ambition,--call it what you will" lead her to "the great American mystery of democracy and government," although her purpose is somewhat obscured. Is she merely content to "see with her own eyes the action of primary forces; to touch with her own hand the massive machinery of society; to measure with her own mind the capacity of the motive power," or is there a reluctance to admit a further ambition, to influence if not exercise power herself?

> What she wished to see, she thought, was the clash of interests, the interests of forty millions of people and a whole continent centering at Washington; guided, restrained or controlled, or unrestrained and uncontrollable, by men of ordinary mould; the tremendous forces of government, and the machinery of society, at work. What she wanted, was POWER. (D8)

Government is the only force specifically mentioned; its power is apparently still "tremendous" if exercised by ordinary men whose styles of leadership may be guiding,

restraining or controlling popular energy. Machinery exists to be used. Public and private spheres collapse in the ambiguity of "wanted" as both absence and desire, discontent and ambition. Is the power wanted to control or to be controlled? Gender complicates this expression since the form that female ambition should and does take is not so clear. The narrator asserts the "woman's natural tendency towards asceticism, self-extinction, self abnegation" in finding a cause or person to whose service she may sacrifice herself, although elsewhere the narrative implies that the language of sacrifice is a delusion masking a desire for a more worldly fulfillment.[197] Nor is feminine self-sacrifice so far removed from a masculine sense of duty in the person of Lee's cousin by marriage, the upright Virginian John Carrington.[198] Unlike Carrington, who felt an obligation to his state to join the confederacy against his own inclinations, and after the disaster of the war is obliged to support his impoverished mother and sisters, Madeleine lacks an object of devotion other than her younger sister, now twenty-four. The possibility of agency in this passage, of guiding social power, is eventually superseded by a more naturalistic worldview, in which the greatest man is only an "engineer" capable of managing the machinery. Power circulates in the absence of authority.[199]

Only Washington, D.C. will satisfy Mrs. Lee's national frame of reference. Daughter of a "famous" clergyman, Philadelphian by birth (for Adams Pennsylvanians are the truest democrats), she married a Virginian who came to New York to earn his fortune.[200] Years of European travel have confirmed Mrs. Lee in her nationalism: "she frankly avowed that she was American to the tips of her fingers." Having "exhausted" Europe, she is determined "to get all that American life had to offer, good or bad, and to drink it down to the dregs, fully determined that whatever there was in it she would have,

and that whatever could be made out of it she would manufacture"(4-5). With her native partisanship and her accumulated cultural and economic capital, perhaps Madeleine Lee will act as leaven to move the national level of aesthetic and moral cultivation a notch higher. Along with her sister, Sybil Ross, who counterposes will, conventional belief and practicality to Madeleine's unconventional doubt, artistic tendencies and self-analysis, she rents a house in Lafayette Square.[201]

Mrs. Lee's salon attracts diplomats like the British Minister, Lord Skye, Baron Jacobi, an ancient Voltairean reprobate who represents Bulgaria, as well as aristocratic young Russian and Italian attaches. It also offers the possibility for Adams to satirize American types, like the Hon. C. C. French of Connecticut, the educated gentleman in politics, who "had reform principles and an unfortunately conceited manner; he was rather wealthy, rather clever, rather well-educated, rather honest, and rather vulgar"(22). Hartbeest Schneidekoupon is the wealthy amateur advocating his own ideas on currency reform and protectionism, who is fond of 'turning rapid intellectual somersaults" to display his manifold occupations from painting to publishing to sport. Nathan Gore, New England poet and historian, is ambitious to regain his former post as Minister to Spain. Their neighbor, Victoria Dare, is a California heiress who outdoes Daisy Miller in being consciously unconventional.[202] John Carrington, Lee's devoted cousin and lawyer, is a gentleman of the old Virginia school who "never talked or seemed to think of himself"—Madeleine's idea of "George Washington at thirty," but a rather pallid figure of virtue, "Washington gone to seed" to quote one reviewer (13). [203]

It is not clear whether Mrs. Lee is more interested in the machinery of government or the "human interest" of the men who run it. A democratic leveling in

society makes personal distinction difficult, but she longs to find greatness: "You [Bostonians] are just like the rest of us. You grow six inches high, and then you stop. Why will not somebody grow to be a tree and cast a shadow?" (D6). During her sojourn in Washington, from December to May during a change of administration, she decides to conduct a clinical study of the preeminent politician of his time, the "Prairie Giant," Silas P. Ratcliffe, of Paeonia, Illinois, the one person "of ordinary mould" who doesn't quite fit her salon in terms of culture, but who casts a shadow in the city:

> To her eyes he was the high priest of American politics; he was charged with the meaning of the mysteries, the clue to political hieroglyphics. Through him she hoped to sound the depths of statesmanship and to bring up from its oozy bed the pearl of which she was in search; the mysterious gem which must lie hidden somewhere in politics. She wanted to understand this man; to turn him inside out; to experiment on him and use him like the physiologists use frogs and kittens. If there was good or bad in him, she meant to find its meaning. (D20)

The metaphysics of the pearl of great price coexists oddly with the natural science "experiment" Lee claims to be conducting on Ratcliffe, her specimen.[204] The naturalist, whether scientific or literary, claims the objective observation and recording of types as her goal. Similarly, Adams claimed that in the age of democracy there were no individuals in history, only types, (which perhaps could serve as an argument for the reduced scale of the novel as well). The dignity of the hierophant guarding ancient secrets of life and afterlife might accord with that of a statesman, but what is implied by the "oozy bed"? Are the roots of statesmanship located in the political muck rather than the disinterested principles for which the Adams family prided itself? Or are we to take this in evolutionary terms, out of the democratic ooze will arise eventually the evolved democratic statesman? In either case the pearl implies a judgment and estimation of worth that is not part of the ethically neutral dissection. The description of what Mrs. Lee

is doing keeps reducing itself to the separate and exclusionary discourses of science and morality. Henry Adams, in the guise of scientific historian in his *History*, displays a similar confusion, hunting for the American ideals which he can find nowhere articulated, but whose effects he feels (but cannot measure) in the aspirations of the poor and working classes of Europe.

Senator Ratcliffe is a prime specimen because he narrowly lost the republican nomination for president when his enemies united to choose the unknown "Hoosier Quarryman," "Old Granite," or "Old Granny" to his detractors.[205] Ratcliffe's plots to dominate this one-term governor of Indiana begin even before the President-elect arrives in Washington, though he presents himself to Mrs. Lee as "a victim and a patriot," forced to become Secretary of the Treasury for his political survival, and to maintain his own place by satisfying clamoring office-seekers expecting their rewards (D97). Having made a study of the Senate, Mrs. Lee knows that no flattery is too great for its members: comparing Ratcliffe to Daniel Webster, she reels him in like "a two hundred pound salmon." This is a passage that disturbed reviewers as an unworthy or even unbelievable lapse by a woman of such taste and probity as Mrs. Lee. It sets her up for Ratcliffe's final accusation that she has been a "coquette," but in their double game Ratcliffe entangles Lee as he ensnares the new President. [206]

Ratcliffe's attractiveness to Lee is based in part on his seeming candor about the operation of practical politics: "If virtue won't answer our purpose we must use vice, or our opponents will put us out of office" (D71). He openly admits that as Governor of Illinois during the war he tampered with the election returns, ensuring the re-election of Lincoln "and with it probably the Union" (D54). As the narrator opines, "Women cannot

be expected to go behind the motives of that patriot who saves his country and his election in times of revolution" (D55). Ratcliffe is self-justifying in denying the possibility of political reform by administrative or legislative means, yet he speaks to the questions asked by the *History*. If leaders can no longer guide the people by representing their highest qualities, if they simply magnify their typical qualities with greater energy and will, then the quality of the mass must be raised morally and intellectually. To Madeleine's question whether a "respectable" government is possible in a democracy, Ratcliffe's answer delivers Adams' analysis of the situation, if not his solution: "No representative government can long be much better or much worse than the society it represents. Purify society and you purify the government. But try to purify the government artificially and you only aggravate failure" (D37). Adams' elitist version of civil service reform was to remove the possibility of Congressional patronage by returning the power of appointment to the executive, rather than a bureaucratized civil service commission. His assumption, at least in the more sanguine days of his political journalism, was that a Constitutional imbalance tilting power in the direction of Congress, particularly the Senate, needed to be repaired to return to a state of equilibrium. Earl Klee sees *Democracy* as a "crucial" work in the development of Adams' political thought. While the earlier essays point to specific power concentrations as dangerous, in the novel "corruption seems to inhere in the system itself," threatening "a new metaphysic of power rejection" in Adams (255).

Ratcliffe's call to Madeleine to do her duty and help him "purify" politics is both a ploy to implicate her in his affairs and a fair commentary on her moralizing. Her dictum that he should act for "the good of the people" is not one she can easily apply to the

choices of day-to-day politics when Ratcliffe purports to present them to her for her counsel. There is a real divergence of values between Adams and the educated class who were willing to become Mugwumps, voting for the principle not the party, and the party regulars for whom loyalty was the highest virtue. In the final interview between Ratcliffe and Lee, after Carrington's letter has revealed his collusion in bribery, Ratcliffe's justification is party loyalty, the higher cause for the corruption Ratcliffe admits to and equates with loyalty to the nation. The reader is meant to understand that the party is merely the vehicle for multiple personal ambitions. The narrator offers a third version of the bribery story, as party hacks listening to Ratcliffe's narrative with professional appreciation would have construed a more accurate and personally implicating train of events. While Mrs. Lee's naïveté in believing Ratcliffe's version is noted and perhaps even approved by the narrator as an indication of the purity of her imagination, a political professional like Ratcliffe is perplexed that his latest explanation has not won her, as his earlier revelation of vote-stealing for the sake of the union had been convincing.

Ratcliffe's lack of moral discrimination entangled with his lack of cultural capital is presented as a failure of taste. He listens to the talk among Mrs. Lee and her friends, "assenting whenever he saw that she wished it. He wished he understood precisely what tones and half-tones, colours and harmonies, were" (D64). Ratcliffe conveys a dim aspiration towards the culture or perhaps cultural legitimacy a wife like Madeleine could provide. He seems to exemplify the national mind that "has no eyelids" as Lord Skye puts it (D64). (A British reviewer asserted that it was only the experience of Europe that awakened Americans to such distinctions as tone.). Lee's rejection of Ratcliffe in their final interview is accompanied by her realization that he is a "moral lunatic," who "talked

about virtue and vice as a man who is colour-blind talks about red and green; he did not see them as she saw them" (D174). Ratcliffe for his part "rightly judged that there must be some moral defect in his last remarks, although he could not see it" (D176). Adams might be offering two examples of the evolutionary stages of ethical development here, the barbarian paying lip service, at least, to his code of loyalty and the civilized woman to the discriminations of her "morality of taste" as Millicent Bell describes Esther Dudley's "ethical instinct more refined than the church" (106). Perhaps it is the morality of taste that would limit the subject matter of the novel, as the grounds on which Henry James criticized De Forest's works.

Mrs. Lee entertains Mrs. Sam Baker, the former lobbyist, once, before pronouncing her outside the circle of people she wishes to know: "The woman was showy, handsome in a coarse style, and perfectly presentable. Mrs. Lee had seen Duchesses as vulgar. She knew more about the practical working of government than Mrs. Lee could ever expect or hope to know. Why then draw back from this interesting lobbyist with such babyish repulsion?" (D104). Duchesses, of course, don't have to be models of propriety; their status is assured. It is the democratic American anxious about identifying the signs of status who has to develop the discriminations of taste. The temptation to learn about the great machine of power is nothing compared to the status anxiety of associating with such a woman. Perhaps it is the intimate knowledge of the engineers themselves, which she can imagine from Mrs. Baker's hints, that increases the "doubt and disgust" directed at the informant. Tellingly, Mrs. Baker is the one passenger who doesn't speak on the visit to Mount Vernon; Carrington uses her presence to send Ratcliffe a message.

Madeleine Lee's own sense of "tones" seems lacking when she asks such a simplistic question as whether America is "right or wrong," a child's wish for absolute certainty: "Is it not better to be a child and to cry for the moon and stars?" (D73). In offering his political creed the historian Nathan Gore, still maintaining his faith in Ratcliffe to secure him his embassy, evades the question of morality. But in his identification with the forces of history and the inevitable direction of change, he seems to speak for Adams:

> I believe in democracy. I accept it. I will faithfully serve and defend it. I believe in it because it appears to me the inevitable consequence of what has gone before it Democracy asserts the fact that the masses are now raised to a higher intelligence than formerly. All our civilization aims at this mark. We want to do what we can to help it. I myself want to see the result. I grant it is an experiment, but it is the only direction society can take that is worth its taking; the only conception of its duty large enough to satisfy its instincts; the only result that is worth an effort or a risk. Every other possible step is backward, and I do not care to repeat the past. I am glad to see society grapple with issues in which no one can afford to be neutral. (D40)

In writing his *History*, the only basis Adams could accept for American exceptionalism was the nature of American democracy as a great social experiment, an experiment in which as an Adams he took a proprietary interest. The acceptance of democracy came with a realization that its expansion of opportunity for the common man might limit the exceptional one. In 1877 upon moving to Washington, Adams wrote to his British friend, Charles Milnes Gaskell: "As I belong to the class of people who have great faith in this country and who believe that in another century it will be saying in its turn the last word in civilization, I enjoy the expectation of the coming day, and try to imagine that I am myself, with my fellow *gelehrte* here, the first faint rays of that great light which is to dazzle and set the world on fire hereafter" (L2:326). A democratic history as Adams conceived it was one of human types, not heroic individuals, of peace, not war, of social

movement so slow and broad it may look like, and the fear is that it may be, moral and mental inertia. Gore himself is unsuccessful in regaining his ministry because the simple Hoosier countryman in the White House takes a dislike to his sophistication and intellectual pretension, especially when there is an Indiana claimant for the office. The figure of Gore, based largely on the historian John Lathrop Motley (with perhaps a touch of James Russell Lowell), suffers Motley's fate. It was widely reported that President Grant ordered Motley removed because "he objected to the way he parted his hair in the middle." [207]

Freed from the external restraints of national conflict and the internal restraints of aristocracy, the United States in 1817, as Adams imagined it, was perhaps three hundred years in advance of Europe in the putatively unproblematic unfolding of democracy across the continent. Like Alexis de Tocqueville, the intellectual hero of his youth, Adams considered democracy the inevitable next stage of social and political development, if Tocqueville was not so sure about the value of the undiluted American model. Adams' concern was to be part of the movement towards the future, to be "true to his time," as Gore says, whatever his doubts about whether change was necessarily progress. Adams' 1869 essay on civil service reform, which Mrs. Humphry Ward cited in naming Adams her candidate as the author of *Democracy*, proclaimed the nobility of the task in educating and organizing public opinion in terms of the familial tradition: "To build by slow degrees this deep foundation of moral conviction, to erect upon it a comprehensive and solid structure of reform, and to bequeath the result to posterity as a work not inferior in quality to that of the Republic's founders, is an aim high enough to satisfy the ambition of one generation" (128). Ten years later the "vehemence" of the

reformer's "passion" has failed to shake "the sluggish self-complacency of the public mind," if the novel is any indication (128).

The novel stages encounters with monuments of the national past in a way that responds, before the fact, to the questions the author of the history will pose about democratic "interests, ideals and objects": at the White House, with the outgoing President and his wife performing as automata at a presidential reception; at Mount Vernon, with the iconic presence of George Washington refracted through the interests of the visitors; at Arlington, with Carrington's transmission of the living memory of the Civil War to Sybil; and the embassy ball, with the British-American relation represented as a social contest between two petulant female fields of force, a British princess and the wife of the president. [208] The White House had personal as well as national associations for Adams as the onetime home of his grandparents and great-grandparents. Democratically, Mrs. Lee and her escort arrive at the mansion on foot, walking across Lafayette Square to join the throng at the dispiriting spectacle of a Presidential reception:

> They took their places in the line of citizens and were at last able to enter the reception-room. There Madeleine found herself before two seemingly mechanical figures, which might be wood or wax, for any sign they showed of life. These two figures were the President and his wife; they stood stiff and awkward by the door, both their faces stripped of every sign of intelligence, while the right hands of both extended them selves to the column of visitors with the mechanical action of toy dolls. Mrs. Lee for a moment began to laugh, but the laugh died on her lips. To the President and his wife this was clearly no laughing matter. There they stood, automata, representatives of the society which streamed past them. (D44)

Madeleine's second reaction is shock. From the narrator's description of the scene, the unnamed President and his wife might seem to be mere instruments of the great machine of power that Madeleine sought in coming to Washington. Reduced to automata, as representatives of society they convey a democratic leveling in the mindlessness they

display. Their lack of intelligence personifies a general vacuity when it comes to pursuits beyond making money. As Tocqueville described American society, the majority enforces harmony with its will; it "surrounds, directs, and oppresses" the individual (643) The unnamed President and his wife are thus perhaps representative as the common embodiments of "the power of the mass over each individual mind" (Tocqueville 643). Certainly compared to Adams' picture of the United States in 1817, there are no indications of development.

But Mrs. Lee's explanation of her attitude is stranger than this. What she alone perceives is "this droll aping of monarchical forms" in what is considered a democratic institution. For all the others, "the deadly dullness of the show was as natural and as proper as ever to the courtiers of the Philips and the Charles seemed the ceremonies of the Escurial. To her it had the effect of a nightmare, or of an opium-eater's vision" (D45). Confirming her superior position in assessing the nature of the "slowly eddying dance of Democracy" [209] who else should join Madeleine in her position of observer than the British ambassador. Adams was well-aware the elaborate ritual of "monarchical forms" at the court of Queen Victoria when his father was ambassador. According to Samuels he was both fascinated and repelled by the "elaborate mummery of royal levees" at which he made "a very dashing appearance" in his court dress (100-01). Mrs. Lee as a woman of the world would be familiar with these forms as well. Her argument is not for republican simplicity; the scene seems all too plain, reduced to the common denominator. Mrs. Lee's republican righteousness seems to cover her mortification and shame that the thing is so poorly done. As a form of civic religion it is not worthy of a nation that Adams foresees aspiring to the rank of Great Britain and beyond. In the absence of any mediation by the

narrator, we are apparently meant to take her reactions as given. Mrs. Lee dissociates herself from her countrymen and aligns herself with the great power. Adams is too acute an observer to put a gloss on the scene, yet if suitable traditions are needed for the empire that is to come, who will invent them but the historian?

What this moment also seems to demonstrate is a desire for revenge against the recent inhabitants of the White House for the lost hopes of Adams and his friends, and by extension, the nation. Grant particularly was a disappointment for Adams. His military leadership failed to translate into political effectiveness, and early expectations of political reform under a Grant Presidency and positions of influence for his associates were dashed.[210]Adams' *History* downplays the talents of Andrew Jackson, the general who blocked his grandfather's chance at a second term as President and instituted the spoils system that made it unlikely that an Adams would ever return. But it expresses skepticism towards American hero worship in general: the people "breathed an atmosphere of peace and industry where heroism could seldom be displayed; and in unconscious protest against their own social conditions they adorned with imaginary qualities scores of supposed leaders, whose only merit was their faculty of reflecting a popular trait" (M:1334).

John De Forest's novel *Playing the Mischief* displays a certain hero worship in its account of a similar Presidential reception that introduces its protagonist, Mrs. Josephine Murray, to Washington society. The overwhelming impression is of an immense crush of the people. De Forest describes the movement of the crowd in military terms of phalanxes advancing and retreating, while individuals are pushing, kicking, trampling, tussling and scuffling. President Grant is at the center of the swirl but seems isolated

rather than involved: “There was a pathetic air of uncomplaining endurance in his otherwise expressionless face…It seemed to say that he hated these ceremonies of triumph, and that he had found the labors which had won them more supportable. Moreover the square-built man looked physically weary already, and almost painfully anxious to have his ovation end” (114). Grant manages to appear both the saintly man of sorrows and out of his depth. De Forest attributes the respect of the crowd to the general who saved the union, not the abstract office of President. If Grant seems uninvolved and even humbly displaced, better that than a suggestion of personal involvement in the corruption eddying around him. Grant nods and smiles but doesn’t speak to his fellow citizens. Mrs. Murray, “although her temples were fairly throbbing with awe” is determined to get a response. “Is not this almost as bad as a victory?’ she asks. ‘It is, madame; they are both great trials,’ answered the modest, war-worn man, breaking out in a hearty smile, so pleased was he at being understood” (115). Mrs. Murray has her personal victory before the multitudes draw her away. This crowd is not anonymous, either. While currents of humanity strand her elderly aunt and uncle, Murray intrepidly pushes through the crowd and gets to work making the connections she will need to win her claim. Then, with the initiative and impatience that will characterize her career, instead of waiting an hour to press her way to the door, she jumps ten feet from the window of the ladies’ dressing room into the arms of a chivalrous Congressman.

Adams posits the figure of George Washington as the reference point and origin to which successors like Grant must be compared and found wanting, but the evidence of the novel is that he cannot be a useful model. The steamer carrying travelers to Mount Vernon sends up a column of smoke, “as though it were a newly invented incense-burner

approaching the temple of the national deity" (D60). The Virginia countryside in February seems to offer the promise of spring, "as though all the ice and snow on earth, and all the hardness of heart, all the heresy and schism, all the works of the devil had yielded to the force of love and to the fresh warmth of innocent, lamb-like, confiding virtue" (D58). But in the city it marks the change of administration: "This is the moment when the two whited sepulchres at either end of the Avenue reek with the thick atmosphere of bargain and sale. The old is going; the new is coming" (D58). Senator Ratcliffe jumps aboard at the last moment in order to escape the office-seekers camped at his boarding house.

Washington's character is treated as a given; as the travelers discuss him they work variations on an image that perhaps seems too familiar for Adams to repeat. As a leader Washington is apparently sui generis; if Adams is measuring American development, there can only be a decline. The reader is offered six facets of a figure that don't cohere into a hexagon, let alone a hexahedron. Nor does the narrator provide either an external structure or an inner essence, leaving Washington curiously remote for all the intimate detail that is offered. Adams believes in the utility of history, but too much has changed for Washington to seem relevant to the present, to be "monumental" in the sense that Nietzsche uses the term, as a model for emulation and an inspiration to action. [211] None of the characterizations offered by the travelers is usable in this sense; of the two most favorable, Gore's and Carrington's, the levels are wrong: one is a catalogue of antique virtues, too abstract for any practical effect, the other is too ordinary, a collection of personal idiosyncrasies about money. Mount Vernon retains its aspect of repose; no angry ghost troubles the consciences of the deal-makers. The nebulous generality of

Washington's excellence is useful in suggesting an American unity that may break down upon further examination into regional and class interests, but it is useless as a model of behavior.

Washington instead becomes a reflection of the travelers' own values. Lord Dunbeg, the impecunious Irish peer who is Lord Skye's houseguest, finds Mount Vernon a typical Irish country house and identifies with Washington the homesick country squire. Victoria Dare disports herself by saying the provocative thing: "The truth is that General Washington was a raw-boned country farmer, very hard-featured, very awkward, very illiterate and very dull; very bad-tempered, very profane, and generally tipsy after dinner" (D63). Lord Skye finds Washington dull for liking no life but the bucolic: "He seems to have been greater in the character of a home-sick Virginia planter than as General or President" (D68). Gore half-seriously idolizes him: "To us he is Morality, Justice, Duty, Truth; half a dozen Roman gods with capital letters. He is austere, solitary, grand; he ought to be deified" (D68). Carrington, the insider, offers a series of anecdotes about his preoccupation with the petty details of money management, reweighing and recounting everything he bought, refusing to credit a tenant for four cents, insisting on paying the same amount for his servant's dinner as his own.

Ratcliffe evaluates Washington as a man of ordinary abilities whose reluctance to assume office "arose from his consciousness of inferior powers and his dread of responsibility," not characteristics Ratcliffe shares (D69). Judging by his own standards, "Washington was no politician at all, as we understand the word…He stood outside of politics. The thing couldn't be done today. The people don't like that sort of royal airs" (D71). Ratcliffe manages to make adherence to principle seem aristocratic affectation.

Private morality when imposed on public action becomes undemocratic—the message of a party loyalist. But the individual pursuit of principle without reference to party describes the Adams family business of statesmanship, or, for that matter the actions of the Mugwumps. Ratcliffe speaks directly to Mrs. Lee's project and the extent to which she is willing to get her hands dirty, if she intends to exercise rather than merely observe power: "If Washington were president now, he would have to learn our ways or lose his next election. Only fools and theorists imagine that our society can be handled with gloves or long poles" (D71). What Ratcliffe is describing here is not a decline in the model of leadership but a complete rupture with the model.

Mrs. Lee doesn't dispute Ratcliffe's description of current affairs, if she can't share his attitude; he claims "the West is a poor school for Reverence." Mrs. Lee asks herself bitterly, "Why was it that everything Washington touched he purified, even down to the associations of his house? And why is it that everything we touch seems soiled? Why do I feel unclean when I look at Mount Vernon?" (D73). It's not clear why Mrs. Lee should react with such bitterness, should take political corruption as such a personal affront. Irving Howe claimed that politics in the nineteenth century American novel "is seen in a far more intimate relation to personal experience than in the European political novel" (162). By personalizing everything, these works fail to do justice to politics in its own right, but "they could brilliantly observe how social and individual experience melt into one another so the deformations of one soon become the deformations of the other" (Howe 163). What is striking in *Democracy* compared to the novels by De Forest and Twain and Warner is the personal sense of loss that is displayed in Mrs. Lee's questioning as well as her own secular sense of sin.

The biggest difference between the journey to Mount Vernon recounted in *Democracy* and the boyhood journey Adams recounts in *The Education of Henry Adams* is that in 1860 the way to Mount Vernon is through the physical dirt and disordered roadbeds that signify the moral evil of slavery, rather than a steamer that emphasizes the beauty of the river and the national technological genius. Yet even then Washington remained untouchable: "George Washington was a primary, or, if Virginians liked it better, an ultimate relation, like the Pole Star, and amid the endless restless motion of every other visible point in space, he alone remained steady, in the mind of Henry Adams, to the end" (Edu 762-63). In that static ultimate relation Mount Vernon acquires something of the primordial repose and consolation of the pyramids and the polar star, to which Madeleine Lee flees at the end of the novel.

The Adams of 1906, looking backward, noted the moral contradiction in deducing Washington "from the sum of all wickedness" without necessarily repudiating the original sentiment. The connection Lee makes between Carrington and Washington benefits her cousin by seeming to remove him like his model from the contamination of slavery.[212] Trained in the old, presumably non-democratic Virginia school, Carrington joined the rebels out of duty rather than conviction. Like his cousin by marriage he has a sense of the tragedy of life, losing both brothers in the war, and most of the family income. Earl Harbert argues that it is in the defeated South that Adams hoped to find the values to regenerate the nation, but this seems overstated. Adams disappoints conventional expectations of an alliance between north and south, if Carrington and Sybil Ross form a temporary conspiracy against Ratcliffe. This relationship is cemented by their rides together, including a ride to Arlington. Here Adams' disappoints reader

expectations as well: his narrator adopts Carrington's gentlemanly reticence in summarizing his stories of wartime suffering and death, rather than unfolding the narrative itself as it moves Sybil. This is a mistake if Carrington's rectitude is to impress the reader over Ratcliffe's dynamism, but Adams may have felt unable or unwilling to tell such a story. Readers see the effects of a "clear view of Carrington, apart from the quiet exterior in which the man was hidden" on Sybil, but are likely to remain unmoved themselves (D125).

The Nation suspected the author of *Democracy* to be an Englishwoman long resident in Washington, not surprisingly perhaps given the satire of American political institutions and its positive portrayal of Lord Skye, the British Minister, as a congenial companion to the sisters. Even Lord Dunbeg, the impecunious Irishman bagged by the uninhibited California heiress, Victoria Dare, may be incoherent, but he has a good head and heart. The British Embassy ball is definitely the occasion for the "droll aping of monarchical forms" by democrats and the adoption of "royal," if not noticeably moral airs. The petulant willfulness of the visiting Grand Duchess, an English princess, "who would not speak to 'that woman' " the wife of Old Granny, is matched by the President's wife, a Hoosier moralist opposed to hard drink and décolletage who takes an instant dislike to Madeleine and her sister.[213] Again we are informed of Mrs. Lee's republican sympathies: "the last place in the room where any one who knew Mrs. Lee would have looked for her," the right hand of the Princess, is where she remains all evening and is immortalized in all the illustrated newspapers. The antipathy of the princess to the President's wife causes her "to brandish [Mrs. Lee], as though she were a charm against the evil eye" to keep her at a distance (147). On this occasion we see irrational female

social power, Britannia and America, staking out their territory on elevated platforms at opposite ends of the ballroom with the Grand Duke, Lord Skye, Lord Dunbeg and to some extent the President scurrying under their jealous eyes.

Mrs. Lee "was something more than republican—a little communistic at heart…She had no notion of admitting social superiority in anyone, President or Prince, and to be suddenly converted into a lady-in-waiting to a small German Grand-Duchess, was a terrible blow" (150). Would it have been a greater or lesser blow, to this republican who makes no distinctions, to serve the queen? It seems to be the ultimate democratic fantasy to be exalted to a position alongside, if slightly behind, royalty and yet remain blameless of any taint of social-climbing; in all innocence Mrs. Lee retains her egalitarian ideals, suffers the "boredom" of public preference and knows she is merely helping her friend, Lord Skye.[214] Not only does the Princess show her favor, but she insists that Mrs. Lee sit next to the President at dinner. Meanwhile, Sybil is awarded the deference due her beauty and "Dawn in June," and spends the night waltzing with the Grand Duke until the Princess frowns. Mrs. Lee's last public appearance in Washington ends in a triumph both social and personal as Ratcliffe offers his hand. Her decision to reject the senator and flee Washington may be an admission of her failure to reform politics by moral influence and taste, but seems ratified by Old World standards when Baron Jacobi, the old Voltairean skeptic, meets the disappointed and surly Ratcliffe on her doorstep and strikes him with his cane.

Objects and Interests

Looking at *Democracy* and *Esther* as sequential explorations of American ideals and values, *Esther* takes up the earlier novel's question of faith but transposes it to a religious context. After Madeleine Lee's first-hand observations of politics, the superiority of democracy is less a truth to be demonstrated than a faith to be asserted despite the evidence. If nothing else, that faith is a Pascalian wager towards the future and the inevitable result of historical forces. Mrs. Lee is presented as a woman whose personal history orients her towards the past. Esther Dudley is offered for examination by the artist Wharton as a distinctly American type, who as American may or may not be the prototype for humanity, a question that Wharton and Adams' *History* leave suspended. Esther Dudley is a twenty-six-year-old woman, the agnostic only child of a wealthy lawyer: she was "one of the best waltzers in town" until she gave it up for painting (E289). A second, twenty-year-old woman, Catherine Brooke, a daughter of the prairies abounding in health and beauty, arrives as the ward of Esther's aunt, Mrs. Murray, and the two women become friends. There are three other male characters of significance, all close friends: Stephen Hazard, an Episcopalian minister newly arrived in New York who embodies the discourse of religion; his friend and Esther's cousin, George Strong, professor of paleontology and spokesman for science; and Wharton, artist and Esther's teacher, who represents the discourse of art. This group engages in an "ecclesiastical idyll" of painting and talk during the time Esther works as Wharton's assistant, painting Catherine Brooke as Saint Cecilia for Hazard's new church. The women translate a poem by Petrarch significant to Wharton and Hazard; the men amuse themselves educating

Catherine, whose strict upbringing has never permitted her to read novels. (Strong's idea of heaven is "reading novels in church.")

Hazard's championship of Esther's work with Wharton and useful artistic suggestions bring Esther and the minister closer, while Wharton and Catherine are mutually attracted, but the arrival of Wharton's long-lost and trouble-making European wife puts an end to the idyll. Esther's father dies, leaving her bereft; Hazard comforts her and when he impulsively proposes marriage, she agrees. Almost immediately she begins to have doubts, not about her love for Hazard, but about being the wife of a minister. She and George discuss the subject; Hazard's congregation becomes restive as the engagement is suspected. Esther breaks the engagement and with Catherine, her aunt and uncle she flees to Niagara Falls, where Strong and Wharton join them. (The action takes place from October to February.) Hazard follows, but his final pleas for himself and the claims of religion are rejected. Impressed by her spirit, George proposes and is informed in the final words of the novel, "But George, I don't love you, I love him."

In terms of subject matter a useful reference might be made to two novels by Mrs. Humphry Ward. The highly successful if controversial *Robert Elsmere* (1888) sought a new understanding of Christianity shorn of its supernatural and superstitious aspects (for example, the *North American Review* of January 1898 devoted itself to a symposium on the novel which included an essay by William Gladstone). Elsmere is a clergyman beset by doubts after an encounter with the Higher Criticism; he resigns his position to set up a "New Brotherhood" to do social work in the city, despite a wife who holds to the old religion. *Helbeck of Bannisdale*(1898) recounts a romance between Alan Helbeck, the devout scion of an old Catholic family, who becomes engaged to Laura Fountain, the

agnostic daughter, now orphaned, of a free-thinking father. Unable to fulfill her promise to convert, Fountain kills herself instead, and Helbeck becomes a Jesuit.

Esther was to have an intense personal significance for Adams. Marian "Clover" Adams, whose free-thinking attitudes—"a veritable Voltaire in petticoats" to quote her friend, Henry James—and close relationship with her widowed father are mirrored in the title character, killed herself in December 1885, eight months after her father's death, by ingesting the potassium cyanide she used in her photography. Adams admitted Clarence King and John Hay into the secret of the novel's authorship after his wife's death, but the subject became too precious and painful for further circulation. He responded to Hay's reading of the novel with, "Now, let it die! To admit the public to it would be almost unendurable to me. I will not pretend the book is not precious to me, but its value has nothing to do with the public who could never understand that such a book might be written in one's heart's blood "(L3:34). The significance for Adams was, of course, intensified by personal emotions, but while *Democracy* takes a somewhat circumscribed look at politics considering the breadth of its denunciations, it has a general appeal to a public demoralized by the politics of the 1870s that can identify the types it describes. To read *Esther* as a roman à clef, though, is to identify a correspondence with the Five of Hearts and their intimates, as Millicent Bell describes them the "select companions" for whom the book "would be the merest topic-outline for a shared history" (104). [215]

If Madeleine Lee was a woman preoccupied with the claims and attachments of the past, Esther is presented not just as an American type but possibly a type of the future. As Wharton says, "If she belongs to any besides the present, it is to the next world which artists want to see, when paganism will come again and we can give a divinity to

every waterfall" (E200). Her cousin George Strong describes her as "the sternest little Pagan I know," as well as a Puritan (E196). The pagan of the future apparently practices an ascetic form that demands the moral stringency of Puritanism. The sharp description of Esther's physical appearance, "she has no very good points," compared to the tributes to Catherine's beauty, may have given Adams pause after his wife's death, but as Wharton describes her, appearance is not the source of her interest:

> I want to know what she can make of life. She gives one the idea of a lightly-sparred yacht in mid-ocean; unexpected; you ask yourself what the devil she is doing there. She sails gaily along, though there is no land in sight and plenty of rough weather coming. She never read a book, I believe, in her life. She tries to paint, but she is only a second-rate amateur and will never be anything more, though she has done one or two things which I give you my word I would like to have done myself. She picks up all she knows without an effort and knows nothing well, yet she seems to understand whatever is said. Her mind is as irregular as her face, and both have the same peculiarity. I notice that the lines of her eyebrows nose and mouth all end with a slight upward curve like a yacht's sails, which gives a kind of hopefulness and self-confidence to her expression. Mind and face have the same curves. (E200)

It is interesting that the extended appreciation of Esther comes from Wharton and not the narrator. Adams may claim that he "broke down" on reading *Portrait of a Lady*, unable to finish, but this passage, in its evocation of female potential and interest in the spectacle of its development, seems to echo Ralph Touchett's desire to set his cousin Isabel Archer free with the gift of an income to see what she makes of it (L2:448) [216] Rough weather comes much sooner for Esther than Isabel in the death of her father. The constraints of marriage are almost immediately visible to Esther, once the prospect of life with Hazard is entertained. Her mind races ahead to determine the future terms and conditions of her existence and forecloses on it, perhaps like that aspect of Adams' mind that would rather not be surprised but wants to know and classify experience before the fact, to discover social laws and formulas. The novel doesn't allow for the Jamesian expansiveness in

which a sensibility responds to its surroundings circumstances and works through the present reverberations of past decisions.

The narration later qualifies some of Wharton's assertions. Esther devours volumes of theology in an effort to convince herself of the validity of religion. "Second-rate amateur" becomes a higher category of talent if Wharton considers no artist higher than a first-rate amateur. Esther is able to paint innocence while Wharton's work is blocked by self-consciousness. For Wharton's saints, the way to sanctity is always through pain and suffering, while Esther can apparently portray grace bestowed rather than earned. As Wharton admits, "if her style is right, my art is wrong" (200). Her art is apparently more modern, more pagan and more American, if also feminine. Esther's quickness and mental agility are marked as national characteristics which gives her progress, if any, a wider significance.

By the end of the novel, Esther has resolved to study art in Italy with Catherine as her companion, but it is hard to know how seriously to take her ambitions. Elizabeth Stuart Phelps' novel *The Story of Avis* (1877) does take the artistic ambitions of its heroine seriously, but conditioning and circumstances intervene to wreck her aspirations. Avis Dobell, inspired by her childhood reading of *Aurora Leigh*, spends years of study in Paris; her master, Couture, (a teacher of John La Farge), predicts her success if she will spend another two years working intensively on her own. On her return to America, Avis falls in love but rejects marriage for her vocation. Her suitor then enlists in the Union cause, but when he is wounded her resolve is weakened by pity. The constraints of marriage and children blight her talent and destroy her career, but the fortuitous deaths of husband and son allow Avis the freedom to raise the woman of the future, her daughter,

whose character is yet unknown. Esther has the strength of will to save herself from Avis' mistake, but if Esther's artistic future is uncertain, so is the future of art without an intensity of purpose like religious faith to compel it.

On the smaller scale of *Esther*, there are two encounters with monuments; in the first an attempt to reproduce the living faith of past ages ends in the conscious display of a stage set; in the second Esther encounters the power of nature at Niagara.[217] Instead of the civic religion of *Democracy*, we have what to Adams is the more spurious religion of St. John's church on Fifth Avenue. Esther and George attend the first services in Mr. Dudley's pew; her father is an unbeliever who nevertheless appreciates that "society needs still that sort of police" (289). Adams' *History* describes a trend in religion as well as politics from principles to practice, from rigor to mildness. By 1817 society "earnestly discussed the value of political or religious dogmas, without betraying a wish to subject itself ever again to the vigor of a strict creed in politics or religion" (M:1317). From the evidence of the novel the tendency to the world of the flesh has continued. Esther finds that the many-colored spectacle of stained-glass windows, red walls, and fashionably dressed congregation rivals the splendors of the opera house.

On his first appearance, Hazard "took possession of his flock with a general advertisement that he owned every sheep in it, white or black, and to show that there could be no doubt on the matter, he added a general claim to right of property in all mankind." In all his dealings Hazard speaks in the name of the church, but identifies his own desire with that of the institution, now "after sweeping all human thought and will into his strong-box, shut down the lid with a sharp click, and bade his audience kneel" (E189). In his sermon Hazard appropriates all thought and act to the church's use: there is

no conflict with science, “only the church now knows with the certainty of science what she once knew only by the certainty of faith,” and as for the philosophers’ “Cogito Ergo Sum,” Hazard absorbs it as well, since all are part of “the supreme I AM” (E190). The unbelieving cousins are described as perhaps the only two auditors who appreciated the sermon. Hazard’s congregation “would have preferred to put the fact of their existence on almost any other experience in life, as that ‘I have five millions,’ or, ‘I am the best-dressed woman in the church,--therefore I am somebody.’ The fact of self-consciousness would have struck them as not warranting a claim even to a good social position, much less to a share in omnipotence; they knew the trait only as a sign of bad manners” (E191). Meanwhile Wharton is convinced the work he has already done on the church is a failure. The board had insisted on a severe Early Christian style, but as he complains: “The thing does not belong to our time or feelings” (E200).

The novel might seem at first to be about the competing claims of science and religion because, conventionally, the marriage plot offers a scientist and a clergyman as claimants for Esther’s hand. Science is certainly in the ascendant in Adams’ view of American history. It is the least problematic rising line in his narrative, the most probable motor of social change, especially in the practical technological applications of steam power. Hazard refuses to argue with science and prefers to subsume its power under the authority of the church. His friend and sometime rival George Strong speaks as a man of science in evolutionary terms. He “looks at churches very much as he would have looked at a layer of extinct oysters in a buried mud-bank,” but when Esther asks him whether religion is true, he turns the question to the truth of science. Neither is precisely true; Strong “belongs” to science, “because I want to help in making it truer.” Esther’s

problem, as he diagnoses it, is "You need what is called faith, and are trying to get it by reason. It can't be done. Faith is a state of mind, like love or jealousy. You can never reason yourself into it." His own vocation is based on faith: "There is no science that does not begin by requiring you to believe the incredible" (E284). As he demonstrates in *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres*, Adams followed Pascal in taking the fideist position that reason alone could not produce faith.

If both science and religion are based equally on faith, only religion seems to demand submission. Or perhaps it is Esther's morality of taste that requires that she submit to the church and all its tenets if she marries Hazard. The naturalness of Esther's art, her instinctive morality and inherent taste make it difficult to disengage the sources of art and religion. Adams doesn't offer her an artist as a suitor. Wharton remains the man most cognizant of female power through his marriage to a woman described as a "maenad" and his disappointment that the church board will not allow him to include a Madonna on their walls. If an artist is not also a claimant for Esther it may be that Adams tended not to see the claims of art as autonomous, but in service of some ideal. As a historian, for example, he sees Unitarianism originating as a religious, artistic and literary revival. As a tourist he tends to value a religion by the quality of the art it inspires. In judging art by its cheapness—for Adams the sign of the greatest, most idealistic art is that it spares no expense—he manages both to scorn economic considerations and exalt them.[218] Esther complains to Wharton: "I wish I earned my living…You don't know what it is to work without an object." Wharton counters by saying that "Much of the best work in the world…has been done with no motive of gain" (E244). But what her art needs, without being as desperate about it as Mrs. Lee, is not the validation of payment—

she has sold work before—but the sense of channeling a force that is external and greater than herself.

Niagara Falls in February would seem to be an odd place for someone to escape from a broken engagement.[219] Catherine and Esther had earlier joked about eloping together, but Niagara Falls was apparently Mrs. Murray's idea. For an instinctual pagan, "ready to give a divinity to every waterfall" it provides the experience of an unfleshly spirituality of pure natural force to which she can compare the faith that Hazard is offering. From Esther's window the cataract is a "frank and sympathetic" confidant. "She felt tears roll down her face as she listened to the voice of the waters and knew that they were telling her a different secret from any that Hazard could ever hear." Earlier she had claimed, "I want to submit…Why some of you can't make me?" But now, "when eternity, infinity and omnipotence seem to be laughing and dancing in one's face," what authority could Hazard retain? The message of Niagara can't be diluted in language, but the sense of the absolute it provides allows her to visualize George Strong's concept of the afterlife as an evolutionary goal of "growing up" to abstract truth: "If our minds could get hold of one abstract truth, they would be immortal so far as that truth is concerned" (E320). As Esther interprets this in terms of her recent experience, she asks him, "Does your idea mean that the next world is a sort of great reservoir of truth, and that what is true in us just pours into it like raindrops?... After all I wonder whether that may not be what Niagara has been telling me" (E321). Esther, Strong and Hazard can all agree that it is truth that they seek. But whatever Esther's new understanding may be, or her impression of pure natural force in contrast to Hazard's compromised personal and

institutional power, she is no closer to the possibility of attaining any particular truth when Hazard arrives at Niagara to continue his suit.

Esther's initial appeal to Hazard was her resistance to religion, along with his friends' high estimation of her quality. According to Strong, Hazard "sees nothing good in the world that he doesn't instantly covet for the glory of god and the church, and just a bit for his own pleasure." (E277). At first Hazard's orthodoxy is presented as his strength: "Like most vigorous-minded men, seeing that there was no stopping point between dogma and negation, he preferred to accept dogma" (E289). Although he prizes her independence, Hazard assumes that Esther will simply succumb to his will once they are engaged and join the church. Her conversion would be something of a coup given a congregation that frowns on his associations with artists and freethinkers. But the more Esther remains recalcitrant, the more Hazard's arguments seem to enact the nineteenth century disposition to reduce doctrinal severity that Adams' history describes. From the assertion of absolute certainty and rationality of the first day's sermon Hazard retreats to the managed doubt of Pascal's wager (with reference to "hazard," I would guess): "What do you gain by getting rid of one incomprehensible only to put a greater one in its place, and throw away your only hope besides? The atheists offer no sort of bargain for one's soul. Their scheme is all loss and no gain" (E329). Hazard redefines belief as a simple question of will, based on "a confession of ignorance" that is joined with "faith and hope." For a scrupulous temperament like Esther's, belief is not so easy to enforce. Adams would go beyond William James' concept of the will to believe to emphasize religion as an act of submission forced on an individual constrained by a particular psychology.[220] Hazard reduces his doctrinal standards—he himself may accept tradition

as handed down, “but no one exacts such strictness from you.” After all, he is forced to give communion to clergymen he considers “little better than open skeptics.” Surely, she could find a formula, “some mysterious and humanly incomprehensible form of words,” on which they could agree (E330). Esther refuses to bargain for terms.

When Hazard admits that his intentions have always assumed her conversion, Esther changes her tone. No longer is her argument for breaking their engagement based on her inadequacy but on his. Her insufficiency has been characterized as a pagan inability to believe and fulfill his expectations; now his insufficiency consists of pagan forms of religious practice. She speaks frankly of her distaste for ritual: “I never saw you conduct a service without feeling as though you were a priest in a Pagan temple, centuries apart from me. At any moment I half expected to see you bring out a goat or ram and sacrifice it on the high altar” (E332). If Adams’ pseudonym of Frances Snow Compton is a tribute to Auguste Comte, Hazard’s beliefs represent an earlier “theological” phase of civilization. Esther won’t accept Hazard’s argument from tradition about particular doctrines like the resurrection of the body; “I despise and loathe myself, and yet you thrust self at me from every corner…All religion does nothing but pursue me with self even into the next world…I can’t understand how you worship any person at all” (E333). Religion has to be a release from self-consciousness, a merging with something greater, or it is nothing. Is Adams implying forms of residual paganism and emergent paganism, a Comtean religion of Humanity, with some Christian norm between? Unlike Hawthorne’s *The Marble Faun*, for example, which Samuels sees as an influence on *Esther*, there is no sense of development from paganism to Christianity, no sense of a fortunate fall. Has Esther reverted to an inherited Puritan critique of Episcopal Christianity without the

underlying faith or achieved some new form of spiritual understanding? If she places Hazard centuries in the past, as his charismatic personality points to a leader out of the old, individualist history, where is Adams placing her in terms of American evolution?

Adams informs the reader that Esther's father named her after Hawthorne's "Old Esther Dudley," a woman whose main characteristic was her fidelity to the royalist family past. Custodian of the Province-House, the governor's residence, she delusively welcomes the restoration of British power, only to realize in her dying moments that it is Governor John Hancock who addresses her:

> Your life has been prolonged until the world has changed around you. You have treasured up all that time has rendered worthless—the principles, feelings, manners, modes of being and acting, which another generation has flung aside—and you are a symbol of the past, And I and those around me—we represent a new race of men, living no longer in the past, scarcely in the present—but projecting our lives forward into the future. (676)

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The description of old Esther seems true of Adams' Esther Dudley in one respect; she is meant to carry the Puritan conscience of her ancestors into the nineteenth century.[221] The fuller description sounds much more like the pose Adams adopts for himself at the beginning of *The Education of Henry Adams*, except that there it is the representative of Hancock's generation, the eighteenth century man, who is bereft of a connection to the present and future. There Adams calls for a new race of men to react adaptively and prospectively to twentieth century forces. Adams' Esther is presented speculatively as both an inheritor and an advance into the future. Divorced from the sources of religious faith, her Puritan conscience has become a finely developed sense of scruple that won't allow her to marry Stephen Hazard without embracing his religion as well. Catherine Brooke, for one, doesn't see why faith should matter any more in marrying a minister than in marrying a lawyer, but for Esther nothing is worse than being "half-married."

Adams can admire figures from the Puritan past like Jonathan Edwards in order to denigrate the weaker intellectual and moral fiber of their successors: "the force of their reasoning commanded respect. Not often had a more strenuous effort than theirs been made to ascertain God's will, and to follow it without regard to the weaknesses of the flesh. (M:1344). [222]

The reference to "Old Esther Dudley" may obscure the traces of another namesake from Hawthorne who experiences a tormented relationship with a clergyman, Hester Prynne, and who in offering counsel to women in trouble and perplexity imagines another woman of the future. It is Hester's "firm belief, that, at some brighter period, when the world should have grown ripe for it, in Heaven's own time, a new truth would be revealed, in order to establish the whole relation between men and women on a surer ground of mutual happiness" (262). [223] In Adams' novel a distinction that first seems to be between religion and science, is reframed as the gulf between belief and unbelief, and in the end is presented as the divide between men and women. The need for a "new truth" is greater than ever amid indications of female revolt. Esther asks, "Why should you drive and force me to take this step? Are all men so tyrannical with women? You do not quarrel with a man because he cannot give you his whole life" (E330). Hazard doesn't distinguish his own desires from the will of the church: "I am tyrannical! I want your whole life, and even more" (E330). Esther refuses to submit, although she hears what is presumably the voice of her Puritan ancestors: "Mistress, know yourself! Down on your knees, and thank heaven fasting for a good man's love" (E330).[224] But she is no Griselda. Her Puritanism resides in her scrupulous cast of mind, the mental toughness that strengthens the will, and an ascetic mistrust of materiality; she is willing to adhere to

what is perhaps a more highly evolved morality "without regard for the weaknesses of the flesh."

She doesn't reject religion, but requires a connection to the absolute much more demanding than the cozy self-affirmation of St. John's. "It must be that we are in a new world now, for I can see nothing spiritual about the church" (E332). But if the old age is passing, the new order has yet to appear. What seems clear is that if there is to be a new relation it must be based on a spiritual understanding: "If you will create a new one that shall be really spiritual, and not cry: 'flesh—flesh—flesh,' at every corner, I will be glad join it, and give my whole life to you and it." But a religion of the future without the priority of self would never ask Hazard's final question: "Can you… think of a future existence where you will not meet once more father or mother, husband or children? Surely the natural instincts of your sex must save you from such a creed!" (E333). Esther finds this blatant appeal to her sex degrading, intending as it does to move her with its sentimental vision of the resurrection of the body: "Why must the church always appeal to my weakness and never to my strength? I ask for spiritual life and you send me back to my flesh and blood as though I were a tigress you were sending back to her cubs. What is the use of appealing to my sex? The atheists at least show me respect enough not to do that!" (E333). In Adams' imaginary of social change, Esther's refusal to submit to marital and ecclesiastical dependency is symptomatic, as is her aspiration to some undefined idealism, and her rejection of motherhood as the automatic and inescapable reference that ends debate with its reference to biological destiny and instinctive behavior, the tigress and her cubs.

If the family is the human institution beyond which Adams was not prepared to inquire, the implication is that Esther at least is willing to look beyond it to some new relation. Perhaps if it were possible she would exchange human generativity for the immortality of the idea. The rejection of generativity in these novels is striking (except insofar as Victoria Dare in *Democracy* snares her earl) and speaks perhaps to Adams' own crisis of historiography. The two novels seem written for the sake of their long climactic scenes of renunciation in which the ritual of refusal seems to respond to some larger crisis.

Another aspect of the problem is the self-consciousness that Wharton asserts is the curse of the modern age; it is self-forgetfulness that Esther seeks. Adams himself is unable to take a leap of faith in imagining the higher being that American democracy might produce. Adams would agree with Friedrich Nietzsche that the purpose of history is for life, which is why he is so interested in its power to prognosticate. Contrasting the flawed but principled figures of his *History* with the presidential nonentities of the novels who are no match for their vigorously unprincipled opponents, he has a sense of inertial drift if not devolution in response to powerful but as yet unspecified forces. As Nietzsche points out, a sense of history can be an inhibition to action. It requires a certain amount of self-forgetfulness to recreate the useful myth that authorizes and energizes future life and becomes "second nature." Adams' may be ironic about his filiopiety but would not radically sever himself from its legitimation, as Nietzsche urges is necessary for the sake of self invention.[225] If the power of regeneration is lacking here, the question of the future is held in abeyance, to be continued and perhaps facilitated by other means.

As I discussed in the previous chapter, in writing about America in the final quarter of the nineteenth century, Adams could not accept the providential metanarrative of earlier historians like George Bancroft, nor on the basis of his attempts to gauge the measure of intellectual and moral development in the novels, did he find undisputable evidence for schemes of evolutionary progress. If he was predisposed to find evidence of American exceptionalism, he could find no scientific grounds for it except a few hundred years head start in democracy and a handful of inventions. Gore's qualified affirmation of faith in *Democracy* on the grounds of historical inevitability is the political version of Pascal's wager. The narrative line Adams adopts in the *History* is the creation of American nationalism through circumstances, political and economic forces that compelled political administrations to exercise power and the public to accept governance. He rises above a focus on the questionable advance of American political practice by broadening his field to include the unquestionable rising action of American technological ingenuity and culminates with the formation of an American national character.

But Adams wrote himself into a corner; the unfolding of national character across space is a fundamentally ahistorical phenomenon. Adams' *History* ends with an admission that his narrative form may be passé; some new model is needed "since in American history the scientific interest is greater than the human," at least in the purely democratic entity that is to come (M:1334). The reader is left with Adams' list of questions for a centennial and the ambiguous image of the democratic ocean, another ultimate relation like the North Star or Niagara: "science alone could sound the depths of the ocean, measure its currents, foretell its storms, or fix its relations to the system of

Nature. In a democratic ocean science could see something ultimate" (M:1335). Madeleine Lee had supposed that beneath the scum floating on the surface the currents of democracy ran swift and clear, but this is no longer sure. After completing his *History* Adams renounced the writing of conventional scientific history. In 1891 he wrote the letter to Elizabeth Cameron, commonly supposed to be the model for Catherine Brooke, comparing his reverence for *Esther* with his historical disillusionment and ennui. Nor did Adams write another novel, although *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres* combines some of the imaginative techniques of the novel with historical analysis and travel narrative.

Both novels end in impasse, with heroines in flight, contemplating the eternal and without much prospect of a happy life. But as Esther's aunt Mrs. Murray says, "All the contented women are fools, and all the discontented ones want to be men. Women are a blunder in the creation and must take the consequences" (E206). If women were sensible they would never marry, but according to Mrs. Murray, no woman is sensible. Or as the narrator of *Democracy* claims, "The capacity of women to make an unsuitable marriage must be considered as the cornerstone of society" (D143). Adams' two protagonists have avoided the trap, but their power, like Penelope's, seems to consist solely in their right of refusal. So much for the voice of female experience and Adams' historical theories of women's proper place. The "blunder" in creation apparently is sexual difference. The physical monument that Adams commissioned from Augustus St. Gaudens and had built in Rock Creek Cemetery as a memorial to his wife and himself features an untitled androgynous figure in an ambiguous contemplative pose. Although Adams conspicuously omitted the whole period of his marriage and the writing of the *History* and the novels from *The Education of Henry Adams*, he discusses his habit of haunting the monument to

register the reactions of visitors and in effect measure the public's level of moral understanding. Like Esther before the torrent, he stops "to see what the figure had to tell him what was new; but, in all that it had to say, he never once thought of questioning what it meant." For the querulous tourists who come to look at a fashionable sight, art, even great art, apparently has no power to raise the sensibilities of the unattuned viewer: "Like all great artists, St. Gaudens held up the mirror and no more. The American layman had lost sight of ideals; the American priest had lost sight of faith" (Edu 1021). For Adams, writing in 1907 about his experiences of the 1890s, the American mind now existed in a state of spiritual deracination that "shunned, distrusted, disliked the dangerous attraction of ideals and stood alone in history for its ignorance of the past" (Edu 1020).

In addition to commissioning St. Gaudens, Adams may have created a literary memorial as well. If there are no women in Adam's *History*, the invention that "best illustrated the character of the people" is gendered female. The "fast sailing schooner with its pivot gun" that simply grew out of the "nautical intelligence" of the people, is "[b]eautiful beyond anything then known in naval construction." Adams adopts a patriotic tone in this chapter all the more striking amid the morass of government mediocrity and incompetence surrounding it. For the first time, in competition with all the world, Americans "proved their capacity to excel, and produced a creation as beautiful as it is practical." When the British captured one of these prizes, she would not run for them: "She could not bear conventional restraints" (M:840). Esther (and perhaps Marian Adams?) had been described a few years earlier as a woman who "has been brought up among men, and is not used to harness." Like "a lightly-sparred yacht in mid-

ocean…She sails gaily along, though there is no land in sight and plenty of rough weather coming," as the schooner, too, was not built for the heavy weather that threatened capture. Esther's face and mind reiterate the lines of the ship: "the lines of her eyebrows, nose, and mouth all end with a slight upward curve like a yacht's sails, which gives a kind of hopefulness and self-confidence to her expression. Mind and face have the same curves" (E200). Esther is confirmed (and memorialized?) as the best America can produce. Whether she is a prototype of the woman to come, or the last of her line like Esther Dudley, (after all, the age of sail is over), remains unanswered.

The quintessentially American privateer was "[b]uilt to fly rather than fight...its value depended far more on its ability to escape than its ability to attack (M:839). The trick for Adams is this evasive maneuver, the renunciation rather than the surrender, the endless series of deferrals before an ultimate conclusion. If Adams can't represent a vision of the future, at least he can offer indeterminacy. Adams and his heroines may have suffered a shock to their nervous systems in confronting forces beyond their control, but Adams at least found a modus vivendi combining restless travel with settled Washington domesticity. He and his class try to revitalize their authority rather than surrender to new forces of economic or popular power; for Adams the rejection of a public life and the adoption of a self-styled "posthumous" existence was a reversion to a life of influence behind the scenes. This was political as well as social authority, for all the self-deprecation of his being the "stablemate to statesmen" in *The Education of Henry Adams*.[226] In the next chapter, Adams' attempts to escape American history through travel simply lead to more, if different history, in which through his adoption of the pose of the innocent tourist he attempts to deny the implications of his emblematic American

presence. Adams will experiment with the uses of difference in attempting to identify and identify with female and aristocratic power in the more personal histories of *The Memoirs of Arii Taimai* and *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres.*

Chapter III: History Written in Space: Henry Adams and the *Memoirs of Arii Taimai*

In 1890 Henry Adams, suffering from grief, overwork, frustration and ennui, left America with a dream of islands. As he wrote in his letters, "civilization" having become "an intolerable bore" and "nausea" having been induced by a mind "fairly soaked with the kerosene of American ideas and interests," he longed to "bolt for other worlds" (L3:235;246). The value of islands, which is also their downfall, is the distinction they offer as discrete worlds. As societies seemingly out of time they are laboratories for the social scientist studying the effects of civilization, and repositories of alternative values whose resistance to modernity is rejuvenating for world-weary moderns. To Adams the Pacific offered the experience of cultures alien enough to offer a salutary shock to the perceptions, yet familiar enough that identification and affiliation were possible. With an ironic nod he noted their distinctions: "Every fresh island has been to me a fresh field of innocent joy in extending my museum of moral curiosities and in enlightening me on the subject of my fellow men" (L3:513).

Adams could not escape America, but distance improved the relation. His *History* had already implicitly predicted an empire for the United States with its invocation of Gibbon in reverse. Reading Adams' letters, with their accounts of cultures historically classified at various stages of health and decline, his adoption into a Tahitian lineage, and his odd encounter with Robert Louis Stevenson, as well as reading that strange hybrid text, *Memoirs of Arii Taimai* (1901) written for his Tahitian adoptive mother, are a way of approaching the American empire as an inheritance whose nature, to Adams at least, remained to be determined. His own status, eroding before the democratic ocean of

American society, was bolstered by his acceptance into a hereditary Polynesian elite. The historian who had given up on the explanatory power of conventional history was refreshed by immersion in an older model of the past. The pleasures of the alllochronic were unstable, however; past and present failed to keep their places. The presence of Robert Louis Stevenson complicated the relations of difference and identification for Adams, the descendant of a settler colonialism that was both imperial and plagued by vestiges of its former position vis-à-vis Britain. The historical fruit of his travels, *The Memoirs of Arii Taimai* (1901) could not unite the interests of Adams' old and new affiliations, two elites bent on revitalization in culturally specific ways. Ultimately the text demonstrates the limits of Adams' own identification with the Tevas, but also the value of difference as an imaginative space of possibility.

Travel as history

Polynesia as an idea retained some of the glamour of the Enlightenment dream of human perfectibility, grafted upon an earlier dream of the Western isles of the blessed, whose inhabitants existed in prelapsarian ease without toil or guilt.[227] "Other worlds," as Adams perceived them, became "other times," as his movement across space was interpreted historically as movement across time.[228] If the actual journey across the Pacific was still rare, its lines were exceedingly familiar to readers. The letters written before his departure call up associations of the South Seas that included turning pirate, setting up an island republic, meeting the "old-gold" woman in the flesh, and becoming a cannibal. All these speak to the fantasies once evoked by the islands of the New World: the freedom from law and convention, the Crusoe fantasy of the deserted island, the

chance to start anew from utopian principles, the fantasy of incorporation, the terror of being incorporated. Since an intimate knowledge of islands, their value, their insignificance and their danger informed Adams' attitude to American expansion, it is worth looking at his "museum of moral curiosities" island by island. His letters classify, identify and delimit his relationships with these alien worlds from detachment to interest, identification to rejection.

Adams had found the shock of immersion in alien islands useful once before. His trip to Japan with John LaFarge in 1886 set the pattern for the later Pacific trips: a drastic change of scene "where I see as little as possible to remind me of myself," an immersion in sensory experience, a search for cultural survivals with a particular interest in the primitive woman, and the collection of art and artifacts (L3:21). After the suicide of his wife, Marion "Clover" Hooper Adams, life in America had seemed intolerable: "I have been thrown out of the procession, and can't catch up again" (L3:20). The experience of physical and cultural marginality was the antidote to psychic isolation. Arriving in summer during a cholera epidemic, Adams at least experienced the return of his senses of smell and taste, and if his sensation was disgust at the excremental odors and alien foods, unfamiliar sights distracted his eye. His letters demonstrate a disjuncture between interest and respect for the past of Japanese art and Buddhist philosophy (he was considering plans for his "Buddha grave," the memorial he would build in Rock Creek cemetery) and disparagement for the Japanese people in their modernity. "Nothing is serious, nothing is taken seriously. All is toy;—sometimes, as with the women,—badly made and repulsive; sometimes laughable, as with the houses, gardens and children" (L3:17).

The exception to this disparagement was an episode which he describes as "the true Japan of my dreams": at a public bath, his party "looked at a dozen people of all ages, sexes and varieties of ugliness, who paid not the smallest regard for our presence," except for one young beauty who mostly stood with her back to them. "When this exceptionally pleasing virgin walked away, I took no further interest in the proceedings, though I still regard them as primitive." Nakedness without shame evokes the prelapsarian world, and the hint of the arrival of sin in this paradise, that the maiden perceived them as desiring subjects, piqued Adams' interest, even if he expressed the regeneration of his desire as relief that Japanese singularity had not been destroyed by modernity: "I had begun to fear that Japan was spoiled by Europe" (L3:33). It is telling that Adams ascribed this damage to Europe, since his companion LaFarge was married to the grand-niece of Commodore Perry who had forced the opening of Japan to the West. Adams' interest in the primitive had long constellated around the figure of the archaic woman and her possible implications for contemporary society.[229] The traces of Japan's past, as Adams perceived them both sophisticated and primitive, were enough to recall him to life and work.[230]

In material terms, this belated quest for vestiges of the past involved a three-month spending spree ($7500 or a quarter of a million dollars today), on antiquities for himself and friends, while constantly complaining that the country had been "cleaned out" of bric-a-brac.[231] Eventually the experience taught Adams that art and culture were related--the best, quintessentially Japanese art was miniature. Authentic art, i.e. art not designed for export, was generally either worn or displayed in small rooms. This led Adams to the conclusion that the islands were peripheral to the knowledge and relation he

sought: Japanese culture was already too derivative of Europe and was just the "anteroom" for China, "the only mystery left to penetrate." A journey to China might offer something more, an originary connection to ancient institutions, plus the chance to study the only other great power besides the U.S. outside the European system, one all inertia and inwardness, the other all energy and expansiveness. A journey west to Asia was the prospect that sustained him as he finished writing his *History*.[232]

It is difficult to imagine Adams embarking upon a journey like this without a network of correspondents to whom he could report his experiences. The greatest pleasure for Adams may have resided in the reading and writing rather than the experience; certainly it accrued value as he wrote about it. Insularity is a virtue when it is embodied in a circle of like-minded friends, a mobile elite called into being and maintained by the circulation of letters. Joanne Jacobson describes Adams' letter-writing as a process of establishing and negotiating authority and organizing alliances against an inhospitable public sphere.[233] Once the last volume of his *History* was published, Adams' subsequent work was circulated privately among this group of correspondents.[234] Adams often presented himself as superseded by the forces his ancestors set in motion as far as political power was concerned, but his influence, in foreign affairs at least, was no less strong for being unofficial. "Our little family of Hays, Lodges, Camerons and Roosevelts, has been absolutely devoted to each other": the intimates who were receiving his travel letters and copies of the *Memoirs* included John Hay, writer, businessman, Minister to London and Secretary of State, Henry Cabot Lodge, a former doctoral student of Adams and influential senator on the Foreign Relations Committee and Nannie Lodge, Adams' romantic attachment, Elizabeth Cameron, wife of the Senator from Pennsylvania, the

Theodore Roosevelts, Clarence King, geologist and member of the Five of Hearts, Lucy Baxter, an Adams family intimate, and his British friend Charles Milnes Gaskell (L3:251). The long serial letters, written every few days were, Adams said, "a sort of diary" evoking a strong presence in absence (L3:285). However, the circulation of the letters rendered them semipublic enough that Adams occasionally warned their recipients to keep his news quiet. [235]

Adams and his companions John LaFarge and LaFarge's Japanese servant, Awoki, wandered without timetable or itinerary (but with two years worth of supplies) from Hawaii to Samoa to Tahiti to Fiji. If Mary Louise Pratt distinguishes between "sentimental" travelers and "scientific" inquirers as two variants of the "anti-conquest" form of imperial travel, Adams the amateur sought both knowledge and affect (Pratt 84-87). The islands were conceived at times as isolate limit cases, at times as stepping stones to Asia, depending on Adams' correspondent and whether he was writing as amateur ethnographer or global strategist.[236] Successful travel for Adams involved a process of identification of and ultimately identification with difference; writing as Tauraatua, adopted son of the Tevas, Tahiti became the center of the world. Each group of islands held a different lesson for Adams, depending on its political situation and economic potential, his position as observer and his assumption of the historical forces at work. As LaFarge wrote from Samoa: "my real and absorbing delight is the sense of looking at the world in a little nutshell, and of seeing everything reduced to such a small scale, and to so few people, that I can take, as it were my first lessons in history" (154).

In Hawaii natural beauty was compromised by modernity: native society had already been displaced by missionary and commercial interests. Adams' party stayed at a

house lent them by his college classmate, Albert P. Hartwell, later to become one of the negotiators of the annexation treaty; he also composed Queen Lili'uokalani's statement of abdication. Hawaii was the only island where they visited conventional tourist sites and thus felt obliged to engage in anti-tourist rhetoric.[237] So they visited the Kilauea volcano, which on the days they visited was less than spectacular and not worth the dreary journey. They visited Cook's death place "from a sense of duty to the savages who killed Captain Cook. One good turn deserves another" (L3:275). Adams met Sanford Dole, later President of the provisional Hawaiian government, and King Kalekaua; on leaving the islands he realized how little sense he had of Hawaiian society, but doubted he would have found it congenial. Not until a trip on horseback along the windward side of Hawaii, inviting themselves to sleep at sugar plantations, did Adams feel "enjoyment such as I hardly ever expected again to feel," but the plantations existed "at the cost of destroying everything that interests a traveler" (L3:282). This journey offered "the only touch of half-native life we have felt"—eating raw fish, wearing leis, hearing Hawaiian songs (L3:278-79).

In Samoa Adams achieved the wonder of discovery that the travelers sought. As the first Americans to travel in Samoa "for pleasure," they found a "model archaic world," typified by the performance of the *Siva*, the traditional dance proscribed by missionaries but still practiced and experienced: "the whole scene and association gave so much freshness to our fancy that no future experience, short of being eaten, will ever make us feel so new again" (L3:291). From his study of ancient institutions, Adams hypothesized that the Polynesians were the youngest branch of the Aryan race and therefore resembled our oldest ancestors. Living in a stage of barbarism similar to pre-

Homeric Greece, their sea habit and bold chiefs may have taken them as far as Central America. As "the spoiled youngest child of the human family," they were not a people without history, but their history was oral and traditional (L3:463). The experience was rejuvenating: "New ideas of history, science and art have crowded on me so fast that I could not even note them down" (L3:323).

They slept at the U.S. Consul's house, but took a native house nearby as living and reception space. In Samoa Adams denied any complicity in "boring" local politics: "though I loathe the very word, and of all politics detest most those of islands, I am just soaked with the stuff here, where the natives are children, full of little jealousies and intrigues, and the foreigners are rather worse than the natives"(L3:293). Yet he was involved. It amused him to accept Samoan recognition as his due for the actions of his namesake, the frigate *Adams,* which had opposed German expansionism: "I am rejoiced to find, for the first time in my life, that my name is worth something to me, but the natives are solid aristocrats to a man, and they evidently know a swell when they see one" (L3:307). He and LaFarge were eager to be seen as "chiefs of America," but the price of enjoying cultural authenticity was realizing that the Samoans were not yet acculturated to the apolitical mentality of tourists or historians seeking traditional knowledge.(L3:306). Although, or perhaps because, he found his neighbor, the *de facto* ruler, Mataafa, personally impressive in a way that the kings of Hawaii and Tahiti were not, Adams' uneasiness at the mimicry of colonial politics was expressed as ridicule.[238] The exercise of non-traditional authority is described as vaudeville or *opera bouffe.* Yet as a historian he knew that events on the colonial periphery could have global repercussions. [239] It made a difference that the United States was itself one of the three

colonizing parties (whose sovereignty over American Samoa dates from its partition in 1899). Later he described the enactment of the Samoa treaties as “painfully disgraceful” (L5:106).

If Adams was unwilling to express a political opinion in his letters from Samoa, LaFarge felt no need to be discreet. Sympathy for Mataafa’s position proceeded to indignation that the U.S. allowed itself to be led by England and Germany: “One must go abroad and far away to realize that whenever we wish we are one of the main powers of the world. It is on our sleeping that grasping nations like England and Germany depend” (143). The global perspective allowed for sharper comparison. Yet Americans are “easily handled by England, to whom we are intellectually subject” and concede too much to German aggressiveness. “We are still in the dark as to our fortune,” the pettiness squabbling of party politics obscuring larger issues like the importance of the Pacific to national political and economic interests (152). “And yet the Pacific is our natural property. Our great coast borders it for a quarter of the world. We must either give up Hawaii, which will inevitably then go over to England, or take it willingly, if we need to keep the passage open to western Asia, the future battleground of commerce” (152-53). LaFarge’s “lessons in history” certainly sound like the product of Adams’ tutelage.

Tahiti, a French colony since 1880, seemed a relief from political embroilment, but was otherwise a disappointment after the expectations raised by Robert Louis Stevenson and a lifetime of reading. As Adams mused on “Tahiti” before they arrived: “To me it has a perfume of its own, made up of utterly inconsequential associations; essence of the South Seas mixed with imaginings of at least forty years ago. Herman Melville and Captain Cook head and heels with French opera and Pierre Loti” (L3:403).

What Adams found was an "exquisitely successful cemetery" whose "charm is almost wholly one of sentiment and association" (L3:455;432). Tahitians no longer danced—they only sang *himene*. With no hotels even in Papeete, Adams and party set up housekeeping. They used letters of introduction to stay with chief Ori in Tautira and discovered they couldn't even find a translator. In their visit to the Salmon family, they pursued the status of "sentimental" travelers seeking an ideal of cultural reciprocity and achieved incorporation into Tahitian society, not as the stereotypical European lovers of Tahitian women, but as the adopted sons of Arii Taimai, who with her son, Tati Salmon, headed the prominent Teva clan. Arii Taimai had married Alexander Salmon, an English Jewish merchant, and the Salmons were one of the few chiefly families able to retain a measure of political power under the French.

As an act of affiliation as well as cultural salvage, (and an antidote to boredom) Adams embarked on a text which he conceived first as the memoirs of his new sister, Marau, the divorced wife of the last king, Pomare V, but with the collaboration of her mother and siblings became the history of the Teva clan. It was privately printed in 1893 as *The Memoirs of Marau Taaroa, the Last Queen of Tahiti.* An expanded and revised version was printed in 1901, more accurately titled *The Memoirs of Arii Taimai*, and also privately circulated to family, friends and libraries.[240] Marau and her siblings with their mixed Tahitian-English- Jewish heritage delineated for Adams a certain decadence which came with Western acculturation, but their dual consciousness and cosmopolitan experience enabled them to serve as his mediators and translators. Tahiti had "passed through the experience of centuries" in a few decades, a shift in time more radical than anything experienced in Europe (T136). This sense of temporal discontinuity allowed the

children to catch “the disease of history” and crystallized the position of their mother in Adams’ eyes as the last great native figure, archaic and pureblooded: “when the old chiefess dies, no one will be left on the island who has any real accurate knowledge of the past" (L3:478).

Travel confirmed Adams’ doubts about social evolution as progress. Given the appalling statistics of demographic decline which the *Memoirs* reiterates, from a society of two hundred thousand people in the eighteenth century who seemed perfectly fitted to their environment to a deracinated twelve thousand in the nineteenth, the idea of the fatal impact of European culture was easy to accept, whether through disease, technology, or the imposition of foreign political and religious institutions.[241] Adams’ attitude displays elements of “imperialist nostalgia,” as Renato Resaldo defined a pose of “innocent longing” towards a culture that one is complicit in changing (Rosaldo 108-9). Nostalgia assumes the inevitability of decline once a certain kind of timeless world begins to change, a world literally or metaphorically linked to childhood, which for Adams meant an immersion in the tropical sensations of childhood summers as well as an adoption into the childhood of the race. LaFarge, who as an artist would be considered to partake of this childlike receptivity to experience, taught Adams watercolor painting on their journeys, and opened his eyes to the “subtleties and endless variety of changes in the color and light of every hour” (L3:278).

Adams’ letters from the South Pacific reveal him in a variety of aspects:

each facet that is displayed depends upon Adams’ correspondent and the nature of the relationship he was trying to maintain and shape. Characteristically, Adams experimented with the possibilities and limits of particular discourses, of political economy, science,

aesthetics, and sentiment. Elizabeth Cameron received most of the long, literary serial letters, Clarence King the articles about geology and ethnography, Lucy Baxter high-minded discussions that played to New England rectitude, Charles Milnes Gaskell, the conventional man-of-the world opinion. So Adams wrote as an agent of political and economic intelligence in this letter to Henry Cabot Lodge:

> As financial investments, none of the Pacific islands, except the Sandwiches, are worth touching. They are not worth any one of the West Indies, if you lumped them all together. In fact, they are worth less than nothing for they require large expenditures. Nevertheless Germany, France, Australia, New Zealand, and the Lord knows what other countries and governments squabbling for the possession of these wretched little lava-heaps;…
> On the whole, I am satisfied that America has no future in the Pacific…Her best chance is Siberia. Russia will probably go to pieces; she is rotten and decrepit to the core, and must pass through a bankruptcy, political and moral. If it can be delayed another twenty-five years we could Americanise Siberia, and this is the only possible work that I can still see open on a scale equal to American means. (L2:518)

The islands should be left alone as unprofitable, with the exception of his friend Hartwell's Hawaii. Americans, if belated in coming to the business of empire, could at least avoid European mistakes and act with some economic and political rationality. The islands were merely the stepping stones to the continent, the location of coaling stations at most. America did have a future in Asia, but in Siberia where Adams seems to imagine another continental unfolding across relatively unpopulated areas of great natural wealth. America's future as a global power was assumed; the only problem here was finding a project equal to it.

But as Adams also points out, "The tourist was the great conservative who hated novelty and adored dirt" (Edu 980). Adams' desire to erect a cultural quarantine for the islands, which is allied with an assumption of the fatal impact of the West, reflects a preservationist strain of colonial discourse. [242] Here Adams follows the trail set by

Herman Melville in *Typee* and *Omoo* in decrying the destructive power of the missionaries in meddling with Polynesian way of life. Once thriving pagan populations, depraved but happy and perfectly suited to their environments, have declined to a sad, sickly few—hardly an argument for the power of Christian morality.[243]

Adams was amused at the mischief they caused in Samoa, "our visit has caused no end of scandal," by asking that the *Siva* be performed wherever they visited "in defiance of missionary remonstrance and even of the women's opposition." Courtesy and the requirements of hospitality prevailed over the reluctance of some chiefs' daughters to dance. Fanua, for example "kicked like a cassiowary at being obliged to lead the *Siva* in the Samoan undress…but the Samoan society made her do it, and…I thought she enjoyed it as much as the other girls did who were less Europeanized" (L3:301). The penalty for dancing was excommunication, but "To amuse us, they…had sacrificed themselves" (L3:316). Their "sacrifice" recalls the young Tahitian women whom Bougainville in 1768 called "sacrifices to hospitality," with their acts updated for tamer nineteenth-century American sensibilities. Adams' antipathy to missionaries was particularly strong in the case of the native catechists who denounced the performance of a *Siva* for the visitors, in contrast to their white superiors who for once attended out of curiosity (or perhaps racial solidarity). With the perspective of an old chief Adams identified these natives as lower class malcontents who sought to use the lever of religion to overturn the social order. To a cultural essentialist the assumption of power by such anomalous persons is an example of an "evolutionary anachronism" (Thomas 44).

The missionaries offered a discourse of assimilation, as did the colonial authorities on Tahiti, who in theory, at least, assumed the universal applicability of

French political forms.[244] Adams was appalled at France's lack of discrimination in sending Governor Lacascade, a Creole from Martinique with an assistant from the Senegambia, to rule such "high-blooded" people. In Fiji, however, Adams found a colonial administration with an anti-assimilationist policy he could admire. Sir John Thurston's "sound views on savages" included preserving as much of the traditional chiefly structure as possible and, exercising the forms of control most suited to the native mind, acting as the "chief of chiefs."[245] This quarantine was supported by the importation of Indian laborers for the plantations.

If travel is a process of identifying and identifying with a people, in Fiji Adams reached his cultural limit. The natives were too black, too Melanesian, too "unromantic," even if fifteen years earlier it had been a cannibal country. In this land where "The men are everything," Adams saw the war dances he had not been able to see elsewhere—and nothing but war dances. The women were downtrodden, virtuous but ugly, and "the poetry is pretty much all gone" (L3:495). Adams and his party lived with the governor in a town that resembled a slice of England. Sir John took them and scores of native bearers on a trek through the interior, where Adams' imagined himself with Stanley in Africa.

Given his interest in the "old-gold" woman, Adams wouldn't identify with a society like Fiji where the status of women was low. From their first contact with Polynesians, Europeans had been absorbed with the question of the natural properties of women and women's place in history.[246] Like Diderot who in his *Supplement to the Voyage of Bougainville* used Tahitian mores to criticize European hypocrisy and sterility, (and portrayed Tahitian sexual freedom as solely in the interests of procreation), Adams looked to the archaic woman for "the possibility of women," some trace on which to

build a more fruitful relation (L3:330). What Jackson Lears calls Adams' "crisis of generativity," Adams' personal and vocational dilemma of inheritance unfulfilled, was depicted in his two novels, *Democracy* and *Esther*, as the problem of a class. The novels are populated by orphans, childless couples, dying children and female protagonists who reject the marriage plot and can find no worthy outlet for their energies. Adams' friend, Clarence King, had celebrated the glories of the "old-gold girl" based on his adventures in Hawaii in the 1870s. [247] Adams and LaFarge traveled to King' waterfall, but found no girls left.

Both were fascinated with the Samoan institution of the *taupo*, the official village maiden who organized entertainments and led the dancing, including dancing at the head of the troops in battle. The "most valuable of village possessions," she was shadowed by a duenna and her marriage was arranged by the village (L3:312). As Adams explained it, in Samoan sexual relationships, status ruled: Adams as a great chief could only fraternize with the best people. In a society in which privacy did not exist he would lose caste if he conducted a liaison with a common woman, and elopement with a *taupo* would be "theft" of a village resource. For the amusement of his readers Adams' letters spend considerable time speculating on the prospect of marrying a *taupo*. Marriage (and subsequent divorce) was certainly possible and "dog cheap" initially, but in this communistic society, her family would expect to share all his possessions and would retain a claim on him for life (L3:337). For a middle- aged man, "not a Loti," not of the "sailor class," the old-gold woman was personally resistible but fascinating as a type for study (L3:412).

In a ruling class that consciously selected partners for a beauty of size and strength, sexual dimorphism seemed less pronounced than in the West. Adams the scientific traveler, in addition to studying the geologic formation of the islands and disputing Darwin's theory of subsidence, embarked upon an anthropometric project to ascertain the physical measurements of these marvels, which he interpreted as our ancestral archetype, "the ideal animal," or at least as the ancestress of Helen of Troy, as he came to annotate Homer "after Samoan experience" (L3:387).[248] Compared to Western women, the islanders were physically robust and free from nervous diseases. But ultimately the old gold girl could teach him nothing useful. "Though I regard the old gold woman as a failure almost as emphatic as the New York female, I have found much entertainment in making her acquaintance" (L3:467).

The islands had their own critical population crisis. In Tahiti their unsuccessful search for a beautiful maiden of first rank reads like a parody of social science as a fairy tale quest for the fairest in the land. For a month they "scoured the island," and talked to "everyone of any especial interest." Of an estimated twelve hundred marriageable girls left, "we must have passed among the larger number, and seen a fair share," yet Adams was "still unable to say what the typical Taïti girl is like." On Fiji they heard arguments that "[t]he women are going to the bad rapidly since polygamy and clubs were prohibited by the missionaries. The children die, and the mothers prefer not to have them" (L3:490). Civilization in the guise of morality once again seemed to be the agent of destruction for the islanders.

Adams was disappointed when the old-gold girl revealed no simpler access to understanding, no foundation on which to base a new relation: "I cannot say I know her,

and this is telling the whole story. I have seen her and somewhat intimately, but, simple as she looks, she is still woman, and even very much a woman" (L3:466). The relative androgyny of Polynesian body types did not indicate a parallel convergence of thinking. Women remained the embodiment of difference, but then Adams went further: "To my mind, the moral is that sex is altogether a mistake, and that no reversion to a healthier condition than ours, can remove the radical evils inherent in the division of the sexes. Yet as nature has made the blunder, it is irreparable, and we might as well look on at it, and see how nature is to get out of the scrape" (L3:467). Adams will have more to say on this subject later in his career. If the biological distinction between the sexes was a cause of personal impasse, the idea of irreconcilable polarities became a useful conceptual tool, in thinking about the feminine history of Tahiti in the *Memoirs* compared to his masculine *History*, or the worlds of the Mother and the Father, or the Virgin and the Dynamo. Adams appreciated his collection of unique cultural anachronisms. In imagining an American empire, though, the persistence of cultural insularity might become a problem for entities large and small.

Predecessors

Adams' enjoyment of the role of American "lord" in Samoa was complicated by the uncanny British presence of Robert Louis Stevenson, who had decided to settle there for his health. Stevenson may be an unexpected addition to Adams "museum of moral curiosities" but he represents another limit case of identification. Stevenson activated Adams' prickly feelings towards Britain and evoked in him another sense of belatedness, not that of imperialist nostalgia, desiring what was already lost, but that of settler

colonialism, trying to catch up and surpass the imperial parent, an anxiety of influence.[249] The prospect of an American empire was not a matter of doubt for Adams, but the problem for both Henry and his brother Charles Francis Adams was not merely to supersede the British, but to retain a unique national character while doing so. In projecting American insularity abroad, how do you maintain your own distinction? Adams' antipathy to Stevenson was personal, as a great literary figure who was apparently insensible to making discriminations, but also imaginatively associated with a problem of interior colonization, the persistence of backward cultural units and their possible devolutionary influences on a modern civilization.

Adams' letters posit Stevenson as his predecessor, while denying Adams was motivated by the same ambitions. Even before he left America he felt it necessary to announce gratuitously, as though taking a pledge, "In thus imitating Robert Louis Stevenson I am inspired by no wish for fame or future literary or political notoriety, or even by motives of health, but merely by a longing to try something new and different" (L3:235). He admitted to wearing native dress for comfort, "its only objection is that Stevenson did the same. Apparently we are destined to play seconds" (L3:424). He and LaFarge visited Tahiti because Stevenson described it as one of his "ideals" (L3:298). They rented a house in which the Stevenson party had stayed, which still retained their family pictures, black silhouettes "impossible to forget or ignore" (L3:432). They stayed with the chief Ori who exchanged names with them as he had done with Stevenson, although "I dreaded a repetition of this baptism and tried to show total indifference to the native custom" (L3:424). Both Adams and Stevenson were concerned with upholding a local standard of accurate cultural transmission as well as metropolitan expectations of

local color and romance. Adams' audience of correspondents was much more exclusive but perhaps he knew its proclivities better than Stevenson read his public. Stevenson's British and American audiences preferred the romantic Scottish stories he was continuing to write like *The Master of Ballantrae* to the more ethnographic and realist work set in Polynesia, let alone his expressions of political advocacy (Smith 12-14).[250]

If Adams was engaged in a one-sided competition with Stevenson to redress American belatedness by accumulating cultural capital in the form of indigenous knowledge, his privileged access to Arii Taimai was a triumph. In Samoa answers to Adams' questions about ancient custom, kinship and religion had been blocked to the point that he assumed the existence of a secret pagan society. Adams ascribed Arii Taimai's willingness to divulge family information to his interest and her affection (L3:478). John LaFarge's account discloses Arii Taimai's past resistance to disclosing family secrets even to the king of Hawaii and suggests that the need to establish legal titles to land under the French administration now made revelation both necessary and final (344-45).[251] Adams admitted that Stevenson could have written the *Memoirs* "better than anyone else" while identifying himself, coyly, as "only a passing stranger trying to find a moment of amusement to vary the wild monotony." But Stevenson "never got in with the old lady," and so his work "only touched the outside rim of Tahitian history" (L3:478-9). Apparently a natural aristocracy recognized its members.

When Adams arrived in Tahiti, he was reading Stevenson's "The Song of Rahéro," a verse tale based on a Teva legend of ambition and revenge; it didn't seem worth the labor, although Adams couldn't quite pinpoint its fault (L3:434). "Rahéro" announces its authenticity paratextually, with a dedication to Stevenson's adopted

brother, Ori, (this gesture was the best thing about it according to Adams) and a note "from a clansman to his chief," apologizing to Tati Salmon as perhaps "the only person in the world capable of reading my verse and spying" a minor inaccuracy (165). On its face, a story which tells of the nearly total destruction of a clan and its rebirth would seem to have some historical significance, but once Adams was working within the Teva genealogy he judged Stevenson's work by its standards, wondering why the author should have bothered with so unimportant a subject: "Rahéro was a very subordinate figure in history, and connects with nothing" (L3:479). Significance in this context is familial relation. With his personal tie to the Tevas, Adams could use the claim of authenticity to trump literary charm.[252]

Adams had already faulted Stevenson for his lack of social discrimination, finding a disturbing disparity between Stevenson's cultural authority and his social status. Presenting Samoa as a convivial world of aristocrats, Adams appreciated the position assigned him: "Aristocracy can go no further, and any ordinary aristocracy is vulgar by the side of the Samoan. For centuries these people have thought of nothing else...their real art is social" (L3:283). Adams' snobbery seems to demonstrate the affinity between the so-called archaic cultures and the leisure class ironically treated by Thorstein Veblen in *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899): "The barbarian of the quasi-peaceable stage of industry is notoriously a more high-bred gentleman, in all that concerns decorum, than any but the very exquisite among the men of a later age" (36). Veblen notes the Polynesian chiefs who preferred to starve rather than eat with their own hands, so devoted were they to the "canon of honorific leisure" (33). As Adams presents them, the Samoans "show their superiority over our idiotic cant about work, by proving how much

happier an idle community can be, than any community of laborers ever were" (L3:302). It was all the more disturbing then, for Adams to discover his great British predecessor was a man who failed the chiefly test. His greatest experience of culture shock in Polynesia may have been his first meeting with Mr. and Mrs. Stevenson, then building their estate at Vailima:

> At last we came out on a clearing dotted with burned stumps exactly like a clearing in our backwoods. In the middle stood a two-story Irish shanty …A pervasive air of dirt seemed to hang around it; and squalor like a railroad navvy's board hut…a figure came out that I cannot do justice to. Imagine a man so thin and emaciated that he looked like a bundle of sticks in a bag, with a head and eyes morbidly intelligent and restless. He was costumed in very dirty striped cotton pyjamas, the baggy legs tucked into coarse knit woolen stockings, one of which was bright brown in color, the other a purplish dark tone. With him was a woman who retired for a moment into the house to reappear a moment afterwards…the change could have consisted only in putting shoes on her bare feet. She wore the usual missionary nightgown which was no cleaner than her husband's shirt and drawers, but she omitted the stockings. Her complexion and eyes were dark and strong, like a half-breed Mexican. (L3:296)

The most surprising thing about this portrait may be its American associations, conflating dirt, disease, and starvation with life on the frontier. A colonial frontier was, after all, Adams' own American origin, and the Briton amid his cleared land could have signified pioneer industry rather than the uneasy devolution of "blackened stumps." But the island frame of reference expected physical beauty and social grace, cleanliness and generosity in household economy (L3:304). For someone like Adams who was attuned to the nuances of dress, who criticized President Jefferson's backless slippers for the unnecessary affront they offered to the British ambassador, a man who wore two different colored socks was either a madman or a clown. Both man and woman are dressed in native dress, the pyjama of Asia, the nightgown the shapeless covering introduced by missionaries, and both were inappropriate daytime clothing for Westerners.[253] The two might seem like beachcombers washed ashore except that the only reference to place is

America, the home of the Irish laborer, the miscegenated Mexican, and the dirt and squalor of the slave settlements Adams reported witnessing as a child (Edu 759-63). Elsewhere, Adams referred to Mrs. Stevenson as an "a wild Apache" (L3:304).

For Adams the American frontier was not the basis for a revitalizing national ideology. Colonization may have been the necessary concomitant of empire, but civilization resided in the coastal cities. The importance of environment in studying the continental expansion of the U.S. was the absence of foreign restraints that might distort the course of the democratic experiment. Adams recognized the existence of contact zones, the middle ground of the frontier in America or the beach in Polynesia, but discounted them for their heterogeneity.[254] While life on the frontier created new, distinctively American types in the interaction between Euro-American and native societies, Adams assures his readers that such barbarous types "must disappear" with succeeding generations. The transformative experience was not the frontier, the "crucible" of American nationality and the engine of democracy as Frederick Jackson Turner would argue two years later, but the free unfolding of a national character without foreign hindrance.

If the Stevensons' circumstances were an indication, settlement looked ambiguously like barbarism: how could you tell that it was not devolution? Stevenson has the uncanny appearance of a ghost in one of his tales, a walking dead man, a skeleton in a sack. Uncanniness here suits its derivation of "unhomelike," the familiar made very strange. Or perhaps this represents an encounter with a tabooed object. After further acquaintance, Adams described Stevenson as *aiku*, a Samoan spirit or ghost, whose phenomenal energy is connected to his incorporeality (L3:392). Once they had met,

Adams seems to have followed the rule of taboo, avoiding a contaminating object as a way of reestablishing order and affirming whatever qualities it disquietingly lacked (Douglas 40). He said he avoided contact for fear that Stevenson would intuit the loathing he couldn't suppress, despite his respect for Stevenson's knowledge and gratitude for his kindnesses.[255]

Adams speculated that Stevenson's life of "squalor" must have been due to an inadequate education, a lack of contact with "first rate" people, a failing which apparently led to promiscuous socialization and the oriental fantasies disseminated by Stevenson's Samoan identity as Tusitala, the teller of tales: "He does not know the differences between people, and mixes them up in a fashion as grotesque as if they were characters in his new Arabian Nights" (L3:373). It may be significant here that upon their introduction Stevenson recognized LaFarge's name and "became at once very chummy with him" while the name of Adams elicited "not the faintest associations" (L3:303).[256] Stevenson's literary and social knowledge of the Pacific was grounded in a variety of social experiences that Adams could not or would not bear, proud as he was to be ensconced among the first families. His South Pacific novels, *The Beach at Falesá* and *Ebb-Tide*, feature protagonists Adams would decline to know.[257]

Adams' first encounter with Stevenson was "as full of queerities as any social experiment I can recall" (L3:303). Perhaps the "experiment " refers to Stevenson's renunciation of his position in Europe where he was a "Figure" as Henry James put it, a revealing attitude for Adams who continually asserted his own weary retirement from public life (77).[258] Perhaps the experiment was the incongruity of Vailima, a version of Walter Scott's Abbotsford with retainers who for Stevenson were "the contemporaries of

our tattooed ancestors who drove their chariots on the wrong side of the Roman wall" rather than Adams' archaic Greeks (*Footnote* 451). Or perhaps it referred to Stevenson's role as Samoan spokesman against European malfeasance, a position Adams might have considered naïve given his beliefs about historical inevitability and the politics of islands. Robert Drinnon claims that Adams "longingly detested" Stevenson, because Stevenson in "going native…had acted out what Adams had only dared fantasize" (252). What seems most disturbing, though, was Stevenson's disorderly crossing of cultural categories. Adams was always of two minds (at least) and primitive and civilized were useful categories to the extent that they remained separate. The idea that one could live in the past, which was what going native would mean, was not a possibility for Adams. The primary locus of Adams' fantasy remained America. As an alternative world Polynesia was a useful idea to enlarge on the sense of human possibility and imagine a wider scope for human action—as a point of reference, not as a point of return.[259]

With the perspective of a settler, Robert Louis Stevenson was exercised enough about the impunity of great powers in small places to write *A Footnote to History* (1892). Yet given his priorities as a settler, Stevenson might have preferred measured change. While he diplomatically called the missionaries "the best and most useful whites" in the Pacific, he also noted that the cultures that had changed least had survived best. Every change a missionary instituted should be carefully considered (*South Seas* 118;64). Adams and LaFarge were amused by what they saw as Stevenson's lack of sophistication, his moralism in finding certain local dances "indecent" and in defining sexual impropriety against the local standard. *A Footnote to History* may end with a plea for the immediate settlement of Samoan affairs on the global level of the great powers,

but it is immediately preceded by a discussion of the Samoan land claims court, the sort of politics Adams would decry as tedious parochialism.

In *The Education of Henry Adams,* Adams returned to the subject of Stevenson. His attitude towards him becomes generalized into an aspect of American national character, identified as an original American-British incompatibility and expanded to include his relations with Swinburne and Kipling:

> Somehow, somewhere, Kipling and the American were not one, but two, and could not be glued together. The American felt that the defect, if defect it were, was in himself; he had felt it when he was with Swinburne, and again with Robert Louis Stevenson, even under the palms of Vailima; but he did not carry self-abasement to the point of thinking himself singular. Whatever the defect might be, it was American, it belonged to the type; it lived in the blood. Whatever might be the quality that held him apart, it was English, it lived in the blood; one felt it little if at all, with Celts, and one yearned reciprocally with Fiji cannibals… All through life one had seen the American on his literary knees to the European; and all through many lives back for some two centuries, one had seen the European snub or patronize the American; not always intentionally but effectually. (Edu 1012)

In his *History* Adams insisted on the divergent character of an England formed by war and a United States founded on peace. In *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres* Adams identified himself as a Norman rather than an Anglo-Saxon. Here presented as a matter of "blood," Adams' depiction of difference suggests the supposed biological properties of race while not denying contemporary racial Anglo-Saxonism either. He cannot deny a common lineage; the British are his blood relations and so a biological distinction seems all the more problematical. Something "in' the blood, a contagion, a contamination, a deviation on both sides, apparently, from the common Anglo-Saxonism causes a nearly magnetic repulsion. Adams now seems to be insisting on a biological division like the division into two sexes that he saw as such a radical evil when it divided women and men. But Stevenson as a Scot was not precisely English to begin with, and a Scot who

distinguished himself from a “Borderer” like Walter Scott might be a Highland Gael. Adams’ positive examples seem chosen for the hyperbole of the argument given their self-evident cultural inferiority. Adams had no use for Irish Celts, inscribing “the Irish” as shorthand for the machine politics he loathed at home, and declaring himself bored by the Home Rule controversies that involved his British friends abroad. As for the Fijians, “they are not fit to live” according to his letters; perceived as black Melanesians rather than Polynesians they were beyond the limits of identification (L3:514). The Celts and Melanesians posed no threat; both were, maybe naturally, subject peoples who could possibly be absorbed in an American system. The distinction that both American and British possess might be a refusal to submit, except for the literary man on his knees. Some islands do become empires. That Kipling at least “never snubbed or patronized” Adams, leaves open the implication that Stevenson may have done so, but to judge from the letters the individual who patronized was Adams himself, perhaps as a pre-emptive strike. In the end we are left with the vehemence of the split, its feeling all the stronger for its inexplicability. In his relations with Britain and the British, Adams was afflicted by the uneven development of American civilization. This sometimes expressed itself as sensitivity to American belatedness as in the case of Stevenson, sometimes as triumph in the surpassing political and economic power that as yet America hardly realized she possessed, a triumph tempered by Adams’ fear that America would make the same mistakes as her predecessor.

Stevenson’s seeming devolution suggested the danger in possessing islands rather than merely appreciating their singular qualities, for individuals as well as nations. Once islands were more valuable than the mainland, but by the nineteenth century different

standards obtained.[260] Like Sir Robert Peel when he rejected Queen Pomare's offer of Tahiti under an English protectorate, Adams has a precise idea of "the value of unclaimed islands" as well as the internal dangers faced by those who colonize them (T179). As he wrote in the *Education of Henry Adams*,

> Apart from too intimate a knowledge of the value of islands, in the South Seas, he knew the West Indies well enough to be assured that, whatever the American people might think or say about it, they would sooner or later have to police those islands, not against Europe, but for Europe, and America too. Education on the outskirts of civilization teaches not very much, but it taught this; and one felt no call to shoulder the lead of archipelagoes in the antipodes when one was trying painfully to pluck up courage to face the labor of shouldering archipelagoes at home. (1052)

"Too intimate" a knowledge manages to assert Adams' authority: he knows the Polynesia too well to say otherwise, but also to decry the experience, he knows more than he wants to know, which suggests a certain exhaustion with the political relations if not his family connection to the islands. The West Indies were also in a familial relationship, in part because of proximity, in part because they were covered under his grandfather John Quincy Adams' handiwork, the Monroe Doctrine. (After a trip to Cuba with his friend Clarence King, Adams worked actively behind the scenes for Cuban independence.) [261] But Adams considered the annexation of the Philippines to be a waste of time, energy and money, since "All our interests are for political peace to enable us to wage economical war." Learning from experience was possible in island backwaters where a future of decline can be predicted, for colonizers as well as colonized.

What it most interesting here is Adams' reversal of space: the continental United States becomes the homogeneous sea in which certain populations remain distinct and distinctly threatening. Those ominous "archipelagoes at home" include not only the West Indies but those islands of the unassimilated "uneconomical races" within the continental

United States itself, the Irish, Mexicans, Africans and Indians who, as the domestic version of Kipling's burden, exert a negative inertial force on the process of civilization. (Consider Americans' too intimate knowledge of the "domestic dependent nations" of the Indians.) Internal projection of the colonial relation reinforces the peril of the external aggression. Adams seems to be visualizing an internal colonization in which the United States, now under threat, might be compelled to adopt the expedients he criticized in Polynesia. Policing could mean anything from the regime of information and administrative control, to the civilizing mission, to martial force. The problem of islands haunts Adams' earlier assumptions in his *History* about the homogeneity of the national character unfolding across the continental United States, let alone the possibility of its export to foreign peoples.

The difficulty of assimilation is conceived in terms of time as well as recalcitrant space. Compare Benedict Anderson's formulation of the nation existing in a homogeneous empty time in which citizens imagine one another in their essential synchronic likeness to be a community, to Adam's vision: "Society offered the profile of a long, struggling caravan, stretching loosely towards the prairies, its few score of leaders far in advance and its millions of immigrants, negroes and Indians far in the rear, somewhere in archaic time" (Edu 937). As a journey in time, Adams imagines the problem as a disparity of group development, with development a function of the inherent properties of the group rather than the effect of external circumstances, This is a form of historicization if each group is imagined evolving or devolving with reference to its own rate, but is fundamentally ahistorical in denying their coeval status as Americans, assuming a racial or ethnic explanation above the working of any qualitative historical

change. In *The Education of Henry Adams*, the scene of Adams' disoriented return to America in 1869 (amid a crowd of anachronistically Jewish immigrants more probable in the 1890s) seems to indicate a cultural intractability at both extremes of society: as a belated straggler from the eighteenth century, "no worse off than the Indians or the buffalo," Adams claims to have lost a sense of the trail himself (Edu 938).[262]

The inevitability of an American empire never seems to be in any doubt for Adams. Rather it seems a function of power as irresistible as the force which drove Thomas Jefferson, the advocate of strict construction and minimal government, to exercise the arbitrary power that "made blank paper of the Constitution" back in 1803 (J:363). By "an act of sovereignty as despotic as the corresponding acts of France and Spain" Jefferson annexed the Louisiana Purchase without the consent of the governed Louisianans abroad or deference to constitutional legitimacy at home. The major difference between the Federalists and Republicans about this assumption of imperial power was the form of rule it was to assume, annexation or assimilation, colony or state. If the distinctiveness of the United States, as Adams writes in his *History*, is its nature as an experiment in democracy, Adams' own distinction was genealogically connected to its success. But the democratic choice of assimilation may not be able to absorb the islands of the culturally intractable wherever their location.

Although America's global power has been assumed, the mistake of Philippine occupation need not be repeated. The nature of its empire was yet to be determined. If its goal was economic hegemony, as Adams proposes, formal political or territorial control on the European model would be a waste of resources:

> We all agree that the old uneconomical races, Boers, Chinese, Irish, Russians, Turks and negroes [sic] must be brought into our system. The whole question is how to do it.

> Europe has always said 'Buy or fight'. So the Irish, the Boers and the Chinese are likely to remain unassimilated. We Americans ought to invent a new method. The old one creates, nourishes, and preserves more dangers than it eliminates. (L5:306)

Since resistance to the European ultimatum brought the United States into being, America, from experience if nothing else, should anticipate the dangers and invent a mode of integration. Adams relies more on native American ingenuity than political principles to find a peaceful solution. The family role of critic of Anglo-American relations has devolved upon Adams: "My life and my father's and my grandfather's and my great-grandfather's and my great-granduncles lives have been spent trying to prevent America from obeying English stupidity" (L5:307). The greatest dilemma would occur if America should be unable to resist the international scramble for territory and simply repeated old models, but the problem remained one of assimilation, incorporating backward peoples both domestic and foreign into an American system while remaining exceptional and unassimilated herself. The future of America has to remain open and unpredictable while that of Tahiti appears irrevocable.

Fears of the "anarchy of empire," as Amy Kaplan calls it, the invasion of the victor by the conquered peoples, were not confined to Adams.[263] Mark Twain's "To the Person Sitting in Darkness," usually remembered as an anti-imperialist polemic against missionary practices, begins with the moral disorder of American cities in an implicit connection of internal and external troubles. Adams' letters adopted a tone of ridicule towards the anti-imperialist movement, whose "crackpot" members included his elder brother, Charles Francis Adams. Both brothers approached territorial expansion historically as a problem of maintaining a distinct national identity, but chose different

aspects of the American experience as historical precedent and disagreed in their estimations of human agency in history.

Charles Francis Adams' 1898 address "'Imperialism' and the 'Tracks of our Forefathers'" celebrates the American fulfillment of Columbus' dream of the Indies and the end of the corrupt Spanish Empire, but argues an exceptional insularity as the basis of American history, a divergence from Old World methods and ideals that is founded on an instinctive separatism. If Old World conquest saw the eventual "amalgamation" of victor and conquered, the Anglo-Saxon "evinced no faculty of dealing with inferior races, as they are called, except through a process of extermination" –the record is clear from the Pequot war "down to the very last election held in North Carolina" (10;16). An attitude "unchristian, brutal, exterminating" has been "the salvation of the race" in its "essentially virile and enduring" qualities (10-11). This instinctive separatism was articulated as foreign policy by Washington's renunciation of foreign alliances and the Monroe Doctrine. Other principles like equality under the law and the consent of the governed assume a homogeneous civilized population as their subjects. Advocates of empire were wrong not only because they denied this peculiar quality of American identity fixed by the American past. In their willingness to abandon "our distinctive national tenets" for Old World models, "which we supposed the world, actuated largely by our example, was about forever to discard," they denied the American character of the global future (25). Charles Francis Adams assumes that amalgamation is fixed as the nature of empire, if the fact of an American empire was still a matter of choice.

While Charles Francis Adams' frame of reference is Anglo-Saxon mastery of racial others in Massachusetts colonial history, his brother's *History* teaches that the

question of empire was settled in Louisiana back in 1804. In the Tahitian *Memoirs*, Europeans are blamed for Polynesian decline: "the foreigners were not wholly responsible [for the spread of disease], although their civilization certainly was; but for the political misery the foreigner was wholly to blame, and for the social and moral degradation he was the active cause" (T6). Yet if American history offered any lessons for the future of the Pacific peoples, Adams' account of the Indiana frontier in 1800 demonstrates fatality, "the law accepted by all historians in theory, but adopted by none in practice; which former ages called 'fate,' and metaphysicians called "necessity," but which modern science has refined into 'survival of the fittest'"(M:343). As Adams writes about the assumption of a French protectorate in Tahiti, Louis Philippe sends "the usual message of great powers to little ones,--an ultimatum, to which the Queen naturally acceded, as small powers always have done, and always must do, before great ones" (T181). The wording here retains the flavor of diplomacy as the personal exchange of courtesies between sovereigns, but the outcome remains the same. Nor was Adams alone in projecting an evolutionary determinism for the islands. Mark Twain mused on the political changes that had occurred in Hawaii since his tour in the 1860s: "The monarchy of my day was gone, and a republic was sitting in its seat. It was not a material change…That imitation monarchy was grotesque enough, in my time; if it had held on another thirty years it would have been a monarchy without subjects of the king's race"(59).[264] A sense of history which saw contact as a single irreversible event, Samoa existing in a state where Hawaii was a hundred years ago (and Tahiti as resembling a deserted Indian village) would relieve Adams of responsibility for Samoa's 1899

incorporation as an American territory while making Stevenson's attempts at intervention look naïve (L3:301).

History as *Belles-Lettres*

As a teacher, Henry Adams complained that he had been unable to construct a system to reconcile the two strains of history, namely, "a fixed science and a course of *belles-lettres*. Between the two conditions I found compromise impossible and separate handling impracticable" (L3:47). The *Memoirs of Arii Taimai*, literary history written for a coterie of Adams' friends and various families, clearly falls into the category of *belles-lettres.* It narrates the descent of the Teva clan, both genealogically and in terms of their declining political power, against the rise of the parvenu Pomare family and its European allies. Critics, to the extent that they have regarded this text at all, have noted its limited interest as "the most esoteric book he ever wrote" (Levenson 216). Most readers see a parallel between the Tevas and the Adamses, two families trained to rule who were supplanted by less worthy opportunists because they adhered to older, nobler values, and who found themselves left with social influence rather than political power. [265] Some readers see the text as a parable of the decline of the West,[266] or "a portrait of a people representative of all people" (Spiller v). I am less interested in discerning a grand narrative, although the fatal impact story of imperialist nostalgia seems more fitting, than in examining the ways that the text enacts Adams' impulse to identify and to distance himself during his Pacific travels, the eventual limit of his identification, and the implications of that limit in imagining through the writing of history an American relationship with the rest of the world. If other readers find fault with the text's

genealogical structure, first person narrative, excess of Tahitian language and confusing voice in limiting the full development of a presumably universal subject, I would focus on the way that this particular Tahitian subject cannot be separated from its peculiar presentation.

The *Memoirs* manifests a generic instability that may be unavoidable, given the divergent interests and purposes of Adams and his native informants as well as their supposed audiences. It is a new/old kind of history; it is autobiography; it is autoethnography; it is local color. Self-identified as "Travels/Tahiti," the text, in collapsing generic boundaries, is also characteristic of the great "rag bag" that was Adams' idea of travel writing. As an attempt at cultural translation which tries to be faithful to his Tevan collaborators yet attractive to his Western circle of correspondents, its disjunctures demonstrate the disparity of his two audiences in interesting ways. But there is a particular instability of the text that has to be assigned to Adams alone, and that is the moment when, fifteen pages before the conclusion, the narrator who has been speaking in the first person all along surprises the reader by announcing that she is now going to speak in her own voice. This is the moment at which Arii Taimai advocates peace through submission to French rule and the single voice, in speaking for herself alone, "in my own words that are more lifelike than any that an editor could use," seems to enunciate the limits of Adams own identification with her and her people. This is the moment when the Adams and Teva inheritances diverge for Henry Adams, when American possibilities became more important than Polynesian certainties.

The form of a Tahitian history would necessarily reflect the priorities of the people who created it. Adams had once speculated about writing a Polynesian romance, with George Sand or Honoré de Balzac as contrasting models, but decided that a Tahitian novel would have to be "some totally new creation of the human mind," assuming a homology between the form of literature and the non-bourgeois, non-Western society that conceived it (L3:434). In the 1890s romance was a popular fictional mode to celebrate the ideals of heroic global expansionism, but Adams was as skeptical of the romantic model as he is of the scientific. [267] What he found appealing was the polarity between a democratic national history and an aristocratic genealogical one, as he wrote after completing the first version of the *Memoirs:* "I really enjoy writing that kind of history. It shows me, too, why I loathe American history. Tahiti is all literary. America has not a literary conception. One is all artistic. The other is all commercial. Both are about equally bankrupt. That is their only marked resemblance" (L4:156). Adams was not an antiquarian; he wanted (needed and lacked) a usable past. Neither scientific nor literary history provided an adequate explanation of social change, but as types each might inform the other and offer points of comparison, leading perhaps to a higher level of generalization or a sense of direction. In writing about Polynesia, as in traveling there, Adams learned the value of difference.

In the absence of any established model with which to organize his unfamiliar material—a first for Adams, who usually started with a form—genealogy, which was the legitimizing principle for the Tahitian elite, became the ordering principle of this aristocratic history a well. It was "the only science in the islands which could fairly claim rank with the intellectual work of Europe and Asia. Genealogy swallowed up history and

made law a field of its own" (T17). Given its preoccupation with descent, the chiefly caste had bloodlines that were "probably purer than in Europe"—a powerful "chiefess" could have as many lovers as she liked, but no infant of impure lineage was allowed to live (T17). Family lineages were closely guarded since they encoded familial rights. A stranger who could prove affiliation would have to be accorded status and property, while an unsuccessful pretender might be put to death. (Accordingly, the Tevas stress the origins of the Pomare family in the uncouth Paumotu Islands and find suspicious gaps in their line.)[268] Publicizing their genealogy became an assertion of prerogative for the Tevas at a time when land titles were being adjudicated under French authority and their own claims were competing with those of the Pomare family.

Strung onto the threads of lineage that finally coalesce in the person of Arii Taimai are stories, songs, poems, and nuggets of ethnographic explanation. As Adams explained: "Without the genealogy to hang it on, the narrative was always wrong or unintelligible" (L3:478). The narrative is less a linear propulsion than a zigzag as it doubles back and sideways in time to fill in the lineage of a new personage, since inheritance is equally possible in male and female lines. The several political "revolutions" that the text describes are marked by a story or poem. One song, which allows Adams a vicarious participation in the text, is the lament of Adams' namesake, Tauraatua, forced to leave his love because her inferior status makes marriage impossible. (LaFarge notes that Tati Salmon brought in another verse of this song which turned it into a call to arms, but Adams omitted that version.)[269] In the oral tradition the "sharp points of their history and the names of their heroes are recorded" as "one keeps a pincushion stuck with pins," to use a homely metaphor, in tales straight out of the storehouse of

Aryan myth (T21). In the perceptions of the *arii*, the chiefly class, the "revolutions" recorded in the literature mark the rotation of power among competing families rather than changes in the form of polity, but this will change.

It may seem strange for Adams to consider this "personal" history when the family is all, but the shifting alliances of island politics are always conveyed as the stories of individual protagonists. Aristocracy for Adams here is not a manifestation of individualism so much as a freedom to be individual predicated on the assumption that status is assured at birth. Thus, for example, gender roles are more easily overridden by the power of caste: "Women played an astonishing part in the history of the island…they figured as prominently in island politics as Catherine of Russia, or Maria Theresa of Austria, or Marie Antoinette of France…in the politics of Europe" (T10). Whereas in America, Adams had to write novels if he wanted to imagine female protagonists.

The text enacts its fidelity to the Tevas in its representation of the Tahitian language. The difficulty of translation is never minimized for an English reader, beginning with the roll of names on the title page: *Memoirs of Arii Taimai e/ Marama of Eimeo/ Teriirere of Toorai/ Teriinui of Tahiti/ Tauraatua I Amo*. The mystifications of a foreign language signal the authenticity of the data.[270] Poetry is presented in the Tahitian language first, with translations alongside or more frequently following, to emphasize the flavor of the language, while the narrator bemoans the impossibility of translation. When translated, a passage often remains mysterious, its political content encoded in a highly metaphorical turn of speech. Occasionally a poem is treated as an untranslatable artifact: a song about a prospective marriage is simply glossed as: "Orie is a fish or bait which attracts the bird Aa-ura, the parrot with red feathers, of Taravao, meaning of course the

Maheanuu, to change places with the bird Terehe, meaning of course Temarii…To translate this song literally would be a hopeless task" (T122). Here translation seems to have an ethical dimension for Adams: some knowledge is apparently unrecoverable and to pretend otherwise would be a betrayal of his informants.[271] These passages are presumably unintelligible only to his Western readers.

The narration proceeds from the legendary time of the demigod ancestor, the shark-man, until the order of succession becomes interwoven with the chronological time of explorers, scientists and missionaries. Tradition that is "indifferent to dates and details, joins together what was far apart, and cares only for what amuses it" is correlated with the accounts of foreigners who pay attention to dates and details but have no insight into what they see (T18). Most notably, the English "could not conceive that any people should be able to exist without some pretense of concentrated authority" (T92) [272] This section, a pastiche of European accounts and native tradition about first contact and early colonization, offers the strongest flavor of Adams' voice in the narration, given its ironic tone and confident handling compared to the careful transmission of the native poetry. That irony is strongly identified with the Tevas against European misunderstanding and malfeasance.

Colonization is a process of self-delusion here. After "the defeat of the natives and sudden friendship for their new European acquaintances," Captain Wallis assumes that Purea, or as he calls her Oberea, Arii Taimai's great-great-great aunt by marriage, is Queen. The narrator ridicules Wallis' sentimental attachment to this lady:

> [H]e was so much more interested in his introduction into good native society that he quite lost sight of politics…his narrative ran almost wholly on the subject of 'my princess, or rather queen,' until it ended in a burst of sentiment which, so far as I can

> learn, stands by in the language of official reports as the only case of an English sea captain recording tears as part of his scientific emotions. (T48-49)

This is not the voice of a woman whose only language is Tahitian of a particularly ancient variety. Purea's own tearful affect at Capt. Wallis's departure, which to the Europeans reads like Dido's lament, is interpreted by the Tevas as an attempt to shore up her family's dynastic ambitions through an advantageous alliance with powerful strangers. But when the strangers failed to return, the whole island punished her "for outrageous disregard of the courtesies which took the place of international law for great chiefs" (T138). Adams discreetly omits her relations with Joseph Banks during Cook's first voyage, the occasion for considerable speculation, censure and laughter in England. We are told that "like a large proportion of the more highly educated ladies and gentlemen of Europe, her views on some points of morality were lax and her later career disastrous," but the details of that laxity are left to the imagination.[273] Imperious, willful and conscious of her prerogatives, Purea acts like one of the models Adams constructed for his essay "The Primitive Rights of Women."

According to Daniel Manheim, Adams surrenders his voice "to escape being implicated in the unilinear narrative of European conquest," but although the text is presented as Arii Taimai's voice the hand of the "editor" seems in control in emphasizing Adams' preoccupations (T231). European blindness has serious consequences for colonial subjects, as the great grandson of John Adams would have cause to know. When Captain Cook arrived, the signs of Purea's reduced political status were obvious, but not their import. Expecting a king, the British settled on a local chief, Tutaha. Thus the Pomare family used their accidental connections with Europeans, and ultimately their conversion to Christianity, to become the "kings" of Tahiti, a word with no meaning in

native terms.[274] The text's antipathy to the Pomares may reflect Marau's attitude, as she divorced her husband, Pomare V, or Adams' partisanship on behalf of his new family. According to LaFarge, Adams, when compiling the variants of song and story from his collaborators, was "more Teva than the Tevas," declining to include a poem Marau brought him in praise of Pomare for example (351). The Pomares are modeled as familiar villains for Adams and his friends in America: he presents them as new men, politicians rather than warriors, (who even have their wives do battle for them); they are quick to seize an opportunity and to realize that they can succeed only by the destruction of the chiefly class.

Given European preconceptions about the nature of sovereignty and the eventual establishment of a continuous missionary presence, the combination of Christianity and firearms, (and they are explicitly linked), makes a qualitative difference in the Pomares' assumption of control. Adams presents the missionaries as innocently obtuse, "the natives looked at the missionaries as a kind of children or idiots, incapable of understanding the simplest facts of island politics or society," and no less dangerous for that (T128). They deal in arms for the Pomares while simultaneously recording the complaints of the people under their illegitimate despotism. But the missionaries learn island politics fast enough when their lives are endangered by the alliance.[275] Unlike the standard nineteenth-century anthropological account, these foreigners' stories are not taken as objective reports but are presumed to be incomplete at best and frequently wrong-headed.[276] Adams' antipathy to the civilizing mission registers as the playful reversal of the trope of the childish native, waiting for the light and to be led.

The “editor’s” voice seems particularly emergent, if falsely naïve, in exposing the perceptual limitations of eighteenth century Europeans and their myth of human perfectibility. It proclaims its ignorance of European ideas yet asserts “the curious accident that Tahiti really influenced Europe” and that Purea, considered the model of natural humanity, “was without her own knowledge and consent, directly concerned in causing the French Revolution and costing the head of her sister queen, Marie Antoinette”(T55). In personal, Tahitian terms, history is framed as the relation of one queen to another. Adams indulges his interest in national character, ridiculing British obtuseness in their quest to identify a royalty that did not exist, while French misapprehension in seeing Tahiti as the state of nature was responsible for the Revolution, as well as the “sentimental attachment” which brought warships back to claim Tahiti decades later (T56). “Attachment” makes fun of a colonial ideology cloaked in the language of romance, as in *The Marriage of Loti*, but there is no rational value to colonizing Tahiti that Adams would conceive.[277] Given the discussion of eighteenth century political ideals, it is striking that America is absent from the text, particularly since John LaFarge’s *Reminiscences* reports Adams’ own connection between Tahiti, the United States, the Adams family and the “pursuit of happiness ” as the “catchword” of the eighteenth century (298). [278] Although the tone is Adams’ own, he suppresses this aspect of his American familial identity here—a link between America and Tahiti mediated through a continuity of European and American ideas is less useful than their common distance from Old World mistakes.

Between the printing of the *Memoirs of Marau Taaroa, Last Queen of Tahiti* in 1893 and the *Memoirs of Arii Taimai* in 1901, the direction of political and economic

power in the Pacific seemed established by war in the Philippines, the U.S. annexation of Hawaii in 1898 and the partition of Samoa in 1899-1900. Arii Taimai had died in 1897. The question is how these events informed Adams' revision of the text and how they strengthened Adams' sense of his American inheritance in relation to archipelagos abroad. As was Adams' custom with the early volumes of his *History*, the earlier printing of perhaps ten copies[279] was circulated as a draft to interested parties for their revisions and additions. The first version ends in 1800 with extensive quotation from, but little commentary on, the *Transactions* of the London Missionary Society that document missionary collusion in Pomare I's reign of terror against the chiefs—the dark ages for the Teva when even the name of their chief is not sure. The second, printed in an edition of perhaps sixty copies continues the narrative to 1846, ending with Arii Taimai's "own story of how I interposed as chiefess, to bring about peace, and the submission of the islanders to French rule" (T181). The first version ends in the obscurity, fear and confusion of war, but the outcome is open; the second commemorates the triumph of peace, but as I shall show, seems to signal the end of Tahitian history for Adams.

Apart from minor corrections and expansions of some poems, the biggest change to the first text was a re-ordering of chapters. The *Memoirs of Marau Taaroa* begins:

> On the 18th of June, 1787, Captain Samuel Wallis, on a voyage of discovery around the world in H. M. Ship "Dolphin," first saw the island of Tahiti, or, as he called it, Otaheite. The story was told in Hawkesworth's Collection of Voyages, and has been told over and over again, for the world never tired of reading it; but I, who have lived in Tahiti all my life and know the tale by heart, shall not repeat it, except so far as it concerns me and my family; and it does so, closely, in the part which at the time most delighted Europe. I must start by saying that all our exact knowledge of dates in the history of the island begins with June 24, 1767...(1)

The *Memoirs of Arii Taimai* shifts this opening to Chapter VII and begins:

> If the Papara family and people had any name, in European fashion, I suppose it would be Teva, for we are a clan, and Teva is our clan name. On the map of Tahiti the four southwest districts…are always marked as *Te Teva iuta*, the inner Tevas, and the whole peninsula of Tairapu…is marked as *Te Teva itai* or outer Tevas. The island of Tahiti is shaped like an hour glass or figure of 8; but as the natives knew neither hour-glasses or figures, they used to call the island a fish…(1)

The first version gives precedence to placing the Tevas in a narrative of world history, but if Tahitian events could be admitted into chronological time, the Tahitian language was misunderstood by Europeans. The second version is discursive, like the opening of Adams' *History* establishing Teva identity as a land and a people. Even so, this chapter can't avoid the centrality of Cook's voyages in discussing the most significant aspect of native population, namely its dramatic decline. (The accounts of European explorers are taken as accurate when they simply report what they see, for estimating pre-contact population figures, for example, but as delusive, to the Tahitians' cost, when they try to interpret what they see.) [280] The moment of first contact is also a moment of Teva supremacy, after Purea and Amo have built a pyramid glorifying their son but before a coalition defeated them. The acculturated Tahitian voice sounds monologic and demonstrates what William Decker calls Adams' "longtime love of performative conversational language" while the other end of that conversation seems to be European (23). "Natives" is used consistently throughout the text but it's not clear whether it refers to non-Teva Tahitians or is a marker of caste. [281]The second version gives pride of place to the Teva, but as the overarching narrative gathers in the branches of genealogy and history, all proceeds to a single person, a single voice and in that person, an end.

The authority of that narrative, written as it is in the first person, might be expected to impose an autobiographical order on the material, but that order is undercut by the mystery of authorial identity. The voice that speaks, sometimes "I," sometimes

"we," is difficult for a reader to grasp. It is not immediately apparent who Arii Taimai is; her name is not mentioned until the end of Chapter IV and her gender not until Chapter XVII.[282] Sometimes the narrator refers to herself as singular, sometimes plural in terms of the clan or Tahitians or a nebulous cosmopolitan identity. In an unusually subjective moment, expressing her youthful unease at being forced by her mother to charm information out of her grandfather, the pronoun shifts again: "she won from the old man what her mother had been unable to win for herself; but she never forgot how little she liked the duty" (T174). It's not clear whether this is an instance of Tahitian formality or Adams' stance of the participant observer, rendering what is most personal, impersonal.

Suddenly, in the last fifteen pages, we are presented with Arii Taimai's own speech, "my own story of how I interposed, as chiefess, to bring about peace, and the submission of the islands to French rule. I repeat it in my own words that are more lifelike than any that an editor could use" (T181). This violation of the generic "autobiographical pact" which agrees to assume an identity between author, narrator and subject is unsettling.[283] Although considering the range of allusions in the narrative, speculating about the connection between "arii" and "Aryan," roaming from comparative mythology to the Middle Ages to Horace Walpole, the existence of an "editor" is no surprise. In Arii Taimai's "own story" of the final twenty pages of the text she acts to prevent a French bombardment by traveling to the Tahitian troops and apparently persuading them to sue for peace, but the absence of Queen Pomare and the Queen's vain hopes for a British intervention remain obstacles to a settlement. Arii Taimai then travels to Raiatea where the "weak-willed" Pomare vacillates for months; finally a second trip brings the Queen back. By her actions Arii Taimai preserves a minimal autonomy for

Tahiti as a protectorate, without succumbing to personal ambition when offered the crown herself. The change of voice may be a courtesy by Adams, offering his adoptive mother the stage at the moment when she makes history, but the gesture also undercuts her authority, as the framing hand of the editor makes itself known, coloring the authenticity of her previous words when authenticity is the source of her power.

The undivided voice does carry the testimony of an actor in a historical event, the one form of history that can never be superseded. In 1886 Adams asserted that "the story to be effective, must be told by the actors; it must in a sense have the interest of autobiography; the only interest that lasts forever, and holds its own as history" (L3:45). But this is not a simple transmission of Arii Taimai's speech, since a Tahitian transcription and English translation exist for the opening part of her story.[284] The translation says:

> In the year 1843 [sic]I was lying on my bed in our house in Papeete, when Peutari v. came to my bedside greatly troubled, saying "I cry for Tahiti! The fearful war with the French is drawing near and the massacre of our men![”] I started up with surprise and became also greatly troubled. Peutari v. again said, "What didn't you know before, and that it only depended with you to make truce?[”]

In the *Memoirs* this becomes:

> During the year 1846 I was resting myself in my room at our house in Papeete, when an old woman by the name of Peutari was shown in. At her entrance I could see that she was very much grieved about something, and a little while after she entered the room she cried out: "I cry for the land of Tahiti. Our people will soon be at war with the French and they will soon be opened like a lot of chickens? [sic] " (T181)

It's not clear why Adams felt the need to change the wording here. Both passages show a deviation from the previous style of the narration that identifies her autobiographical speech.[285] Arii Taimai's now "more lifelike" speech has been smoothed to a more dignified if stilted formality, while Peutari employs a folkloric figure of speech instead of

the word “massacre” that reminds us of its translation but undercuts the seriousness of the situation. In neither do we learn anything about Peutari’s place in Tahitian society or personal relations that might have motivated her intervention, but perhaps what is significant is the call to leadership, for an Adams as well as a Teva, rather than self-promotion. In places Adams’ version adds details, demonstrating the governor’s courtesy, or expanding on a plot to kill Arii Taimai’s companion, “as he was on the French side” or “as lately he had deserted his own side.” In the latter, Adams’ version, “I, however, knew my influence with the natives would be sufficient to save him from any trouble whatever” (T181). Adams cuts as well, removing the invocation of names at the beginning of the speeches as well as the seemingly interesting detail that the people were dismantling their houses and carrying them away before the French could burn them.

Diplomacy apparently plays as large role in the lore of the Tevas as it did for the Adams family. Although the *Memoirs* are full of stories of love and war as befits a romantic history, it becomes apparent that the martial virtues of the Teva cannot prevail. The revolution instituted by the Pomares was not a mere rotation of authority but the destruction of the old system within a global system of power. Thus the future is set not by Opuhara, “their greatest warrior and hero” who fought the last stand on behalf of paganism, but his brother Tati, Arii Taimai’s grandfather, who tried to arrange a truce before the battle and was called “traitor” by Opuhara. A native missionary with a gun killed Opuhara, and, the narrator has been told, Opuhara’s spear, which he named “Brotherless Ourihere” after the confrontation with Tati, now resides in the Louvre (T160). The people “never wholly forgave Tati, although they came to see that Tati was a safer guide than Opuhara. As for submission they had no longer a choice” (T160). Arii

Taimai embodies the coexistence of two sets of warring genealogies: the treaty between the Pomares and the Tevas was sealed by her parents' marriage. As the eldest child of this union, she was promised to the Pomares and raised with Aimata, who became Queen Pomare IV. The difference between Teva and Adams diplomacy is the difference between islands and continents.

However Adams may have emended it, the indeterminacy of Arii Taimai's story has the effect, at least, of the raw stuff of history. Its shapeless accumulation of events gives it the verisimilitude of speech. And while she apparently achieved her end (and the end is the thing here, not the journey), its terms remain at issue. The peace she claims to have created is at most a postponement of hostilities, since she mentions that "in my absence" the chiefs returned to fighting, and the continuance of the Protectorate was only a deferral of the annexation agreed to by the feckless Pomare V, Marau's ex-husband, in 1880. Without the cues of an editor to navigate the local context, it is not clear who these "people," chiefs, "natives," and "whites" are, what options are possible, what motivations probable. Do we read, for example, that "the whites were simply using my name as traitress to her country" as a European assumption of individual opportunism against her apparent presumption that she embodies her country? (T192). The fact of her presence and desire for peace are apparently all the chiefs needed to agree. [286]

With agency and motivation occluded, a narrative that signals a triumphant conclusion with the return of the Queen to Tahiti remains ambiguous: "The peace of the island was then decided upon. On arriving at the governor's house, we found all the commanders of the troops and vessels there, and before them I was thanked by [Governor] Bruat for what I had done for my country" (T196). The passive voice is

puzzling here since "decided" has no immediate referent: was it Arii Taimai, the Queen, the chiefs, or the governor who decided upon peace? In what may be an attempt to depict Arii Taimai's paramount status, it is the governor who thanks her rather than the queen (and the presence of French, British and American commanders attest to her importance). In the absence of editorial guidance the suspicion of collaboration can't be denied.[287] One thing Adams' *History* teaches is the limitation of individual agency: while writing it, he complained that Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe "appear like mere grasshoppers, kicking and gesticulating, on the middle of the Mississippi River. There was no possibility of reconciling their theories with their acts, or their extraordinary foreign policy with dignity." Dignity at least Arii Taimai retained by bowing to the inevitable destiny of small islands and making the best arrangement she can.

Offering the subject position to a native informant has an implicit political significance. Ronald Martin appreciates the *Memoirs* because it anticipates present-day standards of ethnographic practice in presenting the native voice as narrator, in avoiding the terminology of primitivism, in presenting a critique of European colonialism and allowing its informants to edit the text. What Martin and Daniel Mannheim, who cite the *Memoirs* against the sometimes imperialist tone of Adams' letters, neglect is the allochronic relationship the text represents.[288] Adams doesn't have to use the language of primitivism because it is implicit in his sense of history in the differential times that he and Arii Taimai inhabit. She *is* history. She embodies all the lineages; she is the repository of traditional knowledge; they die with her as Adams imagines her, the last great archaic woman.

If Adams' interest in Tahiti is not that of a savage "cannibal tour," it is not because he doesn't see the Polynesians as primitive, but that he values a particular version of primitivism as aristocratic civility.[289] But having done this, Adams draws a line. There is no ethical imperative to treat Arii Taimai's speech as transcribed. Unlike his treatment of the poetry it is not an indication of the untranslatability of communication across cultures, only an obligation to courtesy and aesthetics to enshrine her in a flattering light. In Adams' terms this is history as *belles-lettres* rather than science. By historicizing the Tahitians' experience within a framework of developmental stages, what happens to them is the inevitable result of the forces of history. Their ripple of influence in the eighteenth century may still reverberate in a Western memory of lost paradises, but they suffer the nineteenth-century insignificance of islands that are not empires, or stepping stones to empires. Compared to the contemporary memoirs of Marau's fellow Queen, Liliuokalani, whose self-presentation contested the popular image of her, nothing seems to be at stake within the text. Adams can afford to give Arii Taimai a voice in a history that is posthumous, if the Polynesians might not have seen it this way.

In the sections of the narrative that recount native encounters with the uncomprehending French and English, Adams' portion of the collective "I" is strongest. Both as Adams and as Teva, he has experienced the vagaries of European power and its unintended effects on colonial subjects. And as the author of a *History* which is in part about the struggles of the young republic to retain its autonomy, he can offer a postcolonial sympathy. But in signaling difference with the introduction of the final single voice, he is redrawing a boundary around the occasion of submission to imperial authority and setting a limit on his identification. From an Adams family perspective of

practical statesmanship, the Tevan submission to the forces of history may be heroic, given the futility of war, but these are not the aggrandizing forces that an American recognizes acting upon his own nation. As Bishop Berkeley predicted in 1752, "Westward the course of Empire takes its Way/…Time's noblest offspring is the last." Adams' *History* had seen the course of empire set with the purchase of Louisiana and by 1900 "colonial" history had a wider definition for Americans.[290] An American capitulation to history was the occasion of coming into one's power.

The apotheosis of Adams family diplomacy is described in *The Education of Henry Adams*, when developments in Europe in 1898 "frightened England into America's arms" and an acknowledgment of their new relation: "as he sat at Hay's table, listening to any member of the British cabinet, for all were alike now, discuss the Philippines as a question of balance of power in the east, he could see that the family work of a hundred and fifty years fell at once into the grand perspective of true empire building" (1051-52). In this moment of post-colonial triumph identified as family vindication, Adams family business once again converges with the forces of history, (or as Adams came to describe it simply as "force") and history seems to make sense, at least temporarily: "Never before had Adams been able to discern the working of law in history…but he thought he had a personal property by inheritance in this proof of sequence and intelligence in the affairs of men" (1052). Adams can't sustain this note of gratification towards "the other diplomatic results" of the war, like the annexation of the Philippines. Here he pronounces his lack of illusions about "the value of islands" and anticipates the threats their incorporation would bring (1052). But ultimately Adams announces his version of submission to the inevitable: "The country decided otherwise, and one acquiesced readily

enough, since the matter concerned only the public willingness to carry loads"(1052). [291] Having delivered his warning, he "acquiesced" with surprising complacency to the acquisition of colonies.

The Adams family, like the Salmon family (Arii Taimai's children), was invested in the revitalization of native elites. In the wake of loss, the choice was to be insular and conservative or expansive and acquisitive. The Tevas adopted Adams into their genealogy while the Adams family success in achieving rapprochement with England was possible only through their proxy, John Hay. Adams' crisis of generativity was not an absence of generativity so much as a crisis of direct descent. Despite his conceit of a "posthumous" existence, Adams' relation to productive and reproductive power was substantial, but collateral: he held political influence rather than elective office; he was the "stablemate" to statesmen like Hay; childless, he identified himself as the uncle to nieces and "nieces in wish"; and each self-described literary "failure" was succeeded by a sidestep into a new form.

Through their own proxy, the Salmons saw the *Memoirs* as a way to rehabilitate their family inheritance, to engage and revise the dominant discourses about Tahiti as well as retain their land. As Tati wrote:

> We have been so accustomed to hear the immorality of Tahiti condemned by all of the travelers that ever put foot here, that you have no idea how your words have awaked a new sort of feelings, it has made all of us look into the subject more seriously than ever, for you must have known all that has happened here and our family bore a good deal of the brunt of it, most however being lies. [292]

According to Marau, both she and her mother had embarked earlier on projects to salvage ancient, often proscribed traditions; for Marau in particular, transmission of past glories was a reassertion of family prestige (Mémoires 38-39). Her own version, the *Mémoires*

de Marau Taaroa, compiled in the 1920s but not published before her death, often incorporates Adams' text.[293] But while the difference in political power between *arii* and royalty is significant to Adams, Marau collapses the distinction to claim an equivalent status—her mother is "Arii Vahine, Princesse de la Paix," the true queen of Tahiti (271).

This assertion of Tahitian dignity wouldn't have meant much to Adam's other audience at home; the intended readership for this text seems to have been divided from the start. While composing the book, Adams wrote Marau with questions about genealogy as well as a request for more "risqué" stories, so he can "select what suits our time." Adams flatters her by asserting their coeval status while retaining the authority to decide not only what is truly Tahitian, but the true contemporary standard, the metropolitan relation to local color: "Nowadays in Europe and America, we are getting to like our flavors pretty strong. We want the whole local color," namely the Tahiti of "the old days" when it was "almost as improper as Europe, and very much more frank about it" (L4:82). Local color fiction offered previously marginalized authors and cultures entrée into a wider literary culture in return for privileged access into native ways. Tahiti's "immoral" reputation would suit fin-de-siécle local color writing which became increasingly interested in aestheticizing transgressive experience.[294] Thus Marau is left the option to violate contemporary Tahitian norms of respectability for the sake of a putative past, or demonstrate her provinciality in a book that is ostensibly being written for her.[295]

Discretion about the "supposed laxity of Tahitian morals" wins out in the text, since "no one knows how much of the laxity was due to the French and English themselves" (T:55-56). The book as written denies the mildly sensational promise of its

title, *Memoirs of Marau Taaroa, Last Queen of Tahiti*; not only does the volume end before Marau's birth, but the whole concept of queenship is presented as a Eurocentric misapprehension. Arii Taimai is presented with all the noble character which Adams ascribed to Wallis' misconception of Purea. In fact in his letters Adams replicates the sentiments he ridicules in Wallis: in bidding Adams farewell, she spoke "with such dignity and feeling" that, even though he didn't understand a word of what she said, "I quite broke down. I shall never see her again, but I have learned from her what the archaic woman was" He later professes, "I love the old lady with all my heart" (L3:485;494). There is no hint of the *Memoirs* vision of Purea as archetype in his view of Arii Taimai, as perhaps there is in Marau.

Adams' comment that he could understand from Arii Taimai "what old Queen Pomare was" is not so clear given the general antipathy to that family. Early in her reign Pomare IV and her circle were condemned for their sexual license and general indulgence, but by the time British and French warships were alternately asserting control over Tahiti she was represented as a woman in distress, a mother and queen on the model of Victoria, who beseeched her fellow queen to take her country into the British fold.[296] In *The Marriage of Loti*, Queen Pomare mourns as she watches the physical and mental decline of her children, but there is a hint of romantic adventurism in her past. A note tells us: "From the day of her death may be reckoned the end of Tahiti, from the point of view of native customs, local colour and the charms of individuality" and it is in this light that Adams sees the old lady (209). In the contemporary memoirs of Lili'uokalani, this island queen presents herself as a good Christian occupied in the work of social uplift; she appeals to her fellow believers to oppose Hawaiian annexation and return her to her

rightful place (and predicts the anger of Jehovah in avenging the theft of Naboth's vineyard if they do not.)

In contrast, Arii Taimai remains inaccessible. She asserts no solidarity with her readers on the grounds of maternity or religion and makes no compelling claims on them beyond appreciation for her heroism and regret at the death of what she represents. She does seem to share with Lili'uokalani a sense of prerogative, in the assumption that her interests are identical with those of her people (in Lili'uokalani's case this meant an expansion both of royal power and native suffrage).The implication of Tahitian history, as mediated through Adams' imperialist nostalgia, was that they were no longer the people who inhabited "a sea of islands" and set out on voyages of colonization; their dwindling energies are focused on the conservation of the patrimony memorialized in the text. Queen Lili'uokalani lists her artistic accomplishments, including her translation of a Hawaiian creation myth, but she doesn't present it in her memoirs as an object for our admiration; she tells readers she has had it privately printed and deposited in libraries.

The Teva story still appeals to local color as the cultural acquisitiveness of Adams' Western readers, a way of collecting and controlling the foreign within a familiar frame for readers with the taste to appreciate the piquant flavor of a matriarch who displayed her ancient nobility by sitting on the floor to eat. The "TRAVELS/ TAHITI" proclaimed before the title page can refer to the book as the end product of travel or inspire imaginative flights from non-Tahitian readers, but it does not describe the narrative or its putative subject. "Henry Adams" doesn't appear on the title page, but the private nature of its distribution insured that its authorship was known, even if the reader failed to recognize the identity of "Tauraatua I Amo," the last in the succession of

honorifics on the title page. For Adams' circle of correspondents, a mobile social elite for whom the association of travel and high culture involved what Veblen calls the consumption of "immaterial goods," the text shares the ambiguous public/private status of Adams' travel letters (35).[297]

The *Memoirs* is more successful as an artifact than as a readerly text. Its chief claim to virtue, authenticity, is not enough to sustain an identification for readers who lack knowledge of the discursive field in which it was created, for whom these stories of individuals, while significant for the descendants who understand the relations they encode, are recounted with a certain generic abstraction that emphasizes history when it should be paying attention to literature.[298] Adams doesn't follow Stevenson's lead here. There is no attempt to reproduce the techniques of storytelling; the stories are presented with scientific detachment as samples from the archive of Aryan folklore. Adams, usually so interested in distinctions, points out the transcultural similarities of the tales instead of allowing his readers to discover them through the pleasure of the telling—the tale that he insists is the Teva version of the Trojan war turns out to be a comedy, for example. J. C. Levenson contrasts the "monographic accuracy" of the *Memoirs* with the freshness of the letters and sees the influence of LaFarge's painting lessons in the latter (216). For Adams' Tahitian relatives, though, the *Memoirs* fixes oral tradition to a single variant with Adams as judge, but offers black and white evidence of their entitlements in return.[299]

For his Western friends the *Memoirs of Arii Taimai* is a unique souvenir, better than the paltry stone artifacts Adams was able to buy and the mats he was given, objects highly valuable in Polynesian eyes but little decorative to European perception.

Contemporaneity, an unstable alternation between allochronic and coeval perspectives, remains a formal problem in the text as well as a practical problem for any empire that requires the acquisition of land and peoples. The *Memoirs* addresses two separate elites whose interests cannot in the end be reconciled by a mutual appreciation for perfect manners, (even if Theodore Roosevelt did find Tati Salmon a "polished gentleman" when he visited his adopted brother in Washington).[300] The imposition of a single voice, an exercise in both cultural empathy and ventriloquism, merely highlights the internal incongruity. And having experimented with the capacity of "I" to delineate collective experience, Adams will turn to the impersonal third person to write the history of his life and his generation in *The Education of Henry Adams.*

The distinctions of Polynesian travel confirmed Adams' oppositional stance to the uniformity of American culture and offered him a compensatory status as the member of a local elite. With LaFarge's assistance he could recall the wonder of childhood in the sensual experience of art, while history as *belles-lettres* allowed him to evoke the experience of the past in the skin of fictive ancestors. The idea of history as genealogy was hardly unfamiliar to an Adams who was a medieval historian, (in 1886 he mused that "genealogy has a curious, personal interest, which history wants"), but the practice of writing in the heroic mode was a refreshing contrast to the scientific model of history he has been writing (L3:6). Or as Adams described it, "I have amused myself by printing (ultrissimo-privately) a small volume of South Seas Memoirs, for 'my sister Marau, the Queen of Tahiti,' and it has amused me much more and is much better reading, than my dreary American history, which is to me what Emma Bovary was to Gustave Flaubert" (L4:157). Adams can trade the banality of "provincial manners" for the romantic

imagination of the South Seas and an alternative system of values. An aristocratic society based on gift exchange and characterized by honor, sensuality, generosity, childishness and exquisite manners was a fit subject for an Old World dramatic history of high achievement, something Adams missed in America where democracy was a vast oceanic leveling and commercialism seemed the ultimate value.

But the significance of Adams' Polynesian education as journey and text rested not so much in the value of romance as the uses of alterity in writing history, in locating an origin in the point at which the horizons of difference and identification meet. For Adams there remained no possibility of synthesis between the aristocratic and aesthetic past and the democratic and scientific present, any more than he might marry a Samoan *taupo*, but although he might decry the lack of unity, the existence of an alternative is a source of imaginative freedom. Here Adams learned the value of historicizing difference and imagining himself as the inheritor of the earlier tradition. He might plot the sequence of history by connecting the point of origin to the present and project its direction, something Adams had not been able to do in more than quantitative terms at the end of his *History* of the United States. If human agency was limited, as American and Tevan histories seemed to demonstrate, the more one knew about the direction of history, the greater the ability to employ its force while submitting to its power. Adams' island journey also suggests that a material encounter with an original past whose monuments are both inanimate and aesthetically congenial (twelfth century France, for example) might be easier to subject to imaginative colonization than the living museum of Polynesia. Between the first and second versions of the *Memoirs*, Adams wrote the first draft of *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres*, which is the subject of my next chapter.

Chapter IV. History Written in Monuments: *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres*

In concluding his *History of the United States of America during the Administrations of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison*, Henry Adams expressed his dissatisfaction with the conventional history he was practicing. The objections he raised spoke to his own formal and speculative inclinations. Rankean scientific history with its emphasis on facts was not configured to answer Adams' qualitative questions about the nature of American society and the direction of its ideals and intelligence. If he was hoping to find the sources of an authorizing ideal to revitalize society on higher principles, he failed. Instead, unspecified forces moving beneath the surface of events appeared to govern his political, diplomatic, military and social history. The study of democracy, the ultimate social development, seemed to require some as-yet-uninvented form of scientific history whose object of study was the mass, the nation, not the individual agent. Adams' *History* leaves readers with the image of the democratic ocean in which all the atoms were stirring, but only a new science could "measure its currents, foretell its storms, or fix its relations" (M:1335).

For the sake of an international context that would highlight the lines of American character, Adams had used the archives of five nations in writing his *History*, but not until his trip to Polynesia in 1890-91 did he realize the full importance of place in writing about the past. Touring the South Pacific confirmed the possibility that travel in space could be transmuted into travel in time. What became significant in Polynesia for Adams was a conception of history as difference, in the vestiges of archaic society he felt he had uncovered and in the way that the *Memoirs of Arii Taimai* attempted, not very

successfully, to capture an appropriate form for that history. The past he recounts in the Tahitian *Memoirs* is an alien country compared to the *History*; its story is all literary and aristocratic, told in songs and tales of individual deeds that commemorate the shifting conjunctions of chiefly genealogy. In *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres* (1904), the subject of this chapter, and the *Memoirs of Arii Taimai* (1901), the two works that he explicitly designated his "Travels" in France and Tahiti, Adams translated his journeys into the experience of simpler, more primitive ages, and societies whose values could be posed in diametrical opposition to his own.[301]

Writing about Tahiti created problems of temporality and point of view that Adams could not resolve in a single form; the *Memoirs* had to be read alongside his letters to be intelligible. Tahiti did give Adams the experience of composing unconventional history, writing from another place, inhabiting its alternative point of view and seeking a form analogous to its worldview. In comparison the Middle Ages of *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres* offered both familiar ground and a fresh field. Adams had been the first American academic whose sole responsibility was medieval history,[302] although the visible product of his studies was an essay on Anglo-Saxon law. His attention to the Virgin of Chartres was an extension of his earlier inquiries into the place of women; the irreducible categories of sexual difference were both troubling and liberating for Adams. His devotion to the Virgin marked a break with his seventeenth-century Puritan and eighteenth-century enlightened ancestors, but a hypothetical genealogical relation to the Normans allowed him to assert a physical link to a people chosen for the strangeness of their mentality as well as their remarkable accomplishments in art, war and religion.

Adams wrote about the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries in *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres* not simply for the refreshment it provided from a dispiriting present, although, as in Polynesia, the sense of regeneration he felt in the stimulus of "new worlds" was part of the attraction. [303] *Chartres* is both a social critique and a search for the sources of generativity, a new revitalizing generalization. The narrative first presents itself as the story of two tourists, an uncle and niece, on a summer's tour of France, whose geographical tour concludes half-way through the text. The pilgrimage which might have been expected to result in some new conviction, if not conversion, ends in a state of yearning for the lost unity encompassed by the divine love of the Virgin. Its revelation concerns the power of art to stimulate the imagination, not to a profession of faith reborn, but to a sense of the power that faith once had. From this emotional climax, the narrative moves implicitly to seek the sources of decline and trace the beginnings of the transition to modernity. The return of the cathedral as metaphor unifies the sections, as Adams describes the construction of a theological justification for faith.

In its broadest terms, then, *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres* describes a quest for historical experience. It seeks to establish a relation with the past, provisionally breaching the gap but not closing it. Adams presents the historical imagination in play, at play amid the traces of the past, attempting to reproduce that contact in the mind of the reader, and ultimately beginning to work through that experience to a grand generalization about the nature of history. The best evidence for past mentalities lay in their cultural productions, the past reified. Through a travel narrative Adams could stage encounters with these monuments and gauge the energies that had created them by the effects they produced on the mind of the traveler. Conducted as a series of encounters with cultural treasures,

Chartres represents the typical occupation of the leisure traveler in search of European polish, but also makes visible the historian's emotional investment in his or her materials, the desire that motivated the encounter with an archive. Adams' documents are aesthetic, from the architectural: building, sculpture and window; to the literary: epic, hymn, love poem, tale, chronicle, song, hagiography, philosophical argument and theological treatise. Adams chose them as symptomatic of the society whose organic unity was so unlike the multiplicity of modern life.

As Adams had prescribed for Tahiti, so also the history of aristocratic, spiritual, martial France conforms to a model that is "all literary" and "all artistic"; the point of its utility for Adams is its distance from the scientific commercial civilization which might be captured by scientific history. As he wrote to the medieval historian Henry Osborn Taylor, a former student, "You want to see connection. All I now care for is the break" (L5:247). Retrospectively, Adams asserted he was using the Middle Ages as the starting point of "unity" (if that unity was a precarious balance of forces) to plot the course of acceleration of western thought to the "multiplicity" of the twentieth century and beyond. *Chartres* was "intended to be the starting point, since I could not get enough material to illustrate primitive society, or the society of the seventh century B.C. as I would have liked. I wanted to show the intensity of the vital energy of a given time, and of course that intensity had to be stated in its two highest terms—religion and art." [304] Adams was particularly interested in the moment of transition in the twelfth century when he assumed the spirit of the Middle Ages reached its zenith and Western society began to turn from idealistic to commercial and scientific.

"That unclassifiable book" is how the medievalist president of the American Historical Society described *Chartres* in 1923, though he placed it among the histories of art.[305] Certainly *Chartres* has its deficiencies by the Rankean standards of Adams' own *History*.[306] As Adams wrote Taylor, "To me, accuracy is relative. I care very little whether my details are exact, if only my *ensemble* is in scale. You need to be thorough in your study and accurate in your statements. Your middle-ages exist for their own sake, not for ours" (L5:628). *Chartres* is not objective and detached, proclaims its reliance on secondary sources, is cavalier about providing evidence for its idiosyncratic generalizations, rejects the study of statecraft and economics for the lightweight feminine subjects of art and culture, and like its medieval subjects asserts its preference for "poetry" over "facts," feeling over knowledge. Declining to publish it in 1905 Adams said, "I should bring on my head all the Churches and all the Universities and all the Laboratories at once" (L5:625).

Apologists for *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres* have argued that it should be read not as history but as a "prose poem," a "cathedral in words."[307] Henry Osborn Taylor set the critical tone when he categorized the book less as history, in which "the writer is seemingly lost in his subject," than as literature, in which the personality of the author is foremost. We listen with delight as the "Master of the Show" speaks to "the elect," but by the conclusion we "are left in doubt whether we have gone the round of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, or the round of the mind of Henry Adams, which uses its great knowledge of that period to reflect its own reactions."[308] With its intensely personal orientation, *Chartres* is history of an unconventional kind for an early twentieth century

historian, suited to its pre-modern subject, and contrived to explicate an epoch whose character seemed inimical to modern disciplines of knowledge.

Adams called *Chartres* "the only book I ever wrote that was worth writing" on the basis of what he considered its successful form (L6:341). Its structure is more symmetrical than his other books; it achieves a kind of intellectual synthesis at second hand in Adams' idiosyncratic version of Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae*, and probably most important for Adams, it inspires and authorizes the beginnings of his own theory of history, later completed in the *Education*. The cathedrals were a testament to human devotion and aspiration to an ideal, "the struggle of [man's] own littleness to grasp the infinite," but also "the unsatisfied, incomplete, overstrained effort of man to rival the energy, intelligence and purpose of God" (C439). Their aspiration was directed against heaven as well as towards it. *Chartres* has been described as Adams' spiritual autobiography, but his attraction to the cathedrals as the height of human achievement and his inquiries into the forces behind their generation seem to trace the revival of his ambition as well.[309]

Formally, *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres* divides itself into what might best be described, after Robert Mane, as a triptych.[310] The middle section, centered on the Virgin of Chartres, is flanked by two wings treating the masculine principle in war and philosophy. First, four chapters discuss Church and State Militant, exemplified by Mont Saint Michel, the *Chanson de Roland,* and the churches of Normandy. Adams grants the centerpiece to the feminine principle in art and religion as six chapters describe the special qualities of the cathedral of Chartres, and three chapters depict, respectively, the queen of Heaven, the queens of earth, and ordinary woman exalted in literature. Finally,

the third wing explores the reassertion of the masculine principle in philosophy, ranging from the critical dialectic of Abélard and the scholastics, to the antilogic of Francis of Assisi and the mystics, to Thomas Aquinas' monument of faith and reason, the *Summa Theologiae*. The larger structure also replicates Adams' version of the Trinity, rectifying the damage done when, as he described it in "Primitive Rights of Women," the early Christian Church adopted the idea of the Trinity but "dethroned the woman from her place" in favor of the Holy Ghost. The spread of Mariolatry nonetheless "proved how strongly human nature revolted against the change" (Rights 343).

My discussion explores the potentialities and limits of "Travels," as Adams tests this expansive designation through a number of sub-forms: Adams' use of the conventions of travel-writing and the tourist as a figure of historical inquiry and social critique; his return to the issues of sexual difference and genre, exploring the place of women in history and nature through the symbol of the Virgin and the nieces who are his putative audience; Adams' exploration of the pilgrimage, broadly conceived, as a vehicle of personal, artistic and social renewal; and finally Adams' reconstruction of a third monument, the Church Intellectual, or more generally, a study of the artist as system-builder. These separate topics reflect the multiple discrete perspectives of Adams' thought. The ground of the text shifts back and forth from place to place, century to century, identification to detachment, male to female values. Adams' thinking sorts itself into irreconcilable categories, forms whose differences can be solved, to the extent that they can be solved, only by the transformations of time, rather than an integrative synthesis.

It seems useful to begin by reviewing some of the conditions, personal, social, historical that influenced Adams' thinking in writing *Chartres* and, beyond it, the *Education of Henry Adams*, particularly his sense of the value of art, the uses of emotion, the role of science in history, and the inadequacy of current models of explanation.

Preconditions

The immediate impetus to write *Chartres* rose from Adams' 1895 tour of cathedrals in Normandy and France with his former student, Henry Cabot Lodge, senator from Massachusetts, his wife "Nannie," Anna Cabot Mills Lodge, and their sons. Although Adams had seen his first cathedral some thirty years earlier, the Gothic style was a revelation: "The more I study [the medieval cathedral], the more I admire and wonder…The result was beyond what I should suppose possible in so mean an animal as man" (L4:327). Chartres was "the greatest single creation of man," (L4:327). As Adams wrote in the *Education*, "One sees what one brings" to a monument, and his reactions at the turn of the century were influenced by personal history, contemporary events and the ongoing context of nineteenth-century medievalism.

Adams' choice of the Middle Ages as a subject may seem predictable, since from 1870 to 1877 he was a professor of medieval history.[311] But he attributed his interest in cathedrals to his growing sense of the importance of art and artists, who alone seemed to have access to primitive and child-like instincts (as developmental theory posited primitive as childlike):

> After all, really, it was La Farge and his glass that led me astray; not any remembrance of my dreary Anglo-Saxon Law which was a *tour-de-force* possible only to youth. Never did any man go blind on a career more virtuously than I did, when I threw

> myself so obediently into the arms of the Anglo-Saxons in history, and the Germans in art. The reaction, it is true, has been the more violent. (L5:247)

Contrast the blindness caused by poring over Anglo-Saxon script and producing narrow monographs about the significance of *Sac* and *Soc* with the amplifying power of experience, although the direct experience of light and color could be blinding at times. Under the tutelage of the Catholic La Farge, his travelling companion in the Pacific, Adams felt he had regained the direct connection to sensory experience, to the light, color and movement he had known as a child, and had learned really to see. La Farge's copy of *Chartres* was inscribed, "Your pupil" (Hayward 358).[312] Adams attributed catching the "disease" of interest in medieval churches to his college friend, the architect Henry Hobson Richardson, a master of the Neo-Romanesque style whose Trinity Church was the model for St. John's in *Esther* and who in the 1880s designed adjoining houses in Washington for Henry and Clover Adams and John Hay and family.[313]

Adams' turn to the Middle Ages was motivated in part by the increasing repugnance he felt for his own time. Called back to America during the Panic of 1893 when the family trust faced a crisis, he found his own money secure, yet Adams shared the national mood, describing himself to Hay as "about the scaredest man I know." The measure of his fear and anger can be read in the unusually violent tone of his letters:

> I expect troubled times for many years to come. On all sides, especially in Europe and Asia, the world is getting awfully rickety. In our country we shall follow more or less the path of the world outside. For my own part, hating vindictively, as I do, our whole fabric and conception of society, against which my little life has squeaked protest from its birth, and will yell protest till its death, I shall be glad to see the whole thing utterly destroyed and wiped away. With a communism I could exist tolerably well, for the commune is rather favorable to social consideration apart from wealth; but in a society of Jews and brokers, a world made up of maniacs wild for gold, I have no place. In the coming rows, you will know where to find me. Probably I shall be helping the London mob to pull up Harcourt and Rothschild on a lamp-post in Piccadilly. (L4:128)

Increasingly in the 1890s Adams felt the world was headed for a smash-up. In an obsessive study of global trade statistics, currency circulation and energy production, he sought to predict the time and place of the catastrophe. Adams believed that the U. S. was fundamentally sound but at the mercy of European powers who had sacrificed her to preserve themselves. Adams' own experience of the commune came not from Marx or the Paris Commune but from the "communistic" societies of Polynesia where no one had money and goods were distributed in an aristocratic gift economy—and the "social consideration" of lineage determined status. His quest to discover economic solutions did lead him to read *Capital:* "I think I never struck a book which taught me so much, and with which I disagreed so radically in conclusion," and for a time to consider economics the determining force behind events (L4:194-95).

This letter to Hay must be the first time that Adams placed himself within the mob, even figuratively, and not as a disinterested, or more likely, repelled observer, but as one swayed by the emotions of the moment himself. [314] The outburst was unusual for Adams yet typical of his letters of the period, which set Vernon Harcourt, the chancellor of the Exchequer, and the banker Nathan Rothschild as his targets.[315] Adams began to use the words "gold-bug," "banker," "Lombard St." and "Jew" as synonyms for the capitalist forces that he thought were debasing and disordering society. He proclaimed himself a populist, although he blamed populism for turning his grandfather and great grand-father out of the Presidency.[316]

Adams' persona as the "Conservative Christian Anarchist" made its debut, complaining that he couldn't bomb President Cleveland in the White House because his own windows would shatter, although in general this figure was content to watch the

spectacle of impending chaos, his private *Götterdammerung.* The feelings unleashed by the prospect of economic and social chaos were not surprising in themselves, only that Adams allowed himself to write them; their expression has the effect of an exploration into forbidden territory. The articulation of an emotion gives it shape, tests its validity, and can activate other associated thoughts.[317] In *Chartres* Adams wrote about a world that was outside modern structures of thought and could best be approached by feeling: "one is trying to catch not a fact but a feeling," His book professes the attempt to recover lost feelings for an age that has forgotten them, that has forgotten how to feel (C355). Adams' thought-experiment in populism, in surrendering himself, if only in imagination, to the force of some collective emotion, might have conditioned his choice of the eleventh and twelfth centuries and the mass movements waging Crusades and building cathedrals, even to the way he dramatizes passages in which he and his reader-companion are part of the medieval crowd.

This surrender to feeling could have pernicious effects. It was uncharacteristic of Adams, if relatively trivial, to declare himself a jingo in favor of war with Britain over a Venezuelan boundary dispute; his chief motivation seems to have been to spite the Boston bankers. Far more serious were Adams' expressions of anti-Semitism, beyond the conventional prejudices he had previously displayed.[318] As he spun out successive versions of approaching economic and social catastrophe in the mid-1890s, Jews were always involved somehow, if not as forces than as symptoms of decay, to the point where "Jew" became shorthand for anything and everything Adams found disturbing. When in Britain, his attention was directed to an influx of Jews supposedly spoiling British society and causing the Boer War, while in Paris the Dreyfus affair provided a focus for feelings

that even among Adams' friends were not quite respectable. [319]Adams' anti-Semitism subsided, or at least its expression decreased, when Adams occupied himself with writing books again, although his later work doesn't show any increase in self-awareness.[320]

Adams pondered the historical roots of the crisis by collaborating on his brother Brooks' *The Law of Civilization and Decay*, the book Henry would describe as his "Bible of Anarchy." The *Law* located the present troubles at the terminus of historical oscillations of consolidation and decentralization, civilization and barbarism, from the Roman to the British Empire.[321] Both Henry and Brooks focused on energy as the motor of universal history that fired human achievement: Brooks' economic emphasis dictated following the money supply, while Henry posited a generic force for which economic power was one form. The *Law* highlighted the Middle Ages as the era of artistic, religious and martial ideals furthest from present thinking, but the Crusades also represented the turning point when emotional, imaginative man, ruled by fear, began the transformation to commercial man, ruled by greed.[322] Brooks celebrated "the force which was incarnate imagination" in the great Crusader castles, which through the science of military engineering advanced consolidation (73). Conversely, the incarnate imagination of the cathedral was a dead end, "a gulf which cannot be bridged, and which has broadened with the lapse of centuries," and so particularly interesting to Henry (294).

Both brothers were emotionally overwhelmed by the experience of the cathedral. After Henry had his epiphany, Brooks described his own, characteristically more extreme, reaction years before: "I really and truly did believe the miracle, and as I sat and blubbered in the nave, and knelt at the elevation, I did receive the body of God…To me the Gothic is the greatest emotional stimulant in the world" (L4:335, n. 1). However,

none of this experience got into his discussion of the Middle Ages. Brooks may not have been the commercial type, but he presented himself as the modern man of science in his writing. He revered the knight as the "man of emotion" superseded by commercial man, but Henry's text violates the standard of commercial utility as well as, more poignantly, the Adams tradition of reticent self-control, by expressly seeking and communicating emotion, as in this reaction to the stained glass of Chartres:

> If the imperial presence is stamped on the architecture and the sculpture with an energy not to be mistaken, it radiates through the glass with a light and color that actually blind the true servant of Mary. One becomes, sometimes, a little incoherent in talking about it; one is ashamed to be as extravagant as one wants to be; one has no business to labor painfully to explain and prove to oneself what is as clear as the sky; one loses temper in reasoning about what can only be felt, and what ought to be felt instantly, as it was in the twelfth century. (C459)

Adams is making an illogical assertion, that the Virgin, as a living entity, was literally the creator of Chartres. He doesn't try to rationalize this claim, by offering an anthropological explication of superstition, the "fetish worship" of Brooks' *Law* or, for that matter, his own *Education*. He tries to participate in it, to be the "true servant of Mary," to the extent that a modern son of the Puritans, who, as a condition of modernity has lost the emotion of faith, is capable. The church itself is his primary document in investigating the force that created it, but the bridge of ages here is a disorienting rite of passage. The overload of sensory perception, the immediate panic of blindness, seem necessary to turn detachment into identification and thought into feeling. [323]

In praising the finished *Law*, Henry Adams showed that he hadn't abandoned the idea of scientific history so much as changed his understanding of what it meant: "He has done what only the greatest men do; he has created a startling generalization which reduces all history to a scientific problem, and yet which is so simple and obvious that

one cannot believe it to be new" (L4:336). Adams doesn't seem to be writing ironically in this letter to Elizabeth Cameron. Brooks and he were thinking along the same lines, but Brooks' cruder treatment was no threat to Henry's finesse, rather a stimulus to his thinking.[324] In its broad strokes, Brooks' *Law* seems as much polemic as history.[325] Most professional historians would have equated scientific history with upholding a Rankean methodology and seen the reduction to formula as a problem, but the brothers, gentlemen scholars outside the circle of professional consensus yet with a peculiarly intimate familial stake in the future of the American polity, may have felt a more urgent need to demonstrate the utility of history. They resisted contemporary practice to go back to the assumptions that underlay the work of Charles Darwin and Henry Thomas Buckle—that laws of human behavior exist and may be discovered in historical events—with an urgency generated by their sense of impending catastrophe. [326]

"The Tendency of History," Henry's 1894 Presidential Address to the American Historical Association, speculated about the fulfillment of every historian's dream, the discovery of an original theory of history, one as foundational as the theory of evolution. Brooks defined the scientific laws he thought history should seek: "The law amounts only to this, that certain phenomena have been found to succeed each other with sufficient regularity to enable us to count with reasonable certainty on their recurrence in a determined order." [327]The past as it really was exists to serve the present through the future we might draw from it. And yet, for Henry when he wrote, this was neither so simple nor was it enough. He searched for the historical formula that would explain and contain the disorder of contemporary experience but, as we shall see, the attraction of the Virgin, as he invented her, lay in the escape she offered from law and formula.

Adams came to his appreciation of the Gothic cathedral late in a century which had seen a resurgence of interest in the Middle Ages, as Romanticism rejected the Neo-Classicism of the Enlightenment. As an Adams who proclaimed himself the eighteenth-century man out of his time in the *Education*, he also had family tradition to answer. In *Chartres* Adams accepted the assessment that the Middle Ages were the furthest in spirit from the Age of Reason, but broke with the Neo-Classical perspective that used "Gothic" as a term of insult denoting the crude, barbaric and superstitious. "To most minds it casts too many shadows; it wraps itself in mystery; and when people talk of mystery, they commonly mean fear" (C423). This is the standard gothic of gloom, uncertainty and superstition, the effect that the inability to pierce the mystery produces on "most" minds, but not a small number of initiates who are willing to surrender themselves to the medieval spirit. Adams seems to be proposing a negative capability that accepts the mystery of medieval faith without trying to explain it, but then Adams limits the shadows in his Middle Ages. He never descends with his reader into the ancient crypt to visit the relics that were the immediate attraction for the medieval pilgrim, or visits the less inspiring episodes of medieval history, but seeks "the smile." [328]

He celebrates the irrationality the Age of Reason deplored, (in the cult of the Virgin, for example), and appropriates the eighteenth-century symbol of light, not as a searching clear beam eliminating all mystery but as a remembrance of the child's delighted response to color, not as enlightenment but as illumination of the soul. Adams was not writing a repudiation of the eighteenth century so much as the nineteenth, arguing that an education in rationality alone was inadequate to comprehending human experience. The "uncle" of *Chartres* is a nineteenth-century man fascinated by an age of

faith and poetry; like the idol of his youth, John Stuart Mill, Adams discovered the comforts of Wordsworth as an adult. [329] In this text Adams expresses not the eighteenth-century cult of sensibility, but a romantic longing for a lost sense of wholeness with the universe combined with a late nineteenth-century apprehension of determinism.[330] The Adams tradition was not inimical to religious faith: his great-grandfather, John Adams, representing one strain of American Enlightenment thinking, had nothing good to say about the church of Rome, but, fearful of reason untethered by morality, held "there can be no Philosophy without Religion." [331] For the purposes of the text, the seventeenth century, interested in establishing religion on a new philosophical basis, was a more useful intermediate reference than the eighteenth, although Adams' great-grandfather may haunt its pages implicitly as his model of the author as system-builder.

Chartres has been described as the culmination of nineteenth century medievalism, not only for its date, but because it rejected earlier assumptions that the medieval spirit could be resurrected to remake the twentieth century.[332] John Ruskin was the most prominent figure associated with the reevaluation of Gothic among American audiences, making it respectable for Protestants to appreciate medieval art despite its connection to Catholic practice.[333] Ruskin was an influence assimilated in Adams' youth, the voice of an earlier generation that later seemed irrelevant and even embarrassing to a mind it had helped form: "I pardon nobody for bad Gothic and Venetian taste. Yet I once read Ruskin and admired! we even read Carlisle [sic] and followed! Lord, but we date!"(L6:17). Adams declined to repeat what had been said too emphatically and too often. He attacked Ruskin for his preference for medieval Italy, even as he followed him in assuming a moral correspondence between the aesthetic value of architecture and the

circumstances of its construction, and used the excellence of art to make a claim for the authenticity of the faith that motivated it. [334] He shared with Ruskin a distaste for the shabbiness of art created in a commercial civilization, but not his prescriptions for rectifying it.[335]

Adams' depiction of eleventh-century Normandy resembles the medieval order Carlyle extols in *Past and Present*, of concerted action, of willing service for all and hero worship for most. It represents a system of values that Carlyle could imagine reviving in the nineteenth, of productive work reorganized under captains of industry. Carlyle was much more oriented towards diagnosing the crisis of the Hungry Forties and prescribing a solution, regarding the study of old buildings as fit only for "Dilettanti." Adams' interest in the emotional freedom and expressive achievement of the medieval artist might indicate a link to the Pre-Raphaelites, but Adams was no more interested in imagining the socialist accommodation along medieval lines proposed by his contemporary, William Morris.[336]

Closer to home was Charles Eliot Norton, Ruskin's friend and follower and Harvard's first professor of art.[337] Norton represented Bostonian taste at its most refined, but Adams had fled that atmosphere of rectitude, dutifully expressed in seeking culture, by moving to Washington.[338] Adams once refused to criticize someone's taste by saying, "I am not going to set up for a Charles Norton…I am not a standard. A standard is a damn fool" (L5:451).[339] While Adams assumed that moral qualities were manifest in architecture, he declined to moralize, to set down the law regarding taste, still less religion. Despite the constant social criticism of his own letters, what appeared to gall Adams most was the reformer incarnated as public scold: "and as I do not care to imitate

Carlyle and Ruskin and Emerson and all the rest of our protesting philosophers by trying to make a living by abusing the society of my time, nothing remains but to quit it" (L4:184).[340] Adams had been mortified when his brother Charles joined the "fools" at the Anti-Imperialist League like Charles Eliot Norton; Charles Francis Adams withdrew from the fight, but Norton persisted. Henry, an investigative journalist in his youth, later rejected reform as naïve, and preferred a gentlemanly silence to publicity, still more the appearance of disinterestedness untainted by commerce.[341]

Other Harvard colleagues had medieval interests. Charles Herbert Moore like Adams asserted that the quintessence of Gothic was French, but emphasized the rational technical skill of medieval builders rather than popular religious spirit; his work was hailed by the *Atlantic* as signaling a new era of American art criticism.[342]Adams occasionally focused on the details of technique but only to enhance the poetry of the builders' effects. James Russell Lowell was a more compatible spirit, teacher of medieval French poetry, member of the Dante Club, a colleague and friend at Harvard and elsewhere (Lowell was Minister to Spain and Great Britain). In addition to the medievalist "The Vision of Sir Launfal" (1848), Lowell in 1869 published a long poem, "The Cathedral," based on an afternoon spent at Chartres years before, in which the cathedral's aspirations speak to him as "a happy Goth." He wearies of his "lip-loyal" adherence to the faith of his fathers, longs for past certainty, but accepts "This is no age to get cathedrals built," and ultimately reaffirms his belief.[343]

It's not clear whether Adams ever read Ruskin's late *The Bible of Amiens* (1884), but it demonstrates the difference in their approaches. *Amiens* was the first work in a projected series, "*Our Fathers Have Told Us: Sketches of the History of Christendom for*

Boys and Girls Who Have Been Held at its Fonts."[344] Ruskin wanders through stories of the arrival of Christianity in the land of the Franks before turning to the cathedral whose purity of style, its apse "the first virgin perfect work" of Gothic, make it most representative of that simple Northern faith. His main injunction to his readers is not so much a call to belief (doctrinal details are not interesting) as an obligation to do moral works. The gospel today consists of the instruction in Christian virtues and corresponding vices proclaimed by the sculptures and bas-reliefs of the western portal. From Ruskin's text it is not apparent that the name of the church was Notre Dame de Amiens: he classifies the types of the Virgin but gives central place to the "Beau Dieu d'Amiens," the lord of Virtues. Ruskin feels it necessary to lecture his female and Protestant readers particularly against their prejudice towards Mariolatry. As the harmless superstition of simple people, it registers much less worse than their own worship of material goods. Adams' lessons are more ambiguous. Using primarily French sources, he provokes the memory of his Puritan forebears by exalting the Virgin to the status of a deity and celebrating superstition.[345] The "sermon of Chartres" insists that "the art of the Virgin was not that of her artists but her own. We inevitably think of our tastes; they thought instinctively of hers" (519). It makes an argument about the sources of art, not religion, but even as a rule of artistic expression it takes Ruskin's celebration of the selfless devotion of the artisans to an extreme. Adams emphasizes the alien presuppositions of medieval thinking, that the Virgin was a living presence actively directing the building of her palace, an attitude without much immediate relevance for modern artists. He reverences the faith capable of creating such excellence while denying the possibility of its renewal. [346]There is no chance of return to a more organic order, because without

faith, medievalism, like its object of study, is a beautiful illusion in response to a chaotic universe.

Tourists

Adams claimed that travel writing offered the author a generic freedom. "My notion of Travels is sort of ragbag of everything; scenery, psychology, history, literature, poetry, art; anything in short that is worth throwing in," as he wrote to John Hay, proposing that they collaborate on a book of French travels. It would be more accurate to say that travel permitted Adams to write what interested him without apology or justification. Travel writing did have its conventions, though the access it offered to novice writers showed they were hardly onerous. Adams had broken into print writing travel letters for a Boston newspaper in 1860.[347] *Chartres* is not amorphous; the journey provides a structure for the narrative which is reinforced by the mostly chronological organization of historical data. Narrator and reader move from Normandy to France, from the eleventh century to the thirteenth; from physical monument to literary or philosophical text; from emotion to intellect. With typical self-deprecation, Adams, the former professor, describes himself as a "tourist," a tourist whose role ultimately deepens to that of "pilgrim," although not so much a devotee of religion as of art. *Chartres* has been described as the culmination of nineteenth century U. S. travel writing about Europe, for its ambitious use of its material and the way it complicates the standard narration of travel. [348]

Nineteenth-century travel writing, like the taste it was considered to inform, was built on the making of distinctions. The typical discourse distinguished between the

philistine tourist who followed the crowd and the culturally superior traveler who sought personal transformation through an authentic encounter with the foreign. Adams adopted both poses, although he lost no cultural capital in identifying himself as a tourist. [349] As his audience of friends well knew, after his trip around the world in 1890-92 travel became his habit. Adams spent winters in Washington, part of the year in Paris, and by 1904 had visited Cuba, Mexico, the Caribbean, France, England, Egypt, Turkey, the Balkans, Germany, Austria, Italy and Sicily, Poland, Russia, and Scandinavia, not including American travels which at a minimum took in Chicago, Yellowstone and the Tetons. Critics have cited Adams' travel as an indication of his marginal status, his distance from the masculine world of business, and considered his writing a form of justification by work, but the leisure to travel was also a sign of class prerogative. Adams' circle was a mobile elite and his travels around the world, or to be more exact his travel letters, would have enhanced his position. Writing was more than a retrospective justification for travel. Adams didn't regard himself as a member of a writing class but of a class that wrote: the Adams children as incipient men of letters had recorded their experiences in the expectation of their historical significance. Travel was an index of Adams' restlessness, but also a form of inquiry.[350] Invoking the image of the tourist allowed Adams to disclaim his knowledge and assert his ignorance when it pleased him to ignore a subject and assume the sensibility of the traveler when he wanted to educate his audience to cosmopolitan and historical standards.

Among American literary writers of the late nineteenth century, the two poles of the tourist/traveler designation might have been claimed by Mark Twain, as the regular American abroad, one of a group, and Henry James, as the solitary cosmopolitan

"sentimental tourist." [351] But the tourist/traveler opposition seems to collapse upon closer examination: each author needed the presence of other tourist-travelers, if only to distinguish himself from them. Each rebelled against the guidebook, while their travel assumed its premise, that there was a cultural system to facilitate, evaluate and rank the experiences of travelers. Their works were successful advertisements for their own authorial voices and for the institution of tourism they assailed.

The quotidian experience of travel is inescapable in Mark Twain's *The Innocents Abroad, or the New Pilgrim's Progress* (1869). The end of the Civil War seemed to release the desires of a population willing and financially able to take on Europe, much as the end of the Napoleonic wars had opened the Continent to travel by a wider class of Britons.[352] The ubiquity of the travel letters that offered opportunity to fledgling writers was an indication of their longing. Twain describes his participation in the still-new phenomenon of mass travel, the excursion of a group which, under the auspices of Henry Ward Beecher's Plymouth Church, hired a ship to take them to Europe and the Holy Land. William Dean Howells praised Twain for the freshness and fun of its concept—in 1869 merely to describe the book was to smile.[353] By publishing the journey first as a series of travel letters for newspapers and then through public subscription as a book, Twain sought the widest possible audience; door-to-door sales reached people with aspirations to culture but no access, or knowledge of how to gain access. Twain could present himself as a man of the people and a canny businessman since, indeed, *Innocents Abroad* was a great success.

When Twain's narration celebrates the familiar novelty of the group tour, "I basked in the happiness of being for once in my life drifting with the tide of a great

popular movement. Everybody was going to Europe—I, too, was going to Europe," he plays with the stereotype of the tourist, traveling because it's the thing to do, following what someone else has deemed a significant itinerary, rather than acting on some inner compulsion. The "innocence" of his tourists shows itself in multiple aspects: the wonder of boyhood recalled, a lack of knowledge, a willed refusal to learn, and an assertion of provincial values. Twain doesn't try to enforce a distinction between tourists and travelers—all are tourists in the narrator's eyes, despite the pretensions of some to be more cultured and more righteous—but between "pilgrims" and "sinners." Respectable pilgrims, credulous and suspicious by turn, but usually in the wrong turn, offer the opinions of the guidebooks as a substitute for their own perceptions; irreverent sinners debunk the guidebooks with the evidence of their own eyes. Twain's preface proclaimed his intent, "to suggest to the reader how *he* would be likely to see Europe and the East if he looked at them with his own eyes instead of the eyes of those who traveled in the countries before them" (xvii). Authenticity was achieved by seeing through illusions.

Belatedness, though, is the perennial predicament of travel writers. Even as more Americans became convinced of the value of the unchanged, immemorial past, its depiction was subject to present demands for novelty. The repetition of a familiar experience still required an original point of view, so the better a location was identified objectively through Murray and Baedeker, the more subjective travelers' accounts became. Leonardo da Vinci's *The Last Supper*, a cultural treasure in problematic condition, offered an occasion for Twain and James to display divergent strategies of self-differentiation. Twain favored the seriocomic exposure of cultural pretension and sham. Henry James emphasized the breadth of his sensibility.

Twain, in his pose as unpretentious American, wields humor against the intimidation of the arbiters of taste. Despite or probably because of being warned against it, he is always willing to admit being bored by pictures. When he pays the obligatory visit, he concludes, deadpan, that da Vinci's painting isn't a complete fraud: "After reading so much about it, I am satisfied that "The Last Supper" was a very miracle of art once. But it was three hundred years ago" (143). He admits that the eye of an experienced artist could restore what was lost—after all, he sees the evidence: "as usual, I could not help noticing how superior the copies were to the original, that is, to my inexperienced eye" (142). But he suspects other tourists' "catchy ejaculations of rapture" about the fresco's "faultless drawing," "matchless coloring," "delicacy of touch," "sublimity of conception." We can imagine a beauty that existed once, "but we cannot absolutely *see* these things when they are not there" (143). His fellows are deluded or dishonest to so glibly deploy the "easily acquired and inexpensive technicalities of art" despite the invisible evidence.

Henry James' 1870 story "Travelling Companions" begins with cultural credentials: "The most strictly impressive picture in Italy is incontestably the Last Supper of Leonardo at Milan. A part of its immense solemnity is doubtless due to its being one of the first of the great Italian masterworks that you encounter in coming down from the North. Another secondary source of interest resides in the very completeness of its decay." [354] The excessiveness of the narrator's assertions renders his judgment questionable. An American, writing some time after the events of the story that describes his first Italian tour, he tells us that he has "seen all the great art treasures of Italy" since then, but his rash pronouncements sound more like the voice of the inexperienced young

man he once was. (James seems to intend that his readers take the narrator seriously, which may be why he never reprinted the story.) That the "immense solemnity" of the fresco should be due to its geographical location makes us question what "impressive" and still more "strictly" mean, unless we view the monastery-turned-stable where it molders as the first station in a cycle of devotions, a pilgrimage of art.

Having established the observer and the system of values in which he observes, the narrative arrives at the object itself. The image's continued veneration is both a testament to its importance, "having lost so much, it has yet retained so much," and a test of the viewer's depth of understanding. Pilgrims prove themselves against tourists by their reaction to its ruin. Sight-seeing is deeper than passive observation as James gives his readers a lesson in how to look at art: "Neglect and malice are less cunning than the genius of the great painter. It has stored away with masterly skill such a wealth of beauty as only perfect love and sympathy can fully detect. So, under my eyes, the restless ghost of the dead fresco returned to its mortal abode" (496). When seeing requires an active imaginative intervention, it becomes regeneration: "The mind finds a rare delight in filling each of its vacant spaces, effacing its rank defilement, and repairing, as far as possible, its sad disorder" (495). Having returned to life and beauty, the picture thus appropriated persists in memory as a therapeutic effect: "in moments of doubt and depression I find it of excellent use to recall the great picture with all possible distinctness" (496). The restorative effect seems caused not by the divine subject of the painting but by the talismanic influence of human genius.

The narrator's first encounter with the painting coincides with his meeting the young American woman who, at the end of a travelogue filled with personal incident,

agrees to marry him.[355] The possibility of another "perfect love and sympathy" is raised by his first sight of her, when her eyes are so intent on the fresco that she fails to notice him. "I, too, however, speedily became as unconscious of her presence as she of mine, and lost myself in study of the work before us" (496). The experience is solitary if congruent; they "see," but don't need to engage in fatuous commentary. For contrast James provides the responses of Mr. Evans, accompanying his daughter, who can't understand why she would purchase the photo of a "blurred and fragmentary" head of Christ since "'They'll not think much of that at home.'" To which she responds, "'So much the worse for them'…with an accent of delicate pity" (498). A "perfect American," Mr. Evans prefers to look at the "cheerfullest commonplaces" of a copyist, but more literal-minded than Twain, he wonders why the copyist doesn't include the door that now juts into the image.

Meanwhile the narrator, by implication the atypical American and thus a model for readers, experiences "a thrill of delight" when he notices Miss Evan's tears: "'Sweet countrywoman,' I cried in silence, 'you have the divine gift of feeling.' And I returned to the fresco with a deepened sense of its virtue" (498).The "divine gift of feeling" is what Adams seeks to instill in his nieces and readers as they attempt a sympathetic revivification of the medieval idea. In *Chartres* Adams is not the lone romantic wanderer displaying his rarefied sensibility. If he sees and feels what others do not, by traveling with a niece he indicates a didactic intent to reawaken the dormant modern imagination, or at least to elevate American taste. His interest in art emphasizes its social as well as personal effects, going beyond self-culture to an inquiry into the sources of creativity at

the moment of greatest human achievement. (Or as he saw it, generativity; only Aquinas' God created *ex nihilo*.)

Both James and Twain present their initial encounters with places, although James writes from a position of cultural authority, as a seasoned traveler. If Twain's persona fronting the Old World seems less secure, the mix of confidence and insecurity, yearning and skepticism that he and his companions manifest provides ample grounds for humor (and *Innocents Abroad* helped establish his position as more than a local colorist). Adams' narration is complicated because he is not simply recounting his first impressions but, as uncle/guide recreating selected experiences for his niece/reader. Travel writing implicitly invites the reader's accompaniment, but the intimacy of the uncle's address, more in the nature of his semi-public personal letters from abroad than a newspaper travel letter, decreases the distance between narrator and reader. Adams' account is more personal and yet less straightforward, buffered by his focus on the initiation of his reader into what he has already seen and his attempt to reanimate a medieval realm of feeling. While James and Twain present acts of discovery, *Chartres* is travel as recovery, both in terms of experiencing a specific place and in recapturing the spirit that built it.

In another early work, James, whose description of himself as the "sentimental tourist" has an echo of Washington Irving, seems to invoke the tourist's checklist when he "does" Chartres in a few hours one fine spring day for the readers of the *New York Tribune*, seven years after Twain was sending them reports: "I was so prepared to be entertained and pleased with everything that it is only a mercy that the cathedral happens to be really a fine building" (677).[356] The journey was as worthy of description as the monument: the open carriage to the station in Paris, the buffet breakfast with its

"pungent" bottle of wine at the station in Chartres, the walk through the crooked streets of the shabby provincial town. James tells us he spent a long time trying to find the right perspective to view the exterior of the cathedral, and lets us know that he's seen plenty of them: "I have seen, I suppose, churches as beautiful as this one, but I do not remember ever to have been so fascinated by superpositions and vertical effects." The impression of the west front is overwhelming if solely aesthetic: its elements "crowd upon one's sense with a force that makes the act of vision seem for the moment almost all of life" (679).

Having established his cultural competence in describing the exterior, James feels free to demonstrate his independence from too close an adherence to the guidebook. After a cursory description of the interior, including a nave "full of the little padded chairs of the local bourgeoisie," he leaves—it's too cold. Still, a walk through the town is "remunerative" for James. As his note about the chairs might indicate, culture includes an interest in local life-ways, provided they are pictorial enough. Chartres' decaying streets, filled with crones of remarkable ugliness, at least have the virtue of antiquity. In James' conclusion all these elements, art, history, local color and human interest coalesce in the picturesque: he wanders where the ruin of the ancient wall borders a ditch and sees white-capped women wash clothes from little wooden galleries, while the arch of the ancient gate frames the inner city with the cathedral at its peak. In a reverse colonization, Europe serves as the occasion for an American display of mastery. The cathedral that Adams considered "the finest thing in the world" is just another element for sentimental tourists' actual and vicarious visual pleasure (L4:315).

Adams claimed that his travels with John La Farge taught him to see, but he lacked the inclination or perhaps the capacity for such word-painting. Both Adams and James emphasized the subjective appeal of their objects in determining what they chose to write about, but Adams' selections always had more than personal meaning. *Chartres* ignores most objects outside of its designated medieval centuries, so that the juxtaposition of the contemporary traveler with ancient treasures provides an ongoing contrast of present malaise and past felicity. Visual power bespoke a deeper significance for Adams, who valued objects for the imaginative intensity it took to create them. Adams sought the source of that energy and attempted to measure it by the feelings its products could still generate in him and others. In Adams' novels *Democracy* and *Esther,* he delineated his characters through their reactions to monuments cultural and natural, Mount Vernon and Niagara Falls. In the *Education* he visits Mount Vernon, observes St. Gaudens at Amiens, and measures, negatively, the cultivation of the American public by recording the responses of visitors to his wife's memorial by St. Gaudens at Rock Creek Cemetery. Compared to James' evocation of the atmosphere of the past for the sake of the texture it bestows on the present scene, Adams' claim that he was not after knowledge but only a feeling seems disingenuous.

Twain's persona is proudly provincial in his adherence to American standards of taste, scornful of the other kind of provincialism that demonstrated its insecurity by aping French habits and phrases. At least the superb landscapes of the American West set a standard difficult to surpass; no European lake is as beautiful as Tahoe. Twain is consciously democratic and demotic, condemning the paintings in the Louvre out of hand on political grounds—their painters were guilty of "nauseous adulation of princely

patrons" (104). He is pleased with himself that he can recognize Notre Dame from its pictures, but what really interests him is the human spectacle. The democrat is fascinated to see Louis Napoleon, symbol of progress, riding with his opposite, the Sultan of Turkey, and dazzled by the hospitality of that great family man, the Emperor of Russia, while his attitude towards wretched, ignorant, dirty and superstitious natives everywhere is contempt, varying only with the epithet: Indian, Oriental or Roman Catholic. Twain's experiment in medieval time travel, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889) presents the church as the occult force behind all the social evils of medieval society and the enemy of progress. But in *Innocents Abroad* his attitude is not so consistent or so extreme: it varies from sincere enthusiasm at Milan's cathedral, "It was a vision!—a miracle!—an anthem sung in stone, a poem wrought in marble!"; to amusement (the omnipresent fragments of the True Cross are a running gag, wherever they visit); to stupefaction at the decorative display in the Capuchin Convent ossuary; to indignation that in Italy, "one vast museum of magnificence and misery," thousands should suffer while a fortune was "locked up in the useless trumpery of churches."

James usually wasn't troubled by such considerations, but experienced a moment in 1877 when politics almost interfered with his enjoyment of the Cathedral of Rheims. Under the cathedral's influence he was inclined to feel "tenderly sentimental" towards the Church, when the arrival of a group of canons forced his removal from the choir, and reminded him of the church's current reactionary stance against republicanism. He considers the conflict that must occur in "many thousands" of minds, "between the active, practically liberal instinct and what one may call the historic, aesthetic sense, the sense upon which old cathedrals lay a certain palpable obligation." He doesn't identify

that instinct as American, as Twain would, but reduces the many to one, a lover of cathedrals, who wonders, "How far should he let his imagination bribe him, as it were, from action?" James can imagine how this must feel, for someone else: "I was visited, I scarcely know why, by a kind of revelation of the anti-catholic passion, as it must burn to-day in the breasts of certain radicals." Can a person feel hypothetically? James explores the emotion, but so long as it remains descriptive of some radical's mentality it doesn't become performative, imposing a responsibility to act. For the novelist on whom nothing is lost, this emotion could be a gift, but for the travel writer recording his experiences it raises an awkwardness. His imagination acts so he need not, by displacing the feeling.

Perhaps the cosmopolitan imagination that allows one to sample other cultures extends to the enjoyment of individual psyches. The temporary nature of tourism dissolves any permanent ethical implications. Both admitting the epiphany and dissociating himself from it, James decides in favor of aesthetics: "I raised my eyes again to the dusky splendor of the upper aisles and measured their enchanting perspective, and it was with a sense of doing them full justice that I gave my fictive liberal my good wishes" (742). The political emotion, in providing the occasion to sharpen the eyes, weigh and judge the value of the scene, may have enhanced the experience. Equanimity restored, James continues his tour.[357]

In *Chartres* the "historic, aesthetic sense" rules, or rather, the historic sense revealed through art. Adams' imagination plumbs an earlier ancestry, beyond the familial republicanism. Travel provided the conditions for an experiment in vicarious identification with the mind of the Middle Ages: "the first privilege of tourist ignorance is

the right to see, or try to see, the thirteenth century with thirteenth century eyes" (C416). Under the influence of the cathedral he explores his emotions, he quotes the expression of emotion by medieval sources, and at times creates medieval characters to express feelings for him. Adams' expression of emotion is an implicit criticism of twentieth century Anglo-Saxon society, but generally doesn't entail an obligation to act in the present. The exception, which will be discussed later, is the emotion of faith, implicit in the twelfth century but questionable in the twentieth. Adams cannot transform his expression from descriptive to performative; all he can report is the hypothetical emotion of what it might have been like once for others to worship in this place. Transformed into an anachronism, faith was another loss to mourn.

Twain's immediate estimation of his trip was not likely to please his fellow tourists, people given to "solemnity, decorum, dinner, dominoes, devotions, slander": "It was not lively enough for a pleasure trip; but if we had only a corpse it would have made a noble funeral procession" (483). Travel retained its usefulness to incite the envy of one's less mobile friends, but its personal significance was less clear. Under the imperatives of the itinerary (his narrative line), and the repetitive structure of the tourist's routine, Twain couldn't see or saw too much. Moving in too short a time with too many people, he couldn't think. Arriving belatedly, he had to adjust what he did see to his expectations, "the most cherished traditions of our boyhood," while he searched for something new to say about the experience. Sometimes he was able to regulate if not exactly reconcile the distance between fact and fancy, as in his stay at Venice. "In the glare of day there is little poetry about Venice." It looks "decayed, forlorn, poverty-stricken, and commerceless—forgotten and utterly insignificant. But in the moonlight her

fourteen centuries of greatness fling their glories about her, and once more is she the princeliest among the nations of the earth" (163). The idea of Venice demanded more than disparagement, but the shift between realism and romance couldn't always be arranged so neatly.

The Holy Land presented a bigger challenge to reconcile the "Bible pictures" with a landscape that was too small and too bereft of appeal to encompass so much meaning. Debunking had its limits when it came to the origins of Christianity. Seen too close, the smells, dirt, disease, ignorance and greed left nothing to the imagination. At the same time, Twain's experiences were hard-won by the discomforts of the journey; the mechanics of the trip made it all but impossible to appreciate the scene while the pains he endured seemed to demand a higher return. While the effects of this cognitive dissonance are the source of much humor, the tourist's dismay is also palpable. With time and space, Twain's perspective shifted. In San Francisco a year later, "I am moved to confess that day by day the mass of my memories of the excursion have grown more and more pleasant as the disagreeable incidents of travel which encumbered them flitted one by one out of my mind" (488). In recollection and in forgetting he would be willing to do the whole thing over.

Adams' perspective begins where Twain ends. He starts with the vision of the past as recollected and reanimated in its ideal aspect and then adds an occasional writing to the moment to mark our own immediate presence on the scene: "Here is your first eleventh-century church! How does it affect you?"; "For a first visit to Chartres, choose some pleasant morning when the lights are soft"; "Now let us enter! We must take ten minutes to accustom our eyes to the light." The "we" of *Chartres* is unstable. To the

extent Adams is his own subject, he invites readers to share his reactions or not, since to dictate taste would defeat his purpose, but in any case to react. At times the narrator assumes a divergence between the perspectives of the young and those elders who have allowed themselves to grow "prematurely young" to sense the past. Adams also alternates his degree of distance from the monuments; at times he is the detached observer who describes the site as a stage set upon which he can exercise his irony, at times the stage-manager arranging the effects, at times the would-be participant, whose predominant emotion is longing.

Adams seems at pains to distinguish his text from a guidebook. There is an unusual absence of topographical context, of the genius loci. We don't make the famous ride over the sands to Mont Saint Michel, the island looming out of the mists like a mirage; we begin standing on the heights looking out. The geography is too familiar to be described, perhaps. We don't see the town of Chartres, let alone the cathedral dominating the countryside for miles.[358] Even John Ruskin in *The Gospel of Amiens* begins his account in the railway age: an intelligent traveler, passing through, should at least look out the train window to see the spire of the cathedral. If schedules and timetables permit, one should walk out to the chalk-hill quarry to get a sense of the land; otherwise Ruskin prescribes a particular walk through the town, stopping to buy "bon-bons or tarts for the children in one of the charming patissiers' shops on the left" (128). Arriving at the cathedral, one should pay the beggars a sou without quibbling.[359]Adams begins with a discussion of its spires as our "first glimpse" of the church, without an indication of our location. They are disembodied forms to be compared with the spires of Normandy, as if we were looking at a batch of photographs. Adams is as authoritative as

Ruskin when it comes to the best way to look at a cathedral, but he begins at the building itself.

Adams' limited readership gave him the freedom to delimit his subject, to exercise a greater degree of control in his tour; the past is his territory and fellow tourists, as Twain discovered, merely get in the way. Adams ignores the details of travel; he picks his monuments and selects those aspects which suit his notice. [360] Characteristically for Adams, we begin our tour at the top, looking down from Mont Saint Michel, and in the past tense: "The Archangel loved heights." More provocatively for the historian and playfully for the tourist, we start from inside a medieval consciousness. His tour begins with the arresting physical structures of the past, but once the physical structures have begun to acculturate us, he moves on to the medieval mind as his object.

There is a certain amusement lurking in Adams' adoption of the tourist persona, being part of a populist American crusade for culture invading the old world. He cites the one standard that would prove the power of Marian devotion "to any religious American mind, beyond possible cavil…the money it cost," estimating that the churches built between 1170 and 1270 alone would cost a thousand million dollars to replace (C427-28). In Adams' estimation, great art, great religion spared no expense, but "The world grew cheap, as worlds must" (C350). Americans may regret the absences in their cheaper civilization: late in life when Adams wrote to Henry James about the provincialism of their youth, of the "*type bourgeois bostonien*," his embarrassment was still palpable. But as a barbarian coming last, one may also feel oneself "heir to all the ages" as did James' Millie Theale. Americans had the freedom of outsiders to observe and judge.[361] Adams could claim the best, could pick and choose his past, whether Anglo-Saxon Germany or

Norman France, with the conviction that America owned the future, however uncertain that might be.

Given Adams' audience he doesn't have to introduce himself—he's writing for people who know to take his protests as self-deprecation. Passages implicitly point out his superior sensibility, in noting, for example, that "not one tourist in a hundred,--perhaps not one in a thousand of the English-speaking race" feel the Virgin's presence, or that the revival of "archaic instincts" that foster an appreciation of women "is perhaps the mark of the artist alone" (C459;522). Uncle and niece may claim to be casual travelers, but even the itinerary asserts the historian's prerogative. The decision to begin with Mont Saint Michel through Normandy and end at Chartres is an argument against conventional periodization—the standard tour began with Chartres as the template of Gothic style. If tourists care little for individual dates, sequence remains important; Adams is interested in the process of development from the old style to the new and ultimately from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century. He posits the centrality of the age of the Transition from Romanesque to Gothic and devotes careful attention to the artists of the transition as they revitalized old elements within a new composition.

The singularity of medieval thinking precluded easy apprehension.[362] Because it seemed to have no direct relation to the present, no common point of reference, the gothic permitted an excess of interpretation. Emotion and imagination had been the primary characteristics of the medieval mind as Henry and Brooks Adams saw it, and they play a role in Adams' inquiry. Tourists need not account for emotions; they need no excuse to go wherever they like, and do whatever they please. With that affective foundation, the tourist is ready to disagree with the scholars and guides who assert, for example, that

certain statues do not represent real people but virtues and types. But even here travel writing has its didactic aspect. Interest is the indication of energy, the impact of the monument on the mind or emotions of the reader. The force that could create such monuments was Adams' ultimate object of inquiry. His greatest conceit was to insist like a simple medieval poet that the Virgin designed "her" parts of the cathedral at Chartres, perhaps as transmitted through the architect's dreams. She was something more than a muse, a creative force, but she needed the artist as her instrument.

Nieces and Madonnas

When Brooks Adams pressed his brother to publish *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres*, Henry's response suggested that his expressions of despair at finding an audience were qualified by his insistence on reaching the right people. He projected an image of his likely audience and refused: the "several hundred thousand" people devoted to lectures and libraries didn't count for much, and still less did a specifically female audience, disregarded as "one or two million young women who read poetry in Browning Clubs, and mostly come to Paris to study art when they can. I imagine that neither you nor I care much to be admired by these, but in any case they will admire us the more at second hand. We need not lift a finger to reach that class, who are quite passive, and mere mud-ponds of receptivity" (L5:668-69). The tone Adams used in writing to Brooks, his brother in medieval appreciation and modern disillusionment, ordinarily differed from the tone he adopted when writing his nieces, at least one of whom studied art.[363] But his dismissal of a female readership seems strikingly opposed to the way that the text of

Chartres imagines its audience. Adams' thinking and writing were divided into conceptual categories linked to sexual difference, the one variance that could not be overwritten by time, and a distinction that he decried, yet found intellectually and emotionally productive to maintain.

Unusually, considering the self-effacement of his previous books and the absence of his name on the title page, Adams begins *Chartres* with a preface, which both regrets his diminished power as author and attempts to control the expectations of his reader by fixing her role in advance:[364]

> Some old Elizabethan play or poem contains the lines:–
>
> . . . . Who reads me, when I am ashes,
> Is my son in wishes . . . . . .
>
> The relationship between reader and writer, of son and father, may have existed in Queen Elizabeth's time, but is much too close to be true for ours. The utmost that any writer could hope of his readers now is that they should consent to regard themselves as nephews, and even then he would expect only a more or less civil refusal from most of them. Indeed, if he had reached a certain age, he would have observed that nephews, as a social class, no longer read at all, and that there is only one familiar instance of a nephew who read his uncle. The exception tends rather to support the rule, since it needed a Macaulay to produce, and two volumes to record it. Finally, the metre does not permit it. One may not say:—"Who reads me when I am ashes is not my nephew in wishes."
>
> The same objections do not apply to the word "niece." The change restores the verse, and, to a very great degree, the fact. Nieces have been known to read in early youth, and in some cases, may have read their uncles. The relationship, too, is convenient and easy, capable of being anything or nothing, at the will of either party, like a Mahommedan or Polynesian or American marriage. No valid objection can be offered to this change in the verse. Niece let it be!
>
> The following pages, then, are written for nieces, or for those who are willing, for the time, to be "nieces in wish." (C341)

Compared to the positivism of the census statistics that opened Adams' *History*, *Chartres* is decidedly unscientific in quoting a form as insubstantial as verse, and then offhandedly vague about its (apparently apocryphal) citation. From the preface we know what the

narrator will tell us later, that we should prefer "poetry" to "facts." In a book that Adams considered his best in terms of form, he also indicates form may have priority over content: if "nephew" doesn't scan, "niece" will do. To Adams' implicit chagrin, this form of travel-writing, of art-hunting as a search for medieval feeling, is most likely to attract a female reader, the sort of "harmless and feeble" art students he derided among the horde at Mont Saint Michel. (In reprinting the book years later, Adams regretted its exclusion of war and politics, but in designating the book's reader, he had effectively limited its matter.)

The citation sets up a condition of decline between past and present, in which the lack is both personal, since the childless widower Adams had no son in fact and can't seem to imagine one even in readership, and social, since American men no longer read or bear an interest in culture, regarded here both as a process of cultivation and an Arnoldian appreciation for the highest human achievements.[365] Adams' writings consistently conflate personal and public malaise as products of the same social dynamic. The centrifugal tendency in modern relationships applies to marriage as well, if Americans are no better than pagans or infidels when it comes to maintaining the family bond. Adams echoes his long-time interest in the stages of social institutions, and the primitive forms of marriage delineated by Lewis Henry Morgan, with their implications for the seeming decline of the modern family.[366]

Adams' relation to posterity was at best a collateral one, through nieces, nephews and ultimately readers, so the reference to Macaulay was another reminder of failure: Macaulay, a bachelor, was lucky to have had a nephew, George Trevelyan, who could write his biography, one that Adams admired, but more importantly, the uncle had had an

impressive readership in Britain and America while Adams had trouble finding an audience for his *History*.[367] The tone of the preface is light, mildly cynical, not to be taken too seriously. Adams in fact had nieces and nephews and was particularly close to the five daughters of Edward Hooper, his wife's brother and a widower who died in 1901. In 1897 Adams rented a villa in St. Germain-en-Laye for these nieces, with Elizabeth Cameron and her daughter nearby, and spent the summer educating the girls in French language and culture, taking them at least once to Chartres, so the preface might have been a simple recognition of their time together. Why should anyone raise an "objection" to nieces? Except that Adams does raise a protest and then quashes it. "Niece let it be!" is expressed as fiat when in fact he has no choice. Instead of a courteous acknowledgement to the Hooper "infants," the preface creates an order of importance that is not terribly flattering to them as the companions of last resort. At least young women still read; and the male disinclination to culture can't be taken as Adams' personal fault. Adams doesn't allow himself in public, at least, to wish for a son, but prefers to be put in the position of the wished-for uncle.

The preface anticipates the nostalgia for female rule that the narrative will display; twice ascribing his verse to the Elizabethan age seems no accident. A Virgin Queen inspired an age of national brilliance both military and literary, when the connection between life and art was vital--in other words, when men were readers.[368] The contrast of direct filial relation then and a tenuous collateral connection is hardly progress; Victoria was no Eleanor of Guienne or Elizabeth and perhaps could not be a creative force in a bourgeois age. [369] Then, too, the Elizabethan reference might pay

tribute to his confidante Elizabeth Cameron to whom he maintained an apparently platonic devotion for three decades. [370]

In his maturity Adams increasingly preferred the company of women to that of men.[371] His favorites tended to be married women and mothers like Elizabeth Cameron, Anna Mills Cabot Lodge and Edith Roosevelt, or "nieces," friends of nieces, children of nieces and children of friends. Adams' reader as a "niece in wish" turns into the younger party on the journey, willing to be led and instructed, with a sense of indulgence towards her uncle's enthusiasms on what is presented as a casual jaunt. From his letter to Brooks, Adams took for granted the admiration of young women with artistic inclinations. The niece with the Kodak (not a sketchbook) might evoke the stereotype of the American girl abroad familiar to readers of Henry James and William Dean Howells, but in this book the niece never speaks, let alone chatters.[372] Nieces bear the promise of future generations, moving Adams nearer the natural forces of creativity. Nieces are closer to and thus more capable of the spontaneous reactions of childhood. Thinking like a child or a child-like artist, a mix of art and artlessness, is crucial for the success of the experiment, which is both an education and a dismantling of modern training. The niece's presence is an indication that the casual jaunt has a didactic intent, a message for the future.

When Adams chose the medieval period for its alterity, for a mentality that seemed "insane" by twentieth century criteria and therefore a refuge and a possibility, a prime aspect of that irrationality for one of "English blood and American training" was the apparent ascendancy of women. In the great reversal of twelfth century Europe, mothers ruled heaven and earth. As the historian Jules Michelet put it, "God, if I may so speak, changed sex. The Virgin became the world's God, and took possession of almost

all the temples and altars. Piety was converted to the enthusiasm of chivalrous gallantry" (228).[373] The very incomprehensibility of the medieval success of "the Woman" might signify her value insofar as she persisted as an inertial counterforce to destructive modern energies, but her eminence also indicated the limits of scientific history: "The scientific mind is atrophied, and suffers under inherited cerebral weakness, when it comes in contact with the eternal woman." The artist, perhaps, retained enough "archaic instincts" to recognize her power, and women might return the favor. The text is evidence that the appreciation of art, if not its creation, was a proper study for nieces. Regrettably, "the rest of us cannot feel; we can only study. The proper study of mankind is woman, and by common agreement since the time of Adam, it is the most complex and arduous. The study of Our Lady, as shown by the art of Chartres, leads directly back to Eve, and lays bare the whole subject of sex" (C523).[374]

Adams presents Mary as a transhistorical figure, the most powerful of a succession of goddesses and the culmination of his fascination with the archaic woman, demonstrated in "The Primitive Rights of Woman" and the *Memoirs of Arii Taimai.* [375] Mary as mother of God and Queen of Heaven possesses all the fecund power of an earth goddess; her virginity enhances her autonomy and her intimacy with her son. Adams asserts that Marian worship was a popular movement more or less forced upon the hierarchy of the Church, which had removed the Mother from the pagan Trinity. If it had been able to control her image, "the Virgin would perhaps have remained prostrate at the foot of the Cross," but the Church was unable to ignore the popular will and its own self-interest (C429).

In addition to its artistic significance in defining the new style of gothic architecture, that moment of transition so significant to Adams, Chartres cathedral was perhaps the chief monument of the medieval Marian cult. Its splendor remains a testament to the force of devotion it inspired. The greatest demonstrations of Marian power, her greatest miracles, were its construction and preservation. Adams quotes the astonishment of an abbot at the Miracle of the Carts, the frenzy of devotion that drove all orders of society to rebuild the fire-damaged cathedral: "Who has ever seen! Who has ever heard tell, in times past, that powerful princes of the world, that men brought up in honors and in wealth, that nobles, men and women, have bent their proud and haughty necks to the harness of carts, and that, like beasts of burden, they have dragged to the abode of Christ these carts" (C437). When Charles Eliot Norton wrote of this event, he used the authority of science to explain the power of suggestion: miracles then were like the "mind-cures" of today.[376] Adams preferred to maintain the strangeness of the past: "Of course the Virgin was actually and constantly present during all this labor…Without the conviction of her personal presence, men would not have been inspired; but to us, it is rather the inspiration of the art which proves the Virgin's presence, and we can better see it in the work than in the words" (C438). His readers need to experience the art to infer the force behind it, the force which motivated the crowd. Adams is still interested in the problem of his American history, discerning the motivating force behind the masses, only here he tries to apprehend it from inside the movement.

Adams goes to great lengths to insist that the Virgin was the real author of Chartres, not merely its muse. The ability to entertain this irrational truth without question is the challenge his readers must pass if we are ever to regenerate our atrophied

modern imaginations: “Every day, as the work went on, the Virgin was present, directing the architects, and it is this direction we are going to study” (C438). Sometimes Adams pulls back in amused detachment at such naïveté: “To us [the cathedral] is a child’s fancy, a toy-house to please the Queen of heaven,—to please her so much that she would be happy in it,—to charm her till she smiled” (C424). He asserts that Chartres was not built as a church, but as a shrine, the palace of the Virgin. The nave and transepts were her reception rooms for the public, the apse, “exquisitely lighted,” her boudoir, the chapels her private rooms, built in simple faith, “in this singleness of thought, exactly as a little girl sets up a doll-house for her favorite blonde doll. Unless you can get back to your dolls, you are out of place here” (C424). At other times he uses an ambiguously inclusive “we” in a situation of overlapping temporalities and convictions: “we,” uncle and niece, kneel before the altar, but in doing so, do “we” merge in faith with the ten thousand resurrected twelfth-century worshippers who “see” Mary looking down on us? (C519-20).

Many readers have seen a connection between Adams’ interest in Mariology and his grief and guilt at the suicide of his wife.[377] Adams’ five Hooper nieces were his closest link to Marian “Clover” Hooper Adams, whose presence haunts the text. Adams’ idealization of the feminine principle in *Chartres* has been analyzed as a means to expiate his guilt, or as a coping or defense mechanism to deal with his grief. Critics have suggested that the process of Adams’ mourning included the absorption of the values of his lost wife, that his cultural criticism incorporated Marian Adams’ skepticism towards conventional values. In more general terms, *Chartres* documents Adams’ return to life

after a long withdrawal (although he continued the conceit of his "posthumous" existence). [378]

The personality of the Virgin of Chartres reflects Adams' idea of the essential female nature, combining the willfulness and unpredictability of his archaic woman, the perfect taste and manners of a great lady and sublime motherhood. Not only was she the greatest of Queens, Adams tells us, but also the most womanly of women, "who loved grace, beauty, ornament,--her toilette, robes, jewels;--who considered the arrangements of her palace with attention, and liked both light and color; who kept a keen eye on her Court, and exacted prompt and willing obedience from King and Archbishops as well as from beggars and drunken priests" (C424). She protected friends and punished enemies, but her love wasn't quite unconditional, since she demanded devotion in exchange for favor and reacted fiercely to neglect (C424). She was the greatest artist, philosopher, musician and "theologist" who ever lived, with the exception of her son, of course. Certainly she is the most vital character in Adams' text.

Adams is less than convincing when he denies "any distinct impression at all of the Trinity as a dogma" at Chartres, that Mother and Son absorbed all attention. His explanation of the Virgin's attraction is founded on the authority of the Trinity, if only in her deviation from it:

> the Virgin embarrassed the Trinity; and perhaps this was the reason, behind all the other excellent reasons, why men loved her with a passion such as no other deity has ever inspired: and why we, although utter strangers to her, are not far from getting down on our knees and praying to her still. Mary concentrated in herself the whole rebellion of man against fate; the whole protest against divine law; the whole contempt for human law as its outcome; the whole unutterable fury of human nature beating itself against the walls of its prisonhouse, and suddenly seized by the hope that in the Virgin man had found a door of escape. She was above law, she took feminine pleasure in turning hell into an ornament, she delighted in trampling on every social distinction in this world in the next. (C596)

Adams' primitive women had been anarchic forces in their willful pursuit of personal desires and grievances, but the Virgin with the infinite pity of a mother raises lawlessness to an absolute principle.[379] It is characteristic of Adams that the historian who sought to discover the laws of nature that ruled human history should also be the man who wanted so desperately to escape compulsion, to find unity but flee the law. Her devotion is not a plea for justice; the assumption is that all individuals are guilty of sin.[380] Only arbitrary grace could save, only the irreducible difference of the woman, which offered an alternative, irrational set of values and "the mystery of Maternity, /Soul within Soul,—Mother and Child in One!" to incorporate all errant children.[381] In the iconography of her cathedral, the Last Judgment was not a symbol of law or sin, but her mercy. The Trinity condemned, but "Christ the Mother" reprieved the sinner: "her chief joy was to pardon, her eternal instinct was to love; her deepest passion was to pity!" (C475).

As John Gatta notes, in recounting the miracles of the Virgin Adams was less interested in supernatural occurrences than in the Virgin's penchant for upsetting social hierarchies through the sinners she championed.[382] There is something of Marian Adams in this portrait of a woman "who cared not a straw for conventional morality." "Cared not a straw" sounds as though it could have come from the letters of the woman whose friend Henry James called her "a veritable Voltaire in petticoats," the woman who dared to entertain in Washington during Lent and sat in her front window on Sundays and watched her neighbors go to church, although Marian Adams certainly did note social distinctions. Also there is an echo of Elizabeth Cameron, a mother, importantly, and a great lady who ran the show at grand houses.[383]

Adams' portrait of the Virgin and his account of the rule of medieval women, the "Three Queens," (Eleanor of Guienne, her daughter Mary, Countess of Champagne, and Eleanor's granddaughter, Queen Blanche), as well as "Nicolette and Marion," the heroines of popular fables, bear more than a touch of the carnivalesque. In a reversal of power, Adams proceeds from domination by one sex to rule by another. If male power is a given, female power is presented as male submission. All are sinners and supplicants before the Virgin giving her law, seated on her throne with the infant on her knee replicating her attitude. Even we moderns "are not far from going on our knees" to her. Medieval men (more specifically, Frenchmen) show effeminacy in dress or display an exaggerated lack of efficacy. Adams' version of "Aucassins and Nicolette," for example, emphasizes Aucassins' foolishness: he's "not very bright," compared to the knightly youth of Walter Pater's version.[384] The twelfth- century edition of Tristan is weak, unlike the Stone Age man whom Adams imagines inspired the legend. Adams offers the popular image of Aristotle on all fours whipped by the woman riding him. The knight in the story of Robin and Marion is *bête*, while Marion loves Robin "much as she would her child," only making fun of him "a little" (567). St. Louis hides in a closet so his mother won't know that he's visiting his wife. Eleanor of Guienne humiliates her first husband, the monkish King Louis of France, and demands a divorce; neither her husband nor St. Bernard dares to stop her (C534).

The carnivalesque is only a temporary condition, though, which allows for the play of a certain amount of heterodox opinion before it returns to the old lines of power. It doesn't disestablish hierarchy. Adams values the Gothic transition for its precarious balance of forces; only in the architecture's brief "marriage" of Romanesque strength and

Gothic imagination is there "a union nearer the ideal than is often allowed in marriage" (C372). Marriages between strong men and women seem to have been a constant battle: Adams tells us that the medieval woman "gave as much as she got," but shows us William the Conqueror on horseback dragging Queen Matilda by the hair (and atoning for it by building a splendid convent); more insidiously, Henry II imprisoned Eleanor for fourteen years. But then, courtly love had nothing to do with marriage, a topic that Adams evades.

By placing the worship of the Virgin in the center of the text's triptych, the austere military mobilization of Church and State becomes open to color and light, sex roles are put to topsy-turvy play and sinners are pardoned without question, but only until the schoolmen and Thomas Aquinas arrive to put the system on a rational basis. Some would argue that her phase subsumes the other two because her presence is so vivid and Adams' devotion so evident, but her central position also contains her and positions her within a sequence. The Virgin's anarchic reign was evanescent, but all the more precious for its fragility, superseded by an economic and social revolution whose effects Adams deplored. The rise of a commercial society that reckoned costs to benefits doomed the cathedral. After three generations the bourgeoisie decided that their investment in the Virgin, "the best part of the wealth of France," had been "an almost total loss" in its promise of attaining heaven (C432). Her appeal as Mother remained perennial, yet the intensity of feeling she inspired had been lost. The values of nineteenth-century Mariolatry, an age of apparitions and pilgrimage, were not Adams'. He notes the devotions at Lourdes, for example, but apparently considered them a cultural survival for simple folk.[385]

The chapter on "The Three Queens" would seem to present an opportunity for Adams to redress the inadequacies of scientific history and, considering "the proper study of man," write women into history. Instead, he does two things: he takes the occasion to remind readers of the inadequacy of historical fact and he asserts the essential nature of women outside history. The only woman we can know, apparently, is the symbol.[386] Eleanor of Guienne was successively Queen of France and England, yet the ontic Eleanor can never be known, because her representation was determined by ideological interest and literary convention. And so, history gives us two Queen Eleanors. The French version was sympathetic: her strength and supposed romantic adventures appealed to the public imagination, even after she abandoned King Louis. But among the English "her character suffered a violent and incredible change," not in terms of sexual scandal, but other traits that offended English moral standards. "For us, both legends are true. They reflected, not perhaps the character of Eleanor, but what the society liked to see acted on its theatre of life. Eleanor's real nature in no way concerns us" (C536). Making sense of multiple perspectives on an event or subject is what a historian ordinarily does, whether writing about a controversial figure like Abélard or trying to reconcile American and British accounts of a naval battle. But writing about women raises additional problems of biased testimony ("we can never know the truth, for monks and historians abhor emancipated women,—with good reason since such women are apt to abhor them"), which are apparently insuperable (C525).

Eleanor and her daughter Mary of Champagne remain somewhat elusive as characters, compared to the Virgin and to Eleanor's granddaughter, the more ascetic Queen Blanche. Perhaps Adams is granting them their freedom in avoiding

representation, but he also seems wary. Adams doesn't claim an exemption for himself when he admits that "Historians have commonly shown fear of women without admitting it, but the man of the middle ages knew at least why he feared the woman, and told it openly, not to say brutally." Women, at least Frenchwomen, "not only wanted sovereignty, but won and held it" (C525-26). When Adams asserts that "We do not, and never can, know the twelfth-century woman, or, for that matter, any other woman," he seems to have forgotten his putative feminine audience. [387] In the *Education* Adams demonstrates that his curiosity on the subject, not to mention his reading, was surprisingly limited.

Héloïse might have been one medieval woman who left enough testimony of her own to be incorporated into history, even history considered by conventional standards. Her romance with Abélard was notable enough to attract the debunking interrogation of Mark Twain on his visit to Paris. He tells their story "not as it is usually told, but as it is when it is stripped of the nauseous sentimentality that would enshrine for our loving worship a dastardly seducer like Pierre Abélard" (112). Twain has nothing against Héloïse, "the misused, faithful girl" (112). From the first, Abélard intended to violate the hospitality of her uncle Fulbert, "with the deliberate intention of debauching a confiding, innocent girl." When Fulbert forced them to marry, even Héloïse out of "self-sacrificing love" denied the union for the sake of Abélard's career (110). Twain's identification is all with Fulbert and the rough justice he ordered for the seducer. Flowers for the graves of the ruffians who castrated Abélard, although the blunt man of the West turns euphemistic here, citing a nameless "historian" about "a terrible and nameless mutilation." He gives sympathy where it is due: "*I* at least, shall always respect the memory and sorrow for the

abused trust and the broken heart and the troubled spirit of the old smooth bore," canon Fulbert (112). Héloïse as abbess grew to merit the respect of all, while Abélard became "timid, irresolute and distrustful of his powers," was too frightened to debate St. Bernard and "died a nobody" (111). Adams omits the perhaps too-familiar story of the romance (except to note that Abélard composed love songs), in favor of the career in which Abélard cut a more Promethean figure, asking questions of a Church not ready to accept the answers.[388]

Instead of studying the figure of Héloïse, Adams claims that she is beyond the scope of his discussion: "With infinite regret, Héloïse must be left out of the story, because she was not a philosopher or a poet or an artist, but only a Frenchwoman to the last millimeter of her shadow" (C606). In asserting that her letters to Abélard "are by no means above skepticism," Adams may claim to have been reflecting some contemporary historical opinion, but when it suited him the touring uncle preferred myth and feeling to "the irritating demand for literal exactness and perfectly straight lines which lights up every truly American eye" (C425).[389] Héloïse serves instead to take the measure of Abélard's character and exemplify women's essential nature: "Unfortunately French standards, by which she must be judged in our ignorance, take for granted that she philosophied only for the sake of Abélard, while Abélard taught philosophy to her not so much because he believed in philosophy or in her as because he believed in himself" (C607). Abélard displays a proto-modern individualism in his self-aggrandizing provocations if not in the actual content of his thinking, while Héloïse represents a familiar type of romantic devotion. When it comes to Abélard, "Neither Art nor Thought has a modern equivalent; only Héloïse, like Isolde, unites the ages" (C607). The only

continuity in time is love; the perennial love of women is perhaps more concentrated than men's, having fewer outlets. These heroines are ahistorical rather than transhistorical.

Adams' former student, Henry Osborn Taylor, in *The Mediaeval Mind* agrees that "Love made the life of Héloïse; it remained her all," yet in quoting her letters Taylor presents her in mind and soul as an actual historical figure rather than the eternal type she represents for Twain and Adams (II:4). She was "a great woman, possessed of an admirable mind, a character which proved its strength over years" in addition to her "talent for loving" (II:3). In the chapter Taylor devotes to Héloïse, her story demonstrates the extent of medieval learning, the medieval capacity for emotion and, when she was forced to marry before being forced into a convent, the difference in medieval and modern conceptions of marriage.

It is a "coincidence" that in the age of gothic the Virgin was using spiritual love and Eleanor and her daughters were using earthly love to elevate and civilize their subjects. In the *Education* Adams is rueful about the Puritan inheritance that decried "sex was sin," but in discussing "The Three Queens," Adams' treatment of courtly love seems to evade its subject. In a text that has put us on notice that facticity is not its highest value, Adams' discussion of courtly love is limited by questions about the authenticity of the evidence. He is not sure whether the Courts of Love actually existed any more than he can know the medieval woman. We can read their records if we wish "with considerable skepticism about their genuineness," a twentieth century attitude towards another dead religion; in any case we know what it was like from Cervantes' ridicule.[390] It seems to make no difference to Adams that he himself collapses historical and mythical figures, as he asserts they merged in the medieval imagination: "Isolde and Héloïse, Eleanor and

Mary were the immortal and eternal women" (C544). This merging may simply indicate Adams' contention that the meaning of history is always shifting, dependent on the use that may be found for it in the future.

What is important to Adams is not courtly love in actuality, but the achievement that the illusion inspired. The evidence of its power should be in the poetry itself, although the poetry Adams quotes often has little relation to earthly love. He quotes from Christian de Troyes' "Percival," not his "Lancelot," and finds his poetry, the "flower" of twelfth-century French, "not lyric; neither strong, nor deep, nor deeply felt" but full of "conventional decoration" (C538). King Richard's prison lament speaks to Adams' personal interest as a song that once moved his grandfather. Count Thibault, with whom Adams seems to identify, is more interesting than his poetry, which is even-handedly courteous whether he is writing to the Virgin or an unknown lady, perhaps Queen Blanche. The poetry is simple, charming, elegant, but it lacks the passionate intensity of the cathedral. Adams may actually be writing for his nieces and limiting the extent of the discussion out of a sense of propriety, but unlike professional writers who were forced to tailor their work to be acceptable to the family audience of the magazine, Adams was under no such compunction.[391] Perhaps Adams' own attachment to the married Elizabeth Cameron made him even more self-conscious than usual. At Chartres sensuality is associated with decay, when Adams contrasts the older, twelfth-century spire which personifies the Virgin with the newer, which is Diane de Poitiers, the mistress of Henry II. Four centuries younger, it seems older: "It is self-conscious if not vain; its coiffure is elaborately arranged to cover the effects of age, and its neck and shoulders are covered with lace and jewels to hide a certain sharpness of skeleton…an atmosphere of physical

beauty and decay hangs about the whole renaissance" (C403). The adulterous passion of courtly love doesn't comport with Adams' emphasis on the purity and simplicity of the Middle Ages, but with the Renaissance.

If Adams isn't particularly interested in talking about sexuality, he can celebrate sex in maternity, a subject about which he is more comfortable. Reproduction is "the greatest and most mysterious of all energies." The love that interests Adams most is between mother and child—his golden age is ruled by a mother, whether a vision of childhood, ancient Tahiti or medieval France. In the case of the earthly queens, at least, his emphasis on the art that they inspired is matched if not surpassed by the exceptional sons produced by this superior matrilineage, Richard Coeur-de-Lion, Louis IX, and Thibault the grandson of Marie. As it stands Adams' treatment of the Virgin Mother is the greatest example of courtesy in the book.[392]

By the time the text discusses its medieval heroines, the physical travel has ended and Adams is moving into a more objective historical mode. Still, it doesn't seem like coincidence that Adams chooses the feminine chapters to emphasize the illusory nature of historiography:

> For us the poetry is history, and the facts are false. French art starts not from facts, but from certain assumptions as conventional as a legendary window, and the commonest convention is the Woman. The fact, then as now, was Power, or its equivalent in exchange, but Frenchmen, while struggling for the Power, expressed it in terms of art. They looked at life as a drama,—and on drama as a phase of life,—in which the by-standers were bound to assume and accept the regular stage-plot. That the plot might be altogether untrue to real life affected in no way its interest. To them Thibault and Blanche were bound to act Tristan and Isolde. (C549)

Just as we can never know the actual Queen Eleanor, we can never know the relationship between Queen Blanche and Count Thibault. On the stage of French history they were lovers because Tristan and Isolde was the conventional plot. A problem here as in the

Tahitian *Memoirs*, is that Adams seems to blur the details of the story to fit his own pre-existing pattern. Even as lovers, Blanche and Thibault don't seem to have lived out the story of Tristan and Isolde any more than the story Adams claimed as the Tahitian version of the Trojan War resembled the Greek version. Forms of history conform to the societies that created them; the romantic history of the Middle Ages, like the aristocratic history of Tahiti, had been more refreshing and emotionally satisfying to write than the democratic history of the U.S., but all were equally bankrupt when it came to what Adams wanted to know. He was moving beyond the limited social imagination of any one society for a comparative approach that might lead to the larger power that operated behind the poetry and the facts.

Modern self-consciousness renders all ideals an illusion, not merely the medieval: "Illusion for illusion, courteous love, in Thibault's hands, or in the hands of Dante and Petrarch, was as substantial as any other convention;--the balance of trade, the rights of man, or the Athanasian creed" (C549). By implication the Virgin is the greatest illusion in the text; Adams is slowly distancing himself from the identification of earlier chapters so that by his conclusion the interlude in Chartres will seem like a dream. Adams has been described as a deconstructionist *avant la lettre* for recognizing the constructed nature of historiography (as, above, he anticipated Hayden White in his acknowledgement of the use of literary tropes to conceptualize data) and treating interpretation as endless verbal play.[393] In writing his American *History*, Adams searched for and failed to find an ideal, an authorizing metanarrative, that might reanimate American society on terms more to his liking. Writing *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres* confirmed the importance of belief for concerted social action but failed to diminish the

personal and rhetorical self-consciousness that made such belief impossible. Adams seems to have abandoned the idea of the authorizing myth in favor of a longer view and a higher level of abstraction, a grand synthesizing generalization that might explain the course of events (how does a new idea enter the world?), and in explaining set a pattern for anticipation and response.

In exalting the Virgin as symbol while preferring to avoid any extended discussion of the lives of historical women, Adams may have thought he was elevating all women by circumscribing them within the figure of the eternal feminine.[394] But in his "Primitive Rights of Women" he argued that the Church's supposed elevation of woman's status had condemned her to be subjugated to a husband for the sake of a greater subordination to the Church. In any case, idealization holds women to an impossible standard.[395] For Adams most women seem fated to exist outside history in the "inertia" of sexual reproduction: "If it were worthwhile to argue a paradox, one might maintain that nature regards the female as the essential, the male as the superfluity of the world" (C523). For all his claims of female superiority, Adams gives himself away in calling this a paradox. Women are vehicles of continuity, not creators of change; they remain constant in character across the ages—or should. In "The Primitive Rights of Women" Adams naturalized the family against the changing status of women. He took the acceptance of easy divorce and independent lives for women outside the family structure as an indicator of the sort of social disintegration that destroyed ancient Rome; female independence had been tried then and failed the test.

Women were powerful once, Adams opined, what happened? Why did the Puritans reject the Virgin? Adams presents this greatness, which seems to be strength of

will more than anything else, as emanating from the woman and not from the power granted her by a social structure in which caste was more important than gender. For Adams the history of Tahiti proved the forceful character of archaic woman, not the power of a still-extant chiefly class in which inheritance was possible in both male and female lines. Eleanor was the greatest heiress of her age, coming from a time and place that still allowed her to inherit. Mary was acclaimed Queen of Heaven by virtue of a feudal system that imagined heaven as a court. In "The Primitive Rights of Women" Adams makes a limited distinction between biological division by sex and the social constructions of gender as he traces the changing roles of women through the centuries, but in later work he tends to forget the distinction.

Adams explains why men might have "so passionately flung themselves at the feet of the Woman rather than the Man": the instinct of self-preservation. To quote the "ruthless logic" of Abélard: "all of us who fear the wrath of the judge, fly to the judge's mother, who is logically compelled to sue for us, and stands in the place of a mother to the guilty" (C578). When it comes to the medieval woman, though, piety doesn't assume the form of Michelet's "chivalrous gallantry" to a divine lady. Adams attempts to explain the source of the Virgin's popular appeal and share in the comfort she provided by impersonating a simple supplicant. She is an unusually humble subject for Adams' mental appropriation, but her female presence is both the occasion and vehicle for emotional release:[396]

> How many women are there, in this mass of thirteenth century suppliants, who have lost children? Probably nearly all…and probably every one of them has looked up to Mary in her great window, and has felt actual certainty, as though she saw with her own eyes,--there, in heaven, while she looked,--her own lost baby playing with the Christ-child at the Virgin's knee, as much at home as the saints, and much more at home than the kings. Before rising from her knees, every one of these women will

> have bent down and kissed the stone pavement in gratitude for Mary's mercy. The earth, she says, is a sorry place, and the best of it is bad enough, no doubt, even for Queen Blanche…but there above is Mary in heaven who sees and hears me as I see her, and who keeps my little boy as I come; so I can wait with patience, more or less! Saints and prophets and martyrs are all very well, and Christ is very Sublime and just, but Mary *knows*! (C521-22)

If Mary was worshipped as a wellspring of fertility for the childless, Adams prefers to present her as the Queen Mother who knows the pain of loss and how to set a grieving mother's mind at rest. Mary knows and is known as a real person; the accounts of her miracles portray her intimately in word and image, even to her jealousy and bad language. In turn, her devotees are known to her personally, as individuals. Adams doesn't find women incomprehensible on the universal subject of losing children, at least. Even the widowed Queen Blanche had to fight to keep her son, the sainted Louis XII, against the powerful nobles who sought his guardianship, the struggle enacted in the warring iconography of the north and south porches of Chartres. Purportedly the reader and her uncle are kneeling among the medieval crowd as the point of view keeps shifting from the uncle's talk about "them," to their actions, to "her," to "I," to an individual's feelings. This extract displays some of the simple, patient language and speculative tone of Adams' letters to children, and the character of the woman permits the recognition of content that might have come from a sentimental novel. [397] The note of longing in the mother's plea is strong enough to extend beyond her specific object to Wordsworth's children playing on the shore, to the loss of personal childhood and the childhood of the race.

After the death of his wife, Adams discovered the existence of a community of sufferers: "My table was instantly covered with messages from men and women whose own hearts were still aching with the same wounds, and who received me, with a new

burst of their own sorrows, into their sad fraternity" (L2:644). Adams, who didn't speak or write of his dead wife as a rule, surely had a personal interest when he says in *Chartres*: "People who suffer beyond the formulas of expression,—who are crushed to silence, and beyond pain,--want no display of emotion,—no bleeding heart,—no weeping at the foot of the Cross,—no hysterics,—no phrases!" (C521). Mary knows and no word need be spoken. The mothers might identify with the weeping Mater Dolorosa promoted by the church, but Adams' Mary is always regal: "Her quiet, masculine strength enchants us most"—"us" signifying "me." [398] Adams consistently describes his queens as having "masculine" strength, referring to their intensity of will and purpose. He doesn't imagine a neutral strength not appropriated from men, let alone a maternal variant.[399] This Virgin of repose seems to be a different figure than the willful great lady Adams has introduced. She resembles Kwannon, goddess of mercy, the remote inspiration for the androgynous, nameless statue in Rock Creek cemetery, whose meaning Adams always refused to explain despite the questions of uncomprehending tourists.[400]

What lesson does the goddess of a dead faith have to offer to modern nieces? The Virgin has always been used as an image of what women can and ought to be.[401] The anomaly of her life as virgin mother of God, who was herself conceived immaculately and therefore not subject to the pains of labor, may be the source of her symbolic power but doesn't offer a practical model. Adams' Virgin demonstrates the redemptive power of women, hardly a novel idea for the nineteenth century, but she is a queen who acts in her own right, not merely as intercessor. She is not the submissive domestic Mary that nineteenth-century Catholicism preached as a model, but resembles more closely the Virgin of Protestant feminists [402] Adams offered his nieces a figure who was not

sentimental, something like their Aunt Marian in her refusal to be constrained by conventional thinking and something like Elizabeth Cameron in her glamorous maternity. Seen in this light, Adams' contention that he and his niece sought to "amuse" themselves on tour might have a counter-cultural significance, a celebration of frivolity against a society in which time was money, and an incorporation of the attitudes of his late wife, rather than Veblen's leisure as status display. It may not be fair to cite Adams' withering assessments of the female mind that date from the 1870s; after all he did marry a woman he described as "a charming bluestocking." Still, if he came to prefer the company of women, it was not for the cerebral stimulation they provided. His role was to furnish the intellectual power, theirs to provide comfort and alternative values to masculine standards of competition.[403]

Considered as a personally affective education, the companion text to the impersonal *Education* for young men, *Chartres* doesn't seem to expand the conventional range of feminine activity, although it offers a feminine presence and an equivocal agency altogether lacking in U.S. history. Adams' heroine Esther Dudley, who had "nothing medieval about her" and was presented, possibly, as an American type of the future, renounces marriage, as does Madeleine Lee; they retain their autonomy and moral integrity at the expense of their generativity. The Virgin and the three earthly queens exemplify the powerful influence of maternity They inspired and more, demanded male creativity, attempting to channel brutality into chivalry by virtue of position as well as personality. From the perspective of the Middle Ages, Adams' complaint about the absence of women in U. S. history perhaps makes sense: translated into the terms of a mass society, women as a group haven't had a leavening effect on American values as

culture, morality or taste. In what other terms could women enter history, since Adams was not prepared to end the exclusion of individual women from public life, unless the form of history itself changed? And it would probably take a social revolution to effect a redefinition of what was possible to write as history. Still, in its own disregard of professional conventions, Adams' history seems a tribute to the goddess of heterodoxy, who in some way authorizes his resistance. Intentionally or not, the after-effect of the images of the queens of heaven and earth might awaken Adams' nieces to the potential of feminine power, and the value of resistance to contemporary assessments of female abilities.[404]

In the *Education* and elsewhere, Adams had much to say about the failure of the American woman, her reluctance to have children foremost, but in 1903 he was curious about the possibility of a new social development, "an emancipated social class" of women. "[The Woman] is only beginning her career. What she will become is known only to the Holy Virgin." Adams averred that "If I were beginning again as a writer, I think I should drop the man, except as an accessory, and study the woman of the future." While the American man's limitations were all too clear, "The American woman has not yet existed. She is still a study. She is all that is left to art" (L5:497).[405] The presence of the niece in the text suggests that women still might have a redemptive potential, however undefined that might be.

Renewal

Upon reading *Chartres* William James enthused, "From beginning to end it reads as if from a man in the fresh morning of life, with a frolic power unusual to historic

literature."[406] Travel was the stimulant with which Adams lured his readers to entertain his wider speculations about the nature of historical change. He had experienced its tonic effects in 1895: "The cathedral was like new—or old—life to us. We have made ourselves young in the aspirations of its shafts and images" (L4:310). New sights, surprising contrasts, immersion in a naïvely exalted sense of humanity's place in the universe, all awakened a fin-de-siècle imagination. The "frolic power" is heightened by the text's focus on recreating the optimal experience for the niece/reader rather than reporting the narrator's response to the actuality of travel. Possibly Adams feeds on the freshness of the niece's vision as he drinks again the tonic of medieval simplicity. The adult learns to grow "prematurely young," surrounded by the things of childhood. Repeating his Polynesian stance, Adams translated the very old past into the childhood of the race. The tourist is content to enjoy a restorative immersion into novel old life, while the historian seeks the sources of new forms. As the journey deepens from tour to pilgrimage, the narrative line, at least, seems to hold out the promise of personal transformation, but the expected fulfillment is deflected and deferred as Adams seeks a wider revitalization.

The pilgrimage begins in ancestor worship. Having identified the singularity of the Middle Ages, the unprecedented nature of its achievement and the inaccessibility of its thought, Adams still needed some connection with its difference, a way in. For an Adams and an adopted member of the Teva clan, genealogy was a familiar link to an otherwise unreachable past, in this case a hypothetical relation to the Normans derived from "our" English blood. [407] Adams places us on the heights of Mont Saint Michel to look at the shore—and recall New England. The *pons seclorum* is the door to the church,

the first of many portals that facilitate an imaginative transit of the ages. Before we enter, we must imagine ourselves into that younger time, tenants in service to lords and church, farmers, pilgrims, soldiers, and builders of churches, and yearn for what we've lost:

> From the roof of the cathedral at Coutances over yonder, one may look away over the hills and woods, the farms and fields of Normandy, and so familiar, so homelike are they, one can almost take oath on this, or the other, or in all, one knew life once and has never so fully known it since.
> Never so fully known it since! For we of the eleventh century, hard-headed, close-fisted, grasping, shrewd, as we were and as Normans are still said to be, stood more fully in the centre of the world's movement than our English descendants ever did. (C345)

"We" the American tourists merge into "we" the eleventh century Normans; Normandy is New England "at its highest ideal power." [408] As Adams conjures himself into history: "one knew life once and has never so fully known it since." This vital energy is what Adams envied most, human energy that coincided with the force of history, "the centre of the world's movement," and expressed itself in the great cathedrals and the first crusade. [409] Adams' awed response to the cathedrals was for the force that could instigate the highest human accomplishment, devotion entwined with ambition.

The link to the Normans is surprising, given Adams' former interest in the Anglo-Saxon theory of history, the way that the germ of freedom, nurtured in the tribal forests of Germany and carried to Britain, lying dormant through centuries of English feudalism, came to fruition in the United States. Adams imagines Norman yeomen on the brink of invasion, not the standard aristocrats crushing Anglo-Saxon natives.[410] Feudalism, rather than the enemy of freedom, registers as a devotion to something greater than oneself, and if not exactly voluntary, still a way to escape the self and its demands.[411] While popular accounts of the building of the cathedrals sought to establish a continuous relation to the present, seeing in them an anti-feudal, proto-democratic rise of the urban middle class,

Adams saw this rise as a fall from grace, the beginnings of an industrial and commercial civilization.

Adams' former student, Henry Cabot Lodge, who played historian on their cathedral tour, revered his Norman ancestors as "the most remarkable of all the people who poured out of the Germanic forests" (quoted in Mane 90).[412] Unlike Lodge and others, Adams wasn't interested in making a contemporary argument about the continued domination of the Norman character; he wanted to recover the intensity which had been lost.[413] In Adams' vexed relation to England, the conquest seems to have signaled a decline of Norman leadership in all the important areas: war, politics, religious reform and art. In *Chartres* Anglo-Saxons (we tourists, alas, are also Anglo-Saxons "of American training") are stolid, unimaginative, oblivious to the world of the senses and the spirit; the journey will be a process of unlearning for both uncle and charge.

Adams felt the weight of the past too much to believe in the possibility of an original relation to the universe, but at least he could choose his antecedents. Tellingly, the only nineteenth-century Norman Adams cites is an artist, Gustave Flaubert: "Going up the Seine one might read a few pages of his letters, or of Madame Bovary, to see how an old art transmutes itself into a new one, without changing its methods" (C392).[414] What Adams aspires to know is that process of transmutation. The problem of the artist in effecting that transition from old to new is part of Adams' wider investigation into the sources of generativity.

From the first, Adams is drawn to the juxtaposition of old and new, notably the sixteenth-century Gothic choir seen through the eleventh-century Romanesque arches of Mont Saint Michel. He personifies the extremes of both styles by sex and unites them,

> so that now, standing at the western door, you can look down the Church and see the two limits of medieval architecture married together; the earliest Norman and the latest French…Although the two structures are some five hundred years apart, they live pleasantly together…The choir is charming—far more charming than the nave, as the beautiful woman is more charming than the elderly man. One need not quarrel about styles of beauty, as long as the man and woman are evidently satisfied and love and admire each other still, with all the solidity of faith to hold them up. (C351)

Adams' text reiterates this distinction of male and female styles, which are easier to harmonize from a perspective of centuries. No human marriages reach this ideal of mutuality. All relations are unequal, but mothers at least exert a benign authority. As the journey continues through the centuries, the forces at play will become more complicated and equilibrium won't be possible through a simple compartmentalization.

The "solidity of faith" is provided by the Romanesque foundation, simple, assertive, unthinking, a mailed fist united against the perils of the sea, the devil and the infidel. Young people may prefer the Gothic, but "men and women who have lived long and are tired,—who want rest,—who have done with aspirations and ambitions,—whose life has been a broken arch—feel this repose and self restraint as they feel nothing else." But then Adams' viewpoint shifts. Even the ancestral "cradle of rest" is none too full of repose. "Indeed, when you look longer at it, you begin to doubt whether there is any repose in it at all"; the Church Militant "seems to threaten heaven itself" (C349). Already the early builders were too ambitious in building up from the peak instead of seeking a firmer footing. The Gothic replaced an eleventh-century choir that had collapsed. Already the text registers a tremor of future uncertainty, with a concomitant freedom of choice.

In 1895 the Norman churches had aroused a fantasy of "personal creation" in Adams. Of Notre Dame de Coutances he wrote, "I was a vassal of the church; I held farms…but the one thing I did by the great majority of my ancestors was to help in

building the cathedral of Coutances, and my soul is still built into it. I can almost remember the faith that gave me energy" (L4:319). In *Chartres* Adams uses the juxtaposition of masculine and feminine modes at Coutances to depict the Norman soul of 1200 and by implication, his own idealized self. If we can imagine a spire for the distinctive central tower over the transept, it becomes "the man-at-arms himself, mounted and ready for battle, spear at rest," defiantly the Church Militant with God its Seigneur.[415] Yet the Normans possessed unexpected depths, as the masculine exterior gives way to a shrine for the Virgin within: "one seems to sound subterranean caverns of feeling behind their iron nasals. No other cathedral in France or in Europe has an interior more refined,--one is tempted to use even the hard-worn adjective, more tender,--or more carefully studied" (C387). Mariolatry is all the more striking in the Norman context, as strength surrenders to grace. Adams' emphasis is less on female sovereignty than a masculine character of devotion and courtesy. "Among the unexpected revelations of human nature that suddenly astonish historians, one of the least reasonable was the passionate outbreak of devotion to the ideal of feminine grace and charity and love" that swept up "the most heard-hearted and hard-headed race in Europe" (C388). However improbable the feeling to descendants, the building records it.

Wandering through Normandy and the Ile-de-France, Adams is always sensitive to the problems of transition, thus his particular obsession with the design of the flèche, or spire, to study the point of junction where a usually octagonal spire meets a square tower. "There is no livelier amusement for fine weather than in hunting them as though they were mushrooms…No work of man has life like the flèche" (C386). Partly because of the nature of the flèche, partly due to the many recommendations of churches "worth

an excursion" and suggestions for future investigations, this chapter opens up the narrative to the possibilities of improvisation and serendipity before we return to Adams' program. According to Adams (after Viollet-le-Duc), the treatment of the older flèche at Chartres has never been rivaled for its French "adresse." The adroitness with which it changes from tower to spire, earthbound to ethereal, without a visible break shows the influence of the Norman style and perfects it. To Saint Bernard flèches were "an excrescence due to pride and worldliness," in other words, "an ornament created to gratify the artistic sense of beauty" (C404). Their lack of utilitarian function and aspirational beauty are a large part of their frolic appeal.

At Chartres, too, artists faced more complicated problems of transition: "the architect was obliged to design a new system, which should at the same time satisfy the laws of construction and the taste and imagination of Mary" (C432). The persistence of old elements which needed to be incorporated within the new was a challenge for the architect. All art involves a process of transition from earlier models, but at Chartres we seem to witness the creation of a new idea:

> In this church the old Romanesque leaps into the gothic under our eyes; of a sudden, between the portal and the shrine, the infinite rises into a new expression, always a rare and an excellent miracle in thought. The two expressions are nowhere far apart; not farther than the mother from the Son. The new artist drops unwillingly the hand of his father or his grandfather; he looks back from every corner of his own work, to see whether it goes with the old. He will not part with the western portal or the lancet windows; he holds close to the round columns of the choir; he would have kept the round arch if he could, but the round arch was not able to do the work; it could not rise; so he broke it, lifted the vaulting, threw out flying buttresses, and satisfied the Virgin's wish. (C441)

The western portal with its three lancet windows and its towers survived, miraculously, a disastrous fire in 1194. In it you can see the ideas brought back from the East, most notably the imperial character of the Virgin of the Crusades amid the stylized sculptures

that looked so "ridiculous" to the eighteenth century but are "the Eginetan marbles of French art" (C409). But the rebuilding required that the wall be moved forward forty feet, flush with the towers, and the façade was heightened to provide room for a rose window. For Adams the miracle is not the survival, but the "miracle in thought" that made Chartres a template for later cathedrals, with some sacrifice on the part of the artist and art. To a degree the architect was forced to deface the old work and disfigure his own: "One cannot quite say that he has spoiled his own church in trying to save what he could of the old, but if he did not quite spoil it he saved it only by an amount of intelligence that we shall never learn enough to feel our incapacity to understand" (C444). Better than perfection, the experiment has the spark of creation.

Adams' relation of present art to the past as familial and a patrilineage is not surprising in view of his expectations. The image of the son who has to drop the hands of his father and grandfather to form something new surely has resonance in the Adams context, evoking the scene in the *Education* of the venerable John Quincy Adams enforcing the law, taking the hand of his rebellious grandson and without a word leading him to school: "the President, though a tool of tyranny, had done his disreputable work with a certain intelligence" (Edu 732). Adams' opinion of his great–grandfather was not benign, although the extent of his critique both personal and political was reserved for his private writings.[416] God the Father, compelling the law, is barely a presence in the Virgin's church. She facilitates the relation across the generations; sons are careful readers in the thirteenth century, yet she sanctions their rebellion, making it possible for the son to break with the earlier rule and break it without guilt, since he acts in the service of a higher idea.

The architect practiced "blind obedience, as though he were doing his best to please the Virgin without trying to please himself." [417] He marshaled his forces and minimized the deficiencies of his design by focusing attention on the rose window, which symbolized her. Adams imagines the architect in prayer, reviewing the work of the day in detail and ending with "Gracious Lady, what ought I to do? Forgive me my stupidity, my wretched want of taste and feeling! I love and adore you! All that I am, I am for you! If I cannot please you, I care not for Heaven! But without your help, I am lost!" (C504). Adams invites his readers to consider the problems of the architect in designing the great windows behind the choir, reconciling the jewel-like brilliance of the west portal, the feminine decoration of the apse, and the warring south and north transepts, whose conflicting conceptions reflected the clash between their patrons, Queen Blanche and Pierre de Dreux. In solving the problems of uniting differing styles and warring branches of the royal family, the strategy of the artist of the transition always was to "exalt the Virgin," Adams' own scheme in positing organic medieval unity and in organizing his text. The architect projects "the infinite loftiness of Mary's nature, among the things of earth, and above the clamor of kings" and designs the figure of Adams' Virgin of repose to sit above the high altar, above the strife (C519).

Proposed as a pilgrimage, the cathedral tour that began at Mont Saint Michel and ends at Chartres might be expected to end in an experience of conversion, if only for the sake of the form, but Adams' experiment in regeneration was more complicated. He defined history as "only a catalogue of the forgotten" (C373). In recalling the past to life he was not interested in uncovering the tale of barbarism that Walter Benjamin posited is behind cultural treasures.[418] Still less did he consider it the historian's duty to resurrect

the voices of those oppressed by feudalism and the Church, as did Jules Michelet.[419] Nor was forgetting the past a necessary first step to action, to follow Nietzsche's thinking in "The Use and Disabuse of History."[420] What is "forgotten" is that which no longer possesses a vital link, that which is no longer felt. Forgetting in Adams' account isn't merely the fading of memory but an expulsion of what is an inconvenient reproach to changing attitudes. So the fiscal improvidence surrounding her cult made the Virgin irrelevant to a growing bourgeoisie, to the extent that in the eyes of the twentieth century, "[t]he twelfth and thirteenth centuries, studied in the pure light of political economy, are insane" (C523). [421]

Insanely nonutilitarian and therefore useful to fill a modern need, the Virgin might return to fin-de-siècle consciousness, felt as nostalgia, homesickness, by a "radiant center" of the elect, the nucleus perhaps of some new understanding. Or so Adams claimed when he wrote to the medievalist Albert Stanburrough Cook about restricting the circulation of his book: "My idea is that the world outside,--the so-called modern world,--can only pervert and degrade the conceptions of the primitive instinct of art and feeling, and that our only chance is to accept the limited number of survivors,--the one-in-a-thousand of born artists and poets,--and to intensify the energy of feeling within that radiant center" (L6:357).[422] One hundred copies of *Chartres* were printed in 1904 with no author's name on the title page, and were distributed to friends and libraries. The historian might dream, as ever, of being vindicated by posterity, the sons-in-wish who seemed so out of reach when he wrote his preface. And what middle class reader in search of culture wouldn't want to join that charmed circle, to be distinguished from the philistine herd of tourists? By making his book exclusive Adams made it irresistible to

masses of readers who suspected they possessed the souls, at least, of artists. Adams received so many requests for copies that a revised edition of one hundred was printed in 1912. A year later Adams acceded to the pleas of Ralph Adams Cram and gave him the book to publish under the auspices of the American Institute of Architects (thus allowing Adams to disclaim all responsibility for its appearance). The advance sale broke Houghton Mifflin's records.[423]

Cram, an architect and polemicist for medieval values, wrote in his introduction that the book demanded publication for "its intrinsic nature and the cause it could so admirably serve." [424] He apparently found reading *Chartres* a revelation through artistic experience second only to his conversion to Anglo-Catholicism one Christmas Eve midnight mass in Rome.[425] In proselytizing for a religious and architectural revival through the medium of medievalism Cram seems to have read more into Adam's text than Adams intended.

For Adams the conservation of imagination didn't imply an advocacy for the restoration of religion. He was a historical determinist in accepting the Comtean idea of stages of history, but without the assumption that movement meant progress. In the *Education* Adams reports his perplexity at the way that religion had simply and suddenly disappeared for members of his generation: "neither to him nor to his brothers and sisters was religion real" and they all dropped the practice of the mild Unitarianism in which they had been raised at first opportunity. "The religious instinct had vanished, and could not be revived, although one made in later life many efforts to recover it" (Edu 751). Religion was indisputably real in the stone and glass and words of the Middle Ages, but, as Adams demonstrated at Chartres, this modern man who under the most suggestive of

religious atmospheres made an effort to “recover” it, remained unconverted. (Unlike the disillusionment of Twain’s pilgrimage, founded in the dissonance between the weight of significance and the reality of place, Adams’ failure rested in the observer as a creature of his time.) Adams may not have judged history to be progress but he saw its course as irreversible. The remnant husbanding the vital flame of creativity does so in service of a future as yet unimagined, although in his next book Adams will try to project its lines. But if Cram wrote as though Adams authorized his project of restoration, the text itself provides some justification in the narrative logic that creates an expectation of personal transformation, and in the way Adams sets himself up as guide and teacher, however often he denies it.

Adams, unlike Cram, wasn’t out to lead a crusade against what he considered to be the currents of the age. (Cram’s success as an architect and the popularity of *Chartres* indicate how prevalent their anti-modernist modernism was, at least within a certain class). Still, Adams does show there are limits to his determinism through the idea of the “radiant center”; the right illusion can be irresistible even to a critical historicism. As Adams saw it, individuals always operate under conditions of constraint, with limited agency in the face of uncontrollable forces, yet change does occur and some small component of those forces may be human. In a mechanistic universe a group of like-minded people may constitute a pool of residual energy. Even the hesitation of self-consciousness may have its uses if it enables them to wait for a more favorable current rather than be broken by head-on resistance. Adams’ reference to them as “survivors” raises questions as to whether their persistence turns them into fossils or harbingers of the future, representatives of a residual or emergent configuration.

Adams' radiant center might well have imagined themselves "Wandering between two worlds, one dead/The other powerless to be born" (85-86). His "survivors" are something like the "remnant" proposed by Matthew Arnold on his 1884 tour of America.[426] According to Arnold the past remnants, like Plato's followers of wisdom and Isaiah's righteous tenth, were too small to change their societies, but given the larger scale of America, even a remnant might transform a nation whose majority aims and values were unsound. Arnold emphasized the personal virtues of the remnant, Adams, following Henri Bergson, the spark of creativity they conserved. Adams looked to the transition which would transcend present-day society rather than reform it.[427] After all, the architect of Chartres was both a radical and a conservator, who read his fathers and incorporated them into a new system.

Adams had demonstrated in *Esther* that he didn't think belief could be produced by an act of will. Like Pascal, like William James, he took the fideist position that faith could not be achieved by reason alone. James himself thought *The Will to Believe* might more accurately be called the "right" to believe, coming at the subject as he did from a milieu in which belief was suspect, rather than, as in Adams' novel, a compulsion to be escaped. As James hypothesized about belief, "Our passional nature not only lawfully may, but must, decide an option between propositions, whenever it is a genuine option that cannot by its nature be decided on intellectual grounds." James asserted "a justification of faith, a defence of our right to adopt a believing attitude in religious matters, in spite of the fact that our merely logical intellect may not have been coerced" (23). Esther Dudley, Adams' protagonist, shows that faith is not a question of amassing sufficient evidence to convince her intellect: she reads all she can; she wants the

argument that will convince her. The decision to believe or not reaches James' standard of a "momentous" choice for Esther: her personal happiness seems at stake, and still she cannot suspend her disbelief.

Perhaps for Adams the choice was no longer so momentous. When Adams sought intelligibility behind the events of U.S. history, religious belief no longer could provide an explanation, providential or otherwise. And of what benefit was religion if it no longer concerned itself with answering the questions central to existence? As he wrote in the *Education*,

> That the most powerful emotion of man, next to the sexual, should disappear, might be a personal defect of his own; but that the most intelligent society, led by the most intelligent clergy, in the most moral conditions he ever knew, should have solved all the problems of the universe so thoroughly as to have quite ceased making itself anxious about past or future, and should have persuaded itself that all the problems which had convulsed human thought from earliest recorded time, were not worth discussing, seemed to him the most curious social phenomenon he had to account for in a long life. (Edu 751)

The value of religion seems to lie in its social power as much as its personal effect. In his chapter on St. Thomas the "problems of the universe" raised in twelfth and seventeenth centuries as questions of religion became in the modern era questions of science. Religion became irrelevant to vital discussion, but the divorce of intelligence from emotion afflicted both modern religion and science. By the 1800s, according to Adams' *History*, this instinct to religious belief was becoming increasingly tenuous, whether because or in spite of the fact that the prescriptions of religion were growing progressively milder. By the time of the *Education* it had simply, amazingly, vanished. In *Esther* organized religion may be valued still for its role in policing the lower classes, while the upper classes worship themselves in the ecclesiastical theatre: congregants are both audience and participants as they admire the spectacle. To a nineteenth century skeptic, the appeal

of religion in the Middle Ages was that it seemed real. It connected the individual to a force not personal outside himself, formed him into a community in which all were equal and put them directly into the current of history. To once have lived fully in the center of the world's movement but "Never so fully known it since!"; this is the loss Adams regrets more than religion.

Adams can impersonate belief, leaving readers in suspense as to whether the end result will be belief itself. In one paragraph, he suggests that

> Many a young person, and now and then one who is not in first youth, witnessing the sight in the religious atmosphere of such a church as this, without a suspicion of susceptibility, has suddenly seen what Paul saw on the road to Damascus, and has fallen on his face with the crowd, groveling at the foot of the Cross, which, for the first time in his life, he feels. (C441)

"One who is not in his first youth" might refer, coyly, to Adams (although it sounds more like Brooks' experience). But in the next paragraph he draws back and enjoins, "We are not now seeking religion; indeed true religion generally comes unsought. We are trying only to feel gothic art. For us, the world is not a schoolroom or a pulpit, but a stage, and the stage is the highest yet seen on earth" (C441). When faced with a test of belief, Adams shifts the conversation to art. "Feeling" the cross is apparently not believing, but exploring an emotion, entertaining its present viability; it simply confirms the residue of energy that inheres in the old symbol. [428]

In Adams' furthest attempt to inhabit the lost world, his conviction can go no further than a belief that such faith once existed, as he describes what it is like to be present at "the highest [stage] yet seen on earth":

> One sees [the Virgin's] personal preference on every side. Anyone can feel it who will only consent to feel like a child. Sitting here any Sunday afternoon, while the voices of the children of the *mâitrise* are chanting in the choir,—your mind held in the grasp of the strong lines and shadows of the architecture; your eyes flooded with

> the autumn tones of the glass; your ears drowned with the purity of the voices; one sense reacting upon another until sensation reaches the limit of its range;—you or any lost soul, could, if you cared to look and listen, feel a sense beyond the human ready to reveal a sense divine that would make that world once more intelligible, and would bring the Virgin to life again, in all the depth of feeling which she shows here,—in lines, vaults, chapels, colors, legends, chants,—more eloquent than the prayer-book, and more beautiful than the autumn sunlight; and anyone willing to try, could feel it like the child, reading new thought without end into the art he has studied a hundred times; but what is still more convincing, he could, at will, in an instant, shatter the whole art by calling into it a single motive of his own. (C504-5)

At this climax of the physical journey Adams doesn't present the spiritual transformation that might have been expected from the pilgrimage form or, for that matter, in the aftermath of the Oxford movement. The language plays with the expectation of conversion, "My firm belief," "my conviction," but the truth it asserts is historical: once the Virgin answered prayers here; once belief made her a living presence. "Here and not elsewhere" because the early classic phase of a style is strongest.[429] At Chartres the movement had the freshness of youth and its builders, in abandoning themselves to an ideal, were able to create something new for others to follow.[430] One can be "willing" in cultivating a receptivity to experience emotion, but "will" in this situation acts only to assert the self and destroy a welcome moment of self-abandonment. The reader of Adams' novels would have expected nothing else than renunciation. It is one thing to long, to kneel in courtesy to a woman, another to submit to the authority of the institution. He cannot go back; no one with modern self-consciousness, "a motive of his own" can, although certainly one can feel the longing for self-forgetfulness that had earlier driven Adams to study Eastern religions. History, Adams tells us once again, is not reversible.

On Sunday afternoons Adams can experience a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, a total work of art, because the church is not yet a museum, although Adams can discount the beliefs of

others as a cultural survival. As Marcel Proust, the translator of Ruskin's *Bible of Amiens* wrote, "It can be said that a performance of Wagner at Bayreuth is not much compared to high mass in the Cathedral of Chartres" (87). [431] Adams describes the experience of inundation by sensory stimuli, mind occupied by line, eyes flooded by color, ears drowned by the song of children, "one sense reacting upon another until sensation reaches the limit of its range," which the narrator presumably has experienced. Adams shifts from "my" conviction to what "one" sees, to a prescription inviting "anyone" willing to think, or rather, react, like a child, to the closer "you," the niece, the reader, drawing us in with a sentence that is unwilling to end, that breathlessly accumulates experiences in the succession of commas capped by a semi-colon, "but" then decelerates as it returns from "you" to "anyone" who can be a child, now considered a complication rather than a possibility. The rising excitement and promise of the moment is shattered by the self-consciousness of the narrator who returns, impersonally, as "he," but we recognize the scholar. An overload of sensory perceptions leads to a revelation of the supersensual energy behind it, "a sense beyond the human," but the modern man lacks the instinct to connect with the particular message of the force.

This sensation is more prolonged and more intense than the earlier "blindness," but it is not the disorientation of initiation so much as a demonstration of the power of art: "It was very childlike, very foolish, very beautiful and very true—as art at least;—so true that everything else shades off into vulgarity" (C522). Truth is relative, but the art is true to its impulse. There are elements in Adams' description of a late-nineteenth-century cult of experience, as exemplified by a work like Walter Pater's *The Renaissance*, another idiosyncratic history that might be read best as a map of the author's thought.[432]

As Pater in his defense of aestheticism upends the intent of Matthew Arnold's criticism, which is, as he quotes it, "to see the object as in itself it really is," the important thing becomes "to know one's own impression as it really is, to discriminate it, to realize it distinctly" (xix). For Pater, "Our education becomes complete in proportion as our susceptibility to these impressions increases in depth and variety" (xx). Travel, especially under John La Farge's influence, expanded Adams' aesthetic receptivity, and *Chartres*, as Adams conceived it, was a training in susceptibility for a particular flavor of experience. Pater's cry "What effect does it really produce on me?" might have been Adams' cry as well (x). In his physical and intellectual restlessness he was a relentless consumer of sights and attitudes but also a student of reaction.

Yet it is not enough. For Pater, in modern thinking, "Not the fruit of experience, but experience itself is the end…How shall we pass most swiftly from point to point, and be present always at the focus where the greatest numbers of vital forces unite in their purest energy?" (188). His works of art are "powers or forces producing pleasurable sensations, each of a more or less peculiar or unique kind" (xx). Art as in Adams' experience at Chartres, may have provided "the highest quality" of experience. The evocation of the past made Adams feel alive in the present, but the intensity of experience was indicative of the force which was not in, but expressed itself through the work of art. George Santayana described poetry and religion as part of a continuum, so that "Poetry raised to its highest power is then identical with religion grasped in its inmost truth," but while Adams judged works of religious expression like the *Summa* as art, the art was always representative of its time and an instrument of some power (172).[433] Adams claimed that "Religious art is the measure of human depth and sincerity" (C346). The art

in turn was dependent on and measured by the intensity of the religion; the problem with modern art was that it lacked any similar compulsion. The experience of Pater's "pleasurable sensations" were not enough for Adams; art for its own sake was not enough. (The presence of the niece was an indication of Adam's seriousness, as well as his frivolity; this is not a project for himself alone.)[434] Adams, for all his pose of detachment, preferred to identify himself with the artist rather than the critic. He was interested in locating the sources of creativity, not in exalting the critic as a creative artist, at least if criticism was the expansion of a rare and subtle personal taste. *Chartres* is an artful critique, less of the medieval monuments it describes than the modernity which is its implicit subject, and it is on the way to creating a larger statement.

In Pater's *Renaissance*, history is a resurrection. Nothing is quite new: the worship of the human intellect and body that he sees in the story of Abélard and Héloïse as an early indication of the Renaissance is also the recapitulation of an older idea. Adams the American may feel the heir to all the ages, but perhaps for that reason needs to feel the past as rupture, to see some historical conditions as unprecedented and unrepeatable, and some ages more important to the vital movement of the world:

> when we rise from our knees now, we have finished our pilgrimage. We have done with Chartres. For seven hundred years Chartres has seen pilgrims, coming and going more or less like us; and will perhaps see them for another hundred years, but we shall see it no more, and can safely leave the Virgin in her Majesty, with her three great prophets on either hand, as calm and confident in their own strength and in God's providence as they were when Saint Louis was born, but looking down from a deserted heaven, into an empty church, on a dead faith. (C521-22)

The Virgin as the principle of the eternal feminine can't die out entirely so long as the human race propagates itself, but religious idealism no longer participates in the vital movement of history. A dead faith no longer asks the great questions. As Adams was

writing this there was a resurgence of interest in the cathedrals of France, although none of this is apparent in his book. A century of disputes in which all political parties and classes vied to define the cathedrals' significance coalesced into a conviction about their importance as an expression of the French soul. Their antiquity and their continuity as functioning houses of worship symbolized the nation as nothing else in French society could.[435] Part of the appeal of life in France for Adams was the ability to experience the authenticity of this "living" culture of the past, the children's choir at Chartres or the fête of Our Lady of Coutances, but he treated them touristically as aesthetic, sociological, or historical, not religious experiences.

Adams isn't merely being disingenuous in tending to omit any reference to present-day believers and proclaiming the church "empty." The distinction between a secular age and a religious age is a qualitative one, a shift in the conditions of belief. For the twelfth century faith was tacit, part of the air people breathed; it went without saying. By the nineteenth century faith had become a choice. [436] This farewell to Chartres marks the end of the physical travels, analogous to the point at which Adams' novels end, his heroines preferring lonely integrity to submission, but half the text remains. Adams' inquiry becomes more overtly historical, as he explores the phenomenon of female power and the increasing reflexivity of male medieval thinking. If belief is impossible, the pilgrimage shifts mode and finds intellectual fulfillment and emotional declension in the new system of the *Summa*. As medieval thinking more closely approaches the modern, Adams no longer needs to recapture lost modes of feeling.

The Monument Intellectual

While the central chapters on the Virgin of Chartres are particularly memorable in their imagery, in the emotion they express and in the enunciation of those emotions by a man whose antecedents were New England Puritans and prominent figures of the American Enlightenment, Adams advised William James, among others, that "the last three chapters are alone worth reading, and of course never read," and more specifically, "the last chapter is the only thing I ever wrote that I almost think good" (L6:120;121). Discounting the standard self-deprecation, there are a number of reasons why Adams might consider this his most satisfying book. It offered an opportunity to articulate his discontent with the way modern civilization was proceeding, certainly, but also the pleasure of recalling and extending the traveler's experience of renewal.

Adams might have found satisfaction in his ability to define his subject, the freedom to follow his inclinations without concern for any but a like-minded audience, to find emotional release in a world of childhood light, color and sweetness, to propitiate the spirit of the dead, and bask in the comforting wish-fulfillment of an all-forgiving female principle. If the problem of his *Education* was, as Adams complained, one of literary form, a problem that he blamed on a modern world that "does not furnish the contrasts or the emotion," *Chartres* allowed him the contrasts, the emotion and, in the conclusion, the satisfaction of a formal synthesis in collaboration with Thomas Aquinas.[437] Adams' own thinking tended to the unresolved dialectic, to paradox and contradiction, to the freedom of moving between two alternatives, but in his highly selective version of Aquinas' grand summation of theology the assurances as well as the limitations of faith permit the creation of a unified system. Finally, *Chartres* has been an inquiry into the sources of

generativity and in its conclusion, as Adams begins to work his way towards the twentieth century and formulating a theory of history, (to be explicated in his next book, *The Education of Henry Adams*), he becomes his own artist of transition.[438]

The last of the Marian chapters "Les Miracles de Notre Dame" begins with poetry by Dante and Petrarch, (even past the peak of her influence, or perhaps because of an awareness of its decline, the Virgin evokes such intensity of art and feeling that Adams claims he dares not translate it) and ends with a thirteenth-century poem (in French and English) of the simple acrobat who tumbled before her altar. The uncle enjoins his companion one last time:"If you cannot feel the color and quality,—the union of *naïveté* and art,—the refinement,—the infinite delicacy and tenderness—of this little poem, then nothing much will matter to you; and if you can feel it, you can feel, without more assistance, the majesty of Chartres" (C604). There is nothing more to say, if the uncle's array of evidence hasn't evoked our sympathy by now. If he has quickened our atrophied twentieth-century imaginations we can proceed on our own journeys. Yet the text doesn't conclude with this tutorial in feeling and taste.

The next chapter shifts abruptly from emotion to reason and the masculine principle of a resurgent philosophy. In short order Adams presents an untranslated Latin poem by Hildebert from the first Crusade, then Gregory the Great's five-hundred-year-old definition of the deity which the poem translated into verse. Adams notes that their God sounds remarkably like the God Spinoza, the great pantheist, described five hundred years after the Crusade. Spinoza, "whose name is still a terror to the orthodox," presents a problem for theology: if God is everywhere, "he is the only possible energy, and leaves no place for human will to act" (C606-07). As Adams perceives it, all the theological

thought in the last three chapters, taken to its logical conclusion, seems to end in some ultimate Energy circumscribing human freedom, but generally the constraints of dogma don't allow for the extensions of logic.

Freed from the spatial coordinates of physical monuments, we tourists are moving awfully quickly through time, and the more frequently we cross the bridge of ages the shorter the distance seems. The past doesn't exist in isolation "for its own sake." In the final trio of chapters our relation to it is made more explicit as a set of analogies, while at the same time Adams' range of references has increased. In addition to the medieval, subdivided into centuries, and the modern, he occasionally brings in the seventeenth-century point of view as an intermediate position.

Abélard (1079-1142) is our "Portal" into Gothic philosophy, for which "[n]either Art nor Thought has a modern equivalent" (C607). A rebel who turned his mastery of dialectic to challenging his superiors, at least his protestant personality is recognizable to moderns. Adams displays a measure of identification with this decidedly flawed character and his questioning intelligence, as well as sympathy for his tribulations. Too smart for his own good, Abélard cannot resist an intellectual contest. His method of attacking the inconsistencies of official thought by displaying samples in parallel columns, "Sic et Non!," sounds like the young Adams in his first historical article debunking John Smith's legend and the old Adams exposing the contradictions of contemporary thought in *A Letter to American Teachers of History.* Adams demonstrates Abélard's comparative mode when he begins the chapter with the words of Hildebert, Gregory and Spinoza, noting their heretical similarity, although without the parallel columns.[439]

This Abélard is not the "dastardly seducer" of Twain's account. Adams omits the story of his romance with Héloïse as irrelevant to his intent. Héloïse has little place in an account of Abélard's career. Not being "a philosopher or a poet or an artist," this embodiment of the eternal woman is outside the history of events. If we needed any further indication that the ground has shifted, that women no longer "give the law," (at least in the sequence of the narrative; the rebuilding of Chartres occurred in 1145), Abélard sacrificed Héloïse to his ambition, sending her to a convent. Championing the doctrine of the Holy Ghost, his work to eliminate the feminine in the natural Trinity of Father, Mother and Child for the sake of an abstraction is implicit.[440] His indiscretions here are intellectual and institutional: this adventurer attempts to storm heaven with logic, recklessly but not fearlessly.

Instead of the romance, Adams stages the intellectual tournament between Abélard and his former teacher William of Champeaux on the subject of Universals. William started his argument from the Universe, the ideal, and asserted that the Universal was a real thing, while Abélard proceeding from "the Atom," the individual, the concrete, posited its nominal existence. As Adams freely imagines their contest, (and this fictional re-enactment was the sort of feature that made Henry Osborn Taylor uneasy), Abélard triumphed over William and destroyed his authority as a teacher. When pressed to its logical conclusion the realist argument led to Pantheism, in which "all energy at last becomes identical with the single ultimate substance, God himself" (C618). Philosophy flouted dogma at its peril, since pantheism seemed to negate the existence of free will and deny humans the possibility to choose salvation. In any discussion the Church required a realist assumption of unity, but the attempt to rationalize dogma was too risky.

Taylor's *Mediaeval Mind* considers the debate on universals to have little application to modern thought; it was about "an ultimate analysis of statement, of the general nature of propositions" (L2:347).[441] Adams, with his depiction of history as theater, emerges as a nominalist with an appreciation for the value of idealism. Reading into the debate a contest between free will and determinism, and interested as he is in the question of agency in history, medieval thinking doesn't seem so remote. Adams plays with anachronism in his terminology, so that at one point in the encounter William says, "My Triangle exists as a Reality, or what science will call an Energy" (C620). While the actual Abélard seems to have sidestepped further development of his own position, Adams imagines a continuation of the debate as William might have pushed it: if Abélard affirms that his "Concept" has substance, there is no way to separate this essence of his mind from the divine; if he avoids Pantheism by denying that a universal is anything more than a linguistic entity, his argument degenerates into materialism. The great debate led nowhere in terms of a resolution of the question. The schools were left irretrievably at odds and Abélard, the victor, in trouble.

A more powerful opponent than William was Bernard of Clairvaux, who, faced with the dangers of this kind of theological impasse, saw no need for dialectic, or the schools for that matter—needless disputation and novel ideas like the newly disseminated ideas of Aristotle unsettled faith that required no rational justification. In other chapters St Bernard is the ardent mystical devotee of the Virgin, but here, pulling the strings of Church and State, he is a relentless persecutor. Abélard's book is burned, he is promoted out of the way to Brittany, eventually returns to teaching, and finally he is silenced.

Abélard is striking in his individualism: "he believed in himself" rather than established authority and marks perhaps the turn to the modern self-consciousness that Adams finds so fatal to action. His *Historia calamitatum* is the only autobiography Adams uses in *Chartres*, "so admirably told, so vivid, so vibrating with the curious intensity of its generation." The excerpts Adams chooses demonstrate intellectual pride and its consequences: the youthful Abélard's zeal in challenging his teachers, leading to the "ruin" of William's doctrine of universals and the envy of his fellow students, and, exiled to Brittany, the mature Abélard's abject fear that his monks are plotting to kill him. Taylor quotes the *Calamitatum* to convict the "celebrity" Abélard of vanity and selfishness in his seduction of Héloïse. Taylor tells a story that Adams does not, of a man redeemed by a woman's love: Héloïse was great in her intelligence, strength of character and capacity for love; Abélard was not great in character, but the force of her love and the chastening experience of their misfortunes made him worthy of her in the end (II:3-4)

In Adams' story Abélard's character is rehabilitated somewhat by his efforts to do right by Héloïse in insuring the security of her convent. The "most amiable figure of the twelfth century" appears, Abbot Peter of Cluny, to criticize Saint Bernard's lack of charity and shelter Abélard in his final days (C635). Adams allows Peter, at least, to write with "absolute passion," consoling Héloïse after Abélard's death with the idea that Abélard "the Lord now takes, in your place, like another you, and warms in his bosom; and…He keeps him to restore him to you by His Grace" (C636). Héloïse's womanly presence at the end of the story authorizes the expression of emotion in an account that otherwise has lacked it, but if the text is haunted by the trace of Marian Adams, the expression of grief and hope of consolation knows no gender.

This chapter offers a revised definition of the twelfth-century transition—no longer just about architecture—in which Abélard represents one extreme of the forces that have to be balanced:

> The Transition is the equilibrium between the Love of God,—which is Faith, and the Logic of God,—which is Reason; between the round arch and the pointed. One may not be sure which pleases most, but one need not be harsh towards people who think that the moment of balance is exquisite. The last and highest moment is seen at Chartres where, in 1200, the charm depends on the constant doubt whether emotion or science is uppermost. At Amiens, doubt ceases; emotion is trained in school; Thomas Aquinas reigns. (C638)

When Adams looks back at Chartres now, the perspective has changed. In the earlier chapters, the charms of the cathedral were the immediate ones of light, color, and delicacy; the equilibrium of historical styles and male and female prerogatives to rule were ensured by an exalted maternal solicitude. We tourists, Adams' implied readers, weren't capable of making the generalizations in this passage, the product of distance and reflection; doubt was not the measure of our appreciation. Unity has become no more than a precarious if exquisite "moment of balance." In Abélard's lifetime the claims of reason, stimulated by the ancient knowledge newly filtering in from the east and institutionally based in the university, were still in dispute. Adams feels the need to express a complementary uncertainty, "one may not be sure which pleases most," despite his *de facto* preference.

The other extreme to be balanced, discussed in the penultimate chapter, was the force of unreasoning faith displayed by the mystics. The schools had battled one another to exhaustion, leaving religious minds to skepticism: "The true saint is a profound skeptic; a total disbeliever in human reason" (639). Adams found a historical analogy: "The twelfth century had already reached the point where the seventeenth century stood

when Descartes renewed the attempt to give a solid, philosophical basis for deism" (C639). It's not clear why Adams needs to bring in the seventeenth century. He claims that the schools had already established that "religion was love, not logic" and that God could not be reached by the senses but only known "by contact of spirit with spirit, essence with essence…The world had no need to wait five hundred years longer to hear this same result reaffirmed by Pascal" (C642).

Yet quote Pascal he does. Adams collapses centuries by insisting that Pascal's despair "belongs" to the twelfth century. He tells us that Pascal's response to Descartes was that "it was not God he doubted but logic" (C640). He presents Pascal as if in opposition to Descartes' world of "mathematical certainties," as if Pascal were not also a mathematician. But the long passage that Adams chose to quote expresses doubt about the existence of God and not merely doubt about the possibility of proving him through reason alone. It belongs less to the twelfth century as he has conceived it, "a century of faith and simplicity," than the time of Pascal, living in the wake of wars of religion conducted among Christians, or the secular age of Adams, anticipating a social collapse:

> When I see the blindness and misery of man and the astonishing contradictions revealed in his nature; and observe the whole universe mute, and man without light, abandoned to himself, as though lost in this corner of the universe, without knowing who put him here, or what he has come here to do, or what will become of him in dying, I feel fear like a man who has been carried when asleep into a desert and fearful island, and has walked without knowing where he is and without having means of rescue. (C640-41)

Did Adams choose this selection from Pensée 229 for its odd foretaste of *Robinson Crusoe*? Of course, Adams had some knowledge of islands and the problems of extricating oneself from them. The condition of the "man without light, abandoned to himself" doesn't sound like medieval man as Adams has imagined him, at one with his

fellow men and the universe. In the unquoted portion of this Pensée, Pascal concludes this expression of doubt with an expression of certainty, of faith in revealed truth: faced with the claims of opposing religions to authority, he chooses Christianity, "where I find prophecies"(Pascal 66). (In other thoughts he talks about the God who is both hidden from men and revealed through prophecy from the beginning of time.) But the following unquoted Pensée 230 suggests that Pascal's sense of the uncertain human condition is informed by a new scientific perspective towards nature, leading to a sense of the dizzying disparities of the human condition. We live in a visible world which is "an imperceptible speck in nature's ample bosom," but also a world in which we can wonder at the "minuscule" body of a mite and its "incomparably tinier" parts. Existing as we do between a set of double infinities, with a presumption to know that is just as infinite, "This is why we see that every science is infinite in the scope of its research" (Pascal 66-68). This seems removed from the perspective of the twelfth century or even the thirteenth of Aquinas; his *Summa*, at least as Adams describes it, is possible because he assumes there are endpoints to his science, but it explains why Descartes might want to reject Aquinas and start again upon a new footing.

Adams doesn't end his citation from Pascal with the mysterious island. Pascal can't understand why other men, "miserable like me, impotent like me" attach themselves to a pleasant object while he sets himself apart and wanders in search of truth. Adams attaches a segment of Pensée 682 in which the speaker looks around himself for empirical proof of God's existence:

> I search everywhere, and see only obscurity everywhere. Nature offers me nothing but matter of possible doubt and disquiet. If I saw there nothing to mark a divinity, I should make up my mind to believe nothing of it. If I saw everywhere the marks of a

> Creator, I should rest in peace in faith. But seeing too much to deny and too little to affirm, I am in a pitiable state. (C641)

This particular passage is presented by Pascal, if not Adams, in quotation marks, apparently as the voice of someone who "lives in ignorance of what they are and without seeking enlightenment," and is the target of Pascal's persuasion (Pascal 165). It might seem as though this unhappy condition is leading up to a demonstration of the benefits of fideism, of acting as though one expects to be rescued when one has no proof, a version of Pascal's wager or James' will to believe. Adams tells us that Pascal "touched God behind the veil of skepticism," but this he doesn't present. He leaves Pascal suspended and hoping for a sign. In claiming that "The only way to reach God was to deny the value of reason," Adams seems to exaggerate Pascal's commitment to fideism (640). For Pascal the greatness of men rests in their awareness of their wretchedness: "For what is natural in animals we call wretchedness in man." Reason alerts them that they have fallen from a "better nature" (Pascal 37). Reason's last task is to recognize its limitations and give way to the heart as the final organ of understanding.

Religion in the sixteenth century still concerned itself with the vital questions of life, even if its confidence had been shaken. In broad philosophical terms, using Pascal allows Adams to frame this as a case of "Man" (to use Adams' term), romantically challenging his place in the universe, refusing to accept faith as given, unwilling to trust his reason, unwilling to mistrust it. Adams calls his quotation of Pascal "the true Prometheus lyric" (C640).[442] In literary terms, Pascal heightens the tone of the discussion "to the grand style of the twelfth century" in a way that Adams' medieval poet, Adam de Saint Victor, (and by implication any medieval poet) cannot (C640). When this Adam wrote about his fear of heresy, fear of sin, fear of death and punishment, his twelfth-

century language was inadequate to express such an emotion, for example: "Of the Trinity to reason/Leads to license or to treason/Punishment deserving." (C643). Adams asserts that the Latin verses are delightfully sonorous as songs, but translated their simple feeling has "the canting jingle of cheap religion and a thin philosophy" (C644). In personal terms Adams considered Pascal "the greatest of all the Frenchmen—greater even than Saint Thomas" (L5:381).[443] His grand style speaks to Adams precisely because it is not the voice of the twelfth century: the seventeenth century, "seeing too much to deny and too little to affirm," knew epistemological uncertainty. Pascal's Jansenism would be a more congenial, familiar form of Catholicism to this descendent of Puritans. Pascal's consistent use of "the astonishing contradictions," of framing questions in terms of polarities, and leaving readers suspended between two oppositions, both true (e.g., we are creatures of intellect and heart, capable of achieving God and equal to animals, living in corruption and in redemption), mirrors Adams' own process of thought. Pascal's lament speaks for Adams here, "seeing too much to deny and too little to affirm," and "not knowing what he has come here to do," in expressing the despair of an age less naïve than the medieval.

When it comes to embodying the purest form of mysticism, Adams asserts that Frenchmen like Pascal, Adam de Saint Victor and St. Bernard were simply too reasonable. Their native sense of measure and form prevented them from the aspiration "beyond reaching" of which Italians and Spaniards were capable. St. Francis of Assisi (c.1181-1226) serves the same function in the final three chapters as the Virgin does overall, as an anomalous emblem of the religious instinct and a force for anarchism. "Nothing in twelfth-century art is so fine as the air and gesture of sympathetic majesty

with which the Church drew aside to let the Virgin and Saint Francis pass and take the lead—for a time. Both were human ideals too intensely realized to be resisted merely because they were illogical" (C656-57). For the Virgin anarchy implied the inclusion of any and all sinners who sought her protection, but Francis' idea of unity was asocial. The virgin nurturing her child is less alien than Francis, "elementary nature itself," who refused to extinguish the flame burning his clothing out of respect for a fellow creature. To Adams "[t]he two poles of social and political philosophy seem necessarily to be organization or anarchy; man's intellect or the forces of nature" (C659). In this sense the antithesis of Francis is not Abélard the logician but Thomas who encloses Francis in his system.[444]

Francis' life was a crusade against spiritual pride, especially intellectual pride: "Satan was logic" (C651). Adams brings in an unlikely ally for Francis, Lord Bacon, who in rejecting the syllogism attacked the intellectual pretensions of scholasticism: "'Let men please themselves as they will in admiring and almost adoring the human mind, this is certain:—that as an uneven mirror distorts the rays of objects according to its own figure and section, so the mind…cannot be trusted…'"(C651). [Adams' ellipses] Bacon reflects Adams' attitude towards the schools, defined in the broadest sense. The mind as "uneven mirror" had special resonance for Adams as an image that he reiterates, much as his 1895 "Crillon" article had exposed the incurable distortions of historical fact, reflecting the inevitable biases of witnesses, institutions, historians and readers. Bacon expresses an epistemological doubt that Adams apparently could not find articulated in medieval texts, which instead denounce reason as the product of a devilish pride attempting to destabilize established truth.

Adams also returns to his interest in the institutional response to challenging new ideas. When Francis, speaking as God's "pauper" and "great fool" publicly attacked Cardinal Ugolino and the schools, an "impassable gulf" opened between his order and the Church, but even before his death his Rule was being normalized and Franciscans were becoming scholastics. The wonder, Adams muses, is that Francis wasn't burned as a heretic, as he would have been a hundred years later. Part of the appeal of the twelfth century church is the heterodoxy within its unity; it was "more liberal than any modern state can afford to be," in its willingness to embrace "with equal sympathy, and within a hundred years," such radical contradictions in belief (C675).[445]

Francis' life may be remarkable as a kind of archaic poetry, but having jettisoned culture as far as possible, he is incapable of art. Adams reproduces the "Cantico del Sole," which may be "the last word of religion, as it was probably the first." He declares it "too sincere for translation," and its verses, "if verses they are," barely literary: "Whatever art they have, granting that they have any, seems to go back to the cave-dwellers and the age of stone" (C660-61). To paraphrase St. Francis' message of primitive pantheism:"We are all varying forms of the same ultimate energy; shifting symbols of the same ultimate unity; but our only unity, beneath you, is nature not law!" (C661). For Francis, the ultimate dissolution into unity is "sister death." Francis has all the attraction of the extreme and untenable position for Adams, who as the conservative Christian anarchist is a connoisseur of polarities. Characteristically, he leaves his assessment of Francis open, but instead of leaving the judgment to the reader's inclination, Adams suspends it in anticipation of the needs of the future. No historical judgment can be made of his path "until mankind finally settles to a certainty where it

means to go, or whether it means to go anywhere,—what its object is, or whether it has an object," an echo of Pascal's bewilderment, "without knowing who put him here, or what he has come here to do, or what will become of him in dying." Whether humans have the ability to make these kinds of choices is a question for Adams' final chapter.

Since Adams considered his final chapter "Saint Thomas Aquinas" to be so significant, "the only thing I ever wrote that I almost think good" in a lifetime of self-confessed failures and since he seems to be working his way towards the issues that will animate his next book, it is worth looking at it in some detail (L6:121). Adams imposes his own unity on the material by returning to the figure of the cathedral. He ended his tour of the church Architectural with its early Gothic manifestation at Chartres. Adams tells us that, coincident with the death of St. Francis and the birth of St. Thomas (C1225-74), Gothic art reached "perfection" at Amiens cathedral. Although Ruskin agreed with Viollet-le-Duc that Amiens was the "Parthenon" of Gothic art, [446] Adams seems to be using "perfection" with a Ruskinian inflection. For Ruskin imperfect medieval art was better because it was imbued with the aspirations of its makers; perfect art tended to be made by slaves in the classical past and machines in the present. Adams favored the experimental; he preferred the risky aspiration of Chartres to remake the past along new lines to Amiens' faultless execution of the model Chartres provided.[447] Adams begins by emphasizing the cathedrals as testaments to religious devotion but the emphasis shifts as the cathedrals become monuments to human ambition as well, and as his own historical ambitions seem to revive.

Instead of visiting Amiens where Adams claims "doubt ceases; emotion is trained in school; Thomas Aquinas reigns," we explore its analogue the *Summa Theologiae*,

Aquinas' monument of scholastic science. As Adams describes it, theologians like Thomas "were also architects who undertook to build a Church Intellectual, corresponding bit by bit to the Church Administrative, both expressing—and expressed by—the Church Architectural" (C664). Using the cathedral as metaphor enforces Adams' original contention at Mont Saint Michel about the congruence of all the arts and allows him to avoid an extended discussion of medieval theology by focusing on aesthetics.[448] Reversing the relation in his first chapter, Adams examines the philosophical work through the architecture. The cathedral gives Adams an easily-comprehensible structure for approaching the vastly abstruse *Summa*: Gothic architecture is an art that makes visible the multiple stresses to which form is subject: the risk is breathtaking, the danger of failure, bad form, is manifest.

Adams also compares Aquinas, whose *Summa Theologiae* was the culminating monument of medieval scholasticism, to the architect of Beauvais Cathedral, the last development of French Gothic, both condemned in their time for being "excessively modern, scientific, and technical" (C693). At Beauvais ambition exceeded structural capacity, always a risk given the medieval obsession with height, as Adams noted at Mont Saint Michel. When part of Beauvais' choir collapsed, it was replaced, but the nave was never completed; the intensity of feeling which made cathedral-building a crusade had been lost. Like Beauvais, the *Summa* still stands unfinished, and truncated as the community of believers has fallen away. Adams points out that Pope Leo XIII had recently affirmed the centrality of Aquinas' thought to the Church, a credit to the elegance and strength of St. Thomas' design and an unusual contemporary reference for Adams given his emphasis on discontinuity. But the church that considers a medieval

scholastic the final word on faith and reason is scarcely modern; the persistence of religion in some quarters didn't indicate its relevance for Adams. [449]

The critical consensus concludes that "his St. Thomas tells us more about Henry Adams than about the author of the *Summa*."[450] Adams admits that the twenty-eight volumes of Aquinas are "a mass of manuscripts that tourists will never know enough to estimate except by weight" (C663).[451] For all the effort Adams put into this chapter and the fear he expressed to correspondents about getting the theology wrong there is no evidence that he read any of the volumes, and his interpretation of Aquinas has been called "peculiar," even marked by an idiosyncratic "nuttiness."[452] In a chapter that proposes the imagination as the greatest repository of human freedom, Adams puts this proposition to the test. The historical document remains off in a library somewhere, while the image of the generic cathedral Aquinas is constructing grounds the reader. The text fails to quote Thomas at any length apart from a paragraph cited to show how little his thinking differed from "a system of dynamics as modern as the dynamo" (C687).

Impersonating Thomas Aquinas (the artist rather than the man) allowed Adams the experience, for once, of fabricating a unity, establishing a synthesis between polarities that was contrary to his intellectual inclinations if not his desires. He could fulfill his idea of "literary form—a notion of writing a story with an end and an object, not for the sake of the object, but for the form." While Aquinas may be his alter ego,[453] Adams has reservations. It is one thing to long for the unity of the Middle Ages as an escape from modern fragmentation and another to subscribe to organic unity as dogma. There seems to be a temperamental difference as well. Although he recognizes Aquinas' "extraordinary genius," Adams' depiction lacks the sympathy he accorded to Abélard and

others: Aquinas, he tells us, had no sense of humor. What is more significant as well as symmetrical is that he should be a Norman. Through his mother, the only medieval woman mentioned in this chapter, Thomas was the descendent of Norman princes and built his edifice with characteristically Norman "courage and caution. The Norman was ready to run great risks but he would rather grasp too little than too much" (C668). Bretons like Abélard, Descartes and Renan lacked this sense of measure and grasped more than they could hold.

Although in Adams' narrative the occasion which requires a justification of God by reason represents a loss, a falling away from the unselfconscious faith of the previous century, he can admire the *Summa* of St. Thomas as a masterwork of the synthetic imagination. The God who presides in this chapter is the Creator sitting at his work table rather than the Grand Seigneur of Mont Saint Michel or the absent Father whose law the Virgin subverted at Chartres. If Adams is creating the Aquinas he needs, Saint Thomas, in his practical philosophy attempting to balance the conflicting demands of faith and reason, mind and matter, in a "new and revolutionary" system, might even resemble a closer relation, the figure of John Adams, revolutionary and lawgiver, author of the Massachusetts state constitution, and a paramount leader in establishing the constitutional genre (C689). (If that document isn't quite as old as the *Summa*, it is the oldest written constitution that has survived largely intact.)[454] The content of Aquinas' project would have been viewed with horror by Adams' great-grandfather, for whom the Catholic Church held the minds of men in "a state of sordid ignorance and staring timidity" and kept them "chained fast for ages in a cruel, shameful, and deplorable servitude." John Adams conflated religious and civic values by describing the Reformation as "this great

struggle that peopled America; It was not religion alone; as is commonly supposed; but it was a love of universal liberty and a hatred, a dread, a horror, of the infernal confederacy" of the canon and feudal law.[455] But like Aquinas, Adams and his confederates wrote unity into being. Adams used the same analogy as his great-grandson without the religious connotation: called "suddenly to erect new systems of laws for their future government, they adopted the method of a wise architect in erecting a new palace for the residence of his sovereign."[456] Like Aquinas they incorporated centuries of theory and practice into their system in order to make something new.

Turning to Henry Adams' own aspirations, although he pronounces himself "the pilgrim of art," what interests him, finally, is less art (the "rosewater" charm of medieval lyrics) than the union of art and science that built the cathedrals and the *Summa*. As a historian he insisted on the claims of both, though his definition of scientific interest shifted. The transhistorical perspective he adopts in the final chapters of *Chartres* stimulates his own attempt at historical synthesis in the final chapters of the *Education*, using the polarities of medieval unity and modern multiplicity. In the *Education* Adams explicitly pairs the two books, but from the evidence of the text, *Chartres* doesn't seem to have been conceived in these terms. In the final chapters Adams tends to adopt the more detached tone of the *Education*. He moves beyond the notion of economic forces motivating events, his brother Brooks' model, to some wider conception of power, as he attempts to identify the beginning of the transition from unity to multiplicity. Adams returns to his preoccupation with the process of artistic generation, and connects it to his examination of a question that he asserts troubled both ages, however they conceptualized the universe, the possibility and limits of human freedom. The most

valuable aspect of *Chartres* for Adams, then, may be its power to generate the second book.

The constraints placed on Aquinas as artist/theologian are the constraints that in his treatise Aquinas places on human freedom: "'We are masters of our acts,' he began, 'in the sense than we can choose such and such a thing; now we have not to choose our end, but the means that relate to it'" (C686). His given materials were the reflections of centuries of ancient and patristic thought. His beginning, faith, and his conclusion, unity, were predetermined: God is origin and end. Aquinas was supposed to interpret but not invent, although his interpretations were the product of his creative intelligence: "Saint Thomas merely selected between disputed opinions, but he allowed himself to follow very far afield indeed in search of opinions to dispute" (C665). Aquinas had to satisfy the needs of the individual, Church and society, not always coincident and not always grounded in experience.

The overarching narrative of *The Mediaeval Mind* (1911) by Adams' former student, Henry Osborn Taylor, recounts a progress in which the *Summa* represents "the highest constructive energy" of scholasticism, the end product of centuries in which medieval men struggled to grasp the knowledge of ancient philosophy and the church fathers well enough to reformulate it for themselves (II:307).[457] Taylor assumes that scholastic thought has no direct relevance to the present, and so he feels the need to justify our interest. As fellow humans we should feel sympathy with "the permanent necessities of the human mind" (II:285). His approach assumes that a "truer view" of Aquinas "is gained from following a few typical forms of his teaching presented in his own exposition" (II:483). Thus Taylor gives us a taste of Aquinas' thought by focusing

on what Aquinas considered the *summum bonum*, beatitude, which is a state of knowing God, through ample quotation from two texts. By the time the discussion arrives at the cognition of angels, it is "scarcely to be rendered in modern language" (II:460). It sounds as though Taylor had Adams in mind when he criticizes an alternate approach to Aquinas, "analyzing his thought with later solvents which he did not apply, and presenting his matter classified as he would not have ordered it, and in modern phrases, which have as many meanings foreign to scholasticism as scholasticism has thoughts not to be translated into modern ways of thinking" (II:483).[458]

Adams seems to agree with Taylor about the incommensurability of medieval thought. After all, he chose the Middle Ages for their strangeness and began his tour at Mont Saint Michel by urging the mental adjustments necessary to sympathize with a medieval point of view. If there was no "modern equivalent" to Abélard, Adams' treatment of Aquinas is more complicated. In writing to Taylor, Adams distinguished his approach by saying that his Middle Ages, unlike Taylor's, exist for "our" sake, but our tour of the past has meant more than enjoying the comforts of a simpler alternate world. The immersion in alien life-ways has been an inquiry into the nature of the present predicament, a way to give shape to our discontent. The logic of Adams' argument, though, demands an increase in comprehensibility as reason supplements and eventually supplants faith. The Tahitian *Memoirs* ended with a divergence between author and material when the first person narrator suddenly established a distinction between her voice and that of her "editor," but in *Chartres* the narrator foreshortens the distance by ventriloquizing St. Thomas, translating him not merely into modern English but the vocabulary of science.

In emphasizing the translatability of Aquinas these passages propose a sequential affinity between religion and science.[459] Previously in *Esther* Adams had suggested that science, like religion, depended on a leap of faith. However, while the axioms of physics might ask you to believe the "incredible" as a starting point, science assumed no teleology; its ends were open for discovery.[460] What Adams finds admirable about both religion and science is "the power of broad and lofty generalization," the sort of lofty generalization that it is still Adams' ambition to make (689). Both were preoccupied with the great questions of existence: "Science has become too complex to affirm the existence of universal truths, but it strives for nothing else, and disputes the problem, within our own limits, almost as earnestly as the twelfth century…Little has changed except the vocabulary and the method" (C611). Modern religion seemed irrelevant to Adams at least in part because it had lost a connection to these vital questions. Adams' presentation predicts implicitly that religion will be superseded as the locus of inquiry. Already with Aquinas he asserts a change in method: "the quality that rouses most surprise about Thomism is its astonishingly scientific method," without demonstrating the method, but he provides the scientific terminology as its indication (C689).

That vocabulary also shows the direction of Adams' thinking. After his revelatory trip to the Hall of Machinery at the Paris Exposition of 1900, recounted in the *Education*, Adams was busy trying to catch up with the latest scientific knowledge and this final chapter reflects his reading.[461] Dreaming of machines and cathedrals, by 1902 he was thinking of buying an automobile: "My idea of paradise is a perfect automobile going thirty miles an hour on a smooth road to a twelfth-century cathedral" (L5:387).[462]

Adams simplified Aquinas' architecture into three elements: the Foundation, the Structure, and the Congregation. For his Foundation, God's presence in the Church, Aquinas insisted that God was not merely a concept "but must be proved by the senses like any concrete thing," a dangerous move if his proof failed to hold, "but every true cause must be proved as a cause, not merely as a sequence." Adams decided to explicate Aquinas' proof as a conversation between Aquinas and a "mechanic" from the twentieth century. "'I see motion,' said Thomas: 'I infer a motor!'" Michael Colacurcio points out the oddity of Adams' translation of "*movens*" as "motor" rather than "mover," and decides Adams uses it because he loves the idea of the dramatic confrontation between the scholar and mechanic, just as he chose Aquinas' argument from motion and not his other proofs because it sounded the most scientific. A less scientific Aquinas and a mechanic would have provided even more contrast, but "motor" is a neutral term that implies nothing about the nature of the force. Then, too, the mechanic is on surer ground discussing a material starting point, a machine. It's a deficiency of science, so far, that Adam's mechanic would be hard-pressed to define the ultimate force of the universe, while Aquinas could assert the existence of God, at least, if the divine essence could be described only in terms of what it was not. Their discussion is less a confrontation than a failed attempt at problem-solving. Adams doesn't stage this as a duel in dialectic like the contest between William and Abélard; Thomas and the mechanic begin from too-dissimilar assumptions. Yet "motor" implicates Aquinas' approach to faith from reason as the beginning of the mechanistic worldview of modern science and positions the mechanic as his descendent.

What the average mechanic would reply to Thomas: "'I see motion,' he admitted:—'I infer energy. I see motion everywhere; I infer energy everywhere.'" When St. Thomas avoids the heresy of materialism by further specifying, "I cannot infer an infinite series of motors. I can only infer somewhere at the end of the series, an intelligent, fixed motor,'" the mechanic would hesitate: "'We can conduct our works as well on that as on any on any other theory, or as we could on no theory at all; but if you offer it as proof, we can only say that we have not yet reduced all motion to one source or all energies to one law, much less to one act of creation.'" This dialogue extends Adams' inquiry into the power of faith. Starting from a position of belief Aquinas is both enabled and required to make the inferences he does: he is the actual "first cause and creator" here. Faith enables great work, great art. The mechanic is practical, willing to try any theory. There are no limits to his series, but taking his purely mechanistic view, the whole structure could never have been built from lack of evidence. [463]

Adams seems to be restaging *Esther* when the mechanic resists Aquinas' unsubstantiated assertions:

> "What is the use of trying to argue me into it? Your inference may be sound logic but it is not proof… To your old ideas of Form we have added what we call Force, and we are rather further than ever from reducing the complex to unity. In fact, if you are aiming to convince me, I will tell you flatly that I know only the multiple, and have no use for unity at all." (C667-68)

By declaring the twentieth century multiverse, Adams' mechanic is working towards the premise that becomes explicit in the *Education*, that Adams is studying medieval unity for the sake of modern multiplicity. Adams claims Aquinas' proof was not wholly satisfying even to other theologians, but "it was the safest among possible foundations." The structure required unity to prove God, and unity that was more than a concept, (thus

avoiding the pitfalls that Descartes would face one day).Therefore unity was inferred and God was proved.[464] Adams continues his translation into three epistemes: "What the schools called Form, what science calls Energy, and what the intermediate period called the evidence of Design, made the foundation of St. Thomas' cathedral" (C668). "Form" here is immaterial, used synonymously with "mind" and "soul" and in opposition to "matter," "substance," and "body." The concept of "energy" remains shadowy.

What interests Adams in Aquinas' second phase of Construction is the process of construction as strategy and as subject. The raising of the walls and towers involved choosing a complicated middle way between competing theological arguments. Nothing much seems at stake conceptually for Adams so he can appreciate the workmanship. St. Thomas' treatment of the Trinity was naively simple, "more architectural than religious," but then unlike the mechanic, "every theologian was obliged to stop the pursuit of logic by force, before it dragged him into paganism and pantheism," so his realization of God ended there. The vaulting of Aquinas' church was a masterstroke which "even a lost soul may admire." Boldly, at least as Adams simplifies him, St. Thomas swept away all secondary causes leaving only "two forces, God and Man," so nothing interrupted the vertical lines. "God and the Church embraced all the converging lines of the Universe, and the universe showed none but lines that converged" (C673). Unity is achieved when everything emanates from a God who is the First Cause. Adams' Puritan heritage makes it easier to imagine this direct relation between God and man than perhaps it would have been for Aquinas; the Virgin has no place here, for example.

If, according to Aquinas' composition, nothing could intervene between God and Man, the individual as a union of form/mind/soul and matter must have been created in a

single, instantaneous act of divine will. Unlike human acts of creation there was no generation, no sequence, only a single originating act, a production from absolute nothing. "The famous junction, then, is made! that celebrated fusion of the Universal with the Individual, of Unity with Multiplicity, of God and Nature, which had broken the neck of every philosophy ever invented" (C674). And how was this immemorial problem solved? By insisting on its solution, by building a structure which demonstrated and demanded it. Adams tone is amused, even admiring.[465] "The supreme truth was as easily effected by Thomas Aquinas as it was to be again effected, four hundred years later, by Spinoza. He had merely to assert the fact:—'It is so! it cannot be otherwise!'" (C674). The unsubstantiated assertion is not unknown to Adams, whether motivated by faith or not. The unilateral declaration that assumed a public consensus worked for his great-grandfather's generation. *Chartres* makes a number of assertions that seem questionable: that the choir was designed as Mary's boudoir, for example, or that the Trinity has no presence in the cathedral.

When it comes to the relation of matter to form, things get confusing. Thomas and his teacher Albertus Magnus "were almost alone in imposing on the church the compromise so necessary for its equilibrium. The balance of Matter against Mind was the same necessity as the balance of thrusts in the arch of the gothic cathedral" (C679). Thomas was obliged to reformulate his ideas in the face of opposition, so Adams hands down three possible interpretations of what his views were. What remains clear is the balancing of forces as a principle of sound organization rather than the imposition of a single central power, a principle familiar to Adams' great-grandfather: "Checks and Ballances…are our only Security, for the progress of Mind, as well of the Security of

Body."[466] John Adams wrote *A Defense of the American Constitutions* to refute proponents of centralization. No single central authority could contain human passions and weaknesses and forestall tyranny. Still, eighteenth-century balance aimed for a serene proportionality, not the straining altitude and dramatic contrasts of the cathedral. As Adams describes him, Aquinas adopts a method that accepts revealed truth, admits a range of contradictory commentary wide enough to be controversial to comment on that truth, and attempts a harmonization of opinion through his own interpretive poesis.[467]

If the controversies themselves don't affect us travelers—moderns like the mechanic begin in skepticism—Adams gives a sense of the instability and risk of Aquinas' and perhaps any great intellectual enterprise. St. Thomas Aquinas proceeds at his peril; every path leads to controversy, since "narrow and dangerous was the border line always between Pantheism and Materialism" (C677). Adams joins the fray while characteristically claiming his unworthiness to judge: "Uneducated people," which includes the author and presumed reader, "cannot do battle because they cannot understand Thomas's doctrine of Matter and Form which to them seems frank Pantheism" (C676). St. Thomas, an accommodationist rather than a provocateur like Abélard, nevertheless escaped a Promethean fate only because he died young: "The story shows how modern, how heterodox, how material, how altogether new and revolutionary the system of St. Thomas seemed at first even in the schools" (C689). The hostility provoked by new theory was a theme for Adams, trying to invoke his own powers of "broad and lofty generalization." He wrote hypothetically about the institutional opposition the founder of a new historical discourse would suffer in "The Tendency of History." He claimed that publishing *Chartres* would bring down the wrath of "all the

Churches and all the Universities and all the Laboratories at once. They would scorch me alive for an anarchist" (L5:624).[468] Posterity and a strong institutional base saved Aquinas' masterpiece from burning. Fifty years after his death, "by use of every method known to Church politics," his Dominican order got St. Thomas canonized.

With the final organizational element of Aquinas' cathedral, the Congregation, we turn from questions remote to a question vital to all humanity, "this riddle,—the oldest that fretted mankind," whether the universe was one or many, and following from this question the nature of humanity's relation to it, namely, the possibilities and limits of human agency.

> Mankind could not admit an anarchical,—a dual or a multiple—universe. The world was there, staring them in the face, with all its chaotic conditions, and society insisted on its Unity in self-defence. Society still insists on treating it as Unity though no longer affecting logic. Society insists on free will, although free will has never been explained to the satisfaction of any but those who much wish to be satisfied, and although the words in any common sense implied not unity but duality in creation. (C684-85)

The worshippers of the Virgin with all eternity at hazard were motivated by an instinct to self-preservation. Adams, by implication more clear-sighted or tough-minded than everyone else, puts aside considerations of "self-defence," and answers the larger question at the outset, asserting on the basis of experience a multiple universe, but also doubting the existence of free will.[469] No longer does the unified vision of children, primitives and (sometimes) artists seem to bear witness to a truer reality outside of experience. Adams doesn't repudiate the existence of the unity he wrote about in the first two sections. Typically in this work, he insists on the coexistence of multiple perspectives as he encourages us to develop our own point of view; he dictates the exercise of free choice for his readers, at least. From the twentieth century standpoint,

"[t]ruth, indeed, may not exist; science avers it to be only a relation; but what men took for truth stares one everywhere in the eye and begs for sympathy" (C694). It's as though we have grown up suddenly and, facing reality, see our youthful visions as beautiful illusions; our tragedy is that we cannot return to unselfconsciousness. Adams is interested in the persistence of the idea of the unified cosmos and its usefulness—the illusion may become a saving fiction once again in some as yet unimagined shape.

The temporal distance to the thirteenth century has nearly collapsed as Adams through Aquinas considers what seem to be universal contradictory delusions of unity and freedom. Our modern difference is that we have given up insisting on the logic of the unity which Aquinas still must make manifest.[470] Even science, Adams claims, starting from a position of multiplicity, hasn't given up on the idea of unity, although "its true aims as far as it is Science and not disguised Religion, were equally attained by reaching infinite complexity" (C689).[471] Aquinas as the thirteenth-century artist-scientist has a faith to uphold; his conclusion is foregone if the way to achieve it is unclear.

The universe that is chaotic in actuality might seem to offer individual humans greater scope to act, but the requirements of society still constrain. No will is absolutely free, but as Adams figures it "[a]bsolute liberty is absence of restraint; responsibility is restraint; therefore the ideally free person is responsible only to himself." This is "the philosophical foundation of anarchism" which the Virgin and Saint Francis accommodated, even promoted, but "Saint Thomas was working for the Church and the State, not for the salvation of souls, and his chief object was to repress anarchy" (C685). Adams inserts "State" apparently as the comparable modern reference, taking up where the medieval church left off in laying down the law, but the Church tolerated the asocial

and antisocial to a degree that no state could allow. Nevertheless, organic unity imposed as dogma rather than expressed as feeling is coercive: "The Church had committed itself to the dogma that Order and Unity were the ultimate Truth and that the anarchist should be burned" (C681). And yet, Adams agrees that law is necessary. "Unless [society] asserts law, it can only assert force" (C684). The perspective has shifted: he is writing from the standpoint of the pragmatic statesman or the practical Norman philosopher rather than the devotee of the outlaw Virgin. When in 1869 Adams quoted John Adams that the separation of powers was necessary "to the end that it may be a government of laws and not of men," his great-grandfather's precautionary pessimism about human nature was justified by subsequent events. Given human weakness, freedom was possible only in the equilibrium established when interest was opposed to interest, power to power.[472]

At the same time that it compelled unity, the universal Church needed a congregation to fill its cathedrals. Church and State required that men be free agents, capable of consent, or they showed themselves as frauds. But the Church admitted only to men's free choice, not free will: "the Church was never so unscientific as to admit of liberty beyond the faculty of choosing paths, some leading through the Church and some not, but all leading to the next world; as a criminal might be allowed the liberty of choosing between the guillotine and the gallows, without infringing on the supremacy of the Judge" (C686). A fine distinction, reminding us why believers, all sinners, preferred the infinite mercy of the Virgin and child to the Father's law. The Church unlike the State at least placed humans at the center of the universe and offered them the hope of eternal life.

Adams may frame this as a choice between the one and the many, but it is not for an individual to make; for Aquinas it went without saying that the universe was a unit. He didn't deny the defects of the universe he was given, but claimed "unity might even prove their beneficence" (C685). His task in providing a place for people in his edifice was not merely to reconcile competing theological arguments but to harmonize divergent human needs.

> Man himself…insisted that the Universe was a unit, but that he was a universe; that Energy was one, but that he was another energy; that God was omnipotent but that man was free. The contradiction had always existed, exists still, and always must exist, unless man either admits that he is a machine, or agrees that anarchy and chaos are the habit of nature, and law and order its accident. The agreement may become possible, but it was not possible in the thirteenth century and it is not possible now. (C685)

Aquinas worked from the assumption of unity, but had to make explicit what in the eleventh and twelfth centuries was tacit. The logic of unity apparently dictated that man be an anachronistic "machine," an entity without motive power of its own. Adams returns to translating Aquinas into scientific language in his discussion of free choice, his translation signaling the importance of the topic and its continuing relevance to a modern era. This time there is no mechanic to present the modern position as an alternative. If it is the imposition of a belief in unity that curtails human freedom, it isn't clear why Adams who asserts the contrary, in an anarchic universe, should nevertheless characterize men as machines, but he doesn't dispute the ventriloquized Aquinas. Adams doesn't specify the nature of the energy or energies that are powering the multiverse, his equivalent of the Prime Motor, although at one point he speculates about a hidden "energy not individual," leaving an unanswered question, "What is that Energy?" to be explored in his next book (C631). [473]

As proof that Aquinas' explanation of free choice differs little "from a system of dynamics as modern as the dynamo," Adams offers a version updated to modern mechanical terminology, followed by a paragraph from Aquinas, not quite the parallel columns of Abélard but a sequential comparison. What the two paragraphs demonstrate is the extent to which Adams is willing to reduce Aquinas' language to prove a similarity. The Prime Motor moves all,

> but man, being specially provided with an organism more complex than the organisms of other creatures, enjoys an exceptional capacity for reflex action,--a power of reflexion,--which enables him within certain limits to choose between paths; and this singular capacity is called free choice or free-will. Of course, the reflexion is not choice and though a man's mind reflected as perfectly as the facets of a lighthouse lantern, it would never reach a choice without an energy which impels it to act. (C686-87)

Aquinas' account is more subtle in describing two "agents," one, internal, is "Reflexion," the other, external, is God. "Man reflected, then, in order to learn what choice to make between the two acts which offer themselves. But reflection is, in turn, a faculty of doing opposite things, for we can reflect or not reflect; and we are no farther than before." We have another option Adams doesn't mention, to refuse to reflect, although we still cannot act without the external agent, the will of God. "The fixed point is not in man, since we meet in him, as a being apart from himself, only the alternative faculties; we must therefore recur to the intervention of an exterior agent [God] who shall impress on our will a movement capable of putting an end to its hesitations" (C687). In Aquinas the "alternative faculties" are "as a being apart from himself." Reflexion seems to imply a weak intermediary power or at least an ability of the mind, turning back into itself to consider alternative paths or refuse to proceed, not an automatic response. The image of the lighthouse lantern is more confusing than illuminating: is reflection the same as

transmission? but the image of the lantern with its multiple facets describes the way that Adams offers multiple perspectives on a question, leaving them all in play and offering his readers the option to choose among them, an option he declines to take.

Given the conditions of a single instantaneous creation, even the Prime Motor has no free will after the fact. God "wills that his creation shall develop itself in time and space and sequence, but he creates these conditions as well as the events. He creates the whole, in one act, complete, unchangeable, and it is then unfolded like a rolling panorama, with its predetermined contingencies" (687). This account of creation doesn't seem so far removed from Adams' U.S. *History* in which movement was spatial, biological and sequential, human agency was problematic and the providential deity of earlier historians was nowhere in sight. The "rolling panorama" sounds like Adams at its conclusion announcing that a national character has been formed and is now set to unfold in time and space and sequence across the continent according to determined formulas of demographic and economic growth. This olympian level of generalization led to impasse for the historian; it would take centuries for a scientific observer to notice a qualitative change. In *Chartres*, Adams began by operating on the level of the individual response to the power of historical stimuli but is increasingly playing with the span of eight or nine centuries.

If the concept of "predetermined contingencies" is necessary to preserve divine free will before the fact of creation and human freedom of choice afterwards, Adams returns to his mechanical metaphor to explain how the process works:

> Thomas's Prime Motor was very powerful, and its lines of energy were infinite. Among these infinite lines, a certain group ran to the human race, and, as long as the conduction was perfect, each man acted mechanically. In cases where the current for any reason, was for a moment checked,—that is to say, produced the effect of

> hesitation or reflexion in the mind,—the current accumulated until it acquired power to leap the obstacle. As Saint Thomas expressed it, the Prime Motor, who was nothing else than God, intervened to decide the channel of the current. The only difference between Man and a Vegetable was the Reflex Action of the complicated mirror which was called Mind, and the mark of Mind was reflective absorption or choice. The apparent freedom was an illusion arising from the extreme delicacy of the machine, but the motive power was in fact the same—that of God. (C688)

We are definitely experiencing a disenchanted modernity when Aquinas' idea of the creation of humanity in the divine image becomes translated into a meager share of variable electric current.[474] Determinism here seems to go beyond the presumed randomness of predetermined contingency to divine intervention, but then Aquinas would at least specify that it was the rational soul that distinguished human from vegetable. This is less the world-view of Saint Thomas than Henry Thomas Buckle, who once hoped to discover the mechanical laws underlying human history. What limits and fixes the behavior of the individual human could in the context of a population offer opportunity for the historian-cum-statistician looking for regularities. At the least Adams gets to exercise his newly-acquired scientific vocabulary and take provocative amusement in putting words into Aquinas' mouth. If Adams' position a few pages earlier was that chaos is the law of life, is he now shifting to another level of generalization and adopting this model, changing anarchy to "predetermined contingency" and the Prime Motor force to "Energy"? And what is that energy, if science is investigating new supersensual forms to replace Newton's physics? Adams is still working his way through the question of human agency, playing with the power of reflection and Bacon's "uneven" mental mirror, trying on models of action as he tried on styles of historiography.

Considering "predetermined contingencies" we seem to be in the Calvinist world of Adams' ancestors or the Catholicism of Pascal, except that what is predestined isn't

salvation but the opportunity to choose, or rather the opportunity to experience a stutter in the transmission of motive power, which we interpret as having a choice. Effective action requires a further gift of grace. Adams can amuse himself at the expense of both traditions by discussing the effect of reserve energy in a battery, or what is "technically" referred to as "grace." With bitter hilarity he outlines the process: if conduction is insufficient for a given purpose, "[u]nder ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, the conductor will be burned up, so to speak, condemned and thrown away. This is the case with most human beings. Yet there are cases where a conductor is capable of receiving an increase of energy from the Prime Motor, which enables it to attain the object aimed at. In dogma, this store of reserved energy is technically called Grace" (C688).[475] This scientific reductionism may be "sacrilege" to readers, but Adams claims this has always been the response of some critics—to Aquinas: "They insist that he has reduced God to a mechanism and Man to a passive conductor of force. He has left, they say, nothing but God in the universe" (C689). Adams proceeds from here to discuss again the tendency to Pantheism,[476] but this is a problem for the historian as well. Adams has reduced the actors on stage to one, a passive receptor in a multiverse of powerful forces. How can he move from the individual machine to talk about the course of events, the chaotic experience that Aquinas omitted, let alone the mysterious forces beneath the surface that he sees as the true vectors of history? Adams has gone as far as he can go in breaking down human experience; this unit, this Atom, is where he has to begin again. We don't know precisely when Adams started thinking about writing the *Education*, his account of the experience of "Henry Adams," manikin, but he began writing soon after completing *Chartres.*[477]

Adams was sympathetic to the compromises necessary to impose unity. The great value of the "Hive" of St. Thomas was its comprehensiveness compared to complicated, fragmentary modern systems. But "nothing includes everything," as William James said in arguing for a pluralistic universe, "Something always escapes. 'Ever not quite' has to be said of the best attempts made anywhere in the universe at attaining all-inclusiveness" (321).[478] In creating a system Aquinas reduced divine to human reason: "In his effort to be logical he forced his Deity to be as logical as himself, which hardly suited Omnipotence." Aquinas was contested in his own time from all sides; by the seventeenth century Descartes would start again from a different foundation. The structure may hold as a theoretical system like John Adams' constitution and yet become subject to new forces that make it irrelevant, as the Church's claim to universality increasingly eroded. The successive unities that Adams describes are always placed in time; their decline is assumed given the multiplicity of the universe, but Adams saw chaos where James saw the potentialities of pluralism. The illusion of unity built cathedrals and inspired crusades. James himself, in calling for "the moral equivalent of war," felt the lack of some force larger than the personal to inspire great achievement.

For Adams the most serious element that escaped was an explanation for evil and suffering. The "student" of the Latin Quarter found the idea of a universe conceived by a perfect being in love and harmony unconvincing in the face of "suffering, sorrow and death; plague, pestilence and famine; inundations, droughts and frosts; catastrophes worldwide and accidents in corners; cruelty, perversity, stupidity, uncertainty, insanity; virtue begetting vice; vice working for good; happiness without sense, selfishness without gain, misery without cause, and horrors" (C683). Yet according to the Church, upholding

divine perfection, evil did not exist except as the privation or immoderation of good. Aquinas' theodicy was more an apology than a defense, "an argument for proving the perfection of a machine by the number of its imperfections" (C684). This may serve as an admission and partial justification for what Adams has left out in his Middle Ages for the sake of his project. His catalog of evil and suffering is present always and everywhere, not historically specific. The anarchic universe makes no claim to good or harmony but expects disorder.

Having gone as far as he could go in reducing human freedom, Adams tried to recoup. Aquinas' cathedral supposedly puts all relations in scale: if men are constrained under conditions of unity, so is God. Even in their limited range of action humans had possibilities that God did not.

> [God] was pure act and thus he could not change. Man alone was allowed, in act, to change direction. What was more curious still, Man might absolutely prove his freedom by refusing to move at all; if he did not like his life he could stop it, and habitually did so, or acquiesced in its being done for him; while God could not commit suicide nor even cease for a minute his continuous action. (C691)

Earlier in discussing free choice Adams had omitted Aquinas' distinction that the reflective discrimination between alternatives included the option not to choose. In this chapter which circumscribes the possibility of human freedom, Adams implicitly pays Marian Adams a final tribute by presenting her death as not predetermined. She was not a victim of necessity but "absolutely proving her freedom" by deciding not to live. Here and in the elements of character she contributed to the construction of the Virgin's personality, Adams' makes her a symbol of resistance to fate.

Imperfection has its compensations, apparently. "If freedom meant superiority, Man was in action much the superior of God" (C691). Adams reminds readers that men

were free to change, be absurd, contradictory, or wicked, while "God, being everywhere, could not move." As finite creatures, they couldn't avoid being otherwise, so this doesn't seem like a notable distinction, but then Adams gets serious: "In one respect, at least, Man's freedom seemed to be not relative but absolute, for his thought was an energy paying no regard to space or time or object or sense; but God's thought was his act and will at once; speaking correctly, God could not think; he is" (C691). Adams doesn't stop to expand on the ideas in this last sentence. He uses it as the final architectural element in Aquinas' cathedral, the flèche or spire: "man's free-will was the aspiration to God." If we remember the singular seamlessness with which the architect of Chartres joined his square tower to an octagonal spire, Aquinas accomplishes the same feat. "The square foundation-tower, the expression of God's power in act,—his Creation,—rose to the level of the church façade as a part of the normal unity of God's energy; and then, suddenly, without show or effort, without break, without logical violence, became a many-sided, voluntary, vanishing human soul" (C692). Neither architect not theologian could identify where God ended and man began. "How it was done, one does not care to ask; in a result so exquisite, one has not the heart to find fault with 'adresse'" (C692). The spire was the least essential and therefore the most artistic aspect of the cathedral.

A reader might ask how Adams got from the man-machine whose free choice was a hiccup in the mechanism to return to the concept of free will. We can't tell "where God's power ends and free will begins" because Adams seems to have established that there isn't such a thing. We have to take Adams' word about Aquinas' cathedral: the structure demanded a spire, humans needed to think they were free to seek God, and therefore free will exists as art. His friend William James made a similar assertion in

"The Dilemma of Determinism." With no intention of proving the existence of free will, he suggests that we follow his lead "in assuming it is true, and acting as if it were true." Our first act of freedom is to affirm we are free and then let the assertion create its own conditions (1).[479] But James doesn't begin by saying that "free will has never been explained to the satisfaction of any but those who much wish to be satisfied."

The mind may be absolutely free, if "thought was an energy paying no regard to space or time or object or sense." In celebrating the freedom of human thought, Adams provides a justification for the experiment in imagination across time and space that he has been conducting. But as Adams has been demonstrating, the mind is always subject to the mental assumptions and conventional forms of its time and place, hence the two contradictory Eleanors of France and England. If truth is partial, can the mind be free? The imaginative assumption of multiple historical perspectives allows Adams to identify the various "illusions" under which past societies and by extension his own lived, but makes it difficult to profess faith in any. To the extent that Adams can imagine a vocation for himself it is his role as conservator of imagination itself within the myth of the saving remnant.

Unity itself becomes more complicated as *Chartres* proceeds. In the naïve world of Mont Saint Michel the nieces can imagine themselves small landholders who obey their lords earthly and spiritual, follow them to war in England and the Holy Land and build cathedrals. Without a necessary thought they get to participate in the great movement of the world. Church, state, art and science are all implicitly one. After the heterodoxy of the Virgin and the mystics, and the disunity of the warring schools, St Thomas arrives to assert a new unity, now explicitly. But "St. Thomas was working for

the Church and the State, not for the salvation of souls and his chief object was to repress anarchy" (C685). In the decline of his art, "the despotic central idea—was that of organic unity both in the thought and the building" (C693). From anarchy comes a desire for order, but from unity a self-conscious desire for personal autonomy.

The unity of St. Thomas is a matter not so much of feeling as of form, but in the end the form expresses a feeling: "The theology turns always into art at the last and ends in aspiration. The spire justifies the Church." Free will is the aspiration of humanity and so deft is St.Thomas' handling of the transition from tower to flèche, God's power to man's free will, that the square tower, the expression of divine creation, "suddenly, without show of effort, without break, without logical violence, became a many-sided, voluntary, vanishing human soul" (C692). It is true to the extent that we want to believe it. This is not a trick Adams was able to achieve himself, if his discussion of Aquinas was meant to show an imperceptible shift to science.

In conclusion, the text reverts to the perspective of the uncle/guide, who turns to his niece/companion, She can continue with the story on her own, "after I am gone," the story of the descent into multiplicity bound up with intimations of his own mortality. The tour has demonstrated that "your parents in the nineteenth century were not to blame for the decline of unity in art" (C694). It's odd that she would blame the nineteenth century when according to Adams signs of decline appeared in the fourteenth, odder still that he doesn't address the nineteenth century decline of religion. True, Adams is maintaining the fiction that he and his charges are merely tourists of art, but art is taken by him as the measure of civilization, an instrument through which force finds its symbolic expression,

not a force itself. Adams reiterates that no one was to blame, as though he expected an accusation: "The trouble was not in the art or the method or the structure, but in the universe itself which presented different aspects as men moved" (695). The unity of the Gothic cathedral seems to recognize this in its restless movement.

> Of all the elaborate symbolism which has been suggested for the gothic Cathedral, the most vital and most perfect may be that the slender *nervure*, the springing motion of the broken arch, the leap downwards of the flying buttress,--the visible effort to throw off a visible strain,--never let us forget that Faith alone supports it, and that, if faith fails, Heaven is lost. The equilibrium is visibly delicate beyond the line of safety; danger lurks in every stone. The peril of the heavy tower, of the restless vault, of the vagrant buttress, the uncertainty of logic, the inequalities of the syllogism, the irregularities of the mental mirror,--all these haunting nightmares for the Church are expressed as strongly by the gothic Cathedral as though it had been the cry of human suffering, and as no emotion had ever been expressed before or is likely to find expression again. The delight of its aspirations is flung up to the sky. The pathos of its self-distrust and anguish of doubt, is buried in the earth as its last secret. You can read out of it whatever pleases your youth and confidence; to me this is all. (C695)

Adams' tour began on top of the world with "The Archangel loved heights." Even then the position could not hold, as signaled by the past tense and by the remains of the abbey around it, built too ambitiously. This is not a paean to lost stability, but to the vital intensity of the nervure. Instead of returning to the spires of aspiration Adams reverses direction. His cathedral tours had emphasized the light and avoided the gloom of the crypt, the Gothic nightmare, the suffering that Aquinas suppressed for the sake of the design, but now Adams traces the lines of the nervures into the ground.[480] He pulls together the perspective of the early and final sections by returning to doubt as the emotion of the transition, an emotion that is not spoken (he had to resort to Pascal and Bacon for its expression), but manifest nonetheless in the form of the structure. The paradox of the unity that is not merely a "despotic central idea" is that it is an unstable equilibrium that rests on the shifting feelings and contradictory desires of human beings.

The arches broken, not pointed, fix the pattern of multiple smaller failed arcs in Adams' search for a significant education, predict the great rupture in time in the *Education* and indicate his indirect relation to posterity through the casual relation of nieces. Much earlier Adams had expressed his preference for the austere and unselfconscious Romanesque: "men and women who have lived long and are tired,—who want rest,—who have done with aspirations and ambitions,—who whose life has been a broken arch—feel this repose and self restraint as they feel nothing else." But then his viewpoint shifted. Even the ancestral "cradle of rest" at Mont Saint Michel was none too full of repose. Sequence brings change. Adams keeps shifting aspects, throwing doubt on what occurred, suggesting his companion may have an alternate view, even before he articulates the importance of doubt and self-distrust in the final chapters. The architecture has frozen a moment of unity, proven its existence and also its fragility. Once again Adams leaves readers suspended in doubt, without a happy moral to take away. (He's like his friend Henry James in this respect.) The reader can make of it "whatever pleases your youth and confidence."

The preferred form for Adams seems to be the experiment that doesn't precisely know its end, but leaves something open, which is why he valued Chartres over Amiens, yet he always starts out wanting conclusive answers. Adams' thinking by the time he wrote *Chartres* and the *Education* may have moved from writing history to a philosophy of history, although he didn't see it in these terms. By the turn of the century, German thinkers like Wilhelm Dilthey were responding to the perceived inadequacies of Rankean practice by arguing that history as a human science properly aimed for the understanding of its complex object, but Adams still wanted a formulation closer to the explanation of

the physical sciences, despite his abandonment of the Rankean method.[481] Science was the discipline attempting to comprehend the perplexing lines of force as Adams' final chapter of *Chartres* begins to demonstrate. A scientific law covering the behavior of humans as historical beings would have the benefit of prediction, and prediction allow at least a considered reaction, at best a measure of control.

Compared to conventional academic history, the level of generalization at which Adams was operating required a longer frame of time, yet this greater temporal distance was accompanied by a closer affective relation between the subject and his object. Adams becomes his own subject in history, an instrument of investigation like the heroines of his novels; the energies of phenomena past and present are registered in his reaction to them. This doesn't become explicit until the *Education of Henry Adams*, but the first person travel narrative of *Chartres* has an intimacy of tone and emotional expressiveness that the impersonal quasi-autobiography lacks. [482]

It is the condition of the cathedral that gravity rules the balance of forces. In the Newtonian universe of Adams' grandfather and great-grandfather, too, each action was presumed to have its equal and corresponding reaction. Forces could be calculated, at least, whereas in the aspect of the universe that presented itself at the turn of the twentieth century the forces at work, like electricity, were not so apprehensible. The Virgin served as the comforting integrative face of energy in the twelfth century, when "peasant or prince mattered nothing, for all felt the same motives." Faith, the submission to some "energy not individual" seems required for unity. But in the twentieth what energy could motivate unity, let alone a unity organic rather than coercive? In the *Education of Henry*

Adams, the subject of my next chapter, Adams describes his search for the inhuman twentieth century symbol of force.

Chapter V. History as Education, an Education in History: *The Education of Henry Adams*

In the Editor's Preface to *The Education of Henry Adams* (1918), the putative editor recollects Adams' dissatisfaction with his text: "The point on which the author failed to please himself and could get no light from readers or friends, was the usual one of literary form" (719). This second preface was the author's last word to the reader, written by Adams himself above the initials of Henry Cabot Lodge, his former student, Senator, and President of the Massachusetts Historical Society, which published the book after Adams' death. Having gauged the responses of his first (1907) group of readers, Adams attempted to focus the attentions of a new audience on what he considered most important. In a characteristically paradoxical way, with his confession of failure he hoped to point readers in the direction of his achievement.

According to the preface, the problem of literary form is equated with "his great ambition to complete St. Augustine's 'Confessions,'" but "the scheme became unmanageable as he approached his end" (719). Adams wasn't simply citing Augustine as the model for life-writing, but making a larger argument about the significance of the *Education*. As he noted elsewhere: "We have all three [Adams, Augustine, Rousseau] undertaken to do what cannot be successfully done—mix narrative and didactic purpose and style." [483] Augustine justified writing his life by insisting on its larger purpose, indeed its necessity, and provided a model of form in which the exemplary culmination of the life, conversion, made possible a demonstration of the intellectual achievement which conversion had enabled. The *Education* is an autobiography with ambitions, its unmanageable end not merely the justification of a life, or the depiction of an era, but the

explication of a philosophy of history for which the life is demonstration and learning experience.

The second way that the preface claimed a wider significance for the life was in pairing it with Adams' previous book as a joint experiment in scientific history. Adams quotes his own text to explain how the *Education* had been generated through the composition of *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres*:

> Any schoolboy could see that man as a force must be measured by motion from a fixed point. Psychology helped here by suggesting a unit—the point of history when man held the highest idea of himself as a unit in a unified universe. Eight or ten years of study had led Adams to think he might use the century 1150-1250, expressed in Amiens Cathedral and the Works of Thomas Aquinas as the unit from which he might measure motion down to his own time, without assuming anything as true or untrue except relation. Setting himself to the task, he began a volume which he mentally knew as 'Mont Saint Michel and Chartres: a study of thirteenth-century unity.' From that point he proposed to fix a position for himself which he could label: 'The Education of Henry Adams: a study of twentieth-century multiplicity.' With the help of these two points of relation, he hoped to project his lines forward and backward indefinitely, subject to correction from anyone who should know better. (719)

Linking the two books as the product of design makes for a better origin myth, but from the evidence of the text and his letters Adams doesn't seem to have imagined a sequel to *Chartres* until writing the later chapters. The emphasis on St. Thomas, Amiens and the thirteenth century shows a shift in Adams' thinking from the earlier book, whose radiant center of generativity had been the twelfth-century Notre Dame de Chartres. For the cathedral of Chartres to be superseded by the technical perfection of its style at Amiens, and for the anonymous artist of the Transition to become a St. Thomas had signified a decline in the earlier book. But when the problem of form was the integration of demonstration and theory, Aquinas, the named author of a system, became a more useful reference. Adams still hoped that a scientific study of history might allow for the lines of

relation to be projected far enough ahead to enable management if not control of the proliferating new energies unleashed during his lifetime.

As Adams continued his search for an adequate explanation of the historical forces that conditioned modern life, his level of generalization grew larger, while his field of study shrank. By the conclusion of *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres* his object of study had been reduced to the individual, or rather two, one an anonymous man-machine, the receptor of incomprehensible forces who clung to an illusion about free will, the other the individual who imagined him, Thomas Aquinas. There is a formal correlation between Aquinas and Adams in the way each is positioned as author at the conclusions of the two works, even if Adams hadn't insisted in his letters that the last three chapters of both should be read as a continuum. As he wrote to Henry James, the *Education* contained "a completion and mathematical conclusion from the previous volume about the Thirteenth Century,—the three concluding chapters of this being only a working out Q.E.D. of the three concluding chapters of that" (L6:136).

In the *Education*, then, Adams wrote his own intellectual monument. To do this, he chose autobiography, another generically unstable form with links to both history and fiction. [484] Offered as his "last Will and Testament," the text commemorates the life of "Henry Adams," manikin, while it aspires to create his author's *Summa*, a dynamic theory of history (L6:63). The *Education* conducts an inquiry into the nature of historical change through a participant-observer who is representative enough and distanced enough to record his education in the discontinuities of history. As an inquiry into the nature of historical consciousness and the art of historical explanation, it abjures historicity at times for the sake of its theory. Intended to be published after his death, the

Education is Adams' final gift to a posterity that he had trouble imagining. In its form it attempts to turn the self-confessed failures of a life lived in history and through history into an accomplishment of a higher order, the creation of a great generalization, but instead of a presenting a unified vision, form and content are divided, contradicted and questioned.

Adams also had less exalted motives in choosing autobiography. Writing his own life was in part a defense against posthumous publicity. As he explained to Henry James, "The volume is a mere precaution in the grave. I advise you to take your own life in the same way, in order to prevent biographers from taking it in theirs" (L6:136). In *Chartres*, suicide had been equated with a protest against fate; taking one's life could be a taking-hold, an act of self-possession. The practical strategy was to write himself an epitaph comprehensive enough to discourage future investigators, while reticent enough to deflect speculation, especially about the life and death of his wife.

Adams also claimed the book was written to forestall his participation in any public interrogation into the life of his friend, John Hay, who died in 1905. "I am far from willing to publish, and am driven to it only as defense against the pressure to write a memoir of Hay, which I will not do, not on my account but on his. All memoirs lower the man in estimation" (L6:52). His glowing portrait of Hay, "artist" of diplomacy, will be discussed in more detail, but seems to set a friend's assessment against the qualifications of future biographers. Then, too, Hay's end allows Adams a conclusion to his life narrative, a death-by-proxy in the glorious "martyrdom" of a Secretary of State worn out by his duties.

The *Education* was intended as a study of a generation and a class, the liberal bourgeoisie who had once followed Mill and Tocqueville and anticipated a world that was not only intelligible but open to human control.[485] Finally, Adams claims for his readers the simple human interest of his story: "every one must bear his own universe, and most persons are moderately interested in learning how their neighbors have managed to carry theirs." [486]However, as instances of an education, and a reflection on that education, Adams' experiences are possibly instructive without being exemplary in any simple sense.

The declared object of the *Education* is "to fit young men, in Universities as elsewhere, to be men of the world, equipped for any emergency," although young men were not recipients of the one hundred privately-printed copies circulated in 1907 (722). In a letter of 1909 Adams emphasized the personal relation behind his offering: "The volume sent you was meant as a letter; garrulous, intimate, confidential, as is permitted in order to serve a social purpose, but would sound a false note for the public ear. In truth, for the occasion, I am frankly a conspirator; I want to invite private confidence, and the public is my worst enemy" (L5:205).[487] While both books had the attraction of exclusivity for their first readers, the tone of Mont *Saint Michel and Chartres* offers epistolary intimacy, at least in the earlier sections in which travel by uncle and niece is simulated, but the *Education* is distinctly less personal. It seems like a letter only to the extent that the recipients of Adams' copies were his circle of correspondents, who needed no author's name on the title page.[488] With proper protocol, Adams waited until the legislative session was over before presenting the first copy to "the President," Theodore Roosevelt, (who at least tended to act like a young man, to Adams' despair), the next to

his elder brother Charles Francis Adams.[489] Adams maintained he was following the same procedure as the earlier volumes of the *History* and the Tahitian *Memoirs* by soliciting revisions by interested parties: the book "was put into print only to enable the persons named in it to object or reject or correct whatever concerned them. Any person whose name is mentioned in it has a right to it."

If Adams had no intention of publication, correction would hardly seem necessary. [490] But this uncertainty about the book's degree of completion was not merely a self-deprecating pose on Adams' part, waiting for readers to insist that he publish. He was ambivalent about revealing his life, guarded as his presentation was. He considered his ideas of education to be "radically revolutionary" and as "The Tendency of History" and *Chartres* had demonstrated, he was attuned to expect an institutional backlash against new ideas. To the extent his book was representative of his generation and class, it was open to comments by collaborators. [491] He also wanted to consult historical colleagues: "My notion of work is that of work among workers, that is, by comparison, correspondence and conversation. Ideas once settled so…anyone can explain them to the public" (L6:105).[492] Few conversations ensued, however.

Adams wrote with a sense of the social import of his work; as a historian and an Adams he could not do otherwise. He anticipated the possibility of communicating to a wider audience, although any hopes that the *Education* might effect a change in American thinking were offset by his estimation of the mind of the American public. His reservations were only reinforced by the lack of response to his ideas even by the best people. His elite readers seemed to ignore his provocations and evade discussion, as he complained to his niece, "No one really reads either volume, as I can instantly see when I

talk of it."[493] Some readers see Adams' emphasis on form as a capitulation to the indifference of his readers, but the discussion of form cannot be separated from his didactic purpose. His double prefaces demonstrate his anxiety about being understood, the second pointing explicitly to "his favorite theory of history" (720).[494] This chapter will look at the way Adams conceived a life in history in four respects: as an experiment in autobiography; as a continuation of Adams' investigation into the place of women in nature and society; as an inquiry into the making of history as experience and text; and as an attempt to formulate a theory of history.

Life Writing

To judge from the biographies that Henry Adams wrote, the *Education* was never conceived simply as a biography of himself. [495] *John Randolph* (1882) is a satirical study of an eccentric genius of the Virginia squirearchy, an implacable Adams family foe whose skills at political infighting were matched only by Adams' grandfather, John Quincy. Its purpose seems to have been the character assassination of its subject. While gentlemanly in declining to discuss the storms of Randolph's private life, Adams questions Randolph's sanity and imputes ulterior motives even to political stands he considered reasonable.[496] At the beginning and end of his career, Adams tried to do more justice to his subjects. *Albert Gallatin* (1879) is a comprehensive study of the man Adams regarded as the model of a practical statesman, "an honest and honorable man" as John Quincy Adams concludes. Adams' editorship of the Gallatin papers is evident throughout, possibly too much so for the pleasure of readers. In contrast to *Randolph*, where Adams was always willing to interpret the words of his subject, the primary role of

the author seems to have been the faithful transcription of the words of his subject and their arrangement in sequence, including untranslated multipage letters in French.

The Life of George Cabot Lodge (1911), a far slighter work, was a duty Adams tried to avoid, the life of an honorary nephew who died young. Adams' attempt to depict the poet as the type of the American artist, whose resistance to society had no effect against the nation's vast indifference, conflicted with the Lodge family's desire for an uplifting narrative. Again, the role of the biographer (hampered in this case) was in the selection of letters and poetry that were representative of Lodge and would allow his subject to speak through them. All three biographies begin in genealogy and end in death, but *Randolph* is animated by a confident animosity, while *Gallatin* displays the caution of a faithful transcriber and *Cabot* a surprising hesitancy and detachment towards its subject. *The Memoirs of Arii Taimai,* Adams' attempt, as editor and transcriber, to record the memoirs of the matriarch of the Teva clan in the context of all Tahitian history, fell apart under the weight of its ambitions, its divided audience and its unstable first-person address.

Yet in the *Education*, direct quotation is strikingly absent. Adams cites the letters of British statesman to make a point about the unpredictability and unknowability of human motivation. He might quote Dante's poetry, Karl Pearson's *Grammar of Science*, or the letters of John Hay, or ventriloquize St. Thomas, but he doesn't quote himself, his letters or his works. [497] Certainly there is plenty of referentiality in the *Education*, names and dates and events that point to the actuality of episodes, but Adams' primary purpose was not in telling a Rankean life as it actually was. *Chartres* and his "Crillon" article had made clear his skepticism about the value of facts in themselves; relation in sequence was

all. He produces immediacy though the vigor of his impressions, like the color of a yellow floor in strong sunlight, not by quoting himself or others at the time.

The *Education* is both more self-effacing and more self-aggrandizing than other life writing. Adams suppressed his own name as author on the title page, as he had done with *Chartres* and the Tahitian *Memoirs* before it, although to the coterie who received the first copies he was obviously known. The 1918 editors added the words "An Autobiography" for the benefit of a less knowing public, although those readers still might have been taken aback by the representational strategies of its author. In 1886 Adams described "the interest of autobiography" as "the only interest that lasts forever, and holds its own as history" (L3:45). As a historical document a life narrative is the kind of evidence that can never be superseded, but for the professional historian is suspect because of its individual view, reliant as it is on memory and feeling, and its susceptibility to the distortions of literary style.[498] The historian might compensate for personal bias by putting the evidence into an intertextual relation with other documents or might study the text for the attitudes, values and assumptions it implicitly displays.[499] Adams tried both approaches.

It has been argued that the *Education* is not an autobiography at all, since Adams didn't call it so. The text tends to suppress the self-revelations of conventional autobiography while it lacks the scrupulous attention to facts of Adams' earlier biographical and historical writing.[500] The unapologetic literariness of Adams' narrative, his fondness for the exaggerated contrast, the associational leap, and the over-determined symbol, have also led critics to doubt the attribution. Yet as a kind of life narrative, which assumes some identity between the life and the writer, an account of subjective

experience that holds itself capable of historical verification to some degree, autobiography is a capacious designation with imprecise boundaries. Furthermore, Adams always starts with a given form, and in his two prefaces he is explicit about his autobiographical models. The *Education* is an experiment in autobiography, didactic in intent, written by a historian in an ironic mode which was itself a historical response to his times. [501]

Adams clearly wants readers to see the *Education* in light of its literary antecedents. The original 1907 preface cites Rousseau and Franklin while its reference to "the sphere of the dead languages" is amplified in the second preface to mean the *Confessions* of Augustine. Adams begins by quoting the opening of Rousseau's *Confessions*: "I have shown myself as I was; contemptible and vile when I was so; good, generous, sublime when I was so; I have unveiled my interior such as Thou thyself hast seen it, Eternal father!" and continues with his challenge to readers: "Let each of them discover his heart in his turn at the foot of thy throne with the same sincerity; and then let any one of them tell thee if he dares:—I was a better man!" (721). In his first sentence alone, Rousseau manages to invoke himself five times, and God once. Adams seems willing to take up the challenge, ridiculing the "very great educator in the manner of the eighteenth century" by imagining the Deity's not "unmixed" pleasure at hearing the "least agreeable details" of Jean-Jacques' life.[502]

To nineteenth century "educators" Rousseau is instructive for his negative model: "he erected a monument against the *Ego*" (721). In reaction, "the Ego has steadily tended to efface itself, and, for purposes of model, to become a manikin on which the toilet of education is to be draped in order to show the fit or misfit of the clothes. The object of

study is the garment, not the figure. The tailor adopts the manikin as well as the clothes to the patron's wants" (722). By using the manikin, Adams can present subjective experience in an impersonal way. He positions himself against Rousseau's exposure of the "unveiled interior" and aligns himself with the more congenial model of Benjamin Franklin. Adams doesn't talk much about his debt to Franklin, who offers a secular, externalized construction of a social self, an example of "self-instruction." Like John Adams an authority on the art of emulation,[503] Franklin was confident that his experience offered a valuable model of behavior for his son and posterity in general in a way that Adams could not be. Adams could only hope his story might serve as an instrument for social fitness when his experience was not to be replicated and his posterity, the reading public, was unsecured. [504]

Adams' assertion that "the Ego has steadily tended to efface itself," rings false both in general and particular. Adams may have found Rousseau's idea of the self naïve, his mode of expression recklessly exhibitionistic, and an insistence on the uniqueness of the self not useful for the purposes of his project. He prefers to approach the ego with Thomas Carlyle's injunctions to silence and to work. However, Adams assumes the roles of tailor, manikin and patron, if the *Education* is taken as instruction he conducts for his own benefit as well as the reader's. The extension of the philosophy of clothes borrowed from *Sartor Resartus* alerts the reader to a distinction between narrator and subject that protects Adams' privacy, licenses his imagination and creates a distance in which irony can grow.

For Carlyle's wild philosopher of clothes, though, beneath the garments that "founded" society and its institutions was not a manikin, but a man who was animal,

Spirit and "Mystery of Mysteries" (45). I've already noted Adams' rejection of Carlyle's moralizing and preaching, but there was an analogy between the authors' situations. Carlyle, writing with a sense of imminent social crisis, faced an audience that he assumed would be uncomprehending if not hostile to his ideas and turned to a fiction that modeled itself fantastically on the standard life and works of the great man. [505] He split his exposition through the direct quotation of the German Treufelsdröck's high-flown ideas (which might bear some resemblance to a Conservative Christian Anarchist's) and the English editor who wrestles with the intelligible transmission of dubious fragments of biography and incoherent outbursts of philosophy. Carlyle plays with the expectations of historicity, Adams with the self-conscious constructions of fiction. The *Education* claims the manikin is necessary for a study of human relation: "it is the only measure of motion, of proportion, of human condition; it must have the air of reality; must be taken for real; must be treated as though it had life—Who knows? Possibly it had!" (722). The *Education* is Adams' life so long as it serves his purpose and the desires of his readers.[506]

This byplay of revelation and concealment is too coy.[507] The manikin being fitted with clothes by a cosmic tailor accords with Adams dynamic theory of history in which man learns by reaction to forces, but as a "measure of motion" a dummy seems too static an image. Adams has to introduce a metaphor of "drift" to convey movement. Even as a neutral and representative figure, a manikin is decidedly non-heroic and a little ridiculous.[508] Adams observes his younger self as if he were a Candide: the manikin is the dupe of the narrator, inserted into a variety of situations to demonstrate his (and our) ignorance. Generally Adams prefers Voltaire's irony to Rousseau's professions of sincerity. Meanwhile the narrator exhibits a higher order of ignorance that realizes human

limitations but still insists on knowing more. By reiterating his ignorance, he signifies his impossibly high aspiration to know. [509]

While age engendered retrospection, Adams was interested in bigger ends than just reliving his choices in life. The garment the tailor offers to young men "is meant to show the faults of the patchwork fitted on their fathers" but, as the text demonstrates, no existing pattern could fit the challenges to human intelligence in the twentieth century. [510]Adams returns to Carlyle in Chapter 27, "Teufelsdröck," only to show how seventy years have created a different world. The tourist who visited the Arctic Circle at the spot where the lone wanderer Teufelsdröck "had stopped to ask futile questions of the silent infinite" was unable to replicate the experience. "An installation of electric lighting and telephones led tourists up to the polar icecap, beyond the level of the magnetic pole; and there the newer Teufelsdröck sat dumb with surprise, and glared at the permanent electric lights of Hammerfest" (1097). What the "electro-dynamo-social universe" told Adams, in hourly reports, was that McKinley had been assassinated and his friend Roosevelt was President.[511]

As the Preface continues, Adams shifts the focus from manikin to young man, the metaphor from tailoring to education, and by implication, the century from nineteenth to twentieth. The presumably hollow manikin may be the lesson of the past, but the subject of education, the young man, "is a certain form of energy; the object to be gained is the economy of his force; the training is partly the clearing away of obstacles, partly the direct application of effort. Once acquired the tools and models can be thrown away" (722). The valedictory title of Adams' final chapter, "Nunc Age" refers to his condition of age ("Age" had been the final chapter of his life of *Gallatin*), but also translates to the

injunction “Now go,” or “Now act.” The manikin who by this point has merged into the tailor /teacher/narrator called “the historian” has served his purpose, taught his lesson, and can “be thrown away” (the kind of self-mocking phrase Adams would use) while his students put their training to the test.

Another of Adams’ defenses against the ego and in the direction of greater historicity was his use of the third person throughout. The third person allows Adams to limit self-revelation and the narrator to appear a scientist observing the reactions of his experimental subject. While the use of the third person signals historical enunciation, the generic expectations of history are confounded at times with an interiority more characteristic of the novel, for example when “Henry Adams” remembers his “acute distress” at being bundled up in blankets when he was three. The “I” of autobiography can seem to make a naïve unity of the subject, but Adams’ use of the third person and figure of the manikin makes visible the split consciousness between narrator and younger self that is usually implicit.[512]

Jean Starobinski, looking at the history of autobiography, notes that third-person autobiographies traditionally were written by a principal actor in important events, like Julius Caesar, in which case an impersonal narration transferred emphasis from the actors “to the benefit of the event.” [513] The seemingly modest narration often had the effect of glorifying “the hero who refuses to speak in his own name.” [514] Adams may be amusing himself by using the mode of the great man, given his ironic and self-effacing treatment of his participation in the realm of great events, but his strategies put greater emphasis on the external forces that influenced his subject, widening the significance of his account, while retaining his interest in the effect of those forces on the mind of his

subject. As for glorification, Adams may not speak in his own name, but his name is continually spoken.[515] The *Education* talks about "the baby," "the child," "the young man," "the young American," "the son," "the student," "the private secretary," "the professor," "the weary pilgrim," "the historian," and ever "Adams," "Henry," "Henry Adams," with all the connotations of Adam and atoms. [516]

By using third person, however, the text deprives itself of a direct address to the reader. Considering Adams' two models, the emotional tone of a confession is going to be higher than an education; the relation between Rousseau's "I" and the audience is sometimes too unmediated for comfort. Even in Augustine's *Confessions,* where the strongest relation is between the narrator and the God he continuously addresses, the passionate expression of the narrator creates an immediacy and identification with the reader that is absent in the *Education.* The primary relation in the *Education* is between manikin and narrator, although the difference between narrator and protagonist tends to collapse in the second section, which bears the didactic burden of professing Adams' philosophy of history and finally refers to "Adams" as "the historian."

For Adams the *Confessions* of St. Augustine initiated the tradition of didactic autobiography and was the best model "to do what cannot be successfully done—mix narrative and didactic purpose and style" (L6:237-38).[517] Augustine justified writing his life by insisting on its salvific purpose, indeed its necessity. His *Confessions* provided a model of form in which conversion was the climax of his life, and his exegesis on the creation of the world, based on the new understanding enabled by faith, was the completion of the narrative. The text is intended to teach his brethren, but written in the presence of the God whom he constantly invokes in praise and supplication. His account

documents the evolution of a mind, since as Augustine recounts his life, his conversion allows him to reinterpret past events in light of the divine design he now perceives.

Augustine's text sets itself as a model of conversion, as he himself was converted by reading and hearing about the conversions of others. The chronology begins with Augustine's infancy, climaxes with his conversion and, like Adams' text, concludes with the exemplary death of another, in this case his saintly mother Monica. Chronology and the prospect of conversion order the life, as baptism is continually deferred and sins are inevitably committed. The *Education* has a similar pattern, up to a point; if Augustine's attitude until the moment of conversion was "not yet," Adams' education is never quite fulfilled, and his various attempts could be seen as a series of incomplete conversions, his successive failures as sins. Structurally the recurring pattern of sin or philosophical error in the *Confessions* is similar to Adams' succession of failures.[518] (I will discuss the way Adams depicts his inheritance of sin in the next section.)

Augustine's experience speaks to Adams' historical queries about the disintegration of Rome and the rise of the Church, and his more personal interest about a life lived through a period of wrenching transition. Augustine repudiated the literature he had loved as a youth and his career as a rhetorician to embrace a new system of thought. As Adams' dynamic theory points out, Augustine wrote *The City of God* in an attempt to recreate the world in terms of spiritual rather than political values. Adams' protagonist is never capable of becoming the new man that his age seems to require. While he side-steps, the world seems to rush forward. As Adams says to excuse his *Education*, "the thing cannot be done today. The world does not furnish the contrasts or the emotion." If Adams' *Education* lacks a single climax, both works fail to blend the narrative and

didactic. Adams complained that he had to write "a long supplementary chapter to explain in scientific terms what I could not put into narration," but also complained that "St. Augustine's narrative subsides at last into the dry sands of metaphysical theology."[519] While Augustine works in the tradition of the conversion narrative, and, like Aquinas, knows his beginning and his end, form is a problem for Adams in a way that reflects his own experience in history, in the irony that lurks in the discrepancy between the teleology of conversion and a series of educational missteps, the height of conversion and the sinkhole at the center of his narrative. Without faith in the coherence of history or science, or the efficacy of education, how can he imagine a theory of history?[520] Both he and Augustine may feel powerless before overwhelming force, but Augustine at least assumes there is a design and that his symbols exist in a system of meaning.

When it comes to credibility, Augustine's conviction that he wrote in the presence of a God who could decide his fate for all eternity produces a conviction in the reader of a sincerity of intention at least that later secular writers would have difficulty establishing. Augustine, whose mastery of rhetoric included the classical techniques of retention, may have been able to assume the truth of memory, but the effect of Rousseau's *Confessions* seems to demonstrate the power of subjectivity to alter judgment, if any illustration were needed.[521] Unlike Rousseau, Adams made no apologies about his reliance on recollection. In recounting the twelve-year-old Adams' first visit to Washington, he asserts: "The actual journey may have been quite different, but the actual journey has no interest for education. The memory was all that mattered; and what struck him most, to remain fresh in his mind all his life-time, was the sudden change that came

over the world on entering a slave state" (759). In *Chartres* Adams defined history as "only a catalogue of the forgotten," but in the later text, education could be only what is remembered (C373). The primary task facing manikin and narrator is to capture the forces of attraction at work on a representative mind, forces that could not be captured in the life.

The life, a life, provided the organizing principle that Adams needed for his historical speculations: "Of course the path is sugar-coated in order to induce any one to follow it. The nearer we can come to romance, the more chance that somebody will read—and misunderstand" (L6:177). From Adams's own description of the trajectory of the *Education*, it is not the simple slide into entropy that some readers have taken it to be, but a laborious process of scientific understanding:

> If you can imagine a centipede running along in twenty little sections (each with a little mathematical formula carefully concealed in its stomach), to the bottom of a hill; and then laboriously climbing in fifteen sections more (each with a new mathematical problem concealed in its stomach), till it can get up on a hill an inch or two high, so as to see half an inch or so,—you will understand in advance all that the Education has to say. You will understand also why I believe the literary problem insoluble, and keep the experiment private. (L6:117)[522]

Adams was fond of the invertebrate metaphor, man as grasshopper, insect or worm, (which resonates both as a Puritan inheritance and a reflection of a post-Darwinian universe), not least because it pricks the self-satisfaction of readers. The artist (and "artist" for Adams was defined broadly as an intellectual author) is fascinated by the "insoluble" literary problem of integrating the narrative with the didactic, as Adams consistently found the unresolved dialectic more productive than synthesis. The literary and scientific components of history should be, but never were inseparable. Half an inch

of progress for an insect is something—and is all the self-questioning "success" story Adams was capable of writing.[523] In this respect he is more like his masters Augustine and Pascal than the eighteenth-century models of Rousseau, Franklin or Gibbon.

The *Education* is organized chronologically: the first twenty chapters, from 1838 to 1871 recount "a story of how an average American education, in spite of the most favorable conditions, ran down hill, for twenty years, into the bog labeled Failure." The theme of education is relentless: accidental at best, it is mostly denied, deferred or failed. The boy who inherited eighteenth century principles was unfit for electoral politics. Harvard taught little but at least left the mind blank to learn. Travel enabled a student to learn the most in the shortest span of time, until it didn't. Diplomacy was impossible given the unreadability of human motives. Religion had withered away and the uniformitism of Darwinism seemed more its soothing substitute than an explanation of a catastrophic reality. (The accidental quality of Adams' search for a vocation enacts this impeded development.) Investigative journalism had no effect on the mind of the U. S. public and once Grant announced his cabinet, political reform had no chance. The years lost as a professor and editor marked the "thinnest" of his educations. Education "had not begun," "led nowhere," "could go no further." By the twentieth chapter, unsurprisingly titled "Failure (1871)" the theme seems exhausted: "Henry Adams's education, at his entry into life, stopped, and his life began." The narrative breaks off for twenty years of "life."

Adams' literary problem was also one of self-protection. Had he included the twenty years in hiatus, Adams might have had to ruin his form in order to account for his achievements, the publication of the lives of *Albert Gallatin* and *John Randolph*, the two

novels (secretly), and his monumental *History* (although the *Education* does mention it, disparagingly). His thirteen-year marriage is omitted altogether, although the suicide of his wife is noted obliquely through a visit to the memorial in Rock Creek Cemetery. Adams' silence here corresponds to the silence of his letters and apparently his conversation, but his early readers were aware of the conceit of his "posthumous" existence and what it signified. The gap points to the momentous nature of what happened while preserving his private emotions. In the *History* Adams had examined the condition of the nation before and after a twenty-year interval as a useful device to measure the direction of change, and in 1892, compared to 1871, "something new and curious was about to happen in the world" (1030). But as a chasm in time that breaks the narrative, the gap embodies for the reader the chaotic forces beneath the surface of events.

After the twenty-year breach, education does revive: "it had to be started again, under every disadvantage, and the blindest fumblings, to crawl uphill a little way in order at last to get a little view ahead of the field it should have been occupying." This version of ascent is less picturesque than the centipede's, but it gives the flavor of discrepancy between Adams' great expectations and his experience. Time slows down in the latter section, as the last eleven chapters cover seven years and the distance between manikin and narrator lessens. Compared to the vividness of memory's impressions in the first part, the narrative seems at times to extend itself like a transcription of Adams' calendar, so many places visited and friends seen and the digressions they inspired, a chronicle with no particular point beyond duration. But while the first section chronicled the inadequacy of inherited systems of thought by demonstration, the second seeks to apprehend the

forces in play. Having exhausted "auto-motion," the emphasis is less on action than thought and reaction. Adams' family recedes and Adams' friends come to the foreground in failure and success. As the narrative resumes "Twenty Years After," set in 1892, the three friends, Adams, Hay and King couldn't tell "whether they had attained success, or how to estimate it, or what to call it" (1019).[524]

Adams restarts his education, involuntarily, with the shock of the Panic of 1893 and the ambiguous significance of the Chicago Exposition. Once again, travel, politics and statistics seemed futile, but then his cathedral tour of Normandy taught him "a new sense of history" (1044). Suddenly, "Indian Summer" arrived with the feeling of "winning one's game": his friends were wielding power and for once Adams thought he saw "the working of law in history." His investigations into the mysteries of the new supersensual forces of energy symbolized by the dynamo were complemented by his study of the Virgin, the symbol of medieval unity and opposite polarity. Adams learns the intelligent use of reaction. Describing himself as a "dead man," retired from active life, "after so many years of effort to find one's drift, the drift found the seeker, and slowly swept him forward and back, with a steady progress oceanwards" (1109). Everywhere signs of a new era of unprecedented complexity, multiplicity and contradiction pointed to the need for the development of a new social mind to avert disaster. Seeking explanation or at least intelligibility, "the historian" ambivalently formulates his Dynamic Theory of History and Law of Acceleration as the culmination of his education, but the text concludes with the death of Hay at the height of his success.

Even in depicting himself as a manikin, Adams can't quite present himself as a representative man in terms of the typical American.[525] He paints himself as typical of a generation when chosen Class Orator of 1858 at Harvard: "They saw in him a representative,—the kind of representative they wanted,—and he saw in them the most formidable array of judges he could ever meet, like so many mirrors of himself, an infinite reflection of his own shortcomings"(781).[526] With a few Southern exceptions they were of the Boston bourgeoisie, whose provincialism he would shudder to recall. But by the time he returned to America after the Civil War Adams declares, "he was no worse off than the Indian or the buffalo who had been rejected from their heritage by his own people" (938). Surveying the American scene from the perspective of 1892, he concludes: "The American mind had less respect for money than the European or Asiatic mind, and bore its loss more easily; but it had been deflected by its pursuit till it could turn in no other direction. It shunned, distrusted, disliked, the dangerous attraction of ideals, and stood alone in history for its ignorance of the past" (1020).[527] A knowledge of history might teach the American mind a set of relative values and condition it to greater aspirations. Without a past to propel it or an attractive force to pull it onward, its mass tended to mental inertia with its energies focused on the single channel of making money. (Later Adams reports that "work and whiskey" were the only stimulants for the American man.) Lacking all discrimination, the American mind seemed immune to any forces that might organize and energize it to some higher purpose. In this context, worship of money would have been "a healthy appetite akin to worship of the Gods, or to worship of power in any concrete shape" (1020). The *History* had judged the American character to be

speculative rather than acquisitive, willing to spend or risk all. [528] Extravagance in the service of an ideal was discipline.

Adams' position as critical observer is clear, but any closer relation to the American mind remains ambiguous. If Adams seems out of place in the America he describes, nowhere is it more evident than in his relation to history. An ignorance of history seems to have serious consequences for society, but a knowledge of history doesn't help Adams personally: he knows too much. He claims kinship with those other age-old products of America, the buffalo and the Indian, as history's victim. Yet he asserts that "Only with that understanding—as a consciously assenting member in full partnership with the society of his age—had his education an interest to himself or to others" (724). History allows him to contribute a badly needed long-term comparative perspective to the partnership, a perspective that extends forward as well as back; the two directions can't be separated. Adams' commitment to his society as well as his seeming irrelevance to it are the source of his claim on public attention as participant in and analyst of historical experience.[529]

As Adams portrays his beginnings, the infant seemed marked by his name and its associations for greater things:

> A hundred years earlier, such safeguards as his would have secured any young man's success; and although in 1838 their value was not very great compared with what they would have had in 1738, yet the mere accident of starting a twentieth-century career from a nest of associations so colonial,—so troglodytic,—as the First Church, the Boston State House, Beacon Hill, John Hancock and John Adams, Mount Vernon and Quincy, all crowding on ten pounds of unconscious babyhood, was so queer as to offer a subject of curious speculation. What could become of such a child of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when he should wake up to find himself required to play the game of the twentieth? (723)

There is something slightly peculiar about the historical associations in this passage. It might be said that one hundred years earlier the Adams dynasty had not yet begun. Young Henry may have assumed he would be president one day, but John Adams, born in 1735 to a modest Braintree (later called Quincy) family, could not have expected to pledge "his life, his fortune, and his sacred honor" to independence, to quote the plaque in the local church (754).[530] With the exception of the First Church, his great-grandson's list of associations tends to the anti-and post-colonial. Henry Adams elides the revolution that had made his name illustrious to make it seem as though the Adams dynasty stretched back into history, and reinforces the idea with a jarring analogy between the infant Adams and some baby Israel Cohen, latest in a line of hereditary priests. He leaps from the presumptions of the eighteenth century to the challenge of the twentieth, thus skipping the transitional nineteenth century, and the Civil War, altogether.[531] These are minor discrepancies, but from the outset they encourage the reader to take the text ironically. Adams is willing to exaggerate a distinction and to let the reader see him at it: "For him all opinion founded on fact must be error, because the facts can never be complete, and their relations must always be infinite," including the facts of his own life (1096). In this the *Education* reflects the attitude of his "Crillon" article, although less contentiously.

Adams exaggerates for the sake of his design to demonstrate the ironies of history. Through his "nest of associations" Adams sets up a cozy universe in which politics obeyed the moral law and politicians were statesmen. The greater the fortunes of the infant republic John Adams had brought into being, and the opportunities it provided for the average American mind, the narrower the horizon of expectation for his lineal

descendants. The assumption that one's prehistory had consequence is contradicted by the accident of a nineteenth-century birth that meant "he never got to the point of playing the game at all; he lost himself in the study of it, watching the errors of the players" (724). The accidents that formed his education question the significance of history, if Adams can find no direction to events: "From cradle to grave this problem of running order through chaos, direction through space, discipline through freedom, unity through multiplicity, has always been, and must always be, the task of education, as it is the moral of religion, philosophy, science, art, politics and economy" (731). The moral of history is implicit in his perspective.

It is not always clear what Adams means by education, as unit of analysis or metaphor, beyond a preparation for life: conventional schooling, the acquisition of information, the development of skills, moral instruction, intellectual enlargement, the acculturation of a "man of the world." Most of these variants are tried and proven inadequate, but Adams was not arguing that all education is useless, as some readers claim. [532] Nor is the distinction between the retrospective conclusions of the narrator and the provisional assumptions of "Henry Adams" always clear, when it comes to determining whether he has learned something or learned nothing. Most often Adams describes effective education in the way that he conceptualizes progress in his dynamic theory, not as an intellectual apprehension, but as an instinctive reaction to an external force, a shock to the system: "the profoundest lessons are not the lessons of reason; they are sudden strains that suddenly warp the mind" (818). The shock in this case was the rupture between Adams' father and Charles Sumner, Adams' boyhood hero. The experience of Sumner's "treason," concurrent with the treason of the Confederacy,

"opened a chasm in life that never closed" (818). The sense of powerlessness before an overwhelming force was the attitude of Augustine or Adams' Puritan ancestors before God, (if not the Unitarians of his childhood), but the submission to force often seems to stimulate an increase in imaginative power.

As they are emplotted, these episodes of reaction generally cannot be separated from the ongoing process of disillusionment with inherited assumptions, but they are experienced as a series of accidents, dislocations of the narrative. In the first case, the child encounters the force of society. The boy as "wild animal" needed to be tamed, "but a boy's will is his life, and he dies when it is broken, as the colt dies in harness, taking a new nature in becoming tame" (731). The struggle was at least marked by the distinction of his tamer and the intelligence of his approach. In open rebellion against going to school, the child seemed to be winning the contest of wills with his mother until his ancient grandfather emerged from his study, put on his hat, "took the boy's hand without a word, and walked with him paralyzed by awe," the mile to school:

> The point was that this act, contrary to the inalienable rights of boys, and nullifying the social compact, ought to have made him dislike his grandfather for life. He could not recall that it had this even for a moment. With a certain maturity of mind, the child must have recognized that the President, though a tool of tyranny, had done his disreputable work with a certain intelligence. He had shown no temper, no irritation, no personal feeling, and had made no display of force. Above all he had held his tongue. (732)

Even in Quincy, which, compared to Boston, resembled the child's world of instinct and feeling that Adams valued in the Middle Ages, a boy could not live in a Rousseauan state of nature, but was forced to take on a new social nature. Adams' first lesson is the violence of law imposed on freedom, but the pedagogical duty is accomplished with an economy of force; the boy himself displays intelligence in recognizing his grandfather's

higher faculties. The value of the schooling which was the ostensible end of the journey was much more dubious as education.

Education could be the result of an unconscious attraction to a higher force. The older narrator exclaims, “Among the marvels of education this was the most marvellous,” when the student suddenly discovered his mind was following a Beethoven symphony. “Amid the fumes of coarse tobacco and poor beer, surrounded by the commonest of German *Haus-fraus*, a new sense burst forth like a flower in his life, so superior to the old senses, so bewildering, so astonished at its own existence, that he could not credit it, and watched it as something apart, accidental and not to be trusted” (794). The incongruity of the setting and the intensity of his feelings are so far from his training as to be suspect. An experience which might have thrown his whole concept of education into question was itself questioned: “This could not be called education.” By the second section Adams realizes that the character of learning, however equivocal, is reactive and intuitive rather than logical, which is not to deny the importance of his historical and scientific researches. He will learn to use art as evidence, measuring the force that stimulated its creation but also the imaginative capacity, or lack of it, revealed in its reception, as he records the reactions of visitors to the memorial in Rock Creek cemetery. Similar revelations produced by immersive sensory experiences in the cathedrals of France generated “a new idea of history.” Adams notes but doesn’t demonstrate the later experiences, since the earlier book did it for him, but this episode can stand in for the others.

Nowhere is Adams’ ambition to use personal incident in pursuit of a wider significance more apparent than his account of the death of his sister Louisa. The

Education recounts Adams' disillusioned perspective from 1903: "As a matter of taste, he greatly preferred his eighteenth-century education when God was a father and nature a mother, and all was for the best in a scientific universe," but by that time he had learned better (1138). The death of Louisa is Adams' version of the Lisbon earthquake in which he exposes all three of these fallacies. In the eighteenth chapter, "Chaos (1870)," the climax of the narrative and the emotional heart of the book, Adams experiences a series of shocks in which for the first time he has a vision of the forces working beneath the surface of events. "The last lesson—the sum and total of education" was the death of his sister from lockjaw after an accident in Bagni di Lucca:

> Death took on features altogether new to him, in these rich and sensuous surroundings. Nature enjoyed it, played with it, the horror added to her charm, she liked the torture, and smothered her victim with caresses. Never had one seen her so winning…The sickroom itself glowed with the Italian joy of life; friends filled it; no harsh northern lights pierced the soft shadows; even the dying woman shared the sense of the Italian summer, the soft velvet air, the humor, the courage, the sensual fullness of nature and man. She faced death, as women mostly do, bravely and even gaily, racked slowly to unconscious, but yielding only to violence, as a soldier sabred in battle. For many thousands of years, on these hills and plains, nature had gone on sabring men and women with the same air of sensual pleasure. (982-83)

Louisa had first introduced her brother to Italy and he found it a place of "pure emotion," far surpassing that first experience of Beethoven. At the scene of Louisa's death, nature remains beautiful, but she is not our beneficent mother; she is not merely indifferent, she is malevolent. The simultaneous vision of femininity, beauty and cruelty makes her betrayal far worse. Perhaps because there are so few female symbols in the *Education*, and the symbols in general are free-floating, the temptation is to see the Virgin as another illusory image of nature, created to propitiate nature's cruelty, rather than a symbol of unity which incorporates anarchy under a rule of love, a defense against both law and chaos.

The pathos of the scene overrides its impersonality. Adams does not present Louisa's death in terms of his personal relation with his sister but as a demonstration: "the dying woman" faces death bravely, "as women mostly do"; nature kills as she has for centuries. The impersonality of the language makes the experience universal and the occasion for a revelation about the nature of existence:

> Impressions like these are not reasoned or catalogued in the mind; they are felt as part of violent emotion; and the mind that feels them is a different one from that which reasons; it is thought of as a different power and a different person. The first serious consciousness of nature's gesture—her attitude toward life—took form then as a fastasm, a nightmare, an insanity of force. For the first time, the stage scenery of the senses collapsed; the human mind felt itself stripped naked, vibrating in a void of shapeless energies, with resistless mass, colliding, crushing, wasting and destroying what these same energies had created and labored from eternity to perfect. Society became fantastic, a vision of pantomime with a mechanical motion. (983)

The violence of the event is matched by the violence of the impression. Adams himself is taken over by a violent force; like his experience in Berlin he feels his mind split into rational and instinctive tracks and in this splitting he can intuit a higher reality, beyond the sensual surface. This demonstrates the way in which understanding advances outside the rational accumulation of knowledge. It also represents Adams' realization of the inadequacy of Newtonian science with its orderly universe, predictable by law. The vibrating mind in a void of shapeless energies describes the state of scientific knowledge in 1900, confounded by the new supersensual energies. According to the best available science, "he was henceforth to be a conscious ball of rotating motions, traversed in every direction by infinite lines of rotation or vibration" (1140).

Not merely nature but society seems unreal; the "pantomime with a mechanical motion" recalls Madeleine Lee's impression of Washington ceremony, but Adams' experience is more sinister. As he arrives in Paris at the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian

war, the public seems to treat the war like "a branch of decorative art," when it doesn't ignore the crisis altogether. Adams feels like a supernumerary in an opera by Meyerbeer. Louisa's death "as a soldier" recalls her own gay defiance of war (to be described in the next section). Her suffering may look backward to the Civil War, not directly experienced by Adams, but it presages the earthquake to come in France.

To continue the dismantling of the eighteenth-century episteme, as nature is not a mother, God is not a father: "the idea that a personal deity could find pleasure or profit in torturing a poor woman, by accident, with a fiendish quality known to man only in perverted and insane temperaments, could not be held for a moment. For pure blasphemy, it made pure atheism a comfort. God might be, as the Church said, a Substance, but he could not be a Person" (983). This does not reflect a loss of personal faith, since Adams has already explained that his generation had simply lost the religious instinct, and threw off the mildest of yokes, with the implication that the very mildness might have been a problem. For the sake of his complaint against eighteenth-century certainties, he needs to assert that religion failed as theodicy, it failed even as social anodyne.

The revelation of chaos is confirmed, as well as the human propensity to clothe that chaos with illusion, when Adams stops at Ouchy and views Mont Blanc: "For the first time in his life, Mont Blanc for a moment looked to him what it was—a chaos of anarchic and purposeless forces—and he needed days of repose to see it clothe itself again with the illusions of his senses, the white purity of its snows, the splendor of its light, and the infinity of its heavenly peace" (983-84). Including the illusions of Shelley's art, perhaps. Unity and purpose were necessary illusions: "Chaos was the law of nature; Order was the dream of man." Education needed to conceptualize order in a way that

recognized fundamental anarchy. This chapter may mark Adams' "last lesson," but it is a turning point, not an end. Unlike his other encounters with power, there is no obvious expansion of mental energies. It is suggestive, given Adams' associational thinking, that he ends the chapter with his decision to become a teacher of history, although the actual career is detailed in the subsequent chapter, if the role of a historian is to create a pattern or formulate an order for chaos, even if it is only the product of mind. As he describes his decision only from the viewpoint of 1871, "he broke his life in halves again," inexplicably, for a career he didn't want and knew was a mistake.

Adams resumes his education with the economic upheaval of the Panic of 1893: "As a starting point for a new education at fifty-five years old, the shock of finding oneself suspended, for several months, over the edge of bankruptcy, without knowing how one got there, or how to get away, is to be strongly recommended" (1029). With "only money" to lose, he could afford to laugh at the banks who risked losing their existence. What most people dismissed as "an emotion—a panic—that meant nothing" seemed to be the effect of some mechanical force, "Blindly some very powerful energy was at work, doing something that nobody wanted done" (1029). Its power could be assumed by its effects, but not its motive and direction. Fear stimulates his imagination off the conventional track, or perhaps it was the effect of his earlier vision. A serious student needed to investigate this energy, but in self-defense rather than self-interest, and as a generic power for which economic force was one aspect.

The second section has another, smaller narrative climax (in addition to Adams' "Indian Summer" which will be discussed later). After ten years of pursuit, the historian recognized his object and "found himself lying in the Gallery of Machines at the Great

Exposition of 1900, with his historical neck broken by the sudden irruption of force totally new"(1069). In the power the dynamo exerted on his own imagination, Adams saw the visible manifestation of the forces he was seeking in their latest form and found the symbol he craved. Between the steam engine and the dynamo, "the break in continuity amounted to an abysmal fracture for a historian's objects" (1067). The dynamo represented the occult force of new supersensual energies, electricity, X-rays, radium, that were "little short of parricidal" towards science in their resistance to measurement, let alone explanation by present theory. They represented "a new universe" in which men would have to learn to merge with the forces if they did not want to be submerged by them. "Before the end one began to pray to it; inherited instinct taught the natural expression of man before silent and infinite force. Among the thousand symbols of ultimate energy, the dynamo was not so human as some, but it was the most expressive" (1067). At this stage Adams has learned to use his reactions as a tool of historical investigation. He is capable of following that instinct of worship into an insight about the convertibility of symbols of ultimate energy and to find one more human, the Virgin. As his dynamic theory might predict, Adams' encounter with the dynamo stimulates the train of thinking that leads to the writing of both *Chartres* and the *Education*.

Adams necessarily shaped his life in the form of his own preoccupations. If his dynamic theory of history sought to follow the trail of force as it manifested itself through a sequence of phases in human experience, Adams' own life was going to demonstrate how his apprehension of the world reflected a series of reactions to external force, as well as document the progress of thought that led him to conceive his theory, which I will discuss later in the context of writing scientific history.

The Woman Problem

Adams may have had difficulties imagining the audience that could appreciate *The Education of Henry Adams*, but he tried to warn off at least one potential reader, his niece Mabel Hooper LaFarge (1875-1944). She was an amateur artist, married to a son of John LaFarge. In 1900 Adams described her as "another poor, gentle harmless child who gets horribly on my nerves from her very excellence…She is in the middle of that foolish set of New York women who are more Bostonian than Boston, and more blue than Plato" (L5:93).[533] By 1908 she was living in Europe with her husband and four sons (one named after her uncle), and had suffered a nervous breakdown two years before. Adams advised her to stick to *Chartres*: "You must not read what you call your book [the "Education"], because the Chartres is good enough for you, and me too, and the pigs all about."

Adams' reaction is oddly extreme, not simply suggesting that the artistic and religious Mabel might prefer the one book, but delivering a ukase against reading the other. "Good enough for you" seems to return to the diminished expectations of the *Chartres* preface, and authors forced to settle for nieces as readers, if the "me, too" ameliorates the sting. The "pigs" might well have been the tourists, the mostly female "hogs" for culture that he excoriated in his letters, although *Chartres* was still in private circulation. Then Adams continues, to insist that "The book is not meant to be read. It was put in print to be sent to persons mentioned in it, to obtain their permission; or to persons competent to correct it or suggest changes." If that claim was not persuasive enough, he informs her that "No one really reads either volume, as I can instantly see

when I talk of it. They only play pretend, like children, and ask for it because it is not for sale. Don't believe a word of what you are told" (117-118). [534] The last sentence alone should have driven her to find a copy.

Years later, LaFarge wrote of the *Education*, "The 'nieces' are especially interested in what has been omitted. But here they pause at the sacred portals of silence, and the ground becomes delicate to tread. Twenty years are passed over—years that were the most joyful, as well as the most sorrowful of the Uncle's life" (6). Adams may have been sensitive about the Hoopers' reaction to his excision of all explicit reference to their aunt. But the *Education*, its avowed intention "to fit young men, in universities or elsewhere, to be men of the world, equipped for any emergency," was not written for them. It was too serious, perhaps, as the churches of Normandy were characteristically masculine and serious compared to the feminine cathedrals of France. Mabel, Bostonian and bluestocking, was perhaps in Adams' eyes (and a perception of their shared neurasthenia), already more serious than was good for her. A university education was the pre-eminent demand and perhaps the primary characteristic of the New Woman; however, women's increasing demands for intellectual and social autonomy were for Adams symptoms of an increasingly mechanistic society in which women had lost a sense of their natural function within the family.[535]

To the extent that *Chartres* tried to revive atrophied feeling and imagination, its ultimate hope was the regeneration of male emotion through the offices of women as mothers. It offered Adams a multitude of surrogates for the expression of joy and sorrow. But the *Education* addresses a crisis of the mind, and in focusing on a male mentality depends on strategies of self-effacement, distance, and detachment. [536] Women are absent

from the *Education* except as they are useful as symbols, and here the disappearance of Marian Adams is evidence of a lost possibility of feminine redemptiveness. Except for the polarity of the Virgin and the Dynamo, the existence of a female principle is less intrinsic to the form of the *Education* than to *Chartre*s. Sex is not so significant as a category of irreducible difference when multiplicity reigns and Adams can find alternative sets of values in locations like Quincy and Boston, or in a divided self that is both teacher and student, proponent of order and of anarchy, or in a manikin, starting up and breaking down with each suit it tries.

As the *Education* returns to the Adams' questions about women's place in nature and in history, the absence of women in the text is a symptom of problems that Adams recognizes, and problems that he does not. Adams' positions demonstrate his own gap in understanding: he laments that women are unknown to history—we men can know nothing about them—but we know what is best for them. At the same time, a discussion of the problem of women allows Adams to envision the intersection of his two symbols of power, the Virgin and Dynamo. Religion has already lost its field of force, and now even the power of sex seems too weak to withstand the mechanical attractions of the dynamo.

As direct agents of education women hardly figure. "Women counted for little as models," during Adams' youth (756). Ignorant boys and girls practiced the same provincial manners on one other, while the notion of a Rousseauan, or for that matter, Flaubertian, sentimental education in which a young man refined himself to the standards of an older woman remained unthinkable. Adams' mother, Abigail Brooks Adams, was perhaps too conventionally absorbed by with the inertial world of reproduction for her

son's rhetorical purposes. Still, Henry, "being of less account" as the fourth child, "was in a way given to his mother," to be named after her favorite dead brother. He was emphatically not a Brooks by vocation, though he certainly benefitted from the connection—his maternal grandfather, Peter Chardon Brooks, the richest man in Boston, serves as the figure of State Street and the world of Boston business.[537]

Mrs. Adams appears briefly, no match for her headstrong children. "Certainly, no one was strong enough to control them, least of all their mother, the queen-bee of the hive, on whom nine-tenths of the burden fell, on whose strength they all depended, but whose children were much too self-willed and self-confident to take guidance from her or anyone else, unless in the direction they fancied. Father and mother were about equally helpless" (37). In *Chartres* the figure of the queen bee was a starting point for the study of the Virgin and a reminder of the "paradox" that "nature regards the female as essential and the male as the superfluity of her world" (523). Here, it's not so clear what Adams is implying. How does the bearer of domestic burdens comport with the queen who rules with capricious, if loving demands? The nature and degree of her strength isn't explained. Mrs. Adams hardly possessed the medieval Frenchwoman's masculine strength of will; it's not even clear whether she possessed a sufficiency for her children to depend on, or how, if she was "least" able to control them, she and her husband were "equally helpless" before their children's desires. She lacked the force to drive her rebellious child to school, when his grandfather's authority succeeded. In London she and her husband were effective in deflecting Henry from enlisting in the Army of the Potomac, not by direct opposition but by inventing reasons for delay, but perhaps that

was the "direction" her adult son "fancied." Parenthood sets up the problem of managing emerging forces in miniature.

For an extended example of the way that Adams used a female figure, Adams' treatment of his grandmother seems to be enhancing an Augustinian set of "contrasts" for a modern world that did not furnish them directly. In the *Education*, there is no saintly mother like Augustine's Monica to point the way to salvation, but Adams found an unlikely Eve, who offered freedom from law but also a tainted inheritance. His paternal grandmother, Louisa Catherine Johnson Adams, bears a symbolic importance in the text larger than her apparent influence on his life.[538] "The Madam" was fragile, refined, decorative, all of a piece with her eighteenth-century novels, her Sèvres and her Louis Seize furniture. Like the Virgin, her surroundings spoke her taste. She was ancient, but not archaic, if archaic denoted primitive strength for Adams, and "thoroughly weary of being beaten about a stormy world." Some of that turbulence had been caused by her incompatibility with Adams family priorities. The perspectives of child and adult alternate in the way that Adams is knowing and unknowing of her inner life. Explicitly, "her descendents did not surely know" whether she had been "happy" or "content" or "socially successful" as a diplomat's wife, yet in 1869 Adams attempted an edition of her memoirs that discussed precisely those topics.[539] The adult says of the child,

> He never dreamed that from her might come some of those doubts and self-questionings, those hesitations, those rebellions against law and discipline, which marked more than one of her descendants; but he might even then have felt some vain instinctive suspicion that he was to inherit from her the seeds of the primal sin, the fall from grace, the curse of Abel, that he was not of pure New England stock, but half exotic. (19)

Louisa is over-determined as a figure of difference. Adams has already described how the "outlawry" of Quincy separated him from the constraint of Boston, (and a reader of *Mont*

Saint Michel and Chartres might recall heterodoxy was the principle of the Queen of Heaven), but the Madam seems isolated even within Quincy, and her eighteenth century more removed. She reinforces his delicacy of mind and frame, already noted as the result of scarlet fever. She emphasizes what might for Adams be the personal original sin of self-doubt and self-consciousness, but he has already absorbed this trait from his Puritan ancestors.[540] She offers in addition the larger world, perhaps the fruit of the tree of knowledge. From his account of her life, "exotic" might imply an inheritance of cosmopolitanism: born in London to a Marylander father and an English mother, raised in France during the American Revolution, "Her sense of nationality must have been confused" when the family returned to London after the war, her father appointed U.S. Consul. Louisa didn't see the United States until she arrived in 1801 with a husband and two sons.

The concept of original sin, running back through Pascal to Augustine, not to mention Adams' Puritan forebears, is parodied when insular New Englanders equate a deviation from the local with miscegenation, that "quarter taint of Maryland blood" which Adams has reduced from "half exotic" and which is still exaggerated by half, perhaps as a reminder not to take him too seriously. But the full import of his inheritance didn't arise until the hypothetical quadroon visited the Madam in Washington and realized the primal sin of the nation. Tumbledown Maryland "was raggedness of a different kind," as Adams entered his first slave state and "took education politically" (759).

In Washington "the boy" took his first easy steps in national politics, when the members of the Senate and President Taylor acted like family friends. What struck him

more, though, was the appalling Southern atmosphere: bad roads, no fences, and villages featuring "a haphazard variety of pigs, cows and negro babies, who might all have used the cabins for pens and styes, had the southern pig required styes, but who never showed a sign of care"(758). The scene was appalling, but not entirely unappealing: "Slave states were dirty, unkempt, poverty-stricken, ignorant, vicious! He had not a thought but repulsion for [slavery]; and yet the picture had another side." Adams acknowledges what was only the first of many responses to the light, scent, and warmth, the sensual pull, of a Washington spring, and concludes:

> The impression was not simple, but the boy liked it; distinctly it remained on his mind as an attraction, almost obscuring Quincy itself. The want of barriers, of pavements, of forms; the looseness, the laziness; the indolent Southern drawl; the pigs in the streets; the negro babies and their mothers with bandanas; the freedom, openness, swagger, of nature and man, soothed his Johnson blood. (760)

Quincy and its environs might have been shabby, but this is entropy of a higher order. These passages have been read as an expression of Adams' sympathy for the slaves, although the slaves are just one element in this inchoate merging of categorical distinctions.[541] "The impression was not simple": litotes was a favorite form of understatement for Adams, maybe because it combined a negative construction that suited his temperament with an additional interpretive reversal as a test of fitness for the reader. The impression was complicated by the nervous poetry of his catalog, another characteristic form.

Dirt may be, simply, matter out of place, [542] but for some locations a lack of differentiation is a guarantee of freedom and authenticity. Adams the adult tourist was a connoisseur of premodern dirt, fond of wandering the "outskirts of the vortex, among the picturesque, primitive types of a world which had never been involved in the general

motion, and were the more amusing for their torpor" (1039).[543] This is the feminine, seductive allure of the South, whatever the continent. The problem for nations who were part of the "general motion" of history towards increasing complexity was the sickening possibility that this want of form within their borders was a sign of devolutionary contamination, just as Adams had reacted to Robert Louis Stevenson and his encampment on Samoa in terms of American forms of miscegenation and disorder. [544]

The habit of genealogical order was never too far from Adams' mind, whether he was imagining himself as Tauraatua or one of the Normans building Notre Dame de Coutances. Bostonians might take his eventual escape from their city as a sign of turpitude; however, the Madam's influence naturalized his choice of Washington as home, reducing the suspicion that his childhood expectations persisted or that the move represented an epigone's desire to bask in past family glories. Being both northern and Southern made the manikin a more representative figure, just as Adams made his heroine Madeleine Lee a Pennsylvanian married to a Southerner and living in New York. More than this, though, Adams needed "blood" for the sake of his form. "Completing" Augustine in a secular narrative, he still wanted an inheritance of corruption and an awareness of his divided nature.

In Washington, Adams was vaguely implicated in slavery by his Southern blood and by his instinctive attraction to disorder. Back in Boston, presumably away from the lure of the senses, the narrator claims that "the boy's" view of slavery reverted along ancestral lines to the dogmatism of the seventeenth century, since "Slavery drove the whole puritan community back on its Puritanism," and on this subject politics took a stronger tone than eighteenth-century statesmanship. But then, faced with a question of

practical politics, he committed his first sin.[545] As his first lesson, "he learned the nature of a flagrantly corrupt political bargain in which he was too good to take part but not too good to take profit" (764-65). The men who ran the machinery of the Free-Soil Party, as opposed to the "statesman class" who ran for office like Charles Sumner and Adams' father, were willing to form a coalition with the Democrats. Sumner was willing "to receive these stolen goods," senatorial office. And Adams' moral trespass? He haunted the balloting place for the glory of notifying Sumner he had won, and when he told him, "it was probably the proudest moment in the life of either" (766). Adams' boyish hero-worship is touching, and. as Senator, Sumner upheld the ideals of the anti-slavery movement further than the Adamses were willing to go, but the slavery question is put aside for the sake of examining Adams' moral scruples, so much finer than anyone else's, including his father's and Sumner's.

The episode is an early indication that the men who did the work of parties were no longer willing to cede the decisions to their betters, but for the sake of his pedagogical structure, Adams has to present the election in irrevocable terms. "Thus before he was fifteen years old, he had managed to get himself into a state of moral confusion from which he never escaped. As a politician, he was already corrupt, and he never could see how any practical politician could be less corrupt than himself" (765). When and where Adams is supposed to be standing when he makes the decision for his manikin isn't clear, but projecting a pattern from this one instance, a career in elective office would be impossible: "Education could go no further. Tammany Hall stood at the end of the vista" (765). Not only does his conclusion seem undersubstantiated, but for the sake of an Augustinian parallel Adams has drawn a whole string of associations going back to poor

Louisa, his grandfather's exogamy leading somehow to miscegenation leading somehow to the introduction of original sin into the family blood, leading to the grandson's personal culpability and foreclosing a career in electoral politics.

If the ancient Louisa, enjoying a well-deserved retreat from the world, was an unlikely Eve, her namesake, Louisa Adams Kuhn, Adams' elder sister, presents a figure of womanly redemption along the lines of his Virgin of Chartres. As Adams describes her,

> She was the first young woman he was ever intimate with,—quick quick, sensitive, willful, or full of will, energetic, sympathetic, and intelligent enough to supply a score of men with ideas,—and he was delighted to give her the reins,—to let her drive him where she would. It was his first experience in giving the reins to a woman, and he was so much pleased with the results that he never wanted to take them back. In after life he made a general law of experience,—no woman had ever driven him wrong; no man had ever driven him right. (798)

Louisa Kuhn's willfulness was connected to Adams' definition of the morality of women: "that which they will, is right; that which they reject, is wrong; and their will, in most cases, ends by settling the moral" (798). Adams, a student in Berlin, had been considering the moral position in a war between France and Austria over Italy. Louisa "adored" Italy, disliked Germany; "she wanted [Henry] much to be civilized," not "Germanized," and decided the matter (798). The exercise of female morality was valuable only within a larger, male system, just as the Virgin of Chartres, Adams' projection of womanly attributes, was a vital presence who offered an alternative, irrational set of values, an escape from law and formula. "Intelligent enough to supply a score of men with ideas": this is Adams' idea of the function of women's intelligence. Her role is to inspire men to a higher level of achievement, to sympathize, to civilize, not to follow an ambition of her own.

The Virgin of Chartres "took feminine pleasure in turning hell into an ornament" (C596). As soon as an armistice was declared, "Nothing would satisfy Mrs. Kuhn but to go to the seat of war. Wild as the idea seemed, nothing was easier" (798). Under her auspices Adams took his "first plunge" into Italy. As education it had but one fault: "Life had no richer impression to give." Not yet content, his sister "insisted on invading" Austria. Louisa turned war into civility, as all obstacles and officers gave way to her charm and determination:"The eternal woman as usual when she is young, pretty and engaging, had her way." But even she gasped "to see the double line of sentries stretching on either side up the mountains, till the flash of the gun barrels was lost in the flash of the snow" (799).

The next time she appears in the text, Louisa will be fighting for her life, yielding only to violence "as a soldier sabred in battle," although her death can only be ascribed to the cruelty of nature. Louisa was "the first young woman he ever was intimate with," "his first experiment in giving the reins to a woman." William Merrill Decker points out the use of the word "first" in Adams description of Louisa's death: "For the first time," "The first serious consciousness." Reiteration is stated but not specified: "the terror of the blow stayed by him thenceforth for life, until repetition made it more than the will could struggle with; more than he could call on himself to bear" (982). Adams describes no later instances, but the implication is clear. Through the "force of vantage" as Blackmur calls it, Marian Adams is present in the text.[546] In the scene of her death, Louisa is a generic "dying woman." Her death two chapters before the twenty-year hiatus stands for the loss of Marian Adams as well and points to the hole in the narrative as a grave.

With his sister's death the narrative is diminished by the absence of women. Their disappearance is both descriptive and critical: "in America neither Venus nor the Virgin ever had value as force—at most as sentiment. No American had ever been truly afraid of either" (1070). The Puritans had rejected the Virgin as a tenet of faith and knew that sex was sin. In European churches and museums Adams saw evidences of "the highest energy ever known to man, the creator of four-fifths of his noblest art, exercising vastly more attraction over the human mind than all the steam-engines and dynamos ever dreamed of, and yet this energy was unknown to the American mind" (1071). By implication, then, Americans had always been the servants of the dynamo. In Europe the Virgin exerted a vestigial power, as the "adorable mistress" who forced Adams to buy an auto, the better to visit her shrines. She tells him to consult Thomas Aquinas if he wants explanations for God. But the dynamic theory of history fails to mention her—in science she is subsumed under "the fetish power." From Rousseau's invocation of the "Eternal Father" in the Preface, the text places the reader within a masculine perspective, the world of the Father that the "Prayer to the Virgin of Chartres" had seemed to reject. But it should be said that if the *Education* is a world without mothers, fathers have lost their power. By the time he disembarked in New York in 1868, Charles Francis Adams was irrelevant to the new energies of postwar America. In the first section Adams will try to adopt surrogate fathers, who sometimes come in opposing pairs, and, to evoke his Tahitian lineage and discredit Darwin, include a prehistoric fish. All are ineffective in helping Adams and his friends find their way in a bewildering post-war America.[547]

In writing *Chartres*, Adams had claimed that "The proper study of mankind is woman," although as it turned out, even the great women of medieval history were unknowable, their traces obscured by the bias of contemporary observers (C523). In the *Education* he returns to this theme, first as an interesting digression, but later with a sense of urgency. "The study of history is useful to the historian by teaching him his ignorance of women; and the mass of this ignorance crushes one who is familiar enough with what are called historical sources to realize how few women have ever been known." Adams sounds like John Stuart Mill on the subjection of women when he says that "The woman who is known only through a man is known wrong," but then he goes on to say that "excepting one or two like Madame de Sévigné, no woman has pictured herself." The nineteenth century woman "will be less known than the woman of the eighteenth; none of the female descendants of Abigail Adams can ever be nearly so familiar as her letters have made her" (1042). [548] The historian seems remarkably unperturbed about his crushing ignorance, or remarkably incurious. What had he been reading for the past fifty years? (And unlike Mme de Sévigné's correspondence to her daughter, his great-grandmother's most famous letters were written to and for a husband.)

For someone whose own correspondence was so carefully calibrated to the attention and interests of specific recipients, Adams seems to treat letters as surprisingly transparent expressions of personality. It is possible that what looks like a quantitative claim, that no women wrote, might be a qualitative judgment about the ability to construct a self in language, but Adams is discussing historical documents, not literature. This is not an argument for the inclusion of women in history. Even if Adams had compiled an archive of letters and diaries through which women could be known, these

records could form the basis of a history of women only. Given women's status as the vehicles of "sex inertia," they could have no role in the "general motion" of history as Adams conceived it, except perhaps in a society where lineage was paramount.

Adams diagnoses the woman problem in his chapter "Vis Inertiae." Inspired by his travels in Russia, and displaying the associational thinking that structured his chapters, he considers "two large questions of vital importance to America:—inertia of race and inertia of sex." Russia was a great mystery in that she seemed to fall into "no line of evolution whatever" (1093). Her movement along the ruts of inertia "might be the true movement of the future, against the hasty and unsure acceleration of America" (1093-95). The question of racial inertia was in abeyance for the present, since the Russian government seemed unable to lift its population onto a new course, although a great danger remained that it might "roll over" the huge mass of China. Inertia of sex, however, could never be overcome: "woman's property of moving in a constant line forever is ultimate, uniting history in its only unbroken and unbreakable sequence," but its movement could be accelerated or deflected (1123). The eternal woman could not make history, but she was the condition of its possibility; her absence from history was the strength of the race.

At least, it always had been so. Sex inertia "could not be overcome without extinguishing the race, yet an immense force, doubling every few years, was working irresistibly to overcome it" (1127). By implication, a greater force of reproductive inertia, a higher birthrate among the women who mattered in Adams' terms, would have slowed the acceleration of mechanical force. But the crisis of generativity indicated in Adams' novels and in *Chartres* was proven by the vital statistics. Adams was hardly alone in his

worry, to judge from the pronouncements of President Roosevelt, for one, but instead of talking about "race suicide," he consistently preferred metaphors from the physical sciences for vaster movement and scale. While Adams talks about the new forces of energy in terms of both chaos and compulsion, what fascinates him most is the eruption of anarchic energy. He considers, briefly, the influence of the new forces and their combinations on American politics, but the "despotism of artificial order" is demonstrated mainly in their effect on sex and reproduction. The eternal woman now existed at the crux of social change.

Since 1840 as much as twenty-five million horse power had been turned over to the American woman as "social expenditure." As a result, Adams claims, "The woman had been set free,—volatilized like Clerk Maxwell's perfect gas,—brought almost to the point of explosion like steam" (1126). Here he seems to be predicting some completely unprecedented and frightening phenomenon. It is hard to see volatile molecules as sites of social possibility, but still there is an image of energy let loose that Adams' men do not possess. "She was free; she had no illusions; she was sexless; she had discarded much that the male disliked; and although she secretly regretted the discard, she knew that she could not go backward. She must, like the man, marry machinery" (1128). In "The Primitive Rights of Women," Adams had followed Lewis Henry Morgan's stages of social organization until he reached the stage of the family, but unlike Morgan refused to speculate beyond it. Adams naturalized the family as an instinct to property: one wants to possess the thing one loves. The independence of women outside the family was unthinkable, if not impossible. In this care, apparently, history taught an unambiguous

lesson, since female freedom had been tested to disastrous effect by the Romans. If set free, women could not be autonomous for long; they must marry.

Adams reports an America filled with women married to machinery: "myriads of new types,—or type-writers,—telephone and telegraph-girls, shop-clerks, factory hands, running into millions on millions, and, as classes unknown to themselves as to historians. Even the school-mistresses were inarticulate" (1126). Throughout history women had been delimited by nature and in rebellion against their fate, but in the past they had clung to "the illusions of heaven or hell" as compensation. Now, though, they were under the influence of unprecedented new forces, and the historian was troubled: "the American woman had no illusions or new resources, and nothing to rebel against but her own maternity" (1127). Could the movement of inertia be jolted into unprecedented changes in speed and direction? And what were women to do with themselves beyond childrearing?

Among his own class, Adams conducted an inquiry into the way the law of inertia conditioned the female mind. Since "The woman seldom knows her own thought" and "women's thought is mostly sub-conscious and particularly sensitive to suggestion," Adams "tried tricks and devices to disclose it." The best place to conduct his investigations was the dinner party, where he could ask his "liveliest" neighbor "whether she could explain why the American woman was a failure" (1124). "Because the American man was a failure!" was the usual response. To examine that statement, "he caught the trick of asserting that the woman was the superior. Apart from truth, he owed her at least that compliment" (1124). The man usually found his own wife superior, while the clever woman was sick over her failure to hold the family together or to create a new

society. Once her children were raised she had nothing to do. Adams sympathizes with his neighbor's frustrations: "she saw no one except her own sex who knew enough to be worth dazzling, or was competent to pay her intelligent homage" (1125). Marian Adams once had tried to create a salon in Washington, as had Adams' grandmother Louisa. Still the superior woman's influence was limited: "nine men out of ten refused her request to be civilized, and the tenth bored her" (1125).

American men, as a class, could not help. If women "had discarded much that the male disliked," men apparently offered no recompense, since they were already lost. [549]

> When closely watched, she seemed to be making a violent effort to follow the man, who had turned his mind and hand to mechanics. The typical man had his hand on the lever and his eye on a curve of the road; his living depended on keeping up an average speed of forty miles an hour, tending always to become sixty, eighty or a hundred, and he could not admit emotions, or anxieties or subconscious distractions, more than he could admit whiskey or drugs, without breaking his neck. He could not run his machine and a woman too; he must leave her, even though his wife, to find her own way, and all the world saw her trying to find her own way by imitating him. (1127)

The problem, as Adams describes it, is not so much a problem of woman's competition with man as the violent destruction of a category difference: she imitates the man. The new woman does violence to society, she does violence to her nature, in an example of the infernal consolidation of machine power, dissolving categories like sex and fragmenting institutions like the family. While Adams admitted ambition in women, he imagined it as selfless. Madeleine Lee of *Democracy*, for example, adrift without husband and children, asked herself: "Was she not herself devoured by ambition, and was she not now eating her heart out because she could find no one object worth a sacrifice? (D4). If woman's nature is adherence, though, and she seeks a new attachment, there may be limits to her imitation. The man, while apparently "married" to the machine at least is

running it, but somehow it seems unlikely Adams could imagine the woman with her hand on the lever. In this deterministic universe she is a machine whether married to one or not.

Adams describes himself as Faust, "an elderly man, trying only to learn the law of social inertia and the limits of social divergence," with no prescriptions to offer. Or rather, he could offer prescriptions: he could require the Census Bureau to interview young women about whether they wanted children and how many; he could urge passage of a law "obliging every woman, married or not, to bear one baby,—at the expense of the Treasury,—before she was thirty years old, under penalty of solitary confinement for life" (1128). He doesn't, not because he has always exalted an ideal of woman who resisted fate, rejected law and laughed at convention, but because he is a historian who can only observe.

> He could not frankly discuss the matter with the young women themselves, although they would gladly have discussed it, because Faust was helpless in the tragedy of women. He could suggest nothing. The Marguerite of the future could alone decide whether she were better off than the Marguerite of the past; whether she would rather be a victim to a man, a church, or a machine. (1128)

Adams knew too well that he was helpless to avert the tragedy of women, but what perhaps goes without saying is that Faust was not merely helpless, he was responsible for Marguerite's tragedy. Defining the condition of all women as a tragedy naturalized her fate and universalized Adams' experience. At least the victims of men or churches had a compensatory vision that they were part of an ordered universe. Now it appeared that women no longer had a choice of man or church.

He poses a dream of unity only to enact its historically necessary destruction. In Adams' anti-parable, "as history unveiled itself in the new order," man's mind like a

young oyster secreted a pearl, a universe "that embodied all his notions of the perfect" (1138). [550] This sounds like the mythic version of the etiology of *Chartre*s in contrast to the scientific version Adams offered a couple of chapters earlier. "He knew it was true because he made it, and he loved it for the same reason" (1139). At the center of this jewel was womanly power. For the sake of this Eden,

> The woman especially did great things, creating her deities on a higher level than the male, and, in the end, compelling the man to accept the Virgin as guardian of the man's God. The man's part in his Universe was secondary, but the woman was at home there, and sacrificed herself without limit to make it habitable, when man permitted it, as sometimes happened for brief intervals of war and famine; but she could not provide protection against the forces of nature. She did not think of her unit as a raft to which the limpets stuck for life in the surge of a supersensual chaos; she conceived herself and her family as the center and flower of an ordered universe which she knew to be unity, because she had made it out of the image of her own fecundity; and this creation of hers was surrounded by beauties and perfections which she knew to be real because she herself had imagined them. (1139)

The time frame, from the age of the Virgin to the age of the dynamo, collapses history, and its tense is the timeless past tense of myth. In place of the chaos of the twentieth century, in which women were volatilized and set loose, Adams presents the stasis of the eternal woman. Within her proper sphere of influence, woman can be active and creative, even heroic, willing to sacrifice all for her pearl of great price. A chapter earlier, her life was categorized as "sex-inertia"; a chapter later her religious faith will be described as "fetish-worship" and the whole dream of an ordered universe "thought inertia." In its language and tone this passage returns to the exaltation of the feminine principle of *Chartres*, which perpetuated and civilized society.[551] The element of prosopopaeia is similar as well; in *Chartres* Adams used figures to express emotions for him. Here the dream is constructed by "man's mind" and is followed by a Latin hymn to Venus, rather than the Virgin. Cited for the second time, [552] Lucretius' invocation of the goddess at the

opening of *De rerum natura*, a philosophical poem of physical theory by "the greatest" of "masculine philosophers," comes not long before Adams' own Dynamic Theory.

The male oyster-mind "had never been quite at ease," with his illusion and required a series of delicate adjustments to expel or assimilate the incursions of chaos. Humanity might have been able to maintain this balance through the era of mechanical power, but "the oyster could only perish in face of the cyclonic hurricane or the volcanic upheaval of its bed. Her supersensual chaos killed her" (1139). "Her" apparently refers to Venus, "quae quoniam rerum naturam sola gubernas," [since you alone govern the nature of things], but if it does, it recalls the revelation of chaos Adams experienced on the death of his sister, with its malevolent personification of nature. At least, "Such seemed the theory of history to be imposed by science on the generation of 1900," if science also must be held responsible for failing to find sufficient order in nature (1139).

In terms of a moral lesson, the passage of the pearl seems to lead nowhere. It begins and ends with "the historian" pondering his accountability: "He repudiated all share in the world as it came to be, and yet he could not detect the point where his responsibility began or ended" (1138). But the "theory of history to be imposed by science" is imposed by the historian after reading the incomplete and contradictory findings of science. After destroying the vision of perfection with his own conception of chaos, Adams doesn't consider that perhaps he, too, knew his universe "was true because he made it and he loved it for the same reason," and that he might be formulating a self-fulfilling prophecy. And yet he feels compelled to repeat: "For this theory, Adams felt himself in no way responsible." The historian simply followed the channel of force.

Besides, “a solitary man of sixty-five years or more, alone in a Gothic Cathedral or a Paris apartment, need fret himself little about a few illusions more or less. He should have learned his lessons fifty years earlier; the times had long passed when a student could stop before chaos or order; he had no choice but to march with his world”(1140). He protests too much. Carolyn Porter suggests that, however he protested, Adams accepted responsibility for the world he observed, and that responsibility is implicit in Adams as speaker.[553] The pose of detachment is not congruent with Adams the teacher, who considered an education in history the primary means of socialization. Time and circumstance had severed a direct line of descent, but not all connection to posterity. Adams’ responsibilities were actual to his nieces like Mabel, as well as hypothetical in terms of his “young men” seeking an education.

When Adams asked Thurlow Weed, the consummate manager, whether no politician could be trusted, Weed replied, “’I never advise a young man to begin by thinking so” (854). Idealism was a powerful motivation. Adams cannot believe in unity himself but cannot relinquish the idea, either. Why disabuse his nieces, or his “young men” of faith in unity, “the noblest work of man”? He would rather not have his niece read that her family was “a raft to which the limpets stuck for life in the surge of a supersensual chaos.” *Chartres* at least had left open the possibility of redemptive action by women. Much better that she retained the illusion of “herself and her family as the center and flower of an ordered universe which she knew to be unity,” a dream of art and religion (1139).

Making History

The narrative of the *Education* reflects Adams' skepticism about history as it was conventionally written and taught, but also his faith in its potential to educate and prognosticate. Adams' line of investigation into a contemporary social issue like "the woman problem," which seemed to colonize the matter of sociology, was a little unusual for a historian of his time, although it shared some of the concerns of the "New History," which aspired to "bring the past into relation with the present" and apply historical knowledge to social problems.[554] At a time when Emile Durkheim was trying to subsume all human sciences, including history, under the rubric of sociology, Adams could imagine "the University as a system of education grouped about History: a main current of thought branching out, like a tree, into endless forms of activity," a current that was based upon a universal law (L6:207). [555] But in order to build that system, history itself had to be re-imagined on a scale of generalization grand enough to impose unity upon human thought.

The *Education* is interested in the making of history in its double sense, the occurrence of significant events and the recounting of their significance (*res gestae* and *historia rerum gestarum).* Adams joked that "the motive of the first part [of the *Education*] is to acquit my conscience about my father. That of the second part is to acquit my conscience about Hay. *Ego* exists only for the last chapters, which tie onto the last three chapters of Chartres, as my little say in life" (L6:61).[556] Twice Adams was a participant-observer to the kind of successful diplomatic negotiation that was an event in his *History*, once as his father's secretary, once as John Hay's friend and unofficial advisor, although each time to different effect. In addition the narrative discusses Adams'

perceived failure as a teacher of history, a failure he assessed as partly personal, partly the fault of a stultifying educational system and partly due to the irrelevance of contemporary models of historiography. Ultimately the text embodies Adams' ambition to supersede the history and historians of the past, notably his idol and rival Edward Gibbon, to show how the thing should be done, through his questioning about the nature and representation of historical experience, through an account of the construction of *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres* and through his formulation of a dynamic theory of history.

According to Adams, "For history, international relations are the only sure standards of movement…the only sure base for a chart of history." With their comparative global perspective and long-term outlook they had the scope he preferred (1105). The *Education* observes the physical making of history by describing the efforts of Adams' father, Charles Francis Adams, as Minister to Great Britain from 1861-1868, and celebrating the career of John Hay, as Ambassador to Britain and then Secretary of State from 1897 to his death in 1905. Upon their arrival in Britain, Minister Adams and family were shocked to hear the government had declared its neutrality by recognizing the belligerency of the Confederacy.[557] For the next couple of years the Americans expected to be recalled at any time when Britain took the next step and recognized Southern independence. Adams insists this is the story of an education and not his father's diplomacy, so instead of the grand sweep of policy he presents something of the worm's eye view as the hapless private secretary makes his way in London. Although Charles Francis Adams and his secretary/son succeeded in keeping the British government officially neutral during the war, for the sake of his formal scheme Adams

manages to describe the experience as a failure because he was unable to discern correctly the personal motivations behind the public positions of Lord Palmerstone, the Prime Minister, Earl Russell, the Foreign Secretary, or William Gladstone, the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The education is conducted both in the past and in the narrative present, contrasting the impressions of "the private secretary" in the 1860s with the research of "the private secretary" in the 1890s. Still possessed by the young Adams' question, "could one afford to trust human nature in politics?" the narrator continues his instruction by reading the memoirs, biographies and letters of their British antagonists forty years after the events. In 1862 Lord Palmerston seemed to want to force a quarrel with the U.S., then backed off, but Minister Adams henceforth declined to communicate with him except through Lord Russell. By his actions Lord Russell was assumed to be waiting for the proper moment to recognize the South, while constantly insisting on his good faith and honest neutrality. From his father's perspective, the son's question was irrelevant: Charles Francis thought that "in the main, Russell was true," while practical diplomacy required that he be treated as false (857). Russell accepted he was at fault in the *Alabama* affair, but for Adams the question was his motivation: "there could be no sense in history unless a constant course of faults implied a constant motive" (857). Without a constant motive there could be no direction, and "movement" is what Adams claimed to be after.

However, from subsequently reading their correspondence, Adams learned that Russell was the one who instigated a Cabinet meeting to recognize the South, while Palmerston was willing to wait for conclusive war news. Gladstone tried to force Palmerston's hand by asserting publicly that the Confederacy had "made a nation" and

the North “must drink of” the cup. While Russell maintained to the American minister that he was embarrassed by Gladstone’s remarks and upheld the position of neutrality, in fact the cabinet had just met and refused Russell’s proposal to intervene. When Napoleon III offered to join their intervention, Gladstone recorded that he alone was firmly in accord, while Palmerston’s support was feeble and Russell declined to fight. By1863, Minister Adams had no alternative but to inform Lord Russell “this is war!” for allowing the construction of armored warships for the Confederacy. Adams and staff assumed that Russell changed position in response to the U.S. threat, but the records revealed the foreign secretary had already taken measures to ensure the ships would never be turned over to the South. In 1896 Gladstone confessed his speech had been an error of “incredible grossness”: he admitted he had acted improperly for a cabinet minister bound to neutrality, but insisted he was motivated not by any inclinations to North or South, but only “an act of friendliness to all America” (870). There was no conspiracy or even a settled policy to break up the Union, contrary to young Adams’ suspicions of an opposing force massed against them.

Adams turns his discussion on the claim, “If one could not trust a dozen of the most respected private characters in the world, comprising the Queen’s Ministry, one could trust no mortal man” (857). Readers can assume the irony, since disputing with royal ministries seems to have been the family vocation, and as Adams reiterates, all statesmen lied, in fact, “falsehood was more or less necessary to all” (840). Then why does Adams emphasize the private character of individuals who spoke and acted on behalf of the Crown? He goes into great detail in reporting the ministers’ statements in all their contradictions, but furnishes surprisingly little of the political and institutional

contexts in which they spoke.[558] Instead, Adams claims his innocence of context: the "private secretary" arrived in England expecting to find a friendly government and an anti-slavery people. While the letters of individuals can provide a clue to their intentions, by confusing intent with motive and insisting on knowing motivation, Adams moves from the domain of history to psychology. He seems determined to require a level of evidence and a certainty of causation impossible to attain with the human matter of history.

In his Civil War chapters, Adams presents a strong picture of the messy confusions out of which history is made, but then uses those confusions as a justification for the failure of his education, whether in politics or diplomacy.[559] Adams reports that his retrospective researches "made a picture different from anything he had conceived and rendered worthless his whole painful diplomatic experience" (883).[560] In the absence of certainty about human motivation, Adams professes to find behavior meaningless. His insistence on finding meaning in human thought and action demonstrates why he is a historian and not a politician, while his impatience and unwillingness to entertain the ambiguities of human experience and work his way through them to construct a meaning demonstrate why he was not a novelist like his friend James. If Adams' contemporary Wilhelm Dilthey proposed that the imprecision of human behavior left the historian with modes of understanding and interpretation rather than explanation, Adams wanted to explain too much but not to have to interpret at all.[561] Adams tried to avoid the middle ground in which synthesis looked and felt like compromise. Mere interpretations of history were inadequate for Adams, like his Rankean version of America, or his romantic version of Tahiti that were provisional products of their age and culture and subject to

revision and reinterpretation. History on the level of human events was not going to provide Adams with the unequivocal line he wanted, a line of causality that was much too elementary to discover through the motivations of individual actors, even those he considered "simple-minded" Britons.

At the same time that history on the ground in London was unintelligible, young Adams was able to intuit the direction of events in the United States. By 1863, "one began to feel the first faint flush of new and imperial life…One began to dream the sensation of wielding unmeasured power. The sense came like vertigo, for an instant, and passed, leaving the brain a little, dazed, doubtful, shy." "One" is as close as Adams can get to the first person, but here the sense is plural. There is something adolescent in the contrast between present unwittingness and the promise of omnipotence, which confirms Adams' preference for extremes, but seems meant to indicate national growing pains as well. "Little by little, at first as a shadowy chance of what might be, if things could be rightly done, one began to feel that, somewhere behind the chaos in Washington, power was taking shape; that it was massed and guided as it had not been before" (874-75). Who or what is doing the shaping and guiding isn't clear, but no individual seems capable of such agency.

Clearly the movement of history was easier to discern at a distance, and the diplomats in London had only to wait for this unarticulated power to expand far enough that they might put it into play:

> Life never could know more than a single such climax. In that form, education reached its limits. As the first great blows began to fall, one curled up in bed in the silence of night, to listen with incredulous hope. As the huge masses struck, one after another, with the precision of machinery, the opposing mass, the world shivered. Such development of power was unknown" (875).

Adams' clairvoyance about accelerating American power in the 1860s will be confirmed by statistics later in 1892. When the coal output of American railroads approaches that of the British Empire, "one held one's breath at the nearness of what one had never expected to see, the crossing of courses and the lead of American energies" (1021). By 1898 the lead of American energies was apparent in international relations under the direction of John Hay. The British could not recognize their day was past, but Adams never felt more American than when he was abroad: "An American saw in a flash what all this meant to England. One's mind was working with the acceleration of the machine at home" (875). As in his *History*, Adams needed a foreign setting to define American identity and prospects. The closer he got to the United States the less he was able to locate that massed power, so that by the time his family returned to America they felt completely out of its course. Their bewilderment confirms the inadequacy of past ways of thinking emphasized in the first half of the text.

As an act of filial piety, the *Education* is ambiguous. Adams attests to his "unreflecting confidence" in his father in London. The minister's patience and coolness in the face of setbacks were undeniable, yet with reflection his trust in Russell seemed naïve and his great triumph, his "Vicksburg," when he apparently forced Her Majesty's government to shift policy, turned out to have been a misapprehension. Adams describes his father as "one of the luckiest of men, both in what he achieved and in what he escaped" (825). Lucky in his eighteenth-century equipoise, his mind "perfectly balanced" in judgment and temper but "in no way exceptional in either depth or range" (744-45). Lucky in his enemies who tended to defeat themselves or to disappear from the scene, as did Palmerston and Russell (889). Lucky that, in following the familial and national

mission to remove the slave power, his education was sufficient; "it mattered little to his success whether [his sons] paid it with their lives wasted on battle-fields or in misdirected energies and lost opportunity" (744). By the time he left in 1868 Charles Francis Adams was "almost a historical monument in London," but if Henry felt "unfairly forced out of the track" upon their return to the United States, he enjoyed the "comfort" of knowing that his father was even more superfluous: he "could scarcely have earned five dollars a day in any modern industry" (938).

Adams isn't entirely serious in his London chapters, poking fun at the young man's humiliations as he attempted to find a toehold in British society, on the occasion, for example, when he was forced by the Dowager Duchess of Somerset, "a terrible vision in castanets," "to perform a highland fling before the assembled nobility and gentry, with the daughter of the Turkish Ambassador for partner" (827). Nor is he entirely serious in his determination to justify his lack of a diplomatic career on the grounds of human incomprehensibility. As in his "Crillon" article, he provokes the reader by creating an epistemological stalemate on somewhat spurious grounds and then throws up his hands, claiming he can go nowhere. Back in the 1860s, Adams informs the reader, his first diplomatic education could not have led to a career: "Adams saw no road; in fact there was none." As "all his advisers" agreed: "Anyone who had held, during the four most difficult years of American diplomacy, a position at the centre of action, with his hands actually touching the lever of power, could not beg a post of Secretary at Vienna or Madrid in order to bore himself doing nothing," as John Hay had "buried himself" for some years until he gave up diplomacy for journalism. In "any ordinary system," Adams

could have gone to work at the State Department, but under the extraordinary spoils system this was impossible for Adams because it required pulling party strings (913).

Hay, a Midwesterner with a career to make, was willing to do the things that his friend Adams would not. In the second section, Adams, the self-described "stable-companion to statesmen," watches his friends Hay, Roosevelt and Lodge in concert and in opposition operate the lever of power. 1897, when Hay was installed as ambassador to Britain, initiated Adams' "Indian Summer" when personal vindication combined with the intellectual satisfaction of discerning purpose in history: "Since 1864 he had felt no such sense of power and momentum, and had seen no such number of personal friends wielding it. The sense of solidarity counts for much in one's contentment, but the sense of winning one's game counts for more" (1051). Politics was as personal a relation for Adams as for any urban ward boss. [562] Adams wrote of winning his game not only as the "last survivor" of the 1861 legation, but as a man who carried his ancestral memory back to 1750.

As I've already discussed in the chapter on the Tahitian *Memoirs,* Adams presents Hay as the proxy for the Adams family who fulfilled the family mission by forging an unofficial alliance with Britain on American terms, the only unqualified success in the *Education*. [563] Germany "frightened England into America's arms," although how this translated into diplomatic terms is not too clear, since Adams is more interesting in enjoying than analyzing the moment. "Never before had Adams been able to discern the working of law in history…but he thought he had a personal property by inheritance in the proof of intelligence and sequence in the affairs of men,—a property which no one else had a right to dispute; and this personal triumph left him a little cold towards the

other diplomatic results of the war" (1052). A little evasive as well, as Adams substitutes England for the problematic Philippines, and a discussion of his position and Hay's. Adams was willing to acquiesce to the acquisition of a territorial empire, if that was the will of the people, while considering it an unnecessary waste of energy, for the ability to sit at Hay's table and discuss empire-building with the British on equal terms.[564] Hay's accomplishment of Anglo-American friendship gave meaning and direction, an intelligible sequence, to the Adams family's struggles, and the vindication of history.[565]

After patiently enduring years of being used by professional politicians for his name, as the assistant secretary and co-biographer of Lincoln, and fortune, (he "owed his free hand to marriage" as Adams puts it), associating with the kinds of people no Adams would stoop to knowing, Hay was appointed ambassador to Britain. He shared some of Charles Francis Adams' diplomatic qualities from the 1860s: "Hay's chance lay in patience and good temper till the luck should turn, and to him the only object was time" (1061). Unlike Minister Adams, Ambassador Hay was able to do more than wait for the impersonal motion of history to carry him to success; he was able to manage it. [566]

Beyond luck, Hay demonstrated "artistry," much in the spirit that Adams described Thomas Aquinas as an artist: he created a unified system of relations. Apparently Hay had some of the managerial talents Adams had first observed in Thurlow Weed, an American political boss whose type had fascinated Adams in the 1860s, like Weed's "faculty of irresistibly conquering confidence," for example, although not Weed's preference for holding power rather than office. Hay was a gentleman who played the political game, but his "aims were considerably larger than those of the usual player" (1061). His diplomatic successes always came at the expense of his health, but

this registers as a sign of disinterestedness rather than ambition. Hay, who called his months as ambassador the happiest of his life,[567] was reluctant to become Secretary of State, but a "conclave" of friends, no doubt with Adams as presiding cardinal, decided: "No serious statesman could accept a favor [the ambassadorship] and refuse a service" (1053). No historian could resist the vantage point from which the Secretary measured forces and men: "He had an influence that no other Secretary of State ever possessed, as he had a nation behind him such as history had never imagined…he wanted no help, and he stood far above counsel or advice; but he could instruct an attentive scholar as no other teacher in the world could do" (1106). The Adams family viewpoint adopted the national perspective of the practical statesman, executive rather than legislative. Adams' self-effacement as willing student cannot be taken at face value, but as a combination of diplomatic discretion and the characteristic self-deprecation that seemed to show up everyone else. There is no record of what Adams discussed with his best friend the Secretary of State when they went for their habitual afternoon walk when in Washington, but if "education had done its worst, under the greatest masters and at enormous expense to the world, to train these two minds to catch and comprehend every spring of international action, not to speak of personal influence," it's hard to imagine that Adams would not offer and Hay not accept to put that education to use (1108). [568]

Hay's boss, President McKinley, a successful manager of men, "brought to the problem of government a solution which lay very far outside Henry Adams' education. He undertook to pool interests in a general trust into which every interest should be taken, more or less at its own valuation, and which mass should, under his management, create efficiency" (1061). In 1893, with the repeal of the Silver Act, Adams claims his

education in politics stopped. Once the nation submitted to a capitalistic system, the only question left was the efficiency of the machine: "the whole mechanical consolidation of force…ruthlessly stamped out the life of the class into which Adams was born, but created monopolies capable of controlling the new energies that America adored"(1035). McKinleyism, "the system of combinations, consolidations, trusts, realised at home and realisable abroad," fostered the affinities of vast mechanical energies, but at least Adams could enjoy the paradox that this capitalistic scheme looked a lot like socialism (1107). Hay's ability to realize combinations abroad in terms of actual treaties was considerably limited by the demands of domestic politics, the animus of Irish or German voters towards England, for example, or the demands of their representatives to be rewarded for support. Adams consistently described the Senate's power to ratify treaties as a Constitutional defect leading to diplomatic paralysis, but Hay persevered on both foreign and domestic fronts to see the second Hay-Paunceforte treaty ratified, for example, clearing the way for the building of the Panama Canal.

Hay's artistry in 1900 "saved" China and seemed to presage an American century. The public saw a Dumas adventure in the tale of the diplomats in Peking besieged by murderous Boxers, while Adams saw "the control of the world" at stake, should China be dismembered (1077). "When Hay suddenly ignored European leadership, took the lead himself, rescued the Legations and saved China, Adams looked on, as incredulous as Europe, though not quite as stupid" (1078). The international order changed forever when "Hay put Europe aside and set the Washington government at the head of civilisation so quietly that civilisation submitted" (1078). Perhaps this is true in the way of the Declaration of Independence, a self-fulfilling proclamation, asserted but not proven.

Hay's Open Door notes had to be issued unilaterally, despite their considerable accord with British policy, since the American public would accept no alliance. American troops joined an international force that rescued the diplomats, although the McKinley administration had to move carefully given public fears of being involved in another land war in addition to fighting in the Philippines. Hay achieved a public relations coup when through his Chinese contacts he was able to ascertain that the beleaguered diplomats were still alive. Throughout the crisis caused by the Boxer Rebellion, he consistently urged a cautious and measured response that worked through existing structures of authority, which perhaps translates into saving China from dismemberment by the European powers. Historians differ on the efficacy of Hay's statements, although they were applauded by his contemporaries.[569] Adams expresses no doubt: "Instantly the diplomacy of the nineteenth century, with all its painful scuffles and struggles, was forgotten, and the American blushed to be told of his submissions in the past. History broke in halves" (1078). Adams plays the historian as prognosticator, triangulating the future.

The painful scuffles and struggles that Adams carefully detailed in his 1860s experience are absent from the record of 1900. Instead of the detailed missteps, retrogressions and confusions of history in the making, Adams presents Hay's Passion: the effects of complexity are manifested in Hay's physical debilitation and mental exhaustion. Hay is driven to "madness" (Adams' term), or at least to feeling like "a bore" (Hay's complaint) by "the enormous complexity and friction of the vast mass he was trying to guide" (1080). If Hay was operating at the limits of his powers in managing the mechanical forces of the late nineteenth century, Adams is setting up the dilemma of the child born in 1900 and faced with a multiverse of supersensual energies. The broad view

of Hay's victories makes sense for the sake of Adams' form, as he begins to work towards his dynamic theory of history and wants to show a clear line of movement beneath the world of events, so he can "chart the international channel for fifty years to come" (1106). Hay demonstrated that the human dream of unity could be made actual by an artist with an intellectual and intuitive grasp of the forces at work. By not showing how Hay achieved his effects, though, Adams undercuts the credibility of his narrative. The art Hay seems to be performing is magic.

Adams' account of Russo-Japanese war, which gave Hay "his last great triumph," demonstrates the problem. Hay's contest with the Russian ambassador was so skillful "that no one knew enough to understand the diplomatic perfection of his work, which contained no error; but such success is complete only when it is invisible, and his victory at last was victory of judgment, not of act" (1145). Adams may be a connoisseur of diplomatic subtlety, but he doesn't stop to explain the fine points of his appreciation for readers. At the least he seems to indicate an intimacy with Hay's work that the narrative either denies—Adams supposedly knew no more than any newspaper reporter—or declines to explain under an injunction, the first one of diplomacy, according to Adams, to "hold his tongue." Hampered as Hay was from acting by his American political situation, nonetheless his association with the British bore fruit. The Japanese and their ally, Great Britain, "saved his 'open door' and fought his battle" by defeating Russia (1145). Hay debated retirement, but Adams, "who had set his heart on seeing Hay close his career by making peace in the East, could only urge that, vanity for vanity, the crown of peace-maker was worth the cross of martyrdom" (1179).[570] Hay didn't live long

enough to negotiate the settlement, (Russian inertia predictably delayed the process), but peace was in sight when he died of "the malaria of power" in 1905.

It is possible that Hay's words and deeds would have been so well known to Adams' intimate circle of friends that no description was necessary, but William James, not in the inner circle, read the *Education* and wondered precisely what it was that Hay did: "Above all I should like to understand more precisely just what Hay's significance really was. You speak of the perfection of his work, but it is all esoteric." [571] James suggested Adams write a biography of Hay, when to Mrs. Lodge and others Adams had tried to excuse the existence of the *Education* by saying, "except to clear my conscience of biographizing Hay, the volume would never have been written" (L6:50).[572] Clearing his conscience seemed to include immersion in an alternative task that would preclude his writing a biography, as well as erecting enough of a monument to Hay to forestall criticism from any other potential biographer.[573]

When it comes to an assessment of Hay's achievements, Adams hedges. In the last chapter of the *Education* he sails with Hay to Europe and reassures his dying friend with "the rosy view" of his accomplishments:

> he had solved nearly every old problem of American statesmanship, and had left little or nothing to annoy his successor. He had brought the great Atlantic powers into a working system, and even Russia seemed about to be dragged into a combine of intelligent equilibrium…For the first time in fifteen hundred years a true Roman *pax* was in sight, and would, if it succeeded, owe its virtues to him. (1180)

The rosy view from sea, suitable for adoption by Hay's family and friends, is conditional and belies the education which has put the very possibility of human agency in question. Against the *pax Americana* is the weight of a narrative in which "Adams proclaimed that in the last synthesis, order and anarchy were one, but that the unity was chaos" (1091).

The "only apparent alternative" to Hay's system was "setting continent against continent in arms," but "elements of resistance and anarchy" like the Kaiser, apparent once they landed in Europe, needed to be calculated against Hay's organization. Technically, order and anarchy remain suspended at the conclusion of the *Education*; once again time alone is proof.

Of the trio of friends who in 1892 couldn't tell "whether they had attained success, or how to estimate it, or what to call it," here, too, Adams maintains his system of polarities. The third member, Clarence King, absent from the narrative since their trip to Cuba in 1894, appears briefly to bid his friends farewell on his way West (physically and metaphorically) and dies offstage in 1902. Hay eulogizes him as

> the best and brightest man of his generation, with talents immeasurably beyond his contemporaries; with industry that has often sickened me to witness it; with everything in his favor but blind luck; hounded by disaster from his cradle, with none of the joy in life to which he was entitled, dying at last, with nameless suffering, alone and uncared for, in a California tavern. (1100).

At least Hay's death shows that a life in history can have a proper end: "on Hay's account, [Adams] was even satisfied to have his friend die, as we would all die if we could, in full fame, at home and abroad, universally regretted, and wielding his power to the last"(1181). Hay's apotheosis will have to stand for all.

In describing himself as the "stable-companion to statesmen" Adams was to an extent describing a traditional role of the historian, concerned with the education of an elite, and vicariously enjoying the standpoint of the powerful in writing political and diplomatic history.[574] Even into the eighteenth century, history was deemed the great teacher of life, *historia magistra vitae* as Cicero put it, providing samples of virtue and a practical guide for rule.[575] More personally, history could be a reminder of the great

deeds done by one's family, and an injunction to the present generation to follow, whether that family was American or Tahitian. When Adams was a boy, his assumption was "What had been would continue to be" (734). But his *Education* demonstrates the fallacy of presuming the exemplary and empirical value of history taken in a simple sense that assumed the continuity and commensurability of experience across time. If nineteenth-century values seemed foreign to the eighteenth-century point of view, the twentieth century would be something altogether alien to both, as new forms of energy proliferated and accelerated the development of new social formations.

Adams continued to insist that the development of a historical consciousness was vital for an American society that saw little advantage in it, while providing a personal illustration of its limitations. His search for an education that "should try to lessen the obstacles, diminish the friction, invigorate the energy, and should train minds to react, not at haphazard but by choice, on the lines of force that attract their world" was inseparable from his search for a useful history (1007). The manikin's final persona is "the historian" who takes up where he left off teaching at Harvard in 1877.

Adams' response to his unlikely appointment as the first professor of medieval history at Harvard, "He knew no history; he knew only a few historians," could be read as a criticism of contemporary historiography as well as his own ignorance. His own lack could be corrected, but he still needed something of substance to teach:

> He saw no relation whatever between his students and the middle-ages unless it were the Church, and there the ground was particularly dangerous. He knew better than though he were a medieval historian that the man who should solve the riddle of the middle-ages and bring them into the line of evolution from past to present, would be a greater man than Lamarck or Linnaeus; but history had nowhere broken down so pitiably or avowed itself so hopelessly bankrupt, as there. Since Gibbon, the situation was almost a scandal. History had lost even the sense of shame. It was a hundred

> years behind the experimental sciences. For all serious purpose, it was less instructive than Walter Scott and Alexandre Dumas. (995)

For Adams, history needed to have a vital relation with the present. The problem with medieval history was that it tended to "antiquarianism or anecdotage," valuing facts for their own sake rather than as part of a systematic idea about the nature of historical change. No one in 1871 was trying to fit the Middle Ages into the kind of grand generalization that would make history a science rather than mere pedantry or storytelling. For secular historians of the enlightenment like Gibbon, not to mention Protestant historians, the era was a sink of Catholic ignorance and superstition, a problem for a positivist and progressive metanarrative. This interpretation was slowly changing in the nineteenth century, as the expansion of the curriculum indicated, but the mention of Gibbon seems to indicate a wider malaise, if no one historian in the intervening hundred years had come up with a model to surpass him. In the criticism he wrote for the *North American Review*, Adams berated English historians, especially, for mindless empiricism, reporting data without conclusions, treating history as a mere "field of scraps," compared to more theoretical continental thinkers. Adams took it as a measure of the English mind that Macaulay, a dramatist and poet, was celebrated as "the English historian," while Buckle, who had tried to link history with ideas, was considered a failure (923). Adams insisted on both scientific significance and literary expertise in historiography. As his references to Scott and Dumas indicate, putting events into a "line of evolution" was a problem of narrative, although historical narrative had standards of referentiality, causation and theoretical significance distinct from the novel.[576]

In his criticism Adams made an exception for Maine, Tyler, Buckle and Comte, as writers who "stirred" the scandal of historical backwardness by treating history as social

science, but found he could "fit them into no theory of his own." By implication Adams is pointing to his and his brother's attempts to resolve the question of the Middles Ages as historical quandary. In *The Law of Civilization and Decay* Brooks Adams, with the assistance of his brother, found a place for the medieval period within his cycles of centralization and decentralization. In *Chartres*, Adams judged the Middle Ages valuable precisely because their mentalities and ways of life seemed anomalous by the standards of the nineteenth century, fit no simple narrative of progress, and therefore could be placed in productive relation with the later era.

In the *Education* Adams discusses how he came to realize the proper scale of his subject: after studying modern psychology's theories of the "dissolving" mind, "the historian felt himself driven back on thought as one continuous Force" without qualifying adjectives of country or religion. History as a science must be universal and comparative, not local: "This has always been the fate of rigorous thinkers, and has always succeeded in making them famous, as it did Gibbon, Buckle and Auguste Comte. Their method made what progress the science of history knew, which was little enough, but they did at least fix the law that, if history ever meant to correct the errors she made in detail, she must agree on a scale for the whole" (1117). Gibbon's inclusion is a little strange here with two nineteenth century thinkers interested in the intersection of history and sociology, but perhaps a large scale and fame are enough to link the three. Adams actually seems to be describing himself as one of their company as a "rigorous thinker" and predicting fame for himself in a departure from his usual self-deprecation—it almost sounds like the confident self-assessment of Gibbon's autobiography. At the conclusion of the *Education*, Adams accepts his own challenge and incorporates the Middle Ages

into his dynamic theory of history: they demonstrated the powerful attraction that "the promise of sharing infinite power in future life" exerted upon the social mind after Western economic systems collapsed.

Adams was determined to impart something useful to his students, but "In essence incoherent and immoral, history had either to be taught as such,—or falsified" (994). He taught "a few elementary dates and relations" that seemed required for the form and encouraged students at least to exercise their privilege of "talking to the professor," but large classes stifled discussion. He then concentrated on the top ten percent of students, teaching them historical method in the now-fashionable German way, but found they needed some shape to their material, so he narrowed the focus to ancient law. He set half a dozen doctoral students free to read and compare what they pleased. "As pedagogy, nothing could be more triumphant," when they learned to chase an idea through a thicket of obscure facts, "but their teacher knew from his own experience that his wonderful method led nowhere…Their science had no system, and could have none, since its subject was merely antiquarian. Try as hard as he might, the professor could not make it actual" (997). [577] His final experiment to "stimulate the intellectual reaction of the student's mind" was based on his own thinking, which required "conflict, competition, contradiction." But his proposal to staff classes with two teachers of opposing views, which seems to assume the relativism of historical explanation, was not approved.[578] All in all, "the seven years he passed in teaching seemed to him lost" (998).

Given Adams' skepticism about the value of education, and the jaundiced account of his experiences as student and teacher, he expresses a surprisingly high opinion of the teacher's influence: "A parent gives life, but as parent gives no more. A murderer takes

life, but his deed stops there. A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops" (994). This is an extravagant statement, but not an ironic one. Adams seems to have regarded history as the primary means of socializing the young, if by 1909 he was proposing "the University as a system of education grouped about History" (L4:207). Hypersensitive to criticism, Adams was cautious about his options within the constraints of the educational system in 1871: "A teacher must either treat history as a catalogue, a record, a romance; or as an evolution." Clearly his interest was with the more dynamic prospect of evolution, but as with the subject of the Church, evolution was controversial: "whether he affirms or denies evolution, he falls into all the burning fagots of the pit" (995). An inflated sense of the teacher's power, "He makes of his scholars either priests or atheists, plutocrats or socialists, judges or anarchists, almost in spite of himself," may excuse an avoidance of controversy. Some readers have been skeptical of the pedagogical claims of the *Education*, seeing them as a convenient trope to justify the vanity of an autobiography, but in his letters and in his subsequent "Letter to American Teachers of History," Adams presented himself as the teacher of teachers.

For the purposes of his scheme, Adams' manikin has to try on a variety of garments that do not fit, that of the student, the politician, the diplomat, the journalist, the teacher, the editor. He doesn't fail conclusively so much as he discovers himself somehow sidelined, hardly begun when he can go no further. He warns the reader "he never got to the point of playing the game at all; he lost himself in the study of it, watching the errors of the players" (724). Adams is more emphatic than usual in titling his chapter and his career as professor, "Failure," but this is the vocation to which he returns, unofficially. Adams' vocation as a historian, the way he develops from "the boy"

into "the historian" is never explicit; perhaps the self-described victim of nineteenth century change couldn't help but be a historian.[579] In order to look some way forward, he needed to look back.

The *Education*'s occasional references to Edward Gibbon suggest the extent of his hold on Adams' imagination, both in terms of his autobiography, the exemplary story of a historian's vocation, and his monumental work, as a standard and a challenge to the historians who followed. On his first visit to Rome in 1860, Adams reported that reading Gibbon's autobiography had inspired a personal ambition and tentatively advanced the idea to his brother Charles: "I read Gibbon. Striking, very. Do you know, after long argument and reflexion I feel much as if perhaps some day I too might come to anchor in that. Our house needs a historian in this generation and I feel strongly tempted by the quiet and sunny prospect, while my ambition for political life dwindles as I get older" (L1:149). The twenty-three year-old assumed that a quiet and sunny life based on eighteenth-century assumptions was possible. But he also identifies the role of historian within the mission of his "house," which was disinterested public service. Critics who see Adams primarily as a writer and not as a writer of history may underestimate the extent to his writing retained a sense of civic function, no matter how frustrated his relations with an audience.[580] In the *Education*, Adams describes his young self in Rome in 1860, sitting in Gibbon's place and pondering the fate of empires, the concept of progress, and the inadequacy of historical explanation, although for the purposes of education no vocational ambitions were suggested: "The young man had no idea what he was doing. The thought of posing for a Gibbon never entered his mind" (804).

Nineteenth-century historians may have found Gibbon's temper too cold and his irony too corrosively irreligious; Thomas Carlyle, for example, reportedly lost his faith in miracles if not his faith altogether, after reading Gibbon.[581] Yet the scope of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* and the image of the great historian remained a challenge and a promise to them; after reading Gibbon's autobiography, William Prescott also chose his future career. [582] Gibbon's *Autobiography* is a straightforward account of the way its author came to fulfill the historian's vocation. He announces that his fame has been felicitous, his choice of vocation justified: "twenty happy years have been animated by the labour of my History, and its success has given me a name, a rank, a character in the world, to which I should not otherwise have been entitled" (219). Gibbon acknowledges his fortune: it was "the lucky chance of an unit against millions" to be born in his particular circumstances (217). Wealthy enough to live on his income but not so wealthy as to sap his ambitions, an undistinguished career in Parliament, and an uneventful commission with the local militia nonetheless provided useful practical experience for the historian. Even unhappy episodes conspired ultimately to the creation of his masterpiece: his youthful conversion to Catholicism was regrettable but instructive, and his subsequent exile in Switzerland enabled the kind of intensive study that never would have been possible at Oxford; the paternal intervention that cut short his one romance safeguarded the financial independence he would need to write. The culmination of the narrative is the creation of his monumental history.

Gibbon's autobiography is the exemplary history of a life which assumes that exemplary history is still credible. "In the fifty-second year of my age, after the completion of an arduous and successful work, I now propose to employ some moments

of my leisure in reviewing the simple transactions of a private and literary life"(1). Gibbon simply assumes that the success of the work has won him an audience for the story of the labors that went into making it. Beyond that he assumes the central significance of history and the writing of history to civilized life.

> Yet a sincere and simple narrative of my own life may amuse some of my leisure hours; but it will subject me, and perhaps with justice, to the imputation of vanity, I may judge, however, from the experience both of the past and of the present times, that the public are always curious to know the men who have left behind them any images of their minds…the student of every class may derive a lesson, or an example, from the lives most similar to his own. (4)

Gibbon's claim that "My own amusement is my motive, and will be my reward" sounds like a sentence Adams might have written (or borrowed).[583] When Adams makes similar claims they tend to sound like self-justification or pre-emptive gestures against the disappointment of recalcitrant or non-existent audiences. Spoken in the tones of Gibbon's self-satisfaction, personal amusement seems more credible as a sentiment, and yet given the controversy over his treatment of Christianity, Gibbon, too, might have wanted to take his life before someone else did.[584] If Gibbon's stately sentences exhibit some of the equipoise of Charles Francis Adams finely balanced mind, Adams' sentences betray a nervous energy. Gibbon's disarming candor on the subject of his vanity is an element of the simple, sincere style that connotes truth, without obliging him to confess to more private failings.[585] After all, if he is to become the subject of biography, and he assumes he will be, no one else is so well-qualified on the subject. And if he considers the ancients and moderns who have written their lives, (and sometimes the lives are more interesting than the works), "That I am equal or superior to some of these, the effects of modesty or affectation cannot force me to dissemble" (5). For Adams, vanity is too venial a sin to confess; he prefers under- or overstatement in his self-assessments, as in most other

judgments. Adams describes his work as an education, not a lesson in life, yet like Gibbon what he is most interested in is presenting an image of the mind, a representative mind faced with the uncertainties of apprehending its modern environment as well as realizing its own nature.

In Gibbon's orderly, rational, eighteenth-century universe, history was a popular form and historical excellence was rewarded. Aware that novelty was part of the appeal of his first volume, he still cannot avoid crowing: "I am at a loss how to describe the success of the work, without betraying the vanity of the writer…My book was on every table, and almost on every toilette; the historian was crowned by the taste or fashion of the day; nor was this general voice disturbed by the barking of any profane critic" (180). Adams could only dream of such a reception. Leslie Stephen, in an essay on reading "Autobiography" concludes that Gibbon's autobiography is the "most delightful of its class." When the reader joins Gibbon on his walk at the conclusion of his masterwork, "we feel we are in the presence of a man who has a right to his complacency. He has not aimed, perhaps, at the highest mark, but he has hit the bull's-eye....With singular felicity, he has come at the exact moment and found the exact task to give play to his powers" (226-27).[586] In the *Education*, Adams is disabused of his complacent assumption of intelligibility and rational purpose in human affairs, which he identifies historically as an eighteenth century illusion. Adams can seem like the anti-Gibbon; his every effort leads nowhere.[587]

In both Adams' and Gibbon's narratives, the life serves the work. In Gibbon's case, the life is centered around the construction of history, but unlike the *Education* it is not experienced in historical time. Gibbon's eighteenth century seems itself like the

culmination of history in which past experience confidently mirrors future expectations. The model of historical change in the *Decline and Fall* seems to have no bearing on Gibbon's own life and society. And yet, even the tranquility of Lausanne was disturbed by the recent tremors in France, as Gibbon complains: "These noble fugitives are entitled to our pity; they may claim our esteem, but they cannot, in their present state of mind and fortune, much contribute to our amusement. Instead of looking down as calm and idle spectators on the theatre of Europe, our domestic harmony is somewhat embittered by the infusion of party spirit" (216). Writing on the other side of the revolutionary divide, the boy who read the eighteenth=century histories in his father's library complained of the "mental indolence of history" (752). Reading them did little to prepare him for the "whole mechanical consolidation of force" that destroyed his expectations.

The *Education* demonstrates Adams' ambition to correct Gibbons' eighteenth-century confidence; it surpasses Gibbon's work in terms of the complexity of its form and its conception of historical consciousness. It embodies the uncertainties and contradictions that Gibbon's life seems to deny with its inerrant progress to success. Unlike Gibbon's autobiography, the writing of Adams' monumental *History* of the U. S. is hardly the culminating act of the *Education*, Accomplished off-stage, it is mentioned in deprecatory terms: "He had no notion whether [his volumes] served a useful purpose" (1008). Still the culmination of the *Education*, as Adams felt compelled to remind readers, was the final trio of chapters, linked to the final chapters of *Chartres*, which set forth Adams dynamic theory of history. In a larger sense the *Education* itself is the culmination of the life, as the life is the demonstration of the principles of the history. The *Education* is a retort to the terms and conditions of Gibbon's success. [588]

Adams remained challenged by the scope of Gibbon's achievement and kept up a ritual emulation of the life, hoping to share his luck, perhaps. The autobiography reports that Gibbon celebrated his "final deliverance" from the *Decline and Fall* with "several turns in a *berceau* or covered walk of acacias" experiencing "joy on recovery of my freedom, and, perhaps, the establishment of my fame." But pride was succeeded by "sober melancholy" (205). In a fragment of diary that survives, Adams writes of finishing his *History* with decidedly opposite emotions: "In imitation of Gibbon I walked in the garden among the yellow and red autumn flowers, blazing in sunshine, and meditated. My meditations were too painful to last. The contrast between my beginning and ending is something Gibbon never conceived" (L3:143).[589] As every reader of his autobiography knew, Gibbon had maintained his solitary devotion to history to the end, while four years after the suicide of his wife, Adams still grieved.

The "conception" of the *Decline and Fall* is an even more familiar scene, cited, Adams informs the reader, in his Murray's guidebook: "It was at Rome, on the 15th of October, 1764, as I sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol, while the bare-footed friars were singing vespers in the Temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the city first started in my mind" (160).[590] Implicitly cited early in Adams' *History* as a token of personal and national aspirations, this is a familiar trope in the *Education* as well: Adams sitting on the steps of the Ara Coeli in Rome in 1860, 1868, 1899, or on the steps beneath Richard Hunt's dome at the Chicago exposition of 1893, and asking questions.

His encounter with the bewildering mass and variety of monuments in Rome produced the "first impulse" that was likely to "lead or drive" a boy for life. On his first

trip in 1860, Adams pondered the problem of Rome, "mechanically piling up conundrum after conundrum in his educational path, which seemed unconnected but that he had got to connect; that seemed insoluble but had got somehow to be solved" (802). The problem was more than academic.

> Rome was actual; it was England; it was going to be America. Rome could not be fitted into an orderly, middle-class, Bostonian, systematic scheme of evolution. No law of progress applied to it. Not even time-sequences—the last refuge of hapless historians—had value for it. The Forum no more led to the Vatican than the Vatican led to the Forum" (803).

One sequence is assumed here—Rome, England, America, if the sequence is the transit of empire and the viewpoint is the narrator's rather than the youth's. The opening of Adams' U.S. *History* evoked Roman pretensions with the Capitol half-finished rather than half-destroyed, but the assumption was of pattern in history with America the last and best of a sequence. In Rome in 1860, Adams is not interested in his origin as much as his future. History is prophecy as the mind leaps forward to the end of the sequence; the difficulty is finding the line of narrative, if narrative implies causation, between Rome, Britain and America. Without an assumption of this relation, there would be no conundrum about fitting in the church, the Middle Ages and Italy's present political subordination.

The problem with Rome as it was experienced was that there was so much other history besides the Empire, all of which was present simultaneously to the tourist's eye. Visually Rome displayed the past as an assortment of unrelated styles, which translated temporally to a series of ruptures. The Empire and the Church might be alike in their aspirations to universal unity and their failure, but there was no obvious reason why one institution should have followed the other. The city's past glory and present "medieval"

state raised questions about the simple narratives of progress Boston told itself. (1860 was too early for Adams' critique of Darwinism, but in his eyes the eighteenth century, Boston, and Darwinism all sought to justify complacency.) But then what did Garibaldi signify? Rome seemed to prove the professor's complaint about the immorality of history in the kinds of behavior it recounted and in its lack of meaning, a moral, for the present.

The separate pasts of Rome could be strung on a sequence of time, but otherwise seemed to possess no meaningful relation. In writing a history of Tahiti Adams had been faced with finding the organizing principle for a confusing and unfamiliar mass of legend, song and story; Rome put the problem on a grand scale and made the implications personal. Beyond finding intelligibility in the multiple pasts of the city, the question was Empire. Rome was central to the West, "she gave heart and unity to it all," and yet the significance of the center was not clear. More than order, Adams wanted an explanation. He sat on the steps of the Ara Coeli,

> curiously wondering that not an inch had been gained by Gibbon,—or all the historians since,—towards explaining the Fall. The mystery remained unsolved; the charm remained intact. Two great experiments of Western civilization had left there the chief monuments of their failure, and nothing proved that the city might not still survive to express the failure of a third. (803-04)

Adams leaves the third great experiment unexplained, allowing the reader to define it, but the way the present imagines itself in the midst of some great "experiment" is going to affect the way that other temporalities are conceived and placed in relation, even the way their failures are defined. The failure of education has been a want of effective power, an inability to live up to preconceived expectations or to recognize and employ powerful new energies; it reflects as much on unprecedented social conditions as the individual. The failure of Gibbon might be seen as an inability to satisfy nineteenth century questions

and standards of explanation, but “the Fall” implies a single question and a single answer about human nature, an Augustinian sense of scale, except that the nineteenth century looks to its generalizations of timeless human nature in science, not religion. A scientific theory of history might be able to explain the fall of Rome, the rise of the Church and the place of the Middle Ages in a historical continuum.

The tourist asks “the eternal question:—Why! Why!! Why!!!...No one had ever answered the question to the satisfaction of anyone else…Substitute the word America for the word Rome, and the question became personal” (804). Adams had discussed the relativism of historical truth before, yet he still wants an eternal answer. In the *Education* unity is often no more than the crystallization of one of those images the mind craves: the precarious balancing of Lancelot on the knife’s edge, an acrobat crossing a chasm with a dwarf on his back, or an elderly pedagogue riding a bicycle. Even the more extended periods of unity, the reign of the Virgin or John Hay’s combinations, were moments of equilibrium. But Adams doesn’t give up the belief that history must be intelligible on some causative level, and by 1900 finding it had become urgent for the sake of the future. History was personal. Adams’ familial branding to America was both his glory and his curse, as the investigator of history became his own experimental subject.

Adams’ criticism of past historiography included his own efforts to fix sequences, though he presents himself as more self-reflexive than the ordinary scholar: “Historians undertake to arrange sequences,—called stories, or histories,—assuming in silence a relation of cause and effect. These assumptions, hidden in the depths of dusty libraries, have been astounding, but commonly unconscious and childlike” (1068). Adams considered history to be, in part, a narrative art, but in this context “history” connotes

"fairy tale." When chronology is taken for causation, an accumulation of events is taken for history. Irrelevant as historians seemed to be, no one called them to account, but "Adams, for one, had toiled in vain to find out what he meant" (1069).

He makes a rare reference to his historical writing, only to proclaim it, too, a failure despite his rigor: "He had even published a dozen volumes of American history for no other purpose than to satisfy himself whether, by the severest process of stating, with the least possible comment, such facts as seemed sure, in such order as seemed rigorously consequent, he could fix for a familiar moment a necessary sequence of human movement" (1069). Adams combines the professional and the amateur, supposedly publishing a dozen volumes for his private satisfaction. In this particular allusion to Adams' writing, the epistemological reliability of facts is not at issue, but the fixing of sequences seems to depend on a common understanding of consequence. In any case,"Where he saw sequence, other men saw something quite different, and no one saw the same unit of measure" (1069). History at the level of events seemed impossible to fix in a sequence so necessary that it avoided contradictory interpretations, yet unless history was content to settle for a dusty antiquarianism, it was useless without a diagnostic movement.

Sequence was an essential relation to historical thinking, but Adams decided to explore other units of measure:

> Satisfied that the sequence of men led to nothing and that the sequence of their society could lead no further while the mere sequence of time was artificial and the sequence of thought was chaos, he turned at last to the sequence of force; and thus it happened that, after ten years' pursuit, he found himself lying in the Gallery of Machines at the Great Exposition of 1900, with his historical neck broken by the sudden irruption of force totally new. (1069)

Back in 1860 when the unsettling mysteries of Rome provoked his interest, Adams' problem was to connect the unconnected, the monuments of Empire and Church that seemingly possessed no relation but juxtaposition. The sequence of men, history on the ground, could lead to a wilderness of interpretation. In his *History* society had apparently reached its ultimate development in democracy and could go no further. Adams had criticized historians for substituting chronology for causation, while a standard narrative of economic progress and development could not include the Middle Ages. By finding a still larger unit of measure Adams at least was able to put Empire and Church into a question that assumed sequence: why did political force become transformed into spiritual force? And then, why did spiritual force become transformed into mechanical force? He could conceive his two symbols the Virgin and the Dynamo as polarities of human and inhuman force. In 1900 "man had translated himself into a new universe which had no common scale of measurement with the old" (1068). As Adams considered the new "occult, supersensual, irrational" forces at work, like electricity, radioactivity, X-rays, radio waves, "they were a revelation of mysterious energy like that of the Cross" and "parricidal" towards an orderly Newtonian universe (1068-69). Adams considered the West in 1900 to be on the verge of the kind of momentous change that Gibbon had described when Constantine made Christianity the religion of the Empire in 313.

The questions remain personal when the historian is left to his ultimate investigative instrument, his own mind as representative receptor and measuring device:

> The historian was thus reduced to his last resources. Clearly if he was bound to reduce all these forces to a common value, this common value could have no measure but that of their attraction on his own mind. He must treat them as they had been felt; as convertible, reversible, interchangeable attractions on thought. He made up his mind to venture it; he would risk translating rays to faith. (1069-70).

As Adams remarks elsewhere, unity is the product of an individual mind projecting itself upon the world. Through the perspective of the *Education*, this is the genesis of *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres*. From his impulse to kneel at the foot of the dynamo, Adams could imagine the attraction of the Virgin, create her image of power out of the qualities the dynamo lacked and his mind craved, a unity that defied law and admitted anarchy. On his 1897 tour, the cathedral that had impressed him most personally was Coutances, because he felt it expressed his Norman soul. As Adams remarked about monuments, "One sees what one brings" and it may have taken the anterior vision of the dynamo to conceive the Virgin of Chartres in her power and her mercy (1073). In this sense, perhaps, the two books were imagined together, and not in the more schematic terms Adams claimed. If the dynamo mysteriously converted mechanical energy to electricity, in "translating rays to faith" Adams' brain became itself a dynamo.

As Adams' pursuit of force continued through the research and writing of *Chartres*, power, once an object for the young man to control, was now an element to observe and register through the interaction of hand and brain. In the "labyrinths" where "the secret of education still hid itself somewhere behind ignorance,"

> the pen becomes a sort of blind man's dog, to keep him from falling in the gutters. The pen works for itself, and acts like a hand, modelling the plastic material over and over again to the form that suits it best. The form is never arbitrary, but is a sort of growth like crystallization, as any artist knows too well; for often the pencil or pen runs into side-paths and shapelessness, loses its relations, stops or is bogged. Then it has to return on its trail, and recover, if it can, its line of force. The result of a year's work depends more on what is struck out than on what is left in; on the sequence of the main lines of thought, than on their play or variety. (1075-76)

Writing history is almost automatic writing, in the way that Adams distances himself from what he produces; not even a hand writes, but a pen like a hand that works for itself.[591] What Adams emphasizes is not content, but the unfolding of form as an organic

if inanimate natural process. This may seem like a further dissociation between "Adams" and the narrator, replacing some of the distance that had eroded in the second section, but Adams is writing in the present tense. This has been read as the reification of the imagination, hand into machine. But in portraying writing as an automatic process, what Adams seems to be attempting is a loss of the rational, analytic self and the recovery of instinctive reactions. *Chartres* presents an argument for the importance of the emotions and instincts atrophied in the transition to modernity. Like the unnamed artist of the transition, intuiting what it was that the Virgin wanted for her Church, Adams is trying to generate art through submission to some force greater than himself, which for an unbeliever is described as the force of the pen finding its way. Adams' Dynamic Theory of history defines education as the growth of the mind through the assimilation of external forces.

Above all Adams refers to himself as an artist and the pen as a sculptor. He claims the status of artist, in the broad terms in which he conceived the term, as he begins to write his dynamic theory of history. The requirements of an artist creating a system might be in conflict with the caution of the historian or scientist, however, since he seems to be exerting considerable force on his material in eliminating play or variety for the sake of his lines. In *Chartres* Adams noted some of what Aquinas had to omit for the sake of his system, like an explanation for evil and suffering. William James, in an obvious reference to Adams, wrote about the impossibility of drawing a straight line through history in a pluralistic universe:

> A friend of mine has an idea, which illustrates on such a magnified scale the impossibility of tracing the same line through reality, that I will mention it here. He thinks that nothing more is need to make history 'scientific' than to get the content of any two epochs (say the end of the thirteenth and the end of the nineteenth century)

> accurately defined, then accurately to define the direction of the change that led from the one epoch to the other, and finally to prolong the line of that direction into the future. So prolonging the line, he thinks, we ought to be able to define the actual state of things at any future date we please. We all feel the essential unreality of such a conception of 'history.' (399)[592]

What interests James is the way that novelty arises from continuity. In his view it would be difficult to trace a straight line of sameness or causation through a series "without swerving into some 'respect' where the relation, as pursued originally, no longer holds" (395). Terms shift, relations change, intervals deflect and the line of sameness fades: "the objects have so many aspects that we are constantly deflected from our original direction, and find, we know not why, that we are following something different from what we started with" (395). The only possible representations of development are approximate or probabilistic. Adams discovered that it wasn't as easy to project a line of history into the future as it would be to project the future output of coal, although he sometimes wrote as though the two speculations were analogous. The Jamesian point of view might note that in every failure is the potential for something new, but Adams was focused more on ends than beginnings.

Although Adams described the *Education* and *Chartres* as part of a project to trace history from unity to multiplicity, *Chartres* doesn't seem to have begun with such a programmatic purpose. From the retrospective view of the *Education*, Adams explains the scientific mission of *Chartres*: "The historian's business was to follow the track of the energy, to find where it came from and where it went to; its complex source and shifting channels; its values, equivalents, conversions" (1075). "Shifting channels" sounds like a more complex continuity than a straight line, but even so, what Adams seemed more interested in doing was identifying essential points of comparison, emblems of a shift.

Adams' vision was linear, but his preferred mode of historical relation was analogy, in which the sequence between the points was implied rather than traced. Based on the general category of "energy," *Chartres* creates analogies between the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries, with an implicit analogy to the nineteenth century and occasional connections to the seventeenth. It stages encounters with past monuments, the cultural treasures and individuals that symbolize their age, including monuments that symbolize transition by their juxtaposition of elements.

The first half of *Chartres* is organized as a journey both spatial and temporal; the action moves from church to church and the sequence is made meaningful by the changes in architectural style that signify changes in thought; the second half, while more or less chronological (there is a break in continuity when the third section goes back in time to pick up the rise of rational explanation), seems more arbitrary in its organization and choice of literary treasures, the organizing principle more overtly Adams' mental associations.

Each century seems like a conversion, while within each century different cultural forms are expressively equivalent. With the possible exception of the chapter that wanders from Normandy to the Ile-de-France, where the movement of the journey and the multiplicity of churches propels the narrative into a channel, Adams doesn't trace the shifts in force so much as declare them. Adams' desire for order is always in conflict with his mistrust of uniformitism. In the microhistory of the *Education*, an individual life provides continuity, but that life as experienced is one of impasses, disjunctions and false starts. [593] For the purposes of continuity, his dynamic theory draws a line so broad and consequently abstract that it loses meaning; even the Virgin was not significant enough to

be included. The line of force is too lean, too schematic, especially in contrast to the richness of the narrative that preceded it, in which history operates in the realms of the specific, the general, and self-reflexive. Adams finds a place in the sequence for the fall of Rome and the recessive Middle Ages and yet he seems unable to conceive a line without some inexplicable events like the abrupt appearance of gunpowder and the compass. In the macrohistory of a Dynamic Theory, which seems to include the continuity of all human life (universal history defined as the history of the West, mostly), Adams' lines are curved rather than straight. Direction swerved and change accelerated in 310, 1500 and 1700, and then, in 1900, "the continuity snapped" (1137).

History into Science

In 1894 Henry Adams sent his Presidential Address to the American Historical Society as their ever-absent leader. "The Tendency of History" is its disposition to become a science:

> That the effort to make history a science may fail is possible, and perhaps probable; but that it should cease, unless for reasons that would cause all science to cease, is not within the range of experience. Historians will not, and even if they would they can not, abandon the attempt. Science itself would admit its own failure if it admitted that man, the most important of its subjects, could not be brought within its range. (126)[594]

Adams never relinquished the idea of practicing scientific history, but his idea of what that meant changed throughout his career, from his original veneration of Rankean methodology, to his use of the social and physical sciences as adjuncts to historical explanation, to the hope he shared with "four out of five serious students of history" that "they were on the brink of a great generalization that would reduce all history under a law as clear as the laws which govern the material world" (Tendency 127). Adams' Dynamic

Theory of History and Law of Acceleration are the culmination of the education, the product of his education and the justification of his pedagogy. Formally, his Dynamic Theory is a fitting conclusion, a grand generalization that expresses skepticism about the very possibility of formal design. [595]

Adams was not uncritical of science or a scientific education, but the *Education* also presents the scientist as hero. By the end of chapter twenty, "Failure (1871)," the story of education seems exhausted. Yet Adams still claims he could envision a successful education conceived on lines more systematic than his accidental experience, based on his encounter with one unidentified man, who "stood out in extraordinary prominence as the type and model of what Adams would have liked to be, and of what the American, as he conceived, should have been and was not" [596] After two suspense-building pages of local color, he meets Clarence King in a cloud of homosocial romance. Visiting a friend working in the Rockies for the U.S. Geological Survey, Adams missed his trail in the dark and came upon a cabin: "Adams fell into [King's] arms. As with most friendships, it was never a matter of growth or doubt…They shared the room and the bed, and talked till far towards dawn" (1004). If King, Adams and John Hay shared many interests as the male three of the Five of Hearts, Adams creates a certain polarity between the two types, dramatizing King's promise and Hay's success, his first meeting with King and his last with Hay.

Adams was far from alone in ranking King's charm, aesthetic judgment, literary talent and scientific achievement as the best of his generation: "So little egoistic was he that none of his friends felt envy of his extraordinary superiority, but rather groveled before it, so that women were jealous of the power he had over men; but women were

many and King was one. The men worshipped not so much their friend, as the ideal American they all wanted to be" (1006).[597] By this point in the narrative, Adams' effusions seem a likely signal of some future disaster, for King and for his mode of education: "…King had moulded and directed his life logically, scientifically, as Adams thought American life should be directed." Adams' *History* continually stressed the importance of scientific education to national prominence and celebrated the speed of American technical innovation. "Education, systematic or accidental, had done its worst"; no more was possible for Adams or King in 1871 (1006). King and Adams were on the brink of their major work, but while the geologist could "look back and look forward on a straight line, with scientific knowledge for its base, Adams's life, past or future, was "a succession of violent breaks or waves, with no base at all" (1005).

Yet, and this doesn't bode well for an education constructed on a straight line, King and his colleagues knew that "catastrophe was the law of change; they cared little for simplicity and much for complexity," confirming Adams' doubts about uniformitist theories of evolution. [598] According to the expectations of his friends, "With ordinary luck [King] would die at eighty the richest and most many-sided genius of his day" (1005). Soon after Adams meets the geologists, the narrative itself breaks off for its twenty-year hiatus and the catastrophes he experienced offstage. The appearance of King at the conclusion of the first section previews the greater interest in science and scientific explanation in the second section. As for King himself, in the second section King's promise is blighted when he leaves the leadership of the Geological Survey to go into the mining business. By1893 it was evident that "the theory of scientific education failed where most theory fails—for want of money" (1036). King's breakdown was the

occasion for his and Adams' trip to Cuba and a meditation on the nature of American success.

Geology was also the primary field in which Adams explored his equivocal relation to Charles Darwin.[599] "The Tendency of History" cited Darwin and Henry Thomas Buckle as heralds of the expected science of history. In the *Education* chapter called "Darwinism 1867-1868," Adams, fleeing English dilettantism and fearing American antiquarianism, embarked on a career as a journalist by writing a review of Sir Charles Lyell's *Principles of Geology,* which described an evolution conducted at a steady, uniform rate. [600] Adams calls himself "a Darwinist before the letter; a predestined follower of the tide; but he was hardly trained to follow Darwin's evidences," which may say something about the timing of his intellectual formation (925).[601] Before he read Darwin or Marx, he read Comte and Buckle. He claims he should have been a Marxist, but some trait in his New England nature resisted, so he became "the next best thing, "a Comteist, within the limits of evolution" (926). Adams' preference for the physical rather than the biological sciences as references may follow Buckle; the greater abstraction of physics allowed for a clearer trajectory and a more inclusive generalization.[602] William Jordy's contention that Adams felt a greater affinity to the physical sciences because he "tended to look toward the termination of a process" is also suggestive (133).[603]

Adams doesn't always make a distinction between the ideas of Darwin and the claims of Darwinism.[604] In England in the 1860s he recognized evolution's appeal: "Steady, uniform, unbroken evolution from lower to higher seemed easy" and confirmed one's preferences (927). After all, "Unity and Uniformity were the whole motive of philosophy." If Darwin like an Englishman backed into it, while Spinoza started from it,

"the difference of method taught only that the best way of reaching unity was to unite." Uniform evolution easily engendered the complacency of Darwinism, "the very best substitute for religion; a safe, conservative, practical, thoroughly Common-law deity," in its assumption of present progress and dream of future perfection (926-27). But on reading Lyell, Adams was disturbed to discover that the glacial period "looked like a chasm." [605] Forced to state Lyell's views, "which he thought weak as hypotheses and worthless as proofs," he inserted a sentence referring to the contrary ideas of Louis Agassiz, his former teacher, expert on glaciation and a catastrophist. But Adams still projected evolution as a structuring principle for scientific history—the problem for the historian was to bring the Middle Ages into the "line of evolution," after all. Adams can't escape the metaphor of development, if change was not always steady and progress not necessarily improvement.

In another specular encounter with the past, what Adams saw as he lay among the grazing sheep on Wenlock Edge, with its Roman road, thirteenth century abbey, fifteenth century priory, fossil *Pteraspis* (the first vertebrate), and mountains older than life, was the interchangeability of time. All geology seemed to prove was "Evolution that did not evolve; Uniformity that was not uniform; and Selection that did not select" (931). *Pteraspis*, his vertebrate forefather, "a very respectable fish," had no antecedents itself and seemed to erupt into the record, while *Terebratula* seemed unchanged from the beginning of time. Adams is not really searching for origins; from the opening of the *Education*, he has ancestors enough. The amusing *Pteraspis* is interesting not as the first instance, but as an accident.[606] The scene at Wenlock confirms Adams' skepticism: "He could detect no more evolution in life since the *Pteraspis* than he could detect it in

architecture in the Abbey. All he could detect was change" (931). The Wenlock interlude lacks the urgency of his Rome encounter, since Adams is not asking questions but making a case.

The "Adams" of 1901 reread the Lyell article alongside current geological research and his doubts increased. Nothing had replaced the theory. Yet the evidence for complexity and discontinuity against uniformity only increased, even as the study of geology became more contradictory and fragmented. Adams admits his ignorance: the "correctness" of the science "in no way concerned him" in his own concern for the "history of the mind," but here and elsewhere he is impatient with the slow speed at which scientists formulate theories. He wants to know, he wants the scientists to tell him what is correct, or else he wants them to change the *ignoramus* that is "under their breath" to the *ignorabimus* "on the tips of their tongues," an admission of failure (1086).[607]

Lack of knowledge doesn't hold back Adams from making his own assessment about the nature of evolution:

> Evolution was becoming change of form broken by freaks of force, and warped at times by attractions affecting intelligence, twisted and tortured at other times by sheer violence, cosmic, chemical, solar, supersensual, electrolytic,—who knew what?—defying science, if not denying known law; and the wisest of men could not imitate the church, and invoke a 'larger synthesis' to unify the anarchy again. Historians have got into far too much trouble by following schools of theology in their efforts to enlarge their synthesis, that they should willingly repeat the process in science. For human purposes a point must always be soon reached where larger synthesis is suicide (1086-87).

Adams evokes the poetry of chaos and the vatic power of poetry with his alliterative consonants and proliferating catalogue of forces punctured by a question.[608] The geologists' experience in science and Hay's experience in politics seemed to point to "the larger synthesis of rapidly increasing complexity," but Adams is also aware that "unity is

vision; it must have been part of the process of learning to see" (1084). If the child saw unity, the complexity Adams cannot avoid seeing might be the vision of age: "the change might be only in himself" (1087). Perhaps the history he questions here was the kind that started with the assumption of design, like the intention of a providential deity behind the course of events, or the "Darwinian" evolutionary schemes that replicated the assurances of religion, but Adams insists history needs to have an idea. Writing history that followed the line of evolution might not be so easy if evolution was "change of form broken by freaks of force."

In light of his own construction of a dynamic theory, and his "recurrent pattern of forced retreat to higher ground" to quote Carolyn Porter, Adams' warning against the larger synthesis is interesting and surprising. When Adams questions his assumptions, he speaks as the student, not the law-giver: "Any student, of any age, thinking only of a thought and not of his thought, should delight in turning about and trying the opposite motion" (1087). Adams delights in entertaining his sets of polarities and paradoxes too much to abandon them for the sake of a synthesis. Adams always assumes motion, and looks for changes in direction and rate. "Inertial" thought tended to follow sentiment.

In a tribute, perhaps, to King and his old friends on the Geological Survey, towards the end of the *Education*, the historian describes his goal as "triangulation":

> Scarcely half-a-dozen men in America could be named who were known to have looked a dozen years ahead; while any historian who means to keep his alignment with past and future must cover a horizon of two generations at least. If he seeks to align himself with the future, he must assume a condition of some sort for a world fifty years beyond his own. Every historian—sometimes unconsciously, but always inevitably—must have put to himself the question—how long could such-or-such an outworn system last? He can never give himself less than one generation to show the full effects of a changed condition. His object is to triangulate from the widest possible base to the furthest point he thinks he can see, which is always far beyond the curvature of the horizon. (1081)

When Adams means to use scientific terms literally and when figuratively is not always clear, but it is difficult to read this translation of spatial projection into temporal prediction as anything but metaphorical. Adams demonstrates the extent to which historians, consciously or not, write the past from the perspective of present problems, but then goes so far in his orientation towards the future as to change his subject to speculative philosophy, if not prophecy. Premodern historians had once defined history as the testimony of two or three generations of eye- and ear-witnesses; anything beyond that connection was ancient history.[609] Adams changes the matter of history by placing the historian two generations in the future. If it takes one generation to show the results of a changed condition, "The child born in 1900 would, then, be born into a new world which would not be a unity bit a multiple." Adams tries to imagine that "land where no one had ever penetrated before; where order was an accidental relation obnoxious to nature" (1086). Instead of saying that he was extrapolating forward from present struggles between anarchy and order, Adams claims that "the law of the new multiverse" explained the present disorder.

Apparently only the second generation born in 1920 would experience the full effect of the changes. The "historian" as prognosticator, the only one who sees fifty years ahead, seems to be his own instrument of divination. Yet if the new forces at work truly represented a break in continuity, could human thought anticipate them? In "The Tendency of History," Adams wrote, "Any science assumes a necessary sequence of cause and effect, a force resulting in motion which cannot be other than what it is. Any science of history must be absolute, like other sciences, and must fix with mathematical certainty the path which human society has got to follow" (129). For the sake of his

pedagogical project, Adams needs scientific theory for its possibilities of prediction, its "necessary sequence of cause and effect." Any science of history might make it possible to educate young men for the regularities of existence, according to the laws of human behavior, although in such a determinist world necessity would seem the remove the possibility of choice and obviate the need for an education. Conversely, given his law of acceleration, no education was possible, because the future with its geometrical expansion of complex new forms of energy and compulsion would be beyond present standards of intelligibility. The greater the acceleration of change, the less likely the development of a higher synthesis which sought pattern beneath the disruption, and the more dubious the synthesis. The possibilities seem limited to order or anarchy or an alternation of the two, but in either case the premise of the volume, "to fit young men, in Universities as elsewhere, to be men of the world, equipped for any emergency," is in doubt (722).

The old formulas had failed and, in his impatience to know, Adams read the unwillingness of science to theorize about the new forces as intellectual bankruptcy. In such a quandary, "every man with self-respect" has to "invent a formula of his own for the universe" (1151). This makes his dynamic theory something like cultivating his own garden. Even before he begins, Adams qualifies his theory as merely personal in significance: "One sought no absolute truth…Among indefinite possible orbits, one sought the orbit which would best satisfy the observed movement of the runaway star, Groombridge, 1838, commonly called Henry Adams" (1151). Adams' reluctance to make claims for his theory raises questions about the possible effectiveness of generalization in historiography, if even a generalization on the grand scale of tracing the line of force

through western history claims only the singularity of a personal meaning. But then, in case the reader was about to accept his proclamation of modesty at face-value, Adams characteristically shifts position and implicitly looks down on historians and scientists for their reluctance to generalize: "Any schoolboy could work out the problem if he were given the right to state it in his own terms" (1151). Adams' end is his beginning: "he sat down as though he were again a boy at school the values of a Dynamic Theory of History" (1152).

The theory begins on a note of derision directed against itself and all theories: "A dynamic theory, like most theories begins by begging the question: It defines Progress as the development and economy of Forces. Further it defines force as anything that does, or helps to do work. Man is a force; so is the sun; so is a mathematical point" (1153). "Energy" might seem to fit the definition more closely, but "force" provides the sense of direction so important to Adams.[610] As Samuels describes the Dynamic Theory, it is not so much scientific as "scientific-sounding."[611]

Man "begs the question" by assuming that "he captures the forces," but the dynamic theory assumes the reverse:

> The sum of force attracts; the feeble atom or molecule called man is attracted; he suffers education or growth; he is the sum of the forces that attract him; his body and his thought are alike their product; the movement of the forces controls the progress of his mind, since he can know nothing but the motions which impinge on his senses, whose sum makes education. (1153)

Adams is back with a unit of demonstration, although here his Adam, whether a child or just living the childhood of the race, is defined as a feeble force, not a manikin, nor is he Aquinas' man-machine whose energy was provided by a Prime Motor. If Adams used the

language of machines to indicate Aquinas' scientific modernity, here science is connoted by language that accretes meaning while remaining flat, dry and lacking affect.

Mechanical force will be one of the future influences on the man, but Adams prefers to begin with an organic simile. (As he says elsewhere, "images are not arguments, rarely even lead to proof, but the mind craves them.") The man is like a spider in his web: "Forces of nature dance like flies before the net, and the spider pounces on them when it can; but it makes many fatal mistakes, though its theory of force is sound. The spider–mind acquires a faculty of memory, and, with it, a singular skill of analysis and synthesis, taking apart and putting together the meshes of its trap" (1153). In the beginning, though, all he had was "acute sensibility to the higher forces," compared to other creatures.[612] The spider doesn't seem to be attractive himself and the web constrains the spider as much as his prey, to wait and react. "With little or no effort on his part," fire, water, animals and plants taught him their uses; "all these forces formed his thought, induced his actions, and even shaped his figure" (1153).

As his appetite for power assimilated more forces, man enlarged his mind. To control the highest energy, "he invented the science called religion," which is "cultivation of occult force whether in detail or mass," thus in effect making the Virgin and the Dynamo equivalent and interchangeable. He conceived the universe in the image of his own unity. However,

> Unable to define Force as a unity, man symbolized it and pursued it, both in himself and in the infinite, as philosophy and theology; the mind is itself the subtlest of all known forces, and its self-retrospection necessarily created a science which had the singular value of lifting his education, at the start, to the finest, subtlest and broadest training both in analysis and synthesis" (1155).

In the conclusion of *Chartres*, too, Adams had celebrated human thought. Explicitly the mental ability Adams valued most was imagination, when he posited that in thought at least, man was free: "his thought was an energy paying no regard to space or time or object or sense" (691). *Chartres* was an experiment in imagination across time and space, which in conclusion celebrated the qualities of analysis and synthesis as well, in the person of Thomas Aquinas. The idea that "self-retrospection necessarily created a science" that lifted education to "the finest, subtlest and broadest training" justifies the project of the *Education* within the course of human development, even as the book supposedly demonstrates the validity of the theory.

When Adams claims that five thousand years ago, man "reached his highest powers," it seems clear that his account is not going to be a triumphal progress, whether or not it will be a story of declension. Momentum consisted mainly in the conservation of force, rather than its development, until A.D. 310, when Adams' language turns from abstract to specific and personal. "There it was that Adams broke down on the steps of Ara Coeli, his path blocked by the scandalous failure of civilisation at the moment it had achieved complete success," which he doesn't need to remind the reader was also the scandalous failure of historians to explain. For Adams the observer effect seems inescapable; he can't avoid being self-reflexive about his theory or his experience. Bewailing present problems and lost opportunities, he notes that in four hundred years, the empire had "solved the problems of Europe more completely than they have ever been solved since." The standard economic explanation of its fall through depletion and adverse exchanges was contradicted by the development of "too much energy and too fast" (1156). A dynamic law insists that the masses of man and nature "must go on,

reacting upon each other, without stop, as the sun and a comet react upon each other, and that any appearance of stoppage is illusive. This thesis seems to extract excess rather than deficiency, of action and re-action to account for the dissolution of the Roman Empire, which should, as a problem of mechanics, have been torn to pieces by acceleration" (1156). Here Adams seems to be describing a more active role for reaction, if men and nature are engaged in a mutually dynamic relationship.

The dynamic theorist who follows the attractive forces, notes that with the "relentless logic of Roman thought," the empire could not help but establish unity in heaven as well: "It was induced by its dynamic necessities to economise the Gods" (1157). "Good taste forbids saying" that when Constantine made Christianity a state religion, he simply was pursuing power: "he speculated as audaciously as any modern stockbroker on values of which he knew the utmost only the volume; he merged all uncertain forces into a single Trust, which he enormously overcapitalized, and forced on the market." Pagan society "was drawn to the Cross because, in its system of physics, the Cross had absorbed all its old occult or fetish-power. The symbol represented the sum of nature,—the Energy of modern science,—and society believed it to be as real as X-rays—perhaps it was!" (1158). This is analogy as proof, which begs the question of the similarity; if this is the way capitalists behave, then it must be true.

The ghost of Gibbon seems to hover over this section, since Adams' discussion of the fall of Rome is animated in a way that the other phases of his theory are not. In his own idiom, Adams, like his hero, is amused to antagonize the Church and religion, whether in questioning Constantine's motivation, the reality of the Cross or its equivalence to X-rays. "Fetish power was cheap and satisfactory down to a certain point.

Turgot and August Comte long ago fixed this stage of economy as a necessary stage of social education, and historians seem now to accept it as the only gain yet made towards scientific history. Great numbers of educated people,—perhaps a majority,—cling to the method still" (1158). In another writer, the absence of a clear referent for "it" might seem like a grammatical lapse, but with Adams there is always the possibility that he is making an obscure joke about contemporary historiography, just as he plays on the concept of "educated." In presenting his history as a series of phases, Adams seems to be modeling it on the broad lines of Comte's historical sociology. Fetish power is just the first period of Comte's Theological stage, but Adams may have been drawing on his old interest in ancient institutions as well (or simply enjoyed the provocation of the phrase).[613]

The problem of the empire was unequal development. To support an expanding social and political system, the empire had only fetish power and slave power. This seems to be the inverse of the nineteenth century problem in which political and social systems lagged behind the growth of mechanical power. The result which "might have been stated as a mathematical formula" was a "vicious circle" (the paragraph includes a typical mix of the scientific and the figurative): "The economic needs of a violently centralizing society forced the Empire to enlarge its slave system until the slave system consumed itself and the empire too, leaving society no recourse but further enlargement of its religious system in order to compensate for the losses and horrors of the failure" (1158). When the city of Rome first fell, Augustine redirected public attention from the City of Rome to the City of God, which didn't save the people of Hippo from destruction, and left society "in appearance dull to new attraction." (1159).

The human mind is mysterious to the historian, but "Never has nature offered it so violent a stimulant as when she opened to it the possibility of sharing infinite power in eternal life" (1159). The medieval "delight of experimenting on occult force" produced monuments that still retain vestiges of that stimulus; they "still affect some people as the noblest work of man, so that, even today, great masses of idle and ignorant tourists" are surprised at the evidence for "a social mind of such singular energy and unity." In his discussion of the Middle Ages, Adams never mentions the fetish power of the Virgin, the "adorable mistress" of his previous chapter. In the strictly scientific view, the symbolization of the power mattered less than its effect, the work it stimulated, the "great epochs of emotion" proven by the Gothic Cathedrals and Scholastic Theology. "The moment had Greek beauty and more than Greek unity, but it was brief." It says something of the *Education's* associational organization and analogical style that this is the first time the Greeks have been mentioned.

The dynamic theory is re-energized with "the sudden, unexplained appearance of at least two new natural forces of the highest educational value in mechanics," gunpowder and the compass (1160). (In *Chartres* Adams had placed the seeds of the scientific revolution in Aquinas' turn to reason to explain God, which was influenced by the recovery of ancient philosophy as the result of the Crusades, but the dynamic theory craves the quick image, the compass indicating "the widening scope of the mind" and gunpowder the diabolic magic of technology.) Adams also strikes a blow for the power of imagination released by the larger synthesis in sentences like:

> The dynamic scheme began by asserting rather recklessly that between the Pyramids (B.C. 3000) and the Cross (A. D. 300) no new force affected western progress, and antiquarians may easily dispute the fact; but in any case the motive influence, old or new, which raised both Pyramids or Cross was the same attraction of power in a

> future life that raised the Dome of Sancta Sofia and the cathedral at Amiens, however much it was altered, enlarged, or removed in distance in space" (390)

Considering the Roman empire's prominent place in the narrative, it's surprising to discover that Adams didn't consider it a "new force," but his primary relation may have been to Gibbon and the decline. With bravado Adams admits his historical deficiencies, while inviting the reader to soar with him across centuries and continents, far above fussy antiquarians mired in facts. In any case, between the Cross and the Crescent, the world was completely absorbed in the attractions of the afterlife until "Literally these two forces seemed to drop from the sky" (1160).

Unlike Brooks Adams' *Law of Civilization and Decay*, which describes a recurring pattern of consolidation and decentralization, civilization and barbarism, Henry's scheme, true to his interest in catastrophism, allows for shifts and turns in direction, and acceleration and deceleration of movement. Adams needed to indicate a force that broke the inertial continuity of the Middle Ages, and "taught" the inhabitants about the new mechanical world to come, but the sudden appearance of the two technologies is more magical than the discussion of fetish worship. It would be one thing if he were describing past reactions to the "sudden, unexplained appearance" of the strange new technology, but he is describing the effect on historians: "no single event has more puzzled historians." The interruption seems like a contrivance, a joke about causation in history rather than a contribution to a historical discussion. Having apparently solved the conundrums of the fall of Rome and the recession to know of the Middle Ages, Adams seems driven to create a new mystery, another *Pteraspis*. The problem is one of tone, if Adams wants to be taken seriously, but perhaps he cannot take a larger synthesis entirely seriously.

According to the dynamic theory, the next great movement in education occurred around 1500. Oddly, given Adams' opinion of the great man theory of history, there is a hero of the dynamic theory, and furthermore, he taught a lesson still relevant for the twentieth century. Lord Bacon (as Adams always referred to him) recognized the new forces at work, reoriented his thinking, and taught the attitude which allowed posterity to make use of the new phenomena. Bacon, possessed of a more "active—or reactive" mind than most, "reversed the relation of thought to force." The "persistence of thought-inertia," i.e. the old belief in a unified universe and a conscious purpose behind events, "is the leading idea of modern history." However, "Except as reflected in himself, man has no reason for assuming unity in the universe, or an ultimate substance, or a prime motor." Bacon urged society "to lay aside the idea of evolving the universe from thought, and to try evolving thought from the universe. The mind should observe and register forces—take them apart and put them together—without assuming unity at all." Bacon's law is tactical: "'Nature to be commanded, must be obeyed'" (1162).

To a degree Bacon was simply articulating an inevitable reaction and he, like everyone else, was astonished at the speed of progress: "Europe saw itself violently resisting, wrenched into false positions, drawn along new lines like a fish that is caught on a hook; but unable to decide by what force it was controlled" (1163). All history and philosophy from Montaigne to Nietzsche wrestled with nothing else. "Not one considerable man of science dared face the stream of thought; and the whole number of those who acted, like Franklin, as electric conductors of the new forces from nature to man, down to the year 1800, did not exceed a few score" (1163). Adams claims that "America, except for Franklin, stood outside the stream"; this is the assumption of

Adams' *History*, which details a change in attitude to science only after 1800. If Asia "refused to be touched by the stream," this seems to imply that resistance was possible; Russia and China remained fascinating puzzles of "race-inertia" for Adams.

Slowly the attractions of the new forces replaced the old religious science, as "Man depended more and more absolutely on forces other than his own and on instruments which superseded his senses" (1163). Men maintained the illusion that they controlled the forces, but Bacon "foretold" their dependence on mechanical forces to do work. For Lord Bacon's "true" followers, "science always meant self-restraint, obedience, sensitiveness to impulse from without," which sounds like the basis for a priesthood (1163-64). Bacon's attitude of acquiescence to the new forces might be questioned as hastening that acceleration and consequent dislocation. If Adams' young men learned to follow the current and even facilitate it, might they not be hastening an apocalypse? "The idea that the new force must be in itself a good is only an animal or vegetable instinct. As nature developed her hidden energies, they tended to become destructive" (1164).Would obedience to the strange new forces even permit command? In the pose of the Conservative Christian Anarchist Adams claimed he wanted to hasten the crisis to see its culmination, whatever that might be.

When it came to the problem of women Adams was willing, half-heartedly, to urge adherence to the old inertial channels, but for his young men to have any choice, they needed the power of intelligent reaction to survive what was coming. "In the earlier stages of progress, the forces to be assimilated were simple and easy to absorb, but, as the mind of man enlarged its range, it enlarged the field of complexity, and must continue to do so, even unto chaos, until the reservoirs of sensuous or supersensuous energies are

exhausted, or cease to affect him, or until he succumbs to their excess" (1165). 1900 seemed to begin a revolutionary phase as great as 310. Even the men of science were bewildered, like priests of Isis before the Cross, because the new forces seemed immune to measurement.

Adams' Dynamic Theory of History closes in uncertainty: "This, then, or something like this, would be a dynamic theory of history. Any school boy knows enough to object at once that it is the oldest and most universal of theories" (1165). "Something like this," is an essay into a dynamic theory rather than a theory. Like Adams' insistence on the unfinished state of the *Education*, this is more than an excuse for his failings. In judging art Adams preferred the experiment that didn't precisely know its end, but left something open to possibility, and in writing he imagined the pen that wrote without knowing its own way, because they followed the line of vitality. The conditional mood suggests the hypothetical nature of all theories and the impossibility of their conditions for history specifically. As a demonstration of a theory, it seems to invite the reader to propose another personal formula.

Adams starts from what he has inherited; this is the "oldest" of theories, which differs only in the way that force is conceptualized: God or Nature, purposeful or arbitrary, one or many. Having created a law, Adams is bound to create an escape: "Everyone admits that the will is a free force, habitually decided by motives. No one denies that motives exist adequate to decide the will; even though it may not always be conscious of them" (1165). This is surprising, because in the conclusion of *Chartres* Adams wrote about unity and free will as contradictory delusions: "The world was there, staring them in the face, with all its chaotic conditions, and society insisted on its Unity in

self-defence." Having insisted on unity, society contradicted itself in wanting free will as well: "Society insists on free will, although free will has never been explained to the satisfaction of any but those who much wish to be satisfied, and although the words in any common sense implied not unity but duality in creation" (684-85). In *Chartres* Aquinas had to assert the existence of free will as the necessary precondition to belief and Adams seemed willing to accept it as the finishing touch of art. In his own theory, Adams begs the question and posits a universe in which man is a weak force, able at least to measure and to choose among attractive forces, if not necessarily to choose well. The manikin, too, is more drawn than self-propelled, whether he is following the prescribed route or drifting, waiting for the current.

A Dynamic Theory envisions a difficult world of greater complexity. Since "past history is only a value of relation to the future, and this value is only one of convenience," to make his theory of movement more convenient, Adams proposed a formula of Acceleration. Instead of the human spider, the Law of Acceleration prefers the image of the man-comet:

> which drops from space, in a straight line, at the regular acceleration of speed, directly into the sun, and after wheeling sharply about it, in heat that ought to dissipate any known substance, turns back unharmed, in defiance of law, by the path on which it came. The mind, by analogy, may figure as such a comet, the better because it also defies law. (1167)

In the more deterministic universe of the Law of Acceleration, defiance defines the space of human freedom, the possibility of an exception. Adams needs a more active symbol than a spider trapped in his web, but comets have been known to disintegrate as well as escape. As with his dynamic theory, even before he formulates his law Adams wants to

suggest an escape clause. But the law of acceleration is relentless in its mechanical way. The human mind will have to find its own way out.

The historian turns to statistics on coal power, since "society by common accord agreed in measuring its progress by the coal-output." The development of coal power in the nineteenth century (as well as, presumably, a science of statistics) made it possible to assign values, "and the appearance of supersensual forces towards 1900 made this calculation a pressing necessity; since the next step became infinitely serious" (1171). The utilized power of coal doubled every ten years between 1800 and 1900 and this ratio of increase in volume serves as "dynamometer" (1168). Much of the explication of the law is taken up with projecting this rate backwards into time through an assortment of forms of energy, which are in some way homologous since they supposedly accelerate at the same rate. The assumption is that acceleration, "progress," is constant, even if the rate increases almost to invisibility. Ratios would have to be guessed for other forms of energy like the new forces that had been discovered since 1800: "Complexity had extended itself on immense horizons, and arithmetical ratios were useless for any attempt at accuracy." The ten-year rule seemed conservative, but "Unless the calculator was prepared to be instantly overwhelmed by physical force and mental complexity, he must stop there," thus demonstrating the effects of the acceleration he was trying to prove (1168).

When it came to forms of energy other than coal power, "nothing was easier than to assume" the ratio from 1900 as far back as 1820, but then statistics no longer helped. "La Place would have found it child's play to fix a ratio of progression in mathematical science between Descartes, Leibniz, Newton and himself. Watt could have given in

pounds the increase of power between Newcomen's machines and his own." Franklin and Volta could report "absolute creation of power…Napoleon I must have had a distinct notion of his own numerical relation to Louis XIV." Taken on face value, these examples posit the existence of hypothetical subjective judgments (with the partial exception of Watt's) founded on personal ambition as well as professional expertise. Perhaps the emblematic list of names would be enough to set up a chain of progressive associations for the reader, but they themselves are not examples of acceleration, let alone proof. Granted the measure of force is its effect on the human mind, how are these thinkers hypothetically measuring as ratios the power of mathematical science, machine power, personal political power? At the conclusion of his *History* Adams had regretted the inability of science to answer qualitative questions about human experience.

The proliferation of examples is an indication of acceleration, and the narrative speeds backwards as the number of examples diminish. "Pending agreement between these authorities, theory may assume what it likes" for the eighteenth century. Leaping more quickly over the seventeenth century, in faux-naïve association Galileo, Kepler, Descartes, Newton "took vast pains to fix the laws of acceleration for moving bodies, while Lord Bacon and William Harvey were content with showing the fact of acceleration in knowledge, but from their combined results a historian might be tempted to maintain a similar rate of movement back to 1600, subject to correction from the historians of mathematics." Even more quickly, "to save trouble, one might tentatively carry back the same ratio of acceleration, or retardation, to the year 1400, with the help of Columbus and Gutenberg, " again "subject to correction from statisticians" (1169).

Then Adams stops the narrative to consider a new formula for a “law of mind” in which the rate of force increased by squares every century: “As the human meteoroid approached the sun or centre of attractive force, the attraction of one century squared itself to give the measure of attraction in the next” (1170). Each acceleration reaches an equilibrium, which is undefined, before it is drawn to create a new equilibrium. The law assumes the proper temporal measurement is the century, Adams’ favorite period or episteme, so as to create a series of phases, but how to determine the attraction of a century and why it is a “law of mind” is not discussed. As Adams continues his progress in reverse, there is not much to report. An architect could detect sequence, probably, between the cathedrals of St. Peter’s, Amiens, San Marco, Sancta Sofia and Ravenna. ”All the historian dares affirm is that a sequence is manifestly there, and he has a right to carry back his ratio, to represent the fact, without assuming its numerical correctness.” As for the problem of the Middle Ages, “the break in acceleration in the middle-ages is only apparent; the attraction worked through shifting forms of force.” And so on, jumping to the existence of the arrowhead to prove that acceleration, although infinitesimal, persisted through prehistory.

There is a serious idea in the Law of Acceleration about the nature of time as it was experienced in modernity, but as a law, it parodies law and reflects Adams’ dissatisfactions with the explanations of science as well as history. A scientist like Lyell might shape theory “after his own needs” and assume unity from the start, neglect the evidence, select the convenient or irrelevant fact, or claim future research would fill in the record. Science might wait for the “larger synthesis” that never came, to sweep away rather than incorporate its internal contradictions. Adams’ reliance on the explanatory

power of science was a historicist decision, which assumed that only science was capable of conceptualizing an ordered universe in the modern era, or if not ordered, at least intelligible. Yet, "The most elementary books of science betrayed the inadequacy of old implements of thought" with expressions of ignorance, contradiction, even an unwillingness to investigate causes. At the same time, Adams was frustrated by reading the assessments of scientists: Karl Pearson claimed the new forces were unknowable. Henri Poincaré promised only endless displacement: "we should discover the simple under the complex, then the complex under the simple; then anew the simple under the complex; and so on without ever being able to foresee the last term" (1135) The historian "who waited to be led, or misled" by science could wait no more and had to form his own laws (1137).

Despite the levity of his language in reviewing the past, when Adams faces the future his tone turns apocalyptic:

> Every day Nature violently revolted, causing so-called accidents with enormous destruction of property and life, while plainly laughing at man, who helplessly groaned and shrieked and shuddered, but never for an instant could stop. The railways alone approached the carnage of war; automobiles and firearms ravaged society, until an earthquake became almost a nervous reaction. An immense volume of force had detached itself from the unknown universe of energy, while still vaster reservoirs, supposed to be infinite, steadily revealed themselves, attracting mankind with more compulsive course than all the Pontic Seas or Gods or Gold that ever existed, and feeling still less of retiring ebb. (1172)

This returns to the vision of Mont Blanc in 1870, "a chaos of anarchic and purposeless forces" usually clothed by the illusions of the senses, and the death of Louisa at the hands of a cruel and beautiful nature. But there is no compensatory delusive beauty; the products of human imagination are purely mechanical. The illusion of progress that technology implied cannot be recovered. Throughout the *Education* Nature is an idea that

seems absolute, as the mind craves unity in imaging force. As a scientific term, though, "nature" remains mystifying, even when it is not being personified. At times all forces are products of nature, while at others, Adams predicts forces will create a "despotism of artificial order that nature abhorred." He doesn't distinguish between the eighteenth century vision of Nature, whose beneficent laws impel women to have children, and the twentieth century perspective presented here.

As his own nervous reaction to force, and this passage is filled with nerves to the point of hysteria, all Adams can attempt to do is recreate the world in his own illusion, this time in the language of science which seems even less adequate than the language of religion. Against the poetry of chaos, both horrific and seductive (when the Russian interior minister is assassinated, the Conservative Christian Anarchist isn't sure whether to identify with the murderer or the murdered) all Adams has to offer is the inadequate defense of a law.

The Law of Acceleration should be subject to verification by experimentation: "If the acceleration, measured by the development and economy of forces, were to continue at its rate since 1800, the mathematician of 1950 should be able to plot the past and future orbit of the human race as accurately as that of the November meteoroids" (1178). In resorting to formula, Adams seems to be repeating the conclusion of his *History*, which claimed that by 1820 national character was fixed and the simple application of formulas of population and economic growth could explain its expansion across continent for the next hundred years. In this autotelic projection history was completed before it began and movement in space became more important than movement in time. History as a domain of knowledge would become a study of the regularities of a mass society and require

some new unimagined scientific form rather than narrative. But the study of timeless regularities might be considered the end of history rather than its reinvention for a new age. [614]

William James, who of all Adams' friends seems to have returned the most detailed and cogent response to the *Education,* [615] had trouble with the final chapters, their "retrospection projected on the future." His objection to the way time became endless regularity was based not so much on the requirements of history as the origins of the new. "But unless the future contains genuine novelties, unless the present is really creative of them, I don't see the use of time at all. Space would be a sufficient theatre for these statically determined relations to be arranged."[616] Where Adams saw a chaos of new forces and preferred certainty, James was willing to project a pluralistic universe of possibility.

Adams addressed the difficulty, not in terms of the nature of history and its relation to time, but history in its function as acculturation. Critics might argue that a history that could plot the future "was profoundly unmoral and tended to discourage effort," but the historian can only report what he sees and apply it to his pedagogy. Besides, what Adams has predicted so far has indicated the need for utmost mental attention, if the child of the future was to be "a sort of God compared with any former creation of nature," the product of unimaginable new forces, and not their victim. If nothing else, the teacher has learned his ignorance: "The teacher of 1900 if foolhardy, might stimulate; if foolish, might resist; if intelligent might balance, as wise and foolish have often tried to do since the beginning; but the forces would continue to educate, and

the mind would continue to react. All the teacher could hope was to teach it reaction" (1174).

The theory exists for the sake of the form, as the culmination of the education it has been depicting, as an education for Adams himself, as an education for young men. (Otherwise a dynamic theory would need its own volume at least, like Brooks' *Law of Civilization or Decay*, or Vico's *New Science* to unfold and explicate its argument.) On all these grounds it remains equivocal about the conditions of its creation. The dilemmas of science, which seemed to be at the limits of comprehension in seeking an adequate explanation for supersensual phenomena should have made Adams less, not more skeptical of any grand theory. As Adams' Dynamic Theory of History proclaims, unity is merely the residue of an inertial mental formation, even if under that inertial formation "the greatest works of man" were achieved. As Adams projects the future against the past failure and present inadequacy of thought he suggests, "Evidently the new American would have to think in contradictions, and instead of Kant's famous four antinomies, the universe would know no law that could not be proved by its anti-law" (1174)

Like Adams, William James was concerned about the ability of the mind to react to the challenges of a new age, but from an assumption of hidden abundance. His own question for education asked "How can men be trained to their most useful pitch of energy?" In his 1906 Presidential address to the American Philosophical Association, James suggested the possibility of releasing the hidden reserves of energy humans possess and only call on, (as "second wind" for example), at moments of great excitement: "Most of us feel as if a sort of cloud weighed upon us, keeping us below our highest notch of clearness in discernment, sureness in reasoning, or firmness in deciding.

Compared with what we ought to be, we are only half-awake. Our fires are damped; our drafts are checked. We are making use of only a small part of our possible mental and physical resources" (12). Biographical research was necessary to learn "the possible extent of our powers." Discovering "the various keys for unlocking them in diverse individuals, [should] dominate the whole problem of individual and national education" (38-39). [617]

Adams' Dynamic Theory posited the enlargement of mental power in response to external stimulation over time. However, his own essay into biological research suggested that the mind might no longer be capable of the kind of radical expansion required: "To educate,—oneself to begin with,—had been the effort of sixty years; and the difficulties had doubled with the coal output" (1175). (James might perhaps argue it was those new forces that had stimulated his late work.) As Adams saw it, the problem for the reactive mind of 1900 was not only the aggregate amount of force or forces around it, but also their accelerating movement and their increasing complexity.

> The movement from unity to multiplicity, between 1200 and 1900, was unbroken in sequence, and rapid in acceleration. Prolonged one generation longer, it would require a new social mind. As though thought were common salt in indefinite solution it must enter a new phase subject to new laws. Thus far, since five or ten thousand years, the mind had successfully reacted, and nothing yet proved that it would fail to react—but it would need to jump. (1175)

In writing *Chartres*, Adams had analyzed the effectiveness of religion as a Jamesian "dynamogenic agent" that was able to draw out extraordinary achievement for a time, but the forces of the twentieth century multiverse seemed incapable of generating a similar compelling illusion of unity. The "rosy view" might take Lord Bacon as a model and preach "self-restraint, obedience, sensitiveness to impulse from without," might re-organize the university with history as the unifying formula of a new church. Against

James' assumption of plenitude, though, Adams increasingly suspected depletion, and not simply of human energy. Adams' final essays "The Rule of Phase Applied to History" and "A Letter to American Teachers of History" take his scientism to a new level.

Adams planned to send "The Rule Of Phase" to professors of history with a cover letter which suggested that a history revitalized by scientific thinking might form the cornerstone for a revitalization of university instruction:

> In that case, he will conceive of the University as a system of education grouped about History: a main current of thought branching out, like a tree, into endless forms of activity, in a regular development, according to the laws of physics; and to be studied as a single stream, not as now by a multiversal, but by a universal law; not as a scientific but as a historical unity; not as a practice of technical handling, but as a process of mental evolution, controlled, like the evolution of any series of chemical or electrical equilibria, by one general formula. (L6:207) [618]

This intention bears little resemblance to what the "rule" actually says, although possibly Adams intended to revise it further, since it was never sent. Without any explanation or framing, it plunges into a discussion of Willard Gibbs's Rule of Phase (or a small portion of it that interested Adams) in the way substances changed to reach new states of equibibrium. He translated Gibb's chemical phases into Auguste Comte's phases of society, if not Comte's periodization. Adams' Rule of Phase was an extension of his Law of Acceleration, in which the rate of acceleration proceeded by squares: he proposed a Religious phase that ended in 1600, a Mechanical phase that ended in 1900, an Electrical phase that would end in 1917 and an Ethereal phase that would end in 1921, which would "bring Thought to the limit of its possibilities." Or not, depending on how well he had calculated his periods.

The more comprehensive, if still sketchy, "Letter" attempts to do the same using the Second Law of Thermodynamics, whose explanatory potential for the chaos Adams

perceived might be more persuasive. Adams claimed his intent was "to force some sign of activity into my own school of history, which seems to me as dead as the dodos. In despair of galvanizing it into life by any literary process, it occurred to me that some little knowledge of physic-chemical processes might show me a means of acting on it from outside. If I could hit it hard enough with the birch of the other professors, I could make the beast trot a step or two" (L6:305).[619] He pushes the idea of scientific history as the search for an organizing formula to an extreme, along with disclaimers that he doesn't know what he is talking about—all too true apparently.[620] The *Education* has been read through the lens of the "Letter to Teachers" as though it were an illustration of the law of entropy, but Adams' interest in the second law came later. Some readers have doubted his seriousness, assuming both essays were an attempt to take the idea of scientific history to its absurd conclusion as an elaborate joke, but the essays end in the same kind of impasses as his earlier works.[621]

The "Letter" purports to enlarge on "The Tendency to History" as a report from a teacher of teachers about the need to revitalize their profession. The letter is divided into "The Problem" and "Solutions": the problem stages a debate between the "degradationists," who see the evidence of entropy at work around them, and the "elevationists," who follow the older comforting ideas of Darwinism with its assumption of uniform progress towards perfection. This is something like the debate on universals between Abélard and William in *Chartres*, or Adams' plan for a class taught by two conflicting teachers. In effect the problem persists and the "solutions" defined chemically or practically never quite crystallize.

Adams looks to Europe to find an intellectual convergence on the subject of decline, from the history of plants that traces the increasing cooling of the earth, the increasing extinctions that demonstrate loss of variety among all species, the depletion of natural resources, the contention that the highest concentration point of human energy and will was expended in the transformation to becoming human, and thus the subsequent decline of art, the pessimism of artists, the increase in insanity, the evidence of Durkheim's work on suicide, Le Bon's on crowds, and Bergson's on the triumph of intelligence over intuition. Adams seems carried away by the debate and even more by the momentum of decline, so that the role of history is obscured.

Either history is "the Science of Vital Energy in relation with time, or "history is not a science and society is not an organism" and the historian can "remain quietly in the pleasant meadows of antiquarianism" (207;169). If history is that science, then, except for the deluded elevationists, scientists insist that the vital energy of society is part of nature and not exempt from the laws of energy. The historian's teaching has to accord with the increasing unanimity of scientific opinion that the easy old mechanical law is dead. Yet the content of that teaching would reveal the inexorable process of the dissipation of all energies on earth, that every supposed gain in power has been made at the cost of human vitality. Such a stance, acceptable in the laboratory, would probably result in his dismissal from the lecture-room.

Adams seems to have spent all his own energy in enlarging the problem; the "Solutions" are ineffectual and few and mainly continue the debate: "Galileos who are wise enough not to shock opinion" might seize the vocabulary of debate and adopt a less threatening language, substituting "Expansion and Contraction" for "Rise and Fall,"

"Transformation" for "Evolution" (211). As a compromise, the historian might speak of dissipation in unthreatening figures like the phases of water, electricity, dynamite, gases, table salt or Adams' favorite, "the gaseous nebula." The teacher might learn to use "laboratory methods": technical tools, large formulas, generalizations.

> The whole field of physics is covered with such temporary structures, mere approximations to truth, but in constant demand as tools. Mathematicians practise absolute freedom; they have the right—and use it—to assume that a straight line is, or is not, the shortest line between two points, as they please. In the whole domain of science, no field of cultivation is poorer in labor-saving devices than history, yet Man, as a form of energy, is in most need of getting a firm footing on the law of thermodynamics. (237-38)

If the "tendency of history" claimed that "Any science of history must be absolute, like other sciences, and must fix with mathematical certainty the path which human society has got to follow," now mathematical certainty looks like guesswork, a play of imagination, the opposite of determinism (129). This provisional state of knowledge-making excuses Adams' own halting formulas, his lines of sequence and curves of acceleration, and the tentative presentation of "A Dynamic Theory," as the necessary work of creation, a foothold, rather than the imposition of tyrannical order.

The theory of degradation might be superseded in future, but part of its appeal is its ability to explain so much, to a community that wants to believe. [622]Adams returns to his skepticism about monist schemes: "this mental need of unity is also a weakness, which gives the degradationist an artificial and unfair advantage. The convenience of unity is beyond question, and convenience overrides morals as well as money, when a vast majority of minds, educated or not, are invited to live in a complex of anarchical energies, with only the privilege of acting as chief anarchists"(241). Here the degradationist scheme is no better than the elevationist scheme, except as it produces a

more complete and thus more desirable, social effect, but unity is more than a convenience. “Simplicity may not be evidence of truth, and unity is perhaps the most deceptive of all the innumerable illusions of mind; but both are primary instincts in man, and have an attraction on the mind akin to that of gravitation on matter. The idea of unity survives the idea of God or universe; it is innate and intuitive” (241-42). This sounds a little like the rationale for James’ will to believe, the desire for some unity outside the self, the assumption that the effect of belief will be to foster a better harmony with the world. Adams presented science as the successor to religion in its concern with ultimate questions, but he wasn’t quite able to produce a belief in either religion or science.

Yet this particular version of unity presents a problem that elevationism did not. Unlike St. Thomas’ *Summa*, it doesn’t include free will as a final gesture of art. As a hypothetical degradationist argues, reason “in strictness and reason does not work,—it is only a mechanism,—nature’s energy, which we have agreed to call Will, that lies behind reason, does the work—and degrades the energy in doing it.” Men rebel against this denial of agency by instinct, “Man refuses to be degraded in self-esteem, of which he has never had enough to save him from bitter reproaches” (230). In this case, the hypothetical teacher of history rebels if only in the inertia of his thought and teaching; he is both demonstrating the law of entropy in his refusal to change and resisting it.

What is convenient in the laboratory remains problematic in the classroom, not that the historian could not make “the material fit his figure; history can be written in one sense just as easily as another, but “he would not think it in the service of the students or of the University” (243). Then Adams returns to more evidence on behalf of degradation, “society cannot ignore the fact forever.” In a characteristically inconclusive conclusion,

history needs to join with the human sciences to work out "some common formula or figure to serve their students as a working model for the vital energies," and this figure has to be brought into accord with the models of the physical sciences, but it seems doubtful that the human sciences would accept the second law of thermodynamics as part of that model. For the situation to be resolved seems "to call for the aid of another Newton" (263). Newton is the scientific equivalent of Thomas Aquinas, a great system-builder, but the essay began by criticizing mechanical systems as incapable of reflecting anarchic reality. [623] This simply recalls the paradox of *Chartres*: the human need for unity was stronger than any argument against system, but having a system, humans required a provision for free will. This wasn't quite what Adams had in mind, as "a sort of squib, or fire-cracker, among my peaceful herd of historical browsers…I shall aim my pins only at those I want to prick" (L6:295). The reaction of any historian who received a copy of the "Letter" would be puzzlement.

References

[1] Letter to William James, 17 February, 1908 (L6: 119-120). The *L* in parenthetical references indicates the *Letters of Henry Adams*; *J*, the *History of the United States during the Administrations of Thomas Jefferson*; *M*, the *History* under Madison's administration; *D*, *Democracy*; *E*, *Esther*; *T*, the Tahitian *Memoirs*; *C*, *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres*. The *Edu* which indicates the *Education of Henry Adams* in earlier chapters is dropped when it becomes the subject of Chapter V.
[2] In the *Education* Adams notes that Augustine is the author of the *City of God*, an attempt to recreate the Roman word through a Christian perspective.
[3]Letter to Barrett Wendell, speaking of his predecessors Augustine and Rousseau, "We have all three undertaken to do what cannot be successfully done—mix narrative and didactic purpose and style. The charm of the effort is not in winning the game but in playing it. We all enjoy the failure. St. Augustine's narrative subsides at last into the dry sands of metaphysical theology. Rousseau's narrative fails wholly in didactic result; it subsides into still less artistic egotism. And I found that a narrative style was so incompatible with a didactic or a scientific style, that I had to write a long supplementary chapter to explain in scientific terms what I could not put into narration without ruining the narrative." Letter of 12 March, 1909 (L6:237-38).
[4] Letter to Henry Cabot Lodge, 1 February 1878.
[5] Adams' letters are often self-contradictory: he also writes of his last two works they "have not been done in order to teach others, but to educate myself in the possibilities of literary form" (L6:122). While the education was conducted as an inquiry on behalf of Adams himself, this is a partial explication. The didacticism is inherent in the form, and between the lines; the work is not a solipsistic exercise, but the exercise of an author who hedged his statements because he was unsure of an audience.
[6] Although Adams was a nationalist, whose work demonstrated that the weak federal government described in the Constitution was unworkable, it doesn't seem to have occurred to him that the power of the Constitution might lie in its ambiguity, its polysemic appeal to multiple constituencies. Characteristically, he wants the principles spelled out.
[7] "The Tendency of History," was an address Adams wrote as President to the American Historical Association and had delivered in absentia in 1894.
[8] William Merrill Decker sees Adams' assumptions of a variety of genres as attempts to reach an audience, although I see Adams returning, unsatisfied, to the same set of preoccupations. Certainly his vexed sense of an audience is a problem for his writing.
[9] In the propitiatory quality of Adams' elaborate courtesy there is a suggestion that the other face of the Virgin might be the malevolent female figure of Nature in the *Education*.
[10] Reprinted in *Critical Essays on Henry Adams*, edited by Earl Harbert.
[11] Adams disputed what was "probably the most romantic episode in the whole history of this country," by demonstrating the absence of the rescue in the earliest texts (11). Pocahontas, the genetrix of prominent Virginia families, the Randolphs among them, is captured in a contemporary account as a child nakedly turning cartwheels in the marketplace with the English boys. As for Bancroft, "The brilliant popular reputation of Smith had already created a degree of illusion in [Bancroft's] mind which resembles precisely the optical effect of refracted light. He saw something which was not there, the exaggerated image of a figure beyond" (13). The figure beyond here is presumably modeled on the conventions of romantic fiction, the typology of hero and heroine that added interest to a work. Adams' objection was not to the literary ambitions of history, but to the specific form they took. "Captain John Smith" was printed in the *North American Review* in 1867. See Henry B. Rule, "Henry Adams' Attack on Two Heroes of the Old South."
[12] According to George Burton Adams (no relation), in 1874-76 Professor Henry Adams directed "the earliest true seminary work done in this country,…although it was not called by that name" (521 n.1) The first historical seminary so-called was conducted by Charles Kendall Adams (no relation) at Michigan in 1871, but wasn't quite up to the definition. Herbert Baxter Adams (no relation) of Johns Hopkins was the strongest proponent of the system. George Burton Adams, "Methods of Work in Historical Seminaries."
[13] See Georg Iggers and Konrad von Moltke, "Introduction," in Leopold von Ranke, *The Theory and Practice of History.*Also see Iggers on the way that Americans dissociated Ranke's methodology from its context in idealistic philosophy in "The Image of Ranke in American and German Historical Thought."

On the subject of scientific history, W. Stull Holt argues there were two distinct and contradictory conceptions: one group believed in historical laws or generalizations, (which included Henry Adams), the other that scientific history rejected philosophical generalization in a search for objective facts. W. Stull Holt, "The Idea of Scientific History in America."

William Jordy would divide the conceptions of scientific history into three: the Rankean, which relied on a scientific methodology; the Comtean, which felt that generalizations should derive from the social sciences, political science, sociology, psychology, economics, anthropology, geology; and a third, which took its model of generalization from the natural and physical sciences. The core of the movement to scientific history was methodological to accord with the demands for professionalization of the discipline. Adams during his career embraced all three aspects of scientific history.

Dorothy Ross argues against the applicability of Holt's division for the generation who founded the American historical profession and considered Rankean fact-seeking and the construction of law-like generalizations "indissolubly linked." They connected history to political action, practicing a kind of "historico-politics." At a moment of political crisis, history was a way to confirm American principles and govern the unruly. Ross doesn't discuss Adams specifically, but her description captures Adams' expansive sense of scientific history. Adams wrote history in the hope it had a public function, but his irony and skepticism would hardly fit the purposes of indoctrination. Dorothy Ross, "On the Misunderstanding of Ranke and the Origins of the Historical Profession in America."

[14] Henry Adams et al, *Essays in Anglo-Saxon Law*.

[15] See David Levin, *History as Romantic Art: Bancroft, Prescott, Motley and Parkman*. There are Germanic traces in Motley's Dutch republicans and even the Visigoth ancestors Prescott uncovers in Castile (Levin 74-6). Bancroft describes the settlers in Virginia as Anglo-Saxons "back in the forest."

[16] The English historian, Edward Augustus Freeman, for example, lectured in America on "England in Her Three Homes," Germany, Britain, and America.

[17] Review of William Stubbs' *Constitutional History of England in Its Origin and Development*, which exemplified the problem with English historiography, its antiquarianism. For a discussion of history's continual and self-constituting conflict between the scientific and the literary from the standpoint of literature, see Linda Orr, "The Revenge of Literature: A History of History."

[18] In 1872 he suggested the "historico-political line" as a practical beginning for an ambitious young Henry Cabot Lodge. To the question "Can you make it *pay*? either in money, reputation, or any solid value," Adams offered the example of Prescott, Motley, Parkman and Bancroft, "none of them of extraordinary gifts." In the absence of successors to these, and here Adams may have been prescribing as much for himself as for his student, "anyone who has the ability can enthrone himself as a species of literary lion with ease, for there is no rival to contest the throne. With it, comes social dignity, European reputation, and a foreign mission to close" (L2:138-139).

As an indication of Adams' status as a transitional figure, he appears in the final chapter of David Van Tassel's *Recording America's Past*, which concludes with the founding of the American Historical Association in 1884. (Adams attended the first meeting of the association and was an elusive president years later.) Robert Vitzthum in *The American Compromise* compares Adams' history to Bancroft's and Motley's; the theme for all three is *e pluribus unum*, although their techniques differ. Adams appears in the first chapter of Peter Novick's history of the historical profession, *That Noble Dream*, as an anomalous figure among historians for his interest in a philosophy of history, understood as a grand interpretive generalization or law. Adams is part of the tradition of great amateurs, "background" for Richard Hofstadter's *The Progressive Historians: Turner, Beard, Parrington*, New York.

In the two 1995 issues celebrating the centenary of the *American Historical Review*, Adams is ridiculed by Robin Fleming for practicing the "picturesque" medieval history that the *AHR* was founded to replace, and praised by Walter La Feber for the breadth of his researches into diplomatic history and for his prescience in predicting opposition from institutional interests unhappy with the results of historical research. Adams' own article in the first edition of the *AHR*, "Count Edward de Crillon," which will be discussed in this chapter, is treated with suspicion by Gordon Wood, who sees it as a mockery of the historical profession, while Dominick La Capra finds it an early example of a deconstructivist reading of history.

[19] The letter to Charles Scribner, 1 August 1888, continued, "I should be sorry to think that you could give me eight thousand a year for my investment, because I should feel sure that whenever such a rate of profit could be realized on history, history would soon become as popular a pursuit as magazine-writing, and the luxury of its social distinction would vanish" (L3:131). Having completed his history, he estimated "It has

cost me about a hundred thousand dollars, I calculate, in twenty years, and has given me that amount of amusement" (L3:225). Letter to Henry Holt, 5 March 1890.

[20] As a professor Adams had hated being subject to what he considered the petty institutional constraints of teaching. The regularization and collectivization of a discipline also presupposed a certain leveling of talent, legitimizing mediocrity, as J. F. Jameson acknowledged in claiming what the profession needed now was "the spread of thoroughly good second class work"(253).In a survey of historical writing in America, Jameson wrote that the science "sorely needs that improvement in technical process, that superior finish of workmanship, which a large number of works of talent can do more to foster than a few works of literary genius" (253).

[21] Copies were sent for comment to George Bancroft, John Hay, Abram Hewitt, Carl Schurz and Charles Francis Adams, Jr.

[22] John Adams is never referred to by name in the early volumes, only Jefferson's "predecessor." In later volumes his name is mentioned, and in the final volume he appears, an old man angry at the machinations of the Essex Junto, seen in a quotation from George Ticknor.

[23] Earl Harbert even claims that the "kernel" of the work can be found in a paragraph of J.Q. Adams' diary that talks about the Republicans' sudden reversal of their policies upon attaining office (90-91). Earl Harbert, *The Force So Much Closer Home: Henry Adams and the Adams Family*.

[24] The criticism of the earliest, "Housatonic," will be discussed later. More recently, the most vigorous critic of the *History* as family vindication, if not vendetta, is Peter Shaw in "Blood is Thicker than Irony: Henry Adams' *History*. For Shaw the *History* is primarily a story about the triumph of family principles. What seems like Adams' "ambivalence" towards Jefferson is not; readers need to look past Adams' polite language to his intention to discredit family enemies. In "The War of 1812 Could Not Take Place: Henry Adams's *History*," Shaw claims Adams' main interest in writing history was the moralistic family preoccupation with exposing error; he was "unscientific and unmodern" because his animus, disguised by indirection and irony, was "entirely personal" (554).

While I'm not a historian, and can't judge the merit of specific historical arguments, Adams' treatment of Jefferson seems sympathetic while critical, and occasionally seems unfair. Adams is engaged with the attempt to do justice to the complexities of Jefferson's personality in a way that is not true for Madison, to the detriment of the later volumes. Some readers see the history as a Federalist text, but the consensus seems to be otherwise. My impression is that the text is more Jeffersonian than not. Adams knows and understands the Federalist point of view, but sees it as an intermediate stage of development. For better or worse, he writes history with an eye to the future. Nationality isn't the property of the Federalists. This is where the framing chapters at beginning and end are important: despite the failure of "experiments" like the embargo, it is the Jeffersonian vision of promise that prevails in the end--another irony carried out on a larger scale.

[25] Peter Shaw for one, in "The War of 1812 Could Not Take Place."

[26] Adams' public criticisms of his grandfather were mild compared to his private comments when he read a draft of his brother Brooks' biography. MS Houghton Library, Harvard. See Katherine Morison, "A Reexamination of Brooks and Henry on John Quincy Adams."

[27] Letter to Samuel J. Tilden, 24 June 1883.

[28] Adams misquotes Gibbon, but cites "Murray's Handbook" as his source. In a letter to his niece Mabel on her first visit to Rome, he quotes from memory even less exactly and mischaracterizes Gibbon's emotional state as "cool," when Gibbon describes himself as a man little given to enthusiasm reacting with strong emotion and even "intoxication" to the eternal city. (157-59). Adams describes a "sense of finite failure which is the soul of Rome. Rome merely tells of the two first failures of western civilization." (L4:463). More about Gibbon and Rome in Chapter V.

[29] Russell Hanson and W. Richard Merriman, "Henry Adams and the Decline of the Republican Tradition," see Adams as a late representative of the tradition of republicanism and find his *History* republican in its focus on the conduct of statesmen, lawmakers, diplomats and generals as the concept of American leadership changed. Certainly this is one element in the work, amid so much else. Adams explicitly referred to the nascent democracy of primeval Germany rather than Rome, although this was no longer a prevalent interest by the time he wrote the *History*. Even if the role of statesman seemed no longer available to Adams, he could assume the civic role of the historian.

[30] J. C. Levenson describes it as "the plainest sentence he ever wrote" (121). J.C. Levenson, *The Mind and Art of Henry Adams.* Adams is following the precedent of Macaulay's Chapter III which also begins with a discussion of population, but in the absence of statistics.
[31] Consider, for example, the ventriloquized first person narrative of Adams' Tahitian record, the *Memoirs of Arii Taimai,* purported to be the voice of the matriarch of the Teva family, compared to the third person voice of Adams himself in his autobiographical *Education of Henry Adams* with its omission of twenty notable years of his adult life.
[32]According to Vitzthum, Adams' use of paraphrase was both signaled and unsignaled. In the case of unsignaled paraphrase, he might weave words and phrases from multiple sources into the shape of his narrative, a practice that is not apparent without looking at the documents, since Adams' footnotes are sparse. According to Vitzthum, Adams differs from earlier historians like Bancroft and Parkman in nearly always using primary sources for paraphrase and quotation.
[33] Walter La Feber's "The World and the United States": Adams' comprehensive research is a model in this survey of American historians' approaches to foreign affairs.
[34] Adams studied Macaulay's mastery of narrative technique while rejecting an obvious replication of his style and attitude. In Adams' peaceable country he can omit discussing the problems of keeping public order against the "lawless manners" and brigandage created through "ages of slaughter and pillage" in the borderlands, although Adams considers the incessant fighting and feuding of the frontier to be a survival of low British habits. Nor does he need to discuss the obligation to join the militia, or the composition and armament of the regular army and navy.
[35] If the people of the nineteenth century were better off in terms of wages, in absolute and relative terms, in one respect "the progress of civilization has diminished the physical comforts" of the poorest, in the amount of common land that was available to all before the enclosures (331).
[36] Noble Cunningham criticizes Adams for over-emphasizing American backwardness in support of his rhetorical scheme. Adams failed to consider the considerable economic and social growth and development that Cunningham claims occurred since 1750. Instead Adams contrasted 1800 with his own age. To some extent this is an argument about periodization, how historians define their subject and where they begin to look, but Cunningham charges that Adams' preconceptions and fondness for bold generalization overruled his analysis. If Adams had studied the 1800 election, for example, he would have seen the popular desire for change, but Adams misses the importance of political culture. Noble Cunningham, *The United States in 1800: Henry Adams Revisited*. For a fuller discussion of Adams' political thinking, see James Young, *Henry Adams, the Historian as Political Theorist*. Adams' work is partial to hyperbole and dramatic contrast. His references to the Middle Ages and primeval times seem to be attempts at humor as much as terms of comparison.
The first six chapters were published separately and according to Cunningham had sold 161,000 copies by 1986 (3). Gary Wills argues that the introduction by itself gives a false picture of the whole. Unfortunately, even historians read only the introduction and misread it through the pessimism of the elderly Adams. Cunningham is the "worst offender" for his incomplete reading: "He cannot have read the last chapters that fulfill the prophecy of a bright future" (4). But Cunningham agrees that the opening is in contrast to the conclusion: his argument is that Adams compresses the changes into too short a period for the sake of a strong contrast.
Wills claims that "Adams advances a surprising (almost scandalous) thesis—that the Jeffersonians' four terms at the beginning of the nineteenth century created a national unity and internationalism far in advance of what preceded them." Furthermore, "*only* the Jeffersonians could have created the national unity they began by deploring. They alone combined the high vision and practical tinkering, the regional ideology and trans-regional organization, the American optimism and the sense of destiny, the ambitions for the West, that could bring it all off" (2). Adams does claim that a national identity was created during those years, a democratic nationalism that built on Jefferson's expansive vision. Wills doesn't mention the effect of the war on the public imagination, which for Adams seems to have had a primary influence. The forces at work in effecting historical change remain mysterious, which is why the narrative seems at times dissociated from the conclusion. Later Wills comes closer to Adams' position: "the Jeffersonians wrought better than they knew while they thought they were doing something else," but he still maintains, "they made a nation" (393). Nor is the conclusion as unambiguously optimistic as Wills asserts.
[37] Macaulay never finished his history. Five volumes were completed, covering seventeen years. John Clive reads small echoes of Macaulay in the opening chapters, "fraternal tributes across the years from one

historian to another who had once cast a long shadow" as well as a conviction Adams shared with Macaulay that "the average human mind, when confronted with something radically new, will always tend towards inertia and resistance (172). John Clive, *Not By Fact Alone*.

[38] Letter to Charles Francis Adams, Jr. 21 November, 1862. Even in his 1858 Class Day address at Harvard, Adams lamented his generation's lack of idealism and anticipated the final question of the *History* that questions the existence of objects and aspirations beyond physical content. MS Henry Adams Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

[39] The letter to Charles Francis Adams, Jr., then a Captain of Cavalry, dated 1 May, 1863 describes Tocqueville and John Stuart Mill as "the two high priests of our faith." See Samuels for a discussion of Adams' reading and its influence (I: 128-44). In 1860s London Adams met and was reading Mill, a friend of the Union; *Democracy in America* was reissued in translation, while another friend was editing Tocqueville's works. Samuels claims that Tocqueville and Mill were important for the way they articulated and provided a systematic framework for many Adams family beliefs about representative government and democracy.

If Adams' letter of 1863 followed its tribute to Tocqueville with "The great principle of democracy is still capable of rewarding a conscientious servant," Robert Dawidoff sees his attitude, and the influence of Tocqueville as model, as ultimately undemocratic. Adams, "the first American Tocquevillean," engendered a whole line of disenchanted American intellectuals when he adopted a pose of detachment that separated him from his own culture and promoted an attitude of judgment rather than engagement, an obsession with upholding distinctions between high and low, rather than participating like Dawidoff's models of engaged intellectuals, Jefferson and Emerson. *The Genteel Tradition and the Sacred Rage.* As a historian, Adams wouldn't have needed to read Tocqueville to develop an attitude of detachment, since this was the default position for the practice of social science as it was becoming professional at the end of the nineteenth century; perhaps Dawidoff's distinction is the unacknowledged assumption of Tocqueville's aristocratic European perspective. It is also difficult to translate Jefferson's and even Emerson's public involvement into the context of fin-de-siècle America, although Dawidoff says Adams could have been "the Emersonian 'American Scholar,' or would have, had he but believed"(35). Adams would have considered the writing of history a public service, but for Dawidoff his writing was "an anti-democratic exploration of American themes" (38).

For another perspective on Adams' status as participant-observer, in Carolyn Porter's Seeing *and Being: the Plight of the Participant Observer in Emerson, James, Adams, and Faulkner*, Adams ultimately accepts his responsibility as a participant.

[40] He also anticipates the interdisciplinary interests of the "New History" whose leading exponent James Harvey Robinson emphasized a history whose interests in geography, economics, political science, sociology, religion were linked with present needs.

[41] Unsigned review, "A Short History of the English People," *North American Review.* Adams described Green as second only to Macaulay among contemporary British historians.

[42] Macaulay asserts that English history "is eminently the history of physical, of moral, and of intellectual improvement" and that it "will be my endeavor to relate the history of the people as well as the history of the government (I: 2). He proceeds to list the kinds of subjects he will include, such as useful and ornamental arts, literary taste, manners, dress, furniture, repasts, public amusements; McMaster expands this list of subjects. Thomas Babington Macaulay, *The History of England from the Accession of James II.* Critics often compare McMaster's style to Macaulay's. Depending on the reviewer, this makes McMaster's work old-fashioned and limited in contrast to Adams' work, or "picturesque" and "immensely readable" unlike writers with "more precise and finical methods," perhaps a reference to Adams. William Walsh, "Book-Talk," *Lippincott's* n.v. (January 1890):143; "Literary Notices," *Eclectic*, 56(1892):139. Albert Bushnell Hart, a former student of Adams, praises Mc Master's volume III as "unique and indispensable" for presenting the kind of information other writers neglected. If Adams presents "the subtle undercurrents of the nation's life," Mc Master presents "the material condition of the average American"; each accomplishes his goal (363). [Review], *Political Science Quarterly*.

Mc Master's *History* was published in eight volumes: Volume I (1784-90) was published in 1883; Volume II (1790-1806) in 1885; Volume III (1806-12) in 1892; Volume IV (1812-21) in 1895. Not trained professionally in history, McMaster was an instructor in engineering until the success of his *History* won him a professorship to teach it. John Higham places him among respected amateur historians like Adams, Theodore Roosevelt, James Ford Rhodes and Moses Coit Tyler, where he was unusual as a "product" of the

Middle Atlantic States. See Higham, *History: Professional Scholarship in America*. McMaster's preferences seem mildly Federalist; his work praises Hamilton and later the "independent thinkers" among Hamilton's followers who welcomed the Republicans' turn to strong government.

[43] McMaster evidently paraphrased secondary sources as well as primary. Reading McMaster after reading Adams can produce a feeling of déjà lu, at least with volume III, which was published in 1892 after Adams' work and in covering the war shows a greater interest in political history than earlier volumes. In the absence of footnotes, it is possible that both relied on common sources, but their judgments also converge in similar language.

[44] From Fiske's point of view, "the victory of Wolfe at Quebec marks the greatest turning point as yet discernible in all modern history" because it assured the settlement of North America by the English who had preserved "the free government of the primitive Aryans" (583). "Manifest Destiny," *Harper's Monthly*. Michael Clark writes about Fiske's conflation of tradition and progress in *The American Discovery of Tradition.*

[45] G.F.Hegel, *The Philosophy of History.*

[46] Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Problem of the West."

[47] On the opening page, the "true political population" consisted of "one million able-bodied males, on whose shoulders fell the burden of a continent" (J: 5). Even in the social survey, women are mentioned in passing: the burdens of frontier life were hardest on women and children; travelers reported that Pennsylvania women were beautiful, while the men seemed like another species; Franklin blames women's bad teeth on frozen apples and boiling tea; eighteenth-century speech, even women's, was coarse, and a judge might think nothing of giving a lady a copy of *Tom Jones*; Boston women had only "belles-lettres to occupy their minds"; and Connecticut disapproved of the way Boston educated women. In the narrative, the route to political success in Spain is through the Queen's bed; Jefferson describes the British ambassador's wife as a "virago" for doing her part to keep up the etiquette wars; Theodosia Burr attracts adherents to her father; Dolley Madison says something unkind about Monroe; the letter of another British minister's wife, a Prussian baroness, is quoted in French ridiculing Dolley Madison for her bourgeois manners. In Mc Master's first volume of six hundred pages, he devotes half a page each to the education of girls in New England, housemaids, and spinning bees. In the 1920s, Charles and Mary Beard's *The Rise of American Civilization* revises Macaulay by noting women of accomplishment in seventeenth-century England and revises Adams by noting the existence of women writers in the early republic.

[48] Letter to his older brother Charles Francis Adams, serving in the army.

[49] "Readers who have followed the history here closed, have been surprised at the frequency with which the word *imbecility* has risen in their minds in reading the proceedings of the House" (M: 1273).

[50] "Die Administration Andrew Jackson's in ihrer Bedeutung für die Entwickelung der Dewmokratie in den Vereinigten Staten von Amerika" in the 1875 *North American Review*. Most of this review is simply an extended quotation in translation of a book of lectures by Heinrich von Holst, an indication of Adams' agreement and approval.

[51] Adam's novel *Democracy* speculates on the prospects of a Washington in Gilded Age politics. To be discussed in the next chapter.

[52] Even in this chronologically-ordered narrative chapter, McMaster's work has the effect of a miscellany: it begins with war against Algiers, moves to the Congressional pay controversy, then to the selection of nominees for the Presidency and another controversy about the caucus system, an example of election fraud, a call for the uniform election of electors, the renewal of relations with Spain, and so on.

[53] Letter to Samuel J. Tilden, 24 January 1883.

[54] Samuels 3:358-60. Spencer uses the imagery in *First Principles*, but Adams also might have read an echo in John Fiske's *Cosmic Philosophy*. An ardent disciple of Spencer, Fiske attempted to reconcile Social Darwinism with Christianity by turning Spencer's "The Unknowable" into God. As a young professor, Adams took his meals with Fiske and Chauncey Wright, a leading critic of Spencer, and listened with interest to their debates. Spencer seems to have been an influence that Adams assimilated without talking much about. In his letters he mentions meeting him, and criticizes his *Philosophy of Style*: "I return the Spencer. It has disappointed me. If his other works are not better thought out, they must have very little sound method to recommend them" (L2:194). Letter to Henry Cabot Lodge, 23 June 1874. Adams owned the 1882 edition of *First Principles*. See Ronald Martin, *American Literature and the Universe of Force*, for an extended discussion of the relationship between Spencer, Fiske, and Adams.

[55] James had sent him his article, "Great Men, Great Thoughts, and the Environment," as well as "Rationality, Activity, and Faith." James calls it "folly, then to speak of the 'laws of history' as of something inevitable, which science has only to discover, and which anyone can observe, but do nothing to alter or avert"(454). James uses Darwin against Spencer's "philosophy" of evolution, which he describes as "the mood of fatalistic pantheism" (458). Adams' comments reflect some of the preoccupations of his novel, *Esther*, published in 1884.

[56] Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History*.

[57] In the opening survey, Jefferson is representative in that he is always laboring under some difficulty: in chapter one, facing "vexatious delays" en route between Washington and Virginia, forced to cross eight rivers, five with "neither bridges nor boats." In the second, even this "most active-minded and sanguine" inventor had to abandon cultivation of tobacco because of unproductive land. In the next, he is blinded by his own prejudices, seeing cities and the national bank as un-American, and too conditioned by history not to doubt that East and West would remain united. Next, the good people of Massachusetts look at him and see the depravity of the French Revolution.

[58] See Michael O'Brien for a discussion of the relative portraits of Jefferson and Madison and Adams' attitudes to the South in general. O'Brien supports the consensus that Adams underrated Madison, possibly because he was too ideologically eclectic to be a representative Southerner, possibly because Adams reflected his era in showing little interest in the writing of the Constitution. Garry Wills too, thinks that Adams didn't take Madison's intellect seriously; Madison had a better mind than Jefferson, but "In a paradoxical way, Madison was too simple for Adams to understand him" (281).

[59] The question of Jefferson's character remains important for historians, although Adams is no longer cited in their texts, see for example, Peter Onuf, *The Mind of Thomas Jefferson*, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007); Joseph Ellis, *American Sphinx*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997); Annette Gordon-Reed *Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings*, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1997). Recent historians who cite Adams argue that Jefferson's Revolution of 1800 was more significant than Adams realized: Joyce Appleby, *Thomas Jefferson*; Jeffrey Pasley, "1800 as a Revolution in Political Culture."

Adams' account of Jefferson's tenure as president was a litany of ironies about the "revolution" of 1800, but the irony that the Apostle of Liberty was a slave owner, so significant to historians today, was not a particular subject for Adams' analysis. Although Adams focuses on public lives, he repeats the Sally Heming's story twice, as a demonstration of debased European taste in the case of a song by Thomas Moore and, along with the rest of James Callendar's accusations against Jefferson, as a demonstration of the scurrilous lengths of democratic factionalism. It reflected poorly on Jefferson that he had a relationship with such a vile character as Callendar in the first place. Adams asserts the purity of Jefferson's character, more or less convincingly, depending on the context and the point of comparison. In Adams' narrative, Virginia had great virtues and great vices, slavery and sensuality the worst. The best Virginians expected the abolition of slavery, but the Revolutionary impulse to reform the state of Virginia had been exhausted by the measures to overthrow primogeniture, land tenure and the established Church. Only later, when Virginia was no longer in power and the cultivation of cotton become profitable, did states' rights and slavery become connected and Adams credits John Randolph with the germ of the concept of nullification. Adams considered Reconstruction to an extremist mistake. Once the family mission to abolish slavery had been accomplished, Adams seems to have lost interest in the condition of black Americans, except perhaps for his servants. Adams' tribute to the freedom-loving people of Haiti has the side effect of making Jefferson look bad in colluding with Napoleon to cut all trade with the island, although Adams attributes the withdrawal more to the Southerners' fear that black rebellion might spread. Under John Adams the U.S. had diplomatic relations and traded with Haiti.

[60] Adams' obituary in the *American Historical Review*, for example, is something similar: "He never lost his interest with [history], but his occupation with it was but an incident in an intellectual life so rich, so refined, and so varied that to seek a parallel one might have to search in an older society—for example, among the most enlightened noblemen of eighteenth-century France, whom indeed Mr. Adams, with the free play of his mind, the extraordinary keenness and wit of his conversation, and his essential but somewhat detached benevolence, greatly resembled" (715) "Personal," *American Historical Review*.

[61] When Jefferson appeared in similar clothes to receive the new British minister and his wife, in full regalia, and entertained in pêle-mêle style, the suspicion was that he intended to send the British a message, and the diplomatic insults escalated. But the possibility also existed that Jefferson meant what he claimed,

that he was trying to remake the world on new principles and institute a regime of republican manners, in contrast to his predecessor's formality. Adams might be amazed at Jefferson's lack of self-consciousness, not to care what the British and the rest of the diplomatic corps thought; in this respect Jefferson and Napoleon were alike. Adams professes amazement that a man with all the instincts of Virginia hospitality could act discourteously to a guest, worse, a woman, in which case both explanations left Jefferson culpable.

[62] Adams' own grandfather, John Quincy, suspected Jefferson of moral cowardice, which Adams explains as partly a cultural difference: courteous Virginians would rather lie than offend, while New Englanders respected "the brutal, rude, ungentlemanly thing—but the truth" (L2:323).

[63] This description has been read as strictly critical of Jefferson, although for the time this was not an unusual description of him. Merrill Peterson, for example, says "The observation, while revealing of Jefferson, was perhaps even more revealing of Adams' temperamental aversion to him and the allegedly 'unmanly' statesmanship he pursued" (191). "Henry Adams on Jefferson the President." Aside from Jefferson's lapses in protocol, which really did seem to rankle, Adams doesn't seem to manifest aversion to Jefferson, but to Hamilton. Adams was a pessimist who could see the utility of optimism: Federalist pessimism couldn't motivate a nation. Jefferson's idealism could appeal to the strain of romanticism in Adams. Late nineteenth century accounts of Jefferson used the letters of the Jefferson family to show the private man, the doting paterfamilias. Peterson in *The Jefferson Image in the American Mind* discuses the humanization of Jefferson's image in Henry S. Randall's *Life of Jefferson* (1858), the first to use the private family papers and, according to Peterson, 'the pinnacle of Jefferson's reputation in historical literature in the nineteenth century" (158). Randall, in praising Jefferson's parental virtues, claimed his subject when dealing with children "had the feminine dexterity and delicacy of manipulation; he had the feminine loving patience; he appreciated instantly and correctly what was under all circumstances appropriate to them, with a feminine instinct"(qtd. in Peterson 153). Henry and Clover Adams toured Monticello with Sarah Randolph, Jefferson's descendent and author of a book on the private Jefferson.

[64] Michael O'Brien talks about Adams' conception of the South as feminized later in his writing, but isn't sure about reading Jefferson this way.

[65] Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Irony of American History*. Also Richard Reinitz finds Adams made more use of irony than any other historian until the twentieth century; his depiction of Jefferson is a rich example of Niebuhrian irony. *Irony and Consciousness: American Historiography and Reinhold Niebuhr's Vision.*

[66] As a student at Harvard, Fiske nearly was suspended for reading a volume of Comte during compulsory chapel. As a "Lecturer on the Positive Philosophy" and critic of Louis Agassiz's anti-Darwinism, his views were considered controversial enough that he was offered a position as librarian rather than the professorship Adams held (Pannill 12; 19-21). See Ernest Samuels, also Ronald Martin, for Adams' relation to the ideas of Spencer and Fiske.

[67] Both view the American continent as essentially free and open to an expanding population. In Adams' account, natives "wither away" with the approach of settlers; he deplores white incursions but sees an inevitable process. Fiske considers native barbarism "a petty annoyance," no threat to civilization (584). Progress required the waging of war against barbarous, and therefore intrinsically warlike, enemies for the preservation and expansion of peaceful civilization: "Obviously the permanent peace of the world can be secured only through the gradual concentration of the preponderant military strength into the hands of the most pacific communities" (579). That American history is a progress of peace with occasional wars fought "on pacific principles" to foster a federalist system is a demonstration as well as a critical contribution to the ultimate adaptation of a global federation based on altruism and universal peace (94). The United States is the most pacific of nations given its happy geographical isolation from enemies, its "industrial" stage of civilization replacing the military phase, and its federal organization. From the perspective of Fiske's version of universal history the American Civil war was fought for "this great pacific principle of union" with the abolition of slavery a happy although incidental effect. To Adams in the *Education*, these sorts of evolutionary explications were simply a new version of providential history as dubious as the old, Darwinism transformed into a substitute for the religion Darwin had put in doubt. John Fiske, "Manifest Destiny."

[68] "In regard to the battle of New Orleans, I have been profuse of maps. This course is not due to the importance of the battle, which was really of little importance, military or political; but for some reason, probably sectional, the Battle of New Orleans has always held an undue place in popular interest. I regard any concession to popular illusions a blemish; but just as I abandoned so large a place to Burr—a mere

Jemmy Diddler—because the public felt an undue interest in him, so I think it best to give the public a full dose of General Jackson"(L3:237-38). Letter to Charles Scribner, 3 May 1890. Also, referring to the first four volumes on the Jefferson administration: "I consider these four volumes as containing all I have to say. The remaining four or five are mere pandering to popularity, and love of empty sound" (L3:228). Letter to Lucy Baxter, 10 March, 1890. Jon Latimer, who writes about the war from the British perspective, claims that George Bancroft's interpretation of the war, which celebrated the British victory as an American win and mythologized Andrew Jackson's defense of New Orleans into a great military triumph was "substantially echoed" by Adams, a reading that doesn't seem borne out by the text (3). Jon Latimer, *1812: War with America*.

[69] Cruce Stark claims "the impression left by his 'objective' documentation is a *tour de force* of historical bias" against Jackson, in "The Historical Irrelevance of Heroes: Henry Adams' Andrew Jackson" (174).

[70] Similarly, in *Gallatin*, he reports Gallatin's assessment of Jackson without comment. As Albert Gallatin addressed Jackson's presidential capabilities, he was "an honest man and the idol of the worshippers of military glory, but from incapacity, military habits, and habitual disregard of laws and constitutional provisions, altogether unfit for the office" (the same letter found John Quincy Adams unqualified for lack of "sound and correct judgment") (Gallatin 599).

[71] Mark Russell Shulman argues on the basis of the *History* that Adams was the only major historian of his era to reject the political agenda of navalist historians like Theodore Roosevelt and Alfred Thayer Mahan, but Schulman's argument doesn't seem indicated by the text. Adams tends to criticize the government for its lack of naval preparedness: the gunboats Jefferson ordered built for coastal defense were a waste of money; a regular navy of war sloops would have been more effective than reliance on privateers. When Schulman claims that Adams defended the secessionists of the Hartford Convention and was opposed to the war being fought on grounds of national pride, he misreads Adams. "The Influence of History upon Sea Power: The Navalist Reinterpretation of the War of 1812."

[72] "Napoleon, or the Man of the World" in *Representative Men.*

[73] J.-C.-L. Simonde de Sismondi wrote about the career of Eccelino III da Romano and his brother Alberic in *A History of the Italian Republics*, 1841; Eccelino was notorious for his aggressiveness, his military prowess and his extreme cruelty. In The *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, Jacob Burckhardt cites Ezzolino as the first of the petty despots to make no pretense to any aim beyond personal ambition and to openly adopt any means necessary to achieve his ends.

[74] *On Heroes, Hero-worship and the Heroic in History*.

[75] Adams described Andrew Jackson in Emersonian terms as the kind of leader who embodied the qualities of the people, not a type that conformed to Adams family concepts of statesmanship.

[76] James Young discusses Adams' relative lack of interest in party politics in *Henry Adams, the Historian as Political Theorist*, as does Brooks Simpson in highly critical terms in *The Political Education of Henry Adams.*

[77] Edward Chalfant, author of a massive biography of Adams, argues that Adams organized the structure deliberately to discourage readership, wanting to avoid fame in his lifetime and knowing its merits would be comprehended in the long run. "By arranging the publication of his *History* without its original chapter titles, without its book divisions and book titles, and in as many volumes as possible, he both decreased the work's intelligibility and lent it a false appearance of excessive length and uniform, featureless, arid monotony"(556). Edward Chalfant, *Better in Darkness.* It's not clear why readers of the future would be less discouraged by an off-putting organization; the first reviewers don't seem to mention it, although they tended to read the volumes as they were released, two books at a time. Adams did have decided opinions about the way the volumes should look. Although the volumes were numbered I-IX on their spines, internally each administration began with I. In his correspondence with Scribner's, Adams favored printing chapter titles in the Table of Contents and not elsewhere, but other prescriptions like wide margins, plenty of maps, and books that were not too large to fit comfortably in the hand, (hence nine volumes), were user-friendly.

[78] Adams' research showed that the diplomats in Washington knew of Burr's intentions to form a Western empire and took them seriously. General Turreau predicted the division of the union, perhaps sooner than later. Anthony Merry, already intriguing with Federalists, offered Burr qualified support, but London declined to intervene. When the conspirators came to Marquis of Casa Yrujo, he assumed they had failed to obtain funds from the British. Yrujo, knowing that Wilkinson was in the pay of Spain, concluded that the conspiracy failed only when Burr began to talk about invading Mexico and Wilkinson decided to protect

his Spanish interests. Garry Wills suggests that Adams may have been carried away by his new research to take the conspiracy more seriously than it deserved, but since Wilkinson had the motive and means to destroy the evidence in New Orleans, Adams' construction is plausible. However, Wills thinks this is the first place Adams is "provably unfair" to Jefferson in considering him negligent for not acting earlier against the conspirators. A recent biography of Burr, *Fallen Founder* by Nancy Isenberg, (New York: Viking, 2007) argues that Burr's intention was filibustering and not dividing the union.

[79] In May of 1812, as Napoleon was about to invade Russia, Joel Barlow, the American Minister to France, was given a copy of the repealing decree, dated a year earlier, by the French foreign minister, who insisted the ante-dated paper was not ante-dated but had been sent to the U.S. and also sent a copy to the French envoy at Washington, blandly complaining that he had neglected to acknowledge its receipt the year before. The sudden appearance of the document produced no changes in French behavior, even after the U.S. declared war against England. Napoleon seemed to begrudge Barlow his success and made negotiation difficult: "One is tempted to think that this victory cost Barlow his life" (M: 471). In December 1812 Barlow died on the road from Poland, where he had been sent, as a delaying tactic, to negotiate with Napoleon himself, but got caught up in the confusion of the retreat from Moscow.

[80] Internal improvement was the dream of his grandfather, John Quincy Adams, as well, as Brooks Adams emphasizes in his introduction to *The Degradation of the Democratic Dogma*.

[81] As he wrote in the *Education* his own thought required "conflict, competition, contradiction" ((998).

[82] Randolph shows to better advantage here than in his biography, as the voice of original republican principle, at least until his drive to be in opposition turns to perversity.

[83] Some critics prefer the *History* to the later works because the complexity of the data forces Adams to avoid overgeneralization. For example, Yvor Winters, who saw mental disintegration in Adams' late works, thought the penetrating intelligence of the History made it "the greatest historical work in English" with the probable exception of Gibbon's Decline; "All generalizations are made from the objective data actually present, and the generalizations give the effect, at least, of caution and precision"(415-428). Winters, *The Anatomy of Nonsense*. John Lukacs praises Adams the historian for his maturity, literary judgment and style but condemns the "split-mindedness" that produced the abstract philosophy of history of the later works. William Dusinberre prefers the *History* in which "Adams controlled his penchant for overgeneralization…He fused German scientific history with English literary history, and this fusion remains, I believe, his greatest achievement" (2).

Gary Wills calls the *History* "the non-fiction prose masterpiece of the nineteenth century of America" (1). He argues that the work is misread or not read because it is approached through the pessimistic distortions of the later work and not as the work of a man who was "optimistic, progressive, and nationalistic" (8). Wills charges that historians like Richard Hofstadter, who said that Adams saw this era as a period of "fumbling and small-minded statecraft, terrible parochial wrangling and treasonous schemes," and Henry Steele Commager plainly never read beyond the opening chapters and certainly not to the optimistic conclusion. No reader would call Jefferson or Gallatin small-minded on the basis of Adams' depiction, but that still leaves many if not most of the officials around them open to judgment. What about chapters entitled "Cabinet Vacillations," "Burr's Schemes," "Rejection of Monroe's Treaty," "Perplexity and Confusion," "General Factiousness," "Executive Weakness," "Legislative Impotence," "Incapacity of Government," "Hesitations," "Discord," "Executive Embarrassments," "Exhaustion," and "The Hartford Convention"?

Richard Hofstadter said of the *History:* "the volumes he produced have been proclaimed—rightly, I think—as the summit of American achievement in historical writing" in *The Progressive Historians* (32). Henry Steele Commager wrote, "It is not an exaggeration, indeed, to insist that the *Gallatin* is the best political biography, the *Administrations of Jefferson and Madison* the finest piece of historical writing, in our literature." "Henry Adams" in Earl N. Harbert, ed., *Critical Essays on Henry Adams*. Edwin S. Morgan, called it "the masterpiece of American historical writing in any century."

[84] Some readers, notably Gary Wills, see the conclusion as an unproblematic vision of success.

[85] Like everything else in the *History*, improvement never follows a simple trajectory. Apparently the magnificence of the chamber wasn't compensation enough for its deficiencies: the acoustics were terrible "and its ventilation was so bad as to cause the illness of Jacob Crowninshield, one of its leading members, then lying at the point of death." A year after the chamber was finished, the representatives debated abandoning the city (J: 1071). The arrival of British troops in 1814 made the question of renovations moot.

[86] While the feminine pronoun is conventional in speaking of a ship, the next chapter will suggest a personal frame of reference for Adams.
[87] American warships were known for their exceptional strength. even compared to the British. Their strength made them extremely heavy and their construction expensive and slow, in contrast to the privateers.
[88] Henry Adams and Henry Cabot Lodge, "*The Constitutional and Political History of the United States* by Heinrich von Holst." This review article is interesting as a rehearsal of Adams' *History.* Holst criticizes the way Americans made a "fetich" of the Constitution; its universal worship, despite wildly conflicting opinions as to its meaning, is an indication of the immaturity of American political thinking. Other long quotations from Holst discuss the role of political ambition in Jefferson's and Madison's espousal of states'-rights, the war of 1812 as forced upon the nation by a few politicians, the characters of Henry Clay and John Calhoun. Adams and Lodge (although Adams called this his Centennial oration) defend the Constitution on the grounds that it worked—it fulfilled its promise in keeping the nation together—the fact that a strict constructionist like Jefferson was forced to reverse his principles was a sign of strength, not inconsistency. In the *History*, the constitutional discrepancies will be more of a problem for Adams. The authors say that individual motives were irrelevant, but ridicule Jefferson as a would-be philosopher with French tastes. The War of 1812 was declared by men who were acting as representatives of the people. It was a necessary first assertion of self-respect by a people and did more to advance national feeling than anything else in twenty years.
[89] In 1863, he wrote to his brother, Charles Francis Adams, "Everything in the universe has its regular winds and tides" As an example of his "unpractical experiment-philosophico-historico-progressiveness," he explained:

> But my philosophy teaches me, and I firmly believe it, that the laws which govern animated beings will be ultimately found to be at bottom the same with those which rule inanimate nature, and, as I entertain a profound conviction of the littleness of our kind, and of the curious enormity of creation, I am quite ready to receive with pleasure any basis for a systematic conception of it all. Thus (to explain this rather alarming digression) as a sort of experimentalist, I look for regular tides in the affairs of men, and of course, in our own affairs. In every progression, somehow or other, the nations move by the same process which has never been explained but is evident in the ocean and the air. (L1:395-96).

[90] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*.
[91] "History is past politics; politics is present history," the dictum of British historian Edward Augustus Freeman, adopted by his colleagues at Johns Hopkins as their motto. Freeman's work was consistently criticized in the *North American Review*. When Freeman complained to Adams, the editor, Adams signed subsequent reviews.
[92] As Reinhart Koselleck characterizes historical time: "It is the tension between experience and expectation which, in ever-changing patterns, brings about new resolutions and through this generates historical time" (Koselleck 275) Koselleck cites Adams' theory of acceleration in the *Education of Henry Adams* as a contribution to the nineteenth century dynamic of time (252). See also Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other*; Steven Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space*; on the relation between time and history.
[93] Bercovitch, *The Rites of Assent.*
[94] Once again Adams is borrowing a metaphor from Herbert Spencer about the process of reaching equilibrium. As Samuels reports from Spencer's *First Principles*, "evolution has an impassable limit…Descending from clouds and trickling over the earth's surface till it gathers into brooks and rivers, water, still running toward a lower level, is at last arrested by the resistance of other water that has reached the lowest levels. In the lake or sea thus formed…quiescence is eventually reached…In all cases then, there is a progress towards equilibrium…the ultimate establishment of a balance" (Spencer in Samuels 359).
[95] Melvin Lyon makes a distinction between the human ocean of the *History* and the chaotic ocean of the later works in an extended discussion of Adams' water imagery. Melvin Lyon, *Symbol and Idea in Henry Adams*.
[96] It may be a stretch to say that that *Chartres* and the *Education* also end with a single vibrating atom/Adam/Adams.
[97] Dorothy Ross, *The Origins of American Social Science*.
[98] At the end of his history of the French empire in North America, Parkman asks whether the United States could produce such heroic figures as his subjects. Adams seems to be replying.

[99] Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" (47). Turner's 1893 address quotes briefly from Adams' history and also recommends greater use of census data by historians (38).
[100] If Adams was searching in his *History* for a new authorizing myth that might stimulate the American mind to a higher understanding and action, his friend Theodore Roosevelt used the frontier myth as the source of personal and national re-invention in *Hunting Trips of a Ranchman* (1885), *Ranch Life and the Hunting Trail* (1888) and his popular history *The Winning of the West* (1889-96).
[101] His anonymous novel, *Democracy*, published in 1880, speaks to many of his doubts.
[102] Letter to the Virginia historian, Hugh Blair Grigsby, on 1 September, 1879, when Adams was in France researching the *History*. "America is increasing so rapidly, and her future is so vast, that one man may reasonably devote his life to the effort at impressing a moral on the national mind, which is now almost a void. The old days of Virginia and New England supremacy in power are gone. The America of the next century will be one of the greatest problems of all history. To reach one's arm over into it, and give it a shove, is at least an amusement" (L2:371).
[103] William Jordy reports that Scribner's sold 3550 copies of volumes 1 and 2, first published in 1889, 3280 copies of volumes 3 and 4, first published in 1890, 2850 copies of 4 and 5, first published in 1890, and 2800 copies of volumes 7, 8, and 9 published in 1891. See *Henry Adams, Scientific Historian*. Nineteenth-century sales of Macaulay were in the hundreds of thousands. Adams came to favor exclusivity as a virtue; his novels were published anonymously or pseudonymously and his books subsequent to the *History* were printed and circulated privately and only published posthumously or late in his life.
[104] In 1960 Merrill Peterson wrote "None who thereafter ventured across the boundaries of the Jeffersonian period could escape 'the great *History*.' Paradoxically, the work which established the crucial importance of Jefferson's administration in American history had the effect of impoverishing it so far as American historiography was concerned. Whether because of the work's inherent merit, or because of its power to catch at the imagination, or because of the exaggerated respect it obtained in scholarly circles, no one has attempted to rewrite the history of the period, and no one has felt the need to do so"(291). Peterson, *The Jefferson Image in the American Mind*.
Irving Brant, biographer of James Madison, found it cause for complaint that "the Adams history has become the acknowledged classic, virtually unchallenged by historians, biographers, journalists or statesmen," since "Madison was left buried under 750,000 disparaging words" (860). In *The Presidency of James Madison* Robert Rutland wrote in 1990 that "The historian Henry Adams left his mark not on one generation but on a whole century when he portrayed Madison…as an inept, indecisive president who was out of his depth in the executive mansion" (208). Reginald Horsman, discussing *The Causes of the War of 1812*, refers to "that remarkably penetrating historian Henry Adams—still in many ways the most valuable authority on this period… (217). J.C A. Stagg, author of *Mr. Madison's War*, states that ever since the appearance in the 1890s of Adams' "classic" history, "the dominant feature of all the literature on the war years has been its emphasis on the sheer ineptitude of the American war effort." The interpretation "has always seemed so obvious to historians as to preclude the need for further discussion" (x)..
[105] William S. Walsh, "Book-Talk," *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine*.
[106] "Book Notices," *Hartford Courant*.
[107] "The Character of Jefferson," *New York Times*.
[108] "Jefferson and Burr," *New York Times*.
[109] "Talk about Books," *Chautauquan*; "Bookishness," *Life*.
[110] "Recent Books on American History," *Atlantic Monthly*.
[111] "Some American Histories," *Overland Monthly*.
[112] "The First Administration of Madison," *The Literary World*.
[113] "The Second Administration of Madison," *Literary World*.
[114] "Adam's Administration of Madison—I," *Nation*.
[115] "Adams's Administration of Madison—II," *Nation*.
[116] "Through Four Administrations," *The Critic*.
[117] "The Administrations of Madison," *New York Times*.
[118] Letter to Theodore Dwight, 6 March 1890. " Housatonic" published *A Case of Hereditary Bias: Henry Adams as a Historian* as a pamphlet based on letters printed in the *New York Tribune* on September 10 and December 15, 1890 and slightly expanded. Unknown to Adams, "Housatonic," William Henry Smith, was an Ohio newspaperman and historian, general manager of the Associated Press (L3:417 n.1). He seems to

be the same William Henry Smith who in 1893 provided a deposition charging Adams, Henry Cabot Lodge, Timothy Dwight, the former State Department Librarian and Adam's former secretary, and unspecified others with a conspiracy to monopolize the State Department archives. Smith claimed that for ten years he was denied access to documents, despite the permission of Secretaries and Under-Secretaries of State, because of Dwight's obstruction. He found it suspicious that soon after he provided Dwight with a list of articles he needed, Adams announced his intention in a New York paper to publish on the same subject. Variously described in the newspapers, as "the Boston literary ring," the Boston cinch," "the Tammany of literature," "the New England syndicate," these "Boston literary pirates," "raped," "ravished," "plundered," "harvested" and "gleaned" all literary and historical value from the documents, preventing the work of Western and Southern writers like Smith, Moncure Conway, the state librarian of Indiana, and others. The *Washington Post* was the most prominent inquisitor, calling for a Congressional investigation. The House Committee on the Library seems to have questioned the present Librarian, who knew only that the archives were open to all reputable investigators, and there the matter apparently dropped. Lodge called it "a silly story," motivated by his run for the Senate; Adams was unavailable for comment. See the *Washington Post* (December 28, 1892):1; (December 30, 1892):4; (January 2, 1893):2; (January 4, 1893): 4; (January 5, 1893):4; (January 6, 1893); 4; (January 12, 1893):4; (January 15, 1893):4; (February 15, 1893):4. "Is There a Literary Ring?" *New York Times*, (December 28, 1892): 5; "Government Library Ring," *New York Times*, (January 12, 1893): 6.

[119] David Hackett Fischer argues that the Essex Junto as a conspiracy was conceived in the mind of John Adams, out of touch with Massachusetts politics after years abroad, to explain his difficulties with the Federalists, and was accepted as fact by John Quincy Adams, as well as the Republican party. Henry Adams perpetuated the myth in his *History* and earlier in his edition of *Documents Relating to New-England Federalism*, which he compiled in the "spirit of impartial investigation" in response to Henry Cabot Lodge's *Life and Letters of George Cabot*. More than half of *Documents* is taken up by John Quincy's "Reply to the Appeal of the Massachusetts Federalists." The Appeal had been written in 1828 by members and children of the Essex Junto, asking for proof of Adams' public charge that they had worked to dissolve the union years earlier; the Reply, written in bitterness after Adams had been driven from the Presidency, to Federalists who were partisans of Hamilton "when he was publishing his pamphlets of slander against my father," was intemperate enough that he suppressed publication (his grandson still cut some personal attacks) (108). According to Fischer, there had been an Essex Junto, a part of a Federalist faction, but of all the reputed members only Timothy Pickering was still active in politics at the time of the supposed conspiracy. The movement to disunion in New England was a grassroots affair and except for Pickering Federalist leaders tried to prevent a break.

[120] William Ander Smith traces the quotation to the *Memoir of Theophilus Parsons*, prepared by his son, which repeats the quotation from a friend who heard it from a second friend present when Hamilton made the remark. John Quincy Adams had once studied law with Parsons, a member of the Essex Junto, and Parson's son taught law at Harvard when Henry was there as student and teacher. According to Ander Smith, the quotation was tenuous as evidence, thus a "transgression" to use; yet Adams judged it worth using as a revelation of Hamilton's personality and philosophy, because of his antipathy to Hamilton and because the "hero" of Adams' *History* is the people. Adams' relation to the people is more complicated, though. The hero of his volumes is the nation more than the people, or the people as they came to form themselves into a nation. Adams always felt included in the nation, but he was and was not one of the people.

[121] "Future political crises all through Hamilton's life were always in his mind about to make him commander-in-chief and his first and last written words show the same innate theory of life"(L2:267). Letter to Henry Cabot Lodge, 15 May, 1876. Adams refers to Hamilton's letter to his family, (also quoted in full by John Quincy Adams in *Documents*), in which his political ambition overrides all his practical and moral objections to the duel with Burr.

[122] Tocqueville was an early "idol," whose ideas Adams assimilated in the 1860s. By the 1880s the influence was not explicit. Against "scientific" history, Adams posed "aristocratic" history, "heroic" history, "romantic" history, or "history as *belles-lettres*."

[123] Letter to Henry Cabot Lodge, 21 March 1881.

[124] To judge by the standard of the Library of America, Adams and Parkman are the two leading American historians, the only two published.

[125] "Critical Notices: *The Old Regime in Canada*."

[126] William Jordy makes the distinction here not between romantic and scientific historians, but between active and passive historians. "Where Parkman submerged the present in the past, Adams brought the past to the present and laid it, bit by bit, before his readers as the scientist might perform an experiment"(59). Adams wanted his readers' active participation, Parkman their immersion. William Jordy, "Henry Adams and Francis Parkman.".

[127] Letter to Charles Milnes Gaskell, 23 January, 1894.

[128] For a sampling, Edmund Gosse writes an obituary for realism, appreciating its value in sweeping away the "inanities and impossibilities" of older fiction, but at its worst tending to "somber grimy, dreary studies in pathology." Edmund Gosse, "The Limits of Realism in Fiction," *Forum* n.v. (June 1890): 391-99. William Roscoe Thayer insists that the methods of science and the doctrine of democracy do not apply to art; against the pessimism and lack of faith of realism, he proposes the imagination. "Realism in Literature" *The Independent*, 38(Oct. 21, 1886): 4-5. Thayer criticizes the impersonality and materialism of science, the world of facts as inadequate to literature. "The Fallacies of Realism," *The Open Court* 4(July 3, 1890):11-14). Hamilton Wright Mabie looks at the best of realist fiction, *The Rise of Silas Lapham*, and finds it wanting—a lack of vitality, a substitution of observation for insight, the analysis of motives of characters who are too "feeble, irresolute, unimportant," and a too cool, deliberate, skeptical approach that paralyses the finer feeling and higher aspirations of the reader. Instead of this "practical atheism applied to art" we need a new movement of the imagination. "A Typical Novel," *Andover Review* 4(1885): 417-429. Maurice Thompson criticizes realism for emphasizing the superficial and observable, mere photography, agnosticism and facts, but argues for the power of romance, including Darwin's imaginative power. "The Domain of Romance," *Forum*, n.v. (November 1889):326-336. In "A Plea for Romantic Fiction," Frank Norris takes the naturalist point of view against the previous idealists and attacks the stultifying surfaces of realism, commonplace people and ordinary lives, "the drama of the broken teacup," against the "unplumbed depths," and the extraordinary experience beneath the surface of the ordinary. In "Zola as a Romantic Writer" he proposes naturalism as a form of romance opposed to realism, dedicated to the unique, the extraordinary, the enormous, the vast and terrible drama of life. *The Literary Criticism of Frank Norris.*

[129] He complains that "the new historical romances" are essentially undemocratic: "Their testimony, false witness as it is, is against the American life of individual worth, without titles and ranks, and only the distinction of honorable achievement." But he also postulates that they are too popular: "the dime novel has gotten into good literary society, and flourishes in periodicals of the highest class," where its brutish adventure at least lowers "that delicate something which we call tone," if not the morals and minds of readers (941). Stories of hunting and fighting, blood and violence were regressive formally and morally as Howells imagined the evolution of the novel and society. "The New Historical Romances."

[130] Howells didn't write a formal review of the *History*, but was highly appreciative of Adams' keen-eyed account of Burr's conspiracy "with all its amazing suggestions of opéra bouffe." "There can be no doubt of the historian's consciousness of the loose social structure, the weak sense of collective interest, the intense and exaggerated individualism fostered by the exigencies and opportunities of pioneer existence…At the same time he treats it with that sort of fine toleration, that delicate and penetrating justice of his, which give a kind of aesthetic beauty to his criticisms of communities of men. His truth is unsparing, but it is not unkind, and with a humorous perception of whatever was ridiculous in the situation, he is always alive to what is important and finally significant. He found "one's pride of country and faith in human nature (when it is good-natured human nature, especially) rather refreshed than otherwise" in the contrast between the "mighty republic of today' and its tentative beginnings (968-69). "Editor's Study," *Harper's Monthly.*

[131] Nietzsche is disturbed that the evacuation of personality could ever be considered an ideal, that the retrieval of the past could be considered an end in itself rather than an instrument for the enhancement of present life (105). Friedrich Nietzsche, "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life."; the original German edition was reviewed in the *North American Review* by Thomas S. Perry during Adams' editorship.

[132] Perhaps this illustrates Michel Foucault's remarks about the "author function" and how authorship differs from the attribution of scientific productions. Certainly Adams fantasizes about being like Darwin the founder of a discourse in his 1894 address "The Tendency of History."

[133] Which is not without its competitive aspects. See Thomas Haskell, *Objectivity Is Not Neutrality*.

[134] Adams' "Crillon" article still has the power to rankle professional historians. Gordon Wood, for one, writing in the *AHR*'s centennial issue, can't understand why Jameson printed it. Wood identifies Adams'

tone as "ironic and jaded," mocking the optimism of the new discipline and its idea of historical accuracy. He implies a distinction between Adam's own practice and that of the professional historian in "getting his facts and footnotes straight" (678-9). Wood's discomfort seems to stem from the association he makes between Adams and present day controversies about historical objectivity and epistemological skepticism, as reflected in Peter Novick's book, *That Noble Dream*. Despite Adams' cynical tone, which to Wood seems out of place in 1895 but "could have been written today," Wood asserts that "most historians of early America seem to be going about their craft today in much the same manner as their predecessors of a century ago." To mark the occasion his article is a story of the progress of historical knowledge that Adams failed to write. Writing in the same issue of the *AHR*, Dominick La Capra is interested in the way that Adams' approach to the texts anticipates a deconstructivist reading of history.

[135] In 1908, after reading an "evisceration" of Hippolyte Taine's methodology, Adams described himself as "struck cold"; as an author who has "never written a chapter less than five times over…If I went on forever, I should always do it differently, and of course each version is a correction."

[136] Adams scrupulously revised his *History* as new documents presented themselves. For example, in 1891, while he was in London, he checked the British archives for any gaps in his information, and to be thorough went back before 1800: "As yet no one seems to have taken the trouble to criticize me, and as I have grave doubts whether anyone has ever read me seriously with a view to testing my accuracy, my present task seems a work of supererogation, but as I can never tell what might happen, the precaution is worth taking"(L3:573). Letter to Theodore Dwight, 24 November 1891. However, Adams in a later work, *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres*, was more inclined to rely on secondary sources and to do so less critically. See Robert Mayne for Adams' research and use of sources in *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres.*

[137] Although he used to claim that he hadn't met ten people who had actually read it.

[138] In an essay on "History," quoted in Levine (111).

[139] Thomas Babington Macaulay, *The History of England from the Accession of James II, volume 1* (2). Before his death, Macaulay finished five volumes, which covered roughly the same number of years as Adams' history.

[140] Jameson's inclusion of a paragraph of these despairing sentiments in an article celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the *Review* seemed a bit odd if he was trying to justify his inclusion of the Crillon article, which he describes as "a chip from [Adams'] workshop, slight but entertaining"; once again Adams is a reluctant guest at the historian's party. But perhaps this was simply an indication of Adam's contemporary prominence in 1920. In an irony of history that Adams would have appreciated, *The Education of Henry Adams*, published posthumously in 1919, had sold widely and won the Pulitzer Prize.

[141] According to Mary Poovey, *A History of the Modern Fact*, professionalization is one response to the "epistemological peculiarity" of the fact existing as both observed particular and a part of systematic knowledge (1-3).

[142] Henry Thomas Buckle, *History of Civilization in England, Vol. I* .

[143] The *History* was published from 1889-91, but as preparation Adams edited *Documents Relating to New England Federalism* (1877) and *The Writings of Albert Gallatin* (1879), wrote biographies of Gallatin (1879), John Randolph (1881) and Aaron Burr (never published). The first quarter of the *History* was privately printed and circulated for criticism by intimates in 1884, the second in 1885, the third in 1888.

[144] In the *Westminster Review*.

[145] On his return to the U.S. in 1868 after seven years in England as secretary to his father, Charles Francis Adams, the minister to Great Britain, Adams began a career as an investigative journalist in Washington. Adams' expectations were disappointed by the Grant administration; from originally hoping for the enactment of a program of political reform, he became disgusted enough by the general atmosphere of incompetence and corruption and the lack of opportunities for himself and his friends to take the position of assistant professor of medieval history at Harvard. But he continued to promote his political convictions as editor of the *North American Review* and helped organize a movement of Liberal Republicans to pressure the Republican Party to adopt their program of civil service reform, free trade and currency reform under threat to start an Independent party of their own. In 1872 Charles Francis Adams narrowly lost the Liberal Republican nomination to Horace Greeley. Greeley was a disastrous candidate against Grant, and with the reformers still divided at the time of the 1876 election, the chances for a Presidential candidacy by Charles Francis Adams became increasingly unlikely. The Republicans did nominate a reform-minded candidate, Rutherford B. Hayes; the Independents failed to hold together. With few regrets Adams left the editorship of the *NAR* after the publishers objected to "The Independents in the Canvas" an article calling for voters to

break away from the regular party in the 1876 election. In 1877 he left Harvard and returned to Washington to write history. He bought an interest in the *N.Y. Evening Post* but didn't continue to write political articles. Estimations of Adams' political efficacy vary; Ari Hoogenboom thinks he made "an enormous contribution" to the passage of the Pendleton Civil Service Reform Bill (31).

[146] The first quotation is from an assessment of the career of "Trollope." The second is from "The Art of Fiction" (1884): "the only reason for the existence of a novel is that it does attempt to represent life." James makes an analogy between painting and the novel, "to insist on the fact that as the picture is reality, so the novel is history. That is the only general description (which does it justice) that we may give of the novel. But history also is allowed to represent life; it is not any more than painting, expected to apologize" (46). Roslyn Jolly sees these statements as an attempt to bolster the novelist's cultural authority through the connection to history; James' early novels invoked the attitude of the historian "to disciplining and blocking expressions of the fictive imagination dramatized *within* the novel" (vi). However, as Jolly sees it, James' characters resisted such a view, and in his late works characters use fiction in opposition to history as a way to approach existence and solve its problems.

Susan Goodman quotes James to claim that American novelists of manners at the turn of the century felt they were writing human history. However, when she says, "By the turn of the century, distinctions between historians and fiction writers were frequently blurred," she must be writing from the point of view of the novelists, not the historians bent on turning their discipline into a profession, for whom the difference was becoming more crucial. Earlier in the nineteenth century Walter Scott had had an influence on historians, who wanted to represent living, breathing characters in historical events.

[147] According to Samuels, 14,000 copies were sold in sixteen American printings by Henry Holt during Adams' lifetime, the last in 1908; the 1925 reprint is the first to list Adams as author. Theodore Stanton's attribution in *Manual of the American Novel* (1909) went unnoticed, but William Roscoe Thayer's 1915 *Life and Letters of John Hay* also named Adams as author. Adams donated his royalties to civil service reform. The first English edition was published in 1882, as well French and Tauchnitz editions later. 14,000 English copies have been reported sold, but Samuels finds the coincidence of figures suspect (438-39). Adams described the piracy of his novel as "the greatest compliment an author can have…the single real triumph of my life"(L5:691) Those suspected of authorship included Clarence King, John Hay, Marian Adams, Harriet Loring, Arthur Sedgwick, Manton Marble, John De Forest. Most amusing for Adams was the letter to the editor of *The Nation* from his brother, Charles Francis Adams, attributing *The Bread-Winners* (1884), anonymously published by John Hay, to the author of *Democracy* on the basis of a similar crude semi-educated style.

[148]The *International Review* said, "This little volume is a very wholesome contradiction to the theory of those persons of whom Mr. Henry James is the chief literary exponent that Americans and American life cannot furnish material for a novel unless they are first transplanted to Europe where they can be studied as rare and curious exotics" (209). James wrote, "This moral is that the flower of art blooms only where the soil is deep, that it takes a great deal of history to produce a little literature, that it needs a complex social machinery to set a writer in motion. American civilization has hitherto had other things to do than to produce flowers" (320). From James' study of *Hawthorne* (1879), the only American included in a series on English men of letters.

[149] *Fortnightly Review*, *Westminster Review*.

[150] Adams was accused of nihilism for saying that "the man who has committed murder for his country is a patriot."

[151] "Novels of the Week" *The Athenaeum*.

[152] "New Novels," *The Academy*.

[153] English reviewers were sensitive to the distinctions between English and American novels. In 1882 Howells' article "Henry James, Jr." in *The Century* had been the source of controversy in England, relegating Dickens and Thackeray to the literature of the past and proposing James as the future of the novel.

[154] See Samuels (II:223),

[155] See Andreas Huyssen, "Mass Culture as Woman," for a discussion of the way "the political, psychological, and aesthetic discourse around the turn of the century consistently and obsessively genders mass culture and the masses as feminine" (47).

[156] Reporting on the reception of the first volume of the *Decline and Fall* (180).

[157] For example, in 1883, after his biography of Aaron Burr was rejected for the "American Statesman" series on the grounds that Burr was no statesman, Adams wrote to Hay: "I hate publishing and do not want reputation. There are not more than a score of people in America whose praise I want, and the number will grow with time," so "Aaron" may have "three or four more years of privacy" before being published (L2:488).
[158][Review] *Mountaineering in the Sierra Nevada, North American Review*.
[159] According to J. C. Levenson, possibly "Frances" as a variant of Francis, as in Charles Francis Adams, Senior and Junior; "Snow" for a winter tale, the New England temperament?; "Compson" for Comtean.
[160] "By what process of logical accretion was this slight "personality," the mere slim shade of an intelligent but presumptuous girl, to find itself endowed with the high attributes of a Subject?—and indeed by what thinness, at the best, would such a subject not be vitiated? (1077). 1908 Preface to *The Portrait of a Lady.* Adams may not consider his heroines to be centers of interest in themselves, but as instruments of social investigation measuring his subject, American society, in particular aspects. Still if their sensitive perceptions and instinctive responses are to be taken seriously, his characters have to matter to the reader.
[161] According to Samuels, he objected to the historian Lucy Salmon, but the notes to the *Letters* refer to "reports on local history projects by members of women's groups." Typically Adams objected to the quality of the masculine presentations as well, e.g. a history of the theory of comets presented by President Andrew Dickson White, but not on grounds of gender. See Samuels II: 269-70, also *Letters* II: 625-6.
[162] See Bonnie Smith, *The Gender of History*, for the way that the professionalization of history excluded women.
[163] J.C. Levenson in *The Mind and Art of Henry Adams* speculates that another reason for hiding his authorship was that, like Hawthorne, he felt "that his New England forebears would writhe to know that a descendant of theirs had become a mere teller of stories"(198).
[164] But Garry Wills tries, calling Adams a "proto-feminist" for his attention to his grandmother's travails in joining the family. However, Adams' sympathies seem to be engaged at least as much by the children of the family, separated from their parents to further Adams family ambitions. Kim Moreland, writing about *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres*, considers Adams' supposed feminist reputation: his claims of feminine superiority attracted criticism in the Fifties from Edward Saveth as flattering club-women and readers of women's magazines, while in the Seventies Susan Gilbert in "The Education of Henrietta Adams" used selective editing of Adams' words to discover a feminist, as Duco von Oostrum demonstrates. Moreland is interested in the way that Adams' celebration of the women of the past allows him to justify his criticism of the women of his own time. See especially the letters to Charles Milnes Gaskell, in which Adams consistently adopts a man-of-the-world tone in disparaging female ability.
[165] The essay was published in a collection accompanying the *History* in 1891.Eugenia Kaledin in "Henry Adams's Anthropological Vision." cites Adam's first historical article from 1867, "Captaine John Smith," debunking the story of Smith's rescue by Pocahontas, as an example of Adams' interest in cultures he considered primitive. She describes his picture of Pocahontas as "entirely charming" (59). It seems more likely that Adams is attempting to both differentiate his own approach from an earlier romantic historiography and score points against a Virginia aristocracy that considered her an ancestor. Members of the Randolph family, Adams family antagonists, might not find it so charming to read their ancestor described in a contemporary account as a "wanton yong girle" who at the age of eleven or twelve would follow the boys in turning cartwheels in the marketplace, "naked as she was, all the fort over"(Smith 54). What is interesting is that Adams claims this as the most romantic episode in American history, not to be repeated. It may be the presence of the native woman that allows for the possibility of romance, since Adams considers romance to be the characteristic mode of archaic and aristocratic history; he attempts to recreate it in the *Memoirs of Arii Taimai.* The possibility of a national romance uniting north and south or east and west is entertained but never fulfilled in *Democracy;* only the international union of Miss Dare and Lord Dunbeg is assumed.
[166] "Houses of the Mound-Builders," *NAR* 123(1876):60-85 and "Montezuma's Dinner," *NAR* 122(1876): 265-308. Both were also cited in the bibliography of *Essays in Anglo-Saxon Law*. Also Morgan's *Ancient Society* (1877) Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1985. Marx's notes on this were the major influence on Engel's analysis, since he had difficulty obtaining a copy of the book.
[167] Adams' opposition to Reconstruction, despite his family's abolitionist tradition, seemed to display a similar legalism — the removal of legal impediments to citizenship was enough to remove the obligation to

do more. No further attention need be paid to the newly freed slaves now that the Constitution was properly revised.

[168] Eric Rauchway argues that as a feminist Adams gave women's sphere a history, and asserted that its history had not been a progress. Therefore, "he sought to defy the notion that women's sphere served to nurture women to independence" (62). But what is interesting about Adams analysis is that it stops time at the stage of the family and refuses to imagine anything beyond it. Modern society can only move on old lines—independence in the past led to the corruptions of the Empire: "none had been more scandalous and more fatal than the corruptions of the women." Adams wasn't arguing in favor of women's independence. Although he sympathized with the thwarted potential of women, and encouraged his nieces to learn how to control their own money, it's not clear how women could be included in art, religion and politics—what he thinks they could do, or should be permitted to do, except as members of a cultivated audience.

[169] See Samuels I: 266.

[170] See David Partenheimer, "Henry Adams's 'Primitive Rights of Women.'"

[171] See Martha Banta, "Being a 'Begonia' in a Man's World," on gender and Adam's sense of vocation in *The Education of Henry Adams*. Eugenia Kaledin in *The Education of Mrs. Henry Adams* finds Adams incorporating the spirit of his late wife in his increasing cultural critique.

[172] Although Nancy Conley, while acknowledging the centrality of the family in Adams' conception of primitive rights, argues that the absence of mothers is typical of the literature of the period "in which mothers we seen as having little or no effect on matters of importance"(6) "Henry Adams' Feminine Fictions: The Economics of Maternity."

[173] Clive Bush argues that Hazard misinterprets sentimentally what is "essentially a gentile matriarchal landscape"; he fails to see Esther's story, which Adams described as about "Kings and queens in tropical islands…with giants and talking monkeys," as "the history of the race in myth" (64). Hazard does participate in the drawing and story-telling to Esther's apparent gratification; if Hazard underestimates Esther's strength, Esther doesn't seem conscious of it herself. The idea of archaic history as myth, legend and poetry told in a female voice is one Adams takes up in *The Memoirs of Arii Taimai*.

[174] Donoghue, for example.

[175] Adams' popularity in the 1920s reflects his odd reception history. *The Education of Henry Adams*, printed and privately circulated in 1907, was only published after his death in 1918. Its pessimistic speculation about a world of technological forces beyond human control resonated with post-war audiences and won the Pulitzer prize in 1919.

[176] *Eclectic Magazine of Foreign Literature* complains about the scarcity of the political novel.

[177] As Fredric Jameson argues in *The Political Unconscious* for "the priority of the political interpretation of literary texts," the political reading is "the absolute horizon of all reading and all interpretation."

[178]See Samuels for more on reading influences (II: 70-71). Adams is "appalled" by Trollope's autobiography but doesn't seem to comment on his political novels. Tancred's decision to go to the Holy Land and seek "first principles" rather than take his rightful place in Parliament may be echoed in Madeleine's final retreat to Egypt, at least in the sense that she is bypassing Europe to return to a primary source, here of civilization rather than religion. See Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness*, on Disraeli's imperialist musings on the Eastern Question in *Tancred.* While the novel purports to seek a religious truth to revitalize England's political ideals, it leaves its hero in the East dreaming of the power of faith and race to conquer the world. What at first seems like a specificity of place in relation to the divine becomes a philosemitic assertion of the superiority of the "Arabian" race as the originator of the world's great faiths. See also Christopher Harvie, *The Centre of Things*: Disraeli's "trilogy" of political novels of 1844-47 were not so popular at first issue. *Tancred,* Disraeli's favorite, sold only a couple of thousand copies, but was reissued in 1870 as a result of Disraeli's political success. *Tancred* "anticipates" British foreign policy of the 1870s and "that curious Tory obsession with the Arabs" (Harvie 44). Madeleine Lee's sister, Sybil, may be named in tribute to Disraeli's heroine of *Sybil, or The Two Nations*, or possibly *Histoire de Sybille* by Octave Feuillet, an early enthusiasm according to Samuels (II:70).

[179] Writing to Charles Milnes Gaskell about "the great and glorious success which Disraeli has won over Turkey—or was it Russia?" Adams says: "The truth is your government has cut a very droll figure, but on the whole got out of the scrape very happily. I am not disposed to quarrel with anyone who preserves the peace…And I never was very much of a Gladstonian. He showed what he was worth during our civil war, and I never got over the impression he made on me. Are you going to visit Cyprus? I suppose there will be a dozen English Brightons on it before ten years are out" (Letters II: 345).

[180] Just to name two, Norman Podhoretz on the right and Robert Davidoff on the left consider Adams to have a continuing pernicious influence in fostering an attitude of detachment and elitism among intellectuals.
[181] Is there an Anglo-Saxon word for "vulgarity"?
[182] From the *Nation*, 14(1874) review of *Honest John Vane*, and the *Nation* 21(1875) review of *Playing the Mischief*. Also Lathrop's *Atlantic Monthly* review of *Honest John Vane.*
[183] H. H. Boyesen, "Why We Have No Great Novelists." *Forum*, February 1887: 615-22.
[184] "Social Washington" by Henry Loomis Nelson, *Atlantic Monthly* 52(1883). Perhaps both novels were inspired by the success of *Democracy*? Burnett's novel, reviewed in the *Atlantic* of July 1883 as "a brilliant book" that "might have been a great one" is the tale of a woman's unhappy marriage to an unworthy man who tries to use her to lobby for his "Westoria" land scheme.Throughout the novel the heroine, a fashionable hostess, hides her feelings for her first love, news of whose death on the Indian frontier concludes the novel. If the atmosphere of politics can be degrading, the most significant lesson of the novel seems to be that girls shouldn't allow themselves to be rushed into marriage, a political lesson in a sense wider than Adams would define the term. Dahlgren's novel is briefly reviewed in the October *Atlantic* as "a travesty of Washington, but it is not good fiction, nor has it good manners" (576).
[185] Writing to her father in1879, Marian Adams described a visit to the House of Worth. She "yielded to Henry's wishes" to order a duplicate of a gown designed for the Duchess of Wurttemberg. Worth himself "was standing pensively by the window in a long puce-coloured dressing gown with two exquisite black spaniels—twins—sitting on two green velvet chairs." She continued, "I have become bored with the idea of getting any new gowns, but Henry says, 'People who study Greek must take pains with their dress.'"(224).
[186] See the 1899 *Theory of the Leisure Class.*
[187] Adams might seem to be making what for him was an unusual acknowledgement of a subSaharan Africa that admitted some complexity of social organization; for all his interest in geo-political prognostication this is not a part of the world that usually figures in his calculations. But in the mid-1870s the King of Dahomey was variously the object of indignation or levity, based on his annual custom of insisting that Western merchants attend his annual execution of prisoners, his 4.000 or 5,000 wives, his female company of bodyguards, and the British blockade entailed by his refusal to pay a penalty in palm oil for his personal insult to a British subject. See *New York Times* articles.
[188] The source of Hay's own fortune was his marriage to a Cleveland heiress, Clara Stone.
[189] Vernon Parrington, *Main Currents in American Thought*, Vol.III.
[190] Adams sense of the economic determinism was probably at its strongest in the 1890s after the Panic of 1893 while he was helping his brother Brooks with his *Law of Civilization and Decay*.
[191] See Patricia O'Toole, The *Five of Hearts*. The pious Mrs. Hay, whose keeping of the Sabbath Samuel Clemens found daunting, may have been a member ex officio. After King's death, his friends discovered his secret marriage in 1888 (without license and under an assumed name) to a black woman, Ada Copeland, and their clandestine family establishment in Brooklyn and later Canada. In the next chapter I talk more about the way that Adams' letters from Polynesia create and maintain a circle of intimates. See Martha Sandweiss, *Passing Strange*, for an account of King's dual life.
[192] Carolyn Porter, *Seeing and Being; the Plight of the Participant Observer in Emerson, James, and Faulkner*.
[193] Charles Vandersee emphasizes Adams' satire of the "charity-culture phase." While Adams' letters profess impatience with priggish Bostonians making a religion of culture, Adams' satirical tone in detailing Lee's possessions could be applied to his own acquisitiveness and that of his wife. If his protagonist has a Corot as the "altarpiece" in her parlor, Henry and Clover Adams owned a Bonington, a pair of Reynolds portraits, a Blake, etc.
[194] Male characters are referred to by surnames or titles, females by first names or titles.
[195] Donoghue quotes Gilles Deleuze, from *Proust et les signes*, on the Socratic mind: "The Socratic demon, irony, consists in anticipating the encounters. In Socrates. the intelligence still comes before the encounters; it provokes them, it instigates and organizes them" (197). "Henry Adams' Novels."
[196] Whereas Henry James "resorted to instruments only to ascertain what his sensibility had *already* discovered," according to R. P. Blackmur, *Henry Adams*.
[197] Rauchway thinks Adams is arguing against a sentimental women's culture of sacrifice, but Adams is still praising Woman's self-sacrifice on behave of her family, the pearl of great price, in the *Education*. The problem is not so much the sacrifice as the lack of an adequate ideal to sacrifice for in a modern age.

[198] Andrew Schreiber, for example, emphasizes the way that the association of morality with gender marginalizes a virtuous man like Carrington as a problem for Adams and American politics. See "The Widow and the Dynamo: Gender and Power in Henry Adams' *Democracy*."
[199] See Harold Kaplan on Adams and literary naturalism.
[200] "Too thoroughly democratic to fear democracy, and too much nationalized to fear nationalism, Pennsylvania became the ideal American state." But Pennsylvanians don't "take kindly" to politics: "Perhaps their democracy was so deep an instinct that they knew not what to do with political power when they gained it; as though political power were aristocratic in its nature, and democratic power a contradiction in terms" (J:80-81)." Mrs. Lightfoot Lee" has echoes of southern Revolutionary and Civil War heroes, an aristocratic style of leadership.
[201] Adam's own neighborhood and within sight of the White House, if the statue in the square represents the family nemesis, Andrew Jackson. Michael O'Brien points out that Adams' choice of this end of Philadelphia Avenue demonstrates the Adams family preference for the administrative role over the legislative. See Viola Hopkins Winner, "Henry Adams and Lafayette Square, 1877-1885." As Adams wrote about his own move to Washington to his English friend, Charles Milnes Gaskell: "The fact is, I gravitate to a capital by a primary law of nature. This is the only place in America where society amuses me, or where life offers variety. Here, too, I can fancy that we are of use in the world for we distinctly occupy niches which ought to be filled…"
"One of these days this will be a very great city if nothing happens to it. Even now it is a beautiful one, and its situation is superb. As I belong to the class of people who have great faith in this country and who believe that in another century it will be saying in its turn the last word in civilization, I enjoy the expectation of the coming day, and try to imagine that I am myself, with my fellow *gelehrte* here, the first faint rays of that great light which is to dazzle and se the world on fire hereafter" (L2:326). 25 November 1877.
[202] Adams found his friend's Daisy *Miller* "really clever," but "broke down" on *Portrait of a Lady* (L2:344; 448). Adams and his wife are reputed to make an appearance as the Bonneycastles in James' story "Pandora" (1884) and are reflected in "The Siege of London" (1882). Mr. Bonneycastle "was not in politics, though politics was much in him" (838). The couple "solved all of their problems successfully, including those of knowing none of the people they did not wish to, and of finding plenty of occupation in a society supposed to be meagerly provided with resources for persons of leisure." With only a month left to the old administration, Mr. Bonneycastle exclaims, "Hang it, there is only a month left; let us have some fun—let us invite the President!" (838). From *Complete Stories 1874-1884.* Critics have proposed Marian Adams, whose "intellectual grace" was admired by James, as a possible model for Isabel Archer. Marion Adams reported that James had written her before sailing back to Europe: "He wished, he said, his last farewell to be said to me as I seemed to him 'the incarnation of my native land'—a most equivocal compliment coming from him. Am I then vulgar, dreary, and impossible to live with…Poor America! She must drag on somehow without the sympathy and love of her denationalized children" (384). *Letters of Mrs. Henry Adams*, ed. Ward Thoron..
[203](William Dean Howells?) "Recent American Fiction." *Atlantic Monthly (*September 1880); 422.
[204] The figure of the pearl returns in Chapter V as the dream of love and beauty in which the Woman maintained her family, and in the letters as the young Adams' symbol for his life's work.
[205] A reference to Ulysses Grant, obviously, but also Rutherford B. Hayes. The President's wife displays "Lemonade Lucy" Hayes' interest in moral propriety, although on closer acquaintance the Adamses found her a kindly country schoolmistress type, with "not a bit of nonsense or vulgarity" (Letters of Mrs. Henry Adams 260). Sen. Ratcliffe is widely accepted to be a portrait of James G. Blaine, the "Plumed Knight" of the Republican Party with elements of Roscoe Conkling and others. Henry and Marian Adams found him too corrupt to acknowledge in society, cutting him even when he was Secretary of State; he also apparently obstructed a Presidential nomination for Charles Francis Adams.
[206] R. P. Blackmur sees justice in the accusation, or rather, "When the intelligence plays the coquette with corruption she is as sullied in her person as is the woman in whose guise she plays it. But what if there is no role for the intelligence to play in corrupt politics but that of coquette?" a problem that he sees exists still for the liberals of 1943 in "The Novels of Henry Adams" (293). Edward Saveth's reading from the 1950s focuses less on the political and religious contexts and more on the psychological makeup of Adams' strong and "dominating" heroines who project a particularly feminine destructiveness, "posing a

contemptuous challenge to masculine institutions" like democratic government. "The Heroines of Henry Adams."

[207] See *Education* 972. See Samuels for further accounts of Motley's firing (II:92). William Dean Howells, who as consul in Venice in the 1860s worked under Motley, described the historian as "an ideal democrat who was also a real swell, and who was not likely to discredit us socially when we so much needed to be thought well of in every way" (Literary Friends and Acquaintance 96).

[208] In his later works the monumental encounter has a transformative effect on Adams himself, as he gauges his responses in the cloister at Chartres Cathedral, before the dynamos at the Paris exposition of 1900, on the steps of the Ara Coeli in Rome, or eavesdropping on the responses of tourists visiting the monument he commissioned at Rock Creek Cemetery.

[209] Carlyle's *French Revolution*.

[210] Adams' incomprehension of the military mind tends to an unfair assessment of Grant.

[211] In *The Uses and Disabuses of History for Life*, reviewed in its German version by T.S.Perry when Adams was editor of the *North American Review*.

[212] See Michael O'Brien, *Henry Adams and the Southern Question*, for a discussion of the way that Adams' *History* gives the Jeffersonians, upholders of the American dream, the benefit of the doubt as to slavery, before Randolph and Calhoun invent the Slave Power (108-13). Adams may have had a certain respect for the non-commercial values that Carrington represents but to say as Earl Harbert does that the South for Adams "now seems to offer the best hope for a much- needed renaissance in American political life" ignores much that Adams wrote critical of the South, most savagely in his biography of John Randolph (75). This sounds more like the encomiums offered the South by Charles Francis Adams Jr., Henry's older brother, on the centenary of Robert E. Lee's birth.

[213] Adams was possibly influenced by the memoirs of his grandmother, Louisa Catherine Adams, who described court life in Europe as a diplomat's wife. As the wife of the Secretary of State she detailed the battles between senator's wives and cabinet members' wives over precedence.

[214] The scene of the British Ambassador's ball in which Madeleine Lee, through no effort of her own, is singled out for special favor by the visiting princess seems like wish fulfillment rather than a satire of the democratic obsession with royalty. After Queen Victoria's death, Adams wrote: "Even I, who, for some years, belonged to Victoria's Court in what was supposed to be its best time, and who never could see anything but selfishness and bourgeoisie to admire in the old woman, and who never received from her or her family so much as a sign of recognition, am a very little touched to see her so tragically, broken-hearted at the wretched end of such a self-satisfied reign, and nobody care"(LettersV:189). Interesting that Adams personalizes his response to the Queen, as a member of her Court. As the secretary/son of the American Minister during the Civil War what kind of personal recognition would he have expected? He still seems to take the royals' indifference personally, if it rankles after thirty years, but as a representative of the Union, they would be constrained in their actions by the imperatives of statecraft rather than personal inclination.

[215] Esther herself seems to be based on Marion Adams; Catherine Brooke on Elizabeth Cameron, Washington neighbor and wife of Senator Don Cameron; George Strong on Clarence King with a portion of Henry Adams, e.g. "He was rich, and his professorship was little more to him than a way of spending money" (195); Hazard on Adams' cousin, Phillips Brooks, of Trinity Church in Boston; Wharton on John LaFarge, the artist. LaFarge, Augustus Saint-Gaudens, and H.H. Richardson, the architect, all Adams' friends, had been engaged in building Trinity when Adams still lived in Boston. See Charles Vandersee on Trinity Church.

[216] Marian Adams' comment about the novel, that "It's very nice and charming things in it" but James "chaws more than he bites off," has been taken as her husband's attitude as well (Letters of Mrs. Henry Adams 306).

[217] Marian Adams' family had ties to the transcendentalist movement. Her mother, Ellen Sturgis Hooper, published several poems in the *Dial* before her early death, while her aunt, Caroline Sturgis Tappan, was a friend of Emerson and Margaret Fuller, and had agreed to serve as guardian to Fuller's son, if needed.

[218] See his comments on Chartres, where no expense was spared for the Virgin, compared to his disappointment at the shoddiness of religious structures in Ceylon.

[219] Apparently the only novel that Adams ever reviewed was William Dean Howells first, *Their Wedding Journey* (1872), with an itinerary that included Niagara Falls. Adams commended the novel's "extreme and almost photographic truth to nature, and remarkable delicacy and lightness of touch." Given the "masculine incompetence to comprehend the female character" he suggests that Howells must have had feminine

assistance "in revealing the secret of her own attractiveness, so far at least as she knows it." Characterizing the novel as "essentially a lovers' book," Adams wrote that "It deserves to be among the first of the gifts which follow or precede marriage offer…If it can throw over the average bridal couple some reflection of its own refinement and taste, it will prove itself a valuable assistant to American civilization." *North American Review*, 114(1872): 444-45. Adams' own copy is inscribed with his and Marion Hooper's names and the date of their engagement. See Samuels II:235. Unlike Esther Dudley's experience of the falls, described as a "companion," a "confidant," a "huge playmate," Isabel March experiences a few moments of psychological paralysis before their power; luckily, other tourists arrive on the scene and social embarrassment overcomes existential panic.

[220] See Michael Colocurcio on the way that *Esther* seems to anticipate and engage with James' "The Will to Believe" published twelve years later, in "*Democracy* and *Esther*: Henry Adams' Flirtation with Pragmatism." In 1882 Adams wrote to James about two articles the latter sent him that were later incorporated in to *The Will to Believe*, "Rationality, Activity and Faith" and "Great Men, Great Thoughts, and the Environment." In the latter James attempts to restore human agency to history despite the writings of Herbert Spencer. While Adams rejects Carlylean hero-worship, and finds that "in history heroes have neutralized each other," he admits "you could doubtless at any time stop the entire progress of human thought by killing a few score of men." But, and here he seems to echo Esther's conversation with Strong about getting hold of one true thought, "Not one of them has ever got so far as to tell us a single vital fact worth knowing. We can't even prove that we are" (L2:466). In the former James asserts that faith will always be a factor in our "philosophic constructions" and that no philosophy will be considered rational that does not "pretend to determine expectancy" and make a direct appeal to powers we esteem like faith, a power that "brings forth its own verification" (86). Adams reaction was, "As I understand your Faith, your x, your reaction of the individual on the cosmos, it is the old question of Free Will over again. You *choose* to assume that the will is free. Good! Reason proves that the will cannot be free. Equally good! Free or not, the mere fact that a doubt can exist proves that x must be a very microscopic quantity. If the orthodox are grateful to you for such gifts, the world has indeed changed, and we have much to thank God for, if there is a God, that he should have left us unable to decide whether our thoughts, if we have thoughts, are our own or his'n" (L2:466). More on *The Will to Believe* in the context of *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres*.

[221] Patrick Wolfe, who is hardly alone in reading the novels chiefly as keys to Adams' life, considers Hawthorne's Esther, "an old woman who remained loyal to the old order and turned her back on the future," to be symbolic of Marian Adam's "condition," "her unhealthy dependence upon her father" in "The Revealing Fiction of Henry Adams" (418). Katharine Simonds' "The Tragedy of Mrs. Henry Adams" also emphasizes the similarities between Clover Adams and Esther Dudley in an early attempt to recuperate Mrs. Adams historically. Simonds emphasizes Henry Adams' inability to reassure his wife because he shared her feelings of uncertainty, solitude and terror of death. See Eugenia Kaledin, Otto Friedrich for subsequent biographies of Marian Adams.

[222] Although as Clive Bush points out, the novel could be read as a variant on the popular Victorian form of "The Minister's Wooing." In Harriet Beecher Stowe's 1859 version, her minister, the historical figure Rev. Samuel Hopkins, less superbly egotistical than Adams' Stephen Hazard, accepts the intervention of a disinterested bystander, Miss Prissy and releases his intended bride from her promise when her supposedly-dead beloved returns from the sea. Set at the end of the eighteenth century, the novel advocates and exemplifies the turn to doctrinal mildness that Adams' history describes; Stowe's minister is humble enough to be won to a democratized Calvinism. Both Hopkins and Aaron Burr, the aristocratic scoundrel of Adams' *History* and Jonathan Edward's grandson, are described as living by a rigid "logic of life," one devoted to sacrifice, the other to pleasure. In the novel Burr is dissuaded from his pursuit of a married woman, Mme de Frontenac, but his pride rejects the possibility of spiritual redemption.

[223] Robert Sommer suggests Esther's connection to Anne Bradstreet, nee Dudley, sharing an artistic identity with this ancestor as well as "the strength of character that develops by virtue of being a woman with artistic talent" (140). "The Feminine Perspectives of Henry Adams' *Esther*." But Adams' treatment of Esther's art is equivocal. It is described as fresh, natural, innocent, and gendered feminine, although sometimes, for example in her depiction of her father, her work acquires some of the masculine strength of her subject. Her art can be appreciated as different, but Adams can't seem to determine the value of that difference. After breaking her engagement, Esther's intent is to study art in Europe, although not in Paris as Wharton recommends, but in Italy.

[224] Or the biblical Esther, who submits to the king's will when her predecessor Queen Vashti refuses?

[225] *Uses and Disabuses of History for Life* (76-77).
[226] On Adams' evasive reticence about his political influence see John Carlos Rowe, *Literary Culture and U.S. Imperialism*. Edward Chalfant's massively detailed biography finds a hidden significance and heretofore-unrevealed system behind Adams' writings and doings so consistently as to seen unreliable. For a discussion of the revitalizing effects of anti-modernist modernism see T. J.Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace*. E. Digby Baltzell seems to overemphasize Adams' isolation in writing about his developing sense of caste in *The Protestant Establishment*.
[227] See Gillis on Western imagination of islands, Edmonds, Smith, and Rennie focusing on the Pacific.
[228] See Johannes Fabian on the allochronic, the contemporaneous experience of societies whose ranking in an evolutionary model of social development seems to render them non-contemporaneous (32).
[229] Donald Richie in "Henry Adams in Japan" laments what Adams resolutely refused to see—Japan in 1886 was passing through a period of transition that should have fascinated the former professor of medieval history. Much of Japan Adams rejected out of hand. When Ritchie mentions the scene of mixed bathing, which as Adams noted was no longer done in modernized Tokyo, Ritchie assumes that Adams uses the term "primitive" in dismissal, when cultural survivals like the baths and phallic shrines were what interested the student of archaic institutions. Adams said he turned away "though" the scene was primitive, not, as Ritchie implies, because of it.
[230] As well as revive LaFarge's career; see Adams et al and Yarnall.
[231] Estimate by James Yarnall, *Recreation and Idleness: the Pacific Travels of John LaFarge*.
[232] For more on this trip see Christopher Benfey, *The Great Wave*, about Americans in late nineteenth century Japan, also LaFarge's *An Artist's Letters from Japan* and *John LaFarge*.
[233] Jacobson, *Authority and Alliance*. William Merrill Decker also discusses Adams' letters in *Epistolary Practices*.
[234] Apart from a brief article in the *American Historical Review*, "Count Edward de Crillon," and a written address "The Tendency of History" to the American Historical Association as their perpetually absent president, The *Memoirs of Arii Taimai*, *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres*, *The Education of Henry Adams* and *A Letter to American Teachers of History* were all privately printed and circulated, although *Mont Saint Michel* was published under the aegis of the American Institute of Architects before Adams' death.
[235] Adams warned his friends to keep his comments about Samoan politics to themselves for fear they would get back to the islands and cause difficulties in a touchy political situation. Also, he heard about Robert Louis Stevenson's account of their meeting in a letter from John Hay, quoting Stevenson's correspondence with a third party. Later Adams warned his own correspondents to keep his news from Stevenson's ears.
[236] An attitude that John Lyons calls "American Pacificism," the "co-presence of the nationalistic stepping stones narrative with a nostalgic oneiric cover story that it never displaces; rather the two hands wash each other clean"(27).
[237] For more on the discourse of travel and the cultural value of the "tourist" and "traveler" distinction, see James Buzard, *The Beaten Track*. I'll have more to say about this in the chapter on *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres* in which the former professor of medieval history calls himself just a tourist.
[238] See Homi Bhabha for a discussion of the disturbing qualities of colonial mimicry.
[239] Implicitly citing the work of Francis Parkman, Adams writes in his *History*: "As in the year 1754 a petty fight between two French and English scouting parties on the banks of the Youghiogheny, far in the American wilderness, began a war that changed the balance of the world, so in 1811 an encounter in the Indian country, on the banks of the Wabash, began a fresh convulsion that ended only with the fall of Napoleon" (M:342).
[240] Adams used this process of private printing and correction for the early volumes of his *History* and *The Education of Henry Adams.* Probably ten, possibly as many as fifty copies of the *Memoirs of Marau Taaroa, Last Queen of Hawaii* were published , with nearly half remaining in Adam's estate. See Samuels, Jordy, Lagayette, Danielsson, on numbers and distribution. The 1901 edition of the *Memoirs of Arii Taimai* was distributed to friends and deposited in libraries, according to Spiller's introduction, below. In 1947 Robert Spiller edited a reprint of the 1901 edition, now titled *Tahiti*, which is the title printed on the spine of the *Memoirs*. Years later Marau decided to return to it. In the 1920s two anthropologists from the Bishop Museum in Hawaii, Willowdean Handy and E. S. Craighill Handy, helped her prepare another revised and expanded version for publication, but it was not published in her lifetime. In the 1960s Marau's daughter, Princess Takau Pomare, translated this third version into French and published it through the Société des

Océanistes, as *Mémoires de Marau, dernière reine de Tahiti* (1971). The 1947 reprint by Robert Spiller is the edition I am using. "T" in the parenthetical references refers to *Tahiti*, or the *Memoirs of Arii Taimai*.

[241] Adams' pessimistic account of social decay was hardly limited to the South Pacific. Beginning with the Panic of 1893 at least, through the decade of the '90s, he calculated the probabilities of "a general collapse of the social fabric in Europe...financial, social political and moral" and its effects on an America he assumed to be basically sound (L4:119).

[242] See John Carlos Rowe's discussion of the letters as a guide to reading Adams' evasive complicity with American imperialism. Daniel Manheim urges caution in interpreting the variety of opinions expressed in Adams' letters and uses the evidence of the *Memoirs* to argue that Adams was more of an anti-imperialist than would be apparent from the letters alone.

[243] Adams to Henry Cabot Lodge, August 4, 1891: "The South Seas swarm with laughable satires on everything civilised, and especially on every known standard of morality. They flourished in outrageous defiance of every known moral, economical, social and sanitary law, until morality and economy were taught them, and then they went, promptly and unanimously, to the devil. Nine in every ten perished of virtue, among all the islands and races, little and big; and they go on perishing with a unanimity quite conclusive. I do not undertake to draw a moral from their euthanasia" (L3:518).

[244] See Colin Newbury on the many definitions of assimilation for the French in Tahiti.

[245] According to Nicholas Thomas, the essential difference in the Fijian system was culture, not race—the assumption was that assimilationism was the cause of decline (117).

[246] As Kathleen Wilson discusses this, the multiple indeterminacies of the encounter "make visible the *unwriting* of History"(346).

[247] King's interest in the "archaic" and prejudice against the "over-civilized" female type led him to his secret marriage with a black woman, apparently not revealed to friends until after his death. See O'Toole and Sandweiss..

[248] Meanwhile LaFarge is bemused by the "violation of certain rules of the game of science," the classificatory system of social development, evidently Lewis Henry Morgan's, according to which "high" Polynesians who neither make pottery nor use the bow-and-arrow seriously would rank in savagery beneath the "lower" Papuans who do both (111).

[249] Adams' relation to Great Britain, his yearning for recognition and assertions of American superiority could be a study in post-colonial relations.

[250] The travel accounts serialized in 1891 in the *New York Sun*, among other places, at least some of which Adams read, were partially collected as *In the South Seas* (L3:408). In this mixture of ethnographic research, natural history and personal narrative, Stevenson presents himself as a dying man who travels to the South Seas as a last expedient to prolong his life and finds himself regenerated. His travels take him from a death-obsessed Marquesan society awaiting its own extinction, to a variety of islands whose peoples are still vigorous and cultures still autonomous. Once nearly bereft of life and hope, he finds a homeland in Samoa. Adams doesn't mention "The Beach at Falesá" which Stevenson claimed to be the first realistic story of the South Pacific, a work appreciated by Henry James, their friend in common. See Barry Metchnikoff on "Falesà." Nor does Adams say much about *A Footnote to History*, Stevenson's account of great power politics in Samoa, except that he recommends the work as "something which is to me like autobiography…It deserves reading if only for its account of fine old Mata-afa," oddly personalizing and rendering nostalgic a work of advocacy journalism (L6:61-2). Adams received a copy and a gracious letter from Stevenson regretting Adams' absence from Samoa and proclaiming his journalistic *Footnote* a poor thing to set before a historian.

[251] Colin Newbury discusses the French attempts to regularize land titles (225-26). Years later Adams dismissed the book as written to win a pension. As his interest grew in writing the book that would become *Chartres*, proportionately he seems to have lost interest in the *Memoirs*.

[252] Chris Bongie, writing about European authors, describes fin-de siècle exoticism as a feeling of finitude—that everything had already been written about the old, disappearing world: "The exotic was no longer that which could be written; it was now no more than a matter for rewriting" (19). While Adams shares the world-weary pose of the anti-modern modernist, I think he is too much a nationalist to assume that everything has been said until Americans had a chance to speak.

Adams is most man-of-the world when he writes to his English friend Gaskell, in 1894 invoking the tropes of Loti. In commiserating with Gaskell he wrote, "though you will hardly believe it," about his grief at the

recent death of "my Tahiti sister" Beretania. "My Tahiti relationship is quite a real thing…and if I were to back there, I should be a distinctly real member of the Papara family" (L4:226).

[253] In *Robert Louis Stevenson and the Colonial Imagination* Ann Colley writes about Stevenson's varying modes of dress in the Pacific. On special occasions the staff at Vailima were expected to wear kilts of Royal Stewart tartan.

[254] Greg Dening discusses zones of contact and cultural performance, including Adams' encounter with the Tevas, but unless he is using alternate sources of information, his details are a bit off.

[255] Even posthumously Stevenson retains his uncanny power, as Adams wrote in 1900: "I am reading Robert Louis Stevenson's *Letters* which make me crawl with creepy horror, as he did alive" (L5:95).

[256] Certainly Stevenson insisted on his British dignity before the Samoans; LaFarge bemusedly reports on his refusal to call on the principal chief, Mataafa, because he was not sure that Mataafa shouldn't visit him first (147).

[257] Stevenson's first encounter with the people of the islands was nothing like Adams' fantasy fulfilled on Samoa, but a disturbing experience in which he was the specular object. He had chartered a yacht for himself and his family and when they arrived at the Marquesas the ship swarmed with six-foot tall tattooed men, "all talking, and we could not understand one word; all trying to trade with us, who had no thought of trading, or offering us island curios at prices palpably absurd" in an atmosphere of "jeering laughter" when Stevenson declined to make a deal (19). Later that day, Stevenson describes a cabin filled with people:

> three brown-skinned generations, squatted cross-legged upon the floor, and regarding me in silence with embarrassing eyes. The eyes of all Polynesians are large, luminous, and melting; they are like the eyes of animals and some Italians. A kind of despair came over me, to sit there helpless under all these staring orbs, and be thus blocked out of a corner of my cabin by this speechless crowd; and a kind of rage to think that they were beyond the range of articulate communication, like furred animals, or folk born deaf, or the dwellers of some alien planet. (*In the South Seas* 20*)*

[258] Ernest Samuels proposes that Stevenson's abdication of the privileges and duties of fame argued "some kind of lunacy" to Adams (30).

[259] Drinnon also compares Adams unfavorably to Gauguin. Taking Gauguin at his own valuation, Drinnon seems to ascribe the superior qualities of Gauguin's art (compared to LaFarge's) with a deeper connection to Tahitian culture. Gauguin arrived in Tahiti shortly after Adams left, although he does mention Marau in his memoir, *Noa Noa*.

[260] Reference Gillis.

[261] Adams' letters report that as the Cuban Quesada left, Hartwell arrived, but it's not clear whether Adams was equating the Cuban independence movement with the putative republic of the Hawaiian missionary party, or simply depicting his role as confidant and facilitator for both.

[262] If Adams never forgets the Salmons' Jewishness, he claims that it complements their Tahitian identity. Here his attitude exemplifies the conventional anti-Semitism of his class rather than his vitriolic anti-Semitism of the later 1890s. For the fullest discussion of Adams' changing attitudes to the Jews, see J. C Levenson, "Israel Adams."

[263] Kaplan's discussion of Downes v. Bidwell and the concept of unincorporated territories "foreign to the United States in a domestic sense" is pertinent here (4-12).

[264] *Following the Equator*, published in 1897.

[265] Lagayette, for example, sees it as "a refined version of the History," which he reads as a vindication of the Adams family (5) This text is also unusual in the context of Adams' career, given his evasion of the bibliographic filiopiety exhibited by his father and two brothers in writing and editing books about Adams forebears.

He did start but never finished an edition of the memoirs of his grandmother, Louisa Catherine Johnson Adams early in his career. Michael O'Brien discusses Adams complicated relationship with the South in *Henry Adams and the Southern Question*. The categories of North and South shared much of the same "moral geography" in the U.S. and in Europe, the South generally connoting a space of warmth, freedom and hedonism to Northerners. See also Andy Martin for an exploration of this larger South of pleasure in "Willing Women: Samoa, Tahiti, and the Western Imagination." The somewhat surprising importance of Southernness in the person of the grandmother in the *Education* may have something to do with the "old lady" of the South Seas. It is Adams' conceit that Louisa Adams' "Southern blood" made him an "exotic"

not bound to Boston proprieties. Also, in a letter Adams personifies Tahiti as a grandmother—all she does is smile.

[266] See Samuels or Kaledin for example. Samuels would include a secondary tragic parable about the Western ideal of the goodness of man (101-05)

[267] Amy Kaplan reads the masculine romances of the 1890s as a re-imagining of American masculinity for the task of global expansion. One popular trope of American romance novels in the 1890s was the rescue of an aristocratic foreign heroine by an American who nonetheless rejects a title for himself.

[268] Or claims that Arii Taimai was he child of an adulterous liaison. See Langdon.

[269] In a letter to Elizabeth Cameron, he inhabits the identity of his namesake for a moment: "I had to leave her because my family objected; but I immortalized her in verse. That was a century-or two—or three—ago," as he will later imaginatively impersonate his Norman ancestors in *Mont Saint Michel* (L3:485).

[270] The name "Henry Adams" doesn't appear anywhere, but intimates would recognize the last of the titles, Tauraatua I Amo, as the family name bestowed on him. European phonetic renderings of Tahitian speech are highly variable. Tahitian is a language in which personal names can also denote places or titles, male or female. New names accompany successive stages of life, so that, for example, upon the birth of an heir a chief becomes regent for the new infant head of the family and often takes a name reflecting the child's characteristics. Place names vary according to the speaker, and vary in Adams' usage.

[271] LaFarge's *Reminiscences of the South Seas* quotes some of the same poems, although only in translation. His translations are more polished than Adams' versions, which are more likely to leave words untranslated and presumably untranslatable. Marau's third version of this text, written in the 1920s in English, but published in her daughter's French translation in 1971 as *Mémoires de Marau Taaroa,* includes additional poetry. It occasionally prints the Tahitian version of a poem but generally does not; her daughter presumably translated her mother's English translations into French.

[272] Adams brings his own agenda to the idea of the incommensurability of European kingship with island political systems. As part of his study of ancient institutions in the 1870s he had been excited by the researches of Lewis Henry Morgan into Native American history, which seemed, first, to imply that monarchy was a particular European form and not a necessary stage of human development and second, to confer historical legitimization on the American system of confederated government. In judging the reliability of the European evidence Adams may have followed Morgan as well as the attitudes of his Tevan informants. Morgan wrote an article, "Montezuma's Dinner," for Adams as editor of the *North American Review,* later cited in *Essays in Anglo-Saxon Law,* about making this distinction between observation and interpretation in judging the accounts of the conquistadors. Morgan, in alluding to Mark Twain's travel letters from Hawaii as evidence of the absurdity of native kingship, may have forgotten his own counsel.

[273] For the more sexualized Oberea as variously complaisant and submissive to her new masters, or as ribald Pacific procuress corrupting youth see Patty O' Brien (2006:61-67). Also Greg Denning discusses the multiple entertainments in the appropriation of Purea and their uses, including Adams'. He also discusses Purea's appropriation of a British symbol and its possible meaning.

[274] Historians differ on whether there was a paramount authority with indigenous origins or whether it was imposed by Europeans. See Oliver, Newbury.

[275] Perhaps the missionaries were not as naïve as Adams assumes. Christopher Herbert suggests that, consciously or not, they had a rudimentary idea of culture as an integrated whole that could not be changed piecemeal. Their first imperative was to impose a discipline of time and work and space on the natives, not baptize them. To eighteenth century British clergymen, the replacement of a number of chiefships, each with its temple or *marae,* by a single Christian king would have seemed like an advance, even if the collateral suffering attendant on achieving this revolutionary development was regrettable.

[276] Gillian Beer talks about the "gentlemanly network of allusion" in which the reports of interested European observers are automatically accorded objective status in nineteenth century anthropological writings (79).

[277] As Matt Matsuda puts it, "Loti created a romantic French Pacific by rewriting the sensual idealism of a Bougainville to suit the political sensibilities of post-1870s European bourgeois nationalism."

[278] On the ship to Tahiti LaFarge writes, "The 'pursuit of happiness' in which these islanders were engaged, and in which they were successful, is the catchword of the eighteenth century…Nor am I allowed to forget the assertion of those 'self-evident truths' in which the ancestor of my companion, Atamo, most certainly

had a hand. So that the islands to which we are hastening…are emblems of our own past in thought…" (298).

[279] See Chalfant, Levenson et al, and Samuels for estimates of the number of copies printed.

[280] Here Adams adopts the figure of 200,000 as the pre-contact figure. In his letters he mentions the 200,000 figure to one correspondent but 50-60,000 to two others, notably the scientist Clarence King. Pierre Lagayette faults Adams for emphasizing "events" to the neglect of ethnography. As Lagayette quantifies them, of 110 quotations in the *Memoirs*, only seven are "non-historical" (126).

[281] Marau's own third version of *Mémoires* retains the distinction of "les indigènes."

[282] The name Arii Taimai was given to her husband on his marriage and means prince or chief from beyond the sea.

[283] See Philippe Lejeune on the autobiographical pact.

[284] Reel 32, microfilm of the Henry Adams Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society. Neither seems to be in Tati or Marau's handwriting.

[285] As Jean Starobinski discuses the "implicit self-referential value" of style for autobiography (74).

[286] She maneuvers the chief who is the main proponent of war into being her spokesman out of courtesy, although Marau in her memoirs describes her mother as a great orator. The one malcontent is rebuked: "What are you known as in the annals of the country, that allows you to get up and speak, when your chiefs have already given the word? If peace had not been declared here amongst us all, your blood would have to pay for this insult" and the chiefs assure her that he will be shot if he persists (186).

[287] Arii Taimai and her husband are described as "collaborators" in Newbury (116; 231-2). According to Samuels, Alexander Salmon's "keen sense of opportunism" in enhancing his wife's estates under French rule "was apparently unknown" to Adams (III:105).The existing manuscript of Arii Taimai's journey doesn't extend as far as this episode but there is similar language of official thanks in a letter from Tati Salmon, then living under direct French rule. He accepted a mission from the French to travel to Raiatea in an attempt to avert a war and on his return met the new governor: "he thanked me in the name of France for my services at Raiatea, using words very flattering, so I think we shall get on together." March 10, 1897, Reel 13, Henry Adams Papers, MHS.

[288] Edward Galligan thinks that the "beauty" of the text "is that it so quickly and so thoroughly contradicts false, often politically correct ideas" about Adams. Critics who think Adams is a male chauvinist, racist and snob are proven wrong by this book. He sees Arii Taimai as outwitting the French.

[289] See Lyons.

[290] The *N.Y. Times* cited Adams' *History* in support of the annexation of the Philippines—the history of the Louisiana purchase proved that the will of the people for expansion cannot be denied.
Also see the *Proceedings of the American Historical Association* at the turn of the century: mindful of the utility of their craft they call for the study of colonial history, now meaning colonial administration. Subsequent reports detailing the national varieties of colonial government cite American racism as a problem in implementing administrative systems that utilize native talent.

[291] John Carlos Rowe finds that earlier critics, in focusing on the *Education*'s literary qualities have failed to recognize that this literariness is a deliberate evasion of Adams' participation in creating a US imperium, in an effort "to distract readers from the new political power elite of men like Adams and Hay" (191). Rowe cites Adams' letters as a more reliable account of his attitudes. But there is nothing straightforward about Adams' letters, either. They display a variety of aspects of their author depending on the identity of his correspondent, their expression concerned to elicit and maintain a relationship. Characteristically, Adams manages to be both self-deprecating and aggrandizing in this passage from the *Education* and certainly he is more involved than he lets on, but I'm not sure why he would find it necessary to hide imperialist views that were moderate compared to those of his circle, even if, as Rowe argues, he did anticipate a wider audience for the book someday.

[292] Letter of February 10, 1897, Reel 13, Microfilm, Henry Adams Papers, MHS.

[293] For example, Marau's conclusion simply reprints Adams' final story of Arii Taimai (in fact her daughter simply reprints the previous French translation published by the Société des Océanistes) with the addition of two paragraphs, a list of her mother's titles on Tahiti and a list of her titles on Moorea, twenty in all.

[294] As Brad Evans argues.

[295] Adams suggests of a true account of Marau's marriage that "One could make pure Balzac of it, with red-hot Chili pepper added; but the story is too well-known and the family too respectable to maltreat in such a

way; and Pomare is almost too vile for art" (L3:426). The whiff of scandal with its promise of future developments insinuates his correspondents into the creation of the *Memoirs*.

[296] See Patty O'Brien, *The Pacific Muse*.

[297] See Joanne Jacobsen on the "interpenetration' between Adams' letters and his other works (113).

[298] The *Memoirs* remains a valuable source for studies of Tahitian history, for example Douglas Oliver's *Ancient Tahitian Society*. Oliver correlates Teva tradition with Teuira Henry's *Ancient Tahiti*, based on her missionary grandfather's ethnographic researches, as well as Marau's later, sometimes contradictory, data; each work has its particular bias. Oliver finds the account of first contact a less useful "hodge-podge" of oral tradition and written sources(1355-56 n.2). See also Langdon, Gunson and Newbury on the historical reliability of the text.

[299] Adams remained in contact with his adopted family for decades, at least with Tati. He provided the funds to ensure that mortgaged lands remained in the family, and shared in the cost of family gatherings with his namesake, Tati's son, assuming his ritual place. In commiserating with Charles Milnes Gaskell in 1894 he wrote, "what has affected me also, though you will hardly believe it, is the death of my Tahiti sister, Beretania, a beautiful girl, or woman, who died of consumption a short time ago. It is strange that the most beautiful spot in the world should be the saddest. My Tahiti relationship is quite a real thing, you must bear in mind, and if I were to back go there, I should be a distinctly real member of the Papara family. As real, at least, as most things" (L4:226). This sounds like pure Loti in the personification of Tahiti as the dying woman, with the Anglo-Saxon distinction that the affective relationship is sibling. Adams' letters to Gaskell tend to adopt a mannered, man-of-the-world tone more than to any other correspondent.

[300] At dinner Roosevelt found him "a delightful Polynesian chief…a polished gentleman, of easy manners, with an interesting undertone of queer barbarism." *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt* (I:304).

[301] The half-titles before the title pages of *Memoirs of Arii Taimai* and *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres* say "TRAVELS/TAHITI" and "TRAVELS---FRANCE." The title of the second work was hyphenated as *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres* when published in 1913 under the editorship of Ralph Adams Cram, but the Library of America edition I am using follows Adams' unhyphenated title, which designates the whole island rather than the abbey alone. See "Notes on the Texts" (1219).

[302] According to William Courtenay, "The Virgin and the Dynamo:The Growth of Medieval Studies in America (1870-1930)" (6).

[303] Earl Harbert describes it as "an act of literary escapism, which Adams sought to justify only after he had finished the *Education*" (146). In *The Force So Much Closer Home: Henry Adams and the Adams Family*, Harbert doesn't discuss *Chartres* in his book about Adams in the context of his family because it represents "resistance to—rather than the development of—his Adams inheritance" (146).

[304] Letter to the medievalist Albert Stanburrough Cook, 6 August 1910 (L6:356).

[305] Charles H. Haskins, "European History and American Scholarship." This *AHA* presidential address makes an argument for the relevance of European subjects: "Whether we look at Europe genetically as the source of our civilization, or pragmatically as a large part of the world in which we live, we cannot ignore the vital connections between Europe and America, their histories ultimately but one" (215). English history "is in a sense early American history"; his survey of modern work in this category begins with *Essays in Anglo-Saxon Law*, by Adams et al. Relevance is complicated by American "remoteness": the physical distance from the archives, the "fear of languages," and the need for experience to acquire "the sympathetic appreciation of European habits and points of view which comes with prolonged travel and residence abroad and without which history is bloodless and unreal if not untrue" (216).

[306] E.g. Norman Cantor, *The Making of the Middle Ages*, on Adams: *Chartres* "reads today as naïve and idiosyncratic, in a way that his great history of early-nineteenth-century American politics does not…he never mastered the complexity of twelfth-century ecclesiastical culture sufficiently or asked tough enough questions about it to make his book useful today as other than an emblem of an artificial neoromanticism in early-twentieth century Boston culture" (44).

[307] E.g. Robert Mane on the "prose poem," cited by Oscar Cargill. Herbert Creek emphasizes Adams' desire for escape through a romantic quest against Paul Elmer More's judgment of Adams' "sentimental nihilism." .William Merrill Decker considers Chartres "holiday historiography" but sees a strong poetic bent even in his conventional history. Mane, whose *Henry Adams on the Road to Chartres* investigates Adams' sources, argues that the strongest influences on Adams were American; Manes is particularly thorough in examining Adams' reliance on secondary sources, not the approved methodology for a Rankean scientific historian: e.g the statue of St, Michel that seems to be a medieval relic("The archangel

loved heights"), was a nineteenth century addition; Adams misread the caption on a photograph, so tourists still look for the wonderful chartrier at Mont Saint Michel, actually a closet. R. P. Blackmur reminds the reader that Adams' "adventure…enjoys the rights and limitations of foreshortening that go with the work of art" (186). Robert Spiller's article on Adams in the *Literary History of the United States* of 1948 is cited as marking the critical turn from disapproval of Adams the historian to appreciation of Adams the literary stylist. Still J.C. Levenson in *The Mind and Art of Henry Adams* argues for *Chartres* as cultural history, noting that its documents and evidential requirements differ from political history.

[308] Review [untitled], Henry Osborn Taylor, *American Historical Review*. A reader today is less inclined to take the claims of scientific history at face value, after the reflexive turn in the analysis of the social sciences has emphasized the linguistic construction of historical and fictional reality, and scientific explanation has been studied as a function of historical circumstance, rather than an immutable standard of investigation and analysis. See for example, Roland Barthes, "The Reality Effect" in *The Rustle of Language*; Hayden White, *Metahistory,* on the tropological affinities of nineteenth-century history; Paul Ricoeur, *History and Narrative* on the inescapability of narrative; Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions.*

[309] See R.P. Blackmur on Adams' spiritual autobiography.

[310] Robert Mane, *Henry Adams on the Road to Chartres.* Ernest Schleyer sees the chapters organized in the form of a cathedral.

[311] Robin Fleming on Adams' place in Anglo-Saxon historiography: Adams was a dilettante who initiated the specialty only to drop it. In another article she ridicules *Chartres* as a late example of "picturesque" medieval history, out of step with the standards of a new, better generation of historians. Oscar Cargill takes Adams' Anglo-Saxon studies more seriously but regrets his wasting time in petty skirmishes with English historians when he could have attacked the Anglo-Saxon germ theory itself.

[312] Now property of the Huntington Library. See Ira Hayward, "From Tahiti to Chartres: the Henry Adams – John La Farge Friendship."

La Farge began as a painter but expanded into decorative work as well, feeling that the whole environment should be a uniform work of art. In addition to studying medieval glass, he was the inventor of opaline glass, the biggest technical advance in stained glass since the Middle Ages, although Louis Comfort Tiffany was able to make more use of it. See Henry Adams, *John La Farge*, and Doreen Bolger Burke, *In Pursuit of Beauty: the American Aesthetic Movement.*

[313] See Scheyer, *The Circle of Henry Adams, Art and Artists*, Manes, Samuels.

[314] In his *Letter to American Teachers of History* (1910) he cites Gustave Le Bon's study of *The Crowd* as evidence of social entropy.

[315] To William Phillips, August 13, 1893; John Hay, September 8 and 21, 1893; to Elizabeth Cameron September 15, 1893.

[316] Timothy Donovan discusses the Adams family's intellectual traditions in *Henry Adams and Brooks Adams: the Education of Two American Historians*. Adams showed little interest in the Populist party platform beyond the free coinage of silver and a general suspicion of Eastern bankers, wherever East might be located. Practically, he served the cause by anonymously writing speeches for his neighbor, Senator Don Cameron, the only Eastern senator to advocate bimetallism.

[317] See William Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling; a Framework for the History of Emotions,*for a discussion of emotions as self-exploratory and self-activating.

[318] For example, he always noted that the Salmons, his adopted Tahitian siblings, were half "English-Jewish" but this doesn't seem to have hampered their relationship; he apparently assumed for years that the husband of his late sister, Louisa Kuhn, was a Jew; in *Democracy*, Madeleine Lee and her sister have Jewish friends. See Levenson, "The Etiology of Israel Adams," for the fullest treatment of Adams' anti-Semitism. Also Edward Saveth, "Henry Adams' Norman Ancestors." Alex Zwerdling, in *Improvised Europeans* touches on the subject in the context of Adams' residence in Europe.

[319] As he wrote to Gaskell: "I blush to confess even a worse weakness—I read with interest actually the extravagance of Drumont—France Juive, Libre Parole, and all," but then he recommends Gaskell read the "ravings" of Edouard-Adolphe Drumont nonetheless. E, Digby Baltzell sees Adams' anti-Semitism as an indication of a change of thinking about class at the end of the century. From considering himself as part of an aristocracy, which renewed itself by assimilating new members, Adams' own sense of powerlessness led to his emphasis on caste, which based its membership on heredity and race. Adams' "extreme medievalism supported his sense of caste which reinforced his anti-Semitism" (90-91).

[320] In *Chartres* Adams disagrees with Viollet-le-Duc by declaring the Tree of Jesse window, tracing the Virgin's genealogy, is not interesting, while asserting that the Virgin didn't care for Jews. He doesn't mention the impact of the Crusades on the Jews, but decries Jewish dealers who alone can afford to collect medieval treasures.
[321] "When a highly centralized society disintegrates under the pressure of economic competition, it is because the energy of the race has been exhausted. Consequently the survivors of such a race lack the power necessary for renewed concentration, and must probably remain inert, until supplied with fresh energetic material by the infusion of barbarian blood"(Law viii). In Brooks' *The New Empire* of 1902, fresh blood has arrived, but not to infuse new vigor into the old civilization: "The seat of energy has migrated from Europe to America" (xi).
[322] And is fear, which produced the religious, aesthetic, martial society they admire, the implicit stimulus for the brothers as well? Do they consider themselves, and the limited readership that Henry at least assumes, to be cultural survivals, or possibly the harbingers of a civilization-to-be?
[323] As an indication of how radical this turn to emotion may seem, one critic, Yvor Winters, judges it an indication of Adams' disintegrating mind, which, unable to analyze experience, projects its incoherence into the depiction of a world in chaos in the *Education*, and the reverse image of unity in *Chartres.* Winters contrasts the later works and letters with Adams' *History*, "which is penetrated with precise intelligence in all its parts; it is in this quality which it surpasses any other historical masterpiece with which I am acquainted" (429). Winters, "Henry Adams, or the Creation of Confusion" from *The Anatomy of Nonsense.*
[324] See Donovan for comparisons of the two brothers' thinking. In his Introduction to the 1943 edition of the *Law,* Charles Beard argues for the primacy of Brooks' thought in formulating his theory. Accounts of Henry's influence on his brother were over-rated: his annotations to the manuscript were unimportant; he only became interested in the theory and philosophy of history after Brooks showed him the way. Moreover, Henry was fearful of getting involved in the controversy that he expected to ensue should Brooks' book be published. (Donovan traces Henry's belief in the possibility of covering all phenomena under scientific law as early as 1862.) For Beard, Brooks Adams *Law* holds a significant place in American intellectual history as "the first extended attempt on the part of an American to reduce universal history or at least western history to a single formula or body of formulas conceived in the spirit of modern science," anticipating Spengler by many years.(3). Its value seems to lie in the theoretical ideas it provoked rather than the content of its argument, since Beard finds that in its lack of comprehensive economic analysis, Brooks' narrative is motivated more by psychological than economic forces. He also finds the brothers' scientific thinking out-dated, in Brooks' mechanical physical conception of cycles of history and Henry's idea of causation as explanation, since the natural sciences no longer assume that a conceptual description of sequence is an explanation.
[325] In 1896 it was often judged in the context of contemporary political debate, given its excoriation of gold-bugs. (The assertion of economic causes for the Reformation also caused controversy.) Theodore Roosevelt wrote the most notable review, praising the author's "entirely original point of view." Adams "writes with a fervent intensity of conviction, even in his bitterest cynicism, such as we are apt to associate rather with the prophet and reformer than with the historian…"(575). After praising the brilliance of the work, in particular the depiction of the Crusades, so "startling" in its "vigor," Roosevelt refuses to accept the "gloomy philosophy" of the whole. Adams' emphasis on currency is wrong—cheap labor was the cause of Rome's destruction and present-day America has erected safeguards against competition with "races of lower vitality." Adams' concern for debtors at the hands of capitalists is quite unworthy of him, while the "economic" man of today is more loving to women and a better fighter than the "emotional" man of the Middle Ages or present-day Spain and Russia. Adams' scorn for "what is ignoble and base in our development" is "soul-stirring," and provides the occasion for Roosevelt's own assessment of some of the "very ominous facts" of his own century, like the "immense masses of the poor" now huddled in the cities at the expense of the countryside, the dislocations of technology, "a certain softness of fibre," a loss of flexibility, and worst of all, "a very pronounced tendency among the most highly civilized races, and the most highly civilized portions of all races, to lose the power of multiplying, and even to decrease"(579).
[326] For a contrary view, Yvor Winters in "Henry Adams, or the Creation of Confusion," sees this search for unseen forces as the habit of a Puritan inheritance in which Adams in searching for the meaning behind every event is as steeped in the allegorical turn of mind as Cotton Mather. The difference is that for Adams the religious explanation for the universe has been lost and meaning rendered incoherent.
[327] In *The New Empire* (xviii).

[328] In reproducing the tale of the simple tumbler who experiences a Marian apparition in his chapter "The Miracles of Notre Dame," Adams increases the verisimilitude of the setting, at least, by interjecting, "We have seen at Chartres what a crypt may be, and how easily one might hide in the shadows," but the crypt is not part of the earlier tour of the Cathedral. At Mont Saint Michel, photos "answer all the just purposes of underground travel," but "any over-curious tourist" can take a look at the crypt at Chartres (373). Articles often mentioned Mont Saint Michel's history as an infamous prison, although the prison closed in the 1860s.

[329] One critic, Raymond Carney, has gone so far as to call Wordsworth the real patron saint of *Chartres.*

[330] It seems to indicate a certain discomfort that in the *Education* Adams tries to reconcile his 18th and 19th century enthusiasms. He can't imagine that his hero Edward Gibbon would be unimpressed by the cathedral as a human achievement. He does imagine Gibbon standing before the cathedral, and reporting "I darted a contemptuous look on the stately monuments of superstition," but Adams doesn't take the remark seriously. The "fat little historian," was "trying to persuade his readers—perhaps himself,--that he was darting a contemptuous look on the stately monument, for which he felt in fact the respect which every man of his vast study and active mind always feels before objects worthy of it" (1073).

American naturalist writers often allied themselves with romanticism against realism, e.g.in the manifestos of Frank Norris, "A Plea for Romantic Fiction" and "Zola as a Romantic Novelist." (Norris was not a writer Adams recommended.) Harold Kaplan writes about Adams' relation to naturalist thinking in *Power and Order*.

[331] Letter to Thomas Jefferson, 15 July 1815 (358). In another letter to Jefferson, Adams' reading of history makes him exclaim: "'This would be the best of all possible Worlds, if there were no Religion in it.'!!!" But then he reflects, "Without Religion this World would be Something not fit to be mentioned in polite Company, I mean Hell" (509). He finds it an "inscrutable mystery" that mankind should submit to be taxed to build the Temple of Diana, the Pyramids, St. Peter's, Notre Dame, etc., "when my Navy Yards, and my quasi Army made such a popular Clamour"(510).

[332] For Alice Chandler in *A Dream of Order; The Medieval Ideal in English Literature, Chartres* marks the failure of medievalist aspirations. Adams' loss of faith in an ordered universe is lost hope; medievalism's optimism turns to pessimism in a deterministic universe.

[333] In writing *The Seven Lamps of Architecture,* he succeeded in his mission to "reclaim medieval architecture for Protestantism." according to A. Dwight Culler. See Roger Stein's *Ruskin and Aesthetic Thought in America* for an account of his U.S. influence.

[334] Henry Osborn Taylor mentions Ruskin in his review of *Chartres*, "one had best not remember Mr. Ruskin too specifically, for specifically he is often wrong. One should retain him as an ennobling mood or moralizing point of view, as Mr. Adams retains him, doubtless," perhaps as a warning that Adams too might be "specifically wrong" in his account.

[335] Adams owned books by Ruskin. The *Stones of Venice, Modern Painting, The Seven Lamps of Architecture, Praeteritera,* were in Adams' library when he died, books apparently without annotation. Ruskin's name is not frequent in *Chartres* or in his letters. By the 1860s when Adams was living in England, he would not have been interested in Ruskin's later books on social philosophy or appreciated Ruskin's hostility to the Union cause.

[336] Adams' closest connection to the Pre-Raphaelites was the sculptor Thomas Woolner, a friend from the 1860s who occasionally bought art for him. Except for a translation of *Old French Romances*(1896), the medieval interests of William Morris (1834-1896) ran to different paths, Arthurian, Icelandic, Germanic, and English. The fourteenth century was the era that he like Marx looked to as the great age of workingmen, after the ascendancy of the craft guilds and before the enclosure movement. Adams letters' have a fleeting reference to Morris' poetry and in 1875 refer to his designs as elements of the typical Boston "atmosphere of 'culture,'" importing the latest European intellectual fashion, that "makes me foam at the mouth" (L2:235). In 1871 Clover and Henry Adams "searched for Morris and Rossetti," to furnish their house but Morris' shop was closed; by the next year Morris seemed too "affected in style" (Letters of Marion Adams, 22, 116).

[337] See Norton, *Church-Building in the Middle Ages*, which concentrates on Italy and his *Atlantic Monthly* article on construction of Chartres.

[338] In 1896 he described Norton as "buried already." Adams' response to Henry James' 1903 *William Wetmore Story and His Friends* was surprisingly intense in its embarrassment ("You make me curl up, like a trodden-on worm. Improvised Europeans we were, and—Lord God!—how thin!")for the provincial

ignorance of the "*type bourgeois bostonien*" of his youth. "God knows that we knew our lack of knowledge! The self-distrust became introspection—nervous self-consciousness—irritable dislike of America, and antipathy to Boston" (L5:524). Something of this reaction seems projected onto Norton.

[339] Touring the chateaux, he's "condemned to listen to the unutterable cant of British morality" (L4:331). But Adams' own writings claim an identity between the architecture of the chateaux and their all-too-human history of ambition, greed, and lust. It seems to be the preaching he resents: "Well, well! When I get quite wild with England, I read Ruskin and Carlyle, or Matt Arnold or Shelley and console myself by thinking of their lifelong martyrdoms, so inglorious, so grimy, and so mean" (L4:331).

[340] Adams did return to reading Carlyle late in life; the relation of *Sartor Resartus* to the *Education* is a subject for the next chapter. There is something of Carlyle's dream of authority in Adams' account of Norman society, disciplined, hard-working, following their leaders without complaint and their religion without question, and of Carlyle's ambition to dramatize history. In *Chartres* Adams declines to make the explicit juxtapositions of Carlyle's *Past and Present*. The problems of the twentieth century were more general and less amenable to reform; the Conservative Christian Anarchist anticipated a general collapse before change would occur.

[341] The *Education* describes the young journalist in Washington in 1869: "Thus far no one had made a suggestion of pay for any work that Adams had done or could do; if he worked at all, it was for social considerations, and social pleasure was his pay." He assigned away his royalties for *Democracy*, *Chartres* and the *Education* and estimated he'd spent a hundred thousand dollars in researching and writing his *History*.

[342] As a sample of the technical emphasis of *Development and Character in Gothic Architecture* (1890), Moore claims, "In the works of the true Gothic style a noble and well-conceived original design is carried out systematically with strict logic of construction, with thorough regard to mechanical and statical principles, and with a controlling sense of beauty"(v). Moore criticizes earlier writers for their lack of comparative analysis in assuming Gothic was a common European style. (His sole exception is Viollet-le-Duc, who was also Adams' major source.) Given Moore's stringent definition, Gothic architecture "was never practiced elsewhere than in France" (vi). Even the English use of the pointed arch was inferior. The *Atlantic* heralded Moore's book as the beginning of a distinctively American art criticism, turning an American lack into a virtue. What other nation could so disinterestedly judge the ancient monuments of Europe as the one who possessed none of her own? For a discussion of Adams, Norton and Moore as three Americans who wrote about Gothic architecture see Michael W. Brooks.

[343] *The Poetical Works of James Russell Lowell*.

[344] One volume was to have discussed Chartres.

[345] Quoting from Viollet-le-Duc, Eduard Corroyer, the Abbé Bulteau, Emile Mâle, Gaston Paris and J.-K. Huysmann among others. See Robert Mane for influences specific to *Chartres* and Max Baym for French influences in general on Adams' thought.

[346] John Gatta finds Adams' medievalism unusual in his mix of emotional fervor for Marian devotion and rejection of standard religion: "Adams's writing expresses the self-contradicting view that there is no God—but that Mary might truly be God's mother," as well as his emphasis on the non-Victorian aspects of the Virgin's redemptive power, like her erotic force (97). ("There is no God…" is attributed to Santayana by Robert Lowell in *Life Studies* (1953).

[347] According to Terry Caesar, "possibly no kind of writing ever published in America sprang from such a broad democratic base" in *Forgiving the Boundaries: Home as Abroad in American Travel Writing* (22). The letters by "H.B.A" for the *Boston Courier* were published under such titles as "Letter from Italy," Letter from Austria," "Letter from a Tourist" (Samuels I:69-74). His biggest coup, which he describes in the *Education*, was an interview with the victorious Garibaldi.

[348] William Stowe calls it "a fitting culmination for the nineteenth-century American writer's romance with Europe" (197). *Chartres* makes original use of European history and culture through Adams' complicated variations on the conventions of travel writing (219-20).

[349] The standard study is still Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, New York: Schocken, 1976. MacCannell sees tourism as an ethnography of modernity; the tourist is a typical member of the middle class, seeking identity in leisure rather than work and authenticity in preserved and reconstructed non-modern sites.

[350] William Stowe argues travel was "his favorite form of self-marginalization(196.) His writing was the work that legitimized the travel. It may be, though, that Adams traveled to write—the habit of writing

seems to have been instilled in the Adams brothers at an early age and letters were the way his maintained his social networks. Adams' journeys were social occasions, usually conducted with friends, several of whom were authors of travel books: Clarence King, John Hay, Theodore Roosevelt, William Rockhill, John LaFarge, Henry James, Edith Wharton. See Pierre Lagayette, "Travel as Episteme," on Adams' travel as a search for knowledge. Adams may have felt marginalized in 1893, but by the turn of the century when he was writing *Chartres* his friends were in power.

[351] According to James Buzard, "tourist" as a noun seems to date from the late eighteenth century and by the turn of that century seems to have been used pejoratively compared to the neutral "traveler." Buzard cites Wordsworth's 1799 "The Brothers" as example: "These tourists, heaven preserve us!"
See Jonathan Culler, "The Semiotics of Tourism" for a discussion of the way tourist and anti-tourist attitudes are entwined integrally. The tourist always wants to define herself in opposition to others more touristy, often using animal images to denigrate them. *American Journal of Semiotics*, 1(1981): 127-40.

[352]James Buzard in *The Beaten Path* discusses the contrast between the elite Grand Tour of the eighteenth century and the mass tourism of the nineteenth through the rise of institutions like Cook's Tours and the Murray and Baedeker handbooks as well as the self-ascribed distinctions between traveler and tourist. Larzer Ziff supplies an American perspective in *Return Passages*. Adams experienced something of a Grand Tour when he convinced his father to let him finish his education post-Harvard in Germany. His course of study was abortive but Adams toured the continent, seeing his first cathedrals, and experiencing an epiphany when a Beethoven symphony suddenly became intelligible, (something like his reaction to the cathedral of Coutances in 1895). As I discussed in Chapter I, Adams' most significant encounter in Rome may have been with the figurative presence of Gibbon, inspiring a sense of his vocation as a historian.

[353] "The idea of a steamer-load of Americans going on a prolonged picnic to Europe and the Holy Land is itself almost sufficiently delightful" without considering the author's droll execution. The humor is compounded by the contrast between the book's content and its material production: "If one considers the fun of making a volume of six hundred octavo pages upon the subject, in compliance with one of the main conditions of a subscription book's success, bigness namely, one has a tolerably fair piece of humor without troubling Mr. Clemens further." From the *Atlantic Monthly* of December 1869, quoted in Howells, *My Mark Twain* (107).

[354] "Travelling Companions" from the *Atlantic*, November-December 1870.

[355] James Buzard describes this as "travelogue-fiction" and sees James attempting to demonstrate his acquisition of European culture and justify the expense of his travels to his family; the experience has been remunerative. William Dean Howells, too, is writing travelogue fiction at this time. As he ventured to write novels, his first published samples, *Our Wedding Journey* (1871) and *Chance Acquaintance* (1873), were travelogues peopled by fictional characters.

[356] Written for the *New York Tribune* in 1876.

[357] Henry James, "Rheims and Laon: A Little Tour."

[358] James devoted more space to a description of the train and the town than the church. Standard accounts report the image of the church looming over the surrounding countryside. On Randolph Bourne's brief visit he described the countryside from the train, the newer boulevards, the old crooked streets where he got lost, many small pictures of life. Randolph Bourne, "An Hour in Chartres." J.-K. Huysmanns' *The Cathedral* is unusual in beginning in the dark in a "weird forest" with its protagonist leaning against the enormous trunk of a tree; as day breaks through the lancet windows the forest blooms into a church and "the Mother" awakens (20-22).

[359] *Gospel of Amiens* (28, 126-129).

[360] Despite his interest in ancient institutions, Adams never mentions the Chartres tradition of the Druid worship of a virgin mother, or the sacred well where the Christian martyrs, "les Forts," were thrown. It's not even clear whether Chartres' most famous relic, the tunic or shift of the Virgin, still exists.

[361] "One is apt to forget the smallness of Europe" (470).

[362] "The gothic is singular in this; one seems easily at home in the renaissance; one is not so strange in the Byzantine; as for the Roman, it is ourselves; and we could walk through every chink and cranny of the Greek mind; all these styles seem modern when we come close to them; but the gothic gets away" (423).

[363] Mabel Hooper, who later married a son of John La Farge. See her *Letters to a Niece.*

[364] The *Life of Albert Gallatin* (1879) includes a preface, thanking George Bancroft among other things, while *The Education of Henry Adams,* posthumously published in 1918, includes a Preface and an Editor's Preface, both written by Adams. *John Randolph*, the two novels, the *History*, and the *Memoirs of Arii*

Taimai simply begin as though the material speaks for itself, to the point of readerly disorientation in the *Memoirs*.

[365] Raymond Williams points out the difficulties of separating these two strands of meaning of "culture" in *Keywords*. Culture in its anthropological sense may be apropos here as well. Medieval civilization is significant for Adams because the unity of its cultural products demonstrates its integrity as a culture. The level of Adams' generalization sometimes rises to treating individual centuries as though they were separate cultures.

Adams himself may guilty of being one of those sons who declined to read his father, since he evaded the family tradition by declining to work on his father's papers, leaving them to his brother Charles. His brother Brooks gave up the biography he was writing of their grandfather, John Quincy Adams, because Henry's criticisms were so stringent. But Henry wrote the Tahitian *Memoirs* as an adopted son, brother and friend.

[366] Kim Moreland considers the preface to be a frame story translating the reader into Adams' dream vision of uncle and niece, analogous to the framing tale of Twain's *Connecticut Yankee*. The preface, though, seems to ground the reader in an equivocal present in which the figure of the niece indicates Adams' present frustration and didactic intent.

[367] My first chapter discusses Macaulay's influence upon Adams' *History*.

[368] Adams sometimes used the figure of Shakespeare, never equaled let alone surpassed, as an argument against simplistic notions of progress.

[369] As he wrote after Victoria's death, "Even I, who, for some years, belonged to Victoria's Court in what was supposed to be its best time, and who never could see anything but selfishness and bourgeoisie to admire in the old woman, and who never received from her or her family so much as a sign of recognition, am a very little touched to see her so tragically, broken-hearted at the wretched end of such a self-satisfied reign, and nobody care"(L5:189).

[370] As he wrote to Cameron after a frustrating reunion, "if only I still knew a God to pray to, or better yet, a Goddess, for as I grow older I see that all the human interest and power that religion ever had was in the mother and child, and I would have nothing to do ith a church that did not offer both. There you are again! You see how the thought always turns back to you" (L3:561).

[371] Brooks complained that his brother "came rather to shun me, seeming to prefer women's society, in which he could be amused and tranquilized." No one would accuse Brooks of having a tranquilizing effect on people, but Henry's preference for feminine company wasn't altogether a compliment. Brooks Adams, Introduction, *Degradation of the Democratic Dogma*.

[372] Adams expressed his enjoyment with *Daisy Miller*, but "broke down" before *Portrait of a Lady*, breaking down probably meaning that he couldn't go on to finish it. Howells' early novels with traveling heroines are less read, but James was reading and commenting on *Chance Acquaintance* (1873), *Lady of the Aroostook* (1879), *A Foregone Conclusion* (1875), and "A Fearsome Responsibility." *Daisy Miller* could have been so developed a conception because it was playing on a type already established. See Michael Anesko, *Letters, Fictions, Lives* for an account of Howells' and James' relationship during this early period of their careers. For a full account of the American girl and her subtypes depicted in word and image, see Martha Banta, *Imaging American Women: Ideas and Ideals in Cultural History*.

[373] Michelet was a major source for Adams when he started teaching medieval history. This is the translation Adams owned. Michelet is interesting as a model, perhaps for Adams, of an earlier, romantic style of historiography in which the historian put himself and his emotions on the page.

[374] Even the artist might not feel her power. In the *Education* Adams took St. Gaudens to Amiens to study his reactions, but the symbol that attracted St. Gaudens, described by Adams as a man of the Renaissance born too late, was the horse.

[375] "Astarte, Isis, Demeter, Aphrodite" were her predecessors. Adams follows the lead of Johann Jacob Bachofen's work on *Mother Right (Das Mutterrecht)* (1861), which apparently he read in the 1870s. See Samuels.

[376] *Atlantic Monthly*.

[377] In *The Writing of History*, Michel de Certeau argues that all history is a settling of accounts with the dead. This may not be true for all historians, but seems true of Adams, given his familial relation to American history and the link between the figure of the Virgin and Marian Adams. If Certeau sees all history as heterology, Adams' Others shift in each book depending on his identification with his material.

[378] See Jackson Lears, 268-69.Oscar Cargill reads Adams' text as an act of atonement for his novel *Esther* and its unflattering portrait of his late wife. Cargill sees the similarities between *Chartres* and Joris-Karl Huysmans' *The Cathedral*, a novel-travelogue of Chartres, in which the recent convert Huysmans tried to exorcise the sacrilege of his *La-bas.* Eugenia Kaledin suggests that Adams absorbed his wife's values to become "a passionate social critic." Joseph Byrne finds in Adams' depiction of the Virgin an alternation between coping and defense mechanisms after the death of his wife; in Martha Banta's "Being a Begonia in a Man's World," Adams was "a man who carried within himself much of what it signifies to be a woman" in his dissociation from male norms of success and incorporation of his dead wife's qualities. R.P. Blackmur emphasizes Adams spiritual autobiography and return to life.

[379] The Catholic Hugh Blount sees in Adams' strange obsession with Mary "the synthetic Virgin of anti-Catholic prejudice, such a Virgin as was never known in Catholic devotion"(47) and suggests he may have gotten his false idea of her from E. B. Pusey's *Eirenicon* (1866) with the difference that Adams perversely celebrated everything that Pusey found appalling in Catholic worship. Pusey's work, published when Adams was living in England, cited Mariolatry as a significant impediment to Roman Catholic and Protestant reunion. In response John Henry Newman repudiated the superstitious worship of the Virgin while defending the practice of devotion to her.

[380] Whereas Michelet in his *History of the French Revolution* looked back at the arbitrary nature of caste in determining worth and grace in determining religious salvation during the Middle Ages and called for justice. But then Michelet identified with the continuous sweep of French history (French before the fact of France, it might be argued) in a way that Adams for all his supposed Norman ancestry reserved for the United States.

[381] From Adams' "Prayer to the Virgin of Chartres," of 1900, which incorporates and repudiates a "Prayer to the Dynamo" (lines 155-56).

[382] The miracles dramatize "the immediacy and vitality of her presence" more than the miraculous results of her intervention, according to Gatta (108).

[383] See the sketch of Cameron running the household at Surrenden Deering in Abigail Adams Homans, *Education by Uncles.* Gregory Jay sees the Virgin as "Adams first major experiment in ironic self-fashioning." For Jay "'Henry Adams' of the *Education* will be the outlaw virgin of the nineteenth century, the noncenter of the text who nonetheless seems to attract all the forces of the era." He "becomes the representative man exactly insofar as he typifies the human realities that fail, or resist, being governed by the sociopolitical and philosophical economy of the American Order"(235). It could be argued that the heroines of Adams' two novels were his first experiments in self-fashioning in this respect with their refusals to submit to powerful men who represent that economy. If Jay is particularly interested in the dynamics of the family romance as analogy of social history, the "I" of the *Memoirs of Arii Taimai*, his adoptive mother and "the last great archaic woman," revising the Western order's interpretation of herself and her people, would prefigure the Virgin in "her absolution of men from the logocentric drive"(213).

[384] In *The Renaissance*.

[385] Nineteenth century apparitions at La Sallette(1846), Lourdes(1858), Pontmain (1871), Knock(1879), Marpingen(1876) and in 1917, Fatima. Also the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception was proclaimed in 1854.Turner and Turner discuss the rise of the modern Marian pilgrimage, instigated by these apparitions to humble rustic people, often children, and their somewhat apocalyptic feeling.

[386] The mother of Jesus presumably had a historical existence, but the figure of Marian devotion was based less on her presence in the scriptures than on apocrypha and tradition, one reason for the Protestant rejection of her. See Jaroslav Pelikan, *Mary Through the Centuries* , Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex* and Miri Rubin, *Mother of God*, for a historical overview of her significance.

[387] This trope of female unknowability doesn't have to be read as masculine evasion. For example, in *The House of Mirth* by Adams' friend Edith Wharton, for all the general discussion of the heroine, readers never do know the "real" Lily Bart, if such a person exists. Bart declines to tell her own story; anything she could say would be ineffectual against the stories that have been written and spoken about her as a semi-public figure. The novel ends with Selden's unreliable suppositions.

[388] While Adams considered the institution of courtly love, to whatever extent it existed, to have been a civilizing feminine influence on a brutal society, Twain had nothing good to say about the medieval women who proleptically transgressed against Victorian standards of propriety. In *Connecticut Yankee* the knights were fine fellows, lovable as overgrown children, but their ladies lacked decency. The strong-willed Morgan Le Fay had all of the faults of an arbitrary ruler and no compensating virtues; Guinevere's

immorality ruined everything for the Round Table. In *Innocents Abroad*, the narrator sees a manuscript annotated by Petrarch and with contrarian humor declares his sympathy for "poor Mr. Laura," the wronged husband: "How did he enjoy having another man following his wife everywhere and making her name a familiar word in every garlic-exterminating mouth in Italy with his sonnets to her preempted eyebrows? They got fame and sympathy—he got neither" (136).

[389] According to Constant Mews, the authenticity of her letters was questioned in the nineteenth century, but tends to be accepted in the twentieth. Based on the correspondence and her writings as abbess, as well as her influence on Abélard's thinking about ethics, Mews considers her an original writer and thinker. Michelet took the letters as genuine in the 1840s, as did Walter Pater in the 1870s, and Henry Osborn Taylor in 1911.

[390] Some readers see a sexual undercurrent in the relation between uncle and "niece." The whole set-up of Adams and travelling companion disturbs Oscar Cargill. It's "obscene" that Adams would take some "Daisy Miller" to take pictures of Mont Saint Michel. It's also disturbing to think that he would bring a young woman who was actually a niece to Chartres to teach her of the power of sex, although if she were some unrelated Daisy Miller this education might have a salutary effect on America. Bonnie Smith sees "themes of incest" in the writings: "Meanwhile he sustained an adulterous passion and worshipped young girls, including his nieces, with whom he regularly traveled throughout Europe. Themes of incest, exotica, and avant-garde goods evoke modernism."(224).

[391] E.g. Boyeson discusses the "Iron Madonna" whose readership limits what can be written in American magazines and blights the prospect for a vital American literature. *Chartres* recommends *Madame Bovary*, so apparently it's suitable for nieces to read, but Adams decided against buying some sensuous statuettes by Rodin because he would have to put them away when nieces were around.

[392] Read Kim Masterson for a discussion of four varying interpretations of courtly love.

[393] John Carlos Rowe and Dominick La Capra, for example.

[394] As Martha Banta puts it in "Being a 'Begonia' in a Man's World," "His obsession was not to know what women 'are' – since for Adams all females are irrevocably 'the Other" –but what they 'do' in the world" (55).

[395] See Marina Warner, for example, on the way that the elevation of the Virgin had a contrary effect on the status of women.

[396] Ernest Samuels, Adams' biographer, notes "One searches fruitlessly in his immense correspondence of these years, for signs of a sympathetic interest in the ordinary individuals who make up the mass of mankind" (III:252).

[397] To cite a familiar example, the appeal of the narrator in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*: "And oh! mother that reads this, has there never been in your house a drawer, or a closet, the opening of which has been to you like the opening again of a little grave?"(75).The all-too-familiar memory of lost children unites in bereavement and sympathy the narrator, Eliza, Senator and Mrs. Bird, and the reader. Stowe's historical novel *Agnes of Sorrento* (1862), a narrative explicitly inspired by family travel, displays an appreciation for the womanly intercession of the Virgin as well as its proto-Protestant heroine, and for the Catholic doctrine of the communion of saints, uniting all members of the Church both living and dead. John Gatta in *American Madonna*, places Adams in a tradition of American Protestant writers like Hawthorne, Fuller, Stowe and Frederic and Eliot who were fascinated by the Madonna.

[398] The Church promoted the submissive type of Griselda, "the pale reflection of the Mater Dolorosa," according to Adams in "The Primitive Rights of Women" (359).

[399] Nancy Comley discusses this in "Henry Adams' Feminine Fictions: The Economics of Maternity."

[400] See the *Education*.

[401] In Jaroslav Pelikan, for example.

[402] Kimberly V. Adams sees Adams as a successor to Anna Jameson in their conception of the Virgin as Queen. In *The Bible of Amiens* Ruskin classifies three types of Virgins in chronological order: the Madonna Dolorosa of Byzantine origin, the noblest according to Ruskin, the Madonna Reine, the Norman and French type, "crowned, calm and full of power and gentleness," and the Madonna Nourrice of the South transept of Amiens, "decadent and Raphaelesque," seeing in Raphael's works the decline of art in their elevation of the merely human at the expense of the divine (165). Adams identifies two types of Madonnas at Chartres, the early Byzantine Empress of the west portal, whose iconography was brought back from the first Crusade and the later French Queen of Heaven of the south porch.

[403] In later years Adams seemed to have an inexhaustible supply of nieces and honorary nieces willing to take care of him. Cindy Weinstein writes, "As deeply as Adams identified with women, he also identified them as sources for solace and sympathy—the most conventional of all female roles" (311).
[404] As Margaret Fuller saw the Virgin as a transformative figure for women in *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, at least before travel to Italy revealed the extent to which Catholicism was a reactionary political force. See Kimberly Adams, *Our Lady of Victorian Feminism*. Natalie Zemon Davis in "Woman on Top" discusses the image of the unruly woman in late medieval Europe and argues that it could undermine assent to hierarchy by widening "behavioral options" for women and sanctioning political disobedience for men and women (131). Mikhail Bahktin describes the general characteristics of the carnivalesque, while Stallybrass and White write about the bourgeois need for such a category. See Clive Bush for its connection to Adams.
[405] Letter to the writer George Cabot Lodge, an honorary nephew and after his untimely death the subject of a biography by Adams.
[406] James to Adams, letter of 28 April, 1910, quoted in Samuels (III:308).
[407] "The gothic is singular in this; one seems easily at home in the renaissance; one is not so strange in the Byzantine; as for the Roman, it is ourselves; and we could walk through every chink and cranny of the Greek mind; all these styles seem modern when we come close to them; but the gothic gets away" (423). Adams may insist on the importance of historical sequence but there is no necessary continuity of thought.
[408] Letter to Brooks Adams, 8 September, 1895 (L4:321).
[409] The "world's movement" has an echo of Hegel and the contention that some ages are more important than others. Adams saw change but not necessarily progress over time and certainly not Hegel's teleology of the world's spirit perfecting itself through history. His *History* at first suggests that American history might become a narrative of the national character achieving ever-higher expression as a distinctive civilization, but by its conclusion his disillusionment is implicit. Adams' thinking is dialectical but he prefers to defer a synthesis. In the *Education* the Conservative Christian Anarchist claims descent from Hegel and Schopenhauer, "rightly understood." The "larger synthesis," (always presented by Adams in ironic quotation marks), was a limited agreement in the service of a larger contradiction: that "order and anarchy were one, but that the unity was chaos" (1909-91). See Joseph Kronick on the relationship between Adams' and Hegel's thought, David Partenheimer for Adams' relation to German philosophy in general.
[410] Clare Simmons in *Reversing the Conquest* writes about changing images of Norman oppression and Anglo-Saxon primitive democracy. By the late nineteenth century the concept of a conquest was minimized, so that E. A. Freeman's history emphasizes the persistence of Anglo-Saxon life and character—the Normans vanished, assimilated by the conquered. The important victory was the Teutonic invasion centuries before. Adams' own argument in *Essays in Anglo-Saxon Law* complicates the concept of the "Norman yoke," since he claims that some elements of feudal and monarchical privilege had already been imported by Edward the Confessor before the Conquest. *Ivanhoe*, which did most to fix the popular image of Saxon and Norman races, was a childhood favorite of Adams, reread in the 1890s in Polynesia.
[411] "No doubt we think first of the church, and next of our temporal lord; only in the last instance do we think of our own affairs, and our private affairs sometimes suffer for it; but we reckon the affairs of Church and state to be ours too, and we carry this idea very far" (349-50).
[412] From a speech in the Senate, March 1896. Lodge was a stalwart of the anti-immigration league. His style, as the *Education* describes it, "harked back to race"; the *Education* also calls him "English to the last fibre of his thought"—a back-handed compliment.
Other New Englanders were interested in exploring their Norman connections, e.g., in Sarah Orne Jewett's *Country of the Pointed Firs*, the Bowden family reunion celebrates the virtues of their Norman ancestors and by extension their own good breeding. Jewett also wrote a history, *The Normans; Told Chiefly in Relation to Their Conquest of England*, which asserts that the savage Northmen of the "dragon ships," (not in this case Lodge's French-speaking Germans) were actually superior in literature, law, history and social customs to the people they pillaged. Twelfth-century Normans remained restless, daring, and adventurous, and their motives for joining a crusade, according to Jewett, were decidedly mixed: "A madness to go crusading against the Saracen possessed him, not alone for religion's sake or for the holy city of Jerusalem, and so in all the ages since one excuse after another has set the same wild blood leaping and made the Northern blue eyes shine" (28). As for the Norman influence on England, "England the colonizer, England the country of social and intellectual progress, England the fosterer of ideas and chivalrous humanity is Norman England" (356). In France it was the Normans who were responsible for social refinement and

courtliness, not those crude Germans, the Franks. The U.S. "might be called the Normans of modern times" with the same strengths and weaknesses of "our" ancestors. "They were the foremost people of their time, being most thoroughly alive and quickest to see where advances might be made in government, in architecture and in social life," but in their rapid expansion of power they sometimes chose the pursuit of luxury over righteousness (360-61). "Most thoroughly alive" echoes a similar vitalism in Adams' appreciation. Adams isn't trading on a direct descent. He proposes that all English have some Norman blood, just as, apparently, they have inherited the Anglo-Saxon vices.

[413] It is odd that by 1904 Adams didn't find the United States in the center of the world's movement; this sounds more like the Adams of 1893. Adams may be reflecting a genre in which medieval values rule. His perspective in the *Education* on the assumption of power by America and his circle of friends is very different in attitude.

[414] "Some critics have thought that at times Flaubert was *mesquin* like the Norman tower, but these are, as the French say, the defects of his qualities"(392). Adams is not afraid that *Madame Bovary* will corrupt young minds, or perhaps he's forgotten his putative audience.

[415] Local people made other associations about the exterior, calling the church "La Fillette," the little girl. See Pierre Nora, ed., *Realms of Memory*.

[416] Notably in his long response to his brother Brooks' biography of their grandfather, which Brooks never published after reading Henry's attack on the man, Houghton Library MS. For example, Adams felt that his grandfather had been willing to be the tool of the slave power for the sake of his ambition, until the slave power rejected him. See Peter Shaw, "A Dissenting View of John Quincy Adams," also Gary Wills and Katherine Morison.

[417] Money at least was no object, although as a man of his age Adams couldn't help looking at the cathedral in economic terms, speaking with a knowledge of the losses required to create a middle class: "Illusion for illusion, granting for the moment that Mary was an illusion,--the Virgin Mother in this instance repaid to her worshippers a larger return for their money than the capitalist has ever been able to get, at least in this world, from any other illusion of wealth" (433).

[418] Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History." Theological speculation is presented as a somewhat perilous venture, given the penalties for heresy, but the age is presented as one of intellectual ferment and tolerance compared to the climate one or two centuries later. The Crusades occur offstage, although Adams was later to consider this omission a deficiency. The Virgin's distaste for Jews is noted along with her disdain for the bourgeoisie, the coming commercial civilization. The French revolution is projected as the fruit of a grudge the bourgeoisie and peasants held against the Church to get back their own, once they discovered that their financial investment in the Virgin didn't necessarily pay off.

[419] From the vantage point of 1904 Adams considered that the French peasant had done very well for himself. "In fact, he succeeded in plundering Church, Crown, Nobility and Bourgeoisie, and was the only class in French history that rose steadily in power and well-being, from the time of the Crusades to the present day, whatever his occasional suffering may have been; and, in the thirteenth century, he was suffering" (558).

[420] Although he may demonstrate the way that the practice of "critical" history destroys useful illusions..

[421] Or as Paul Bové puts it, "Adams insists that all the apparatuses of modern education and knowledge production do not and cannot create a subject capable of knowledge about the Gothic because the Gothic is that with which such subjectivity precisely cannot come into proximity." According to Paul Freedman and Gabrielle Spiegel, Adams' interest in the alterity of the Middle is shared by postmodern scholars, but the professional historians who succeeded him tended to emphasize the relevance of medieval history in its continuities and similarities to modern life. For Adams its relevance was as a repository of alternative values.

[422] As he concluded this 1911 letter to the medievalist Albert Stanburrough Cook, who apparently asked him about publishing *Chartres*, "You see, therefore, why I should be not merely indifferent but positively repellent of a popular following. It means to me a crowd of summer-tourists, vulgarizing every thought known to artists. In act, it is the Ober-Ammergau Passion-play as now run for Cook's tourists" (L6:357). This disclaimer has to be read as a defensive maneuver after the lack of popular response to his *History*. Adams doesn't seem to have been less than gratified by the book's immediate success.

[423] "Chronology," Henry Adams, *Novels; Mont Saint Michel, The Education*.

[424] Cram, "Editor's Note," *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres*. Adams had copyrighted the book but he turned all royalties over to the AIA to provide copies for indigent students. As the funds accumulated they

supported lectures, prizes for young architects, and in the 1950s a new stained glass window for Chartres Cathedral, featuring Bishop Fulbert who had ordered and supervised the major construction at Chartres but also incorporating New World skyscrapers (Samuels 540-41).

[425]See Douglas Shand-Tucci, *Ralph Adams Cram: Life and Architecture*. Michael Clark describes Cram's "sacramental" perspective and cyclical sense of history in *The American Discovery of Tradition*.

[426] "Numbers; or The Majority and the Remnant" in *Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold: Vol. X Philistinism in England and America*. Arnold apparently was Adams' guest in Washington. If the remnant is larger in modern society, Arnold doesn't consider that so is the majority whose "aims and doings" are "very faulty" (145). Adams seems to be following the Hellenic model, as Arnold describes it, of lying low and minding one's own business. rather than the too-precipitous Hebraic push towards salvation. Arnold felt that Americans clung to their Constitution when they should have been cultivating themselves to be "true, elevated, just, pure, amiable, and of good report" (151-2). Similarly, in *The Use and Abuse of History for Life*, Friedrich Nietzsche recalls the hundred people who changed Germany culture at the end of the eighteenth century in his dream of a forming a nucleus, untainted by the effects of historicism, that might initiate another regeneration.

[427] Adams recommended Bergson's *Creative Evolution* to Albert S. Cook.

[428] Could genuine religious faith ever produce bad art? For Adams the art seems to ratify the quality of the faith, although it's not quite clear what his standards for excellence are. One seems to be originality, while the other is an economic test: great art spares no expense.

[429] Stern writes about the development of Adams' artistic preferences as they were influenced by his travels. His exposure to the art of Asia and Byzantium may have contributed to his admiration for the relatively stylized sculpture of the west portal of Chartres, not universally appreciated in his time, much as he came to prefer the archaic age of Greece to the classic, Delphi rather than Athens.

[430] The idea that the Virgin answered prayers here and not "elsewhere" is a troupe of Huysmanns' *The Cathedral*: the devout Durtal feels the Virgin's presence at Chartres, but not Notre Dame de Paris.

[431] From *Consuming the Past*, Emery and Morowitz, eds.

[432]Originally called *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* when first published in 1873 but substantially revised three times, the last in 1893. Pater's *Renaissance* was reviewed in the *NAR* article by Sarah Wister "Pater, Burckhardt and Rio," while Adams was editor. He owned a copy of *Marius the Epicurean*. Adams doesn't seem to have read Burckhardt. The *Renaissance* and *Chartres* overlap in the stories of Aucassin and Nicolette and Abélard and Héloïse. Pater reacts against Ruskin's negative evaluation of the Renaissance and periodization by seeing medieval antinomianism as one of the sources of the Renaissance and finding in medieval literature the "new kingdom of feeling and sensation and thought" usually associated with the Renaissance.

[433] Santayana, "The Elements and Function of Poetry" in *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion.*

[434] Adams' preferred word is "amusement" not "pleasure." For a descendent of the Puritans, amusement is more controlled and controllable. It connotes a certain eighteenth-century detachment tending to disinterestedness. It demonstrates frivolity rather than passion, when, for example, the uncle and niece drive across the Norman countryside, hunting fleches like "mushrooms," or Adams writes about "bagging" cathedrals. But it could be argued that "amusement" is also a sign of resistance, a celebration of uselessness against a culture in which time is money. As amusement tends to be a feminine quality, critics have written about the way that mourning his wife included an incorporation of feminine values, e.g. Martha Banta and Eugenia Kaledin.

[435] In part this was a reflection of a revival of interest in Catholicism among the elite in France. *Chartres* quotes from Joris-Karl Huysmans *The Cathedral*, for example, the product of the author's notorious conversion. Emile Zola, with a very different political and religious orientation, wrote a trilogy of pilgrimages, two of which, *Rome* and *Lourdes*, Adams recommends in his letters. When the state decided to reorganize its relationship with religious institutions, a popular outcry ensured the continuation of support for the cathedrals. Look at Elizabeth Emery, *Romancing the Cathedral*, for nineteenth-century literary interest in the cathedral, also the article by André Vauchez in *Realms of Memory* on the cathedral as a symbol of Frenchness.

[436] This is a distinction that Charles Taylor makes, that the "conditions of belief" and the "context of understanding" in which belief becomes one option among many are more important to understanding the change to secularity than the absence of religion from public spaces or the decline of religious practice.

[437] Writing to William James of the *Education*, "…St. Augustine alone has an idea of literary form—a notion of writing a story with an end and an object, not for the sake of the object, but for the form, like a romance. I have worked for years to establish that the thing cannot be done today. The world does not furnish the contrasts or the emotion. If you will read my Chartres—the last chapter is the only thing I ever wrote that I almost think good—you will see why I know my Education to be rotten" (L6:119-20).
[438] As companion volumes, Adams described *Chartres* as a volume "where I could hide, in the last hundred pages, a sort of anchor in history" which no one would understand and the *Education* "where I could hide—in a stack of rubbish meant only to feed the foolish—a hundred more pages meant to complete the first hundred" (L6:91-92).
[439] Also like Abélard and also as this chapter demonstrates, Adams characteristically wants thinkers to push their arguments to their logical conclusions; he wants the underlying theory. He admires formally the way that Aquinas cuts off the lines of discussion for the sake of the whole, but his appreciation is complicated by his tendency to speculate where those lines might lead. Adams' interest in theory is evident in his book reviews of histories in the *North American Review*—British historians tend to be especially reluctant to employ their powers of generalization—and in the *Education* and speculative essays in which scientists are frustratingly reluctant to draw conclusions from their data.
[440] In the central feminine chapters Adams mentions in passing that Abélard wrote love songs for Héloïse and was devoted to the Virgin, but he segregates information according to category.
[441] From the height of the twentieth century Henry Osborn Taylor sees the debates as a kind of elementary "clearing up of the mind," since, unfortunately Abélard lived two or three decades too early to read all of Aristotle's treatises on logic. "And the various twelfth-century opinions on universals no longer possess human interest. It is hard for us to distinguish between them, or understand them clearly, or state them intelligibly. They are bound up into a phraseology untranslatable into modern knowledge, because the discussion no longer corresponds to modern way of thought. But one is interested in the human need which drove Abélard and his fellows" to the problem and to their struggles to escape the pitfalls of pantheism and nominalism (348-49).
[442] Max Baym considers Adams' "Prayer to the Virgin of Chartres" to be inspired by this passage of Pascal, at least in spirit it is a "metric stylization of Pascal's prose lyric" (202). Baym provides a full description of Adams' reading of Pascal and other French authors in *The French Education of Henry Adams*. R. P. Blackmur sees an affinity between Adams and Pascal in the "intense levity" of their language and thought: "In the intense levity of Adams is his own Pascal: the anguish of self-distrust and doubt. Pascal is part of his spiritual autobiography: the creative labor in which men have to make use of others in order to see demonstrated the truth of that which in themselves alone they cannot believe, though they suffer it"(239). R
[443] Letter to Mabel Hooper La Farge, 29 April 1902.
[444] John Patrick Diggins sees a parallel between Max Weber's study of the routinization of charismatic authority and the way that the Virgin and St. Francis, who accommodated and even promoted anarchism and whose power was based on their popular following were eventually incorporated into the Church, while the *Summa* of St. Thomas demonstrates the scholastic systematization of knowledge. Both Adams and Weber saw that scientific rationalism diminished religious mystery, but Weber found new sources of authority in science and the state.
[445] R.P. Blackmur is particularly interested in this vision of exemplary liberalism and reads Adams against the grain of his polarizing figures to look at the centrists who made it possible, humanistic types like Abbots Suger and Peter of Cluny. But he also notes that the pope could afford to tolerate Francis since he was concurrently demonstrating his power to enforce orthodoxy by exterminating the Cathar heretics and destroying their Provençal culture.
[446] While allowing that Chartres had more dignity (Ruskin 1321).
[447] From the Adams family perspective, failure, as the aspiration to an unattainable excellence, may be preferable to success, a subject to be discussed in the *Education*.
[448] William Stowe argues that Adams' use of the cathedral here is an important shift from synecdoche to metaphor. The previously synecdochal relation of art to its period, so the Cathedral or the poem was an essential expression of a time in which all art bears that identity, demonstrated Adams' essentially conservative outlook on the past, whereas the turn to metaphor projected historical dynamism. Even at Mont Saint Michel, though, where the Mount and the *Chanson de Roland* seem to express the same idea, the heights are precarious and the energy propulsive. What interests Adams about the Gothic is the phase of

transition. The ground shifts with multiple perspectives. Adams values unity and stability but anxiously awaits the next change. Living as he thinks he does at another end of an age, he looks for signs.
[449] In his encyclical of 1879, *Aeterni Patris*.
[450] In *Henry Adams and Henry James*, John Carlos Rowe expresses an opinion that goes back to Henry Osborn Taylor's early review (88).
[451] An echo of Montaigne here.
[452] See a 1911 letter to the medievalist Frederick Luquiens, who had encouraged him to publish. 'I care far more for my theology than for my architecture, and should be much mortified if detected in an error about Thomas Aquinas, or the doctrine of Universals."
According to Robert Mane there is no evidence that Adams read the thirty-four volumes of the latest available edition of the *Summa*, in whole or part, but his library contains annotated copies of secondary sources. Adams discusses less than a fifth of Aquinas' philosophy and of Aquinas' five proofs for the existence of God mentions only one. As Mane says, he used guidebooks here as he had in the earlier chapters, but when it came to the *Summa*, "he never actually visited the church" (211).
Michael Colacurcio assumes that Adams was careful in his research, judges him by the standards of literature rather than academic history but still finds the treatment of Aquinas "very peculiar" (696). Raymond Carney considers the portrait of Aquinas about as accurate as Shakespeare's portraits of English kings. He finds the chapter on Aquinas the most striking example of the "outrageousness, the extravagance, the outright nuttiness (at times)" of Adams' imagination, using stylistic freedom as compensation for social powerlessness (521-22). R. P. Blackmur takes Adams' history seriously, but ends up importing other historical authorities to fill in the gaps of Adams' account. J. C. Levenson defends Adams' reading of scholasticism as remarkably similar to that of the later Catholic philosopher Etienne Gilson (284).
[453] Carney (524). Colacurcio argues that despite "surface similarities…no men ever thought less alike." Adams is a monist, always trying to simplify; Aquinas is a dualist, adding distinctions, secure in the faith of "Transcendent Unity" (702). Adam maintains his intent to simplify and at least construct a unity, but even in imagination he cannot project one.
[454] According to Ronald Peters, *The Massachusetts Constitution of 1780*, Adams was in Europe during the drafting of the U.S, Constitution, but, less modest than his descendents, admitted of his work, "I made a constitution for Massachusetts, which finally made the Constitution of the United States," letter to Mercy Otis Warren, July 28, 1807 (14). As a boy Henry copied and read proof for the complete works of his great-grandfather being edited by his father, Charles Francis Adams.
[455] From "A Dissertation on the Canon and Civil Law" in *The Political Writings of John Adams*.
[456] From John Adams, *A Defence of the American Constitutions*, ibid., 118.
Richard Samuelson doesn't make a comparison between Adams' handling of Aquinas and his grandfather in his article "Henry Adams's Debt to John Adams," but he's interested in exploring what Henry Adams meant when in 1901 he wrote that "It is just a hundred years since ["my old friend" Jefferson] turned my harmless ancestor into the street at midnight, and I think he must wish he hadn't, for there is mighty little left of him; whereas my venerable ancestor has at least me." Samuelson connects John Adams with Tocqueville and less convincingly Rousseau, and through Rousseau, Pascal, to show that Henry's work in *Chartres* did not repudiate his great-grandfather's principles. John Adams never disputed the importance of religious faith, as opposed to superstition, in undergirding public morality, but he is more interesting here as someone who defines a system and in asserting it, creates it.
[457] Although Taylor finds the ultimate medieval synthesis in the genius of Dante. While it's true in the case of Abélard and even Thomas, that one generation's heretic is the next generation's prophet, Taylor declines to discuss unassimilated heretics like the Cathars, since their thought, according to the logic of progress, led to nothing.
[458] Frederick Luquiens, a specialist in medieval literature, was more admiring in his *Yale Review* assessment of Adams' book, suggesting that *Chartres* might take its place next to Taylor's *Mediaeval Mind* as the "Medieval Soul."
[459] Adams uses "science" in multiple ways. It can mean scholastic science, used with or without the modifier, as a unified body of knowledge and inquiry, but with the suggestion at times that medieval rationality leads to modern science. This is complicated when Lord Bacon is cited to attack scholasticism as guilty of faulty method and intellectual pride. Adams also makes a distinction between "true" science compared to science as disguised religion—true science follows wherever the evidence leads, the other sets limits on thinking and excommunicates heretics. Recent science, Adams implies, is learning to operate

under different assumptions than the past. In the *Education* Adams speculates on the implications of a non-Newtonian universe and criticizes "Darwinism" as disguised religion.

[460] In *Esther* the scientist George Strong claims. "There is no science which does not begin by asking you to believe the incredible…the doctrine of the Trinity is not so difficult to accept for a working position as any one of the axioms of physics"(284-85).

[461] See Samuels for a discussion of Adams' scientific reading during the long revision of his last chapter.

[462] Letter to his niece Mabel Hooper La Farge, Paris 17 June 1902. In spring 1904 he bought a Mercedes.

[463] See William James in *The Will to Believe*, arguing against W.K. Clifford's claim that it is always wrong to believe without sufficient evidence; we may or must decide in the absence of proof when a living, momentous and forced option is available and the results of belief beneficial.

[464] Ralph McInerny points out that the proof from motion was not self-evident but had been painstakingly detailed in Aquinas' *Physics*, also in the *Summa contra Gentiles*.

[465] In 1900 he wrote apropos of his study of Aquinas, "St.Thomas is frankly droll, but I think I like his ideas better than those of Descartes or Leibniz or Kant or the Scotchmen, just as I like better a child of ten that tells lies, to a young man of twenty who not only lies but cheats knowingly. The Thomas was afraid of being whipped. Descartes and the rest lied for pay." Letter to Charles Milnes Gaskell, 27 July 1900 (V: 141).

[466] "Checks and Ballances, Jefferson, however you and your Party may have ridiculed them, are our only Security, for the progress of Mind, as well of the Security of Body." Letter to Thomas Jefferson, 25 June 1813, *The Adams-Jefferson Letters*, Lester Cappon, ed., 1959, Omohundro Institute, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1987.

[467] The form was based on the kind of oral proceedings that took place in the universities: topics were divided into questions to be discussed, first the negative positions were established, then a counter position, followed by Aquinas' own argument, drawing upon established authority, and finally a consideration and refutation of the objections to his argument. Adams doesn't discuss this form specifically; it's not clear what he meant by Aquinas' scientific method.

[468] Letter to Henry Osborn Taylor, 6 January 1905. William Merrill Decker traces the figure of the intellectual protagonist in Adams' work and the frequent instances in which figures suffer for their advocacy of new ideas in "A Martyr to the Disease of Omniscience" in *Henry Adams and the Need to Know*, Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 2005.

[469] This raises questions about what if anything we learn from experience, questions that Adams will take up in later works; where would the individual be if he admitted a multiverse?

[470] Although Adams does refer a few times in passing to Ernest Haeckel, a contemporary proponent of monism.

[471] For an example of that "disguised Religion" from the *Education*, some "Darwinians" hold to natural selection as "a form of religious hope; a promise of ultimate perfection" (931).

[472] Adams' article "Civil Service Reform" quotes (440) the Massachusetts Bill of Rights and also his great-grandfather's *A Defense of the Constitutions* on the effect of the destruction of the balance of powers: executive power in the hands of the legislature "will corrupt the legislature as necessarily as rust corrupts iron, or as arsenic poisons the human body; and when the legislature is corrupted the people are undone" (446). From "Civil Service Reform," *North American Review*, 109(1869):443-475. Adams came to believe that the balance of power had been overridden, perhaps irretrievably, by political parties' power over the executive and that his great-grandfather's "noble science" of politics had been eclipsed by powerful economic forces, but in 1869 he was hoping still to rouse public opinion to reform the system. Samuelson matches Adams' statement with Tocqueville's "It is not force alone but rather good laws, which make a new government secure"(28)

[473] "The attempt to bridge the chasm between multiplicity and unity is the oldest problem of philosophy, religion and science, but the flimsiest bridge of all is the old human Concept, unless somewhere, within or beyond it, an energy not individual is hidden; and in that case the old question instantly reappears:--What is that Energy?" (631).

[474] Henry Osborn Taylor quotes Aquinas: "Man is declared to be made in the image of God in this sense (as Damascenus says) that by 'image' is meant *intellectual*, *free to choose*, and *self-potent to act*. Therefore, after what has been said of the Exemplar God, and of those things which proceed from the divine power according to its will, there remains for us to consider His image, to wit, man, insofar as he is himself the source (*principium*) of his acts, possessing free will and power over them"(439).[Taylor's italics] This

statement precedes a discussion of the final end of human life, beatitude, so Taylor never expands on what Aquinas means by free choice and self-potency. In addition to reducing human choice to a mechanical response, Adams discusses the constraints under which Aquinas' God operates as the logical consequences of the creation.

[475] Taylor quotes Aquinas on grace: "'Grace is something supernatural in man coming from God.'" It can be a "divine aid, moving us to willing and doing right, or as a formative and abiding (*habituale*) gift, divinely placed in us." It is "nothing less than a sharing (*participio*) of the divine nature'" (478-79). When Taylor summarizes Aquinas' concept in his own words—grace is "a divinely bestowed increment, directing our natural faculties toward God and uplifting them to higher capacities of knowing and loving"—he moves a little closer to Adams' depiction of the mechanism in the increment that raises capacity while retaining Aquinas' sense of the ends of grace (478).

[476] The Jesuit whom Adams quotes, Father de Rognon, criticizes Thomism as it "tends to reduce more and more the efficacy of second causes," which is not the same as Adams' claim that it had removed all secondary causes between God and humans (689).

[477] By 1903, while Adams was making final revisions of *Chartres*, his letters were filled with the themes of the *Education* and by the end of 1905 he was discussing arrangements for its printing. See Samuels. Edward Chalfant argues to the contrary that the writing of the *Education* began in 1890 when Adams read and destroyed his diaries and his letters took a retrospective turn, including occasional phrases incorporated in the *Education.*

[478] William James, *A Pluralistic Universe*. Adams is much less sanguine than James about the space of human freedom and the ability of humans to repair the dislocations of the multiverse.

[479] From *The Will to Believe and Other Essays*.

[480] McIntyre describes the movement of the book as a whole as a "stepping-down."

[481] Wilhelm Dilthey, *Introduction to the Human Sciences*. Dilthey was not an author Adams would have read, but an alternative contemporary approach to the nature and limits of historiography.

[482] Michael Colacurcio, for example notes "an interesting paradox: the work which seems to be history turns out to be a great deal more personal than the one which seems to be autobiography" (697). Michael Colacurcio, "The Dynamo and the Angelic Doctor."

[483] Letter to Barrett Wendell, 12 March 1909.

[484] The conflict between history and fiction is not the only one. The confession as spiritual autobiography seems the foundational form, but the study of autobiography is bound up with changing conceptions of public and private identity, the self, the subject. Some significant writings on autobiography include: Leslie Stephen, "Autobiography" (1881); Wilhelm Dilthey, *Pattern and Meaning in Society* ; George Gusdorf , "Conditions and Limits of Autobiography" (1956); Roy Pascal, Design and Truth in Autobiography (1960); *The Examined Life: Franklin, Adams, James*, 1964; Philippe Lejeune, *On Autobiography*; Jean Starobinski, "The Style of Autobiography"(1971); James Olney, *Metaphors of Self* (1972); Patricia Meyer Spacks, *Imagining a Life* (1976); Paul de Man, "Autobiography as De-Facement"(1979); Domna Stanton, "The Female Autograph"; *Smith, Sidonie*, A Poetics of Women's Autobiography; John Paul Eakin, Fictions in Autobiography (1985); Susan Stanford Friedman, "Women's Autobiographical Selves: theory and practice";Stone, Albert. *Autobiographical Occasions and Original Acts: Versions of American Identity from Henry Adams to Nate Shaw*(1982); Cox, James. *Recovering Literature's Lost Ground: Essays in American Biography*. 1989; Olney, James. *Memory and Narrative: The Weave of Life-Writing*, 1998.

[485] Mill's own autobiography describes itself as the narrative of an education, but it assumes that education is still directly applicable to present experience.

[486] This seems to have been the appeal of autobiography for Howells, at least. In 1909 he wrote that the charm of autobiography lay in its "wholesome optimistic spirit," its sense of future possibility compared to the closed form of biography. Autobiography offered an "intimately confident" perspective in which readers recognized a "family likeness" to great men. Finding a "common mean" in extraordinary lives, they flattered themselves they were reading their own story. From this perspective, he found the *Education* less than satisfying. Faced with Adams' insistence on turning the life to the question of his education, Howells simply didn't care. Given Adams' privileged position, he could not accept Adams' assessment of failure or his criticism of Boston.

[487] This letter, which begins by discussing the *Education,* was intended to introduce an essay, "The Rule of Phase Applied to History," before Adams decided not to circulate it. Originally addressed to "Professor _____," George Cabot Lodge, an honorary nephew, may have been the only recipient.
[488] Forty copies, later augmented to one hundred according to Samuels (III:332); forty according to Chalfant.
[489] According to Samuels, four recipients returned copies, President Charles Eliot of Harvard among them. Any corrections of his have been lost, but not his opinion: "An overrated man and a much overrated book," (III:334).
[490] Letter to Henry Osborn Taylor.
[491] As he had once collaborated on the *Essays in Anglo-Saxon Law* and the Tahitian *Memoirs*.
[492] Letter to Charles Francis Adams, 17 January, 1908. Adams was thinking about sending a copy to historian James Ford Rhodes, who had written about Civil War diplomacy.
[493] Henry Cabot Lodge, who might well have felt stung by Adams' criticism, merely denied he was as British as Adams made him out to be. Charles Francis Adams, formerly a severe editor and critic of his younger brother's writing, was enthusiastic about Henry's evocation of their childhood. The President reported himself too enthralled to return his copy.
[494] William Merrill Decker says, "By minimizing the book's content and insisting that his efforts had all been an experiment in form, Adams anticipates the possibility that no audience of any magnitude can exist for such a text and that even his select readership can prove indifferent," in *The Literary Vocation of Henry Adams* (48). Hayden White writes about the anxiety and self-doubt revealed by the two prefaces in "The Context in the Text."
[495] Or to judge from biographies of Adams. Ernest Samuels' three volumes note the errors and omissions of the *Education* compared with the evidence of the life. Edward Chalfant argues that the *Education* was not an autobiography, thus sidestepping questions about facticity. Brooks Simpson argues that neither Samuels nor Chalfant are critical enough in accepting Adams' point of view on Gilded Age politics.
[496] Adams' biography of Aaron Burr might well have been written in a similar vein as *John Randolph*. Also written for the American Statesman Series, it was declined by the publisher on the grounds that Burr failed to fit the description. Adams' research was absorbed into the *History*, and no copies of the biography seem to have survived.
[497] In discussing the British handling of the Boers as a repetition of their attitudes to his colonial ancestors, Adams quotes his own letter to Hay without attribution (1060). Some documents no longer existed. Like his brothers, Adams had kept diaries since childhood, but before his journey to Polynesia he read and destroyed them. He had destroyed letters and papers relating to his wife after her death and in 1898 went through another round of destruction. At times he enjoined his correspondents to burn his letters. Still, to judge by the six volumes of Adams correspondence (incomplete), there was plenty of material had Adams wished to cite it.
[498] Wilhelm Dilthey is an exception to the historical skepticism towards autobiography: "Autobiography is the highest and most instructive form in which the understanding of life confronts us" (85). In the intimacy of understanding and the creation of coherence, "the first problem of grasping and presenting historical connections is already half-solved by life" (86). "Here we approach the root of historical comprehension….It alone makes historical insight possible"(86-87). *Pattern and Meaning in Society: Thoughts on History and Society.*
[499] For a discussion of historians' attitudes to autobiography, see Jeremy Popkin, *History, Historians and Autobiography*.
[500] It is not surprising that Adams' two major biographers, Ernest Samuels and Edward Chalfant, declare that it is not an autobiography, aware as they are of its discrepancies from the record, Adams' experiences at Harvard, for example.
[501] In his study of the deep structure of the historical imagination as it prefigured its writing tropologically, Hayden White argues that, in Europe at least, the predominant historical trope at the turn into the twentieth century was ironic, defining ironic as "radically self-critical with respect not only to a given characterization of the world of experience but also to the very effort to capture adequately the truth of things in language"(37). *Metahistory: the Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe.* In this respect, Adams seems to have been out of the mainstream of American historians.
[502] By quoting Rousseau's sentence, Adams' work begins with an indirect invocation of the deity, the traditional guarantor of truth in memoirs; God the Father in *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres* was the giver

of the Law not much in evidence in the Virgin's Church, but here he signifies the masculine perspective of the work.

[503] Robert Sayre describes John Adams as "the original American authority on the 'instinct of emulation.'" Adams considered it "an instinct second only to self-preservation as a force in human life" (152) "Autobiography and America" in *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*.

[504] In a letter Adams cites Washington and Franklin as the two greatest American figures. Washington is the unexamined origin, the Pole Star, but in the *Education* Adams plays with the idea of Franklin as the "conductor" of energies both electrical and historical.

[505] See George Levine, *The Boundaries of Fiction.*

[506] Hayden White characterizes this sentence as "A rhetorical question followed by an ambiguous answer—which might very well serve as an emblem of the 'style' of Henry Adams" (199). White examines the code-shifting of the opening of the *Education* as an experiment in semiological analysis in "The Context in the Text."

[507] More than one reader has found Adams' treatment of the manikin irritating. J. C. Levenson, for one,: "Carlyle's irony turned into an almost overbearing archness, since the manikin suggests a lifeless construct on which the author may arbitrarily hang the diverse lessons that he picked up here and there in life; but this interpretation only represents the side of Adams which perversely enjoyed antagonizing his readers" (307).

[508] Some readers focus on the hollowness of the figure: Sacvan Bercovitch, for example, in *The American Jeremiad* sees the *Education* as an anti-jeremiad in which the manikin is "a mythic representation of non-being" that offers no alternatives but inevitable failure, a "cosmic void." Adams may not be willing to predict a millennial future, but he seems to project cosmic uncertainty rather than a cosmic void. According to Judith Shklar, annoyed by Adams' self-deprecation, the manikin is a psychological symptom of Adams' unfitness for life (82).

For Hayden White the manikin "signals the literal 'emptiness of the text, a fit vehicle for the emptiness of his own ego," an interpretation that jumps to a psychological explanation without looking at what the manikin as a figure can do for the text (199). My reading of the book takes Adams' didactic intentions seriously; the *Education* culminates with the generation of an admittedly flawed dynamic theory of history. Although William Dusinberre views the prefaces "as part of a pretense that Adam's sole object was didactic rather than autobiographical" when "he took obvious pleasure in telling of his own life," the two motives can't be so easily separated. The life exists for the education but also in excess of it.

James Mellard sees Adams as a transitional figure who rejects the ideology of realism, a humanist who cannot "apotheosize humanity. More like Foucault, Adams enfigures the focus of epistemological unity in a diminished thing—a manikin" (65-66).

[509] In R.P. Blackmur's sympathetic reading in *Henry Adams*, failure is "the dominant emotion of an education, when its inherent possibilities are compared with those it achieved." In Adams' radical view, "It is the failure the mind comes to ultimately and all along when it is compelled to measure its knowledge in terms of its ignorance."Adams is an example of "education pushed to the point of failure as contrasted with ordinary education which stops at the formula for success" (4).

[510] See David Minter, *The Interpreted Design as a Structural Principle in American Literature*.

[511] The two succeeding chapters seem to be titled in ironic tribute to *Sartor Resartus*: "The Height of Knowledge (1902)," about Hay's mastery of diplomacy; "The Abyss of Ignorance (1902)," about Adams' search for unity.

[512] For John Paul Eakin the "I" is an "illusion of simplicity" implying a unity greater than the evidence of the self (ix) and an "illusion of self-determination"(43). James Olney sees the use of third person as a comment on conventional life-writing: "it is not use of the third-person but of the first-person pronoun that is unnatural and that leads to the kind of fiction (pernicious or otherwise as one may choose) that we find in Rousseau's *Confessions*. *I* of the present does not share consciousness with *I* of forty years ago, and mere use of the first person can scarcely paper over the gap"(237-38). *Memory and Narrative: The Weave of Life-Writing*.

[513] A contemporary exception would be William Dean Howells' *A Boy's Town*, one of several autobiographies Howells wrote around the turn of the century. "For convenience, I shall call this boy, my boy; but I hope he might have been almost anybody's boy; and I mean him sometimes for a boy in general, as well as a boy in particular"(2). The story of "my boy" has the effect of natural history, and sounds as though it might have been influenced by the writings of naturalist John Burroughs. Howells' multiple

autobiographies were not unusual for late nineteenth-century America. Susanna Egan notes "the remarkable number of autobiographies that were revised, updated, reattempted, or succeeded by later volumes" (88).
[514] Jean Starobinski, "The Style of Autobiography" (77) Starobinski suggests a "solidification by objectivity" for the person of this narrative, compared to the repetition of the monologic "I" that can depersonalize—in Beckett's work the first person becomes "non-person." In Adams' case though, the ironic discrepancies of the manikin-narrator situation hardly make for stability, let alone solidity. Earlier critics of autobiography criticized Adams for trying to write a public autobiography when he had no public role in American life—the assumption was that autobiography required great deeds or some great transformation to justify itself. Today critics of autobiography are more interested in underrepresented lives and unknown histories, in the formation of identity rather than the depiction of an autonomous self and its accomplishments.
This needs documentary study, but there seems to have been a greater interest in autobiography after the turn of the century in periodicals, including a "new" autobiography, journalism that transcribed the "unknown" lives of ordinary people.
[515] Thomas Smith points out Adams' fondness for proper nouns over third person pronouns to identify himself. Adams refuses the first person names "I" and "me" that are customary and "do not individualize us"(158).
[516] Hayden Write argues that in spite of suppression of I or because of it, the *Education* is a "supremely egoistic" text, which equates Adams with his class (207). "The Context in the Text."
[517] Adams' assessment of his work and that of his predecessors varied with time and correspondent, but generally in terms of their relative failure. To William James: "Of them all, I think that St. Augustine alone has an idea of literary form,—a notion of writing a story with an end and an object, not for the sake of the object, but for the form, like a romance. I have convinced myself that the thing cannot be done today. The world does not furnish the contrasts or the emotion." 17 February, 1908 (L6:119-120).
To Edith Morton Eustis: "The two volumes have not been done to teach others, but to educate myself in the possibilities of literary form. The arrangement, the construction, the composition, the art of climax are our only serious study. Now that I have the stuff before me—in clay—I can see where the form fails, but I cannot see how to fix the failures. I believe the scheme impossible…send for the Confessions of St. Augustine, my literary model, and ask him why he failed too, as artist." 28 February, 1908 (L6:122).
To Whitelaw Reid: "To write a heavy dissertation on modern education, and fill up the back-ground with moving figures that will carry the load is a tour-de-force that cannot wholly succeed even in the hands of St. Augustine or Rousseau." 13 September, 1908 (L6:138)
To Barrett Wendell, speaking of his predecessors Augustine and Rousseau, "I feel certain that their faults, as literary artists, are worse than mine. We have all three undertaken to do what cannot be successfully done—mix narrative and didactic purpose and style. The charm of the effort is not in winning the game but in playing it. We all enjoy the failure. St. Augustine's narrative subsides at last into the dry sands of metaphysical theology. Rousseau's narrative fails wholly in didactic result; it subsides into still less artistic egotism. And I found that a narrative style was so incompatible with a didactic or a scientific style, that I had to write a long supplementary chapter to explain in scientific terms what I could not put into narration without ruining the narrative. "12 March, 1909 (L6:237-38).
To Henry Osborn Taylor: "…I aspire to be bound up with St. Augustine. Or rather, I would have aspired to it, if it were artistically possible to build another fourth-century church." 22 November 1909. (L6:287).
[518] John Carlos Rowe uses Pascal's Wager to characterize Adams' multiple efforts at education. Each bet is a new affirmation of being, but "he is condemned to renew his wager constantly in different forms and by diverse methods, recognizing the impossibility of any final definition" (99). *Henry Adams and Henry James: The Emergence of a Modern Consciousness*.
[519] It's hard to imagine that Adams would not have been interested in Augustine's meditations on the nature of memory and time, if not the explication of the creation that succeeded them, e.g. Augustine's conclusion that the three tenses of time are realities only in the mind, so, "it might properly be said, 'the present of past things, the present of present things, and the present of future things'" (261).
[520] James Olney discusses the tension between chaos and form in modern autobiography, the problem to find a form that in Beckett's term accommodates "the mess" (12).
[521] See Olney, *Memory and Narrative*.
[522] Letter to James Ford Rhodes, 10 February, 1908.

[523] As Martha Banta sees it, Adams maintained his dignity with humor: deploying attacks on enemies and pre-emptive strikes on himself, he became "an amateur of wit" (289). "Adams seems able to do what Franklin did and Mark Twain did not; be amused over the fact of defeat in ways superior (as Adams phrases it…) to society's 'vacant and meaningless derision of its own failure'" (288). *Failure and Success in America: A Literary Debate*.
[524] The title seems to allude to Dumas' sequel to *The Three Musketeers*, as Adams reiterates, "Once more! this is a story of education, not of adventure. It is meant to help young men,—or such as have the intelligence enough to seek help,—but it is not meant to amuse them" (1997). This will be the story of the three friends: Adams, King, and Hay.
[525] Although the *Education* figures large in discussions of "the American self."
[526] According to the *Education*, "it was to be the only flattery of the sort he was ever to receive," when it would be more accurate to say that he rejected what honors he was offered. He was voted President of the American Historical Society *in absentia* and went to great lengths to remain *in absentia* during his tenure. Also, he turned down an honorary degree from Harvard and when informed he had been chosen for the Loubat Prize in History, recommended that Columbia give the prize to Alfred Thayer Mahan instead.
[527] Possibly Adams enjoys his paradoxical absolutes, e.g., the American mind "stood alone in history for its ignorance of the past," for the sake of contrast, since on his trip to the Chicago exposition he began to wonder "whether the American people knew where they were driving" after all. If there should be a sense of direction to their drift, even "a sharp and conscious twist towards ideals," one's artist friends would be winners (1032). Chicago might then be fixed as "the first expression of American thought as a unity" (1034).
[528] Adams' *History* had concluded in 1820 with the formation of a national mind. Americans revealed a quickness, a willingness to change, and a practical, inventive intelligence, although "much doubt remained whether the intelligence belonged to a high order." American "mildness" discouraged any excess of intelligence or morality, and the American "willingness to relax severity," to discard principle in religion and politics for the sake of comfort, might well lead to corruption and mental inertia (1342).
[529] See Carolyn Porter on Adams as participant observer and David Minter on the patterning of the man of action and the man of interpretation.
[530] As to Henry Adams' Presidential ambitions, "The Irish gardener once said to the child:—"'You'll be thinkin' you'll be President too!'…He could not remember ever to have thought on the subject; to him, that there should be a doubt of his being President was a new idea" (734). Adams' father, Charles Francis Adams, ran unsuccessfully for Vice-President for the Free Soil Party in 1848 and was in the running for the Democratic nomination in 1872, but lost to Horace Greeley.
[531] As Adams frames the nineteenth century in generational terms, the eighteenth century died in 1848 with his grandfather John Quincy Adams. For the generation active from 1840-1870, the generation of his father, Charles Francis Adams, an eighteenth century education could still be effective; for Henry Adams' generation that education left them unfit for their times.
[532] E.g., Judith Shklar, Adams' ultimate message was that education was pointless: "The very idea of an education that prepared young people for success was a delusion" (82). Adams' book questions its own pedagogical effectiveness (as it does everything else), but doesn't deny it. "Success" would be as difficult to define and more ironically treated than "education." Assessments of Adams' success and failure vary widely, with perhaps a disciplinary distinction, so the political scientist Judith Shklar sees the *Education* as the expression of sour grapes, by a crank embittered by his failure to attain office. For the historian Carl Becker in his 1919 review, the wonder of the *Education* is that Adams could consider himself a failure. See Martha Banta for a literary perspective on the topic in general, *Failure and Success in America*.
[533] Letter to Elizabeth Cameron, 19 February, 1900. "She is pathetic, with her baby and her sentiment, and I am brutal to try and teach her to take herself and the world less seriously—or sentimentally." Her friends "are children of Margaret Fuller and Etta Dunham [a department store heiress]; and the Stock Exchange is poetry by comparison with them. They tire me" (LV:94).
[534]La Farge's brackets in letter of 4 June 1908, not included in the *Letters*, but in *Letters to a Niece*. As Mabel La Farge wrote, readers will differ on Adams' writings according to "what they are looking for." Her uncle was "many-sided, and his sympathy and understanding of every point of view was so great that he seemed to share it entirely," plus his thinking changed over time (26). La Farge, a convert to Catholicism in 1911, did prefer to read *Chartres* and still more the poems "Buddha and Brahma" and

"Prayer to the Virgin of Chartres" as signs of her uncle's life behind "the veil," and his progress to religious faith.

[535] See Carroll Smith-Rosenberg on the New Woman.

[536] Which is not to say that the *Education* is an argument for the return of eighteenth-century rationality. Adams learns most through those shocks that upset the standard course of thinking: "the profoundest lessons are not the lessons of reason; they are sudden strains that suddenly warp the mind" (818).

[537]In 1849 Brooks left two million dollars to his seven children.

[538] Garry Wills in *Henry Adams and the Making of America* sees Adams' 1869 interest in his grandmother's papers as evidence of his proto-feminism, also an indictment of his grandfather's selfishness and the family willingness to sacrifice personal considerations to political interest. Wills sees evidence of her memoirs in the *History*. Michael O'Brien in *Henry Adams and the Southern Question* finds little direct evidence of her influence, but she makes a rhetorically useful figure for the *Education*. In Adams' early interest in her papers, "She focused the problem of family damage" (24). For more information on Louisa Johnson Adams, see Paul Nagle, *The Adams Women* and Joan Challinor, "The Mis-education of Louisa Catherine Johnson."

[539]To paraphrase Michael O'Brien, Adams was interested in the desk as a piece of furniture and not the writings she produced on it (24). Adams' grandmother left diaries, memoirs, e.g. "Diary of a Nobody," letters, poetry, plays and other writings. As he wrote Charles Milnes Gaskell about the memoirs, "An ancient lady of our house has left material for a pleasant story" (L2: 25). Adams' incomplete manuscript, now at the Houghton Library, passes quickly over his grandmother's youth and family, his supposed Southern connection, to focus principally on the life of a diplomat's wife in Berlin, Russia and Washington, and to conclude with letters about his grandfather's illness and death. This lack of attention to genealogy was unusual for Adams, but there was some evidence of irregularity: Louisa describes her grandmother as "Miss Young" and her own parents seem not to have married until after her birth. In the 1890s Adams hired an investigator to search for Louisa's maternal genealogy, but he found no trace. His manuscript discusses Louisa's anguish at being forced to leave her elder children behind in America, but omits her life-long mortification that her father had lost his fortune on the eve of her marriage. Brooks published her "Narrative of a Journey from Russia to France, 1815," an account of her journey across Europe, accompanied only by her child and a nurse, during the Hundred Days. (Her husband, characteristically, had gone on ahead to negotiate the peace treaty with Britain.)

[540] "The habit of doubt, of distrusting his own judgment and of totally rejecting the judgment of the world, the tendency to regard every question as open; the hesitation to act except as a choice of evils; the shirking of responsibility; the love of line, form, quality; the horror of ennui; the passion for companionship and the antipathy to society; all these are well-known qualities of New England character in no way peculiar to individuals," even if Adams thought they had been accentuated by his childhood illness (726).

[541] Whether the slaves themselves might have had a role in the disorder beyond the pernicious slave system remains ambiguous, although a few pages later the boy for whom "Life was not yet uncomplicated" still thought "Every problem had a solution, even the negro" (763). As for Reconstruction, Adams was more interested in re-establishing social order in the South than in discharging any duty to the former slaves. By 1870 he wrote, "On the subject of Reconstruction little need be said. The merits of the system adopted are no longer a subject worth discussion. The resistance to these measures rested primarily on their violation of the letter and spirit of the constitution as regarded the rights of States, and the justification rested not on a denial of the violation, but in overruling necessity." The Reconstruction laws were adopted with reluctance by Congress and people, and "whatever harm may ultimately come from them is beyond recall and must be left for the coming generation, to which the subject henceforth belongs" (42). Adams' main interest here was the substantial increase in the power of Congress, perhaps justified to counteract the increasing inability of cities like New York to govern themselves, corrupt state legislatures and the "enormous" development of corporate power. In "The Session," *North American Review*.

[542] To follow Mary Douglas about *Purity and Danger*.

[543] In typical aphoristic style, "The tourist was the great conservative who hated novelty and adored dirt" (980).

[544] The impression was further complicated by a trip to Mount Vernon. Slavery and bad roads were the sign of "social crime," yet "at the end of the road and product of the crime" stood George Washington. If the boy was credulous enough to accept simply that Washington "stood alone," here, as elsewhere, Washington doesn't bear investigation by the historian. Nor does he fit into the Augustinian scheme of sin. Washington

is immemorial, "an ultimate relation like the Pole Star," unchanging because unexamined, but a useful figure by which to measure his successors, as Adams judged them from across Lafayette Square.

[545] Gary Wills sees this as Adams' version of the pear theft in the *Confessions*. Augustine demonstrated his youthful depravity when he and his friends robbed a pear tree of fruit they did not need or want—stealing for no other reason than their comradeship and the pleasure of the forbidden. "But Henry, in the darkened mood of the *Education*, wants to dramatize the degradation involved in all politics" and distorted the facts of the situation to do it (54).

[546] R. P. Blackmur claims that from the vantage of his wife's death, looking backward to the death of his sister and forward to the point of composition, "Adams did not need, for the purposes of the *Education*, to deal directly with [Marian's death]: it was there; and it ought to be possible to point out how it is there by the sequence and kind of images" (86).

[547] J. C. Levenson argues that the ultimate "aspiration" of *Chartres* is love while the *Education* "drifts" to death: "As aspiration describes the action and, symbolically, the form of the earlier book, drift describes the action and all too nearly shapes the form of the later one. The former teaches that the ultimate meaning of aspiration is love; the latter that the ultimate meaning of drift is death" (323). Aspiration is not unmixed with ambition, though; Adams is interested in the power of love as stimulus. Drift, too, is an equivocal term for Adams, at times he is "Drifting in the dead-water of the *fin-de-siècle*" going nowhere, but at others drift is current or direction, the drift finds the patient seeker, and the "stream of events" favors Hay and Adams. In both books the limited power of the individual is magnified by its coincidence with the tendency of historical forces. The drift to death is the inevitable end of a generation, but the emotional undercurrent is love for his friends.

[548] Adams' father published the *Letters of Mrs. Adams* (Fourth ed. Boston: Wilkins, Carter and Company, 1848), an edition of the letters of John Adams to her, which sold more slowly, and in time for the Centenary, *Familiar Letters of John Adams and his Wife Abigail Adams During the Revolution* (New York: Hurd and Houghton; Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1876). An introductory "Memoir" of Abigail Adams in both finds the letters particularly significant as the record of the revolutionary generation, the materials for a history of "feeling" to go with a "history of action." When it comes to our statesmen, "We look for the workings of the heart, when those of the head alone are presented to us" (xviii). In addition, the history of those times is not only in the nature of the excellence of famous men, but the degree to which that excellence was general, since the great names "were not the originators, but the spokesmen of the general opinion, and instruments for its adaptation to existing events'(xix). The "home sentiment' depends on "the character of the female portion of the people," as "The domestic hearth is the first of schools"(xix). "The lot of woman, in times of trouble, is to be a passive spectator of events, which she can scarcely hope to make subservient to her own fame, or to control" (xx). Therefore, "If it were possible to get at the expression of feelings by women in the heart of the community, at a moment of extraordinary trial, recorded in a shape evidently designed to be secret and confidential, this would seem to present the surest and most unfailing index to its general character" (xx). Charles Francis Adams describes this "somewhat novel and perhaps adventurous" undertaking, as "the first attempt, in the United States, to lay before the public a series of private letters, written without the remotest idea of publication, by a woman, to her husband, and others of her nearest and dearest relations" (xxi).

Henry Adams' assertion about the unknowability of women comes, oddly, in the middle of a paragraph about his relation with Mrs. Lodge and her husband, the senator; she drove Adams right by inviting him to join her family on their cathedral tour of Normandy, which became the inspiration for *Chartres*. Adams' excursus on history ends by paying tribute to the nineteenth-century woman as great company, better than her husband or her grandmothers, but "pure loss to history" (1043). It was no secret that Adams preferred the company of Mrs. Lodge, Mrs. Cameron and Mrs. Roosevelt to their husbands', but perhaps the passage was inspired by Mrs. Lodge's secret romance with John Hay as much as Adams' discovered interest in medieval women. Mrs. Henry Cabot Lodge, known as Nannie or "Sister Anne" in Adams' letters, was a "sister" by marriage, after Brooks Adams married her sister Evelyn (Daisy).

[549] In Adams' letters, even among his own set of friends and relations, no one could identify "the coming man," while the supply of nieces and nieces-in-wish seemed endless.

[550] In 1867 Adams used the figure of the pearl in a letter that predicted his future independent of the family "go-cart": "I never will make a speech, never run for an office, never belong to a party. I am going to plunge under the stream. For years you will hear nothing of any publication of mine—perhaps never, who knows. I do not mean to tie myself to anything, but I do mean to make it impossible for myself to follow

the family go-cart. One thing only or at most two, can change my mind; ill-health or marriage for love. With these exceptions to destroy my wind, I shall probably remain under water a long time. If you see me come up, it will be with an oyster and a pearl inside" (I: 557). Letter to his brother, Charles Francis Adams, 16 November 1867.

[551] William Merrill Decker sees this as a depiction of parthenogenesis, the vision of "a recriminating male imagination" (266). It demonstrates, as does *Chartres* (where the ideal of marriage is the juxtaposition of two rooms one Romanesque, one Gothic in harmonious coexistence), Adams' difficulty in imagining mutuality between men and women. Either one or the other has power, but the failure of women is ultimately the failure of men.

[552] In "The Dynamo and the Virgin," it is paired with Dante's invocation of the Virgin at the opening of the Paradiso, to demonstrate the survival of the goddess, in either instance known to Americans only intellectually, never as a feeling (1071).

[553] Carolyn Porter, *Seeing and Being: the Plight of the Participant Observer in Emerson, James, Adams, and Faulkner*.

[554] James Harvey Robinson, "The New History." The New History was a precursor of Progressive History.

[555] Intended to be sent to recipients of the *Education*, as a cover letter to introduce the "Rule of Phase" before he decided to suppress it..

[556] Letter to Mary Cadwalader Jones, 11 April 1907.

[557] The minister had delayed his departure for six weeks to attend the wedding of his son.

[558] Unlike some of his letters, e.g. the letter of 16 September 1863 to his brother Charles which discusses some of the difficulties of Russell's position when it came to disposing of the iron-clads (L1:390-93). Lee Mitchell points out Adams' "fabrications" for the sake of his pattern in "'But This Was History': Henry Adams' Education in London Diplomacy."

[559] In "Writing History in the Age of Darwin," J. C. Levinson points out that "'twentieth-century multiplicity,' set forth as a distinctly modern condition, is also a name for the age-old problems of historical study and historical writing" (116).

[560] To equate a diplomatic education primarily with a knowledge of human nature seems like the perspective of a historian, not a diplomat, and the disenchanted historian of 1907, not the 1880s. The author of the *History* skillfully maneuvered a path through the diplomatic archives of five nations and made much of Jefferson's naïveté in thinking that foreign policy could be conducted according to principle. As Jefferson learned, an assertion of moral exceptionalism was ineffectual if not disastrous in the arena of great power politics. Gary Wills, who finds the *History* a more significant achievement than the *Education*, cites the *History* as proof of just how much Adams had learned about diplomacy during his years in London.

[561] Dilthey, *Introduction to the Human Sciences*.

[562] E.g., one reason he offered for being driven away from Washington during the Grant administration was that he no longer knew anyone in it and therefore had no one inside he could support. Temperamentally, he preferred to be connected rather than in opposition.

[563] Several times Hay was forced to assert that he had made no secret alliance with Britain. Hay is described as the most Anglophile of his contemporary policy makers, desirous of a formal alliance with Britain but cognizant of its impossibility given U.S. electoral politics, notably the sympathies of Irish and German voters. After a flurry of war-talk in 1896 over a Venezuelan boundary dispute, Americans and Britons reached rapprochement through British neutrality-leaning-to-support for the U. S. during the war with Spain. Those warm feelings were demonstrated by American government neutrality-leaning-to-support of the British during the Boer war, despite public sympathy for the Boers. The U.S. and Britain had common interests in China as well in curbing Russian expansion in Asia. See Bradford Perkins, *The Great Rapprochement*. Anglo-Saxon racialism was at its height during this period: in an intellectual atmosphere promoting Social Darwinism members of the Anglo-Saxon race had to demonstrate their natural allegiance against Russians or even Germans. In *Race and Rapprochement* Stuart Anderson emphasizes Hay's Anglophilia along with his desire to promote American business interests; a treaty of alliance with Britain was his "unattainable dream" (83). See William Thayer, *Life and Letters of John Hay, Vol. 2,* for denials of an alliance; *Addresses of John Hay* for expressions of Anglo-American kinship and amity.

[564] John Carlos Rowe, for example, discusses Adams' evasiveness on the subject of empire and on his relationship with the secretary of state in terms of policy and influence.

[565] Howard Hurwitz emphasizes the importance of race, as the term was broadly defined at the turn of the century, to Adams' imagination of unity. But unlike Hay's less complicated Anglophilia, Adams had obviously been formed by his English experiences as well as a family tradition of friendly opposition. Yet or perhaps because of this, he took considerable pains to assert an American difference. Rome, England, America: England was the second term in the sequence. Adams never felt more sympathy towards the British than when he thought the Americans had surpassed them. Hay's diplomatic ambitions extended beyond Anglo-Saxon partners, if the British were the strongest link.
[566] Wayne Lesser sees Hay's role as central to the establishment of equilibrium at the end of the book. If equilibrium "is the place where we provisionally acquire intelligible being by simultaneously negating and reclaiming our heritage," Hay is involved in political, narrative and personal terms (391). His diplomacy is modeled on Charles Francis Adams' to a greater degree: Hay negates Washington's policy of non-alignment, but "becomes the embodiment of the heroic principle of equilibrium first seen in Adams' father." But Adams insists too much on the generational difference for Hay to use the older Adams as model; his father's eighteenth-century role seems to be a steady state of mind projected on the world, a constant principle rather than Hays's active, however invisible, technique of management. When Lesser points out that Hay rereads "the spirit of balance at the heart of the United States Constitution" into foreign relations, yes, Hay follows the Adams family project in general (391).
[567] See Anderson and Kenton Clymer, *John Hay: the Gentleman as Diplomat.*
[568] Which is not to say that Hay always took Adams' advice. E.g. during the war with Spain, Adams sent Hay proposals for an armistice, recommending the retention only of a coaling station in the Philippines. Hay first responded with complete agreement, but eventually moved with President McKinley to advocate keeping the islands. For an account of Hays' evolving position, see Kenton Clymer. Apropos the Boer war, "to Adams the war became a personal outrage. He had been taught from childhood, even in England, that his forbears and his associates in 1776, had settled, once for all, the liberties of the British free-colonies, and he every strongly objected to being thrown on the defensive again, and forced to sit down, a hundred and fifty years after John Adams had begun the task, to approve by appeal to law and fact, that George Washington was not a felon, whatever might be the case of George III" (1060). Adams is quoting here, without attribution, a letter he wrote to Hay. In the *Education* Adams merely says that official British attitude was "terribly embarrassing to Hay." Adams had been trained "to hold his tongue and to help the political machine run somehow," so would not bother Hay with theoretical objections. Adams cannot ignore "an evident fact" as Hay must: "Practical politics consists in ignoring facts, but education and politics are two different and often contradictory things" (1061). However, Hay, unlike Roosevelt, doesn't seem to have had much sympathy for the Boers. In a letter to Henry White, an American diplomat in London, he claimed that "most men of sense" in the U.S. shared his view that "the fight of England in South Africa is the fight of civilization and progress" (letter of 18 March 1900 in Anderson 134). Popular opinion tended to favor the Boers but was not deeply-rooted. Hay angered a team of Boers sent to Washington to seek a mediated settlement with his perfunctory reception; he read a formal statement of neutrality and then welcomed the British ambassador as they left.
[569] Hay's effectiveness is a matter of opinion. Thayer's 1915 biography claims that Hay more than anyone else saved the legations in Peking, because "almost alone" he believed they were still alive.(240). Writing with a focus on U.S.-British relations, Bradley Perkins points out that the two Open Door notes, although widely praised, were backed up by no threat of action (213-16). For a detailed view of the limitations under which Hay's China policy operated, see Marilyn Blatt Young. Brooks Adams wrote to Hay after the legations were rescued: "The news today assured us that you have won for us the greatest diplomatic triumph of our time. No living minister in the world has done the like…Your policy will prove to have carried us round one of the great corners in our history" (in Young 174).
[570] And presumably win the Nobel Prize given to Roosevelt in 1906.
[571] Letter of 9 February, 1908, in Samuels III:340-41. James suggested, "Isn't it your mission now to write a life of Hay, defining him and his work exactly?" As Hay's potential biographer, Adams probably knew more than anyone else. When Mrs. Hay decided to publish an edition of her husband's letters, she enlisted Adams as her preliminary editor to collect the correspondence and make a first selection. For discretion's sake she eventually published the letters without names, only initials.
[572] Letter to Anna Cabot Mills Lodge, 6 March 1907.

[573] A week later (13 March 1907) he complained to Elizabeth Cameron, "To gibbet myself for a friend's sake is no agreeable thing, and must be disguised by all sorts of ornaments and flourishes, landscape backgrounds, and weeping Magdalens" (L6:52-53).
[574] As Michel de Certeau emphasizes the places of history and historians.
[575] According to James Farrell, John Adams looked to Cicero as his model of public service, virtue and eloquence and saw an analogy between their careers, "John Adam's Autobiography: the Ciceronian Paradigm and the Quest for Fame.See Reinhard Koselleck's discussion of the various ways Cicero's phrase about the teaching function of history was interpreted before the nineteenth century. He cites Adams' law of acceleration for the way it upset the structures of historical time and created a situation in which it was no longer possible to learn from the past.
[576] At least at times Adams wanted something as certain as Carl Hempel's "covering law," (a term not invented until the 1940s), causation that showed nomological regularities, although this may have been for the intellectual amusement of pushing a position to an extreme. See Max Weber's 1904 essay on "'Objectivity' in the Social Sciences and Public Policy," arguing for a more concrete "causal imputation" in history.
[577] The Latin epitaph for himself that Adams includes in the "Indian Summer" chapter of Anglo-American amity and postcolonial triumph gently ridicules the ambitions of the scholar who studied Anglo-Saxon to establish the distinction between Sac and Soc."Here lies/ The manikin (homunculus) writer/ Barbarian scholar/Henry Adams/Son of Adam and Eve/Who first explained/ [The law of] Soc" (1056). Explicitly Adams brings up the subject to show how far his thinking about history had changed from an emphasis on facts to forces, but the discoverer of Soc takes credit for initiating his own Anglo-American connection.
[578]He wanted to teach the early history of the republic with Cabot Lodge taking the Federalist view and Adams the Democratic.
[579] Adams' *History* was written offstage. He jokes that between his *History* and Hay's life of Lincoln they have covered most of the nineteenth century, although he's not clear what it's gotten him beyond a hundred thousand dollars in expenses. Being a historian was no drawback to being a politician or diplomat to judge from the careers of friends George Bancroft and John Lathrop Motley, or in a later generation Theodore Roosevelt, Henry Cabot Lodge, or Woodrow Wilson.
[580] Robert Spiller was probably most responsible for the turn to picturing Adams as a writer who was originally "Unable to reconcile his natural inclination to literature with the family directive to action"(1083). *Chartres* and the *Education* "in concept are one, a planned work of the imagination rather than a historical, autobiographical, or scientific record or argument," to be valued for their "timeless quality rather than their circumstantial reference"(1100). *Literary History of the United States, Vol.2*, 1948.
[581] John Clive, *Not by Fact Alone* (88).
[582] David Levin, *History as Romantic Art* (7).
[583] The *Autobiography*, also known as the *Memoirs*, wasn't published until after Gibbon's death, compiled from several manuscripts by his friend Lord Shefield. In one version Gibbon announces his intention to withhold publication until after his death, but apparently changed his mind.
[584] According to David Womersley, Gibbon was not as sanguine as he seemed about his reputation. Having lost control of his public image during his lifetime, he tried to fix his image for posterity through the *Memoirs* (also known as the *Autobiography*) (192).
[585] Franklin, too, is a master at the confidential admission of minor faults in his autobiography. In this respect, Adams follows neither, preferring to swing from extremes of self-abasement and self-aggrandizement. Although Adams was probably more attracted to Gibbon's olympian tone and his version of success, he overlaps with Franklin in his pedagogical frame and invocation of posterity (hypothetical, in Adams' case).
[586] While Gibbon's temperament was moderate, not to say restrained, according to Stephen: "Gibbon has affections as warm as are compatible with thorough comfort." Stephen sees a perfect match between temperament and vocation: "He clearly had enough passion for his historical vocation. A more passionate and imaginative person would hardly have written it at all. It requires a certain moderation of character to be satisfied with history instead of a wife, and Gibbon was so great a historian because he could accept such a substitute" (229). Apparently an awareness of Gibbon's emotional and mental limitations diminishes the effect of Gibbon's vanity and allows the reader to enjoy rather than resent his triumph. Stephen points out that this life lived at a lower pitch seemed calculated for its maximum enjoyment: "If such a life has less vivid passages, is there not something fascinating about that calm, harmonious existence, disturbed by

no spasmodic storms, and yet devoted to one achievement grand enough to extort admiration even from the least sympathetic?"(230). In Stephen's view, the *Decline and Fall* was an achievement that could never be superseded. Gibbon's life was fascinating because it seemed so remote from the common run of existence, not to mention nineteenth century concepts of genius. Stephen, who finds that reading an autobiography "may be more valuable in proportion to the amount of misrepresentation which it contains," pleasurable because of the author's unconscious self-revelations, seems to underestimate the conscious art it took for him to conclude that Gibbon "acted as if he had foreseen the end from the beginning"(227).

[587] Jeremy Popkin, whose particular interest is autobiography by historians, sees Adams' and Gibbon's works as defining "two limiting positions between which most contemporary historians' memoirs find their place"(117). However, the *Education* "stands apart" for its literary quality and "because of the author's claim that his life story illustrates a metahistorical point of universal experience"(118).

[588] As the "periautography" of a historian, *The Life of Giambattista Vico* lies somewhere between the two. In Vico's third person account, the *New Science* is the culmination of the life, but the life is written "as a philosopher, meditating the causes, natural and moral, and the occasions of fortune." *The New Science* "was to demonstrate that his intellectual life was bound to have been such as it was and not otherwise," since the history that men make reflects the intentions of their creator (182). The vicissitudes of the author's career, his great disappointment in failing to obtain a chair of Law, for example, are treated as the actions of providence, making possible the conditions for the creation of his great work. Apparently Adams never read Vico. James Olney writes about the ways that Vico's autobiography anticipated the education in *Memory and Narrative*.

[589] Adams instead began to destroy his diaries: "I mean to leave no record that can be obliterated" (L3: 143).Quincy, 18 September, 1888. He had finished the narrative.

[590] Not misquoted in Murray's but slightly misquoted in the *Education.*

[591] William Butler Yeats, interested in automatic writing, was also absorbed by the *Education* and Adams' theories of history.

[592] From the Appendix of *A Pluralistic Universe.*

[593] Bernard Accardi argues that despite Adams' professed distaste for British empiricism, the *Education* shows the influence of empirical epistemology in its tropes and in its problems with narration: "his premises assume that there is not so much a story of life to tell, but a sequence of experiences—drawn from the stock of memories—for which to account"(271). As the self progresses through experiences, Adams demonstrates the presence or absence of growth by returning to places that made a significant impression, like Rome. "Empiricism and the Epistemological Rhetoric of *The Education of Henry Adams*."This seems truer for the early sections of the book, which string together vivid impressions of the past, rather than the later sections which move by chronology and a logic of association. To the extent that Adams' project places "Adams" as an experimental subject registering the forces that made up his education, it is an empirical project that was not experienced as a conventional story.

[594] In Brooks Adams, *The Degradation of the Democratic Dogma*.

[595] William Dusinberre argues that the "oversimplified generalizations of *Chartres* and the *Education* "were two different forms of a single reaction against the demanding, detailed analysis of the *History*." Because Adams felt the *History* lacked coherence he over-compensated in his inferior later works by claiming theories and laws (213).

[596] King was a model for George Strong, the scientist in *Esther*.

[597] And "The women were jealous because, at heart, King had no faith in the American woman; he loved types more robust' (1006). King's tales of the "old-gold" girls he had met in Hawaii whetted the imaginations of Adams and LaFarge before their own Pacific journey. It's not clear when Adams knew anything about King's secret marriage to a black woman; Hay secretly supported King's widow. Martha Sandweiss describes King's racial masquerade in *Passing Strange*; Thurman Wilkins wrote the standard biography. *The Helmet of Mebrino* was a memorial compiled by King's friends, including Adams. Robert Wilson describes King's glory days in *The Explorer King: Adventure, Science and the Great Diamond Hoax.*

[598] See King's speech at the Sheffield school, later published as "Catastrophism and Evolution."

[599] While traveling in Polynesia he studied the geologic formation of the islands with a view to disproving Darwin's theory of subsidence.

[600] For a discussion of Adams' criticism of uniformitism in his review of Lyell's *Principles of Geology*, see Keith Burich, "'Stable Equilibrium is Death': Henry Adams, Sir Charles Lyell, and the Paradox of Progress." Also William Jordy discusses Adams' use of Lyell's theory throughout his writings.
[601] He was also "a Darwinian for fun," an evolutionary development incomprehensible to his father; "Henry Adams was the first in an infinite series to discover and admit to himself that he really did not care whether truth was, or was not, true. He did not even care that it should be proved to be true, unless the process were new and amusing" (932).
[602] As Levinson suggests, the tangled bank at the conclusion of *The Origin of Species* may be too much like Adams' "tangled skein of history that one may take up at any point, and break when one has unraveled enough."
[603] As William Jordy points out, "It seemed to him far less important to ask how far history had come to wonder how much further it could go"(133).
[604] In "A Letter to American Teachers of History," Adams was straightforward for once in his estimation of Darwin: "This popular understanding of Darwinism had little to do with Darwin, whose great service,—in the field of history,—consisted by no means in his personal theories either of natural selection, or of adaptation, or of adaptation, or of uniform evolution; which might be all abandoned without affecting his credit for bringing all vital processes under the law of development or evolution—whether upward or downward being immaterial to the principle that all history must be studied as a science" (153).
[605] Like the "cosmic" philosophy of John Fiske, his friend at Harvard in the 1870s, the devoted follower of Herbert Spencer.
[606] Something like the legendary shark-man of the Teva clan or George Washington, *Pteraspis* is an unexamined point of origin, but of all the surrogate fathers in the first section, the fossil is the one who never disappoints. When Adams returned to Washington, he discovered a human analogy. George Washington was the upstanding forefather with no apparent antecedents, an origin; Ulysses Grant the *Terebratula* who "should have been extinct for ages." Comparing the two, "The progress of evolution from President Washington to President Grant was alone enough to upset Darwin" (963).
[607] According to Joseph Riddell, the education that should be the acquisition of a usable past "turns out instead to be the acquisition of a usable vocabulary, but one that changes, or even becomes anasemic, at the very moment it seems to define most precisely a new understanding. It is this changing sense of change that Adams stages as an 'autobiography' that can never close upon a realized 'self,' and as an 'education' which can prepare one for nothing but questioning the end toward which education would be directed, or what would be the consequences of arriving there" (921-22).
[608] Timothy Melley sees this as a version of the mathematical sublime in which an anxiety about reducing an overwhelming profusion of data into narrative order becomes an anxiety about the proliferation of theory, his practice of "the thermodynamics of historiography"(73-74).
[609] Koselleck, *Futures Past*.
[610] In *American Literature and the Universe of Force*, Ronald Martin details Adams' scientific reading that should have made him wary of treating "force," an arbitrary and essentially figurative term, as "actual and absolute," but didn't (134-35).
[611] A "scientific-sounding tour-de-force" (III: 388).
[612] Had Adams read been reading James? Another, more effective image of the spider mind as the sensibility of the novelist, in which Adams' passing "forces" are the artist's "hints of life": "Experience is never limited, and it is never complete; it is an immense sensibility, a kind of huge spider-web, of the finest silken threads, suspended in the chamber of consciousness and catching every air-borne particle in its tissue. It is the very atmosphere of the mind; and when the mind is imaginative,—much more when it happens to be that of a man of genius,—it takes to itself the faintest hints of life, it converts the very pulses of the air into revelations." Here, the spider *is* his web, which makes for a more capacious principle of action than Adam's spider trapped in his web; absorption is creation as well as enlargement. Henry James, "The Art of Fiction."
[613] Fetish power is also Brooks Adams' term in *The Law of Civilization and Decay*.
[614] It might be said that Adams was anticipating the *Annales* school of history and their insistence on the *longue durée* to follow the movement of civilizations, but Adams was interested in regularities over time for the sake of their projection.
[615] His brother Henry's response to the *Education*, sent a year after he received the book, was so vaguely effusive as to suggest he hadn't finished it. "I speak of the reasons for my ugly dumbness as many, but they

really all come back to my having been left by you with the crushing consciousness of far too much to say. I lost myself in your ample page as in a sea of memories & visions & associations—I dived deep, & I think felt your extraordinary element, every inch of its suggestion & recall & terrible thick evocation, so much that I have remained below, as it were, sticking fast in it even as an indiscreet fly in amber" (76). Letter of 31 August 1909, *The Correspondence of Henry James and Henry Adams*.

[616] Letter of 9 February, 1908, in *Selected Letters of William James*, ed Elizabeth Hardwick (243), quoted in *Letters of Henry Adams* (L6: 118). Paul Bové argues that Adams decided not to send James a copy of his book originally because in James' pragmatism, "the dominant and ignorant American mind is the ground for truth as James understands it." According to Bové, what Adams could not tolerate is that "Ideologically, James's test for truth, its cash value in the domain of experience, has the effect of making the status quo serve, precisely within a generalized domain of experience, as family recognition, as the measure of what is new and disruptive"(90). Paul A. Bové, "Giving Thought to America: Intellect and *The Education of Henry Adams*."

[617] William James, "The Energies of Men," reprinted in *On Vital Reserves*. Originally published in the *Philosophical Review* in January 1907, and as "The Powers of Men" in the American *Magazine* of October 1907.

[618]The "Rule of Phase" was apparently sent only to Brooks Adams and George Cabot Lodge. While waiting for John Franklin Jameson to find him a scientist to criticize and correct his science and math, Adams' readings led him to Kelvin and the Second Law of Thermodynamics and he began his "Letter to American Teachers of History" (1910). The "Rule of Phase was published after Henry's death by Brooks Adams in *The Degradation of the Democratic Dogma.*

[619] Letter to Henry Bumstead, 1 February 1910; Bumstead, a professor of physics at Yale, had tried to correct the scientific errors of the Rule of Phase.

[620] See William Jordy, for the most comprehensive analysis of the late essays and Adams' state of scientific knowledge.

[621] As he wrote Brooks, "a joke, which nobody will know enough to understand." Brooks, however, preferred the essays to the *Education*. Howard Munford in "Henry Adams and the Tendency of History" sees "The Tendency of History" as the first in the series of elaborate jokes intended to ridicule the grounds of scientific history, the authority of science to order history, the fun of it being that none of his readers would catch the irony. In his 1919 Presidential address to the American Historical Association, "Vagaries of Historians," William Roscoe Thayer commented on "that extraordinary Letter by our master ironist—and may I not also say, our master historian?"(186). Thayer says, "I cannot avoid thinking he is making fun of us historians," since he proposes something he never carried out himself, and in fact, his own History of the U.S., "packed full of *human* stuff," seems to refute his theories(189). According to Ralph Maud, "He literally gives us no alternative, since we cannot accept his science fiction, but to doubt that his statements have any substance whatsoever"(381). In Adams' later works, beyond his "feigned" ignorance lies "real" ignorance: "Paradox and moral bankruptcy go together"(391). But in 1962 Lewis Mumford wrote "An Apology to Henry Adams," citing Adams' late speculative essays for his lonely prescience about the cosmic realities of modern science and technology, even to predicting something like the atom bomb.

[622] Charles Glicksberg sees a transformation in Adams' attitude towards science ending in "a definite feeling of antagonism," but he uses *Chartres* to make his case and not the later *Education* to argue that Adams, frustrated by the ignorance of science turned to religion.

[623] Keith Burich argues that Adams is not advocating a return to a mechanistic determinism, that his knowledge of the Second Law was extensive, including the way that the explanation of irreversibility seemed to require concepts like randomness and indeterminacy. Therefore Adams was making an argument against conformity for his fellow historians, warning of the dangers of law and its denial of free will. "Henry Adams, the Second Law of Thermodynamics, and the Course of History." Randomness as Adams presents it seems like a continuation of his interest in chaos and catastrophism. Adams doesn't argue for indeterminacy so much as he produces its effect, by stressing the provisional nature of theory in the mind of the scientist, his desire for unity and the convenient effects of a theory of unity. Adams wants to run order through chaos, but he also wants freedom to revolt against law.

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