BETWEEN CHAUTAUQUA AND WASHINGTON SQUARE: RELIGIOUS LIBERALISM AND POLITICAL RADICALISM IN THE THOUGHT OF ANNIS FORD EASTMAN AND MAX EASTMAN

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ABSTRACT

"Between Chautauqua and Washington Square: Religious Liberalism and Political Radicalism in the Thought of Annis Ford Eastman and Max Eastman"

Ph.D. Dissertation by

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This dissertation explores the life and thought of Annis Ford Eastman, one of the first women ordained in U.S. Congregationalism, in relation to the early intellectual development of her son, Max Eastman, well-known publisher of *The Masses* and participant in New York City's early twentieth-century radical subculture. Contributing the first systematic treatment of Annis Eastman's sermons, lectures, and personal papers, this dissertation presents her pursuit of ordination, ministerial career, and participation in the women's movement as a distinct trajectory within religious liberalism, and as a vital groundwork in relation to which Max Eastman's political and cultural radicalism emerged. Building from a combination of romantic idealism and evolutionary science acquired through study at Oberlin College in the 1870s, Annis Eastman developed a form of subjectivity that supported her pursuit of ordination in transgression of gendered conceptions of religious leadership. Articulated through the term "self-realization" during the 1890s and 1900s, Annis Eastman advanced a critique of gender, particularly in relation to religion, that envisioned its abolition as a primary category of social distinction. When interpreted from the vantage of Annis Eastman's work, Max Eastman's early critiques of philosophy, psychology, art, and politics reveal the substantial influence of his mother's thought. This dissertation thus identifies points of continuity between religious liberalism and political radicalism, which previous scholarship has framed as opposed social orientations.

CONTENTS

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INTRODUCTION

"Chautauqua pulls and Greenwich Village pushes."

—H. L. Mencken, *A Book of Prefaces*

Compressed in a volley of rejoinder, a scene from Warren Beatty's 1981 film *Reds* portrays a classic representation of the "innocent rebellion" that surged in New York City's Greenwich Village during the 1910s.[1] Voices and footsteps ascend a stairwell, entering John Reed's ramshackle apartment, strewn with labor-union propaganda and coffee-stained issues of *The Masses*, magazine of record for prewar innovation in art and politics. Awaiting their arrival, Louise Bryant witnesses fervent discussion, glimpsed through a crack in the bedroom door. Emma Goldman, famed anarchist, announces her resolute conviction: "If it's illegal to hand out pamphlets on birth control, I'm proud to be a criminal!" Max Eastman, socialist editor of *The Masses*, hoping to redirect his colleague's activism, replies, "No one is arguing with your inalienable right to go to jail, Emma. All I am saying is that this is not the right time to go to jail for birth control." Having none of his hesitation, Goldman quips, "Oh, there is a right time to go to jail for birth control? *The Masses* is governing conscience now? Soon you'll be indistinguishable from the *New York Times*." The figures moving in and out of Bryant's line of sight, Eastman replies again, stating that Goldman is "too valuable to the antiwar movement." "You're wrong," she declares.

"No, he's right," interjects Reed. "If we get into this war, there are going to be thousands…" Goldman cuts Reed off, in reproof: "Your sentence is not worth finishing.

[1] Henry F. May employed the term "innocent rebellion" as a title for the third part of *The End of American Innocence: A Study of the First Years of Our Own Time, 1912–1917*, new ed. (1959; New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 217ff.

Thousands of American women overworked, underfed, and dying, giving birth to anemic children who can't last out a year. Are their lives any less valuable than thousands of American boys?" Wanting to convince his feminist friend, Reed plies her with an offering of coffee.

"Chase and Sanborn?"

"Of course." After a pause, "I'm out of coffee."

"Again? I'm leaving. The conversation is over. You're a journalist, Jack. When you're a revolutionary, we'll discuss priorities. Hopefully over coffee."[2]

Initiating a series of intercut scenes depicting syncopated ragtime dances and candlelit disputes in basement pubs and coffeehouses, this front-parlor row projects an image of Greenwich Village as the energetic center of rupture and innovation in modern American politics and culture. Contraception, feminism, socialism, antimilitarism, empty coffee tins, and dingy walk-up apartment buildings all collaborate in Beatty's script to conjure popular images of the radicals and bohemians who lived among the Village's wending ways.

Later in the sequence, seated on sofas and side chairs, a cluster of compatriots shouts back and forth. "Read Jung!" demands one. Parroting the mandate, Eastman returns, "'Read Freud, read Jung': Read Engels, read Marx!" Another calls back, "My God, you can't interpret Freud in an economic context." Out of the din, naming Dostoevsky's monastic elder, Eastman declares, "Zosima represents the corruption of religion." His *Masses* co-editor Floyd Dell denounces the claim: "I tell you you're wrong." The voices trail off: "And Jung is a mystic…"[3] The film deepens its portrait, adding psychotherapy, political economy, literature,

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[2] "A Bit of a Rebel," *Reds*, directed by Warren Beatty (1981; Hollywood, CA: Paramount Pictures, 2006), DVD.

[3] "A Bit of a Rebel," *Reds*.

anticlericalism, and mysticism to the nostalgic invocation of radicalism.

Beyond such filmic permutations, representations of this enclave of dissident artists and activists have come to furnish a historiographical shorthand, indicating a sharp turn in the contours of modern American society. As David Hollinger writes, "[i]t has proved difficult to resist the charms of the men and women who created the Armory show, brought the Paterson Strike to Madison Square Garden, gathered at Provincetown and in Mabel Dodge's salon, wrote for *The Masses* and *Seven Arts*, discovered Freud and Bergson…, marched with Big Bill Haywood, and opposed American entry into World War I."[4] The color and verve embodied in these figures, their pugilism with the past, wanting to make all things new in a modern moment, leads historians to find in them a sure source of disconnection between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, between Victorian and modern, staid progressivism and youthful revolution.[5]

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[4] David A. Hollinger, "Foreword to the Morningside Edition," in *The End of American Innocence*, by Henry F. May, new ed. (1959; New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), xvi. This dissertation has also yielded to the Village's enchantments, though hopefully so as to understand its interpretive lures in new light.

[5] The trope of Greenwich Village as font of modernism appears repeatedly in scholarship. Arthur Frank Wertheim contributed an influential interpretation in this line, with *The New York Little Renaissance: Iconoclasm, Modernism, and Nationalism in American Culture, 1908–1917* (New York: New York University Press, 1976); Christine Stansell suggests this characterization in *American Moderns: Bohemian New York and the Creation of a New Century*, new ed. (2000; Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), in which she describes the Village bohemians as engaged in "the attempt to create a specifically American modernity" by assuming a role as "custodians of the 'new' for the nation," (x). Stansell also acknowledges that the Village's projects were provisional and shot through with uncertainty, caught up among "the confusing sources of change, the shifting balance of old habits and emerging hopes, the unintended consequences of well-meant actions," (2). Gerald W. McFarland contextualizes the bohemian and radical residents of the Village with a broader interest in the diverse demographic range of the neighborhood, in *Inside Greenwich Village: A New York City Neighborhood, 1898–1918* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001). Popular histories that stress artistic and political revolutionaries are Ross Wetzsteon, *Republic of Dreams: Greenwich Village, the American Bohemia, 1915–1950* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2001); and John Strausbaugh, *The Village: 400 Years of Beats and Bohemians, Radicals and Rogues: A History of Greenwich Village* (New York: HarperCollins, 2013). It must be noted that, even though the Greenwich

In such a frame, Greenwich Village points inexorably forward, heralding the arrival of freedom and the passing away of constraint, liberating modern America by proxy.

Among the voices clamoring in Beatty's Village panorama, Max Eastman's sometimes shouts loudest. Likewise for historians, Eastman often stands first among these interpretively irresistible figures. Variously called "a paradigmatic figure of American cultural modernity" and "the central figure of the generation of 1912," Max Eastman has come to embody the impulses that darted around Washington Square before 1920.[6] As editor of *The Masses* from 1912 until the Wilson administration forced its closure in 1917, Eastman inhabited the center of the magazine's arguments for a revolution in politics, art, journalism, and social norms.[7] By guiding *The Masses*,

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Village revolutionaries attract much attention, some scholars have been careful to offer balanced portraits, often criticizing the conceptual imprecision and naiveté of the rebellion. Leslie Fishbein writes, for example, that "[i]nstead of creating a genuine renaissance founded on common values of iconoclasm, modernism, and nationalism, prewar radicals championing a new American culture embraced competing ideals. They preferred an immediate affective resolution of the tensions that were thus generated to the disciplined task of evolving a coherent ideology." In Leslie Fishbein, *Rebels in Bohemia: The Radicals of the* Masses*, 1911–1917* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 57. Despite such nuance, Greenwich Village plays the part of liberative modernizer in most historiography of the United States.

[6] M. Keith Booker, *The Modern American Novel of the Left: A Research Guide* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), 100; John P. Diggins, *Up from Communism: Conservative Odysseys in American Intellectual Development*, new ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, [1975] 1994), 17. The role and symbolism of Washington Square Park as a locus for Greenwich Village's political and cultural radicalism is addressed in Emily Kies Folpe, *It Happened on Washington Square* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 247–308, and Luther S. Harris, *Around Washington Square: An Illustrated History of Greenwich Village* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 174–206.

[7] An extensive literature documents the impact of *The Masses* on radical movements and its role in reshaping magazine publication as part of the "little magazine" phenomenon. Representative studies include: John A. Waite, "*The Masses*, 1911–1917: A Study in American Rebellion," Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, 1951; William P. Dunkel, "Between Two Worlds: Max Eastman, Floyd Dell, John Reed, Randolph Bourne and the Revolt against the Genteel Tradition," Ph.D. diss., Lehigh University, 1976; Leslie Fishbein, *Rebels in Bohemia: The Radicals of the* Masses*, 1911–1917* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982); Margaret C. Jones, *Heretics and Hellraisers: Women Contributors to* The Masses*, 191–1917*

he exerted significant force on the direction taken by that revolt and its means of expression, earning him a reputation among scholars as "the orphic bard of the Left, the eloquent lyricist of liberation."[8]

Much of Eastman's versifying described the liberation that he and his collaborators sought as an emancipation from Protestantism and its puritanical interdictions.[9] But that purportedly puritanical Christianity had itself prepared the ground on which it became possible

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(Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993); Rebecca Zurier, *Art for the Masses: A Radical Magazine and Its Graphics, 1911–1917* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988); Eugene E. Leach, "The Radicals of *The Masses*," in *1915, the Cultural Moment: The New Politics, the New Woman, the New Psychology, the New Art and the New Theatre in America*, edited by Adele Heller and Lois Rudnick (Rutgers, 1991), 27–46; Thomas A. Maik, The Masses *Magazine, 1911–1917: Odyssey of an Era*, Modern American History (New York: Garland Publishing, 1994); Melissa Nickle, "Max Eastman and the Greenwich Village Left, 1900–1929," Ph.D. diss., University of California–Irvine, 1996; Mark S. Morrison, *The Public Face of Modernism: Little Magazines, Audiences, and Reception, 1905–1920* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001), 3–16, 167–202; and Benoît Tadié, "The Masses Speak: *The Masses* (1911–17); *The Liberator* (1918–24); *New Masses* (1926–48); and *Masses & Mainstream* (1948–63)," in *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines*, Volume II, *North America, 1894–1960*, ed. Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 831–856.

[8] John P. Diggins, "Getting Hegel out of History: Max Eastman's Quarrel with Marxism," *American Historical Review* 79, no. 1 (February 1974): 39.

[9] "By Puritanism," writes Daniel Aaron, "they meant 'repression,' 'bigotry,' 'prudishness,' 'Comstockery,' attitudes which they attributed to a dry and arid New England, and they detected its confining influence in politics, economics, religion, education, and art." In Aaron, *Writers on the Left: Episodes in American Literary Communism*, new ed. (1961. New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 8. James Burkhart Gilbert summarizes the importance of "the caricature of the puritan, who was pictured as a cultural philistine and a moral hypocrite, armed with ideas from the *Saturday Evening Post*, the archenemy of Bohemia." In *Writers and Partisans: A History of Literary Radicalism in America* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1968), 20. Randolph Bourne offered perhaps the best example of arguments that critiqued puritanism as a stylistically problematic inheritance from Victorian Protestant culture. "The puritan gets his power," Bourne wrote, "not in the harmless way of the artist or the philosopher or the lover or the scientist, but in a crude assault on that most vulnerable part of other people's souls, their moral sense." See "The Puritan's Will to Power," *Seven Arts* 1 (April 1917): 631–637, reprinted in Randolph Bourne, *The Radical Will: Selected Writings, 1911–1918*, ed. Olaf Hansen (1977; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 305.

for Village radicals to spar over the competing causes of women's equality and antimilitarism. The feminist concerns voiced by Goldman in Beatty's script, for example, occupied an extreme end of the spectrum of American women's activism that reached back to earlier generations of women who engaged in an unswerving pursuit of equal rights. Many of those earlier advocates perceived the advances they gained in the latter half of the nineteenth century as indicators of their own revolutionary moment. In many ways, the Village's radicalism continued causes that preceded it.

In 1899, for instance, Annis Ford Eastman, Max Eastman's mother, ascended the lectern of the Chautauqua Assembly's amphitheater in far western New York State to deliver an address on "Woman's Right." Billed as "one of the most pleasing speakers upon the public platform," Eastman began her remarks at one of the signal institutions of fin-de-siècle American Protestantism with an intended provocation:[10] "We used to say woman's rights, but I long since decided that woman, like man, has but one right—namely the right to be and do and become all

[10] "Political Equality Day at Chautauqua," *Westfield Republican* (Westfield, NY) July 19, 1899. Eastman's lecture was also announced in *The Chautauquan* 29, no. 4 (July 1899): 396. The "Woman's Day" and "Political Equality Day" celebrations at Chautauqua—the 1899 occasion on which Eastman delivered this address—provoked controversy over the Chautauqua Assembly's position on the suffrage question. While the assembly remained officially neutral on the issue, the assembly's venerable leader, Methodist Bishop John Heyl Vincent, adamantly opposed extension of the franchise to women. Equally venerable women's rights activists Susan B. Anthony, Anna Howard Shaw, and Zerelda Wallace had advocated for participation of pro-suffrage leaders, and first gained access to Chautauqua's program in 1891. Daniel Rieser explains that the Woman's Day speeches in 1898 and 1900 proved especially significant by revealing the widespread popularity of pro-suffrage arguments among the Chautauqua crowds, despite Vincent's continued disapproval. To Vincent, Chautauqua functioned "as a platform for 'forward movements' (that is, progress) but not 'reform or radical movements,'" and in his view, women's social and political equality fell under the latter category. Daniel Rieser, *The Chautauqua Moment: Protestants, Progressives, and the Culture of Modern Liberalism*, Religion and American Culture (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 184. Efforts to include pro-suffrage speakers are described in John P. Downs, "The Political Equality Movement," *History of Chautauqua County, New York, and Its People*, Vol. 1 (Boston, MA: American Historical Society, 1921), 352.

that she is capable of being and doing and becoming."[11] She narrowed the massive critiques of the women's movement into a single concept: "The struggle for existence has been not only a strife for food, but a struggle for self-realization, for the unfolding of the powers and capabilities which man felt within his nature urging him to their expression in deeds and institutions."[12] Invoking a romantic–evolutionary frame for history, Eastman announced a doctrine of radical personal freedom. If the Greenwich Village rebellion advanced under a banner of liberation, no term could better describe its project than that of self-realization, as discussed below.

Through the turns of her lecture, Eastman argued that modernizing social and economic conditions had begun to open wide avenues along which women could join in that pursuit. "[T]he deeper meaning of the modern woman's demand for the franchise," she declared, "is but the expression of a desire which shows itself in the nature of woman to add to her sex relation to the world, a human relation." Allowing women the capacity to express themselves apart from role expectations would liberate them from acting as "mother, sister wife and daughter of men" and instead allow them to express identities as "student of nature, thinker, worker, lawgiver, discoverer with her brothers toward God and the universe."[13] And, more than seeking mere rhetorical freedom, the role of "discoverer toward the universe" demanded concrete change. Eastman ended her speech by calling for a revised concept of marriage, in which "fatherhood and

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[11] Annis Ford Eastman, "Woman's Right," ca. 1909, MS, leaf 1, Crystal Eastman Papers, 82-M4, folder 82, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA (hereafter "Crystal Eastman Papers"). The manuscript dates to 1909, although Eastman delivered this lecture repeatedly, from as early as 1897. The basic argument and content remained consistent across various versions, especially Eastman's construction of "self-realization." Cf. "Woman's Rights: Annual Convention in this City a Big Success," *Geneva Gazette* (Geneva, NY), November 10, 1897.

[12] Annis Ford Eastman, "Woman's Right," 1–2.

[13] Ibid., 7–8.

motherhood shall be thoroughly socialized so that men and women demand decent parentage, wide opportunities of education and culture for all the children of the state."[14] Not the buttoned-up moralism aped in prewar bohemian salons, this rhetoric of personal liberation stood behind and alongside the radical visions dreamed by the innocent rebels of 1912.[15]

Pushing and Pulling, between Liberal Religion and Radical Politics

The expansion of religious liberalism before the turn of the twentieth century, particularly among Protestants, coincided in large measure with the emergence of radical left-wing political ideologies in the United States. Yet historians frequently depict the two traditions as standing at significant distance from one another, harboring competing visions for the transformation of American society. As Mencken wrote concerning the opposite and exaggerated reactions to the censorship of Dreiser's novels, "Chautauqua pulls and Greenwich Village pushes."[16] Protestant reform threatened to pull the writer back towards nineteenth-century norms, while the Village intelligentsia pressed him towards ever harsher iconoclasm. In historiography similar tensions hold, through narratives that pose liberal reform as clinging to outdated mores and religious rationales, while radical politics and culture set to work severing ties to anything deemed parochial or out of date.

This opposition of liberal religion and radical politics matched the perceptions of many

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[14] Ibid., 43–44.

[15] Paul Buhle suggests a similar link, writing that the emergence of radical socialism, especially in connection with Eugene Debs and the Industrial Workers of the World, "made Victoria Woodhull or Frances Willard parents not only to Greenwich Village feminists, but also to the IWW." In Buhle, *Marxism in the United States Remapping the History of the American Left*, revised edition. The Haymarket Series (1987; New York: Verso, 1991), 87.

[16] H. L. Mencken, "Theodore Dreiser," *A Book of Prefaces*, Second ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1917), 145.

partisans of the "Lyrical Left," who, in Christine Stansell's analysis, "loved to picture themselves riding the zeitgeist of modernism, zipping straight to the future."[17] The intellectual, artistic, and political outlets furnished by a newly forming subculture in Greenwich Village served as the first independent forays for many of these figures as adults, many of whom grew up in environments shaped by religion. In bohemia, the shedding of ties to religious identity often served as a rite of passage from impotent reform to robust revolution. Despite this, these revolutionaries carried the impress of religion with them into the world that opened between Fourteenth and Houston Streets in lower Manhattan, even if they wished to disguise that fact or refused to acknowledge it.

This observation has not escaped the notice of historians. Where Protestantism functioned as one of the core social and cultural rubrics that structured the norms of the nineteenth century's genteel tradition, the young intellectuals assailed it as such. But they also carried forward many of its elements. As John P. Diggins writes, in its place they sought "a new life that had to be experienced before it could be analyzed." This pursuit of vital experience, however, never fully escaped the orbit of deeply rooted Protestant concepts and attitudes:

> Despite the cult of irresponsibility, many intellectuals who had been brought up in a religious environment carried with them the heritage against which they rebelled. Their passion for social justice, their quest for love and friendship, and their thirst for aesthetic experience reflected the internalized values of their Protestant backgrounds. If they rejected the capitalist ethos of striving to make good, many retained the religious ethic of striving to *be* good. In essence, theirs was a Christian culture without Christianity.[18]

In this, Diggins presents an enticing puzzle that provokes further consideration. Although he

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[17] Stansell, *American Moderns*, 3. John P. Diggins first used the phrase "Lyrical Left" to refer to the prewar generation of radicals, in *The Rise and Fall of the American Left* (1973; New York: W. W. Norton, 1992), 93–143. The term was then employed by Edward Abrahams in *The Lyrical Left: Randolph Bourne, Alfred Stieglitz, and the Origins of Cultural Radicalism in America* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1986).

[18] Diggins, *Rise and Fall*, 97 (emphasis in original).

never defined them, one asks what parameters Diggins envisioned as surrounding this "Christian culture without Christianity." If such a culture took shape, how did it come into existence? What social consequences followed from its emergence? How might this cultural formation alter interpretations of the relationships between American religion, culture, and politics in the early twentieth century? More specifically, what might such a formation reveal about connections between Christianity and U.S. national identity?

This dissertation takes up these questions in order to address the tense terrain that stretched between the pushing and pulling of radical politics and liberal religion during the turn of the twentieth century. The post-Christian culture named, though not explained, by Diggins unfolded along this ground. As suggested in the examples above, less distance separated the concerns of Chautauqua and Washington Square than histories of the era typically admit.

By way of example, Max Eastman perceived aspects of this tension in his own life. He summarized the plotline of his first memoir as "the story of how a pagan and unbelieving and unregenerate and carnal and seditious and not a little idolatrous, epicurean revolutionist emerged out of the very thick and dark of religious America's deep, awful, pious, and theological zeal for saving souls from the flesh and the devil." Here, in the representation of having escaped from "religious America" into "epicurean revolution," Eastman sustained a narrative of his abandonment of religion. Despite this, even though he wished not to see himself as permanently stamped with the religious mold of his forebears, these negative allusions to carnal idolatry reveal the persistence of a religious imprint, even if a blank one.[19]

Taken as emblems of liberal religion and radical politics, Annis Ford Eastman and Max Eastman together lend insight into the form and content of the religionless religious culture

[19] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, xiv–xv.

Diggins described. Annis Eastman exerted an influence on Max Eastman's intellectual development that cannot be overstated. Through her parenting of Max, the correspondence they exchanged, and their interactions in his young adulthood, Annis conveyed to Max a set of intellectual commitments and social values that reflected the shifting forms of late nineteenth-century romantic idealism and evolutionary science. She acted as a prime mover behind Max's escape into revolution.

In studies of Max Eastman's thought and career, what Diggins terms the "generational transfusion of idealism" from Annis to Max is almost universally cited as important for inspiring Max's radical turn, but such acknowledgements typically occupy only a paragraph or two.[20] This dissertation suggests that a more sustained analysis of the contours of that transmission improves understanding of a crucial moment in the history of the United States, which has been understood as a fulcrum around which modern America turned toward secularism. Something of Annis Eastman's religious liberalism survived in Max Eastman's radical cultural politics. The transfusion Diggins identifies was a transfer of religious idealism into a burgeoning tradition of political and cultural critique that, in turn, helped to define the bounds of twentieth-century secularism. In particular, Annis and Max shared in common a language of realization that drew

[20] Diggins, "Getting Hegel out of History," 40. For examples of brief reference to Annis Eastman in studies of Max Eastman, see Diggins, *Rise and Fall of the American Left*, 47, 118; Henry F. May, *The End of American Innocence*, 314; Daniel Aaron, *Writers on the Left*, 30–31; William L. O'Neill, *The Last Romantic: A Life of Max Eastman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 3–6; Milton Cantor, *Max Eastman* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1970), 15–18; Walter Rideout, *The Radical Novel in the United States, 1900–1954 Some Interrelations of Literature and Society* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956), 100; Fishbein, *Rebels in Bohemia*, 12–13; John Fabian Witt, "Internationalists in the Nation-State: Crystal Eastman and the Puzzle of American Civil Liberties," in *Patriots and Cosmopolitans: Hidden Histories of American Law* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 161; Steven Biel, *Independent Intellectuals in the United States, 1910–1945*, The American Social Experience (New York: New York University Press, 1992), 111; and Stansell, *American Moderns*, 168–169.

together many of the religious, political, social, psychological, and spiritual strands of thought involved in turn-of-the-century upheavals. As Max Eastman's political and cultural criticism left aside explicitly Christian terms of reference, his critiques yet relied on forms of reasoning and valuation that Annis Eastman had articulated before him. By attending to the relationship between Annis and Max Eastman, this dissertation adds vital examples to the history of American religion, culture, and politics as they unfolded among white, middle-class reformers in the United States between 1880 and 1915. In doing so, this study calls for reassessment of the distance presumed to divide liberalism and radicalism at the turn of the century.

A Religious Context for Radicalism, a Radical Context for Religion

The turn-of-the-century traditions of liberal Protestantism and left-wing radical politics shared common edges, seamed together in processes of reinvention and transformation. But they have not always been understood as closely linked. In part, this tendency stems from the definitions and conceptions of religion that scholars employ in their narratives of the past.[21]

Generally, scholars of radicalism treat obvious or simplistic representations of religion configured as institutions, symbols, or rituals in their interpretations. For these historians, radicals critiqued religious forms that were destined for the dustbin of secularization, retaining only those elements that seemed politically or rhetorically expedient for their activism. If radicals held connection with any aspect of religious significance, in this frame, it was an attitude concerning experience, understood as an unintentional or inauthentic vestige of religious superstition. For such scholars, religion appears incompatible with modernity.

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[21] Jon Butler raises this critique in a recent pair of essays that examine historiography of religion in the twentieth-century United States. See Jon Butler, "Jack-in-the-Box Faith: The Religion Problem in Modern American History," *Journal of American History* 90, no. 4 (2003): 1357-1378; and Jon Butler, "Theory and God in Gotham," *History & Theory* 45, no. 4 (2006): 47-61.

For example, when historians of radicalism in Greenwich Village approach the subject of religion, they typically rehearse three characterizations: that radicals denounced religious institutions as hypocritical, corrupt, and aligned with wealth; that they adopted Jesus as a disruptive symbol of resistance to wealth and solidarity with the disenfranchised; and that the religious upbringings of many radicals prevented them from denouncing religion wholesale, but still encouraged their rebellious abandonment of it and predisposed them towards the pursuit of vital experience and dedication to a moral cause.[22] From this vantage, the arguments radicals constructed concerning politics, culture, and society held little connection to religion.

In addition, presumptions about the antinomy between religion and modernity, and the affinity between modernity and secularism, prevent historians of radicalism from understanding radicals' negative identifications in proximity to religious culture. Radicals employed vocabulary associated with the negation of Christianity in order to describe their innovations. From the Pagan Routs of Webster Hall's ballroom on East Eleventh Street, to the convening of the feminist Heterodoxy Club, and broadly applied emphases on spirituality, mysticism, inner experience, and new moralities, radicals often used language oriented negatively towards what they perceived as religion in order to characterize the emerging forms they advanced. Pagan not puritan, heterodox not orthodox, radicals boldly declared their break with respectable religious

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[22] The work of Leslie Fishbein exemplifies this approach. See her essays "The Culture of Contradiction: The Greenwich Village Rebellion," in *Greenwich Village: Culture and Counterculture*, edited by Rick Beard and Leslie Cohen Berlowitz (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1993), 221–222; "Radicals and Religion before the Great War," *The Journal of Religious Thought* 37 (Fall/Winter, 1980/1981): 45–58; and her chapter "The Road to Religion," in *Rebels in Bohemia*, 113–126. Also see Rebecca Zurier, *Art for the Masses: A Radical Magazine and Its Graphics, 1911–1917* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988), 20–25. Zurier offers the somewhat subtler claim that, while most of the intellectuals in the vanguard of the Village rebellion remained hostile to religion, many participants in the wider context of socialism and labor activism understood Christianity as compatible with their critique of power in society (see especially p. 25).

forms as a sign of the new society they hoped to birth.[23] If the sanction formerly supplied by religion fell away in society's modernization, they announced, new forms of authority and expression would spring up in their place. In most historical accounts of radicalism, this narrative seems satisfactory, despite the fact that many of the radicals' critiques rested on forms of reason and action rooted in liberal religious thought and practice.

Scholars of religion in American history demonstrate a related, though distinct, tendency that excludes left-wing radicals from their historical accounts. Taking denunciations of religion at face value, these scholars understand radicals as standing outside the boundary of religion in equally obvious terms, perceiving simple exchanges of theology or devotional practice for political and cultural critique. This tendency stems, in part, from the influence that historians of American Protestantism place on other phenomena during this period. The social gospel movement and the fundamentalist–modernist controversy occupy a significant proportion of historical writing on turn-of-the-century Protestantism, and supply the major themes presumed to be of significance in these years. In this view, radicals formed a minority constituency that furnished a convenient foil for fundamentalist preachers or a cautionary tale of extremism for liberal ministers.

Liberalism itself has received significantly less general attention than its evangelical counterpart, leaving radicalism mostly without interpretation with respect to religion.[24] In a

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[23] Gilbert, "The New Paganism," in *Writers and* Partisans, 8–47. Fishbein also discusses paganism in *Rebels in Bohemia*, 41–48.

[24] The adjectives "evangelical" and "liberal," as used here, denote factions within late nineteenth-century Protestantism that diverged over the degree to which new developments in science, theology, and literary scholarship should apply to Christian belief and practice. Boundaries between categorizations "evangelical" and "liberal," however, have always been fluid, evident from at least as early as the movement away from strict Calvinism beginning in the 1730s. As Worthen explains, "[i]t is not entirely possible to distinguish between 'liberal' and

recent review of new scholarship on liberal religion, Molly Worthen writes that liberalism "has come to seem like the brittle great-aunt of American religious historiography, wheezing at the margins as her younger and more boisterous relations take center stage."[25] Perhaps alluding to an earlier historiographical personification—in which James Turner named a coterie of influential chroniclers of conservative Protestantism as the "evangelical mafia"—Worthen draws attention to imbalanced elements in the historiography of American religion.[26] With narrative gangsters on one side stacked up against a frail elder's breathless gasping on the other, emphasis falls on evangelical Protestant identity at the expense of liberal religion. As Worthen notes, however, a new historiography of religious liberalism has begun to expand scholarly attention to religious forms other than evangelical Christianity, while offering new characterizations of Christianity

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'conservative' Protestantism in the years before the fundamentalist–modernist crisis, although branches of the emerging liberal tradition—particularly Unitarians and Universalists—came into early flower and foreshadowed the ways in which twentieth-century liberals would reinterpret the Bible's authority and challenge the political and cultural decrees of the moral establishment." Worthen, "The Recovery of American Liberal Religion," Review of *Conceived in Doubt: Religion and Politics in the New American Nation*, by Amanda Porterfield, *The Rise of Liberal Religion: Book Culture and American Spirituality in the Twentieth Century*, by Matthew Hedstrom, and *American Religious Liberalism*, edited by Leigh E. Schmidt and Sally M. Promey, *Modern Intellectual History* 11, no. 2 (August 2014): 510–511. Conventional interpretations of religious liberalism emphasize its Protestant expressions, patterning themselves, in Leigh Schmidt's analysis, according to a narrative of movement from "orthodox starting points [towards] liberal end points." Schmidt sees this reliance on evangelical-to-liberal narrative lines as calling for expansion of interest in liberal religious forms beyond Protestantism. Leigh E. Schmidt, "The Parameters and Problematics of American Religious Liberalism," in *American Religious Liberalism*, ed. Leigh E. Schmidt and Sally M. Promey (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 4.

[25] Worthen, "The Recovery of American Liberal Religion," 505.

[26] James Turner, "Foreword," in *Reckoning with the Past: Historical Essays on American Evangelicalism from the Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals*, edited by D. G. Hart (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995), 7.

that complicate its past interpretations.[27] To wit, some recent scholarship on religion and politics has begun to consider turn-of-the-century liberal Protestants alongside left-wing political radicals, exemplified in works by Dan McKanan, among others.[28] Still, these studies reflect the tendency to identify religion with its institutional expressions, especially through denominations and voluntary societies. An ancillary claim advanced here follows Schmidt, Promey, et al., who argue that scholars must broaden conceptions of religious liberalism to include its institutional

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[27] Representative works in the new historiography of American religious liberalism include Matthew Bowman, *The Urban Pulpit: New York City and the Fate of Liberal Evangelicalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); David A. Hollinger, *After Cloven Tongues of Fire: Protestant Liberalism in Modern American History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013); Leigh E. Schmidt and Sally M. Promey, editors, *American Religious Liberalism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012); Matthew S. Hedstrom, *The Rise of Liberal Religion Book Culture and American Spirituality in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Pamela Klassen, *Spirits of Protestantism: Medicine, Healing, and Liberal Christianity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011); Courtney Bender, *The New Metaphysicals Spirituality and the American Religious Imagination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010); Michael Robertson, *Worshipping Walt: The Whitman Disciples* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010); Christopher G. White, *Unsettled Minds: Psychology and the American Search for Spiritual Assurance, 1830–1940* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009); Catherine Albanese, *A Republic of Mind and Spirit: A Cultural History of American Metaphysical Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007); Kathryn Lofton, "The Methodology of the Modernists: Process in American Protestantism," *Church History* 75, no. 2 (June 2006): 374–402; and Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Restless Souls: The Making of American Spirituality* (San Francisco, Calif.: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005).

[28] For examples, see Dan McKanan, "The Implicit Religion of Radicalism: Socialist Party Theology, 1900–1934." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 78, no. 3 (September 2010): 750–789; Dan McKanan, *Prophetic Encounters: Religion and the American Radical Tradition* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2011); Michael Kazin, *American Dreamers: How the Left Changed a Nation* (New York: Knopf, 2011), especially pp. 68–122; Janine Giordano Drake, "Between Religion and Politics: The Working Class Religious Left, 1880–1920," Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2012; David Burns, *The Life and Death of the Radical Historical Jesus* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); and most recently, William A. Mirola, *Redeeming Time: Protestantism and Chicago's Eight-Hour Movement, 1866–1912*, The Working Class in American History (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015). Tony Michels offers a similar account of religion and radicalism, with respect to Judaism, in *A Fire in Their Hearts: Yiddish Socialists in New York* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).

articulations in addition to more open-ended modes of expression.[29]

Helping further to ameliorate these historiographical oversights, new scholarship on turn-of-the-century social and political ideologies resituates narratives of radicalism and its relationship to religious liberalism. In particular, Doug Rossinow contributes an alternative narrative of ideological and activist alignment during the Gilded Age and Progressive Era that better situates figures like Annis and Max Eastman. Where historians often exaggerate differences between radicals of the political left and reform-oriented liberals, and where right-wing pundits often portray radicals and liberals as twinned exponents of left-wing extremism, Rossinow argues that "[h]istorically, left-wing radicalism and liberal reform overlapped in U.S. political life." During the period of 1880 to 1940, in particular, he identifies "a broadly shared belief in a qualitative vision of progress, according to which American society was undergoing a fundamental transformation."[30] This shared vision constitutes the basis for Rossinow's use of the

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[29] See Schmidt and Promey, eds., *American Religious Liberalism*, cited above. Tisa Wenger, for instance, demonstrates this broadening of interest by including cultural modernists, especially Mabel Dodge Luhan, alongside liberal Protestant and Native American figures in *We Have a Religion: The 1920s Pueblo Indian Dance Controversy and American Religious Freedom* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

[30] Doug Rossinow, "Partners for Progress? Liberals and Radicals in the Long Twentieth Century," in *Making Sense of American Liberalism*, ed. Jonathan Bell and Timothy Stanley (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012), 17. Rossinow presents this argument in much greater detail in his book, *Visions of Progress: The Left-Liberal Tradition in America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008). Rossinow's thesis, which has been well received in general, has come under critique, in the words of one reviewer, for "its adoption of a framework that collapses all left-of-center American politics into the category of left-liberalism." See Daniel Geary, "Left Out," review of *Visions of Progress: The Left-Liberal Tradition in America*, by Doug Rossinow, *Reviews in American History* 37, no. 1 (March 2009): 88. Still, Rossinow's emphasis on a mutually held vision of the possibility of social transformation through collective action provides a substantial common ground on which to interpret radicals and reformers as a unit. Arguing similarly to Rossinow, Gerald McFarland writes that the terms "liberalism" and "radicalism" denoted parallel orientations towards social change, not cleanly divisible ideological essences that stood in opposition. He argues that, at least before the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, Greenwich Village residents "used the terms *radical*, *liberal*, and

term "left–liberal" to describe "a neglected middle ground of ambitious reform politics" that "includes liberals who were deeply critical of American capitalism as well as leftists who saw great value in social reform, as opposed to revolutionary upheaval."[31]

Where Rossinow's work primarily revises the liberal–radical divide in political terms, it merits application to religion and culture. In his description, late nineteenth-century social and political activism often functioned as "a kind of secularized Protestant reform."[32] If liberals and radicals staked competing identities around religion and its repudiation, they shared foundational assumptions about the common good that allowed movement across and between such demarcations. In this, Rossinow echoes Richard Wightman Fox's assertion that "[l]iberal Protestantism was protean: its face was sometimes 'secular,' sometimes 'religious,' and the 'progressivism' it embraced was sometimes 'democratic' and sometimes 'antidemocratic.'"[33] In this frame, more oriented towards consensus than polarity, radicals and liberals in politics and religion appear as differing gradations of similar mentalities. To consider religious liberals and political radicals as cohabitants of a left–liberal tradition allows their divergent articulations of religion and secularism to occupy the same interpretive space, and permits common intellectual

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progressive interchangeably to refer to one or another form of advanced thinking." In McFarland, *Inside Greenwich Village*, 126.

[31] Rossinow, *Visions of Progress*, 2. Leila Danielson's volume *American Gandhi: A. J. Muste and the History of Radicalism in the Twentieth Century* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014) makes substantial use of Rossinow's argument to interpret the life of one of Eastman's religious fellow travelers. His "left–liberal" construct also shares sensibility with Michael Kazin's recent description of the American Left as "that social movement, or congeries of mutually sympathetic movements, that are dedicated to a radically egalitarian transformation of society." Kazin, *American Dreamers*, ix n.

[32] Rossinow, *Visions of Progress*, 13.

[33] Richard Wightman Fox, "The Culture of Liberal Protestant Progressivism, 1875–1925," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 23, no. 3 (Winter 1993): 639.

trajectories to come into vision.

The Eastmans and the Language of Realization

The relationship of Annis Ford Eastman and Max Eastman presents an especially apt case for considering points of contact between religious liberals and political radicals.

Annis Eastman built a career as a clergywoman dedicated to causes of women's equality and progressive social reform. Born in 1852 in Peoria, Illinois, Annis Bertha Ford grew up with four sisters, an alcoholic father who worked as a gunsmith, and her mother, who left the marriage as soon as her daughters reached adulthood. In preparation for a career as an educator, Bertha Ford enrolled in the Oberlin College Ladies' Department between 1872 and 1874. There, she met and promised to marry Samuel Eastman, son of a circuit-riding Congregationalist minister from New York's Saint Lawrence River valley. While Samuel completed ministerial training at Andover Theological Seminary, Bertha—as Annis was known to her family—worked as a schoolteacher in Erie, Pennsylvania. Married after the completion of Samuel's studies in August 1875, the couple moved between parish assignments until settling in Canandaigua, New York, in 1881. Between 1877 and 1883, the couple had three sons and a daughter, the oldest of whom died in 1884. In the years following this early death, both Annis and Samuel experienced debilitating illnesses, so severe for Samuel that he resigned his preaching position in August 1886.[34]

[34] Annis Ford Eastman has typically appeared only in brief mention in scholarly literature, and that by virtue of the influence she exerted on her children. While this is understandable in light of their much more widespread influence, Annis Eastman's life and career made significant contributions in her own moment, and reflect her unique perspective on the religious, social, and political changes that affected the United States at the turn of the century. Thus, this project emphasizes her intellectual development on its own terms as well as in relation to that of her son, Max. Biographical sources on Annis Ford Eastman, apart from those authored by Max Eastman, are limited to entries in reference works and one M.A. thesis. See *Notable American Women, 1607–1950: A Biographical Dictionary*, vol. 1, s.v. "Eastman,

Her husband unable to support the family, Eastman accepted a position teaching at the Granger Place School in Canandaigua, and took interest in pursuing a ministerial career herself. Working as a home missions officer in her role as minister's wife, Eastman had gained experience in public speaking, though never before a mixed congregation. Testing her ability in the pulpit—as well as public reaction to it—Eastman began preaching at a village church in Brookton, New York, where the congregation hired her as their full-time minister. In November 1889, Thomas K. Beecher convened a council of regionally prominent ministers, and ordained Annis Eastman as a Congregationalist minister. She served the parish in Brookton until 1892, when a congregation in West Bloomfield, New York, hired her and sent her to address the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893. In 1894, Thomas Beecher engaged Annis and Samuel together as associate ministers in his Elmira, New York, Park Church, which Mark Twain attended with his wife's family, and where the Eastmans assumed full ministerial responsibility after Beecher's death in 1900.

Throughout the 1890s and into the 1900s, Eastman championed progressive causes in lectures before women's clubs, in private parlors, and on pro-suffrage platforms. She experimented with theories of mind–body connection, seeking mental treatments from New Thought practitioners, and underwent Freudian psychoanalysis under Abraham Brill. Eastman expanded her education through attendance at the Harvard Summer School of Theology, attending courses by James, Royce, and Santayana, among others. Perhaps most telling of her theological commitments, Eastman oversaw the revision of the Park Church's creed from a

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Annis Bertha Ford," by Jill Ker Conway (Cambridge, Mass : Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971); Carol Kammen, "Annis Bertha Ford Eastman: A Woman Pastor for Brooktondale," in *Lives Passed: Biographical Sketches from Central New York*, 91–93 (Interlaken, NY: Heart of the Lakes Publishing, 1984); and Leah F. Matthews, "Women in Ministry: 1853–1984," M.A. thesis (Oberlin College, 1985).

trinitarian to a unitarian foundation, and eventually decided she would leave the ministry in order to pursue other professional work, and considered seeking the deanship of Barnard College. During her years of active ministry, Eastman published numerous essays in the feminist and denominational presses, many of which reflected the common theme of her oratory, that self-realization constituted the best goal for individual human effort as a foundation for social transformation. Her determination to change careers was never realized, as she succumbed to a cerebral hemorrhage in October 1910.

Born in 1883, the earliest years of Max Eastman's life unfolded in the turbulence that followed the death of his oldest brother and the family's resulting financial instability. His mother's attainment of professional success restored balance to the household, and enabled Max to attend two years of preparatory school at the Mercersburg Academy in Pennsylvania, before enrolling at Williams College in 1900. During his undergraduate years, Max experienced a profound conversion to agnosticism through his reading of poetry, and determined to pursue a career as a writer and intellectual. Before relocating to New York City in 1907, he received New Thought treatments for neurasthenia in the Hudson River valley and in Bethel, Maine, which stoked an abiding interest in theories of the mind. While in New York, he undertook a Ph.D. under John Dewey at Columba University, attempting to develop a frame in which to unite his interests in poetry and psychology, idealism and realism. At the same time, he joined his mother on the pro-suffrage lecture circuit in New York State, founding the Men's League for Woman Suffrage.[35]

[35] Most studies of Max Eastman rely heavily on his published writings, and take biographical cues from his two volumes of memoir, published in 1948 and 1964, and a loosely autobiographical 1927 novel. This dissertation makes use of newly available personal papers at Indiana University's Lilly Library, especially a dense collection of correspondence between Annis Ford Eastman and Max Eastman, in addition to a substantial body of manuscript sermons

Drawn into the core of radical art and politics as they acquired momentum in Greenwich Village, Max accepted a position as editor of *The Masses* in December 1912. In the years before undertaking this editorship, he gained exposure to the writings of Marx and Freud through his Village associates—especially through attorney and activist Ida Rauh, who he married in 1911, and together with whom he scandalized polite society when she kept her own name—which transformed his pro-suffrage reformism into brash socialism. Eastman's politics grew increasingly radical as labor conflicts increased during the 1910s, revolution stirred in Russia, and Americans contemplated participation in an international war. At the same time, he hoped to promote cultural forms that would reshape American society by transforming social relations through newly imagined means of understanding and expressing experience, especially through poetry.

This crucial early period in Max Eastman's intellectual development has been sketched as a simple transition from romantic idealism to political radicalism. In one account, "[h]e was an unpoliticized poet, atheist, and adventurer when he graduated from Williams in 1905. Dewey gave him a lifelong love of science and pragmatism between 1907 and 1910, and his preference for socialism blossomed shortly afterwards."[36] Correct in its general frame, this standard version of the story understands Eastman in terms of his radical politics at the expense of considering the sustained influence of idealism, largely acquired from Annis Eastman, throughout his career.

On the surface, Annis and Max Eastman seem to exhibit the opposed archetypal traits of

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and lectures authored by Annis Ford Eastman, in the collections of the Schlesinger Library at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University. See Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1948); Max Eastman, *Love and Revolution: My Journey through an Epoch* (New York: Random House, 1964); and Max Eastman, *Venture* (New York: Albert and Charles Boni, 1927).

[36] Dunkel, 167.

liberalism and radicalism. Despite the distance that might be inferred from the outlines of their biographies, however, these figures shared an intense intimacy. Not only derived from their parent–child bond, Annis and Max were drawn together intellectually. As they both undertook education in philosophy and psychology, and as they pursued vocations as published writers and in-demand public speakers, their correspondence furnishes evidence of a vital exchange of ideas and criticism that united mother and son across the differing emphases of their work.

Their intellectual sympathy shows itself in especially clear terms through the mutual elaboration of a language of realization as they described their various programs for social, political, and expressive transformation. Annis Eastman wrote and spoke consistently over nearly two decades about the central value of self-realization in denunciations of patriarchy and visions of liberation for women into forms of selfhood not determined by gender. Having received his mother's tutelage through his upbringing and sharing in her pro-suffrage work, Max transferred the language of self-realization into his theory of poetry as a vehicle for encountering life's experiences through imaginative realization.[37]

The persistence of idealism in Max's early work is evident in his critical studies of poetry and experience, which he pursued through studies under Dewey and which culminated in a work of literary criticism, *Enjoyment of Poetry*, published in 1913. Eastman structured this volume around a concept of "imaginative realization" enacted in poetic expression, translating aspects of the notion of self-realization from his mother's idealism into his scholarship. By imaginative realization, Max envisioned a practice by which "we can so vividly remember and imagine, and

[37] Diggins acknowledges the importance of this concept for Max: "His mother impressed upon him the idea that life should be lived intensely as a continuous adventure in self-realization and social responsibility." Diggins, *Up from Communism*, 41. As above, however, Diggins stops short of describing what self-realization entails.

through the clear medium of poetic language realize in dreams the experiences of others."[38] Where, for Annis Eastman, individuals ought to seek the fullest realizations of their own selves in order to contribute to social well-being, Max Eastman's notion of imaginative realization performed a similar function. To him, the realizations made possible through reading and writing poetry furnished sources of identity and interpersonal affinity that would form the foundation for an improved society.[39] Though striking different emphases, Annis and Max shared in common a language of realization that gave expression to their revised understandings of the relation between self and society, and of the significance of experience and expression.

Beyond its articulations by the Eastmans, the concept of realization constituted a robust point of connection between liberal religion and radical politics. Often employed to denote the twentieth-century side of a massive cultural shift in the United States, self-realization has come to signify the displacement of religious authority by secular therapeutics in the twentieth

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[38] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Poetry*, 59. The concept of realization proved so central to Eastman's volume that the titles for five of its fifteen chapters contain the term. Max had begun work on the project, which he initially planned to entitle "The Realization of Being," at the beginning of graduate school while vising a friend in Princeton. In later years, he recalled that, while strolling along Stony Brook, he "fell into…the trance of realization," and experience through which he "was filled and brimming, not with any truth or godhead, not with any mystic principle inside of or behind the life I was living, but with a joyous consciousness of life itself." Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 272.

[39] Max's understanding of poetry created a "basic tension" or a "dichotomy" that Diggins describes as a "yearning for the imaginative world of the possible beyond the actual, and his dispassionate respect for the actual world of fact and experience." And Marxism resolved the distance between them. See Diggins, "Getting Hegel out of History," 41–42. Waite similarly observed that "[t]he inner turmoil of long years of conflict with atheism, rationalism and other discontents came to a focus for Eastman with the belief that socialism offered a method through which to work with the tools of science for a better world." See Waite, "*The Masses*, 1911–19127," 16. In such interpretations, the primary emphasis falls on Eastman's later communism, seeing in his hope for poetry as a social salve a naïve and impossible idealism. Independent of later occurrences, Eastman's composition of *Enjoyment of Poetry* expressed a combination of romanticist idealism and evolutionary science inspired by Annis Eastman.

century.[40] In standard Victorian-to-modern accounts of the turn of the century, American culture underwent a transition from emphasizing character to developing personality.[41] For Casey Nelson Blake, this transition brooked "a kind of crafted self, which found autonomy through creative work and symbolic interaction. Personality was the realization of the self in tension—or in dialogue—with its environment."[42] Here, realization built modern personality into a secular self. Annis Eastman's elaboration of the term, however, suggests a more complex origin and purpose for the term. Rooted in her experiences of confronting gender hierarchies in the 1880s and 1890s, Eastman's notion of realization preceded the therapeutic tendencies of the 1920s and

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[40] Two works published in 1983, and that shared portions of their titles in common, illustrate this explanatory structure: E. Brooks Holifield, *A History of Pastoral Care in America: From Salvation to Self-Realization* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1983), and T. J. Jackson Lears, "From Salvation to Self-Realization: Advertising and the Therapeutic Roots of the Consumer Culture, 1880–1930," in *The Culture of Consumption: Critical Essays in American History, 1880–1980*, ed. Richard Wightman Fox and T. J. Jackson Lears, 3–38 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983). The turn-of-the-century role of self-realization as an important concept for reconfiguring psychological and spiritual understandings of the self is discussed in Paul C. Vitz, *Psychology as Religion: The Cult of Self-Worship* (Eerdmans, 1977), 99–103, who emphasizes the preaching of Harry Emerson Fosdick and Norman Vincent Peale in the 1920s and 1940s as a principal source of therapeutic self-realization; Richard M. Gale, *The Divided Self of William James* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), 94, 150, 186; Alex Owen, "Modern Enchantment and the Consciousness of the Self," in *The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern* (Oxford University Press, 2004), 116–121; Steven C. Rockefeller, *John Dewey: Religious Faith and Democratic Humanism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991),12, 223. Though she does not employ the term "self-realization," Eva S. Moskowitz describes similar developments under the term "self-fulfillment," especially in connection with New Thought, in *In Therapy We Trust: America's Obsession with Self-Fulfillment* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 19–28. Also see discussion of "self-actualization" and "self-fulfillment" in Dana Becker, *The Myth of Empowerment: Women and the Therapeutic Culture in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 31–32, 36–38, 43–59.

[41] Fox, "The Culture of Liberal Protestant Progressivism," 647, who reinterprets Susman's *Culture as History*.

[42] Casey Nelson Blake, "The Young Intellectuals and the Culture of Personality," *American Literary History* 1, no. 3 (Autumn 1989): 522.

1930s with which historians associate it. In this way, the language of realization further complicates strict dichotomies of Victorian and modern, radical and liberal, and instead forms a substantial point of continuity between them.

Where Diggins writes that "self-realization and social responsibility" comprised the core of Annis's legacy in Max, he identifies fundamental tendencies that drew liberals and radicals together in pursuit of the common good.[43] In contrast to a received narrative that stresses invention and novelty after 1900, this dissertation suggests that emphasis also needs to be placed on continuity with earlier thought and practice. The writers, activists, and artists who comprised the lyrical left indeed took up projects that discarded convention and imagined new social and cultural possibilities. But this work of reinvention owed a substantial debt to ideas and practices that preceded it, an aspect which has not received the full attention of scholarship.

In many ways, this dissertation picks up where Diggins left off. He marked the "tension" in Max's early thought between "poetic idealism" and "scientific realism" as a byproduct of his turning away from liberal religion.[44] In the anxious space between idealism and realism, Max constructed a frame for reinterpreting the place of religion in society, articulated in terms continuous with the program of reform articulated by Annis Eastman. By reversing attention backwards chronologically, towards Annis and away from Max's infamous communism and later anti-communism, we see more clearly the strength of the bonds between twentieth-century radical socialism and liberal reform that was motivated by religion in earlier decades. This shifted perspective calls into question portrayals of the early twentieth century as the primary point of fracture between religion and secularism in America.

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[43] Diggins, *Up from Communism*, 41.

[44] Diggins, "Getting Hegel out of History," 41.

Viewing Max Eastman's revisions of art and politics from the perspective of the history of religious liberalism helps to account for this ambiguity. In the case of his early career, as Max assembled the elements of a philosophy that balanced "the practical and the poetic" in experience, his writings and correspondence reveal more than "the internalized values of [a] Protestant upbringing" named by Diggins.[45] They offer evidence of the direct application of ideas and attitudes modeled by his Protestant parents, at times even directly quoting them.[46] More than semantic quibbling, recognition of the close proximity between Max Eastman's critiques, which he labeled as "revolutionary," and those of Annis Ford Eastman's generation, which Max dismissed as "reform," exposes the ground on which "a Christian culture without Christianity" unfolded.[47] Max did not invent his philosophy out of whole cloth; a variation of it had been articulated by his mother before him. Both figures participated in a moment of social and intellectual transformation that resulted in alternative expressions of religion, politics, and

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[45] The paired categories of practical and poetic structured the interpretation of poetry as a universal frame for human experience that Max articulated in 1913 with the publication of *Enjoyment of Poetry*, his first systematic treatment of the social functions of literature and an expression of his general philosophical mindset. This work is discussed in detail below, in chapter 4.

[46] As described in chapter 4 below, Eastman sometimes quoted from his parents' sermons when composing lectures for the philosophy courses he taught at Columbia University.

[47] Differences perceived between revolution and reform in the characterization of activism functioned as one of the main aspects of differentiating between generational mentalities. The first issue of *The Masses* published after Max assumed its editorship in December 1912, for example, declared it to be "[a] revolutionary and not a reform magazine." See *The Masses* 4 no. 4 (January 1913): 2. Max and his colleagues subsequently codified this phrase into the magazine's editorial statement, printed as part of the masthead, from the February 1913 issue until its last, November-December 1917. Signaling an opposite affinity in the announcement for its summer program of 1899, the Chautauqua Assembly hedged charges of revolution by explaining that "[t]he educational policy of Chautauqua will be, as in the past, progressive but not radical." *The Chautauquan* 29, no. 4 (July 1899): 393. Annis Ford Eastman's lecture was announced on p. 396.

culture, articulated against a background of expanding secularism.

To find in Max Eastman's poetry of life a parallel tradition to Annis Ford Eastman's liberal Christianity is neither necessarily nor entirely to claim the persistence of an ersatz religion in an emerging secular culture. Equally, it is not to perform a surreptitious style of scholarship that finds, despite Max's unambiguous protestations against religion, a cloaked form of Christianity in revolutionary politics.[48] Identifying such parallels, however, calls into question the terms through which both Max and Annis—and, behind them, a wider set of historical actors—policed the boundaries around terms like religion, secularism, science, truth, beauty, good, and evil. Whatever categorizations one applies to Max's poetics or Annis's Christianity, both figures were caught in a moment of vigorous conceptual contestation. Actors on all sides encountered religion and secularism in processes of construction and obliteration. As explained by Leigh Schmidt, "the relationship between religious and secular versions of liberalism is taken to be dynamic and mutually constitutive."[49] Rather than describing opposing ontologies, glaring at one another across a chronological divide, religion and secularism inhabit and construct one

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[48] John Lardas Modern has recently identified a problematic tendency in the "rush to identify hybrid forms" as part of an "evidentiary refutation of secularization" that fails to "address how and why religion gets made, for whom and by whom, and to what end." Such historiographies reproduce a sort of "Protestant dream of secularization" that envisions religion as "an object … of a quality that conforms to a self who chooses, decides, and eventually believes by himself and for himself." John Lardas Modern, "My Evangelical Conviction," *Religion* 42, no. 3 (July 2012): 442–443.

[49] Schmidt, "Parameters and Problematics," *American Religious Liberalism*, 3. In this, the recent effort to return to liberal religious thought and practice in U.S. historiography helps to delineate the mediating forms of expression explored in this dissertation. Schmidt continues, observing that, "[a]gnostic orator Robert Ingersoll … [thus] becomes part of the same narrative as romantic preacher Henry Ward Beecher; likewise, the secular despair of Joseph Wood Krutch's *Modern Temper* is part of the same story as the Protestant hopefulness of Shailer Mathews's *Faith of Modernism*; and the freethinking socialism of Hubert Henry Harrison shares ground in the Harlem Renaissance with the religious connections of Alain Locke (including Ethical Culture and the Bahá'í Faith)," (3).

another.

Thus, in turning attention to the ways in which this particular pair entered the fray, we gain insight into some of the implications that stemmed from their having done so. As Courtney Bender and Ann Taves write, "how people categorize their activity—whether as secular, religious, spiritual, or some variation thereof—is central to processes of valuation and meaning making."[50] Max's denunciations of religion, his shifting intellectual and political allegiances, and strong public reactions to them, signaled broader anxieties over the implications of American national identity. And Annis Eastman called for drastic revisions of marriage, gender roles, and religious identity and practice that indicated similar concerns.

In the context of this project, liberalism and radicalism constituted related forms of expression and activism, put to use by various actors for varying purposes. If we are to understand the radical bohemia of prewar Greenwich Village, we must look, at least in part, to the Protestantism that it regarded with such disdain. And if we want to understand Protestantism, we must consider the wilds below Fourteenth Street to which it gave way.[51] These worlds invented one another, at least in substantial measure. By considering their crossed purposes we gain understanding of the negotiations that surrounded religious and secular America at the turn of the twentieth century.

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[50] Ann Taves and Courtney Bender, "Introduction: Things of Value," in *What Matters? Ethnographies of Value in a Not So Secular Age*, ed. Bender and Taves, (Columbia University Press, 2012), 2.

[51] Matthew Bowman suggests a similar interpretation, although he emphasizes New York's post-1900 commercial culture as a replacement or competitor religious form to evangelical Protestantism, rather than underscoring radicalism's continuation of liberal Protestant ideas. See Bowman, *The Urban Pulpit*, 156–165.

Outline of Chapters

The dissertation's first two chapters chronicle Annis Ford Eastman's early career, from the years she spent as a student at Oberlin College through the first decade of her ordained ministry. Chapter one finds that Annis Eastman incorporated romantic and evolutionary forms of thought with the liberalizing strain of evangelicalism that she encountered in the 1870s at Oberlin and through Samuel's studies at Andover. These forms combined in a powerful expression of Christian nationalism centered in her conception of the home as engine of social change. In the 1880s, Eastman identified an emerging "womanly ideal" that called for women's equal participation in society. Through an encounter with Susan B. Anthony at Oberlin and participation in the home missions movement, Eastman perceived the possibilities of her own entry into the ministerial profession, and eventually attained ordination.

In the 1890s, as explored in chapter two, Eastman cultivated increasingly independent and liberal religious and political sensibilities that came to be centered in a notion of "self-realization," deployed primarily through arguments supporting women's political and social equality. Under this notion, she combined gender advocacy, religious ecumenism, cultural and natural aestheticism, appreciation for nature, and Darwinian evolution in her ministry and activist work, further elaborating romantic and evolutionary intellectual values.

In its third and fourth chapters, the dissertation considers the influence of Annis Eastman's thought on that of Max Eastman as he entered college and then relocated to New York City. Chapter three continues the analysis begun in the second chapter, paying attention to developments in Annis Eastman's conception of religion and its relation to society. Through exposure to new ideas at the Harvard Summer School of Theology, her notion of self-realization took on new valences of meaning, mostly in line with what she understood to be new sciences

that could incorporate spirituality in their explanations. These developed especially in connection with expanded interest in comparative religions, social reform, and New Thought mental healing techniques. Especially with respect to theories of the mind and personality, she transmitted the ideals of romantic and evolutionary thought to her son, Max, whose experiences of reading poetry and seeking New Thought therapies connected him to his mother's liberal religion and propelled him away from theism.

Chapter four shifts primary focus to Max Eastman. As he encountered new philosophies in New York City, first as a graduate student at Columbia University and then through his neighbors in Greenwich Village, he began to exert an important intellectual influence on his mother. Psychoanalysis and socialism appeared to both of them as powerful new ways for explaining experience and social reality. After Annis Eastman's death, Max Eastman echoed the inheritance of his mother's religious liberalism in reverberations of the romantic and evolutionary, expressed through notions of the complementarity of aesthetics and science in literature and politics, explained in terms of poetic realization. Max Eastman's radical critique of culture and politics thrived through its deep roots in, and parallel concerns with the thought of Annis Ford Eastman. In addition, Annis Eastman's understanding of the psychology of the self and of religion's social role shifted through contact with Max Eastman's experiments in reading Marx and Freud among his bohemian cohorts.

These lines of influence between mother and son especially reflected the larger importance of women's activism in preparing the way for Greenwich Village's social, cultural, and political experiments. The bohemian rebels "heralded the New Women as heroines of a

desirable modernity."[52] Nineteenth-century women made it possible for the New Woman of the 1910s and 1920s to arrive at center stage, even if the younger generation perceived them as outdated. The work of women reformers, clubwomen, settlement house workers, and suffragists in the 1890s provided a stable foundation on which later actors built substantial aspects of the left–liberal movement, and attached women's activism to broader concerns for liberation.[53] In the new century, as Stansell writes, "[f]eminism … was much more than the vote; it represented psychological and sexual freedom, a transformation of the self that would precede and contribute to the attainment of full political rights."[54] The late nineteenth-century women's movement, animated in significant measure by Protestant liberals, furnished many of the critiques that remained prominent in Greenwich Village's new-century revolution. And those modern rebels translated their feminist inheritance into a new language of individual experience and collective solidarity, pulling forward those participants in the latter-day women's rights movement who found the new language compelling.

Such connections have not always seemed obvious to scholars. The moral language employed by women activists before 1900 seems disconnected from the rhetoric of political radicals in the decades that followed. This perceived dissonance stems from the attitudes of the

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[52] Stansell, *American Moderns*, xi. Blanche Wiesen Cook has drawn similar emphasis to the importance of women in setting and carrying out the agenda for radicalism in the Village, in "The Radical Women of Greenwich Village: From Crystal Eastman to Eleanor Roosevelt," in *Greenwich Village: Culture and Counterculture*, edited by Rick Beard and Leslie Cohen Berlowitz (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1993), 243–257.

[53] As Doug Rossinow writes, "[d]espite the complexity and ambiguity of their class loyalties, there is good reason to see the women among the new liberals as the vanguard of this burgeoning movement in the late Gilded Age, more inclusive and adventuresome in their politics than were organizations run by men," (*Visions of Progress*, 37).

[54] Stansell, *American Moderns*, xi.

young moderns themselves, which Ann Douglas describes in stark terms: "There can be no doubt that the Victorian matriarch was scapegoated by her descendants; the ills of an entire society were laid at the door of the sex whose prestige it always held expendable."[55] But the language of realization that formed in common between Annis Ford Eastman and Max Eastman, as a sign of much broader affinities, calls into question interpretations that identify a sharp break between early twentieth-century liberal religion and radical politics, and marks common ground between Chautauqua and Washington Square.

[55] Ann Douglas, *Terrible Honesty: Mongrel Manhattan in the 1920s* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1995), 6–7. Behind this dynamic, Douglas perceives a core problem for interpreting the turn-of-the-century United States "It is easy, I think, to underestimate cultural power, particularly cultural power like the Victorian matriarch's, that is grounded largely in religious organizations, beliefs, and practices; many people today do not consider religious expression a crucial arena in a society's life. We do well to remember that neither the Victorians nor the moderns shared this appraisal. I myself believe that America's identity was, and is, at bottom, a theological and religious one; I also believe that conscious and acknowledged cultural influence, however distorting its effects when not backed by full economic and political responsibilities, is indeed power. The matriarch's authority, however the moderns exaggerated it, was the ascendant cultural force in late-Victorian America, and it did not disappear after the Great War," (6–7).

CHAPTER 1

"The Woman Ordained by Nature": Public Ministry and Annis Ford Eastman's "Womanly Ideal"

On November 11, 1889, Annis Ford Eastman dreamed "a detailed prophecy" of the local Congregational council that would ordain her the next day in the village of Brookton, New York:

> I was at the foot of a high mountain. I knew that on the other side was a company of ministers. I could see them in their long black coats and white ties: they looked very dreary, but earnest and dependable. Before me was an indistinct sort of vehicle, which I was to enter and which they were to pull up to the top of the mountain by an attachment of rope and pulleys. I hesitated to get in; for the mountain was high and rocky, and I feared the rope would break or that the ministers would not be strong enough. Yet it seemed necessary, and I entered the vehicle finally, although wofully [*sic*] and trembling. As I began slowly to rise, I lifted my fearful eyes to the summit of the mountain, and there appeared the old house which we called home. Light streamed from its open door, and in its upper windows appeared the eager faces of my three children. They were waving their hands and crying: "Don't be afraid, mother. They won't let go! They'll pull you up!"[1]

The ministers from Eastman's mountainous dreamscape did indeed "pull [her] up," ordaining her a regular minister of the Congregational Church.[2] Eastman thus became one of the first institutionally recognized clergywomen of the Congregational—or any other—denomination since Antoinette Brown Blackwell's 1853 ordination, the first ordination of a woman in the United States, sixty-five miles north of Brookton, in South Butler, New York.

More than conveying Eastman's trepidation at the near singularity of a council assembled to consecrate a woman, her dream signaled the profound significance of children and family as essential elements of her professional identity. By culminating in Eastman's arrival at home with

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[1]Annis F. Eastman, "The Making of a Woman Minister," *The Christian Register* (Boston, MA) 83, no. 14 (April 7, 1904): 374.

[2] *The Congregational Year-Book, 1890* (Boston: Congregational Sunday School and Publishing Society, 1890), 12. https://archive.org/details/congregationaly16commgoog

her children, the dream indicated both anxiety over the competing demands of ordination and motherhood, and the affirmation of her cheering children. For Eastman, the process of recognizing and acting upon her professional capabilities unfolded inseparably from the work of parenting.

In order to understand the significance of Eastman's ordination for the emergence of a common terrain between liberalism and radicalism, we must perceive it in terms of the dual focus she maintained on relating the professional and the personal. If, as Diggins asserts, Annis transfused Max's intellect with idealism, she did so as his mother, while she sought, attained, and then carried out the work of ordained ministry. Thus, this chapter describes the early sources, formation, and development of her encounter with idealism as it unfolded in relation to her pursuit of public ministry and reform activism.

Historicizing Eastman's ordination is no simple task, however. Carl Schneider and Dorothy Schneider have argued that, "[t]o trace the history of clergywomen in the latter half of the nineteenth century is to follow a thousand threads that only occasionally get woven into swatches of cloth."[3] This piecemeal historiography reflects the slow emergence of women's official recognition as religious leaders in U.S. Protestant denominations during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. From Blackwell's 1853 ordination to the turn of the century, only forty-nine Congregational women received ordination.[4] Similarly few scholarly accounts explore in

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[3] Carl J. Schneider and Dorothy Schneider, *In Their Own Right: The History of American Clergywomen* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Co., 1997), 57.

[4] Catherine Wessinger, "Key Events for Women's Religious Leadership in the United States—Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," in *Religious Institutions and Women's Leadership: New Roles inside the Mainstream*, ed. Wessinger (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996), 360.

detail the experiences of women who pursued this path, or incorporate their stories into the larger narrative of U.S. history, even though many of the first ordained women exerted significant influence in American religion and politics.[5] Redressing part of this interpretive paucity, Beverly Zink-Sawyer studies the cases of three of the best-known, first-generation American clergywomen. Examining the careers of Antoinette Brown Blackwell, Anna Howard Shaw, and Olympia Brown, she finds that they represented a shift in the interest of women preachers towards active pursuit of ordination as a recognition of their equality with men, where such figures previously had not demonstrated strong interest in ordination's official sanction.[6] Eastman, however, represents a departure from these examples, in that she sought ordination not as a demonstration of equality with male ministers, but as the facilitation of an intellectual and professional activity that she found desirable. Where Eastman fits easily alongside Zink-

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[5] Schneider and Schneider have contributed the only dedicated historical overview of women's ordination in America. Their work, however, addresses such a broad chronological scale that it gives cursory attention to the principal century during which Protestant women gained most ground in the effort to win ordination, between Brown's 1853 ordination and the 1956 decisions in the Methodist Church (USA) and Presbyterian Church (USA) to grant full ordination to women. Most other studies emphasize a small group of selected ordained women, as in Zink-Sawyer, below, or focus on women's preaching, especially among evangelical women, at the expense of interpreting ordination itself as a marker of women's professional, vocational, and personal development. This is attributable, in part, to late nineteenth-century attitudes concerning the moral stature of women and the domestic character of church life, which allowed women to gain influence as religious leaders without seeking or obtaining ordination. For studies that place less emphasis on ordination than preaching, see Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880–1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993; Catherine A. Brekus, *Strangers and Pilgrims: Female Preaching in America, 1740–1845*, Gender and American Culture (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Anthea D. Butler, *Women in the Church of God in Christ: Making a Sanctified World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Priscilla Pope-Levison, *Building the Old Time Religion: Women Evangelists in the Progressive Era* (New York: New York University Press, 2013).

[6] Beverly Zink-Sawyer, *From Preachers to Suffragists: Woman's Rights and Religious Conviction in the Lives of Three Nineteenth-Century Clergywomen*, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knows Press, 2003), 120.

Sawyer's "ecclesiastical mavericks" in some respects, her experience presents another unique model of women's religious and political activism. [7] Most distinctly, Eastman never left the pulpit for full-time suffrage activism, but balanced the two almost equally throughout her career.[8]

Reflecting a line of critique growing in force during the 1880s and 1890s, Annis Ford Eastman understood ordination as an after-the-fact recognition of skills already in evidence and use. Writing in Lucy Stone's *Woman's Journal* eighteen months after her own ordination, Eastman observed that,

> One brave young woman, I believe, has recently claimed recognition at the hands of a Council before proving her call by her labor; but all of the other women ministers, so far as known to me, have first gathered their flocks, tended, fed, shepherded them to their own blessing and content, and then asked men to sanction that upon which God had already set his seal.[9]

In this, Eastman posited the secondary significance of institutional credentialing. With limited if any access to seminary training, women proved their suitability for ministry not by attainment of professional credentials, but by accomplishing the work of ministry even without denominational endorsement. Indeed, after the turn of the twentieth century, Eastman announced a claim that some women held innate capacity for work as clergy members, declaring in 1901 that "[n]o profession offers higher opportunities of usefulness for the woman ordained by nature than does the Christian ministry."[10] In this statement, Eastman revealed a powerful critique of traditional

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[7] Ibid., 3.

[8] Ibid., ix. Evident from her title, Zink-Sawyer finds that the most striking feature of her three figures was their almost total transition from ministry to political activism.

[9] Annis Ford Eastman, "Some Women Who Preach," *Woman's Journal*, June 20, 1891.

[10] Annis Ford Eastman, quoted in Ida Husted Harper, "A Woman Minister Who Presides over a Large Eastern Church," *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 27, 1901.

understandings of gendered vocational identity and spiritual authority. Women could find professional sanction in their natural abilities rather than through the scrutiny of church councils.

Even more, Eastman's notion of the "the woman ordained by nature" reveals a primary point of connection between idealism, her conception of women's religious authority, and the changing shape of Protestant thought as liberalism gained influence in the late nineteenth century. Eastman encountered the intellectual traditions of romantic idealism and evolutionary science during her studies at Oberlin. She combined this pair of elements in reformulating an evangelical Protestant notion of the relation between self and society that held profound implications for the public participation of women in both secular and religious contexts. This chapter argues that evolution and idealism combined in such a way as to furnish Eastman with the concepts necessary to imagine a form of subjectivity that reconciled her identity as a woman and her sense of professional calling. Thus, an encounter with idealism preceded and supported Eastman's promotion of women's political and social equality in the 1890s.

During her courtship of Samuel and the early years of their marriage, Eastman's ambitions temporarily regressed, inhibited by the constraints of her duties as wife, mother, and church worker. When Samuel proved incapable of continuing his ministry due to illness, by necessity Annis stepped out of those gendered constraints in order to support her family. Eastman's way forward opened through a series of experiences that re-activated her previous ambition, by fulfilling what she termed a "womanly ideal" in ordained ministry.

This chapter traces aspects of that altered understanding as Eastman gathered and assembled them through her experiences as a student, educator, wife, mother, and preacher during the 1870s and 1880s. Through relationships and interactions with various figures—an undergraduate encounter with Susan B. Anthony, her relationship with Samuel Eastman,

parenting her children, and assisting a traveling woman home missionary—Eastman confirmed the reconciliation between gender and public ministry by observing aspects of its manifestation in their lives and, eventually, her own experience.

Eastman's attitudes about the ordination of women, and of the duty for all women to seek a useful purpose beyond the confines of the home, took shape during a period in which women actively pursued such goals through widely varying interests and strategies.[11] In particular, Eastman was formed by Congregationalism, and resisted some of its formations, in a moment of great change and possibility for the denomination and U.S. Protestantism more broadly. Notably, romantic idealism, which had begun to filter into Congregational and Unitarian theology in the 1840s and 1850s, and evolutionary scientific theories came to robust influence in Congregational institutions and publications by the 1870s. Domestic formations intertwined with conceptions of the church and with home missions. The effects of romantic idealism on expectations of gender, particularly as Eastman experienced them in her role as minister's wife and the example of women's leadership in remote regions of the U.S. West, conspired to push Eastman towards pursuit of the practice of ministry, culminating in her ordination.

Between her 1872 matriculation at Oberlin and her 1889 ordination, Eastman followed a trajectory of steadily liberalizing social and theological attitudes. Initially rooted in an evangelical grammar of conversion, piety, and moral suasion, she incorporated romantic idealism and evolutionary science in support of a renewed focus on activism that emphasized women's social and political equality. In this, Eastman's intellectual explorations were bound up with the dominant currents of Protestant thought of these years, and especially with the concerns of

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[11] See Susan Hill Lindley, *"You Have Stept Out of Your Place": A History of Women and Religion in America* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 91ff.

women's activism and Christian nationalism. They comprised a synthesis of romantic idealism, evolutionary science, and New England theology and piety in its evangelical key.

She would eventually employ the term "self-realization" to describe the essential value and aim of identity, though the concept was still forming as she progressed towards ordination. If Eastman later articulated a fully developed notion of self-realization as the ideal of social-psychological aspiration, discussed in chapters two and three below, recollections about the transformation she underwent in seeking ordination offer a record of her own sense of the individual process of realizing a more authentic and fulfilling subjectivity.

Indeed, her 1904 autobiographical account, "The Making of a Woman Minister," presents a chain of such sequential realizations that Eastman reached about her expectations of the possibilities and limitations for public religious leadership, for herself and for all women. From Oberlin College to a decade of life as a minister's wife and mother, Eastman progressively recognized her own interest in religious leadership, her skill in critical reasoning, writing, and speaking, and the approvingly evident quality of that skill to her husband and the surrounding community. Observing the oratorical skill of a woman home missionary with whom Eastman traveled, and then successfully preaching on her own, pushed Eastman over the edge of constraint towards leading a congregation and then receiving ordination as a recognition of her already proven ability.

If Eastman's autobiographical account captures the narrative lines along which her path to ordination were plotted, it more importantly points up her consciousness that social expectations about gender conditioned every point in that plot. And, in her perception, those expectations exerted force not only on her own life, but on that of her husband, her children, and all of society. She recalled, for example, that Samuel had retained a "manliness which survived

the pauperizing influences of the seminary and the pampering influences of an affectionate and wealthy church."[12] In the same way that Samuel's incapacity to continue preaching failed to nullify his "manliness," Annis's presence in the pulpit comported with her own and others' expectations of a performed "womanliness." But Eastman undertook a long journey in order to reach assurance in her role as a woman minister.

Oberlin College and the Womanliness of the Romantic–Evolutionary Self

In a December 1900 biographical sketch of "Elmira's Woman Preacher," the Buffalo, New York, *Illustrated Express* pointed to Oberlin as the source of Annis Ford Eastman's professional and political aspirations: "It was there that [she] met two persons whose influence on her life has been perpetual. One of these was Samuel E. Eastman, a young man destined for the ministry. The other was Susan B. Anthony. In effect each said to the heart of the girl, 'Come with me and I will do you good.'"[13] Eastman's brief matriculation at Oberlin would indeed carry the indelible impress of these two encounters. Her courtship of and eventual marriage to Samuel Eastman drew her close to the evangelical wing of mid-century Congregationalism on the verge of its turn towards liberalism. And the young Annis Ford's meeting with Anthony bound her to that activist's pursuit of women's political equality. More foundationally, these encounters cemented the impact of intellectual traditions that Eastman encountered at Oberlin on her understanding of gender and identity, especially romantic idealist philosophy and evolutionary

[12] Annis Ford Eastman, "Making of a Woman Minister," 372.

[13] "Elmira's Woman Preacher," *Buffalo Illustrated Express*, 16 December 1900. Max Eastman echoed this sentiment in his 1948 autobiography, writing that "[t]he two streams of pious virtue that produced me had their confluence in Oberlin, Ohio," referring to his parents meeting at the college. Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 27.

science.[14]

Two larger contextual realities, however, structured the ideas and values Sam and Annis encountered at Oberlin: the end of the Civil War, and the transformation of Congregationalism from a collection of unaffiliated individual churches into a national denomination.

Before arriving at Oberlin, Samuel Eastman had followed the ambitions of many young Northerners and enlisted in the Union army.[15] As with other members of his generation, the war shaped Eastman's conception of Christianity and its importance for ordering individual and social experience. Newman Smyth, who also served with the Union in 1864 and 1865, and who preceded Samuel at Andover by five years, drew a close link between military service and

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[14] Samuel E. Eastman, entered Oberlin College in 1867, completing the A.B. in 1872, and Annis Bertha Ford enrolled for two years in the Ladies Department, beginning in 1872. The 1872–1873 Oberlin catalog listed Annis B. Ford as a second-year student in the Ladies' Department (p. 29), and Samuel E. Eastman as a junior in the Theological Department (p. 7) and as a Latin instructor in the Preparatory Department (p. 4). *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Oberlin College for the College Year 1872–1873* (Cleveland, OH: Fairbanks, Benedict, and Co., 1872), https://archive.org/details/annualcatalogueo18721883ober. A 1909 catalog summary indicated Annis Ford as enrolled in the Preparatory Course between 1872 ad 1874 (p. 337), and listed Samuel Eastman as enrolled in the A.B. between 1867 and 1872, in the Theological Department in 1872–1873 (p. 293), and as a Latin instructor in the Preparatory Department in 1872–1873 (p. Int. 143), in *General Catalogue of Oberlin College, 1833–1908* (Cleveland, OH: O. S. Hubbell Printing Co., 1909), https://archive.org/details/generalcatalogue00oberrich.

[15] From September 1864 to June 1865, Samuel Eastman served in Company D of the 39th New York Volunteers. He contracted typhoid at Cold Harbor, Virginia, and the illness nearly destroyed his left lung. Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 17–18. Samuel Eastman's Civil War service is also recorded in the *General Catalogue of Oberlin College, 1833–1908*, p. 295, and in the *General Catalogue of the Theological Seminary, Andover, Massachusetts, 1808–1908* (Boston. MA: Thomas Todd, 1908), p. 401, https://archive.org/details/generalcatalogue00andorich. See also *Index to Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from the State of New York*, NARA Microfilm Publication no. 551 (Washington, DC: National Archives and Records Administration, 1964), roll 041; Eastman's pension record can be found in *Organization Index to Pension Files of Veterans Who Served Between 1861 and 1900*, NARA Microfilm Publication no. T289 (Washington, DC: National Archives and Records Administration, 1949), roll 321. A copy of Samuel Eastman's pension certificate after the 1907 Pension Reissue Act can be found in folder 8 ("Dad"), box 2, Eastman MSS II, LMC 2427, The Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN (hereafter Eastman MSS II).

training for ministry: "It formed the habit of thinking in contact with the realities of life. I came to doubt any thinking that was not thought out in the midst of men, in daily and close contact with human life."[16] Complex doctrinal formulae and theological controversies, which unfolded in Congregational and Reformed seminaries from the 1850s to the 1880s, held diminished sway in the wake of battles and bloodshed. After the war, for Smyth—and likely for Samuel Eastman and Annis Ford—the patterns of everyday experience provided a necessary counterbalance to policing the boundaries of orthodoxy. If Christianity was to hold importance in the late nineteenth century, the war taught, it must do so by illuminating and improving the common experiences of everyday life.

The war bequeathed more than this informal pragmatism. Molly Oshatz argues that, "[b]y offering what Northern Protestants took to be proof of the reality of providential progress, emancipation and military victory prepared the way for the development of liberal Protestantism in the North."[17] Northern victory proffered what seemed to be confirmation of moral progress to these Protestants, and seemed equally to call for channeling the benefits of that progress to the regions of the defeated South and the vast expanses of the Far West. In his 1866 inaugural

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[16] Newman Smyth, "Newman Smyth and Later Representatives of Theological Progress," in *Progressive Religious Thought in America: A Survey of the Enlarging Pilgrim Faith*, ed. John Wright Buckham (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1919), 263. This passage illustrates the task that Smyth's and Eastman's branch of American Christian theology set before itself in the wake of the war, a task which, W. Clark Gilpin asserts, "consisted in the application of a permanent, supernatural truth to an ever-changing world." Gilpin, "Redeeming Modernity: Christian Theology in Modern America," in *American Christianities: A History of Dominance and Diversity*, ed. Catherine A. Brekus and W. Clark Gilpin, Kindle Edition (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 165.

[17] Molly Oshatz, *Slavery and Sin: The Fight against Slavery and the Rise of Liberal Protestantism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 113. Ferenc Szasz, writes that postbellum Protestants confronted a trio of principal obstacles in higher criticism of the Bible, comparative understandings of religion, evolutionary scientific theory. Szasz, *The Divided Mind of Protestant America, 1880–1930*, 2.

speech as president of Oberlin, James Fairchild articulated this vision as a goal for the Ohio college: "where Eastern culture and Western enterprise might meet, and where Southern destitution opens its wide door—it seems a good point at which to look out upon the great harvest-field, and to equip for the work."[18] Here, the war appeared as the proximate event controlling perception of the school's capacities and future goals on the eve of Sam's and Annis's matriculation.

If the close of the war prepared northern Protestants with progressive expectations and marked geographies towards which to direct those expectations, Congregationalism responded with a continuation of its ongoing process of denominational reinvention. During the 1830s and 1840s, efforts at Christianizing the western United States had begun to stimulate a Congregational "denominational awakening," necessitating the formation of new educational institutions and associations, Oberlin among them. These developments provided "evidence of the dawning self-recognition of the Congregational churches" as they expanded beyond their northeastern geographic core.[19] While the Civil War had posed problems of sectionalism and slavery, detente allowed for renewed consideration of westward expansion of both church and nation, prompting new missionary attention to conditions in the South and renewed efforts at

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[18] James H. Fairchild, *Educational Arrangements and College Life at Oberlin* (New York: Edward O. Jenkins, 1866), 17. By casting Oberlin's postbellum gaze to the South and West, Fairchild reconnected with the institution's founding purpose as a home missions outpost "from which both preachers and teachers were sent out over the 'desolate valley of the Mississippi.'" Colin B. Goodykoontz, *Home Missions on the American Frontier, with Particular Reference to the American Home Missionary Society* (Caldwell, ID: Caxton Printers, 1939), 381.

[19] Williston Walker, *A History of the Congregational Churches in the United States*, The American Church History Series (New York: The Christian Literature Co., 1894), 370, 371. Walker noted the foundation of Oberlin College as a particularly auspicious sign of Congregationalism's rising self-identity, though that institution's politics and theology would propel it to the denominational margins until after the Civil War.

shoring up Congregational missions in the West.[20] As the denomination built a national identity into the 1870s, the question of home missions as a tool of institutional development stood at the center of its deliberations.

Involved in these denominational dynamics, Oberlin College stood at a complex crossroads during the 1860s and 1870s. Since its founding in 1833, the college cultivated an iconoclastic image, championing the controversial social causes of antislavery and coeducation of men and women. At the same time, the institution adopted the perfectionist theological style and innovations of Charles G. Finney, hallmarks of evangelical revivalism. Though it had been founded by dedicated Hopkinsian settlers from western Massachusetts, popular perception of both its social and theological commitments initially distanced Oberlin from the Congregational

[20] *Debates and Proceedings of the National Council, Held at Boston, June 14–24, 1865* (Boston, MA: American Congregational Association, 1866), 1. These sentiments were expressed in the concluding resolutions of an April 1864 convention of Congregational churches surrounding Chicago that prompted the General Association of Illinois to call for a national Congregational synod. Concern over Congregationalism's reputation as an outdated exponent of U.S. Protestantism led one turn-of-the-century church observer to emphasize that the denomination, "being a live organism, is progressive, and, not being fossilized by fixed law, applies its principles to new conditions as they arise." George M. Boynton, *The Congregational Way: A Hand-Book of Congregational Principles and Practices* (New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1903), 3. In his third year at Oberlin, Samuel Eastman directly witnessed the consequences of the new emphasis on domestic missions. In 1869, his father, Morgan Lewis Eastman, who had served as a New York delegate at an 1865 national council in Boston, relocated from the St. Lawrence River valley to central Wisconsin, "where he continued the life of a ministerial circuit-rider." Uprooting himself from the terrain which he had traversed as minister since his conversion experience in the "burned-over" 1830s, Morgan Eastman followed the denomination's western movement, lending his experienced years to growing efforts in the Middle West. Such denominational expansion, supported by the 1865 council, gave way to further efforts at consolidating Congregationalism into the denomination's first national agency, the National Council of Congregational Churches, formed in 1871. Morgan Eastman's participation in the council is documented in *Debates and Proceedings of the National Council of Congregational Churches*, 23, 505; Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 7.

New England establishment.[21] By the 1870s, however, with the retirement of Finney and the more moderate style of his successor—Max Eastman chided that Fairchild was "less incandescent" than Finney—the college abandoned many of its "ultraisms" and gained a degree of respectability among Congregationalists, to the extent that the college hosted the meeting of the denomination's national council in November 1871.[22]

When Samuel arrived in 1867 and Annis in 1872, Oberlin thus embodied complex institutional and intellectual intersections. More than attempting to resolve the college's denominational position, during the 1870s Oberlin underwent a sweeping intellectual reorientation that aligned the college with two especially prominent trends that had begun to emerge through the mid-nineteenth century: evolutionary science and romantic idealism. The fusion of these elements helped to set in motion Oberlin's movement from its Hopkinsian evangelical roots to its present-day reputation for secularist liberalism.

John Barnard argues that, through the 1860s and 1870s, "the College was still that of the

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[21] Allen C. Guelzo underscores the persistent links that bound Oberlin to the core of the New England Theology *à la* Jonathan Edwards, in "Oberlin Perfectionism and Its Edwardsian Origins, 1835–1870," in *Jonathan Edwards's Writings: Text, Context, Interpretation*, ed. Stephen J. Stein (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 159–174.

[22] Robert S. Fletcher, *A History of Oberlin College: From Its Foundation through the Civil War*, American Education: Its Men, Ideas, and Institutions (New York: Arno Press, 1971), 920. Fletcher identifies a moderating of political stance away from the radicalism of antislavery and Free Soil, the wider acceptance of Oberlin's coeducational model, and its theological adaptation to mainstream Congregationalism as sources of this acceptance. On the goals of the National Council, see Walker, *History of the Congregational Churches*, 409–410. Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 29. On accusations of Oberlin's "ultraist" tendencies in relation to college curricula, see James Fairchild, *Oberlin: The Colony and the College, 1833–1883* (Oberlin, OH: J. B. Goodrich, 1883), 250. On its "ultraist" stances on social questions and politics, see William B. Brown, "Ultraism and Reform," *The Oberlin Evangelist* 4, no. 2 (January 19, 1842): 12.

founders, united around its evangelical tradition and commitment."[23] This close hewing to evangelical orthodoxy, however, came mainly at the insistence of the faculty, and stood in the face of calls from students to merge theories of organic evolution with the college's theological stance. While most faculty members resisted attention to Darwinian thought, from the mid-1870s, "students asserted the compatibility of science and faith." Such attitudes among the younger generation of students "revela[ed] how … painlessly the new science was incorporated into an evangelical scheme" as the college entered the mid-1870s.[24]

More significantly, students applied evolutionary theory to conceptions of society and perceived in this method a rubric for measuring and promoting "moral progress." According to Barnard, "[s]ince Oberlin theology stressed freedom of the will in seeking salvation, the idea of the possibility of human moral progress was congenial to it."[25] Not limited to Oberlin undergraduates, the perception that scientific investigation of the natural world indicated divine immanence in nature became a hallmark of liberal Protestant thought as it percolated within evangelicalism.[26] Not only this, but the 1870s and 1880s constituted a period when many American women offered feminist interpretations of evolutionary theories of biological development.[27] Much of the energy behind later progressive reform and its attendant willingness

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[23] John Barnard, *From Evangelicalism to Progressivism at Oberlin College, 1866–1917* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1969), 33.

[24] Ibid., 50.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Jon H. Roberts, "Science and Christianity in America: A Limited Partnership," in *American Christianities: A History of Dominance and Diversity*, ed. Catherine A. Brekus and W. Clark Gilpin, Kindle edition (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 337.

[27] According to Kimberly A. Hamlin, "[n]ineteenth-century Darwinian feminists crafted a compelling case for the feminist applications of evolutionary science and for a feminist approach

to abandon old social models stemmed from the application of evolutionary understandings of science to religious and social concerns.

Romanticism held importance even more broadly as an additive element to evangelicalism that helped to produce liberal Protestant strands later in the nineteenth century.[28] Typically associated with Transcendentalism as its principal American purveyor, romantic idealism profoundly shaped evangelicalism in the mid-nineteenth century. Within

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to biological sex differences, although most of their ideas ultimately fell on deaf ears as women's rights activists shifted to focus exclusively on the vote and as professional science increasingly excluded women." Such women "learned [from Darwin's writings] to distrust dogma, tradition, and orthodoxy and, instead, view the world around them with a fresh, critical eye and demand verifiable evidence for all supposed truths." Hamlin, *From Eve to Evolution: Darwin, Science, and Women's Rights in Gilded Age America* (University of Chicago Press, 2014), 16–17.

[28] Unitarianism absorbed romantic influences more directly and with greater ease than Congregationalism. But Congregational thought incorporated definite romantic elements, perhaps most directly evident in Oberlin biblical scholar Moses Stuart's translation of Schleiermacher on the trinity. For the relevant background of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century European and British romanticism on American traditions, see Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, second ed., (1972; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press: 2004), 583–596. See also Amanda Porterfield, *The Protestant Experience in America* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2006), 93–132. Porterfield finds that romanticism furnished an experiential frame that proved attractive both to evangelicals and liberals. In her estimation, "egalitarian romantics" who "hoped to correct the abuses of industrialization…without relinquishing modern investment in human progress and material improvement" shared the same moment with "romantic conservatives" who "promoted social agendas grounded in natural hierarchies of race and gender," (97). Bowman, *The Urban Pulpit*, 94–97. James H. Nichols has contributed a more focused account of the infusion of romantic idealism into U.S. evangelical theology in *Romanticism in American Theology: Nevin and Schaff at Mercersburg* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), and Diane Apostolos-Cappadona presents an apt survey of the gendered formations of romanticism within U.S. Congregationalism in *The Spirit and the Vision: The Influence of Christian Romanticism on the Development of 19th-Century American Art* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1995), especially 13–32. George Marsden finds that, from the 1820s, American professors returning from study in German universities exerted an early romanticist influence, crossing the Atlantic with "admiration for German scholarship and increasing openness to idealist and romantic modes of thought." Especially influential among young Americans studying in Germany "were romantic ideals … of cultivating character as the goal of humanistic education." George Marsden, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 183–184.

Congregationalism, this tradition of thought worked especially profound effects on understandings of gender, childhood, and the symbolism and social function of domestic space.[29]

According to Wayne Nicholas Lobue, Oberlin's antebellum perfectionists and New England's Transcendentalists shared a set of values in common, united under the label "religious romanticism." Both groups emphasized a direct relationship between God and humans, organicism, intuition, anti-institutionalism, and social optimism.[30] Despite these shared elements, however, Oberlin demonstrated a distinct approach to romanticism in contrast to the Transcendentalists: "Theology, not philosophy, stimulated their intellects; religious emotions gained in the experiences of spiritual regeneration surpassed the aesthetic stimulation of poetry; revival tents as much as lecture halls echoed with their impassioned oratory."[31]

Annis Eastman's generation moved beyond this, losing a bit of the revival fire in their denominational accommodations, and placing greater value on the aesthetic and experiential qualities of poetry and the socially transformative possibilities of science. Romanticism emphasized literature, aesthetics, and the acts of reading and contemplation because, in Russell Goodman's analysis, "[t]he marriage of self and world requires an attitude or feeling that

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[29] Horace Bushnell's *Views of Christian Nurture and of Subjects Adjacent Thereunto* (Hartford, CT: Edwin Hunt, 1847) is the classic example of such influence.

[30] Wayne Nicholas Lobue, "Religious Romanticism and Social Revitalization: The Oberlin Perfectionists," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kansas, 1972). William Hutchison describes the importance of a "romantic generation of liberal evangelicals," led by Bushnell, for the formation of modern U.S. religious liberalism. See Hutchison, *The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976), 45. Even more, these values reflected traits that would typify religious liberalism in the late nineteenth century. Lobue's list shares much in common with the traits Hutchison associates with modernist Protestants: "adaptation, cultural immanentism, and a religiously-based progressivism," (*Modernist Impulse*, 2).

[31] Lobue, 5.

appears…as a way of apprehending the world [that results in]…an expansion of experience."[32] Practices of reading and written expression provided avenues along which experience could move between self and society.

For Lobue, apart from their common social and intellectual sources in New England, the basic tie between romantic philosophy and evangelical theology came in their shared emphasis on progress: "As religious romantics, Oberlin Perfectionists taught development of personality for the due service of the community and of God."[33] Personal perfectionism resonated with Emersonian conceptions of self-culture, stressing characteristics that Goodman names as "the 'marriage of self and world,' the human mind as a shaper of experience."[34] In this, the evangelical notion of personal holiness as a ground for social salvation mirrored the intimacy between individual and collective experience in romanticist thought. John L. Thomas, in a related construction, conceives of Emerson as "defining…a romantic revolution" during the antebellum period, in which a "faith in perfectibility" encompassed "the essentially religious notion of the individual as a 'reservoir' of possibilities," a widely popular notion among mid-nineteenth-century American Protestants.[35]

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[32] Russell B. Goodman, *American Philosophy and the Romantic Tradition* (Cambridge, 1990), 30.

[33] Lobue, 7, 13, 218. He identifies a "broadly cultural role" for romanticism, rather than its purely literary impact (24). George Marsden has observed that after the Civil War, liberal evangelicals drifted away from a supernatural interpretation of progress, toward a social progressivism. *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 50–51.

[34] Russell B. Goodman, *American Philosophy and the Romantic Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 34–35.

[35] John L. Thomas, "Romantic Reform in America, 1815–1865," *American Quarterly* 17, no. 4 (Winter 1965): 656, 658–659. An important consequence of the availability of perfectionist ideas, for Thomas, came in the "identification of individual development with true social unity...

Through its emphases on progress and perfectibility, romantic idealism cooperated with evolutionary understandings of science to promote new ways of conceiving self and society as intrinsically related. In this line, the concept that Eastman eventually named as self-realization emerged as a re-articulation of Emersonian self-culture, itself shaped through Emerson's movement away from antebellum evangelicalism.[36] As they intersected in the late nineteenth century, evolutionary theory and romantic idealism gave shape to this distinct understanding of identity. Throughout ages of struggle and adaptation, nature conditioned a "reservoir of possibilities" that presented itself in each individual, and which needed to be cultivated through experience and expression. Incorporating a tragic aspect, that reservoir of individual possibility was subject to the potential of neglect, necessitating active pursuit of self-development, both for one's own self and others in society.

In this way, idealism and evolution drew the self and the world into an intimate dialectic of encounter and transformation, a form of subjectivity that enabled Eastman to question the contradictory impulses that tensed between her attraction to professional work and social constraints on her gender. Indeed, this romantic–evolutionary model of subject formation positioned the full development of individual selfhood alongside the optimal well-being of society as parallel and mutually contingent factors. If Eastman hoped to fulfill her childhood aim of pursuing a public career, she must activate her inner well of potential through practices of self-realization. This work of self-actualization, however, required that she simultaneously

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[that] provided the bridge over which [reform-minded humanitarians] passed from self to society," (664).

[36] For Thomas, as it intersected with Transcendentalist thought, romantic perfectionism could be detected in Emerson's notion of self-culture, which "appeared as a secular amplification of the doctrine of personal holiness," (671).

reconceive the social role and position of women, whose self-realization remained constrained by the mandates of domesticity. While Eastman contemplated the first flickering forethoughts of a career in the pulpit, the groundwork of romantic–evolutionary selfhood set in place the elemental aspects of her notion of self-realization as it later took shape.

Thus, the close of the Civil War, Congregationalism's articulation as a national institution, and the emergence of a romantic–evolutionary strain of idealism formed a complex background for Annis Ford's years of study. But she arrived at Oberlin in another context of transition that gave immediate shape to her education, on the question of gender and coeducation. She enrolled at a moment when the higher education of women in any field, but especially women's access to theological education, stirred significant controversy.[37] Colleges like Oberlin, which had admitted women before the Civil War, largely did so as a function of benevolence, "in order to maximize the number of people well equipped to spread the gospel."[38] Where one of Oberlin's founding hallmarks was its admission of women to a collegiate course of study, women enrolled under a specific understanding of the gendered symbolism of education. According to Fairchild's inaugural remarks, "[t]he thought that young women must become

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[37] For an overview of institutional attitudes and policies on women's preparation for ministry in the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries, see Pamela Reed Salazar, "Theological Education of Women for Ordination," *Religious Education* 82, no. 1 (Winter 1987): 67–79; and Virginia Lieson Brereton and Christina Ressmeyer Klein, "American Women in Ministry: A History of Protestant Beginning Points," in *Women of Spirit: Female Religious Leadership in the Jewish and Christian Traditions*, ed. Rosemary Radford Ruether and Eleanor McLaughlin (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), 301–332.

[38] Andrea Lindsay Turpin, "Gender, Religion, and Moral Vision in the American Academy, 1837–1917," Abstract (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 2012). Turpin further asserts that "[c]olleges and universities did not merely reframe their evangelical Protestant heritage into a broader liberal Protestantism considered more intellectually viable and socially respectable; they also re-envisioned the moral purpose of higher education in sex-specific terms."

masculine and strong-minded by meeting with young men in the class-room and in social life, is an impeachment of divine wisdom."[39] Thus, most women did not enroll in the regular undergraduate curriculum, but instead were taught under the auspices of a dedicated Ladies Department, in connection with the college's Preparatory Department.[40]

Decades before Annis enrolled, Antoinette Brown gained infamy for challenging Oberlin's prohibition on women's full access to theological training.[41] "In the Theological Department," Elizabeth Cazden writes, women "were most welcome to reap the benefits of its teaching by sitting in on classes, as long as their only goal was self-improvement." As elsewhere in the college, however, "in classes and in extracurricular activities, women were prohibited from speaking in mixed groups."[42] In an attempt to alter the position of women in Oberlin's overall culture, and more practically, to train themselves in the discipline of rhetoric from which they were excluded, Brown collaborated with her cohort Lucy Stone and other female students to form the Ladies Literary Society in 1846. At its meetings, members and guests delivered orations and debated theological, social, and political questions.

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[39] Fairchild, *Educational Arrangements and College Life at Oberlin*, 15.

[40] Elizabeth Cazden explains that, between 1833 and 1836, the college admitted women only to its literary curriculum, leading to a diploma, and disallowed their enrollment in the classical curriculum, which led to an undergraduate degree. By the 1840s, two thirds of women chose the literary course, with thirty percent seeking a degree. Elizabeth Cazden, *Antoinette Brown Blackwell: A Biography* (Old Westbury, NY: The Feminist Press, 1983), 25.

[41] Brown's efforts to participate fully in Oberlin's educational program are discussed in Cazden, 21–34.

[42] Cazden, 37, 26. Another scholar college women at Oberlin not only absorbed the rhetorical models, but demanded to practice what they had learned. This meant that women sought the podium, a step perceived by the times as contrary to the very essence of womanliness." LeeAnna M. Lawrence in "The Teaching of Rhetoric and Composition in Nineteenth-Century Women's Colleges," (Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 1990).

While women had not gained degree-earning access to the Theological Department by 1872, the implications of Brown and Stone's protest were still felt. During her two years in the Ladies Department, Annis Ford served as president of the literary society.[43] It was in this capacity that, one evening, she found herself in Susan B. Anthony's room at the Park House Hotel in Oberlin. As reported years later by Buffalo's *Illustrated Express*,

> Mrs. Eastman was not eighteen when she first met Miss Anthony. The famous woman suffragist was engaged to lecture at Oberlin College before a literary society of which the young girl was president, and as president it was her duty to introduce the speaker to the audience. Referring to this about two years ago in a little circle of women…Mrs. Eastman said: "I had never done a thing of the kind in my life and I was in great trepidation. In the afternoon I called at the hotel in my official capacity to see Miss Anthony. I went up to her room feeling as awkward as an unaccustomed girl can when she meets a strange celebrity. But I never had a better or more informal time in my life. Miss Anthony was very nice to me. She showed me her clothes and, of course, I fell in love with her at once!"
>
> "Showed you her clothes!" exclaimed one or two with great animation.
>
> "Yes," continued Mrs. Eastman, much as if she had just returned from the hotel and were relating her experience to her classmates, "someone had just given her an India shawl and she was pleased as could be. And she had some other nice things. It was a great delight to me to find her so womanly."[44]

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[43] Fletcher, *A History of Oberlin College*, 762–763. See also Emilie Royce Comings and Francis J. Hosford, "The Story of L.L.S., the First Woman's Club of America," *Oberlin Alumni Magazine* 13, no. 2 (November 1926), 10–13, which records Eastman's membership in the Oberlin literary societies, though not specifying which she led.

[44] "Elmira's Woman Preacher," *Buffalo Illustrated Express*, December 16, 1900; reprinted as "Rev. Annis Ford Eastman," *Elmira Daily Gazette and Free Press*, December 20, 1900. Eastman may have met Anthony previously in 1870, though I have found no indication that she remembered such an encounter. Max Eastman wrote that his mother had introduced Anthony during a suffrage campaign in Peoria, Illinois, during that year. Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of* Living, 25. A letter from Ada Stewart to Max Eastman, mentions Anthony's presence in Peoria on March 31, 1870 to debate a Prof. Hewitt, but does not indicate Annis Ford's participation. See Ada Stewart to Max Eastman, April 28, 1948, box 2, folder 12, Eastman Manuscripts I, LMC 1301, The Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN (hereafter Eastman MSS I). Anthony was in brief residence at Peoria to debate Edwin C. Hewett, a professor of history and geography at Illinois State Normal University, though no mention of Ford has been located. See John W. Cook and James V. McHugh, *A History of the Illinois State Normal University* (Bloomington, IL: Pantagraph Printing, 1882), 47. The Anthony-Hewett debate was reported nationally. See, for example, the Sacramento, California, *Daily Union*, April 4, 1870. Ida Husted Harper, *The Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony*, vol. 1 (Indianapolis, IN:

The topic of the suffrage leader's remarks is not known. Perhaps she countered the anti-suffrage arguments of Fairchild, published in *Woman's Right to the Ballot* (1870). Whatever its content, her direction of attention towards the Oberlin women comports with Anthony's interests during this decade. Kathi Kern explains that Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton both despised the male monopoly on religious leadership, and both sought to activate religious women as pro-suffrage promoters.[45] Encouraging women who attended an evangelical college to pursue the aims of political equality matched the activist pair's hope to match religious fervor with practical political activism.

For Eastman, however, the intimate meeting with Anthony revealed a far more powerful insight: work as a political activist had not eliminated Anthony's womanliness. Victorian constructions of gender presented a strict binary of male and female, and transgressions against this code met with complete condemnation.[46] As reflected in Fairchild's remarks above, society worried that, through active participation in the public sphere, women would "become masculine and strong-minded," negating the submissive piety ascribed to their gender. To the contrary, one of the most publicly assertive women in the nation retained interest in shawls and other "nice

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Bowen-Merrill Co., 1899), 345; Orvin P. Larson, *American Infidel: Robert G. Ingersoll, a Biography* (New York: Citadel Press, 1962), 102.

[45] Kathi Kern, "'I Pray with My Work': Susan B. Anthony's Religious Journey," in *Susan B. Anthony and the Struggle for Equal Rights*, ed. Christine L. Ridarsky and Mary M. Huth (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2012), 95–97. Cazden indicates Anthony's opposition to Blackwell's ordination two decades before meeting Annis Ford (86).

[46] Margaret Bendroth writes that, "[b]y the nineteenth century, gender defined the entire person. …For Victorian Protestants, there was no question that women were female in every possible way—physically, mentally, and especially spiritually." In Bendroth, "The Disenchantment of Women: Gender and Religion at the Turn of the Century (1865–1930)," in *Figured in the Carpet: Finding the Human Person in the American Past*, ed. Wilfred M. McClay (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2007), 171.

things," even while denouncing the social ills of misogyny. The simple symbolism of Anthony's continued sartorial concern allayed Annis's anxieties concerning her purportedly risked womanliness, and suggested the possibility of her own eventual role as a preacher and lecturer. As discussed below, in chapter two, Anthony would later recognize Eastman's gifts when the two shared the platform at a national suffrage convention.

Annis's time at Oberlin, though short-lived, marked her as a participant in the changing intellectual and religious commitments of the Gilded Age, and propelled her on a trajectory towards religious liberalism and progressive reform activism. The pair of years she spent in the Ladies Department connected Eastman with a form of idealism that sustained her efforts to gain professional stature, and that planted seeds of an identity that would develop through a transformed understanding of gender and public authority.

Domestic Constraint and Professional Ambition

Anthony's example was only the first of a pair of encounters at Oberlin that fundamentally altered Annis Ford's course in life. Her meeting of Samuel Eastman, the relationship they sustained until her death, and the family life they developed, exerted a primary force on Annis's pursuit and fulfillment of ministry. Indeed, her initial acknowledgement of a desire to seek a preaching vocation came in connection with her relationship to Samuel. Later in life, she described their meeting at Oberlin in this way:

> [I]t began … when I tried to teach him to dance, and he corrected my Greek exercises in that first winter. Everything might have been different if the people on the lower floor of the boarding-house hadn't complained of the noise of the dancing lessons. That threw us back upon Greek, and then theology; for it was New Testament Greek that we read. It lead [*sic*] to long arguments about the 'doctrines,' which I thought he understood and could explain to me. But those we had to give up,…because our affection wasn't strong enough to bear the strain.[47]

[47] Annis Ford Eastman, "The Making of a Woman Minister," *The Christian Register* (Boston, MA) 83, no. 14 (7 April 1904), 372.

Not permitted to match wits with male students in the classroom, Annis challenged Sam to disagree in the intimate space of the boarding house parlors. And from the simple experience of an undergraduate flirtation, they agreed to marry after Samuel finished preparations for ministry at Andover Theological Seminary. While he undertook a bachelor of divinity degree, Annis worked for a year as a schoolteacher in Erie, Pennsylvania, where she remained conscious of the fact that she lacked access to the theological training Samuel received at Andover.

Annis expressed this awareness in terms of the rhythms and emotions of their courtship. During the winter before they married, Annis wrote to Sam. Through the lines of her letter, she imagined her way into Samuel's room in Andover's Phillips Hall, and wondered whether he thought of her behind the stacked volumes and notepaper sheaves: "His eyes do not wander from the page to where I sit alone. Shall I mourn that I am forgotten?" These questions stirred a deeper concern, less about Sam's attentiveness than Annis's purpose and ambitions: "Is there a *work* for me to do? Anywhere in the world is there a work that needs *me*? But I must wait for the book to close. In this one room are my life and my world, my work and *my love*…"[48] Looming before a still-young Annis Ford, both the obligations and the promises of a settled household seemed set to govern her destiny, and to frustrate her plan to "earn a living in competition with men." Her earlier determination to pursue a life of work beyond house and home had not dissipated, but had moved to the background of her concern.

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[48] Annis Bertha Ford to Samuel E. Eastman (February 20, 1875), quoted in Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 37. The previous autumn, Annis wrote to Sam to tell him of her uncertainty: "My doubts must come so long as I am myself I guess, but you know the magic spell that will soon dispel them. They can not live long in the sunshine of love—I'm living every day in Love's sunshine, am I not?" Annis Bertha Ford to Samuel Eastman, October 21, 1874, box 2, folder 2 ("Mother's and Father's Love Letters"), Eastman MSS II.

While Annis experienced frustration and disappointment at her lack of access to seminary education or other professional training, in the tradition of Antoinette Brown Blackwell, she also contested that limitation by educating herself through Samuel's lecture notes and textbooks once they married.[49] After his graduation from seminary, Annis read the book of notes Samuel took while attending Edwards Amasa Park's famous lectures on "The Atonement," through which, she recalled, "I was living over with him those cloistered years in the theological seminary that made him a minister."[50]

During the early years of her marriage to Samuel, Annis encountered numerous other challenges to her hopes of attaining an independent living. In her years at Oberlin, Eastman had vowed to make something of herself in a public career. By attempting to do so within the context of marriage, however, she risked "the foundering of female ambition for an independent public

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[49] Unlike Blackwell, however, when it came time for Eastman to decide whether or not to attend seminary before seeking a church position, she chose to pursue the latter directly. As she recalled it years later, the decision was a question of whether she should "[take] a course of study at a theological seminary,—not that she could win a degree, but that she might deserve it,—or should she begin by beginning?" (Annis Ford Eastman, "The Making of a Woman Minister," 373). Whether or not referring to Blackwell, Eastman clearly understood the politics of women's professional education and challenged institutional legitimacy by sidestepping the sanction of academic credentials.

[50] Annis Ford Eastman, "Making of a Woman Minister," 374. Annis Eastman's informal absorption of German idealist thought, from Park's Andover lecture notes, exposed her to what Kuklick terms the "self-realization ethic" of idealism as it took shape in the New Theology's surpassing of the New England Theology, (*Churchmen and Philosophers*, 199). This oblique exposure to Park's theology offers further evidence of the complicated relationship Eastman held with religious liberalism early in her professional and theological development. Where Oberlin had provided ties to evolutionary science and romantic philosophy—both mediated through the college's thick evangelicalism—her exposure to Andover and Park likewise prevented an immediate transition to Harvard-style liberalism and eventual Unitarianism, which she adopted in her intellectual maturity. Since its founding in 1808 as a bulwark against the unitarian heterodoxy of Harvard, Andover constituted "the Congregational church's showcase conservative institution." Gary Dorrien, *The Making of American Liberal Theology*, vol. 1, *Imagining Progressive Religion, 1805–1900* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Know, 2001), 293. But Oberlin and Andover opened access to a widening stream of religious liberalism.

role upon the rocks of sacred maternal obligation."[51] Margaret Lamberts Bendroth has argued that a "redemptive family ideal" developed in the antebellum period and was extended during the remainder of the nineteenth century, only transforming in the early twentieth century.[52] In the decades after the Civil War, Protestants elevated the home to a position of ultimate importance for exerting a moral force on society. Protestant missionaries, reformers, and teachers, especially, "saw the home, and to a similar extent the church, as mediating institutions within a larger social whole, simultaneously occupying both sacred and secular space, the private as well as the public sphere."[53] Responsibility for maintenance of the home and church fell almost exclusively to women, and drew intensely on their mental and physical energies. Eastman's role as minister's wife intensified her association with this notion of redemptive domesticity, and exerted strenuous demands on her time and attention.[54]

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[51] Patricia Grimshaw, "'Christian Woman, Pious Wife, Faithful Mother, Devoted Missionary': Conflicts in Roles of American Missionary Women in Nineteenth-Century Hawaii," *Feminist Studies* 9, no. 3 (Autumn 1983): 492.

[52] Margaret Lamberts Bendroth, *Growing Up Protestant: Parents, Children, and Mainline Churches* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 14. In even more specific terms, Bendroth terms this formation as a "Victorian model of redemptive domesticity," (13). Colleen McDannell, has described these dynamics similarly, using the term "Domestic Protestantism." See McDannell, "Parlor Piety: The Home as Sacred Space in Protestant America," in *American Home Life, 1880–1930: A Social History of Spaces and Services*, ed. Jessica H. Foy and Thomas J. Schlereth (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992), 172.

[53] Bendroth, *Growing Up Protestant*, 39.

[54] Leonard Sweet argues that the role of minister's wife proved attractive to women who wished to perform the duties of ministry but were prevented from doing so by prohibitions on women's education and ordination. Sweet, *The Minister's Wife: Her Role in Nineteenth-century American Evangelicalism* (Philadelphia : Temple University Press, 1983), 3–11. Susan Hill Lindley identifies "drawbacks" to the role: "Congregations came to see them as automatic, unpaid labor; they were often expected to set a perfect example of female piety, industry and modesty, fulfilling church and domestic demands with minimal income…" In "*You Have Stept Out of Your Place*," 69.

A letter survives from 1876 to detail some of Annis's experience while assisting Samuel at his first post-seminary church assignment in Swampscott, Massachusetts. "So I am married, and my life has received its triumphant, full answer," she wrote to a childhood friend from Peoria, Grace Bill. "And I'm a minister's wife—and it's beautiful to have such opportunities of helping people and helping the minister."[55] As a wife, and a minister's wife, Eastman set about the work of fulfilling both roles. She described leading a class of girls in studying English literature, overseeing a children's missionary circle, and assuming responsibility for a nearby school through the activities of the women's missionary society, officially serving as Directress of the Swampscott Auxiliary Society of the Woman's Board of Missions and Vice President of the South Essex Conference Association.[56] Outside the congregation, temperance reform had captured Eastman's attention. "Our town like many in New England is now the scene of a great Temperance revival. It is unlike any Temperance work I ever saw or heard before." The women of the town had formed a temperance union and had begun raising funds to support the activities of the local reform club. "I feel a new interest in the Temperance cause. Do you realize how the world would be lifted up if universal temperance reigned? New England is awake on the subject and some parts of the West seem to be also." Not only had Eastman taken up her duties as minister's wife in leading groups of women and children, but she also attended to the good order of her family's home, even tending "a heliotrope and geranium in bloom and a happy little pink

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[55] Annis Ford Eastman to Grace Bill, February 1, 1876; box 1, folder 1 ("Mother's Significant Letters"), Eastman MSS II.

[56] "Report of South Middlesex Conference Association," 113; and "Report of South Middlesex Conference Association," 93, in *Eighth Annual Report of the Woman's Board of Missions* (Boston, MA: Rand, Avery, and Co., 1876).

oxalis."[57] It seemed that Annis Eastman would cultivate the conventional life of a woman married to a minister. Despite this, Eastman struggled to reconcile her domestic responsibilities with her cultivation of intellect and professional skill, sometimes at great emotional cost.

Between 1877 and 1883, Eastman gave birth to four children, setting up house and assisting in ministry as Samuel moved the family between church assignments in Massachusetts, Kentucky, and New York State. In 1881, after this period of frequent relocation, the Eastmans settled in Canandaigua, New York, situated between Rochester and Syracuse.[58] Describing the balance of work between his parents in the early years of their marriage, Max explained that Annis "kept house for him [Samuel], bore him four children, and helped him with his sermons—helped him almost like magic, for she could write so fluently and fast."[59] Fitting in intellectual exercise wherever possible, Annis became a substantial contributor of Samuel's sermons.

Among the work of managing households and leading churchwomen, dark clouds settled over Annis and her family in this period. Annis's sister Elmina, who had lived with them during their first years of marriage, committed suicide in 1877, leaving Annis to take in and raise two newborn nephews.[60] The attending emotional and financial strain added to the newlyweds' stresses, but an even more devastating loss shifted the fortunes of the family more permanently.

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[57] Annis Ford Eastman to Grace Bill, February 1, 1876.

[58] Samuel Eastman's church appointments varied as follows: Swampscott, MA (January 1876 to March 25, 1878); Newport, KY (April 7, 1878 to 1879); Marlboro, MA (1880 to 1881); Canandaigua, NY (November 16, 1881 to September 23, 1886); No appointment from 1886 to 1893, the period of Annis Eastman's early career; Elmira, NY (1894 to 1925), shared as a joint appointment between Annis and Samuel Eastman until her death in 1910. See "Statistics—Massachusetts," *Congregational Quarterly* 20, no. 1 (January 1878): 135; "Quarterly Record: Members Installed," *Congregational Quarterly* 20, no. 3 (July 1878): 485.

[59] Max Eastman, "The Hero as Parent," 3.

[60] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 40.

Nineteen months after the birth of her youngest child, Max, Annis suffered the death of her oldest child, Morgan, in July 1884.

The loss of their son proved deeply traumatic for the Eastmans, and stirred doubt in Annis as to the suitability of her interest in learned ministry. She related the story of Morgan's illness and death in one of the earliest surviving examples of her sermons. Annis described the crushing guilt she experienced over her attempts to balance intellectual pursuit and motherhood. Referring to herself in the third person, she wrote: "Happy had it been for her if in the months of her glad anticipation she had been preparing herself to nurture her babe—rather than in pouring over her Latin and Greek books in the study. Poor first born babies of ignorant mothers!"[61] It seemed that the redemptive family ideal threatened to obliterate those who questioned its boundaries.

In the wake of Morgan's death, both Annis and Samuel suffered from poor physical health as they grieved the loss of their son. After nearly a year in this condition, Annis regained her strength, though Samuel's condition worsened. His illness, initially thought to be the recurrence of a lung injury suffered at the Battle of Cold Harbor, grew to such severity that he relinquished his church position altogether. Where Annis had written his sermons as his health declined, "on August 9, 1886, she wrote for him his resignation."[62]

No longer bound by the constraints demanded of a minister's wife, Eastman returned to

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[61] Annis F. Eastman, "Seven Times One: A Brief Memorial of a Short Life," 5. ts., n.d., box 1, folder 3, Eastman MSS. II. The manuscript of the sermon is including in the folder, following the typescript. Describing his mother's emotional torment after Morgan's death, Max quoted from her diary decades later: "'Only once,' she wrote in her private diary, 'has Morgan come to me in a dream. Finding me in trouble, sorrowing, he threw his arms around my neck and with such a radiant face said: "All four of us, Mamma, all four of us!" ' " Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 50–51.

[62] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 52.

her previous work as an educator, securing a position teaching history and English at the nearby Granger Place boarding school. By returning to regular professional work, Eastman recovered the footing of her earlier ambition. In Max's description, Annis "was not only stimulated to brave effort by her husband's collapse, but also liberated into her own earlier and more eager self."[63] Still, this liberation exacted a cost. By leaving home to teach, she relinquished primary responsibility for the care and instruction of her children. Recalling this changed dynamic years later, Annis's daughter Crystal published this memory of a typical morning routine:

> We are standing, my brother and I, in front of a run-down farmhouse on the edge of the town which had become our home. We have just said goodbye to our mother and now we are watching her trip off down the hill to the school where she goes every day to teach. She turns to smile at us—such a beaming smile, such a bright face, such a pretty young mother. When the charming, much-loved figure begins to grow small in the distance, my brother, who is younger and more temperamental than I, begins to cry. He screams as loud as he can, until he is red in the face. But he cannot make her come back. And I, knowing she will be worried if she hears him, try to drag him away.[64]

If Annis meant to attain her goal of a competitive public career, such experiences of departure revealed that she would also have to redefine motherhood. Eastman inherited the image that Victorian domesticity projected, of the home "as a type of middle-class utopia" formed at the

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[63] Ibid., 55.

[64] Anonymous [Crystal Eastman]. "Mother-Worship." *The Nation* 124, no. 321 (March 16, 1927): 283–284. Max Eastman records a similar memory in *Enjoyment of Living*, 62. This chapter also contends with the consensus interpretation of the influence of childhood domestic life on Max Eastman's radicalism. William Dunkel argues that Max experienced an upbringing "totally conventional in ethical and moral matters." Dunkel, "Between Two Worlds," 43. He asserts that "[i]n the process of interpreting life for Max through the concepts of practical idealism, absolute morality, and proper genteel behavior, his family also laid the foundation of a crippling neurosis which plagued Eastman in his relationships with women for many years. Much of his radicalism, as we shall see, was an effort to liberate himself from the repressive moralism which he so thoroughly internalized as a child," (43–44). See also Dunkel, 24–29, 40–44, and 53–56. This reading of Max's childhood takes into insufficient account the contributions Annis Eastman made towards enabling Max to question moral codes and social norms, and does not acknowledge his own perception of Annis as a revolutionary in her own context.

crossing between female submission and moral perfection.[65] The experiences of her first decade of marriage shattered that image, and led Eastman to question its value, contest its legitimacy, and eventually discard it through adoption of self-realization as the household's primary product. In order to conceptualize that new ideal, Eastman had further ground to cover towards redefining her concept of gender.

Home Missions and the "Womanly Ideal"

On the afternoon of June 6, 1888, Annis Eastman delivered an address to young women attending the annual meeting of the American Home Missionary Society in Saratoga Springs, New York. Exhorting the girls to "Have Salt in Yourselves," Eastman sought to instruct her audience on the means and implications of cultivating authentic motives for lending support to the home missions movement.[66] More than a routine exhortation in support of the missionary enterprise, however, the lecture offered an extended reflection on the conditions of identity that women encountered in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

Framing her thoughts in the mode of intergenerational mentoring, Eastman began by explaining that she sought to "gather up the secrets we have learned and pour them out upon those who stand 'Where the brook and river meet, / Womanhood and childhood fleet.'" Quoting Longfellow's poem, "Maidenhood," Eastman invoked one of the most often-cited stanzas in Victorian literature to situate her topic in relation to the transition between girlhood and

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[65] McDannell, *The Christian Home in Victorian America, 1840–1900* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 49.

[66] "The Saratoga Meeting," *The Home Missionary* 61, no. 3 (July 1888): 152. This lecture is the only text authored by Eastman before her ordination that I have located. It was published as Annis F. Eastman, "Have Salt in Yourselves," *The Home Missionary* 61, no. 3 (July 1888): 163–167, and as pamphlet no. 89 by the AHMS (New York, n.d.), printed at their Bible House facility on Astor Place in Manhattan, five blocks from Washington Square.

womanhood.[67] The lecture thus announced itself as an act of disclosure, of handing down hard-earned insight to younger women in need of guidance.

Not merely recounting women's duties to church and home, however, Eastman outlined a modern imperative for her audience:

> We see that the river of womanhood to-day is not what it was a thousand, nor one hundred years, nor even fifty years ago. It can no longer flow only in sheltered places among the shadows of the home trees, it must pass out into the world's dusty highways, it must help do the world's work—it must carry its crystal waters and its song of peace into the crowded mart and the busy highway. It is no longer enough for woman to suffer in silence, to cry to Him who seeth in secret, for the sins and sorrows of their native land and the world,—the call for action has been heard and women have arisen to obey it.[68]

She emphasized the immediacy of her moment in the late 1880s by situating her own time in epochal terms. As Eastman experienced a personal revitalization by resuming her efforts to gain professional stature, she understood that effort as both suspended in a period of social transformation and linked to the fortunes of her young auditors. "You are a nineteenth—nearly a twentieth—century girl, and new times bring new duties. You cannot escape the womanly ideal of the latter part of the nineteenth century."[69]

In this, Eastman voiced in the imperative the sentiments of many other women within the culture of late-Victorian Protestantism. As David Hackett explains, beginning in this decade especially, new consumer economic habits exerted pressure on gendered social roles. For Protestant women, "a strong contradiction emerged between the womanhood ideals of piety and submission and their actual experience of power and influence through participation in a variety

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[67] Annis Ford Eastman, "Have Salt in Yourselves," 1. On Longfellow, see Sarah Bilston, *The Awkward Age in Women's Popular Fiction, 1850–1900: Girls and the Transition to Womanhood*, Oxford English Monographs (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 4–7.

[68] Annis Ford Eastman, "Have Salt in Yourselves," 2.

[69] Ibid., 2–3.

of evangelical ministries."[70] The "river of womanhood" that Eastman described had begun to run in unexpected tributaries of activism, and the pressure of its current surged in unpredictable directions, promising to overflow the traditional banks of respectable reform. Through the evolutionary idealism of her Oberlin experience, and Susan Anthony's example of activist womanliness, Eastman indeed felt confident in the moral progress of modern womanhood.

As she continued her remarks, however, Eastman revealed the incremental and cautious nature of her own progress along that river. Perhaps aiming to satisfy the brief of her mission-conference sponsors, the remainder of Eastman's lecture emphasized traditional themes of individual piety and American Christian nationalism, urging her audience "to claim America, not for Americans,…but for Christ, and thus Christ for the world." [71]

Still, in her discussion of piety, Eastman urged the young women to adopt a romantic–evolutionary self. Quoting a passage from the July 9, 1833 entry in Emerson's "Journal Q," she explained that "[a]ll young persons thirst for a real existence, for an object, for something great and good, which they shall do with all their heart."[72] In the classic affective style of romantic Protestant devotionalism, Eastman tied this search for vital experience, for the savor of "salt," to spiritual intimacy: "Take Christ into yourself, and you will need no man to teach you the

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[70] David G. Hackett, "Gender and Religion in American Culture, 1870–1930," *Religion and American Culture* 5, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 130.

[71] Annis Ford Eastman, "Have Salt in Yourselves," 2. Home and foreign mission projects in the United States had long stood in support of national expansion and solidification of national identity. See, for example, Wendy J. Deichmann Edwards, "Forging an Ideology for American Missions: Josiah Strong and Manifest Destiny," in *North American Foreign Missions, 1810–1914: Theology, Theory, and Policy*, ed. Wilbert R. Shenk, Studies in the History of Christian Missions (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2004), 163–191.

[72] Annis Ford Eastman, "Have Salt in Yourselves," 9. For the original, see Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. William H. Gilman, *et al*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964), 76.

meaning of Life—nor to paint for you the glory of service to humanity."[73] If modern womanhood actualized the romantic marriage of self and world, it followed a path through personal spiritual development.

As she delivered these hopeful remarks, in her own life Eastman confronted challenges that women faced who wished to follow the unpredictable directions of that womanly ideal, which she worked to realize. Capable of writing her husband's sermons even while lacking the seminary credential supposedly requisite to do so, she was not permitted to preach. Capable of delivering lectures to crowds of young women, she questioned her ability to preach in front of mixed adult congregations. Eastman's confidence wavered even while she remained aware of the revolution in gender norms unfolding around her.

All this changed seven months later. In late January 1889, the New York Home Missionary Society undertook a campaign "with the purpose of arousing the interest of the people by the story of frontier missionary life and hardships as told by one fresh from the field." The Society selected a husband-and-wife team from Dakota Territory, Andrew Jones Drake and Mary Eveline Drake, to speak on a tour of thirty-eight churches, accompanied by Annis Ford Eastman, then serving as vice president of the Woman's Home Missionary Union of New York.[74]

In the 1904 autobiographical account of her journey to ordination, though she never

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[73] Annis Ford Eastman, "Have Salt in Yourselves," 11. Eastman's arguments proved effective in at least some circles. One mission society participant, previously recalcitrant in offering donations for the missions cause, "handed a contribution to [the board] treasurer" after hearing Eastman's lecture. "Our Society," *The Home Missionary* 61, no. 6 (October 1888): 296.

[74] "New York Home Missionary Society," *The Home Missionary* 62, no. 3 (July 1889): 116–117; "New York State," *The Home Missionary* 62, no. 6 (October 1889): 276. https://archive.org/details/homemissionaryma62amer

named Mary Drake, Eastman credited the time she spent with the Drakes as a significant source of her decision to pursue a preaching vocation. She recalled a conversation with Samuel, disabled by illness, upon her return from the tour:

> As the minister lay on his couch one day…I told him of my recent trip through the churches of the State in the interest of home missions. I had been traveling with a bright Western woman, a pioneer home missionary, to talk about the general subject of missionary work while she rested from her brilliant tale of experiences on the frontier. It was a strange experience, that trip through the churches, and taught me…that a man may enjoy hearing his wife talk even if he is a talker himself. For the home missionary was accompanied by her husband, who is a preacher, and whose delight and pride in her speeches, although he heard the same ones every night during the season, gladdened my heart. …As I sat by the invalid's couch, amusing him with the tale of these travels, a thought suddenly came to me which I as suddenly expressed, although only in fun,—"Sam, I believe *I'll* preach!" It had the effect of a galvanic shock. The minister raised himself right up and said, with almost solemn earnestness, yet with the dazed air of one making a surprising discovery, "It's what you were made for!"[75]

Eastman was struck by Andrew Drake's delight in hearing Mary preach, and hoped for a similar reaction from Samuel. In Mary Drake, Eastman observed a woman exemplifying the paradigmatic romantic individual, unrestrained and struggling to spread Anglo-American Christian civilization across the frontier.[76] Regarding Drake in this way raised the question for

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[75] Annis Ford Eastman, "The Making of a Woman Minister," *The Christian Register* (7 April 1904), 372–373.

[76] Still, Eastman preceded Mary Drake in ordination by thirteen months; Drake was ordained on December 18, 1890 in Iroquois, SD. *Congregational Year-Book* 40 (1917): 480. Six months before her journey with Eastman, Drake had written in dramatic fashion to the New York mission women, calling for their aid: "Dear Sisters, Greeting! Sorry I cannot be with you. Must stay by the stuff. Oh, woman, great is your privilege. Send us help to hold our country for Christ. New fields are opening. If you cannot come to the front, *send those who can*. The Master calls you to do this for his sake." In "Gleanings," *The Home Missionary* 61, no. 3 (July 1888): 168. Drake published an extensive description of her experiences in Dakota Territory in Mary Eveline McArthur Drake, *Fanny's Autobiography: A Story of Home Missionary Life on the Frontier* (Boston: Congregational Sunday-School and Publishing Society, 1894). *Congregational Year-Book* 40 (1917), 462, indicates a death date of March 5, 1916 for Mary E. Drake Norton. Drake was profiled in *A Woman of the Century: Fourteen Hundred Seventy Biographical Sketches Accompanied by Portraits of Leading American Women in All Walks of Life*, s.v., "Drake, Mrs.

Annis of how her ambition to work in the world and her skill at speaking might be put to use. Drake proved especially impactful because her example answered Annis's anxieties about gender expression, as had Anthony at Oberlin. Both remained sufficiently "womanly" despite their entrance into independent public activism. In this way, the pulpit became attractive to Eastman, but so did the suffrage platform.

In addition to her skill as a preacher, Drake abetted Eastman's hope to carry out a public ministry through her status as missionary in the Far West. As denominations directed greater resources to the region during and after Reconstruction, they sent scores of women to work as teachers in mission schools, supporting new communities as settlers arrived from the East. According to Susan Hill Lindley, in the context of postbellum home missions, in the remote spaces of the frontier, women educators "found in their teaching an adventure, a career, and a religious vocation."[77]

Eastman's attraction to home missions in the 1880s touched upon one of the most popular movements within nineteenth-century U.S. Protestantism, especially stirred after Josiah Strong published his 1885 "manifesto for home missions," *Our Country*.[78] Congregational missionary

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Mary Eveline," ed. Frances E. Willard and Mary A. Livermore, 259 (New York: Charles Wells Moulton, 1893).

[77] Lindley, 93.

[78] Josiah Strong, *Our Country: Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis* (New York: Baker and Taylor, 1885). The appellation for Strong's book is Wendy J. Deichmann's, in Wendy J. Deichmann Edwards, "Forging an Ideology for American Missions: Josiah Strong and Manifest Destiny," in *North American Foreign Missions, 1810–1914: Theology, Theory, and Policy*, ed. Wilbert R. Shenk, Studies in the History of Christian Missions (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2004), 163. As Deichmann Edwards observes, Strong's widely popular book could lay claim to originality neither in title nor argument, but relied substantially upon mid-nineteenth century publications from the Congregational American Home Missionary Society, (Deichmann Edwards, 164).

efforts in the Far West, in particular, provided a vibrant palette from which she could envision a role for women's religious leadership. The denomination's home missions advocates looked to the West as the source of the church's future. Preaching on the value of western missions in 1871, Samuel Bartlett asserted that the leaders of the New England establishment "have hardly yet waked to the fact that the Congregationalism west of Lake Erie is to be a national force."[79] Even more, in addition to Mary Drake, Congregational women like Emma Newman and Eva Emery Dye found their way to public ministry along the region's missionary trails, manifesting many of the ideals central to romanticist thought.[80] Such women imagined the frontier and the home as a pair of romanticized spaces, twinned opposites that held responsibility for the nation's moral and material fortunes, and presenting opportunities open to women in search of "usefulness."[81]

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[79] Samuel C. Bartlett, "Christian Relations of the East and West: A Sermon in Behalf of the American Home Missionary Society," *The Home Missionary* 44, no. 4 (August 1871): 87. Bartlett's prediction proved true, as Chicago rose in status to become the center of American Congregationalism by the turn of the twentieth century, and its prominent leaders, such as Jenkin Lloyd Jones, set the progressive agenda for the denomination into the 1930s.

[80] Randi Jones Walker, *Emma Newman: A Frontier Woman Minister* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2000). For Newman's exemplification of romantic idealism, especially, see 24–25, 34, 45. Sheri Bartlett Browne, *Eva Emery Dye: Romance with the West* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2004). Laurie F. Maffly-Kipp situates "romantic perfectionism"—an outgrowth of changes in the New England theological conception of the individual—in relation to antebellum constructions of home missions theory that strategized individual moral development on the frontier. See Maffly-Kipp, *Religion and Society in Frontier California* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 22–23.

[81] Dana L. Robert describes "usefulness" as "the most poignant motivation for mission articulated by the female gender." In Robert, *Women in Mission: A Social History of Their thought and Practice* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1996), 33. Home missions theory that emphasized the properly ordered Protestant home as a model for civilizational development would leave an impress on Eastman, who later advanced a social interpretation of the home as source of public morality. On this theme, see Dana L. Robert, "The 'Christian Home' as a Cornerstone of Anglo-American Missionary Thought and Practice," in *Converting Colonialism:*

But the liberation Eastman saw in missionary work offered an incomplete freedom. She perceived a line of direct implication from women's participation as missionaries to their suitability for ordained ministry in local parishes. In a report on women's preaching published in the *Independent*, Eastman asked, in relation to the example of a female missionary working in Japan: "If a woman can preach from house to house…in the foreign field, why not preach and minister in the easier fields at home? Surely we do not mean to admit the truth of that old-fashioned criticism of foreign missions, that we send to the heathen the preachers and teachers we do not want at home."[82] She denounced other strategies newly employed to prevent women from occupying pulpits, such as allowing women's education at Bible schools in order to prepare them for work as lay adjuncts to male clergy: "To what end these schools for Bible study opening to women, to what end institutes like Mr. Moody's for lay preachers—men and women? If we send women into the slums to preach the glad tidings, can we then say to them, 'Thus far and no farther?'"[83] From Eastman's perspective in the first months after her ordination, these concessions to women's appeals for access to religious leadership seemed like hollow gestures meant to pacify them into continued subordination. Against such token treatment, the inescapable "womanly ideal of the latter part of the nineteenth century" demanded extension of professional opportunities for women that matched their full innate potential.

Ordination

The *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, carrying an 1897 *Church Economist* article on "Women as

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Visions and Realities in Mission History, 1706–1914, Dana L. Robert, ed., 134–165 (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2008).

[82] Annis Ford Eastman, "Some Women Who Preach," *Woman's Journal* (June 20, 1891).

[83] Annis Ford Eastman, "Some Women Who Preach."

Pastors," reported the state of Congregational women's ordained leadership:

> The Congregational Church of the present day draws no line of eligibility to pastoral ordination between men and women.…With this perfect harmony and freedom regarding the matter of women as preachers,…it is nevertheless a fact that there are at present writing…but seventeen ordained women preachers in the Congregational Church. Perhaps half a dozen of them are in the New England states. The majority are stationed in the far West—in the Dakotas, Oregon and Washington state.[84]

At the end of the nineteenth century, women had made gains in expanding their access to professions, but on the question of ordination to ministry, at least, egalitarianism had not led to equality. While new opportunities in the remote West supported an increasing concentration of female missionaries and clergy on the far side of the Mississippi River, no rapid increase in women's ordination had occurred anywhere in the nation.[85] And the door that opened for Annis Eastman to lead a congregation did not open westward.

Instead, in 1888, the New York missions board that had sponsored her tour with Mary and Andrew Drake found a small congregation at Brookton, outside Ithaca, in need of a minister, only a brief train ride from Eastman's home in Canandaigua. After the "galvanic shock" of realizing that she wanted to preach, Eastman began to prepare sermons and sought congregations willing to hear her preach. "I had several sermons written," she recalled, "which I carried with me wherever I went, looking for the open door." She found success in a few opportunities, but soon worried that no pulpit would have her:

> After some weeks, in which it seemed likely that my high resolve to preach was to be

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[84] "Women as Pastors," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, September 28, 1897. The article compared Unitarian, Universalist, Congregational, and Methodist. The article described Eastman as a "well known and very successful woman pastor."

[85] Cynthia Grant Tucker chronicles ordination opportunities for Unitarian and Universalist women that opened as a result of geographic remoteness in the West, in *Prophetic Sisterhood: Liberal Women Ministers of the Frontier, 1880–1930* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1990).

> frustrated by a counterresolve on the part of the churches not to hear me, came a letter from a home-mission secretary, telling of a little church which had fallen among thieves and robbers, and was left more than half dead. "They have a debt and a leaking roof, several antiquated church quarrels, and about twenty-five members, although they won't all acknowledge it. They will have you for one Sunday, but promise nothing after that." With such scant encouragement I went forth to my first candidacy, knowing that much depended upon my winning that cantankerous flock to let me be their shepherd.[86]

When Eastman learned of the opportunity, she left her position at Granger Place, devoting all her effort to succeeding at Brookton. If local Congregationalists were to permit a woman to pastor one of their congregations, they aimed to put her through her paces first. Eastman sensed this resistance, and worried that she would never overcome it. As she walked along the streets of Canandaigua to take the train to Brookton for her first Sunday services there, she later recalled feeling "as much shame and humiliation as if I had been led along by a policeman."[87]

Her fears, it turned out, were unfounded. After preaching twice that first Sunday, the congregation asked her to return and offered her a year's contract as their minister. She addressed the problems outlined in the mission-board letter and led the church to thrive, so that its "people revealed such beauty of character and grace as I could never have imagined." Once established with the church, however, Eastman's lack of ordination grew increasingly conspicuous. Her inability to announce a benediction at the conclusion of worship "made an awkwardness in our service which the people did not like. And then, too, there were friends who wanted me to marry them," she remembered. "And so my humble friends in the little church

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[86] Annis Ford Eastman, "The Making of a Woman Minister," 373.

[87] Ibid., 373. As she remembered this anxious morning walk years later, Eastman reflected that "[t[he greatest hindrances in the way of woman's progress toward completer self-realization are not the prejudice and opposition of society, but her own inherited instinct for self-effacement and seclusion," (373). This later interpretation of her initial experiences of crossing out of expected gender performance reveals the progression in Eastman's thought as it moved towards psychology and theories and of the mind.

called a council."[88]

Ordination occupied an important place in distinguishing the Congregational way. Writing after the turn of the century, Yale theologian Benjamin Wisner Bacon observed that "Congregational polity is seen at its best in the proper working of a council of ordination." The ordination service embodied "majesty and dignity that are inseparable from religious rites performed with perfect simplicity and sincerity." More than this, it demonstrated what many Congregationalists believed to be a core trait of their tradition:"[t]he intelligent participation of an absolute democracy of men and women."[89] This same sort of solemn assembly convened to ordain Annis Eastman and formally install her as pastor at Brookton.

A single clipping survives in Eastman's papers to narrate the ordination service. Summoned before "a duly called council of pastors and delegates of the Susquehanna Association" Eastman found favor with her examiners:

> [Her] statement of Christian experience was not only womanly but spiritual in depth and quality. The reading of her paper presenting her religious and theological views was not only unique in originality, but was so spiritual in tone and based on clear spiritual intuitions, and so manifestly the product of spiritual experience rather than result of speculative thought, and the testimony of the church to the excellent work she has wrought for it so impressed the council, that it had no doubt nor hesitation concerning the propriety of approving her ordination and of commending her to service as minister to our churches.[90]

Surrounded by the grey heads of western New York's senior ministers, Eastman's success was

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[88]Ibid., 374.

[89] Benjamin Wisner Bacon, *Theodore Thornton Munger: New England Minister* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1913), 87–88.

[90] "Ordination of Mrs. Eastman," clipping enclosed in Annis F. Eastman to Samuel E. Eastman, November 13, 1907, folder 124, Crystal Eastman Papers. Her ordination was also reported in local papers, for instance in *The Adirondack News* (St. Regis Falls, NY), January 11, 1890.

not easily won. Preaching the ordination sermon, Henry Ward Beecher's half-brother and Eastman's future colleague, Thomas K. Beecher had long overseen the consecration of new ministers in the region.[91] Edward Taylor of Binghamton—who had been present at the Brookton church's founding in 1865 and who was revered by the numerous local churches he had led since 1853—delivered the charge. These men surely matched the dour figures from Eastman's dreamed vision, "in their long black coats and white ties."

Despite the precedent set decades earlier by Antoinette Brown Blackwell, Anna Howard Shaw, Olympia Brown, and others, Eastman faced an uphill battle in accepting ordination in 1889. An 1890 survey revealed that, in that year, fewer people believed that the Bible supported woman suffrage than believed in 1839 that the Bible supported abolition of slavery.[92] Popular opinion demonstrated no feminist awakening. Initially, Beecher opposed Eastman's ordination. According to Myra Glenn, he believed that, "if male ministers ordained one woman, soon hundreds of other women would seek ordination 'in order to get in the pulpit where they can talk.'"[93]

Eastman's ordination ultimately proved to be the result of mixed circumstances, due in part to Samuel's diminished capacity, to her capability and charisma, to the needs and desires of the church she led, and to the standards and requirements of Congregationalist hierarchy.[94] The

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[91] As moderator of the Susquehanna Association, Beecher had granted Washington Gladden's preaching license. Dorrien, 269.

[92] Zink-Sawyer, 10. Here, Zink-Sawyer cites a poll recorded in Kraditor, *Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, 1890–1920* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), 75–76.

[93] Glenn, *Thomas K. Beecher: Minister to a Changing America, 1824–1900* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), 174.

[94] When historians have contemplated motives for ordaining women among Congregational churches, they emphasize the role of the denomination's polity, variously

fact that Eastman held responsibility for the financial support of her family allayed the fears of local clergymen who worried that she sought to contravene her role as wife and mother. "Rather than viewing Eastman as an unfeminine woman who threatened male prerogatives by becoming a minister, …Beecher could see her as a wife and mother, seeking ordination in order to fulfill her prescribed domestic duties."[95] Not only this, but Beecher, held the view that the church constituted a form of domestic space, a home for the family of Christians. In designing and constructing a new building for his Elmira, New York, Park Church in 1876, Beecher conceptualized the entire space as a home with parlors and guest rooms.[96] Max Eastman recalled that Beecher conceived of the building as "a 'home church,' and tried to make it a place where Christians of all creeds, or no creed, would feel that they 'belonged' as a man belongs at his own

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described as congregational, free church, or independent, in creating opportunities for women to seek ordination. See Zink-Sawyer, *From Preachers to Suffragists*, ix; Zikmund, "The Protestant Women's Ordination Movement," in *Encyclopedia of Women and Religion in North America*, edited by Rosemary Skinner Keller and Rosemary Radford Ruther (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 942; Lindley, *"You Have Stept Out of Your Place*,*"* 124–125; Schneider and Schneider, *In Their Own Right*. Between 1889 and 1899, the number of ordained Congregational women grew from as little as four to forty-nine. Still, ordinations of men far outnumbered those of women for numerous decades, into the twentieth century. Wessinger, "Key Events for Women's Religious Leadership," 357, 360. For example, the *Congregational Year-Book* for 1890, which recorded Annis Ford Eastman's ordination, listed the ordination or installation of 260 men but only three women: Annis F. Eastman in Brookton, New York, and Mary L. Moreland in Wyanet, Illinois, were ordained as ministers, and Frederica A. Wilson installed as a minister in Andover, Massachusetts. *Congregational Year-Book, 1890* (Boston: Congregational Sunday School and Publishing Society, 1890), 12, 13. A summary of Mary L. Moreland's biography can be found in Frances E. Willard and Mary A. Livermore, eds. *A Woman of the Century: Fourteen Hundred-Seventy Biographical Sketches Accompanied by Portraits of Leading American Women in All Walks of Life* (New York: Charles Wells Moulton, 1893), 519.

[95] Glenn, 174.

[96] See Jeanne Halgren Kilde, *When Church Became Theatre: The Transformation of Evangelical Architecture and Worship in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 188.

fireside."[97] Refashioned into a hybrid of public and domestic space, Beecher struggled less severely to envision a woman in the pulpit.[98]

Beecher's changed mind illustrates the success of the rhetoric employed by many women who sought ordination in the mid-nineteenth century. As Catherine Brekus observes, "[b]y describing themselves in traditionally feminine terms as mothers, sisters, and daughters, female preachers tried to assure the American public that they had no intention of usurping male authority."[99] Thus, the first generation of ordained women adopted a "revolutionary" stance in "claiming to be uniquely qualified to preach because of their maternal qualities of compassion and understanding." Early ordained women inverted the gendered logic of Victorian Protestantism, claiming that their supposedly private virtue qualified them for public ministry. In this way, Eastman's logic of the "woman ordained by nature" was caught in the middle of a transition in thinking about the nature of gender and authority.

Though much of the late-nineteenth-century debate about Protestant women's ordination centered around questions of polity, hermeneutics, and exegesis, "the real root of the debate was not primarily about the Bible or church polity, but about the nature of women."[100] In the years immediately following her ordination, Eastman grounded arguments in favor of women's ordination in terms of a womanly ideal that situated female gender as an asset to equip skillful

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[97] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 110.

[98] Max Eastman characterized the Park Church "one of the first 'institutional' churches in the country—certainly the first Temple of God with billiard tables and a theater in it." Eastman, "The Hero as Parent," 13. See also Kilde, *When Church Became Theatre*, 188.

[99] Catherine Brekus, "Protestant Female Preaching in the United States," in *Encyclopedia of Women and Religion in North America*, Rosemary Skinner Keller and Rosemary Radford Ruther, eds., (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 969.

[100] Bendroth, "Disenchantment of Women," 164.

ministers, not as a barrier to limit them to the home. By the end of the 1890s, Eastman would extend this argument to denounce the correlation of gender to any social role, instead arguing that each individual, regardless of gender, pursue their own, full self-realization.

By 1892, journalists and other commentators regularly cited Eastman as an exemplar of women's ordination, along with her associates Mary Drake and Juanita Breckenridge, an early woman graduate of Oberlin's Theological Department who succeeded Eastman at Brookton.[101] One report from just after the turn of the century portrayed Eastman in terms similar to those in which she had regarded Susan B. Anthony in her Oberlin hotel: "In the most famous pulpit of Southern New York—an Elmira pulpit made famous by Thomas K. Beecher—there stands on Sundays a woman who in physique, feature and movement illustrates what we mean when we speak of a 'womanly woman.'"[102]

Conclusion

If adaptability proved to be a hallmark of liberalizing Protestantism, that trait also characterized Annis Eastman's life in the years leading to her first ministerial charge. Through her experiences as wife, mother, schoolteacher, missionary advocate, and minister, Eastman encountered and confronted the Victorian ideology of separate spheres, upending its logics of masculinity and femininity by putting them to use in authorizing her professional and personal boundary-crossing. She manipulated gender to defend women's suitability for ordination, asserting the preservation of "womanliness" in the profession by underscoring the domestic nature of ecclesiastical spaces and ministry's social functions. In doing so, she revealed the

[101] See, for example, D. B. Nichol, "Ordained Women Ministers," *The Woman's Column* 5, no. 49 (December3, 1892).

[102] *Daily Star* (Sandusky, OH), January 8, 1901.

rhetorical malleability of arguments about men, women, public self-assertion, and the social role of families. These experiences and arguments directed the intellectual, professional, and activist trajectory which Eastman followed in her years as an influential woman minister.

Behind such assertions about gender and ministry, romantic idealism furnished an intellectual disposition that allowed women like Eastman to move conceptually between the spaces of home and professional life. As an intellectual style that superimposed continuity between experiences of self and world, idealism enabled the identification of connections between disparate experiences and concepts, and provided a bridge linking evangelical piety, literary and natural aesthetics, and scientific rationalism. In this, Eastman refracted the romantic and evolutionary influences encountered through Oberlin and Andover, which together straddled the older perfectionism and an emerging progressivism, into a new sense of professional possibility and moral activism. Annis's absorption of this system of thought, her enactment of it through professional practice, and in later articulations of self-realization, bequeathed to Max the foundation of a new philosophy of poetry and action that undergirded his political radicalism.

Writing not long after ordination, Eastman reflected on the process that led her to it: "From an experience in the ministry under peculiar difficulties, I have learned that there is nothing in the profession uncongenial to, or unfitting a Christian woman, who is prepared for it by gifts and training."[103] The story of the preparation of Eastman's own gifts and training offers a glimpse into the experiences of women who aspired to enter ordained ministry during a period when that option proved unlikely. The elements of her biography illustrate a crucial transition within Protestant liberalism, through which women came to see themselves, and to be recognized by others, as professionally and intellectually capable of religious leadership, and, alongside this,

[103] Annis F. Eastman, "Some Women Who Preach."

deserving of social and political equality with men as individuals and citizens. Women, like men, could pursue public careers not because they earned the recognition of men, but because of innate disposition and potential. Nature ordained women as well as men to public life. It ordained Annis Ford Eastman to a career of pulpit preaching and platform speaking.

CHAPTER 2

"The Gospel of Political as Well as Spiritual Freedom": Liberal Religion in Pulpit, Parlor, and Platform

Writing from the rural expanse of north-central Wisconsin, Morgan Lewis Eastman conferred an epistolary blessing on Annis Ford Eastman's ordination, acclaiming her accession to the pulpit in the unsteady hand of his seventy-six years:

> How is Dear Daughter Bertha enduring the care, work, and responsibilities the Master has counted her trustworthy to assume, 'putting' her 'into the ministry.' I hope she is well and enjoying her work. How it must thrill her soul with joy and wonder as she listens… God bless her and make her 'the mother of a multitude' in Jesus.[1]

Receiving the approval of her circuit-riding father-in-law from the midwestern home mission field, Eastman would not relegate her own ministry to a remote missionary post, but took it up, instead, in regular pulpits in the settled East.

During the decade between ordination and the departure of her youngest child from home, Annis Eastman cultivated a reputation as a leading advocate in women's suffrage, ordination, and reform movements, and steadily expanded a liberal program of theological, political, and social commitments. By the time Max left home to attend the Mercersburg Academy in 1898 and she accepted the full duties of Thomas Beecher's pulpit in Elmira, New York, in 1900, Eastman had steeped herself in a liberal Christianity that gave significant shape to the radical politics her youngest son would pursue in the 1900s and 1910s.

Eastman's profession as clergywoman provided her with opportunities and challenges that molded her assessments of religion and society. It carried her not only into the precincts of denominational and congregational influence, but transported her into wider spaces in which she

[1] Morgan L. Eastman to Samuel E. Eastman, February 13, 1890; box 9, folder 4, Eastman MSS I. Eastman's family referred to her as Bertha, her middle name before marriage.

brought her convictions to bear on questions of interreligious understanding and women's social and political roles. Ordination served to enhance the authority of her public persona, winning her the ears of audiences that might otherwise have ignored the scandal of a woman preacher.

Outside the concerns of denomination and local parish, Annis Eastman's ordination fundamentally altered the domestic routines and qualities of the Eastman household. An upending of roles between Annis and Samuel, which had been anticipated through the previous decade, were routinized as Annis embarked on her new professional responsibilities, and, quickly on the heels of ordination, a vastly expanded lecturing calendar. Her new professional license met with the persistent realities of home life, dividing her attention between professional duties, activist aspirations, home maintenance, and the need for income.[2]

This chapter addresses Eastman's first decade as a clergywoman. Beginning with a discussion of reactions to her ordination and its immediate consequences, the chapter turns to consider the content of her sermons and lectures. Her most notable public appearances, at the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions and the Woman's Congregational Congress, together with sermons delivered in her local congregations and public lectures in parlors and on platforms, reveal a mind closely aligned to intellectual trends within liberal Protestantism during the 1890s, and demonstrate the extent of her resolve to put those ideas to use in promoting women's full participation in society. By attending to the outcomes of her ordination, the ideas articulated in

[2] It is not known how large an income Eastman's lectures provided. In his memoir, Max Eastman recorded that: "The fees my mother received for these lectures were not very large. At least I remember an occasion when some minister, after urging her to edify his flock for nothing, concluded his letter: 'Or are you like Henry Ward Beecher, who was always willing to speak for F-A-M-E, meaning Fifty And My Expenses?' She answered: 'I will speak for Ten And My Expenses, and I call that T-A-M-E.' Her fees were often higher than that, but rarely exceeded twenty dollars." Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 96. While at the West Bloomfield church, Max recorded that the congregation paid his mother an annual salary of $800. Eastman, "The Hero as Parent," 4.

her sermons and lectures, and the networks in which she participated, this chapter uncovers her location among liberal reformers who sought to advance the interests of women by enhancing their public influence through political, religious, and scientific modes of argument.

Each of these elements resonates throughout Eastman's early corpus, demonstrating that her Christianity increasingly bore the marks of liberal expressions of religious identity, which obtained their fullest statement after 1900. She combined gender advocacy, religious comparison and cooperation, cultural and natural aestheticism, and an emphasis on evolutionary science in her ministry and activist work, as well as in her personal piety.[3] Eastman's public speaking addressed self-realization at every level of experience, from international and national social life, to the home and family, to individuals, even addressing the impact of body image and clothing on personal development. Her oratorical productions and experiences as and activist and minister reveal Annis Ford Eastman as a participant in the crafting of liberal Christianity, a process which Richard Allen argues "grew out of the experiences of preachers in their local pastorates struggling to articulate for themselves and their flocks how the faith might be understood in this new age."[4] And this liberal Christianity, still crystallizing in the 1890s, would come to nourish

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[3] These themes are discussed in relation to liberal Protestantism, for example, in Amy Kittelstrom, "The Religion of Democracy: William James and Practical Idealism, 1870–1910," Ph.D. diss., Boston University, 2004, 62. Also see Emily R. Mace, "Cosmopolitan Communions: Practices of Religious Liberalism in America, 1875–1930," Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2010.

[4] Richard Allen, *The View from Murney Towers: Salem Bland, the Late-Victorian Controversies, and the Search for a New Christianity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), xxiii. Here, Allen is summarizing Gary Dorrien's reasoning in *The Making of American Liberal Theology: Imagining Progressive Religion, 1805–1900* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), especially 261–392.

the radical views adopted by her unconventional children Max and Crystal Eastman, which they notoriously promoted in the social and artistic rebellions of Greenwich Village.[5]

During the 1890s, however, Annis Eastman remained firmly grounded in the rhetorical and intellectual patterns of liberal Protestantism and the women's movement, manifested in the contexts of her local congregations and surrounding communities. Through connections cultivated while speaking at regional summer assemblies, especially those at Chautauqua and Keuka in western New York—all incubators of liberal Protestant ideas and practices—and through bonds developed with clubwomen and fellow political activists, Eastman linked her message of women's liberation and social transformation to a broad left–liberal network. One small-town newspaper characterized her standing among local ministers by observing that "[s]he preaches the gospel of political as well as spiritual freedom with convincing power."[6]

More than this, the contents of Eastman's prolific oratory in her first decade of ministry reveal the interrelation of religious and political concern in her critique of gender constructions. During these years, Eastman elaborated the romantic–evolutionary idealism she previously acquired into a more direct and thoroughgoing denunciation of domestic limitations on women.

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[5] Blanche Wiesen Cook, "The Radical Women of Greenwich Village: From Crystal Eastman to Eleanor Roosevelt," in *Greenwich Village: Culture and Counterculture*, Rick Beard and Leslie Cohen Berlowitz, eds. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1993), 247.

[6] "Political Equality Convention," *The Castilian* (Castile, NY), December 15, 1893.

As argued in this chapter, Eastman's combined treatment of "political as well as spiritual freedom" during this period described a method for manifesting, on a much larger scale, the forms of idealism that had enabled her own liberation from domestic constraint. Evolution's connotation of moral progress and romanticism's emphasis on the self-and-society unit gained greater force in her rhetoric as Eastman arrived at and promoted her concept of self-realization. By incorporating social and political arguments in her sermons and religious claims in her political lectures, Eastman interwove religious and secular concerns. More than this, she developed networks of ideas that circulated between her congregations, communities of clubwomen, political activists, and summer assembly attendees. She united pulpit, parlor, and platform in an experimental project of defining new possible futures for women.

Not limiting her arguments to women's religious authority, she called for a complete renovation of society's understanding of the relationship between women and the home, and between the home and society.

Eastman's Early Ministry

While Annis Eastman advanced rapidly in her profession, catapulting to the center of liberal Protestantism at the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions, she initially encountered ambiguous reactions in the press and from the occasional doubtful congregant. After her ordination, some in the communities surrounding Brookton felt unsure of how to react to the presence of a woman minister in their midst. Thomas Beecher, who had overseen her consecration and who, after his death, would leave to her the responsibility of leading his flock, defended her ordination and promoted her work as a preacher. Quoted in the Geneva, New York, *Gazette*, Beecher remarked:

> A year ago or thereabouts (with our brethren) we ordained Mrs. Eastman and commended her to the confidence of all Christians. 'Twas no formal rite or ceremony. We recognize gratefully the presence and the gifts of the Spirit in her. She is ever welcome in our pulpit here, and no Christian visits Elmira that can make a purer enthusiasm than she.[7]

Minimizing the anomalous character of ordaining a woman, the venerable Beecher underscored a spiritual rationale for her consecrated status, and spoke the final word on her legitimacy as a minister.

Eastman received ordination in a moment when it had only recently been associated with arguments for women's political and social equality. As described in chapter one, above, before the 1870s, the few women who sought ordination avoided its broader politicization, wishing only

[7] "A Woman's Lecture on Temperance," *Geneva Gazette* (New York), April 17, 1891.

for authorization to preach and direct liturgy.[8] In the late nineteenth century, however, the ordination of women came into closer alignment with the pro-suffrage and other reform movements. As Barbara Brown Zikmund explains, "[d]ecisions for or against the ordination of women increasingly depended on whether church leadership wanted to embrace, or resist, the modern ideology of gender equality and various related understandings of 'modernity.'"[9] Clergywomen had come to serve as barometers of religious and political liberalism.[10] Equally important, the slow building of momentum in the ordination of women gave each new consecration of a woman minister an outsize sense of significance. As a result of the politicization of ordination and the small number of female clergy, those women who occupied pulpits found themselves under scrutiny.

Annis Eastman recounted minimal opposition to her ordination, and most reports in the local press reflected generally positive reactions.[11] During the first decade of her career, Eastman was the subject of reporting and numerous feature articles in the popular and religious press.[12]

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[8] Mark Chaves, *Ordaining Women: Culture and Conflict in Religious Organizations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 64–66.

[9] Barbara Brown Zikmund, "The Protestant Women's Ordination Movement," in *Encyclopedia of Women and Religion in North America*, Rosemary Skinner Keller and Rosemary Radford Ruther, eds., (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 949.

[10] Addressing mid- and late-twentieth-century debates over ordination, sociologist Mark Chaves writes that "[d]enominations not yet ordaining women after the policy comes to mean 'gender equality' resist something more than actual females in pulpits and at altars. They resist…a part of modernity in which the liberal agenda of elevating individual rights is of paramount importance," (Chaves, 83).

[11] Eastman indicated that some residents in the region around Brookton. questioning her professional legitimacy, accused her ordination council as having been a "picked council." See Annis Ford Eastman, "The Making of a Woman Minister," 374.

[12] Her ordination received attention in numerous local newspapers in New York State and in the Protestant and popular press: *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, 20 April 1890; "Women

Many of these reports expressed confusion as to how Eastman's status should be assessed in comparison to her husband, especially after her appointment to Beecher's Park Church. Because Beecher hired both Annis and Samuel as his assistants, confusion existed especially over sermon authorship: Whose ideas held sway in writing? Did Samuel secretly write sermons for Annis? Those who spread such rumors would have been scandalized to know that Annis had written many of Samuel's sermons before ordination in Canandaigua.

The combination of approbation, denunciation, and voyeuristic leering into behind-the-pulpit politics in these reports demonstrates the range of public attitudes concerning the ordination of women in the 1890s. Depending on the political leanings of the publication, the articles featured women's ordination as a novel social trend or a sign of political and religious progress. News reports often presented group portraits of clergywomen, describing their professional appointments and community activities. Prominently featured figures included Antoinette Brown Blackwell, Olympia Brown, Julia Ward Howe, Anna Howard Shaw, and Augusta Chapin, among others. Eastman appeared alongside these better-known women, portrayed in an almost wholly positive light.

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in the Congregational Church," *Weekly News and Democrat* (Auburn, NY), December 21, 1892; "Woman Preachers—The Prophetesses," *The Sun* (New York), December 23, 1894; "Women Pastors," *New York Herald*, September 19, 1897; S. T. Willis, "Woman in Religious Ministry," *Godey's Magazine* 135, no. 807 (September 1897): 287–294; Anna Howard Shaw, "Women in the Ministry," *The Chautauquan* 27, no. 5 (August 1898): 489–496; and "American Women in the Pulpit," *The Cold Spring Recorder* (Cold Spring, NY), October 21, 1898. Eastman later received individual attention in an article dedicated to her career: "Elmira's Woman Preacher," *Buffalo Illustrated Express*, 16 December 1900. This article was reprinted in Eastman's own city as "Rev. Annis Ford Eastman," *Elmira Daily Gazette and Free Press*, 20 December 1900; she was also the subject of a feature by the columnist and early woman's suffrage historian Ida Husted Harper, "A Woman Minister Who Presides over a Large Eastern Church," *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 27, 1901.

Numerous local reports featured Eastman as the first regularly ordained woman in the Congregational denomination. Conspicuous, however, in these references, very few sources that reported Eastman's ordination acknowledged the antecedence of Antoinette Brown Blackwell, who served the Congregational body at South Butler, New York—only sixty-five miles north of Brookton—as the actual first woman ordained to Protestant ministry in the United States.[13] Perhaps the failure to acknowledge Blackwell's originary status stemmed from the short-lived nature of her ministry in the region. She relinquished her pulpit in 1854, less than a year after ordination, as a result of personal religious doubt and resistance to her presence in the pulpit, and relocated out of the region.[14] While she enjoyed notoriety among feminists and historians as the first ordained American woman, Blackwell had somewhat slipped from local memory. Eastman, on the other hand, remained active throughout western New York as a highly visible speaker.

Overall, Eastman encountered little resistance to her preaching and pastoral work. The opposition she did meet exerted little impact, likely due to Thomas Beecher's defense of her calling and capabilities, both in the immediate period after her ordination and after he hired her as his assistant minister. As a result, ordination provided a base of authority that made way for Eastman to become a prolific preacher in the pulpit, and as a parlor and platform speaker.

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[13] Alice K. Wright, writing in 1898, acknowledged Brown Blackwell's earlier ordination, and wrote that, "[a]t the present time the Congregational Church has something over thirty women regularly ordained in its ministry, among the more prominent of them being the Rev. Annis Ford Eastman, who is assistant pastor of a church in Elmira, N.Y." Alice K. Wright, "Women Pastors," in *What Women Can Earn: Occupations of Women and Their Compensation*, ed. Grace H. Dodge, *et al*. (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1889), 177.

[14] Cazden, 88–90. For the following twenty-five years, Blackwell's doubt prevented her from affiliating with any denomination. By the late 1870s, Blackwell decided to join the Unitarian Fellowship, and earned recognition of her ministry credentials in 1878. But she did not find a congregation to match her desire for doctrinal flexibility until 1903, when Blackwell helped to establish a Unitarian church in Elizabeth, New Jersey. Cazden 192, 243.

Though Balckwell's ministry lasted less than a year, what Zink-Sawyer observed about her could be said equally of Eastman:

> [S]he was able to balance her preaching and pastoral ministry with her travel and lecturing for various reform efforts, especially woman's rights. The reform activity fulfilled her desire to be part of a larger world of important work and interesting colleagues while her parish work fulfilled her call to ministry and her desire to be a pastoral leader.[15]

Like her predecessor, Eastman integrated her church work and activism. Unlike Blackwell, however, Eastman remained dedicated to local church ministry until her death.

In the initial years of her ministry, Eastman's sermons and lectures touched on a consistent range of themes, expressing the core of late-Victorian Protestant progressivism, while holding a sharp edge in arguing for expanded roles for women in society. Constantly moving between the spiritual and the political, Eastman's sermons in the western New York communities of Brookton, West Bloomfield, and Elmira incorporated insights from her circuit lectures, and her activist lectures vibrated with the spiritual urgency of her sanctuary preaching, all made possible as a result of Eastman's daring to pursue ordination at all.

At Brookton, Eastman ministered to a congregation of men and women who were "to quite an extent the descendants of a generation that had immigrated from New England and the Hudson river." Having reinvigorated the Brookton church nearly a year before her ordination, Eastman's efforts made a notable impact. After her death in 1910, a former Brookton parishioner recalled that, "With no strict training in theological schools she brought forward a church pastoral experience which was used most efficiently in gaining the immediate respect and love of an intelligent rural congregation." The significance of the early efforts in ministry placed her, in

[15] Zink-Sawyer, 124–125.

this parishioner's view, "among the few first who laid the foundation for pulpit acceptance of women, now gaining prevalence over the world."[16]

When in the pulpit, Eastman wore "a simple black robe of her own design which she called a surplice,…pleated in front and made feminine by a little black lace in the opening at her throat."[17] Balancing her desire to retain a sense of "womanliness" with the authority of tradition, Eastman donned this slightly modified vestment. In Max's description, "[s]he was of medium height, with light-brown hair and green-blue eyes, a gently curving beauty both of face and figure."[18] Gifted with "self-possession and a thrilling voice," Eastman's sermons were typically well received, and her daughter Crystal recalled that "she had that secret of perfect platform ease which takes all strain out of the audience. Her voice was music; she spoke simply, without effort, almost without gestures, standing very still."[19]

Scarcely more than a year after her ordination, Annis Eastman gathered with a small crowd of women at the First Methodist Episcopal Church of Auburn, New York to speak about Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Her audience received the lecture as "a rare intellectual treat" and the local paper declared Eastman "a pleasing and painstaking speaker, [who] has a sympathetic voice full of tenderness."[20] Such glowing reports of Eastman's speeches became commonplace

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[16] *The Telegram* (Elmira, NY), 6 November 1910.

[17] Max Eastman, "The Hero as Parent: My Most Unforgettable Character," in *Heroes I Have Known: Twelve Who Lived Great Lives* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1942), 1.

[18] Max Eastman, "The Hero as Parent," 1.

[19] [Crystal Eastman], "Mother-Worship." *The Nation* 124, no. 321 (March 16, 1927): 283-284. Max recalled the personal intimacy of Annis Eastman's preaching, writing that "[h]er sermons were so simply and directly spoken from her heart to yours that she seemed to have no art at all but merely self-possession." Max Eastman, "The Hero as Parent," 4.

[20] "Elizabeth Barrett Browning," *The Auburn Bulletin* (Auburn, NY) 18 December 1890.

in the region's newspapers, and portended the wide success she would enjoy so quickly after embarking on the venture of ministry.

"Mrs. Browning: Her Life and Her Song" displayed Eastman's belief that poetry offered a spiritual salve to the "scientific and sceptical, material, mechanical, money-getting" era in which she lived.[21] No brilliant exegesis of the romantic poet, this lecture fit the norms of polite parlor culture, wooing its hearers with ornamental tales of Browning's childhood brilliance, traumatic teenage crippling, and passionately inspiring marriage: "her life was all material for song." The core of the lecture addressed "the most important questions of all concerning a woman, whatever her attainments: How did she look?"[22] Echoing her memory of the hotel-room encounter with Susan B. Anthony and her India shawl, Eastman demonstrated a continued concern with negotiating the boundaries of womanliness, amplified by her new status as a clergywoman.

Despite these flourishes, Eastman found in Browning the emulation of socially progressive, feminist principles, articulated in connection with romantic expressiveness. Eastman drew attention to the poet's claim that poetry proved instrumental in ending child labor. Anticipating Max's arguments, published more than two decades later, that poetry could effect social change, Annis found similar value in Browning's aesthetics. Such ascriptions set the poet upon a pedestal: "Her triumph was greater than any other woman's can ever be because the obstacles to be overcome were more than they will ever oppose themselves again to any woman." Browning's special persistence marked her as a model of manipulating the nineteenth-

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[21] Annis Ford Eastman, "Mrs. Browning: Her Life and Her Song," (November 11, 1894), leaf 1, folder 87, Crystal Eastman Papers.

[22] Ibid., 19, 15.

century feminine ideal in opposition to the limiting tendencies of the age, and championing "the great words God and the Soul, Love and Duty."[23]

More than this, the parlor talk on Browning revealed Eastman's proximity to romanticist notions of the intimacy between humans and nature, the material and the spiritual, science and beauty. Drawing an odd comparison, she announced that "everything, from an orange to a world, has two sides, an outside and an inside." Eastman meant to unite the real and the ideal:

> Beneath the scientific skepticism of our day, beneath its worship of wealth and success is the eternal hunger and thirst of the soul for God and righteousness—and the passionate conviction that these two are one. And it is this side of human life that voices itself in the modern poets, the master spirits of our time as of all time—"they are the only truth tellers left to God. Holders by his sun-skirts thro' conventional grey glooms / Teachers, therefore, who instruct mankind from just a shadow on a charnel wall to find man's veritable stature out—the measure of a man—and that's the measure of an angel, says the apostle."[24]

Quoting Browning's poem, "Aurora Leigh," Eastman assigned poets the role of natural revelator and an orange the analogue of a world. In this, she exemplified what Bernard Reardon describes as the romanticist "idea of the infinite in the finite…in which nature and human history alike are conceived synoptically as forms or manifestations of one infinite Life."[25] In balancing the finite and infinite, romantic idealism emphasized dynamics of chaos and struggle, and the centrality of the individual and subjective perception.[26] As a notion of self-realization began to form in Eastman's thought, figures such as Browning gave concrete shape—as Mary Drake had also

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[23] Ibid., 25; 2.

[24] Ibid., 1–2. Here, Eastman quotes Elizabeth Barrett Browning's poem, *Aurora Leigh*, lines 859–868.

[25] Bernard M. G. Reardon, *Religion in the Age of Romanticism: Studies in Early Nineteenth-Century Thought* (Cambridge University Press, 1985), 4.

[26] Reardon, *Religion in the Age of Romanticism*, 5–6.

done—to the romantic notions of personality, experience, and development that Eastman encountered previously. Her characterization of Browning reveals the continued impact of romantic–evolutionary subjectivity on her understanding of personality. In these first years of ministry after ordination, Annis Eastman continued to rely on views she acquired in earlier decades, addressed popular topics, and relied on familiar forms of reasoning, as might be expected of any young professional gaining her bearings in a new position.

Eastman's tenure at Brookton proved short, and on February 1, 1892, after investing three years in that first assignment, she assumed leadership of the Congregational church at West Bloomfield, New York, eighty miles northwest of her former post.[27] A larger and wealthier congregation than Brookton's, West Bloomfield took pride in risking the appointment of a woman as minister.[28] The church had entertained a female evangelist five years earlier, but Eastman still encountered a degree of opposition in assuming its pulpit:

> [S]ome felt she was out of her sphere, and one good old man wailed: "Think of our new church and new parsonage and new sheds, and a woman in the pulpit!" But even he was charmed, and if he had lived long enough, he might have agreed with the little daughter of another reverend woman, who nipped her brother's aspiration to that profession with the announcement that he couldn't, for he was nothing but a boy![29]

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[27] Marianna Hendee Peck, "The Pastors," in *Historical Papers Read at the Centennial of the Congregational Church of West Bloomfield, N.Y.* (Canandaigua, NY: Ontario County Times Printing House, 1899), 27.

[28] West Bloomfield's congregation totaled 179 members in 1892, and Brookton totaled 96. *The Congregational Yearbook* (Boston: Congregational Sunday School and Publishing Society, 1892), 286, 276. The parish held some degree of prominence within regional Congregationalism, as Eastman had been preceded in its pulpit decades earlier by the first president of Williams College, Ebenezer Fitch, who served the congregation from 1815 to 1827. See Peck, "The Pastors," 23.

[29] Elvira L. Taft, "Woman's Work," in *Historical Papers Read at the Centennial of the Congregational Church of West Bloomfield, N.Y.* (Canandaigua, NY: Ontario County Times Printing House, 1899), 58–59. Memories about the scandal of Annis Eastman's ordination evidently had a long life. After the 1948 publication of his autobiography, Max Eastman received numerous letters from former Canandaiguans, one of whom asked, "Do you remember Mrs.

Evidently, many in the congregation approved of Eastman's appointment and subsequent work. Perhaps in recognition of their confidence in her abilities, soon after hiring its woman minister, the West Bloomfield church sent Eastman to participate in two events that struck at the heart of liberalism in religion and politics, and brought Eastman to much wider attention: a national suffrage convention and Chicago's Columbian Exposition.

An "Orthodox Woman Minister" at the NAWSA

Almost precisely one year after moving to West Bloomfield, in mid-January 1893, Eastman traveled to Washington, DC, to participate in the twenty-fifth annual convention of the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA). The convention's purpose intended "to arouse that divine discontent which shall make women ashamed to remain longer in the attitude of wards in their own country: to stir the dormant sense of justice which shall make men unwilling to monopolize all power, as if women were not to be trusted."[30] A religious service at Metzerott's Music Hall opened the convention. On the platform, Anna Howard Shaw introduced the hymns, and Susan B. Anthony introduced Annis Ford Eastman to the national women's suffrage movement. The New York *Daily Tribune* reported that Anthony used the occasion, and Eastman, to demonstrate the NAWSA's consonance with mainstream Christianity:

> Friends: You will remember that we have been criticised for having women preachers at our conventions who were not orthodox ministers. It is true we have had the Rev. Anna Shaw, a Methodist, but she was not ordained in the Methodist Church, for that church has never yet ordained a woman to preach. But we have with us today an orthodox woman

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Seymour, the town gossip? I am quite sure it was she who used to discuss the propriety of your mother going in to the ministry." John [Alden Lee] to Max Eastman, ca. April 1948, box 2, folder 12, Eastman MSS I.

[30] Harriet Taylor Upton, editor, *Proceedings of the Twenty-Fifth Annual Convention of the National American Woman Suffrage Association* (Washington, DC: Stormont and Jackson, 1893), iii.

> minister, the Rev. Anna [*sic*] F. Eastman, of Canandaigua, N. Y. [*sic*], who is a Congregationalist, and was ordained by that Church about a year ago [*sic*].[31]

Though her facts were out of date, Anthony's introduction identified Eastman as a collaborator for liberation. Thus appointed—and appropriated—as an exemplar of traditional Christianity by her longtime hero, Eastman rose to interpret a passage from Isaiah 58 "in a pleasant, well-modulated voice."[32]

On the following evening, in her presidential report to the convention, Anthony turned again to Eastman, this time as an example of progress in the women's movement. Referring once again to her ordination, Anthony proclaimed Eastman as "another straw showing what we have gained." "Forty years ago," she continued, speaking of the Congregational clergymen who had ordained Eastman, "they would have flown away to the moon or somewhere else before they would let a woman speak in a meeting."[33] Whatever her theological views, Eastman's ordination by a historic American denomination constituted both the material and symbolic advancement of women as public leaders.

The significance of Eastman's participation in the 1893 convention points to the strong connections she built with the national suffrage enterprise within a short time after her ordination. To the suffrage activists, Eastman's clergy status held significance not only for reforming internal denominational structures to allow women's leadership, but even more, signified the continued broadening of possibilities for women's leadership in the secular public sphere. Anthony's attention to the "orthodoxy" of Eastman's religious identity underscored her

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[31] New York *Daily Tribune*, January 16, 1893.

[32] *Washington Daily Post*, January 16, 1893; Upton, ed., *Proceedings*, 9–10.

[33] Upton, ed., *Proceedings*, 55.

concern that the suffrage movement might be overrun with practitioners of experimental spiritualities or moralistic religious ideologues. According to Kathi Kern, Anthony reproofed the suffrage editor and lecturer Clara Colby for engaging in a "religious experimentation" that distracted her from pursuing the legitimate aims of the suffrage movement.[34]

More significantly, the distinction Anthony drew between Shaw and Eastman underscored the increasing normativity of women's ordination as a relevant fact for women's political equality. Anna Howard Shaw, one of the first women ordained in the United States, received her credentials from the Methodist Protestant Church, a small denomination in the Wesleyan–Methodist tradition, after the much larger Methodist Episcopal Church denied her application for ordination.[35] Eastman had been ordained by a regularly convened local Congregationalist council, granting her recognition by the National Council of the Congregational Churches of the United States, the nation's principal Congregationalist body. In

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[34] Kathi Kern, "Spiritual Border-Crossings in the U.S. Women's Rights Movement," in *American Religious Liberalism*, ed. Schmidt and Promey (Indiana, 2012), 176. Elsewhere, Kern observes that Colby resisted further publicizing of Stanton's negative appraisal of Christianity after she initially defended Stanton from the NAWSA's rejection of *The Woman's Bible*. As much as Colby maintained a favorable opinion of Stanton's critique, Kern emphasizes Colby's "reluctan[ce] to offend her suffrage readers" by promoting Stanton's perspective. Kathi Kern, "'Free Woman Is a Divine Being, the Savior of Mankind': Stanton's Exploration of Religion and Gender," in *Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Feminist Thinker: A Reader in Documents and Essays*, ed. Ellen Carol DuBois and Richard Cándida Smith (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 93. Kern also writes of Anthony's earlier support, in the mid-1870s, for the participation of evangelical women temperance activists, urging them to "pray with their ballots." In later years, Anthony worried that evangelical doctrine and enthusiasm might lead women, once having obtained political freedom, to accept religious limitations and subordinate status. See Kern, "'I Pray with My Work': Susan B. Anthony's Religious Journey," 95–97, 99.

[35] Zink-Sawyer, 113–119. Shaw received ordination on October 12, 1880, exactly nine years and one month before Eastman's ordination. Like Eastman, Shaw had already served a church as its full-time minister before her consecration—even, like Eastman, overseeing the renovation of the church's building—and sought ordination as a means of enhancing her ability to conduct services and lead the congregation.

this way, Eastman's ordination received the imprimatur of an "orthodox," or mainstream, Protestant denomination, in contrast to Shaw's more marginal sponsoring denomination. The participation of a female clergy member from the mainstream of Protestantism, Anthony hoped, would counter charges that the suffrage movement, like its "unorthodox" women ministers, occupied a marginal extreme in American politics. For the women's suffrage movement, religious and political legitimacy had become intertwined.

In this way, Anthony's identification of Eastman with orthodox religious expressions can be read in the context of the multilayered politics of activism that Eastman encountered, which included disagreements over religious orientation. Witnessing the workings of a national suffrage convention, Eastman's professional self-understanding developed beyond her initial conception of ordination to include direct political activity. It is unclear what form, if any, Eastman's participation in organized political equality advocacy took before the 1893 convention, but, if nothing else, at the national NAWSA, Eastman had been sutured into the heart of the suffrage movement.[36] In addition, she saw religion's impact as a political motive, and learned of her own symbolic importance in the enterprise.

The early years of the 1890s comprised a significant moment in the suffrage movement, as the American Woman Suffrage Association and National Woman Suffrage Association reunified in 1890 after their 1869 separation. The moment of reunification brought an influx of new participants, as younger women joined the NAWSA in increasing numbers. Elizabeth Cazden notes that this younger generation benefited from a lack of familiarity with the divisive history of the movement. "[They] had never risked public ridicule to travel alone to speak out on

[36] I have found no record of Eastman's previous involvement with national suffrage organizations, though she may have maintained membership in the NAWSA, especially in light of the articles she contributed to Lucy Stone's *Woman's Journal*.

issues such as abolition; they had not been booed off platforms for daring to speak to mixed audiences. …Many of them had been too young to have witnessed the bitter events leading up to the split."[37] In this way, Eastman aligned with the national suffrage movement during a period of expansion and ideological diversification, incorporating the participation of nearly 200,000 temperance women.

The experience of putting her ordained status to work for a political cause, in a national setting, and so early in her career set Eastman on a path towards increasing participation in large-scale reform movements and increased her public recognition. In 1895, she returned to Metzerott Hall's platform, leading religious services for the National Council of Women. In later years, when Susan B. Anthony and her biographer, Ida Husted Harper, set out to record the history of the suffrage movement, they included Eastman among their listing of "women ministers" in an index of "eminent advocates of woman suffrage."[38] Along with the ordained women who preceded her, Eastman understood her work as a minister and as an advocate of women's equality as seamlessly integrated projects. Eastman's ordained status had brought her to the activist edge of political engagement. That new political vision intersected with her shifting understanding of religion, especially as she traveled to Chicago, and established a foundation of political activism that served as a model for the reforms pursued later by her children.

Lectures Abroad and Sermons at Home

Towards the end of the summer of 1893, Eastman boarded a Chicago-bound train in order to visit the "White City" of the World's Columbian Exposition. Having been invited to

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[37] Cazden, *Antoinette Brown Blackwell*, 222.

[38] Louise Barnum Robbins, ed., *History and Minutes of the National Council of Women of the United States* (Boston: E. B. Stillings and Co., 1898), 172; *History of Woman Suffrage*, vol. 4, 1080.

speak at the World's Parliament of Religions and the Woman's Congregational Congress, she anticipated the fair as spectacle, seeing in its exhibits and amusements "the world at play in a sort of fairy land from which all evil and sorrow were banished."[39] The two events, under the auspices of the World's Religious Congress, were convened as part of the fair's auxiliary programs, and brought together many of the leading figures with liberal Protestantism. Envisioning a "grand conjunction of cultures," the organizers of the Parliament intended the gathering to serve as an illustration of the universal spiritual strains flowing beneath the streets of the White City.[40] With this sentiment, the planners of the Parliament reflected their sympathies

[39] Annis Ford Eastman, "World's Fair," 5–6, folder 81, Crystal Eastman Papers.

[40] John P. Burris, *Exhibiting Religion: Colonialism and Spectacle at International Exhibitions, 1851–1893* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2001), 123. The Parliament, in its famous motto, aimed "to unite all religion against all irreligion." Richard Hughes Seager, *The World's Parliament of Religions: The East/West Encounter, Chicago, 1893* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), xvii. For Alan Trachetnberg, "[i]f the Fair displayed matter and things, the Congress reflected on their meaning." Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age,* 25th Anniversary ed. (1982; New York: Hill and Wang, 2007), 213. Scholarship on the Parliament of Religions includes Carrie Triado Bramen, "Christian Maidens and Heathen Monks: Oratorical Seduction at the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions," in *The Puritan Origins of American Sex: Religion, Sexuality, and National Identity in American Literature*, edited by Tracy Fessenden, Nicholas F. Radel, and Magdalena J. Zaborowska (New York: Routledge, 2001), 192. For recent works on the Parliament, see Seager, *The World's Parliament of Religions*; John P. Burris, *Exhibiting Religion*; Justin Nordstrom, "Utopians at the Parliament: the World's Parliament of Religions and the Columbian Exposition of 1893," *Journal of Religious History* 33, no. 3 (September 2009): 348-365; Korden Smith, "Appropriating the Secular: Mormonism and the World Columbian Exposition of 1893," *Journal of Mormon History* 34, no. 4 (Fall 2008): 153–180; Eric J. Ziolkowski, editor, *A Museum of Faiths: Histories and Legacies of the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1993); John S. Harding, *Mahāyāna Phoenix: Japanese Buddhists at the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions* (New York: P. Lang Co., 2008). An expanded bibliography of scholarship on the Parliament, listing most of the above, can be found in Amy Kittelstrom, "The International Social Turn: Unity and Brotherhood at the World's Parliament of Religions, Chicago, 1893," *Religion and American Culture* 19, no. 2 (Summer 2009): 267–268n2.

with broadening Protestant attitudes concerning religious diversity, or what Leigh Schmidt terms "the liberal principle of the sympathy of religions."[41]

The two lectures that Eastman delivered at the pair of meetings aimed at reframing women's social position with respect to religion and to the home. Her remarks both reflected the influence of idealism that typified her rhetoric, and demonstrated new critiques of gender and society. If her participation at the NAWSA convention served largely symbolic purposes, the two lectures Eastman delivered in Chicago provided opportunities to rehearse new arguments on her standard themes, in front of large and diverse audiences.[42]

The Woman's Congregational Congress, themed as "The Summons of the Coming Century to the Women of To-day," comprised part of the larger Congregational Church Congress, which the denomination's male leaders had convened separately on September 10, one day before the opening of the Parliament of Religions.[43] In his remarks to open the

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[41] Schmidt, *Restless Souls*, 106.

[42] Eastman's participation in the World's Parliament of Religions is documented in John Henry Barrows, ed. *The World's Parliament of Religions: An Illustrated and Popular Story of the World's First Parliament of Religions* (Chicago: The Parliament Publishing Company, 1893), vol. 1, 122, 752–758; vol. 2, 1436. She delivered a lecture on women and religion twice, once during the plenary session of the Parliament of Religions in the Hall of Columbus, on the afternoon of September 17, and once earlier, at the Woman's Congregational Congress on September 14. Also at the latter congress, which convened between September 11 and 14, she delivered a speech on domestic space and definitions of marriage. See Annis F. Eastman, "The Home and Its Foundation," in *The Congress of Women: Held in the Woman's Building, World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, U. S. A., 1893*, ed. Mary Kavanaugh Oldham Eagle (Chicago, IL: Monarch Book Company, 1894), 612–615.

[43] Ursula King, "Rediscovering Women's Voices at the World's Parliament of Religions," in *A Museum of Faiths*, ed. Ziolkowski (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 331. Other women who addressed the Woman's Congregational Congress demonstrate Eastman's professional trajectory. Juanita Breckenridge, a graduate of Oberlin's Theology Department who succeeded Eastman at Brookton, spoke on "The True Democracy of Congregationalism." See "Women Talk of the Puritan Idea," *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, Sept. 12, 1893. Jane Addams spoke on the labor problem's relation to the home. Her participation

Congregational Congress, Charles C. Bonney, president of the World's Congress Auxiliary, announced that "it is a graceful and fitting act for the descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers to anticipate that opening [of the Parliament]," revealing the conceit of Protestant and U.S. American exceptionalism at work beneath the parliament's universalist veneer, and in the assumptions of the Congregational delegation.[44] But Eastman's remarks made no reference to Congregational exceptionalism.

In "The Home and Its Foundation," Eastman launched a critique of the entire conceptual apparatus that surrounded contemporary notions of home, family, and marriage.[45] If her 1890 lecture on Elizabeth Barrett Browning evinced consistency with Eastman's views from the 1870s and 1880s, her remarks at this meeting of Congregational women demonstrated her upending of many of those earlier forms of thought. She reached to the very core of nineteenth-century Protestant culture, and called for a reconfiguration of its gendered priorities.

In a juxtaposition that would later form the outline of Max's own intellectual transformation, the lecture commenced with a contemplation of the relationship between the real and ideal. Eastman projected the dire stakes at risk in defining the home through the terms of romantic idealism. "It is fancy and not fact…that rules in the poet and prophet's world, the only world worth living in." Lacking poet and prophet, however, "the Real" proffered no hope for a

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signaled the left–liberal sympathies of at least some of the Congress's organizers, and anticipated the settlement house involvement of both Crystal and Max in New York. See "The Woman's Congregational Congress," in *The World's Parliament of Religions,* vol. 2, ed. John Henry Barrows (Chicago: The Parliament Publishing Co., 1893), 1434.

[44] Charles Carroll Bonney, "The Congregational Church," *World's Congress Addresses* (Chicago, IL: Open Court, 1900), 25.

[45] Annis F. Eastman, "The Home and Its Foundations," in *The Congress of Women, Held in the Woman's Building, World's Columbian Exposition*, vol. 2, ed. Mary Kavanaugh Oldham Eagle, 612–615 (Chicago: W. B. Conkey, 1894).

renewed social vision. Instead, "the best inspirations of mankind" could be discovered in "civilization," which was "the gift of the ideal." As the core of civilization, the home demanded its ideal explication.[46]

As it had developed during the nineteenth century, the Victorian concept of the home—Bendroth's "model of redemptive domesticity"—imbued domestic space with highly charged messages of female morality and male authority.[47] This model of domesticity, with its infamous separate spheres, assigned men responsibility for confronting the morally questionable world of competition in public and women responsibility for duties of instilling morality and good order in the home, and, by extension, society. According to Stephanie Coontz, this arrangement inhibited individual fulfillment "by making men and women dependent on each other and insisting that each gender was incomplete without the other."[48]

Even in this form, problematic as it seemed to Eastman, the nineteenth-century concept of marriage had evolved from "the lair of the beast, the hive of the bees, the nests of the birds," emerging "up through the miasmatic regimes of polygamy and polyandry in the various forms." The fact that marriage and its product, the home, had developed through the long past of nature indicated the possibility of its future improvement. Eastman stopped short of describing what form the home might take in future. She hinted, however, that, in rebuffing his mother and brothers, Jesus Christ may have indicated the notion that "spiritual relationships are … a stronger tie than that of blood." Hedging against an interpretation of home so idealistic that it exceeded human grasp, Eastman considered marriage as "the foundation of the family, as we know it

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[46] Ibid., 612.

[47] Bendroth, *Growing up Protestant*, 13.

[48] Stephanie Coontz, *Marriage, a History: From Obedience to Intimacy, or How Love Conquered Marriage* (New York: Viking, 2005), 176. Also see Coontz, 161–176, and 177–195.

today," raising her central question: "Is it in line with progress, and is it capable of producing a higher type of man?"[49]

Her answer came in the negative. Eastman presented two broad suggestions for improvement. First, family relationships, and, by extension, society, would find their improvement in "recognition of the entire equality of man and woman as complementary parts of humanity—of one humanity." Such a recognition entailed an "entire interdependence" between men and women, demonstrated through equal education, total personal freedom, equality in voting and legislating, equal protection under law, and equal representation.[50] Second, men's and women's roles needed to be defined apart from their roles as father and mother. "Not ten years ago a learned theologian said: 'God foreordained man for the field and woman for the hearth.' This is the free translation: 'God has foreordained man to breathe oxygen and woman carbonic acid gas.'" In place of the rigidity of separate spheres, denounced in obvious terms through her hyperbolic reference to noxious fumes, Eastman instead advocated for "intelligent, sympathetic companionship" as the ideal marriage relation.[51]

Having established her prescriptive aims, Eastman anticipated that her opponents would raise examples from nature in refutation. "We know the argument: The male bird sings louder and sweeter than the female; therefore woman can not be a poet." She saw such logic as moot. "Why not collect data on the opposite side? The male of the American ostrich sits on the eggs, hatches them out and takes principal charge of the young." Rather than suggesting a natural or divinely mandated rubric for gender roles, nature entailed variation. Despite her clear reliance on

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[49] Annis F. Eastman, "The Home and Its Foundations," 613.

[50] Ibid., 613.

[51] Ibid., 614.

the evolutionary logic of adaptation, in the end, Eastman determined that"[o]ur progress is away from nature. What is natural in this sense is not the best."[52]

In final assessment, Eastman called for an expanded purpose for the family. She warned against restricting "the soul-culture gained in the duties and affections of the home" to the purpose of cultivating mere "personal happiness." The ideal home would be realized not by cultivating perfect family relationships, but by redirecting it toward "the serving of some large ideal for the world." The home, in the end, was meant to work for an ever-improving society, "the production and rearing of a higher social being."[53] In this, Eastman aimed to preserve the beneficial aspects of Victorian domesticity that called for careful tending of the home environment, while eliminating harmful effects from over-determined gender roles.[54] In this restructuring, she applied the values of the romantic–evolutionary self, which called for cultivation of each individual's "reservoir of possibilities" in order to activate personal potential on behalf of society's improvement. "The Home and Its Foundations" manipulated idealism's

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[52] Ibid., 614.

[53] Ibid., 614–615.

[54] Ann Taves describes two phases in late nineteenth-century conceptions of the relationship between gender and society. In "the maternal or domestic model," Taves writes, "[t]he domestic sphere was understood as loci of self-sacrifice." By contrast, the "scientific model" of gender and society involved "a developmental conception of a self that emerged through social relationships and the idea of society as a social organism." In this model, "[s]ocial evolution and self-evolution…were considered correlative once the self had arisen out of the life process. The emergence of the self…made possible the emergence of human society. Society…arose out of family relationships that made the emergence of the self possible." Ann Taves, "Feminization Revisited: Protestantism and Gender at the Turn of the Twentieth Century," in *Women and Twentieth-century Protestantism*, ed. Margaret Lamberts Bendroth and Virginia Lieson Brereton (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 316–318. The model outlined by Eastman in "The Home and Its Foundation" falls towards Taves's scientific model, although Eastman does not elaborate a notion of self-evolution here. This aspect of Eastman's thought developed more slowly than the social aspects of her critique, but eventually came to expression in Eastman's notion of self-realization.

envisioned self–world bond as a product of familial interaction, and shifted emphasis onto an evolutionary understanding of moral progress.

Three days later at the Parliament of Religions, when Annis Eastman approached the podium in the Hall of Columbus, she turned attention to her principal cause, the unjustly subordinate position of women in society. Her address, "The Influence of Religion on Women," closed the parliament's afternoon and evening session on Sunday, September 17, following addresses on Catholic views of marriage, contemporary sabbatarianism, and religious education.[55] Her participation in the parliament indicated an interest in questions of comparative religion and intersected with the values of "liberal sympathy, learned inquiry, and spiritual independence" that emerged at the close of the nineteenth century.[56] Eastman's lecture held significance for its symbolism as much as for its argument. Among the 190 lectures delivered

[55] "The Parliament of Religions: Program of the Central Meeting," *Unity* (Chicago, IL), September 7, 1893, 13–14. Richard Seager discusses Eastman's participation in the Parliament in terms of a comparison of her theological identity with Thomas Wentworth Higginson and Julia Ward Howe—both Unitarians who also addressed the Parliament—and sets them in contrast to Frances Willard. In generic terms, Seager writes that these figures "represent the distinctly different perspectives offered by Protestant women at the Parliament." Richard Seager, "General Introduction," *The Dawn of Religious Pluralism: Voices from the World's Parliament of Religions, 1893* (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1993), 35. Seager reprints Eastman's lecture as published in Walter R. Houghtoun, ed., *Neely's History of the Parliament of Religions* (Chicago: Neely Publishing Co., 1894), 345–350. Citations here refer to Annis F. F. [*sic*] Eastman, "The Influence of Religion on Women," in *The World's Congress of Religions: The Addresses and Papers Delivered before the Parliament and an Abstract of the Congresses Held in the Art Institute*, ed. J. W. Hanson (Chicago: The Monarch Book Co., 1894), 568–575. The lectures Eastman delivered in Chicago have constituted the most prominent and widely available of Eastman's published writings, during her life and into the twenty-first century. Almost all mention of Eastman's career apart from scholarship concerning her children has related to this pair of lectures.

[56] Schmidt, *Restless Souls*, 182.

before the Parliament, nineteen women spoke, among whom seven were ordained clergy members.[57]

Reported as "an original and very entertaining plea for the recognition of men and women on their merits without regard to sex," Eastman's lecture on religion and women struck the note of evolutionary social logic, with similarity to her talk on the home.[58] She looked to natural patterns and processes for explanations of social phenomena. As in the earlier lecture, her recourse to naturalism did not intend a one-to-one comparison of nature to society: "If we have made any progress, it is away from nature. We are not spiders, nor lions, nor birds."[59] While nineteenth-century evolutionary sociology reinterpreted humans as animals, as products of natural processes, it did so with the presumption that humans still constituted a position of primary importance in nature.

Having established an evolutionary frame for her analysis, Eastman took up the lecture's primary concern, an "endeavor to trace the influence of Christianity on woman's development, or of religion on woman's development." She embarked on a survey of gendered norms as encountered in readings that addressed a variety of religious expressions, ranging in both chronology and geography, and including examples from within Christianity and outside it. Going out of her way to claim objectivity, Eastman emphasized her conviction that "[w]hen I began the research on this subject my mind was absolutely unprejudiced. I studied the history of

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[57] Ursula King, "Rediscovering Women's Voices at the World's Parliament of Religions," 329. King writes that "the overriding concerns of the Women's Movement of the late nineteenth century are reflected in several of the addresses: the decisive importance of the women's suffrage movement, women in education and in the churches, burning social issues, the temperance movement, the influence and importance of religion and its study," (330–331).

[58] "Favors a Day of Rest," *The Daily Inter Ocean* (Chicago), September 18, 1893.

[59] Annis F. F. [*sic*] Eastman, "The Influence of Religion on Women," 572.

the religious life of mankind as I would study any subject. I found religion to be one of the factors in the human problem, like war or like climate." In its natural force, Eastman found religion to be a neutral factor with respect to gender: "I found also that it was impossible to separate the influence of religion upon woman from its influence upon man. … If religion has been a beneficent influence to man, it has been to woman in like manner, though it could not raise her at once to his level, because it found her below him."[60] By way of conclusion, Eastman assessed the overall value of religion in society:

> The letter of religion as contained in bodies of doctrine, in ceremonial laws, in all those things pertaining to the religious life which come with observation, has in all ages been hampering and hindering man's progress, male and female. But the spirit of religion which recognizes religion as the spirit of man and binds it to the infinite spirit, which acknowledges the obligation of man to God and to his fellows, which brings man finally under spiritual attunement with Him who is neither man nor woman, the Christ of God—this is at once the most perfect flower of man's progress.[61]

By contrasting the "letter" and "spirit" of religion, Eastman articulated a classic statement of the liberal Protestant tenet of universalism, typically articulated in its male-gendered form, "the fatherhood of God, and the brotherhood of man." The strictness of traditional Christian doctrine had fallen away from Eastman's theological imagination, opening space for the liberal conception of unifying spirit as the root of all religion, Christian and otherwise.[62]

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[60] Ibid., 575.

[61] Ibid.

[62] In a lecture delivered to members of her congregation after returning from Chicago, Eastman recalled a vision she witnessed in the Hall of Columbus that reflected her turn towards universalism: "As I heard these truths declared by Brahmin, Budd[hist], Moham[meddan], Jew, Chr[ristian] Scientist, my heart was enlarged & my faith in God & man renewed; as I saw all seeking the same goal reaching after God & likeness to him; & I was glad that this universal teaching could be given to the group, & eternal prin[ciple] of et[ernal] life which our Lord & Savior Jes[us] Ch. laid down for us—That that eternal truth of man's rel[ation] to God upon wh[om] he always insisted had been manifest in every land & among all people. And I saw how thro' all the ages these prin[ciples] had been coming to a fuller declaration until in Him they

The lessons shared in Eastman's lectures at the Columbian Exposition found application in her West Bloomfield pulpit. Not long after returning from the fair, Eastman delivered a sermon in reaction to a painting she had viewed on exhibit in Chicago, her interpretation manifesting the aestheticism of romantic idealism.

Eastman recalled that she had seen "a modern picture of the holy family at the World's Fair which seemed nearer to the reality than those of the old masters which represent the adoring love of Mary and the humility of Joseph before the divine child."[63] The image depicted "the interior of a carpenter's shop." A boy occupied the foreground—Eastman took him to be Jesus—clutching a scroll and seated amidst scattered, sunlit wood shavings. Filling the background, the boy's parents stood in opposite poses. Closer to the front, a man, Joseph, seemed animated by "something of impatience in his manner to recall the boy to his neglected task." Recessed in shadows, a woman, Mary cast her gaze towards the boy, with a "look of mingled fear and love, sympathy and disappointment with which all mothers…sometimes look at their boys, seeing the dawning of an individual life in them."[64]

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received their entire mean[ing]. And as I looked upon that wonderful group they seemed to fade away and their places were taken by the seers and sages of the world from the begin[ning]: Buddha, Zoroaster, Confucius, Socrates, Moham[med], Abraham, Moses, and in their midst the glorious form of Jesus—I seemed to see him claim all these as brothers—heard him say again, 'He that is not against us is on our side!'" Annis Ford Eastman, "World's Fair," 9–10, folder 81, Crystal Eastman Papers.

[63] Annis Ford Eastman, "Whosoever doeth the will of God," 4 (1893, repeated in 1908), folder 2, Crystal Eastman Papers.

[64] Annis Ford Eastman, "Whosoever doeth the will of God." Most likely, Eastman commented on a work by the Unitarian painter Edward Emerson Simmons, *The Carpenter's Son*, 1888–1889, oil on canvas, 66 x 50 ½ in., First Unitarian Church, New Bedford, MA. A discussion of the painting's provenance, as well as a reproduction of it, are available in Sumner Crane and Susan Lehman, "In Memoriam: Simmons's *The Carpenter's Son* (188–1996)," *American Art* 14, no. 2 (Summer 2000): 79–89. Two paintings that depicted a carpenter's shop are listed in the Columbian Exposition's catalog: Emerson's painting and an artwork by Robert

Interpreting the artwork for her congregation, Eastman linked the image with her own critique of social relations in domestic space.[65] As she re-imagined gender and family relations in "The Home and Its Foundations," Eastman saw a complex drama of kinship and authority at play in the depiction. Placing this mythic family in the secular setting of a workshop drew attention to the human dimension of their relationships. Rather than evoking a scriptural reflection, this positioning allowed Eastman to imagine alternatives to traditional gender and family relations: "I saw that the holy family was much like all other families after all, that kinship does not always mean companionship." Though family relationships fostered personal intimacy, they did not necessarily produce fully developed individuals suited for participation in society. In order to reach the full development of the self, humans needed to "seek to find a larger fellowship in the world" in order to achieve "a complete self-realization."[66] Echoing the romantic–evolutionary self, but relocating the context of its production outside the family, Eastman shifted emphasis towards the evolutionary aspects of personal development.

Koehler, *The Carpenter's Family*. See H. C. Ives, *The World's Columbian Exposition, 1893: Official Catalog, Part X, Department K, Fine Arts* (Chicago, IL: E. B. Gonkey, 1893), 22, 26. The possibility that Eastman viewed Simmons's work is striking, in light of Simmons's familial connections to the Ralph Waldo Emerson, and the theological significance the painting has come to hold among the Unitarians of New Bedford, Massachusetts, who own the painting and displayed in their church building until a 1996 theft damaged the work. Koehler's painting, which seems to have been lost, presents its own interest, as he gained notoriety for depictions of political radicals and industrial conflict, notably *The Socialist* (1883) and *The Strike* (1886).

[65] In this, Annis anticipated Max's interactions with painters of the Aschan School on staff at *The Masses*. Artists like John Sloan and George Bellows painted in styles that depicted the gritty character of urban life in New York, creating images that appeared alongside Max's poems on the magazine's pages. For mother and son, art supplied a principal medium for social argument and transformation.

[66] Annis Ford Eastman, "Whosoever doeth the will of God," 6.

She saw this model at work in the life of Jesus, whose "aloofness…from all men…began in his home experience." Turning to Jesus's rejection of his mother and brothers in the gospels, Eastman concluded that "[m]oral and spiritual relationships are closer and more binding than any of the ties which we call natural." Echoing the rhetoric of universality from the Parliament, she contended that "oneness of purpose, oneness of aim, harmony of aspiration is a stronger tie than that of blood." In this churchly context, Eastman allowed herself to make the spiritual claim that she avoided in the Chicago speech on the home.[67]

Such spiritual ties proved superior because they were "voluntary" and consequently the "most real" form of human connection: "The family of God is entered by the door of moral choice, and it is the final and supreme form of human society." By adopting this sort of moral kinship, one would be made "free from the tissue of lies that society and ecclesiasticism have woven." Social structures and doctrinal demands had colluded in the deceptions of domesticity, defining roles that restricted individuality. "We look upon human society and see men and women grouped according to certain social customs and conventions, we see them suffer by their forced union." Where, on one hand, family could produce "the best fruit of the struggle for self-realization," on the other, it could equally serve as "an instrument of the keenest … suffering."[68]

No argument for trial marriage or free love, in this period of her ministry, Eastman advocated for adherence to traditional family structures. She did not envision the utter dissolution of natural family relationships. Indeed, she saw familial relations as "the pillars upon which the spiritual superstructure must rest" and as "eternally binding."[69] Preaching to her staid

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[67] Ibid., 7, 9, 9–10

[68] Ibid., 14, 17, 19.

[69] Ibid., 23, 28.

country parishioners, Eastman probably felt limited in her ability to explore radical questions concerning these basic social bonds. But her sermon contained the seeds of a call for massive shifts in conceptions of family relationships that would come to expression in the lives of Max and Crystal Eastman, both of whom Annis encouraged in sexual and romantic exploration when they reached adulthood.

The lectures Eastman delivered at the World's Fair and the sermons she preached in 1893 and 1894 at West Bloomfield carried the terms of a critique of religion and society refracted through the lens of gender that occupied the center of her intellectual and activist work for the remainder of her career. These texts reveal the increasing boldness of her rhetoric, at times reaching to the extreme of advocating for the abolition of the traditional family. In these developments, Annis Eastman also gave evidence of her capacity for leadership in wider contexts. In the spring of 1894, Thomas Beecher offered her just this sort of opportunity, inviting Annis and Samuel to join the staff of the Park Church in Elmira, New York.

That May, Eastman petitioned the trustees of the West Bloomfield congregation to accept her resignation, effective August 1, so that she and Samuel could accept Beecher's offer.[70] At West Bloomfield, she had "suppl[ied] the pulpit with acceptance for two and a half years," demonstrating a "winning personality, and a sympathy ever in touch with the joys and sorrows of another…"[71] Taking up her new position ninety miles to the southeast, Eastman would remain at Elmira for the remainder of her career. As Eastman's professional life transitioned to a church of

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[70] *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, May 4, 1894.

[71] "The Pastors," in *Historical Papers Read at the Centennial of the Congregational Church of West Bloomfield, N.Y.* (Canandaigua, NY: Ontario County Times Printing House, 1899), 27.

much wider influence, she began to articulate arguments about religion, identity, and society that comprehended a wider scale of application than to the home.

As she had done at West Bloomfield, Eastman carried the lessons of the Parliament of Religions with her to the Park Church. In the Elmira pulpit on a Sunday evening in February 1895, she preached a sermon that addressed a widening appreciation of non-Christian religions. Once again underscoring the liberal religious theme of universalism, Eastman likened the assortment of a forest's foliage to religious variety: "diversity of belief makes the beauty of the world of religion as the different shapes and colors of the leaves of the forest make its unwritten poetry."[72] If, as she asserted, "[u]nity in diversity is the story of creation as told in plant and planet," then "[i]t should not surprise us…when we come to study the religions of mankind to find an infinite diversity of faith and forms of worship."[73] Eastman incorporated this generic concern for interreligious understanding as basic to her liberalism.

Part of the same series of Sunday evening lectures at the Park Church, Eastman echoed the Parliament's positivism and universalism by outlining her views on social progress and its relation to Christianity in a November 1894 sermon, "The Hope of Humanity."[74] Received as "one of the most scholarly and inspiring … [of] her Sunday evening talks," Eastman traced the limits of Christian exceptionalism in the liberal religious world that she saw taking shape.[75]

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[72] Annis Ford Eastman, "Religious Unity," (February 1895, Elmira), folder 6, Crystal Eastman Papers. Eastman later published a revised version of this sermon as "The Unity of the Spirit," *The Church Union* 24, no. 11 (December 1897): 334–335.

[73] Annis Ford Eastman, "Religious Unity," 5.

[74] Annis Ford Eastman, "The Hope of Humanity," 4. (11 November 1894), folder 6, Crystal Eastman Papers.

[75] "Hope of Humanity: A Scholarly and Inspiring Lecture by Mrs. Eastman," *Elmira Daily Gazette and Free Press*, 12 November 1894.

More significantly, this sermon exposed the depth of Eastman's confidence in evolutionary interpretations of social development. She opened her remarks by describing life as an experience of "ceaseless and inevitable struggle and competition, ceaseless and inevitable selection and rejection, ceaseless and inevitable progress."[76] Relying on Thomas Huxley and the English social Darwinist Benjmain Kidd's *Social Evolution*,[77] published earlier that year, Eastman explained the contingency of society by situating it in an evolutionary scale of time:

> The motives which moved the cave dwellers are no longer operative in human society. The pleasures and the sentiments of King David are not like those of the man after God's own heart in our century. Therefore it is that neither the civilization nor the political economy of one thousand years ago are fit for man today…The demands of humanity change with its progress.[78]

Offered as a hopeful assessment, Eastman suggested the openness of potential that should be perceived in natural adaptation, and underscored the correlation between social formation and human development. If modern society unfolded in a natural state of struggle, then a proper understanding of contemporary human evolution would suggest ideal social forms necessary for ideal existence. Science, however, proved limited in its predictive capacity: "Science has traced the evolution of life up to modern human society, but stands dumb before the problems of that society today."[79] Quoting Thomas Huxley, Eastman judged her contemporary social moment as deficient, caught in a malaise of dissatisfaction: "if there is no hope of a large improvement of

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[76] Annis Ford Eastman, "The Hope of Humanity," 4½.

[77] Benjamin Kidd, *Social Evolution* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1894). Kidd, who Bernard Lightman describes as a "religious evolutionist," sought to derive an ethical system from evolutionary theory. See Lightman, "Darwin and the Popularization of Evolution," *Notes and Records of the Royal Society* 64 (2010): 14.

[78] Annis Ford Eastman, "The Hope of Humanity," 11.

[79] Ibid., 16.

the condition of the greater part of the human family…I should hail the advent of some kindly comet which would sweep the whole affair away as a desirable consummation."[80]

Rejecting Huxley's pessimism, Eastman argued that religion presented an additive element to aid science in its delineation of ideal social forms. Science alone lacked the capacity to inspire human cooperation. Society must look elsewhere for the motive to progress: "This then is the meaning of life on this planet," Eastman argued, "this the purpose slowly unfolding out of chaos and strife: a hope of peace, of harmony of individual freedom and social cooperation for the perfection of all."[81] Ultimately, humanity would find its hope at the intersection of spiritual sensitivity and natural chaos. Eastman described her social ideal in these terms: "Life in the kingdom of peace will be characterized by struggle: struggle for self realization in the highest realms. …The forces of evolution are in our hands. Social progress is no longer instinctive and unconscious. It is conditioned upon man's conscious…willingness to cooperate with God."[82]

Annis Eastman's position at the Park Church afforded opportunities to deliver this more learned style of sermon, its congregation ready with interest in academic and activist topics. But life in Elmira afforded more than opportunities to preach and engage in pastoral ministry. Eastman cultivated an intimate friendship with Julia Jones Beecher, Thomas's wife, that left a deep impression on her. Speaking of Mrs. Beecher, Max recalled her connection with his mother:

> She and my mother were the closest of friends, their friendship consisting largely of a voyage together, in the company of Emerson and William Morris and Walt Whitman, beyond the confines of churchly ethics and religion. I cherish the image of her sitting by my mother's hammock beside a brook, reading aloud, with an expression of grim and yet

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[80] Ibid., 16–17. Eastman may have quoted Kidd's quotation of Huxley, which appears in Kidd, *Social Evolution*, 4.

[81] Annis Ford Eastman, "The Hope of Humanity," 21.

[82] Ibid., 26.

> joyful determination in her gentle features, the Calamus poems in Whitman's *Song of Myself*.[83]

Julia Beecher not only partnered with Annis in revering the self-culture of romantic and transcendentalist literature, but also shared progressive feelings about women and society. According to Max, "she bobbed her hair in 1857, anticipating Irene Castle by about sixty years."[84] Annis called Julia "a being of mingled wonder and delight."[85]

Still, this sort of friendship proved to be a rarity for Eastman, in the face of the competing concerns of church work, family life, and public lecturing. But her connections with women like Beecher drew Eastman into the world of women's activism even more intensely. In Elmira, she joined with clubwomen, temperance reformers, suffrage activists, professional guilds, the local reformatory, and schools and colleges in order to press the interests of her progressive religious and political convictions.

Parlor Talks and Summer Assemblies

Eastman did not limit her lecturing to ecclesial settings and major national gatherings. Once settled in Elmira, she became active in the women's club movement and spoke frequently at Elmira's Wednesday Morning Club, as well as at women's literary clubs throughout the region. During the nineteenth century, such associations often developed into politically involved bodies that championed voting rights for women, and Eastman also frequented western New York's numerous political equality clubs.[86] At these meetings, her name often found itself on

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[83] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 111.

[84] Ibid., 111–112.

[85] Annis Ford Eastman, *A Flower of Puritanism*, 6.

[86] Numerous scholars have commented on the importance of women's clubs in supporting women's education and reform activism. See, for example, Karen J. Blair, *The*

programs beside those of more prominent figures in the women's movement, such as Susan B. Anthony, Carrie Chapman Catt, and Julia Ward Howe. Beyond the interior spaces of the parlor and lecture room, Eastman took her speeches outdoors, appearing nearly every summer at Chautauqua-style assembly meetings, or at the Chautauqua Assembly itself. Her lectures in these settings reveal the importance of the institutional and social networks that sponsored them, marking Eastman as an exponent of the reform impulses that stirred within religious and political liberalism in the 1890s.

Early in her career, Eastman repeated one lecture with especial frequency. Audiences heard her deliver a lecture entitled "Culture" on no fewer than five occasions between 1891 and 1898. The speech impressed church and club audiences throughout New York State and at colleges farther afield.[87] Such appearances contributed much towards her reputation for integrating religious and political arguments into her speeches and lectures.

Speaking in the parlors of the home of the Syracuse industrialist, R. N. Gere, Eastman addressed her lecture on "Culture" to a crowd of more than one hundred.[88] "A word to grow by,

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Clubwoman As Feminist: True Womanhood Redefined, 1868–1914 (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1980); Theodore Penny Martin, *The Sound of Our Own Voices: Women's Study Clubs, 1860–1910* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987); Ann Firor Scott, *Natural Allies: Women's Associations in American History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991); Ann Ruggles Gere, *Intimate Practices: Literacy and Cultural Work in U.S. Women's Clubs, 1880–1920* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997).

[87] On November 22, 1896 she preached at Wellesley College's chapel, hosted there by faculty members who were friends from Oberlin. See "College Notes," *The Wellesley Magazine* 5, no. 3 (December 1896): 173. Later that winter, on January 21, 1897, Eastman addressed students at Oberlin College. See "Lectures, Addresses, Concerts, and Recitals," *Catalog of Oberlin College for the Year 1896–97* (Oberlin, OH: Oberlin College, 1897): 245. The following January, she delivered the lecture to her own congregation near the closing of their Winter Chautauqua Assembly.

[88] "Mrs. Eastman Abroad: An Elmira Woman Minister in Syracuse, N.Y.," *Elmira Telegram*, 21 April 1895.

not to show by," culture did not entail the trappings of public display, but intended a process of self-cultivation guided by "observation" and "experience." The "pursuit of culture" demanded that "egoistic impulses must constantly be chastened by the altruistic—in which a regard for our own power must be grasped in hand with a regard for the like powers of our neighbor, for the best of our selfhood is the result of the social."[89] This assertion reflects the form of self-development that Eastman outlined in her sermon on Simmons's painting, in her discussion of home and child rearing. For Eastman, social selfhood served as a base for her political arguments, especially in later years, concerning women's roles in church and state.

In this lecture, Eastman specified elements of her notion of self-realization, which she understood as rooted in a quality of aspiration: "The first essential to the attainment of culture: a realization of one's greatness—as man—as dwelling in a body capable of greater beauty and higher usefulness than any other on the earth." But the goal of self-realization intended another object than the individual's own gratification. Authentic self-realization pursued "vital relations outside self." Put differently, Eastman exhorted her audience to "[g]row not that you be great, but that you may grow and shine, not that you may be admired, but that you may give light and heat for darkness and cold in the world beyond self." Self-realization had a fundamentally social purpose, and its practice comprised the method for uniting self and world.[90]

In this vein, Eastman saw the cultivation of sympathy with the experiences of others as one of culture's principal aims, an idea that Max would amplify in his study of poetry. "The strength of a man is in his sympathies. It is outside himself as heat is outside fire, the aroma

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[89] Annis Ford Eastman, "Culture," 57, n.d., folder 93, Crystal Eastman Papers.

[90] Ibid., 27, 48–49, 49–50.

outside the flower." Through its externality, the sympathy produced through culture allowed an individual to build connections with "all that is rude, undeveloped, upheaving, struggling, suffering, man-making." Without such connections, one would be "selfish as a living fire without heat for the cold hands of children."[91]

Citing the example of Frances Willard's adoption of reform dress, Eastman turned to the seemingly odd subject of pockets in women's attire.[92] "You talk to me in vain of woman's emancipation so long as she has not one small pocket! Some say they have achieved a pocket, but tell me whether they do not have to venture to heaven to find it!" Clothing, as the simplest example of society's gendered treatment of bodies, measured an individual's social standing. And pockets, or their absence, denoted activity and commerce, or not. "Suppose we give her all that custom gives man—financial independence, a latchkey, penknife, where will she put them? Can you imagine a man starting out in the world, the serious business of life, with his handkerchief in one hand and his pocketbook in the other?"[93]

The humorous and absurd image of the prototypical Victorian man waving a lacy handkerchief and wielding a clutched purse displayed Eastman's wit, but also indicated the practicality that underpinned her more idealistic assertions about human culture. Pockets, as symbols of the literal capacity to hold property, implied access to economic and political

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[91] Ibid., 68–69.

[92] Other dress reformers since Willard had made similar reference to the symbolism of pockets. See Martha J. Cutter, *Unruly Tongue: Identity and Voice in American Women's Writing, 1850–1930* (Univ. Pr. of MS, 2002), p. 11, citing Ellen Hayes's talk at the 1893 Women's Congress on the sociology of dress reform; and Patricia A. Cunningham, *Reforming Women's Fashion, 1850–1920: Politics, Health, and Art* (Kent State University Press, 2003), 61, citing "Dress Reform at the World's Fair," *Review of Reviews* 7 (April 1893): 312–316.

[93] Annis Ford Eastman, "Culture," 39–40.

authority. Pockets denoted personal agency. How could a person achieve their full self-realization if even their clothing symbolized subordinate status? Human bodies, and their covering and confinement in clothing, fell within Eastman's vision of re-representing gender. Female bodies, so long as they remained restricted by clothing, remained cut off from the possibility of maximal cultural development. Without unencumbered entry into the physical world, women could not fully cultivate the capacity of sympathy, which she interpreted as the core of culture.[94] Even in this obscure example, Annis anticipated Max's radicalism. As he moved to New York City in 1907, Max gained notoriety for flouting sartorial convention by often wearing a brightly colored orange sweater, rebelling against the expected subdued palette for men's attire.[95]

Annis Eastman's interest in dress reform most likely emerged from her admiration of Frances Willard and Susan B. Anthony, but it was probably nourished by close associations with the nineteenth century's first popularizer of the bloomer outfit, Elizabeth Smith Miller, and her daughter, Anne Fitzhugh Miller. During summer months, the Eastman family resided at Cherith

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[94] In the lecture Eastman delivered at West Bloomfield, reflecting on her attendance at the 1893 Chicago exposition, Eastman argued that, in addition to its hopeful prospect for society, "[t]he Fair also emphasized the wretched condition of woman with her narrow high heeled thin soled shoes, her heavy dragging skirts and mail clad body." Many women had experienced difficulty with clothing in the White City, and special outfits had even been designed to facilitate women's walking through the extensive grounds. But for Eastman, sartorial limitations signified more than an impediment to amusement. Women's clothing restricted their capacity for self-realization: "It is only when one sees women under such circumstances, which demand freedom of movement … that one realizes the abject bondage to clothes in which they live. The real delights of breathing and walking we have never tasted. And there can never be any just comparison between the intellectual powers of man and woman until the physical powers have as good a chance in woman as in man." Annis Ford Eastman, "World's Fair," 15 (November 1893), folder 81, Crystal Eastman Papers.

[95] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 279; Max Eastman, *Love and Revolution*, 204–205.

Farm near Glenora, New York, located at the opposite end of Seneca Lake from Lochland, the famous mother-daughter suffrage duo's home in Geneva, New York. Not far from Lochland, on Seneca Lake's eastern shore, the Millers created a summer retreat, which they called Fossenvue, with several of their friends, and played host to numerous suffrage and reform activists and their families.[96]

As cousin to Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the daughter of abolitionist Gerrit Smith, Elizabeth Smith Miller stood at the center of suffrage politics in New York State. She and her daughter were especially active in organizing the activities of the Geneva Political Equality Club, which hosted the New York State Suffrage Convention in 1897. Invited to address the delegates, Eastman delivered what, up to that point, may have been her best known address apart from her contribution to the World's Parliament of Religions. Five speakers headlined the promotional broadside for the convention: Susan B. Anthony, Anna Howard Shaw, Lillie Devereux Blake, Annis Ford Eastman, and Mary Seymour Howell, all promised as "speakers of national reputation."[97]

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[96] Fossenvue, constructed at Caywood Point, Southwest of present-day Lodi, NY, gained a wild reputation for permitting mixed participation in athletic games. Annis stayed at the camp in 1894, 1896, 1897, 1898, and 1901, and was almost always accompanied by Crystal. Max attended in 1900—when he may have met co-camper and ethical culturist, Felix Adler—and 1901, and Samuel visited in 1896 and 1901. *Embers from Fossenvue Backlogs, 1875–1900* (New York: J. F. Taylor and Co., 1901), Rare Book and Special Collection Division, Library of Congress, http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.rbc/gen.0001: 234. Max Eastman recalled his fondness for "Nanny" Miller, and his mother's close friendship with her. Eastman, *Enjoyment of* Living, 114. Also see Rosemary Fry Plakas, "Catch the Suffragists' Spirit!" Miller NAWSA Suffrage Scrapbooks, 1897-1911; *American Memory* (July 2005), Library of Congress, http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/suffrage/millerscrapbooks/index.html.

[97] Scrapbook 1 (1897–1904), Miller NAWSA Suffrage Scrapbooks, 1897-1911, Rare Book and Special Collection Division, Library of Congress, http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.rbc/rbcmil.scrpbk1.

Addressing the convention from the outdoor "piazza" on the Lochland estate, Eastman raised the questions of "Woman's Right." Denouncing the restrictions of domestic ideology, she urged the moral principle of women's "right to her own nature—the right be what she is, not only actually, but powerfully." Reading a first version of this speech, revisions of which Eastman would deliver until at least 1909, Eastman assigned a political valence to her notion of self-realization.[98] Rather than pursuing mere existence, women needed freedom to seek "the nobler struggle for self-realization which alone is freedom." She ascribed "love for freedom" as the core human value, because "freedom is the realization of personality in the individual or nation." In fulfillment of this human call to liberation, Eastman noted women's increasing participation in the medical and legal professions, and their rising entrance into institutions of higher education.[99] She would later extend these views to an evolutionary analysis of shifts in marriage, gauged by men's attraction to independent women uninterested in a confining domestic life.[100] In all, Eastman's delivery of "Woman's Right" highlights self-realization as a central feature of her theory of the modern self and its relation to society. The concept formed a core of her integrated critique of gender, religion, society, and politics, and would serve as a central legacy of her preaching. By arguing for a universal right to discover and achieve one's capabilities and interests, Eastman hoped to eliminate the predetermination of identity and action according to gender.

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[98] As noted in the introduction, Eastman delivered this speech at the Chautauqua Assembly during the summer of 1899, and a manuscript for the sermon is located in Eastman's papers. See "Introduction," 6n10 and 7n11, above.

[99] *Geneva Gazette* (Geneva, NY), November 10, 1897.

[100] Annis Ford Eastman, "Woman's Right," (1909/1910), folder 82, Crystal Eastman Papers. This later speech is substantially similar to the 1897 lecture of the same title, though it was certainly composed later, as it cites publications dating from 1899.

Eastman's plea for women's individual rights and human freedom found expression in other outdoor spaces around western New York State, through her frequent participation in summer assemblies. The same remarks she delivered at Lochland, she addressed to the Chautauqua Assembly, much farther West, in 1899. Closer to the Eastman family's farm on Seneca Lake, Eastman frequently addressed the Keuka Assembly, fifteen miles Southwest of Lochland and a dozen miles Northwest of the Eastmans' property.

The oratorical stomping grounds of famous Baptist preacher and eventual coeditor of *The Fundamentals*, A. C. Dixon, the Keuka Assembly, on the western shore of Keuka Lake, emerged through the 1880s and 1890s as a popular vacation and self-education destination during the summer months. Located on the outskirts of Penn Yan, New York—"so called from the Pennsylvanians and Yankees who settled it"—the Keuka Assembly was the product of a joint venture between Free Will Baptists and the Congregationalists in western New York and northern Pennsylvania.[101] Keuka held importance as the location of one of at least twenty-three other summer assemblies in the Northeastern United States, and 101 other assemblies that formed between 1875 and 1900, "[that] recognize Chautauqua as their prototype."[102]

As spaces devoted to the late-Victorian ideals of self-education and individual action, these independent summer assemblies occupied a key position as contact points between liberal

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[101] Joel Cook, *America, Picturesque and Descriptive*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia, PA: Henry T. Coates and Co., 1900), 366. Though the two denominations had cooperated in supplying the program for summer assemblies at Keuka Lake for several years, by the mid-1890s they started negotiations for the joint operation of Keuka College, established by the Baptists in 1888.

[102] S. Buford, "The Summer Schools of 1895," *The American University Magazine* 2, no. 4 (August 1895): 312. Rieser supplies a statistical summary (51–53) and a listing of known independent assemblies (Appendix A, 295–297) in *The Chautauqua Moment*, though he includes neither the Keuka nor the Silver Springs assemblies (discussed below). Mention is made of both in Buford.

and evangelical expressions of American Protestantism, from the 1870s into the 1930s. These organizations capitalized on notions of summer as a season of leisure and recreation, and drew rhetorical connections to the camp-meeting heritage of evangelicalism's historical emergence in the "burned-over district." Not intended as mere leisure grounds, the assemblies promoted self-cultivation through independent education. One contemporary observer noted that "undisturbed rest or complete diversion" was not a true necessity of the summer months, but that "the long vacation…may be employed to [the scholar's] advantage, physical as well as mental."[103]

More than this, assemblies served as public spaces in which middle-class women exercised authority beyond the conceptual expectations of separate-spheres thinking. Just as the club movement advanced women's position by serving as a training-ground for political organization, summer assemblies provided opportunities for women and their organizations to manifest public influence. Not revolutionary spaces, the assembly buildings and grounds were constructed and decorated to imitate the Victorian parlor. This tendency expressed no mere aesthetic preference. According to Andrew Rieser, "by extending the parlor into physical space defined as community property, middle-class women presented a cultural atmosphere conducive to greater involvement in the public sphere."[104]

Appearing at Keuka nearly every summer during the 1890s, Eastman fulfilled an obligation to the New York Congregational Assembly to supply their program, and

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[103] Buford, "The Summer Schools of 1895." Eastman would heed this recommendation beginning in 1898, as she attended Harvard Divinity School's newly inaugurated its Summer School of Theology, which she attended each succeeding summer until her death.

[104] Rieser, 204. For a longer discussion of assembly-as-parlor, see Rieser, 197–202.

simultaneously promoted women's interests.[105] By introducing progressive political arguments about women's social and political equality, Eastman helped to define the boundaries between doctrinal and political interests within Protestantism at a moment of increasing ideological fracture within that tradition, especially at Dixon's Keuka Assembly.[106] Across the state, the Chautauqua Assembly promoted a moderate reform agenda, its founding Methodist bishop, John Heyl Vincent, preferring not to raise the suffrage question on the assembly's program. Where, as noted in the introduction, by 1898, Susan B. Anthony had convinced Vincent to open his platform to pro-suffrage activists, she continued to advocate the issue into the twentieth century.[107] In 1903, Anthony wrote to the bishop, asking that he "announce in [the] program for next year a week's symposium on the Woman Question and have Miss Shaw, Mrs. Annis F. Eastman, Miss Ida C. Hultin or some other woman minister preach the Sunday sermon that week."[108] In this, Anthony demonstrated the broad network Eastman had woven between the

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[105] See *The Elmira Daily Gazette and Free Press* for July 21, 1892; July 12, 1893; July 23, 1895; and *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, August 12, 1896. Eastman spoke at numerous other summer assemblies, notably the Spring Lake assembly, where she preached alongside Charles Fremont Sitterly and Henry Anson Buttz of Drew Theological Seminary in New Jersey, and the Chautauqua Institution in 1899. "Silver Lake Assembly," *Silver Springs Signal* (Silver Springs, NY), July 25, 1901; *The Chautauquan* 29, no. 4 (July 1899): 396.

[106] For Rieser, Chautauqua-style assemblies comprised a centerpiece of liberal political and religious thought in the late nineteenth century. The assemblies drew attention to three core traits of liberal Protestantism: "first, that modern life had grown too complicated for any individual to master; second, that social progress depended on the application of fixed moral truths derived from a responsible application of monotheistic religious beliefs; and third, that government would have to be made thoroughly responsive to the needs of the God-fearing, middle-class citizen." Rieser, *The Chautauqua Moment*, 84–85.

[107] See "Introduction," 6n10, above.

[108] Ida Husted Harper, *The Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony*, vol. 3, (Indianapolis, IN: The Hollenbeck Press, 1908), 1294.

intersections of her pulpit, the suffrage platform, and the parlors of home, churches, and outdoor assemblies during her first post-ordination decade.

Conclusion

Through Annis Ford Eastman's formation as a religious liberal during her first decade of ordained ministry, she cultivated relationships across the spectrum of liberal Protestant interest as it expanded near the end of the nineteenth century. Not only this, but she demonstrated vitality as a rising national advocate in the woman's movement, a skillful local pastor, and an appealing public lecturer. Through her persistence as a parish minister, Eastman drew her congregations into consideration of the issues that Americans and liberal Protestants confronted in the 1890s. She remained uncompromising in her conviction of the injustice of women's subordination, even if she stopped short of adopting the most extreme stances. A December 1900 interview, for example, quoted Eastman as stating that "does not say she believes in the New Woman, but 'the oldtime woman with the new opinions.'"[109]

Whatever her characterization of the New Woman, Eastman's rhetoric crisscrossed between religious and political rationales as she sought to expand women's options for work and self-expression through the redefinition of social roles and the realization of individual selves. The early period of Eastman's career as a minister and lecturer reveals the ways in which she contended with multiple conceptions of gender, society, religion, and politics. Where, early in her career, Annis Eastman straddled the boundaries between religious and political interests, the period of her professional maturity drew these worlds closer together. The concerns of home and parish formed the patterns of her daily experience, while her work as a lecturer carried Eastman to some of the principal centers of liberal religious thought in the United States. In the following

[109] "Elmira's Woman Preacher," *Buffalo Illustrated Express*, December 16, 1900.

decade, Annis persisted in women's activism and expanded the reach of her liberal network, and turned interest towards theories of mind–body connection as she encountered New Thought.

CHAPTER 3

"Self-Realization, Which Alone Is Freedom": Building Personality between Mind and Body

By 1900, Annis Ford Eastman had become a fixture of liberal Protestantism. From the center of her ministry in Elmira's Park Church—which had grown to 700 members and over which she took primary charge after Thomas Beecher's death in March of that year—Eastman traveled widely. [1] She preached and spoke in the large and wealthy Congregational churches of Chicago, prominent colleges and universities in New England, and in local communities throughout New York State, from Long Island to Buffalo. Eastman earned a reputation as an exemplar of women's ordained ministry, and won the respect and collaboration of major figures, especially within the circles of social Christianity.

To a significant degree, Eastman's participation in the 1893 Parliament of Religions held responsibility for advancing that reputation. Speaking in Rochester during the autumn of 1905, Eastman shared a platform with Washington Gladden and Josiah Strong, as she delivered remarks on "Religious Changes—A Retrospect and Prospect" at the New York State Conference of Religion.[2] Convened as an experiment in interreligious understanding and cooperation, the

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[1] Milton Rugoff, *The Beechers: An American Family in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: HarperCollins), 198, 563.

[2] J. M. Whiton, "The New York Conference on Religion," *The Christian Work and Evangelist* (New York) 78, no. 2026 (December 16, 1905): 837; "A State Conference of Religion," *The Outlook*. Strong lectured that evening on church-state relations, and Gladden addressed "predatory wealth" on the following day. "A Conference of Religion," *The Christian Register* (Chicago), 34, no. 48 (November 30, 1905): 1347. Eastman's remarks were published in the proceedings, *Addresses before the New York State Conference of Religion*, Series 4, no 4 (June 1906). She participated in the NYSCR from its second meeting in 1901 at Buffalo, New York. "Famous Woman Preacher to Speak Tonight," *Evening News* (Buffalo, NY) June 29, 1901, p. 5.

NYSCR aimed to extend the program of the Chicago Parliament into the local practices of New York's religious communities. Lyman Abbott's *Outlook* reported that the Conference aimed to foster "religious union to invigorate and purify the moral life of society," and upheld the motto, "Religions are many, but Religion is one."[3] In this, Eastman remained loyal to the intellectual and institutional expressions of liberal Protestantism that swelled at the turn of the century.

In the years after 1898, when her last child left home, Eastman continued her efforts on behalf of women, and grew increasingly bold in her denunciations of restrictive conceptions of gender. But Annis also shifted emphasis towards her own intellectual and spiritual development. As she had announced in her 1897 political remarks at Lochland, Eastman understood life as an experience of constant challenge. "Side by side with the struggle for existence," she argued, "has always existed the nobler struggle for self-realization, which alone is freedom." And by "freedom," she meant "the realization of personality."[4] From the time of Max's departure for Mercersburg until her death in 1910, Eastman undertook this work of struggling to craft her own self, working also to convey the importance of that practice to her children. She imparted the value of self-realization to Max through their correspondence, exhorting him to pursue independent and authentic choices. For example, Eastman wrote in one letter that she wished

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[3] Largely overseen by Eastman's fellow Congregationalist James M. Whiton, the NYSCR first met in 1900, and operated as an arm of the National Congress of Religion, which took as its purpose, "in a quiet way, to carry on this work [of the Parliament] in our own land, by gathering together representatives of all religions found upon our shores, in annual sessions, in different parts of the country." See *A Book of Common Worship, Prepared under the Direction of the New York State Conference of Religion by a Committee of the Possibilities of Common Worship* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1900), vi, viii; "A State Conference of Religion," *The Outlook* (December 2, 1905): 802.

[4] *Geneva Gazette* (Geneva, NY), November 10, 1897. See chapter 3, 119n99, above.

Max would "judge for *yourself* about all matters of behavior. …Be an individual—nothing you can gain will make up for the loss of yourself."[5]

This chapter offers a comparison between Annis and Max Eastman, outlining a few major points of connection to be traced more fully in chapter four. During the period under consideration here, Annis had reached the high point of her professional life, where Max was only beginning to form complex ideas about society, politics, and religion. In the years between 1898 and 1907, we can trace the increasingly liberal nature of Annis Eastman's religious perspective at the same time that we perceive the emerging outline of Max's opposition to religion. These perspectives informed one another to a significant degree, plotted between their epistolary exchanges and literary and oratorical productions. The intellectual terrain shared between mother and son comes into clearest view by emphasizing their common inheritance of the romantic and evolutionary traditions as they developed in the late-Victorian United States. Annis Eastman's religious and political commitments continued to inform one another during these years, as they had done during the first decade of her ministry. Similarly, Max's ideas about religion formed alongside social and political critiques.

For both, a combination of scientific and sociological interest accompanied cultural and aesthetic criticism. They refined these interests through exposure to scientific observation, political agitation, and prophetic poetry. Inspired by Darwin, Annis took sociological cues from Herbert Spencer, while Max served as a disciple of John Dewey. Both found in Emerson and Lincoln moral exemplars for the nation's politics. Annis revered Elizabeth Barrett Browning and both Annis and Max were transported by Walt Whitman.

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[5] Quoted in Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 118.

Motivated by largely overlapping intellectual canons, Annis and Max nurtured divergent self-perceptions. Where Annis never offered a systematic rejection of the discourse of social reform, Max eventually adopted a strident anti-reformism, articulated in the language of "revolution, not reform." Framing such self-perceptions in terms of their similarities rather than their distinctions, Doug Rossinow suggests that figures like the Eastmans were situated in "the political zone where liberalism and radicalism overlapped." Rossinow's framing complicates Max's efforts to draw a sharp distinction between reform activism and revolutionary politics, and acknowledges the proximity between Annis's social interpretation of Christianity and strident socialism.[6]

More than allowing for a critical reading of Max's self-perception, Rossinow's critique underscores the significant degree to which Max carried the intellectual inheritance transmitted by his mother and her generation. Perceiving the gap between reformers and revolutionaries as more semantic than substantial allows Max's developing social vision to be seen in clearer terms of its indebtedness to the social and religious thought of Annis Eastman. Max's religious valuation of poetry, his turn towards nature and mental healing, and critique of American political-economic values bound his formative radicalism to his mother's enduring reformism. Indeed, as explored in chapter four, below, Max underwent a significant period of transition between his college years and assuming editorial responsibilities at *The Masses*, during which he participated in the mainstream reform causes of work at the Henry Street Settlement on Manhattan's Lower East Side, and organizing the Men's League for Woman Suffrage.

On the basis of such a scheme, this chapter uncovers intellectual and personal links between Annis and Max Eastman as they took shape between Max's departure for Mercersburg

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[6] Rossinow, *Visions of Progress*, 3.

in 1898 and his arrival in New York City in 1907. The areas of overlap and divergence between Annis's and Max's religious and socio-political perspectives reveal central developments in religious and secular thought during this period, and function in opposition to historiographies that have privileged a narrative of secularization as an accompaniment to modernization. Even though Annis persisted in overlaying a Christian frame atop her prescriptions for social change, and despite Max's relinquishment of that frame for his social vision, mother and son continued to occupy a space of conceptual consonance that simultaneously evoked the nineteenth-century milieu of evangelical perfectionism and anticipated the range of anti- and a-religious ideologies that would inform left-wing politics and culture in the twentieth century. Thus, the interplay between these figures aids in the effort to understand the relationship between religion and secularism as they formed in the early twentieth century. As explained by John Lardas Modern, secularism does not denote the mere absence of religion or opposition to it. Instead, secularism functions as a larger "conceptual environment—emergent since at least the Protestant Reformation and early Enlightenment—that has made 'religion' a recognizable and vital thing in the world."[7] Max's abandonment of Christian terms of analysis for arguments about society, politics, and culture did not negate the influence of religious thought and thereby signal a crossing out of religion and into secularism. Instead, his critique mediated between these categories. The romantic and evolutionary strains of Oberlin perfectionism flowed through Annis Eastman to exert a powerful force in shaping the possibilities envisioned through Max Eastman's eventual radicalism. Through their shared search for new sources of authority in the wake of either reconfiguring or rejecting Christianity, Annis and Max straddled conceptual gaps that opened in new ways at the turn of the century.

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[7] John Lardas Modern, *Secularism in Antebellum America*, 7.

In the end, mother and son followed different directions. Where the language of Christianity continued to compel Annis's visions of reform, Max held Christian terms of expression at an ever-increasing remove as he sought explanations for experience in poetry and, later, socialism. During the years addressed in this chapter, both figures articulated worldviews through the vocabularies made available by religious liberalism, and both shared expression through attention to poetry and aesthetics, nature and physicality, scientific critiques of society, and emerging theories of the human mind and mental healing.

The romantic–evolutionary idealism that had underwritten Annis's notion of self-realization began to find new avenues of expression through Max as he gained an increasingly independent intellectual voice, especially through experiences during and after college. By identifying the major impulses present in Annis's speech and writing, the first section of this chapter lays a groundwork for surveying the initial development of Max's thought, explored in the later portion of the chapter.

Harvard Summers and the Liberal Protestant Avant-Garde

Around the turn of the twentieth century, apart from her continued political activism, perhaps no experience influenced Annis Eastman's thought more than her attendance at Harvard Divinity School, the center of Unitarianism in the United States. By 1899, Eastman decided to improve her formal training in theology and ministry, and enrolled in the first meeting of the Harvard Summer School of Theology, inaugurated in that year. Through three-week sessions held annually in July, the Summer School of Theology provided a vital network of connections

between Eastman and leading trends in liberal Protestant thought. She attended almost every year until her death.[8]

Summer educational programs had begun to spring up at American theological schools and other higher education institutions during the mid-1890s.[9] Similar to the Chautauqua-style assemblies, in which Eastman continued to participate, theological instruction during the summer months aimed to enhance "intellectual quickening of the clergy," and provided an early form of supplemental professional training.[10] Harvard described a more general purpose for its summer program, which the university intended "to provide an opportunity for clergymen and students of theology to meet for the study of subjects of theological interest, and to inform themselves

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[8] The Harvard Summer School of Theology met each July between 1899 and 1910, and then twice more, in 1921 and 1922. Records from Harvard indicate Eastman's attendance in 1899, 1900, 1902, 1903, 1905, and 1909. See *The Harvard University Catalogue, 1899–1900* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1900), 201. In subsequent years, corresponding editions of the *Harvard University Catalogue* also list Eastman as having attended in 1902 (p. 212), 1903 (p. 237), and 1905 (p. 215). See also *Announcement of the Summer School of Theology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1899–1910) https://archive.org/details/announcementofs9910harv.

[9] The Episcopal Church opened a summer school of theology at The University of South in 1889. See "Summer School of Theology," *University of the South Calendar, 1889–1890* (1890), 30. Methodists initiated summer schools of theology at Saratoga, NY in 1890 and Ocean Grove, New Jersey in 1895. See "The Itinerants' Club," *Methodist Review* 72 (November 1889): 918; and Morris S. Daniels, *The Story of Ocean Grove* (New York: Methodist Book Concern, 1919), 252. Presbyterians operated a school at Adelbert College, now Case Western Reserve University, by 1895. See *The Western Reserve University Bulletin* 1, no. 2 (October 1895): 45. In 1893, Iowa Congregationalists hoped for a summer meeting of ministers at Iowa College, now named Grinnell College, to develop into a summer theological institute, and its General Association debated the idea in1896. See "The Religious World," *The New Outlook* (June 17, 1893), 1217; and *Minutes of the General Association of the Congregational Churches and Ministers of the State of Iowa* (Correctionville, IA: 1896), 18.

[10] Herbert Baxter Adams, *Educational Extension in the United States,* Chapter 5 of *Report of the Commissioner of Education for 1899-1900,* United States Bureau of Education (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1901), 324.

concerning the tendencies and results of modern theological scholarship."[11] The 1902 program was promoted as "a rare opportunity for all who wish to refresh their minds and renew their acquaintance with university methods and to learn the conclusions of ripe scholars and thinkers."[12] This latter description aptly characterized the primarily academic orientation of Harvard at the turn of the century. In George Marsden's analysis, between 1850 and 1900, Harvard had undergone a "metamorphosis from old-time religious college to modern university." In the transition, the institution had "tacked in the direction of liberal Christianity" by affirming its Unitarian stance, so that, by 1900, "religion could still be an issue, but questions of orthodoxy seemed as far away as the Dark Ages."[13]

The Summer School of Theology's first session proved popular, with an enrollment exceeding one hundred, including eight women, Eastman numbering among them.[14] During these sessions, Eastman studied biblical exegesis, church history, comparative religions,

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[11] Harvard University, *Official Register* 3, no. 5 (February 21, 1906), *Summer School of Theology*, n.p. The description of the summer program also emphasized equal access for women and men, specifying its policy as "open to **men and women** alike. Special arrangements are made for the comfort of women," even assuring that, in the reception rooms of Phillips Brooks House, "a trained nurse is at hand to render help in case of illness." (emphasis in original). A table recording attendance levels between 1899 and 1905 indicate that, in 1905, seven women and 54 men attended the Summer School. Women had attended each annual program, although never more than nine women attended in a given year. 96 men attended in 1899, the most to have attended before 1906.

[12] "Brevities," *The Christian Register* (Chicago) 3 July 1902, 777.

[13] George Marsden, *The Soul of the American University*, 181.

[14] Adams, *Educational Extension*, 324.

philosophy, psychology, sociology, and theology, under such instructors as William James, George Santayana, Hugo Münsterberg, Josiah Royce, and George Herbert Palmer.[15]

Many of their lessons became fodder for the public lectures and sermons that Eastman delivered in her parish ministry, women's advocacy, and to supplement her family's income. For example, an undated lecture on "The Religion of India" bears close resemblance to interpretations of Vedic philosophy presented by Maurice Bloomfield, who delivered four lectures on "The Religion of the Vedic Hymns," and Charles C. Everett, who lectured about "Hindu Philosophies" on three occasions at the 1900 summer session.[16]

The numerous summers that Eastman spent in Cambridge contributed to her academic understanding of religion, as she gained access to some of the most advanced thinking in these areas at Harvard. But she was most influenced in two other areas of thought: comparative study of religions, and new theories about psychology and mental experience.

As demonstrated in chapter two, above, Eastman harbored a deep interest in the comparative study of religions, at least as old as her preparations for the World's Parliament of

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[15] In 1899, the school emphasized study of the Old Testament, church history, and theology; in 1900, New Testament, history of religions, and homiletics; in 1901, "the relation of ministers to the social question"; in 1902, "current problems in theology"; in 1903, "principles of education in the work of the church"; in 1904, "contributions to historical theology"; in 1905, the Bible; in 1906, origins of Christian theology; in 1907, ministry and social ethics; and in 1909, "the relation of Christianity to other religions. *Announcement of the Divinity School of Harvard University, 1909–1910* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1908), 28.

[16] Annis Ford Eastman, "The Religion of India," n.d., folder 76, Crystal Eastman Papers; *Annual Report of the President and the Treasurer of Harvard College, 1898–1899* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1900), 166. Maurice Bloomfield published a translation of the Atharva Veda in the series of translations edited by Max Müller of Oxford University. See *Hymns of the Atharva Veda together with Extracts from the Ritual Books and the Commentaries*, trans. Maurice Bloomfield, The Sacred Books of the East, vol. 42 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1897).

Religions. She cultivated this interest into the twentieth century, lecturing on the Vedic traditions of India, Japanese religions, and changing conceptions of the theory of Protestant missions.

One such lecture from 1899 reveals Eastman's interest in theoretical questions of the origins and functions of religion. Outlining a definition of religion rooted in an evolutionary understanding of social life, she claimed that: "Religion is another one of these grand divisions of human expression [like art and music], varying in different races, different climates, different stages of civilization, different temperaments, yet in all these variations showing certain unifying characteristics which enables the student to say 'this is religion.'"[17] Inseparable from human activity, Eastman followed a naturalistic line in asserting that religion appears wherever humans appear. Citing an example of a child who claimed not to experience religious feeling in church, but rather sitting in the tops of trees when the wind blew, she claimed that: "Religion is natural in man, and that he can never cease to be religious so long as he is man." If religion is a natural phenomenon, she claimed, one should expect to see it grow and change alongside humankind.

Eastman thus understood religion as malleable in its forms of expression. Likely addressing a Protestant audience, she concluded with an affirmation of the superiority of Christianity: "I am bold to declare that Jesus has said the final word for man in this world. Other truths for other worlds may be. But the truths of Jesus for man in this world." With this, Eastman echoed the sentimental piety of devotion to Jesus and racialist assumptions of the suitability of Protestantism for the American nation. But the boundaries surrounding the "truths of Jesus" seemed open: "Whether the religion of Jesus be the religion of the Hottentot or the modern Japanese does not now concern us. Is it the religion for you, a modern man or woman dealing

[17] Annis Ford Eastman, "What Is Religion?" January 1899, MS, folder 19, Crystal Eastman Papers.

with the problems of life and duty in the closing year of the 19th century?" Rather than adhering to tradition, Eastman called for an understanding of religion that subordinated orthodoxy to individual and practical concerns in local contexts.

By doing so, Eastman stepped into the precarious reasoning of liberal Protestantism. For Leigh Schmidt, religious liberals like Eastman "[struggled] over the firmness and fragility of religious identity in the modern world. Was being a Christian something that remained neatly bounded by authority, tradition, and liturgy ... [o]r were religious identities much more fluid and unbounded than orthodoxies of whatever kind imagined?"[18] While she privileged Jesus as an arbiter of authentic religiosity, Eastman opened the precise meaning of that claim to question. Perhaps the religion of Jesus could be recognized outside the confines of dogmatic Christianity, even among other religions in Asia or Africa.

A little more than five years after she raised these doubts concerning Christian exclusivism, Eastman delivered a sermon entitled "The Unknown God," in which she offered a sympathetic account of agnosticism:

> We sometimes hear the scientists spoken of as dwelling in a world void of mystery because they talk so confidently of the laws which they have discovered and processes as if they understood the world and could almost make one themselves, but the wisest know how short the line of light is and how deep the darkness in which it is lost. So profound is the sense of mystery that characterizes the true student of what is called material science that it has given rise to a new religious sect: the Agnostic. For the agnostic is not necessarily irreligious; he is not an atheist, he makes no affirmations. He contents himself with a sort of worship of the unknown which is sometimes as intolerant and bigoted a worship as any shown in the older sects and creeds.[19]

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[18] Schmidt, *Restless Souls*, 184.

[19] Annis F. Eastman, "The Unknown God," November 1905; folder 35, Crystal Eastman Papers.

This text pressed even the boundaries of interreligious inquiry, raising the possibility of similarity between scientific awe and spiritual wonder. In this, Eastman's thought on religious difference revealed the influence of the Harvard Summer School of Theology, not only in shaping the content of her ideas, but in stimulating her intellectual creativity and curiosity. Marsden writes that Harvard's modern transformation involved an "expansion of the definition of religion…[that] rais[ed] human creative achievements to primary religious significance, especially achievements through science."[20] Seated at the institutional heart of American liberal Protestantism, Eastman absorbed its modern revisions. But Harvard stimulated Eastman's interest in a subject much more closely aligned with her pastoral and personal concern: theories of the mind and its connections to the body.

Psychical Research, Spirituality, and Mental Healing

As with her expanded interest in comparative studies of religion, Eastman's curiosity about psychical research, mental healing, and psychology—new areas of interest for her around the turn of the century—grew in connection with the lectures she attended at Harvard. William James and Hugo Münsterberg, both members of Harvard's psychology department, proved especially influential in shaping Eastman's understanding of the subconscious mind and psychological aspects of her notion of self-realization. In 1902, James delivered a pair of lectures that followed publication, earlier that year, of *The Varieties of Religions Experience*, and in 1905, he spoke on the theme of "Religious Philosophy and Individualism."[21] In 1909,

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[20] Marsden, *The Soul of the American University*, 186.

[21] *Official Register of Harvard University* 3, no. 5 (February 21, 1906): 5.

Münsterberg, who shared a laboratory with James at Harvard, lectured on "The Church and Psychotherapy."[22]

James's 1902 lectures on "Intellect and Feeling in Religion" opened with a discussion of the liberal religious proposition of a unitary human ontology.[23] For James, the liberal adherent "does n't [*sic*] pit spirit against matter, mechanism against teleology, all is of one substance," so that "he is passive when Science talks, to accept without cavil any of her explanations of higher things by lower."[24] This perspective "characterize[d] liberalism in Christianity," and represented an expression of "immanent supernaturalism" that perceived the sacred and mundane as a unit, as opposed to the "older dualistic supernaturalism." In a mocking articulation of liberalism's emphasis on divine immanence, James underscored the unity of naturalism and supernaturalism: "Other world! There is no other world, it says with Emerson."[25]

This modern trend of thought troubled James, as it raised a wall of false separation between science and religion. "Is there a larger world of individual facts than 'science'

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[22] Münsterberg conveyed an important lesson for Annis Eastman in a work published just before the July 1909 session at Harvard, a chapter of which he presented at the summer session. In his 1909 work, *Psychotherapy*, Münsterberg printed his best-known assertion that: "The Story of the subconscious mind can be told in three words: there is none." Hugo Münsterberg, *Psychotherapy* (New York: Moffat, Yard, and Company, 1909), 125. Annis Eastman quoted this claim in her lecture, "The Psychology of Mental Healing," evidently composed after hearing the lecture delivered at Harvard in 1909. Annis Ford Eastman, "Psychology of Mental Healing," 39. Christopher White discusses the relationship between James and Munsterberg, and Munsterberg's importance for American psychology in *Unsettled Minds*, 53, 108, 170, 171, 193, 194, 242, 243.

[23] James never wrote out this lecture for publication, but his notes are published in William James, "Summer School of Theology Lectures on 'Intellect and Feeling in Religion,'" in *The Manuscript Lectures*, The Works of William James (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 81–97.

[24] James, "Intellect and Feeling," 89.

[25] Ibid., 90.

allows?—to wh.[ich] personal experiences bear witness?" Answering this question in the affirmative, he identified the possibility that religion and science complemented one another as different epistemologies. This left room for religion to function not on the level of scientific fact, but on the level of individual experience. "*Somewhere* in this world I must be recognized for what I am. The individual takes *refuge* in his religion, escapes from the falsehood of the common intellectualized classifications of him by his fellows. God is his only adequate understander and companion."[26] For James, human selves could use religious experience to incubate self-identity. Here, Eastman may have recognized a close link with her notion of self-realization as she had constructed it in her Chicago lecture on the home and her parlor talk on culture.[27] In those texts, Eastman commended on self-realization as the spiritual accompaniment to evolutionary struggle. In her framing of social evolution, fully realized selves would emerge from religious dedication.

For James, though, the connection between God and identity suggested a further conundrum. "Are there realities beyond the individual which are pertinent only to him *as* such? Which well up within, and not without, him?"[28] Could the interior experiences that comprise religion, in other words, signal an actual sphere of reality? If such a region existed James sought to detect it through scientific investigation. "Obviously [a] wider order exists," perhaps in the form of "[s]upra normal phenomena" that maintain connection with "suggestion" and the "subliminal." James saw his explanation as important for its capacity to "reestablish *continuity*," for it emerged from the principles of pragmatism: "God, to be real must carry consequences."[29]

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[26] Ibid., 91, 94.

[27] See chapter 2, pp. 99–103 and 115–118, above.

[28] James, "Intellect and Feeling," 94.

[29] Ibid., 95, 96.

On this point, Jeremy Carrette observes that, for James, intensely individual experiences such as religious feeling held little meaning apart from their social articulation. The cases presented in James's *Varieties* function both as records of individual experience and as "a social record of the way experience is shaped by ideas in different cultural contexts." Such an understanding leads to the conclusion that "[f]eelings…require a social cognition to give them 'public status.'"[30] In this way, James's summer lectures held further connection with Eastman's articulations about the social purpose of self-realization. Away from Harvard, as Eastman undertook her own studies of theories of the mind, largely inspired by William James, Eastman found new valences of meaning for her notion of self-realization.

Between 1905 and 1909, she spoke on no fewer than thirteen occasions on the topics of New Thought, psychical research, mental healing, or spiritual practices of mental discipline. Many of these addresses were delivered as part of two series of lectures. During the Lenten season of 1906, Eastman preached a series of sermons on spirituality and selfhood.[31] In an undated series of eight lectures, she took up an immense study of the various theories and methods of the New Thought movement.[32] And Eastman delivered two additional lectures, on

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[30] Jeremy R. Carrette, "Passionate Belief: William James, Emotions, and Religious Experience," in *William James and* The Varieties of Religious Experience*: A Centenary Celebration*, ed. Jeremy Carrette (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2005), 79.

[31] Annis Ford Eastman, "Spirituality," "Self-Recollection," and "Our Dual Self," Lent 1906; folder 37, Crystal Eastman Papers.

[32] "Our Unrealized Powers," "The Effect of Mind on Action," "The Alchemy of Purpose,", "Three Laws of Thought-Control," "Dangers to Be Avoided," "Jesus Teaching about Love," "Suggestion, […], Sympathy," and "What Does Jesus Say to These Things," n.d., folder 94, Crystal Eastman Papers.

psychical research and mental healing. Together, these thirteen discourses fill more than 600 manuscript leaves, forming a dense portion of her surviving archive.

Eastman's interest in theories of mental healing likely stemmed from more than intellectual curiosity or pastoral preparation. She took personal interest in such techniques as she sought remedies for physical ailments from which she had begun to suffer. The standing postures of preaching led to chronic pain in her legs and feet, and Eastman frequently suffered from bouts of depression and anxiety.

Apart from Eastman's reliance on mental healing therapies, no record exists to identify her initial motivations for studying mind–body connections. Perhaps her geographic proximity to the origins of mid-nineteenth-century Spiritualism in the Finger Lakes region of New York stirred her interest; Elmira sits eighty miles south of the Fox sisters' former Hydesville residence. Max, however, felt that his mother scoffed at Spiritualists, or at least took the practice of mediumship to be a source of amusement. In a 1942 essay about his mother, Max related a visit Annis made to a séance:

> One of her parishioners who believed in spiritism once persuaded her to visit a medium. It required a long walk, and when they arrived in the seance chamber my mother sank rather eagerly into a comfortable chair. The medium started forward in agitation:
>
> "Oh, you mustn't take that chair—George is sitting there!"
>
> "Well. I wish you'd ask him to move," she said. "I'm tired!"[33]

Max took the reaction as a sign of his mother's "gay, unmasking humor." If an accurate memory, this recollection likely signaled Annis Eastman's simple distrust of Spiritualism. Molly McGarry observes the development of a postbellum caricature of Spiritualists as "wild-eyed, long-haired reformers; out of step with their time," and it is reasonable to assume that the orthodox

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[33] Max Eastman, "The Hero as Parent," in *Heroes I Have Known: Twelve Who Lived Great Lives* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1942), 11.

boundaries of Eastman's earlier evangelical mindset conveyed a healthy skepticism of spirit communication.[34]

If not interested in Spiritualism in order to dispel its eccentric hokum, perhaps Eastman's curiosity arose through her friendship with Julia Jones Beecher, who maintained keen interest in the subject. As Annis wrote of Julia,

> Nothing interested her more in the last years than the proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research. …But she never could be deceived; her clear mind and wonderful power of discrimination saved her from delusion. If she had ever said to me at any time, "I have had a communication from the other world," I should have known that it was true. Though she received no message herself, she lost no particle of her faith in the existence of that world and its connection with this. "Is it not wonderful," she would say, "that our subjective memories carry so many things shut up and ready to come out on occasion? We can get at them any time, but where are they between times? Do you think they are all twisted up in the gray matter of our brain? I think they become part of our spiritual body, in a way often now independent of what helped to make them."[35]

Beecher's questions indicate a meticulous inquisitiveness that may have sparked Eastman's interest. It is not difficult to imagine the subject occupying one of their riverside conversations, discussing gray matter while lying in hammocks and reciting Whitman.

Whatever the source of her motives, the forms of psychical research that drew initial comment from Eastman emphasized spirit communication, particularly in connection with

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[34] McGarry, *Ghosts of Futures Past* (California, 2008), 55. Still, it is curious that Eastman seems not to have participated in Spiritualism. Perhaps an accident of her age, by the time Eastman entered Oberlin, Spiritualism had begun to decline, especially among women reformers (McGarry, 55). Still, she satisfied the classic Spiritualist demographic, having lost a child at a young age, lost a sister to suicide, sustained involvement in the woman's movement, lived within close geographic proximity to Hydesville by 1885, and supported reform causes taken up by Spiritualist women—notably dress reform and water cure—and possessing an affinity with the core intellectual traditions woven through Spiritualist philosophy: "[i]n Spiritualism, the romanticism and perfectionism of antebellum reform outlived the Civil War." Ann Braude, *Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women's Rights in Nineteenth-Century America*, second ed. (1989; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 7, 152–156.

[35] Annis Ford Eastman, *A Flower of Puritanism*, 67–68.

the work of James Hyslop.[36] In personal terms, Annis had suffered the tragic deaths of her sister and her oldest child, losses that throttled her into deep depression, and exacted an emotional toll until the end of her life. Such losses, especially in the postbellum nineteenth century, had motivated surging interest in Spiritualism's promises of communications from the deceased. Professionally, the principal pastoral application of spirit communication, at least initially, proved to be consolation of bereaved congregants.[37]

Whether or not Eastman was a committed Spiritualist or New Thought practitioner, her own religious experimentation illuminates the depth of her location in liberal Protestant thought, situated at the heart of late-Victorian intellectual and political struggles. As McGarry observes, the diminution of Calvinism and the flourishing of liberal psychological religion indicated "not so much a mass secularization as a widening of a search for answers in newly crafted theological terms."[38] Where Spiritualism "posed a counterdiscourse to both an aging Calvinism and a growing materialism," Eastman sought to supply her congregation with the means to incorporate

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[36] Hyslop has elicited limited comment from scholars; brief biographical sketches and summaries of his writings can be found in Michael E. Tymn, "Difficulties in Spirit Communication Explained by Dr. James Hyslop," *Journal of Spirituality and Paranormal Studies* 33, no. 4 (October 2010):195–209; and Michael E. Tymn, "An Interview with James H. Hyslop, Ph.D., LL. D.," *Journal of Spirituality and Paranormal Studies* 29, no. 2 (April 2006): 71–76. Also see Rodger I. Anderson, "The Therapist as Exorcist: James H. Hyslop and the Possession Theory of Psychotherapy," *Journal of Religion and Psychical research* 4, no. 2 (April 1981): 96–112. Paul M. Dennis mentions Hyslop's bargain with William James that, after James's death, he would send messages to Hyslop through a medium. See Dennis, "Press Coverage of the New Psychology by the *New York Times* during the Progressive Era," *History of Psychology* 14, no.2 (May 2011): 116.

[37] Eastman later turned attention to suggestion and autosuggestion, leaving behind spirit communication, as mental strategies to foster well-being in individual selves and between individuals. Such a shift towards suggestions reflects the approach followed by many religious liberals as they began to adopt psychology as a frame for pursuing spiritual well being. See White, *Unsettled Minds*, 160–165, 171–174.

[38] McGarry, 11.

a thoroughly scientific Christianity, equal parts rational and spiritual.[39] That she incorporated psychological and mental techniques in this pedagogy underscores her increasing attraction to scientific explanations more than it reveals an expanding supernaturalism.

Eastman integrated elements of psychical research, New Thought, and devotional spirituality, into a set of modern spiritual techniques, presented as tools for her parishioners. Exemplified in a series of lectures delivered during the 1906 Lenten season, Eastman emphasized spirituality as a practice of disciplined mental exercise resulting in moral thought and behavior, the pinnacle of evolutionary development. In a lecture entitled "Our Dual Self," she offered a general description of spirituality as mental discipline: "At least two selves dwell in every human body and use all the powers of the soul. Memory, imagination, perception, intellect are just as much instruments of evil as of good."[40] These elements structured human interiority as a morally neutral ground; good would be favored over evil as one learned the practice of spiritualty. For Eastman, "[s]pirituality is that quality which a life and character attains when it is formed by a steadfast devotion to a high ideal."[41] In this way, one practiced spirituality by "living inwardly," an expression Eastman borrowed from Thomas à Kempis.[42]

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[39] McGarry, 19.

[40] Annis Ford Eastman, "Our Dual Self," 7.

[41] Annis Ford Eastman, "Spirituality," 1, folder 37, Crystal Eastman Papers.

[42] Annis Ford Eastman, "Our Dual Self," 8–9. In this lecture, Eastman also indicated her admiration for Felix Adler's writings, observing "that God and the soul are as securely enshrined in them as if they had issued from a Christian pulpit, more indeed than many such because of the absolute fearlessness and sincerity of them," (8–9). Eastman's appreciation of the Ethical Culture innovator stemmed from their shared concept of self–world relations. Leigh Schmidt explains that Adler imagined vital connections between inner spiritual practice and social activism (*Restless Souls*, 144).

In the next of her Lenten lectures, Eastman addressed "self-recollection"—or what might be termed in more recent fashion as "self-reflection"—as a practice of spiritual discipline. Criticizing what she understood to be a popular concept of spirituality, Eastman wrote: "When we think of spirit-culture, do we not immediately reach out to take hold of something: the Bible perhaps, unless we have tried the Bible and found it wouldn't work but rather raised very unspiritual feelings in us, some book of daily readings or poetry." In this construction, spirituality involved biblical, or at least literary study. But Eastman outlined an alternative notion. Through careful exercise of spiritual discipline, she argued, the individual self could serve as a sort of scripture. "But think on this; the Bible, the poetry, all the high thoughts, have come out of the souls of men and women. You are a soul. Why not recollect yourself?"[43] This practice involved focused interiority, which required the capacity to "to concentrate the mind and hold it on one subject."[44]

Eastman's most systematic and comprehensive treatment of these themes came in eight related addresses on the New Thought movement.[45] Undated, they clearly intend a church audience, and may have served as another Lenten lecture series.[46] No matter the occasions of

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[43] Annis Ford Eastman, "Self-Recollection," 9.

[44] Ibid., 11.

[45] For discussion of the origins and development of New Thought, see Charles S. Braden, *Spirits in Rebellion: The Rise and Development of New Thought* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1963). Catherine Albanese has supplied a more up-to-date genealogy of the movement, framed as one strand among the formations of metaphysical religion that developed in the United States during the nineteenth century. See especially her chapter "Spirits Reformed and Reconstituted" in Albanese, *A Republic of Mind and Spirit: A Cultural History of American Metaphysical Religion* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 257–329, and her discussion of Emma Curtis Hopkins, in particular, on pp. 315–323.

[46] Eastman delivered a series of thematic Wednesday- and Sunday-evening lectures each year during Lent, though these lectures bear no direct indication of belonging to such a series.

their delivery, these lectures took part in what Ann Taves terms the "churching of New Thought" between 1890 and 1910, when the movement moved closer to the Protestant mainstream.[47] Congregationalists, for example, demonstrated great interest in New Thought. The February 1908 issue of *The Congregationalist*, for example, featured a two-thirds-page advertisement for "Books on Mental Healing" published by the Pilgrim Press.[48] Not only this, but during the previous month, *The Congregationalist* printed a three-article series by Emanuel Movement leader Samuel McComb, on "The Healing Ministry of the Church."[49]

New Thought carried a ready appeal for Eastman in her capacity as a women's rights advocate. As Beryl Satter interprets the collection of traditions that comprised New Thought, they all shared "involvement in a broad cultural debate over precisely which qualities constituted ideal manhood and womanhood, or the ideal gendered self."[50] This debate occurred within the wider discourse of evolutionary social theory, and New Thought adherents "created new models

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"The Alchemy of Purpose" cites George Herbert Palmer's *The Nature of Goodness*, which was published in 1908.

[47] Ann Taves, *Fits, Trances, and Visions*, 311–315.

[48] The advertisement listed titles authored by Pierre Janet, Aaron Crane—who treated Annis Eastman during the summer of 1908—A. T. Schofield, and others. See "Books on Mental Healing," *The Congregationalist*, 93, no. 5 (February 1908): inside cover.

[49] See Samuel McComb, "The Healing Ministry of the Church: I. The Need," *The Congregationalist* 93, no. 1 (January 4, 1908): 16–17; "The Healing Ministry of the Church: II. The Remedial Forces of Science and Religion," *The Congregationalist* 93, no. 2 (January 11, 1908): 47–48; and "The Healing Ministry of the Church: III. The Method and Working of the Emmanuel Clinic," *The Congregationalist* 93, no. 3 (January 18, 1908): 79–80.

[50] Beryl Satter, *Each Mind a Kingdom*, 9.

of womanhood and manhood that overlapped with, but were not always identical to, the competing paradigms of selfhood offered by social Darwinists and social purity leaders."[51]

Eastman, however, rarely emphasized the gendered aspects of New Thought, drawing attention instead to its practical potential to aid her congregants in mental and physical well-being. In particular, Eastman promoted the New Thought practice of suggestion:

> A close examination of the word suggestion will show us the accuracy of its use by the New Thoughters. It is a Latin word from sub, meaning "under" and gerere "to carry" or bring to carry under. To carry under the conscious mind, into the region of unconscious mind, an idea which shall be seized upon by the powers of that mind and used in its work, …which work is more important in the building and renewing of the body and in the fashioning of the character than all external influences that play upon the soul.[52]

Here, Eastman emphasized the importance of mental suggestion for regulating the health of the body. Only in the initial stages of is scientific elaboration, Eastman believed that suggestion, and all theories of mind–body interaction, remained incomplete. Quoting from James's *Psychology: A Briefer Course*, she observed, "There is as yet no sci[ence] of psy[chology], only the hope of a science. At present psy[chology] is in the condition of physics before Galileo."[53]

Despite the incomplete quality of understanding related to suggestion, Eastman believed it denoted practical reality: "None of us can join a group of people who are laughing heartily without beginning ourselves to laugh before we know the cause of the merriment."[54] But more than this, she believed that the New Thought conception of suggestion articulated standard Christian concepts that related to her notion of self-realization.

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[51] Satter, 13.

[52] Annis Ford Eastman, "Suggestion, […], Sympathy," 4–5, folder 94, Crystal Eastman Papers.

[53] Ibid., 6.

[54] Ibid., 6.

> Distinct individuality is the chief goal of our existence. "To be yourself, and to have measureless trust, perhaps this is best of all," said Whitman. In Him we live and move and have our being, is to my mind the same teaching. You must have a being, you must be yourself, before you can have measureless trust, before you can take your share of the infinite spirit of the living God.[55]

Perhaps intending to offer her congregation an easy entry into consideration of New Thought, Eastman presented its core concept as an obvious aspect of everyday experience.

But Eastman also understood suggestion in more elaborate terms. In her lecture on "The Psychology of Mental Healing," her investigation guided Eastman to the basic conclusion that "mental healing rests on suggestion." Relying on Boris Sidis's *The Psychology of Suggestion*, she offered this definition for the term: "An idea can be conveyed from one mind into another by repetition without the aid of reason or even in opposition to reason."[56] According to Christopher White, suggestion "involved quieting the self and concentrating on lodging affirmative statements in the quieted subconscious."[57] This seemed a common-sense phenomenon to Eastman, who warned that more elaborate interpretation held the risk of drifting into questionably metaphysical assumptions: all the better to emphasize the practical uses of psychological suggestion. It could be applied in order to improve one's own mental and physical state, or that of another person. In Annis's pursuit of self-realization, she believed mental theories held significant potential for easing the lives of her parishioners, and explicated the physical and mental processes that stood behind her belief in human cooperation as the foundation of the divine kingdom.

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[55] Ibid., 9. Eastman summarized the mental healing movement in this way: "N[ew] T[hought] is a practical application of Emer[son's] philosophy [of self-reliance] to daily life, to problems of health and happiness," (9).

[56] Ibid., 10–11.

[57] White, *Unsettled Minds*, 183.

Beyond these lectures, Annis Eastman developed personal connections to the New Thought movement, receiving mental healing treatments for a nervous affliction while at Harvard and for other ailments in Norfolk, Virginia, and sending Max to two New Thought sanitariums when he became ill after college, during the summer of 1906.

During the summer of 1908, Eastman traveled to Norfolk, Virginia, seeking the mental ministrations of Aaron Martin Crane. A New Thought healer from Vermont, Crane had earned a living as an official of the Internal Revenue Service after serving in the Civil War, and had recently published his first book on mental healing, *Right and Wrong Thinking and Their Results* (1905).[58] Eastman was drawn to "the way [Crane's philosophy] illuminates much of the teaching of Jesus." He advocated a pacifist and millennial anarchism and claimed "we are coming to the place … where each will love his neighbor *as himself*, and that materialistic science is on the road and will come out at the same point which, he thinks, the soul can immediately perceive."[59] In addition to daily treatments for foot pain, Eastman studied Crane's philosophy, measuring it with a degree of skepticism. Struggling to apply the insights of what she believed to be a

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[58] An obscure figure in the history of New Thought, Crane's biography is sketched in the publisher's preface to Aaron M. Crane, *Ask and Receive* (Boston: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Co., 1920). Horatio Dresser described Crane's writings as "advocating a kind of modified Christian Science," and noted Crane's participation in 1900 at the first meeting of the International Metaphysical League, convened at New York City's Madison Square Garden (Dresser, *A History of the New Thought Movement*, 189, 198). Dresser included Crane's *Right and Wrong Thinking* in the bibliography of New Thought sources published in *The Spirit of the New Thought* (p. 293); H. Addington Bruce noted Crane's importance as an exponent of New Thought literature in "Mental Healing of To-Day," *The Outlook* (September 4, 1909), 28. *The Congregationalist* included Crane's book, *Right and Wrong Thinking*, in an advertisement for "Books on Mental Healing" in volume 93, no. 5 (February 1908): inside cover. Charles Braden includes Crane among "the outstanding New Thought leader" who contributed to Horatio Dresser's monthly publication, *Journal of Practical Metaphysics*, which commenced publication in 1896. See Braden, *Spirits in Rebellion*, 160–161.

[59] Annis Ford Eastman to Max Eastman, July 12, 1908; box 9, folder 33, Eastman MSS I.

scientifically rooted spiritual expression, Eastman voiced a sentimental piety filtered through the theory of mental suggestion. Separating the sensible from the eccentric, Annis wrote to Max as she attempted to piece together a reaction to Crane's method and philosophy:

> I can't follow all his [sup]positions or see that they are axiomatically true, but I can see that he has found the only key to living and that it is all in Jesus, and just as much in us if we can keep our minds on it and not see that which opposes itself to the truth. …The greatness of Jesus grows upon me and the longing to be able to trust myself to him, as Peter did when he leaped from his little boat to go to him on the water. It is a sound instinct that makes the church cling to his name and bear to cut loose from his Person. The only way to leave him is to embrace his truth and be at one with him. In these wanderings I am *not* setting forth Mr. C's teaching; he says little about Jesus save to show that the truth he has arrived at, Jesus also declared. But I'll not preach anymore.[60]

Anxious that word of her associations with this untested mental healer might reach the prying ears of her neighbors and parishioners, Annis asked for Max's discretion: "Don't talk of these things with the people at Glenora."[61]

While Crane's treatments proved partially successful, Eastman returned home with her ailment persisting. The following summer, returning to the Harvard Summer School of Theology, Eastman sought a mental healer in Boston. In a letter postmarked from Newton, Massachusetts, Annis described her treatments, this time to Crystal:

> I have good news for you. I am better and I have had two mental treatments. I could not have remained at school without—last Friday I was pretty sick and that's the day I went to see Ms. Chapin. I'll not try to describe her—except to say that she has something so strong in her as to be almost masculine—yet isn't. She talks very simply and claims nothing for herself but to be like a sunglass to concentrate the life forces upon her patients; she says just what is the common place of religion if it be considered a matter of present reality and not a history. … Ms. Chapin says very encouraging things to me—of course says I am to be perfectly well and to take my work on a new and higher plane so that it will be a refreshment to me instead of a drain. I see no great change yet except that I'm stronger and can take the lectures with considerable ease. She didn't want me to give them up. … My mind is certainly improving for I am not so bothered with thoughts of

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[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid.

> disaster as I was before. I'm trying to be very reasonable and take it calmly—not be carried away by enthusiasm but thoroughly test it. I do not tell the Brecks for fear they will say discouraging things.

It is likely that Eastman visited Mary E. T. Chapin, a Christian Science and New Thought practitioner in Boston, who advertised her services there, at least between 1887 and 1914, and had participated in the founding of the Metaphysical Club.[62] According to New Thought historian and practitioner Horatio Dresser, the club "aroused public interest in mental healing on the part of people of liberal religious belief … [and] gave expression in part to the Greenacre spirit."[63] Like her earlier message to Max, this letter portrays Eastman as a timid disciple of mental healing. Staying with her close friends, Marion and Charles Breck, at their large home in Newton, Massachusetts while attending the Harvard sessions, Eastman wished to avoid embarrassment if they disapproved of her treatment. Annis's skepticism of Chapin's motives

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[62] See Chapin's advertisements in *Christian Science Journal* 5, no. 1 (April 1887): after p. 54; and *The Master Mind* 8, no. 1 (October 1914): cli. Charles S. Braden records Chapin's participation in a Boston New Thought convention in 1910, and in London at a 1913 international meeting. See Braden, *Spirits in Rebellion*, 186, 188. Chapin was listed as president of Boston's Metaphysical Club in 1916, in *The Boston Directory*, no. 112 (Boston, MA: Sampson and Murdock CO., 1916), 117; and as a speaker for the League for the Larger Life, printed under "New Thought" in the worship listings of the *New York Times* on Dec. 7, 1918. Horatio Dresser mentioned Chapin in his *History of the New Thought Movement* (), 182, 186, 205, 206, 209, 211, 213–214, 218, and 221. For examples of Chapin's writings on mental healing, see Mary E. T. Chapin, "The Conditions of Power for the Individual," *Proceedings of the Second Annual Convention of the International Metaphysical League*, 56–64 (Boston, MA: International Metaphysical League, 1901); and Mary E. T. Chapin, "Lex Medicinaque," *The Medico-Legal Journal* 28, no. 3 (December 1910): 131–133.

[63] Dresser, *History of the New Thought Movement*, 180–181. Dresser described the New Thought program at Greenacre on pp. 176–179.

perhaps reflected ignorance of the prosperity message that New Thought practitioners had begun to incorporate alongside the practice of suggestion.[64]

Through her summertime studies at Harvard, Annis gained exposure to theories that presented new means of achieving self-realization in the practice of mental healing, understood in its relationship to psychical research and the burgeoning field of psychoanalysis. Her lectures, sermons, and personal experiences during this period, whether articulating comparative religious arguments, relying upon evolutionary science, or investigating the powers of the mind, reveal that Annis Eastman remained a religious liberal in almost classic terms.

Son of a Woman Minister Set Loose

In 1898, Max Eastman departed Elmira to attend the Mercersburg Academy in southern Pennsylvania, attempting to meet his mother's hopes of intellectual achievement. Earlier in that decade, Mercersburg had adopted the preparatory school model, indicative of the upwardly mobile aspirations of a Protestant middle class. An advertisement for the academy in the *Chautauquan* announced its goal as producing "thorough scholarship, broad attainment, and Christian manliness," boasting of its "personal attention to boys" and the availability of "modern equipment."[65] This represented a sharp turn from the school's roots. Established two generations earlier, the institution had given rise to the Mercersburg Theology, articulated by church historian Philip Schaff, and theologian John Williamson Nevin, who proved instrumental in transmitting the romantic idealism of Hegel and Schelling to centers of Reformed learning throughout the United States.

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[64] For discussion of New Thought's connections to the broader prosperity movement in American religion, see Kate Bowler, *Blessed: A History of the American Prosperity Gospel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 32–33; and Albanese, *Republic*, 321.

[65] Advertisement in *The Chautauquan* 29, no. 4 (July 1899): 304.

Having left home for the first time, Max and his mother initiated a correspondence that shaped his intellectual and emotional life for a decade. When describing his Mercersburg experience later in life, Max wrote that he experienced an "inner life…sustained by my mother in letters as wise and strong and witty and tender as a boy has ever received."[66] After commencing her professional career, Annis had struggled to define her role as mother, and as he moved away, she determined to cultivate both a motherly and an intellective bond with her son through regular correspondence.

The letters they exchanged during Max's two years at Mercersburg reveal mother and son engaged in intellectual projects and everyday life. Reports of weekly reading intermingled with instructions for sending laundry or requests for spending money. But more than this, their letters carried a frankness of expression with respect to beliefs and doubts. During his second semester, Annis wrote to Max: "I like your theology so long as Christ is your ideal and you keep in touch with God by prayer and doing your best—it is well with you." Evidently Max had reported some change in religious disposition. Revealing the intellectual character of their exchange, his mother's doctrinal affirmation appeared alongside a dismissal of John Milton: "But the theology of *Paradise Lost* is awful to me—it is responsible for much false teaching, I think. Many things that preachers preach are gathered not from the Bible but from Milton's great poem."[67]

The candor of their exchanges afforded Annis regular opportunities to transmit advice and insight. As he settled in for his final year of study before college, rooming alone so as to improve his sleep, Max received a letter from his mother, full of her language of self-realization:

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[66] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 118.

[67] Annis Ford Eastman to Max Eastman, March 1899; box 9, folder 12, Eastman MSS I.

> Live out of yourself persistently. Become interested in all that is going on in the world and train yourself to think about them. Don't be discouraged by rebuffs & failures of any kind. I've always been picking myself up and trying again & tho' I've not made much of a success of life I've done better than I would if I had lain still and let the waves and billows go over me.[68]

Though lacking explicit invocation of the term, Annis's letter pointed Max towards pursuit of self-realization. Annis wished for her son to avoid the disadvantages she encountered as she moved through school, urging him to cultivate self-awareness and attention to the world. By referring to experiences of failure and continual self-assertion, she signaled the necessity of striving to express one's own individuality despite circumstances.

Even while dispensing her motherly wisdom, Annis expressed her admiration for Max and Crystal's "calm and tender philosophy of life," and expressed her own sense of insufficiency: "there are great big lacks and weaknesses in me that you can fill out and tone up."[69] When Thomas Beecher died in March of 1900, Annis shouldered the burden of consoling the Park Church congregation and planning and conducting numerous memorial services and gatherings. She confided her exhaustion in Max: "The services have been so very hard. It does not seem as if I could go through another one, but I live a day at a time. …I love you awfully, you dearest of boys, and you must imagine that I tell you so every day."[70]

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[68] Annis Ford Eastman to Max Eastman, September 13, 1899; box 9, folder 12, Eastman MSS I.

[69] Annis Ford Eastman to Max Eastman, postmarked February 26, 1900; box 9, folder 16, Eastman MSS I.

[70] Annis Ford Eastman to Max Eastman, March 25, 1900; box 9, folder 16, Eastman MSS I. One week later, she wrote to confess her insecurity about her new position: "It seems so preposterous for me to be standing in his [Beecher's] place and trying to carry on a work which he did so grandly. That's the reason why I live in today and do not look beyond its sheltering bars! There's another sense in which I do look ahead with joyful anticipation just as you do, to our joyful meeting and the summer, and my grand children." Annis Ford Eastman to Max Eastman, Apr. 2, 1900; box 9, folder 16, Eastman MSS I.

The intimate dynamic established in Max's first two years away from home persisted. He had excelled academically at Mercersburg—the head of the school, William Mann Irvine, wrote to Samuel Eastman to announce that Max had received "the highest marks ever on record at the school"—and prepared to leave for college as the spring term of 1900 ended.[71]

In the autumn of 1900, Max, rather than joining his brother at Princeton as he desired, went from Mercersburg up to Williams College in the Berkshire Mountains. He approached life at Williams with significantly less scholarly verve than he had at Mercersburg, and was set on "living life" as an undergraduate. This entailed a robust program of "conviviality, drinking, dreaming, roaming the hills, swimming, diving, skiing, writing poetry, writing stories and essays, falling in love, taking a taste of Broadway, [and] spending a summer bumming my way through the Wild West with a friend."[72] By the fall of 1904, at the start of his senior year, this "touch of Bacchus" gave way to serious scholarship, working to write essays of publishable quality and earning membership in the college's Phi Beta Kappa chapter. After this reversal, Eastman's remaining time at Williams provided two strong ties to the evolving traditions of religious liberalism: a deep connection, through nature, to poetry, and an initial familiarity with new theories of psychology and the self.

In the middle years of his time at Williams, Eastman fell in with what he called "another circle of liberal Christians." This cohort of religious liberals anchored itself around the descendants of former Williams and American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions

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[71] Max Eastman, *Love and Revolution*, 13.

[72] Ibid.

president, Mark Hopkins, a man whom Eastman compared to Thomas Beecher.[73] Seeing in both men "personal magnetism, bold good sense, and a belief in science and human love rather than a thought-out criticism of old theology," Eastman found affinity with their nonconforming religious attitudes. And the Williams liberals tolerated Eastman's budding extremism. "[T]hose genteel New Englanders looked upon my rebel opinions rather as a lively firework varying the monotony of their mode of life than as a serious attack upon its frame and foundation of decorum."[74]

Another recollection, from Eastman's final year at Williams, demonstrates a link to nineteenth-century religious liberalism, even if it involved the negation of theism. In that year, Eastman claimed, "Emerson's essays on 'Self-Reliance' and 'Heroism' … became a kind of scripture to me, … [endowed with] an authority not supernaturally derived, but derived from the fact that they gave me myself."[75] Like two generations of religious liberals before him, Eastman found affinity with the writings of the Concord sage. Initially, this devout reading of Emerson's thoughts on personality reinforced Eastman's theism.[76] But he gradually shifted away from belief in a god, eventually declaring his agnosticism.

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[73] Annis Eastman acknowledged Hopkins's high reputation among her Elmiran parishioners when comparing the prospect of boasting about "being a Yale man or a student under Mark Hopkins" to St. Paul's ability to claim Gamaliel as his distinguished teacher. See Eastman, "Ego-Altruism," (March 1906), folder 36, Crystal Eastman Papers. Gary Dorrien labels Hopkins as the "paragon of Congregational conservatism." Dorrien, *The Making of American Liberal Theology*, Vol. 1, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 269.

[74] Dorrien, 198–199.

[75] Ibid., 232.

[76] In January 1905, Eastman wrote in his diary: "imitating Emerson, 'Heroism is the victory of moral conviction over instinct. Each is a product of evolution, and whose arm is the victor's? In that divine moment is not only proof but presence of God,'" quoted in Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 220.

This development came to expression on October 5, 1904, when Eastman abandoned belief in a supernatural deity. Wandering through the hills outside Williamstown, one of Herbert Spencer's writings in hand, Eastman recorded in his notebook: "To the most emotional place, the place of romance, where I can not see a house or a barn, and nothing is there but green and colored leaves and memories, I go with Herbert Spencer, and I become an agnostic, lying flat on top of a big rock."[77] Science and aesthetics had conspired to lead Eastman away from Christianity.

In the two years leading up to this declaration of agnosticism, Eastman discovered a deepened affinity for poetry while at Williams. Before college, Eastman remembered, "[p]oetry had first awakened my delight as a glimpse of nature's beauty through the gloomy walls of family prayers."[78] In moments of escape from the streetcars of Elmira and the pews of Park Church, the family farm at Glenora, near Seneca Lake's shores, had provided Eastman a summertime respite. These moments had also stirred a love for being outdoors. Carrying this affection with him to Williamstown, Eastman cultivated strong ties to the Berkshire Hills surrounding the campus. And he understood his attachments to poetry and nature as points of continuity with earlier experiences in Elmira and Mercersburg.[79]

But, as much as Annis's encouragements kindled Max's passion for verse, the experience of reading poetry at Williams set Max on a different intellectual course than the one preached in his parents' pulpit. One afternoon—he recorded it as April 6, 1901—"[seated] against a grey

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[77] Quoted in Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 220.

[78] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 149.

[79] Max wrote that poetry "had burned sacredly for me in my life with mother and in my frenzy of learning at Mercersburg." Ibid., 136.

rock in a high sloping pasture," Max read Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind." He recalled this as a moment of intellectual arrest, a turning point in the way he experienced poetry. Shelley's imagery of dry leaves scattered by the west wind's "Wild Spirit" transformed the arrival of autumn into a statement of the poet's own intellectual force: "Drive my dead thoughts over the universe / Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!" Not only this, but the dispersal of the poet's thoughts in Shelley's lines held the character of a prophetic announcement: "Be through my lips to unawakened Earth / The trumpet of a prophecy!"[80]

In this stanza, Harold Bloom finds Shelley "suggesting that his thoughts may be useful to fertilize the age he wishes to stir into life."[81] For the undergraduate Eastman, Shelley's displacement of the wind's divine force by the poet's own thoughts represented a liberation of his agency as a thinker. The experience of reading Shelley's "Ode" transformed poetry into "a sacred, inspirational, exalted thing, a thing somewhat like prayer."[82] Shelley's autumnal "incantation" called to Eastman like "the trumpet of a prophecy," and seemed to draw out his "Wild Spirit" and to "quicken a new birth" in him.

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[80] Percy Bysshe Shelley, Ode to the West Wind," *The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, vol. 1, ed. H. Buxton Forman (London: Reeves and Turner, 1892), 145.

[81] Harold Bloom, *The Visionary Company: A Reading of English Romantic Poetry* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1971), 302.

[82]Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 151–152. His mother anticipated the connections Max would draw between the outdoors and the poets. Attempting to comfort a lonely Max, she wrote to him, "I hope your mountains and your poets will not disappoint." Annis Ford Eastman to Max Eastman, April 5, 1901; box 9, folder 17, Eastman MSS I. Decades later, when Max recorded these memories and interpretations of his Williams years, he sought to counteract a strongly religious interpretation of these experiences. In his memoir, after terming this new understanding of poetry as "somewhat like prayer," Eastman's recollection quickly reversed, denying the presence of religious sensibility: "Had my poetry been religious, even in a pantheistic sense, I need not regret this prayerlike sanctification of it. It was quite the opposite, an affirmation of life taking the place of religion," (*Enjoyment of Living*, 152). Here, though written decades later, Eastman hoped to expunge the religious character of the prayerlike recitations.

Just when Shelley's verse had breathed gusts of agnosticism into Max's head, Annis ventured to dissuade her son's incipient unbelief. She had sailed to Europe in the fall of 1901 and traveled around the continent through the winter of 1901–1902.[83] Writing to Max from afar, repeatedly during the winter of his second year at Williams, Annis urged him to seek a form of religion rooted in experience rather than dogma: "Your great need is a vital religion, an experimental faith, not a theoretical one. It is the only thing that can give a satisfying meaning to life. To know God, as friend. Have you ever tried it? Do you pray?"[84] While this admonition directed Max towards prayer, he had largely ceased to engage in its practice, and wished to assert his independence. Writing from Berlin in mid-January, Annis posed a question that she hope would set her son back on a theistic path: "You say that you do not want to be influenced in your beliefs by your desires, but are not desires a natural guide to faiths? What one longs for in his best moments, must be true, that or something better and larger, not something less good."[85]

Max later identified his decision no longer to pray as one of the final markers of his departure from religion. But in an exchange later that spring, after his mother had returned from

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[83] Though the precise dates of Annis Eastman's travel are not recorded, she completed a passport application on October 1, 1901, indicating that she "intend[ed] to return to the United States in December or January." *Passport Applications, 1795–1905*, NARA Microfilm Publication no. M1732 (Washington, DC: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 587.

[84] Annis Ford Eastman to Max Eastman, n.d., box 9, folder 18, Eastman MSS I. Though the letter is undated, it is filed in a folder that Max labeled "Williams 1901–02: From mother sophomore year."

[85] Annis Ford Eastman to Max Eastman, postmarked Jan. 17, 1902, from Berlin; box 9, folder 18, Eastman MSS I. Along with her existential exhortations, Annis informed Max that she had begun to study German, reading Faust, and had purchased a porcelain statuette of Dannecker's *Ariadne auf dem Panther* as a gift for him.

her European travels, Annis issued a more urgent plea for Max to persevere in his attempt to grasp onto belief in God:

> About faith; the agnostic still has my pity, even if he be decent and humble. When you begin to grow old, and the fragmentariness of this life, as compared with the love and longing of your soul, is borne in upon you, then you are desolate indeed if you have no hope beyond … . Mr. Beecher used to say, "Give God a chance." That's the only answer I know to your question. How shall we *get* faith? You say *by waiting*. It depends upon how one waits. David said, "I will wait upon the Lord," but that didn't mean inaction, I fancy. But I'm *so glad* that you pray. Keep on, dearest, you'll have a wonderful answer sometime.[86]

Once again, she directed Max to pray. The experimental faith she had previously described should take the form of prayer, which in itself would be an active expression of waiting for a divine answer to Max's doubts.

In the autumn months of 1902, Max sparked a romance with a young local woman in Williamstown and fell in love: "secret embraces were followed by remorse, and vows to sin no more."[87] He ascribed his guilty feelings over sexual exploration to experiences during childhood. But immediately after the rendezvous, Max fell inexplicably ill. He spent nearly a month in the Williams infirmary, and, lying in bed for such a long period, developed sever lumbar pain, so that he was forced to wear a brace, and "was a semi-invalid for almost five years."[88] The injury, combined with debts, prevented Max from enrolling the next year, which he spent at home in Elmira.

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[86] Annis Ford Eastman to Max Eastman, May 2, 1902; box 9, folder 18, Eastman MSS I.

[87] O'Neill, *The Last Romantic*, 11.

[88] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 196. In his memoir, Max suggested that his true ailment had been neurosis, but that it could not be diagnosed in 1902: "there was no Freudian psychology in America then—no 'mother complex' or 'complex' at all, no understanding of the role of infantile fixations or conflicts of unconscious motives," (196).

Having returned to the Berkshires, as he entered his last semester at Williams, Max exerted great effort in his studies and in his composition of poetry. He shared early drafts of his work with Annis, who almost always commented with approval. In January 1905, he sent his work on "Child of the Amazons," an epic tale of Penthesilea and her mythic companions. Annis quoted Max back to himself, with his line, "the ring of blue between his half-wide lids," and commented, "It is the live-est thing you have done, and every reading has deepened that impression."[89] She took immense joy in Max's work as a writer, and in his eagerness to seek her criticism. She closed her letter earnestly: "It is a great thing for me to be in the same world with you. / Your only Mamsey."

Throughout that term, Annis kept up with Max's work, and kept him up withers. ""Have you read Fechner's 'Little Book of Life after Death'? I've been reading it to Mrs. B. What do you know of Fechner? Prof. James has an introduction to it. It interests me and I know you would like some things in it."[90] As they had done since Max left home, Annis's letters tied him not only to her intellectual wanderings and personal advisement, but to the routines and patterns of her life at work: "This letter sounds dogmatic, but I've been writing a sermon and I *feel* dogmatic. I know it will have no influence upon you, but to arouse opposition to all my positions."[91]

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[89] Annis Ford Eastman to Max Eastman, January 25, 1905; box 9, folder 26, Eastman MSS I. She would have been pleased had she lived to see those words printed in *Child of the Amazons, and Other Poems*, which appeared in 1913, the first of Max's poetry collections. The line appears in Max Eastman, *Child of the Amazons, and Other Poems* (New York: Mitchell Kennerly, 1913), 19. Throughout that term, Annis

[90] Annis Ford Eastman to Max Eastman, February 9, 1905; box 9, folder 26, Eastman MSS I.

[91] Annis Ford Eastman to Max Eastman, February 11, 1905; box 9, folder 26, Eastman MSS I.

An essay written during this last year at Williams anticipated Max's subsequent experiments with mind cures and psychical healing. In a composition for coursework, "Firstfruits of Introspection," Eastman explored the notion of self-consciousness in relation to psychological theories current at the time.[92] Of particular importance, the essay emphasized the mind-body relation. "Of the body it may yet be said that through it comes all consciousness of the external world, and thus it occupies a unique position in consciousness. … [T]he body is always more or less present in consciousness."[93] As Christopher White demonstrates, concepts of the unconscious self and its links with the body underwent a period of intense development in the first decades of the twentieth century. Advancing beyond phrenology, popular in the mid-nineteenth century, the new psychology of that century's closing decades "began locating the mind not in the brain but in the entire neuromuscular system."[94] In Eastman's words:

> And so we seem to have found that the self melts out into all things, for who can draw the line when frequency is the rule? In varying degrees only, all that enters my consciousness goes into the essence of myself—my friends, my enemies, my fields, my hills, my universe of stars. For what is the conception of consciousness without a known content? It is nothing gone naked. My way through the world is myself.[95]

Of course, Eastman observed the fact of this conclusion in his newfound form of prayer: "Poetry preaches this truth. … In so far as I can vividly think it, I can make the universe myself, and desire its ends. I can marry into my life the infinite, the sun-rise and the sun-set. That is the

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[92] Max Eastman, "Firstfruits of Introspection," typescript, ca. 1904–1905; box 17, folder labeled "College Writings," Eastman Manuscripts II.

[93] Ibid., 12–13.

[94] Christopher White, *Unsettled Minds*, 9.

[95] Max Eastman, "Firstfruits of Introspection," 13.

supreme poem."[96] Nature provided a field of deep experience and wonder. New ways of conceiving the subconscious, or the "spiritual self," as intimately tied to the body provided an enhanced means of absorbing and grasping nature's vital qualities. These new conceptions, as Eastman would soon discover, also presented therapies to ease his physical and psychological ailments in the practices of New Thought and Mind Cure.

By the end of Max's time at Williams, he articulated a more complete rejection of theism and a more forceful assertion of individualism. During his final year of study, an essay against Anselm's proof of the existence of God together with an Emerson-inspired composition on moral philosophy helped Max to articulate what he called, variously, "Affirmative Agnosticism, Pragmatism, Social Scepticism." Just as Shelley commanded the wind to carry his own ideas out to the world, through these writings Max felt confidence in "thinking my own thoughts."

The new intellectual assertiveness acquired a sharp edge in Max's delivery of a graduation oration on Giordano Bruno, posed "as a martyr, not of one church against the other, but of poetry and philosophy against churchly masterdom as such." This opposition established the basic lines of what would become Max's critique of religious institutions. The vital force of experience carried in poetic writing, and the science of social transformation presented through philosophy, stood apart from the ideas and modes of action represented by religious institutions. Thus determined to "have some heresies of [his] own," Max concluded the address on Bruno with a proclamation of the power of the self: "Asserting the principle that is within yourself,

[96] Ibid., 14.

before men believe it and name it true, to the end that your life shall be, as were the life and death of Bruno, *for* the ultimate truth."[97]

While Max had resolved his conscious rejection of theism and affirmation of individualism, his physical ailments persisted and, he thought, may have been linked to nervous or unconscious difficulties. The Williams College infirmary having done little to ease his ailments, after college Eastman searched for a therapy that would free him of his metal back brace and constant pain.

He first landed at Charles O. Sahler's Sanitarium in Kingston-on-Hudson, New York. A region steeped for half a century in the traditions of mid-nineteenth-century Spiritualism (the hometown of Andrew Jackson Davis, the "Poughkeepsie Seer" and Spiritualist apostle, was only twenty miles from Kingston), the Hudson River Valley played host to various liberal religious experiments with spirituality and mental healing. After Sahler's cure proved less than satisfying, Eastman transferred his efforts to the Bethel, Maine sanitarium operated by John G. Gehring.

A practitioner of New Thought—what Eastman called "a kind of practical-minded first cousin to Christian Science, a mixture of suggestive therapeutics, psychic phenomena, non-church religion, and a business of conquering the world through sheer sentiments of optimism,"—Sahler operated a small clinic for those with nervous afflictions.[98] Before turning

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[97] Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 227, 231, 232. Max's collegiate reflections on agnosticism, and the idealistic quality of his individualism, resonate in his later characterization, in 1918, that "An attitude that might be called affirmative skepticism is native to my mind, and underlies every impulse that I have to portray the universal character of life and truth." In Eastman, "Earlier Poems: A Preface about Their Philosophy," in *Colors of Life: Poems and Songs and Sonnets* (New York: Knopf, 1918), 97.

[98] Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 240. Charles Oliver Sahler participated in turn-of-the-century developments within the New Thought movement. His book, *Psychic Life and Laws, or, The Operations and Phenomena of the Spiritual Element in Man* (New York: Fowler and Wells Co., 1901) gained limited circulation, and Horatio Dresser noted his contribution as a speaker at

to mental healing, Sahler operated his clinic under the name "Shadelawn," marketing it as a "private retreat" where "cancer [was] treated successfully without use of the knife."[99] Though he could not recall how he learned of Sahler's facility, Eastman noted the strong influence of Emerson and Whitman on the movement, and these were easy connections to his life in Elmira and Williamstown. Not surprisingly, the one obvious link to New Thought in Eastman's mind was through his mother:

> [She] had a weakness for health regimes and quack nostrums and panaceas. She was never so happy as when she could get me to join her in some newly concocted scheme for keeping well and happy. We would stop eating breakfast, or go in for raw food, or abjure salt, or walk barefoot in the dew, or take up Fletcherism, or deep breathing, or absent treatments by Miss Isaphine Granger—it didn't much matter what, so somebody had written persuasively about it. She especially liked those schemes which went at the body through the mind—and moreover in this field she had much wisdom.[100]

In this, Annis Eastman stands as representative of the attitudes adopted by many religious liberals in the turn-of-the-century milieu. The historian Jackson Lears asserts that these "explorations" of liberal Protestants "stemmed from … a desire to smash through the evasions of late-Victorian life and immerse oneself in a flood of unmediated experience." "In part, their program was simply a matter of enacting Whitman's prophetic vision—closing the gap between ideals and actualities." Lears describes Fletcherism as a national fad, even adopted by Henry and Williams James, and expressing the new link between body and mind, "positive thinking with a

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the Cincinnati, Ohio conference on New Thought that met May 29–31, 1910. See Horatio Dresser, *A History of the New Thought Movement*. Sahler wrote of his sanitarium that it was "the only one in the United States where psycho-therapeutics is principally used." See Charles O. Sahler, "Summer Resorts for Health," *The Phrenological Journal of Science and Health* 111, no. 1 (July 1900): 12–16.

[99] C. O. Sahler Sanitarium, Advertisement, *The Lancet* (March 1897): 82.

[100] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 240–241.

new psychological pedigree."[101] In turning from one "quack nostrum" to another "panacea," then, the Eastmans proved to be representative of their time.

At Williams, Max Eastman had also discovered the benefits of understanding the body's link to the mind, but would extend that discovery in the three months he spent at Kingston.[102] Sahler diagnosed Eastman with, "a lack of vital force in the nerve centers … which prevented my making any considerable exertion without weariness."[103]

The practice of New Thought at Kingston, however, met with skepticism on Max's part. He recalled "[wanting] to believe in this institution. I wanted to believe in psychic healing," but "[r]eligion, ethics, and therapeutics were never more naively—and yet I cannot say unwisely—mixed together." Sahler's approach to psychic healing, though, held an attraction and mystery for Eastman. In exploring the facility upon his arrival, Max encountered a bit of the exotic in Sahler's office, observing in the dark corner "a draped and canopied couch suggestive of mystic slumber in the deep Orient."[104]

Though he later dismissed Sahler's practice as "a shrewd and simple way to employ suggestion in therapeutics," in 1906 Eastman underwent treatment with great curiosity about the methods the doctor employed. In his treatments, Miss Page, a practitioner employed by Sahler,

> [would stand] beside me with her hand on my brow for about five minutes; then she would go away and let me rest for half an hour. During that five minutes she was

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[101] Jackson Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation*, 232–233, 245.

[102] "The spate of psychosomatic illness embodied in neurasthenia coincided with the 'discovery of the unconscious' pioneered by Freud and many other writers and artists at the turn of the century, a coincidence that created new possibilities for explaining apparently inexplicable behavior." Lears, *Rebirth*, 243.

[103] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 244.

[104] Ibid., 242–243, 244.

> supposed to be rectifying my condition by a concentration of her will—letting the psychic force, of which there is a great plenty in the universe, pour into me through her as a focusing glass or funnel.

Not wholly convinced, Eastman saw something of a humbug in the necessity for Sahler and Page "to keep up among the patients a sense of their special magnetic power…by means of Sunday night lectures, at which, besides talking a lot of good medical common sense and early Christian morals, they would hypnotize two boys and stick needles into them." Despite his doubts, Eastman "would try to have faith while reposing in the little cubicle with health-in-the-abstract pouring into me."[105]

During his time at Kingston, when not undergoing mental treatments, Eastman escaped into the surrounding hills and forests with Rosanna Atkins, his romantic interest and the sanitarium's dining-room supervisor. Revealing another link to nature-centered religious liberalism, Rosanna took Max on day trips to visit her friend John Burroughs at Slabsides, the famous naturalist's house in Highland, New York. At the home where Whitman had once visited, Burroughs "showed [Eastman] how Walt would bend [a sapling] to the ground and work it up and down very slowly with his arms." Max recalled that he "felt as though [Burroughs] were telling me about life in the kingdom of Saturn before the revolt of the lesser gods."[106] Here, Eastman's affection for nature met with his earlier studies of mind-body integration and the "prayerlike thing" of poetry.

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[105] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 244, 245. Still, he remained unconvinced. "Although swept so far in by the idea of mental healing, and by the millennial good will attending it at Kingston, I was sceptical of much that I heard about psychic powers and entities. I was sceptical of the magnetic force supposed to be wielded by the doctor at those Sunday night exhibitions in hypnotism. … In general, the science of mental healing stood about where alchemy did in the seventeenth century when Robert Boyle laid the foundations of chemistry, and mixed a good deal of magic into the cement he used," (Ibid., 247–248).

[106] Ibid., 247.

Back at the sanitarium, Eastman decided to alleviate his skepticism by trying his own hand at psychic practice. He started out by hypnotizing Sahler's two demonstration subjects in his room at the sanitarium, at night converting his room into an "Institute for Psychic Research."[107] There, he conducted regular "séances" with Rosanna, who also claimed that she served as Sahler's medium and diagnosed each patient at night while entranced, when the doctor summoned her "astral body."[108] In order to improve his acumen at hypnosis, Eastman read most of the books in Sahler's library, immensely increasing his understanding of pre-Freudian psychology. In his "clinical" experimentation and theoretical education, Eastman claimed never to adopt a stance of "faith" in relation to psychic powers, but maintained an attitude of "inquiry."[109] This, however, proved too little for Eastman to continue his quest for therapy at the Sahler Sanitarium. "Although I rejected the occult and spiritistic hokum with which Dr. Sahler surrounded his practice, I did not reject mental healing. I seized upon its least occult feature, autosuggestion, and decided to withdraw from the world and cure myself with that."[110]

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[107] Ibid. "Institute for Psychic Research" served Max's own description for his individual exploration of mental theory and practice while a patient at Sahler's sanitarium. Perhaps the appellation in his 1948 memoir served as a tongue-in-cheek reference to the London Society for Psychical Research or its American counterpart, in which William James maintained membership throughout the 1890s when Annis Eastman attended James's lectures at Harvard.

[108] Ibid., 249–251. With this reference, Eastman implicitly associated Sahler's approach with practices that historian Alex Owen locates among turn-of-the-century "occultists," who utilized the notion of "a complete second self, conceived as a subtle replica of the original … that traveled in the Astral Light." In Owen, "Modern Enchantment and the Consciousness of the Self," in *The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern* (Oxford University Press, 2004), 128.

[109] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 251–252.

[110] Ibid., 255.

Seeking an ascetic retreat, Eastman traveled north of Elmira to his family's farm and summer home near Glenora. In western New York, his family had tilled out of the hills sloping down to Seneca Lake a sort of communal utopia for the local intelligentsia. Purchased in 1894, the Eastmans cultivated the plot of land and built a large house that provided a summertime haven for families from Elmira and the area surrounding Geneva, New York. Less grand than the Miller family's Lochland and Fossenvue, the Eastmans' plot gained a local notoriety of its own. Christened after the biblical "Cherith"—the wadi near which ravens fed the prophet Elijah—the land also provided sustenance for Samuel Elijah, unable to preach consistently due to illness. Most years, the disabled preacher made a respectable profit from the harvest, which he developed into a healthy grocery business.[111]

In this verdant setting, weekly Sunday-afternoon gatherings foreshadowed Mabel Dodge's Fifth Avenue salons, mingling musical performances, poetry recitation, prose readings, and spiritual exercises. The family's record of events at the home, the "Cherith Log," preserves some of the spirit of those gatherings, in the language that formed the weekly prayers recited among the family and their guests:[112]

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[111] Max recalled that "[t]he happiest day of his [Samuel Eastman's] life was when his health broke down and he had to abandon the pulpit and get out on the soil." Max Eastman, *Love and Revolution* (1964), 12.

[112] Though the volumes of the Cherith Log have not been located, Max Eastman excerpted these prayers from, and preserved them in typescript. See folder labeled "Cherith Prayers," box 17, Eastman Manuscripts II. Max Eastman described the "Cherith Log" in *Enjoyment of Living*: "My mother kept a 'Log' at our summer home in Glenora, and we all wrote and pasted pictures in it, recording the day's doings, and the jokes and endless arguments that enlivened our family, kidding and celebrating each other and the landscape and the weather and our guests (if we liked them)—compelling them, too, when possible, to 'write in the Log.' Those volumes, especially the parts in my mother's handwriting …, convey faithfully the savor of our family life together from 1899 to 1910" (204). Cherith had been fully idealized in Max's memory and experience, principally for its vibrant naturalism and its association with his mother. In the summer of 1901, Max read her words from the family's canoe: "I read it while I was

> This is our morning prayer and resolution—that we greet our destiny with a bounteous hand, coming forward eagerly to what awaits us, that we will never accept the illusions of age, but carry ourselves forward now in the very abandon with which we began, and at the end go down to death with the same enthusiasm in our hearts and the same laughter on our lips (July 1907).

Max's older brother Anstice, who went by his middle name, Peter, recorded this meditation:

> The world is perfectly full of beauty and of our friends; the sun has done all that needs to be done, and only asks of us that we launch into the day with a headlong and smiling faith. … We will take people as they come, make less ado of our own rights and the proper treatment of us, and more of the great need for sympathy and acceptance. And may those who hate us be somehow unable to resist the infection of the sunshine, that we may all catch together the spirit of the universal drama (September 2, 1907).

In the language of unrestrained aspiration, these paeans to human capability articulated personal assertiveness and willingness to pursue and undergo vital experiences. They contained no specifically Christian doctrinal formulae, but regarded a humanistic idealism at their core. Resonant with a Whitmanesque naturalism and the rising tide of psychological experimentation, the Eastman family's gatherings at Cherith Farm would later merge with the urban explorations of Max and Crystal, and Annis. Yet in the years before Max arrived in Morningside Heights to undergo John Dewey's tutelage, the farm at Glenora retained its utopian and naturalistic associations.

After Sahler's inadequate treatments, Cherith Farm offered a familiar setting for Max's quest for wholeness, where in solitude he would attempt to cure himself. Still influenced by his mother's fad-driven health observances, Max agreed to join her in following a raw food diet upon his return to Cherith. "It seemed to fit in admirably with my program of autosuggestion, getting my own meals, and reading Walt Whitman. So I signed up too and departed for Glenora

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floating over the ripples under the shadow of our dear cliff in the Blue Bird, and the water of our latest rain had delved all the way down from the freshened moss above, and crawled along the great veins of sandstone, to drip then musically … while you talked to me." Max Eastman to Annis Ford Eastman, postmarked August 1901; box 9, folder 39, Eastman MSS I.

in the mood of an anchorite, with a raw food bill-of-fare in my pocket."[113] During this summer in the natural idyll near the shores of Lake Seneca, Eastman found that his "feelings would be mellow rather than rebellious." He recorded the feeling in verse: "Borne on the low lake wind there floats to me / Out of the distant hill a sigh of church bells, / Mystic, worshipful, almost unheard, / As though the past should answer me, / And I in pagan solitude bow down my head."[114] With church bells signaling his past, sensing his retreat to be a pagan one, Eastman reinforced his trajectory away from liberal Christianity, though without a definable goal ahead.

His summer of withdrawal, however, held close ties to two central aspects of turn-of-the-century religious liberalism. In seeking solitude, Eastman took part in what Leigh Schmidt has termed, "America's romantic cultus of solitude and self-reliance in the second half of the nineteenth century."[115] In strategizing his cure through autosuggestion, Eastman also connected with new thinking about the role of psychology in mental and spiritual health.

Not an obscure or esoteric notion, the pursuit of solitude had become all too common. Figures such as John Burroughs "turned solitude into a virtual cliché of American nature writing."[116] Eastman had touched on "the romance of the hermit"[117] during his college days, in his admiration of classmate Sidney Wood. Sid, who vanished from Williams (due to expulsion) after Eastman's first year, played the wanderer. "He was forever plodding up a lone mountain

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[113] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 256.

[114] Ibid.

[115] Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Restless Souls*, 91.

[116] Ibid.

[117] Ibid., 93.

road to eat dinner with some hermit in a clearing in the woods."[118] After his expulsion, Sid took off on lonely adventures "out west" to work in the Nevada mines, or live for months on end with a community of Native Americans. For Eastman, Sid's bold and semi-solitary independence symbolized the fullest living of a life rich with experience. In turning alone to Cherith Farm after Kingston, Eastman made his own attempt at gaining the benefits of spiritual solitude. In doing so, he partook in a much larger phenomenon of re-imagining the meaning and role of religion. "American spirituality had moved beyond the walls of the churches and beyond Christianity itself, and it had done so though the exaltation of a universalized withdrawal of the individual into occasional solitude."[119]

From Cherith, Max ventured northward, to Bethel, Maine, where he underwent Gehring's work cure, beginning in October of 1906. Ghering's treatment sought to resolve unconscious disturbances through strictly controlled physical exertion, combined with suggestive mental treatments.[120] Reflecting the influence of theories of mind–body interaction, Max recalled that he "flourished in Bethel like a baby tree in the tropics."[121] He experienced gradual relief from his lumbar rheumatism, and grew increasingly convinced that his illness resulted from an

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[118] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 137.

[119] Schmidt, *Restless Souls*, 100.

[120] William O'Neill's biography of Eastman dismissed Gehring's approach as "not a cure," and left Max's "Oedipal situation unresolved." *The Last Romantic*, 13–14. O'Neill's attempt at a psychohistorical interpretation of Eastman's time at Bethel, however, obscures the meaningful experience that Eastman underwent as a patient. As O'Neill notes, Eastman offered his own interpretation of New Thought mental healing in a 1908 *Atlantic Monthly* essay, "The New Art of Healing," discussed below in chapter four. The letters Max wrote to Annis while at Bethel are full of praise for Gehring's method and facilities, and speak of Max's sense that he was regaining health. See box 9, folder 43, Eastman MSS I.

[121] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 261.

unconscious source: "[Gehring] is pretty much decided it is nervous and mental, the foundation of it, and says I can get on top of it in time."[122]

By the time Max completed his treatments in Maine and relocated to Manhattan, he had settled on definite opinions concerning New Thought and related interpretations of mental healing technique. Writing to his mother, Max strained to differentiate between the scientific basis of Gehring's clinical practice from illogical or superstitious claims made by other mental healers. Referring to the Emmanuel Movement in Boston, Max asked Annis to acknowledge the scientific and medical value of suggestion:

> I could wish you wouldn't say it is "New Thought" in the Boston church. "New Thought" as preached and published is full of such utter rubbish. "Suggestive therapeutics" involves no mystical…influences, or one mind concentrating, or any of that which is unscientific and vague and therefore popular. And as a matter of fact, it is not New Thought in the church in Boston, but a careful scientific use of verbal suggestion, together with moral advice to people who are letting themselves be sick. There will be no wisdom where the difference is not grasped. We don't want the church to react and have a new Lourdes. I don't, at least, and, as you can see, I care a lot about it. Dr. Gehring addressed one of those meetings. Don't bother about this, only just don't call it "New Thought"—I loathe the word.[123]

Newly arrived in New York, Max hoped desperately to look back on his experiences with mental techniques at Kingston and Bethel not as side-show excursions in hokum, but as rationally applied medical therapies. In the soft anti-Catholicism of his reference to Lourdes, Max telegraphed both a newly solidified skepticism of Christianity and the first indications of an

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[122] Max Eastman to Annis Ford Eastman, postmarked October 15, 1906; box 10, folder 1, Eastman MSS I. Nearly a month later, Max repeated his report that Gehring diagnosed a mental source for his back pain: "The doctor told me last night he believed my back trouble was an idea stuck in my subliminal, an obsession, and nothing else." Max Eastman to Annis Ford Eastman, November 11, 1906; box 10, folder 1, Eastman MSS I.

[123] Max Eastman to Annis Ford Eastman, postmarked January 21, 1907; box 10, folder 2, Eastman MSS I.

intellectual chauvinism that he would wear as a badge in fomenting revolution over and against reform.

Conclusion

Nearing the end of his stint as Gehring's patient, Max came upon a moment of decision: "One way led to health and the bold enjoyment of living, the other to disease and weakness… And the choice rested with me. There was no help ultimately anywhere in the universe but in my will." Since prayer had begun to lose its sense of efficacy, Eastman looked to his conscious self for motivation to pursue vitality. In service of that pursuit, he "decided that I would open my career in…New York City." The choice struck him as "the stiffest purgatory I could put myself through, for I hated all cities and mortally dreaded their noise, tensity, and cold commotion."[124]

Though he did not initially know it, Max would find the resolution to his existential wanderings by adding the energy of New York life to the natural idylls of Cherith. If he spent the preceding months and years regaining strength at Kingston and Bethel, the dense and loud city posed a test for Max's mettle. Rising to meet New York's challenges, Max moved past its character as a purgatory and found that urban life complemented his retreats into the natural settings of Cherith and, eventually, Croton. As they encountered the city, Max and Annis both underwent new developments in their notions of society, psychology, and identity after 1907. As the new psychology of the 1890s gave way to psychoanalytic theories in the twentieth century, so the Eastmans abandoned mental healing for analysis in the clinics of Manhattan's first Freudian practitioners. And both would gain exposure to new expressions of socialism as the twentieth century's first decade came to a close. The cumulative effect of these transformations moved Annis to make plans for leaving the pulpit, and Max would fully relinquish the religious

[124] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 262.

liberalism of his youth, adopting poetry and socialism as a form of scientific idealism that mirrored Annis's religious liberalism. Though Max adopted many unorthodox views in the years after he left home, he came to understand himself as "revolting against a mother who was herself a rebel."[125]

[125] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 174.

CHAPTER 4

"A Reckless Individuality": Max Eastman as Poet and Revolutionary

Jo Hancock, the protagonist in Max Eastman's loosely autobiographical novel *Venture*, "went to college in one of those small New England towns full of trees…and where ten steps out of the campus carries you into the most beautiful region of…wild mountain woods and meadows in all the romantic landscape of New England." On those wistful northeastern slopes, so evocative of Max's Berkshire Hills, Jo read the poems of Shelley, Byron, and Whitman, from which he developed a "feeling that life should be lived with some high reckless kind of individuality" and that "[e]ach hour should be lived as though it were wrested from death and oblivion." [1] Thus ventriloquizing Max's agnostic conversion, Jo sought to escape conformity in every way possible.

The students and summertime vacationers in the New England college town struck Jo not as people, "but very nicely cut-out patterns, all going through the same thoughts and the same motions. To be the most exact and perfect pattern, was their ideal." Jo—and Max—sought a different goal, and after college, chased it into New York City. Jo felt certain that Manhattan's "eminent citizens would be patterns and not people." Seeking the reckless individuality of his undergraduate dreams,

> he did not want to take his place … among the patterns but among the people. … [Instead] he went down into that little antique inconsequential whirlpool of meandering lanes and by-alleys that lies just off the main thoroughfares of the city, like a back-water in a swift stream, collecting all sorts of strange objects that float a little idly on that stream.[2]

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[1] Max Eastman, *Venture* (New York: Albert & Charles Boni, 1927), 5–6.

[2] Ibid., 5, 5–6, 18–19.

That backwater eddy had caught Max's sister Crystal in its current, channeling her to the settlement houses and reform causes that thrived in Greenwich Village around 1910.[3] As Max joined her in the city in January of 1907, newly refreshed after Gehring's suggestive mental treatments, he embarked on the period of his life that would lead him to his notorious work for the revolutionary socialist magazines, *The Masses* and *The Liberator*. But it was in these first years, between 1907 and 1913, during which he developed a commitment to political and cultural radicalism, shaping it through a psychological interpretation of poetry as an essential aspect of human expression and interconnection. Max later characterized his pursuit as one of "revolutionary science," sought in contrast to "the philosophy of muddle-headed loving-kindness with which [the] belated Christians proposed to redeem the world."[4] Upon moving to New York, Max thus marked his philosophy as increasingly distant from the familiar Christian patterns and symbols of his youth.

While Eastman is well known for his brash editorial work and activism, he had lived in Greenwich Village for nearly five years before his affiliation with *The Masses* commenced. His initial experiences of life on West Eleventh Street evoked authentic experience, in contrast to the confinement of life in Columbia University's Morningside Heights, above 110th Street.[5] This

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[3] Crystal Eastman would build a network of friends and colleagues in Greenwich Village, in part, through her membership in Heterodoxy, a women's club founded in 1912 by Unitarian minister Marie Jenney Howe, who had moved to New York following work in churches in Iowa. See Judith Schwarz, *Radical Feminists of Heterodoxy: Greenwich Village 1912–1940* (Lebanon, NH: New Victoria Publishers, 1982), 9.

[4] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 426.

[5] Years later, Max's colleague and friend John Reed celebrated the uptown-downtown difference in verse: "Yet we are free who live in Washington Square, / We dare to think as Uptown wouldn't dare, … / Say, unenlightened bards whom I deride, / Defend you Gramercy or Morningside, / As fitter spots for poets to reside? / Nay, you know not where Virtue doth abide!"

sense of connection to the vital energy of authentic experience grew out of his mother's articulations of the centrality of self-realization, and took up the linkages she identified between Darwinian science, the role of the unconscious, and social action as core elements in the project of achieving a full expression of selfhood. Annis literally translated that perspective into the apartment that Max and Crystal shared, as she came to the city to test the new therapies offered by psychoanalysis in 1908 and 1909.

As Max encountered new philosophies in New York City, first as a graduate student at Columbia University and then through his neighbors in Greenwich Village, he began to exert an important intellectual influence on his mother. Psychoanalysis and socialism appeared to both of them as powerful new ways for explaining experience and social reality. After Annis's unexpected death in 1910, Max echoed the inheritance of his mother's religious liberalism in reverberations of the romantic and evolutionary, expressed through notions of the complementarity of aesthetics and science in literature and politics.

Between his years at Williams College and his work for *The Masses*, a new system for explaining experience and fostering an ideal society percolated in Max's thought. Under the all-important sign of poetry, it blended concepts from psychotherapy, philosophical pragmatism, Emersonian and Whitmanesque romanticism, and socialism. Taking seed in his initial realization of the importance of poetry as an undergraduate, this philosophy of the "poetry of life" superseded religion in Max's imagination, and informed his graduate studies, suffrage activism, and eventual turn to revolutionary socialism and work for *The Masses.* This chapter presents an outline of the contours of this system of thought as its component aspects came together through

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John Reed, "The Day in Bohemia," in *The Day in Bohemia, or Life among the Artists* (Riverside, CT: Hillacre, 1913).

Max Eastman's experiences between 1907 and 1913, especially inflected through his relationship with his mother, Annis Ford Eastman.

In these years, Max and Annis both came to think of themselves as writers and aspiring intellectuals. Annis's self-perception emerged through correspondence with her children and continued professional work, and Max cultivated this notion in connection with the complementary polarities of Cherith Farm and New York City, and through the intensifying influence of Annis on his sense of vocation. Cherith in Glenora persisted in its powerful evocation of vital nature and unrestrained freedom, taking on a deepening sense of what Max termed as "pagan."[6] Newly encountering life in Manhattan, Max adjusted to the city as a space for detailed and rigorous thinking in his pursuit of an education in philosophy, psychology, science, and aesthetics at Columbia University. Together with his mother, as with so many others, he came to view New York as particularly suited to a literary vocation. Human culture's urban flourishing became a source of almost equal value to Cherith for absorbing the vital stirrings of experience.

Moreover, New York took on multiple symbolisms for Max. He came to associate Columbia's Morningside Heights neighborhood with the confinements of formal academic inquiry, and contrasted that image with a growing sense of Greenwich Village as an "ethical

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[6] Intending neither a resuscitation of ancient Roman *religio*, nor a modern expression of Neo-Paganism, in his 1948 memoir, Eastman employed the term "pagan" as an evocation of its early twentieth-century usage among his radical and bohemian cohorts, who eschewed, through the term, the cultural force of "puritanism." See Introduction, 14, 5n9, and 14n24, above. Indeed, in 1948, Max refused to promote the Neo-Pagan new religious movement, the Church of Aphrodite, after its founder, Gleb Botkin, wrote to Max in an attempt at flattery. Botkin quoted Eastman's own self-description back to him: "As a carnal, seditious and idolatrous pagan, an epicurean revolutionist, a feminist, and also so obviously a man with a kind heart and a sense of humor and, in addition, one who has the means of making himself heard, you appear to be the very person I have been dreaming about all these years as the builder and developer of our Church." Gleb Botkin to Max Eastman, March 31, 1948; box 2, folder 11, Eastman MSS I.

Bohemia" that stimulated his aesthetic sensitivities. Through a shared apartment with Crystal, the philosophical pragmatism which Max imbibed at Columbia took on a social valence, and through their mother's visits to the city in search of psychic cures, his interest in psychology continued to grow in its connections to inner experience and society. Max eventually found a sustained outlet for the burgeoning of his revolutionary social views in an intensifying suffrage movement. Organizing the Men's League for Woman Suffrage in the spring of 1909, he began a brief career of public speaking on behalf of women's rights. Initially with the assistance of Annis Eastman, and on his own after her death, Max found a temporary outlet for his developing poetics of realization.

In 1913, with the publication of *Enjoyment of Poetry*, and through his early participation with *The Masses*, Eastman found more sustained ways to bring his poetics into the world. He hoped to stir nothing less than a pedagogical revolution with his first book of prose, accompanied by the release of his first collection of poems in the same year. These books represented concrete expressions of the ideas about poetry, experience, and society that emerged from Max's readings of Shelley and Emerson in 1904. The ideas they contained, however, began to take on new meaning after 1912. Max first read Karl Marx in 1910, and revolutionary socialism thereafter acquired an intense appeal for Max, which he carefully differentiated from religious commitment.[7] Through these experiences, and despite his youthful aversion to patterns of all sorts, Eastman settled into a pattern of life and work that balanced practical concerns with social idealism and art. During his first years in the city, Max recalled, "I shunted myself back and forth between earning a living, serving some cause I believed in, and my own true function of

[7] In *Love and Revolution*, Eastman wrote that, "[t]o me socialism was never a philosophy of life, much less a religion, but an experiment that ought to be tried," (31).

thinking-studying-writing."[8] In that shunting, his mother's romantic–evolutionary notion of self-realization collided with Max's intellectual and activist explorations, yielding new combinations as he articulated his own reckless individuality.

Writing between Utopia and the City

Though so much of Max Eastman's reputation has arisen from his activities among the New York intellectuals, he initially felt repelled by the city. Having lived the first twenty-four years of his life in rural settings and small towns, the rush of Manhattan offended his "rustic" nature. In this, he shared his mother's skepticism concerning cities. Both Annis and Max, however, would come to love New York. But Max retained an especially close connection to his family's rural retreat in Glenora, and he accomplished much of his writing in his room in Cherith cottage. He took solace and found inspiration in the natural setting, which freed his intellectual wanderings. Max's earliest publications took shape amidst this dipolar relation of Cherith and Manhattan, drawing naturalist aestheticism from the hills around Seneca Lake and philosophical scientism from his studies in New York. Still, the city was an acquired taste for mother and son.

Annis Eastman drew her initial impressions of America's swiftly urbanizing centers from her experiences traveling to Brooklyn and suffering among the crowds at Chicago's Columbian Exposition a decade earlier. In a missionary society lecture from February 1909, "The Menace of the City," Eastman recounted her initial impression of New York, having stayed with Max and Crystal in the fall of 1908.[9] Stepping off the train, New York assaulted her senses with its "darting, doubling, dashing, dodging, leaping," as the crowds pressed in chaotically around her.

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[8] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 313.

[9] Annis Ford Eastman, "The Menace of the City," February 1909, folder 45, Crystal Eastman Papers. The lecture was repeated at Ithaca Congregational Church Tuesday 7:30 PM, April 7, 1909. See *Ithaca Daily News*, April 3, 1909).

Reaching her children's Greenwich Village apartment, Annis was confronted with "five flights of double steps" that disturbed "the equilibrium of my nervous system." In her estimation, such physical exertion should not be required only to reach the front door of one's home.

These "two threats of the city," overwhelming crowds and excessive physical exertion, initially contravened any benefit she might have imagined in New York. "But I stayed long enough thank God! to see that life can be lived wholesomely, happily, nobly in a great city…and that the dominion of things over souls is not apt to be so absolute as in the towns or smaller cities like our own." The city's menacing qualities subsided once Eastman learned to cope with them. More than this, New York even presented the option of simpler living. "'Things are in the saddle & ride mankind,' E[merson] said long ago. …Now in N.Y. flats…you can't have things and so you are set free from that bondage." In place of homes cluttered with possessions, cities contained shared public spaces and institutions. "Beautiful things—pictures, rugs, furniture, art creations of all kinds—will some day be publicly owned & enjoyed by all the people, & private homes will not have so much the character of museums, but will have…only things essential to life & godliness in artistic & beautiful forms."[10] Eastman turned to Josiah Strong for evidence of the prospects of modern cities. Summarizing his arguments in *The Twentieth Century City* (1898), she found that "We can not go back to the age of homespun, to the simple individualistic life of the world's past. Man has entered on an urban age and is moving on toward that holy city of the apostle's vision."[11]

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[10] Annis Ford Eastman, "The Menace of the City."

[11] Annis Ford Eastman, "The Menace of the City," 10, 17, 25. Strong had developed sympathies somewhat in line with Annis Eastman's. Especially relevant, he marched alongside Alice Strong, his wife, during the 1912 New York City suffrage parade, partly organized by the Men's League for Woman Suffrage which Max Eastman founded in 1909 (see discussion below). Wendy J. Deichmann Edwards, "Women and Social Betterment in the Social Gospel

In a postmillennial caste, the "menace of the city" came to represent "promises of good and gain." Cities, in this new urban age, served as concrete representations of the progressive state, and the developments of technology and bureaucracy extended the hope of individual health and freedom: "waterways, maps & charts, cities paved lighted & drained, water power & natural gas, tram lines, …tenements, fine libraries, baths, telegr[aph] & railways in some counties Boards of Health, quantitative public ed[ucation]. All these represent the freeing of the ind[ividual] from the tyranny of things." In this idealized vision, cities would transform the relations between humans and wealth. Material goods would receive diminished attention "so that the spiritual part may have more time for realization." [12] Eastman thus imagined her children as inhabiting the center of all modern hope and possibility, the most fertile ground in which they might achieve self-realization.

In January 1907, when Max first arrived in New York, he reacted similarly to his mother. He wrote to her that he was "getting used to the noise, and nonchalant about the [going] in street-cars (at which my soul revolted). The tendency of this damned rush (I use the word in its legitimate Biblical meaning) is to make me slide my hands into my pockets, lean back my shoulders, and just saunter for all I'm worth."[13] He resisted the urban crush with an ambling

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Work of Josiah Strong," in *Gender and the Social Gospel*, ed. Wendy J. Deichmann Edwards and Carolyn De Swarte Gifford (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 35. Strong also constituted a conduit that connected Eastman to her home missions work in the 1880s, as America's expanding urban centers had become a primary target of home missionary effort beginning in the 1890s.

[12] Annis Ford Eastman, "The Menace of the City," 3, 4, 7. These page numbers refer to another manuscript under the same title and preceding the above pages in the same folder, perhaps representing a different draft of this lecture.

[13] Max Eastman to Annis Ford Eastman, postmarked January 14, 1902; box 10, folder 2, Eastman MSS I.

protest. As he made his way downtown to Crystal's apartment, Max found that Greenwich Village matched his pace. In that neighborhood "there was sauntering in the streets … [and] the saunterers were not artists as yet, but reformers and social workers."[14]

Mixing among the slower pace of Greenwich Village, he hoped to become a writer. For the first month of 1907, Max rented a room near Crystal's apartment at 12 Charles Street. Rather than plunging into a career, he had decided to find work on the side, to avoid "mixing business with art" so that his writing could "be performed to my own sovereign taste." Unsure of his options, Max had declined the offer of a fellowship at Columbia University in order to pursue vital experience on the streets. But the need for income won, and Max took a job as a miserable "tuberculosis impresario" for a charitable organization in the city, setting up projection equipment for lectures on public health.[15]

This work proved unsatisfying, and he searched for opportunities as a tutor, working with neighborhood youth at the Lower East Side's Henry Street Settlement. Two months after his arrival in the city, Annis intervened with a letter, instructing that, "You ought to choose in the line of your greatest power, which is not tutoring…Your power is with thoughts and words." She imagined her son in connection with Jesus's first sermon at Nazareth, "and as I thought of it, it seemed a very great thing for a young man gifted as he undoubtedly was, to choose the inconspicuous vehicle of thought and words for himself and his service of the world. But how wisely he chose, and how the promise has been fulfilled." The great moral exemplar of Annis's liberal creed proffered a model for her dilettante son, despite his lack of interest in Christian symbols. Lest Max fail in his ambition for lack of motivation, she offered advice not only

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[14] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 266.

[15] Ibid., 265, 267.

concerning the direction of Max's exertions, but also as to the manner of their accomplishment: "I believe I would start in to write a certain length of time every day, whether you feel like it or not."[16]

Unexpectedly, and to Max's relief, John Dewey plucked him from Charles Street up to Columbia University, hiring him to teach "The Principles of Science" to a class of sophomores. Dewey's colleague in the philosophy department, Dickenson Miller, provided Max with secondary income, paddling a canoe up the Hudson from 110th Street several mornings each week. None of this, however, reflected Max's literary aspirations, as he "did not want the responsibility of an ambition." Instead, he "wanted to revel awhile in the flux of experience."[17]

As the spring of 1907 turned to summer, and Max departed New York for Glenora, he took his mother's advice. Reveling once again in the nurture of Cherith Farm, which "had by then become a millennial little community of outdoor idealists with our cottage as its temple," Max enforced a regimen of writing from nine o'clock until noon each day, and drafted an essay on techniques of mental healing.[18] Max further followed his mother's leading, who had remarked approvingly on his idea of writing about "suggestion," and attempted to motivate him by adding,

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[16] Annis Ford Eastman to Max Eastman, March 1, 1907; box 9, folder 31, Eastman MSS I. Annis Eastman disclosed part of her motive for calling on Max not to lose sight of his ambition. "Don't run the risk of losing the impulse to write by giving it up now. I made that mistake when I was a girl. …I might have earned a good living and lived a richer life in ever so many ways if I had held myself to what I felt was my work. I don't mean I could ever have done great things but I could have been like Margaret Sangster or Amelia Barr maybe."

[17] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 265, 267. The quote is on p. 270.

[18] Ibid., 274. Max related the less recreational aspects of a summer at Glenora in an essay which he wrote in 1908 and published in the Unitarian periodical that published his mother's sermons. Max Eastman, "Liquefied Baseball," *The Christian Register* 89, no. 42 (October 29, 1910), 1119.

"Why not drop a line to that editor of the *Atlantic* and ask him whether that is a 'magazineable' subject?" [19]

Max's recurrent interest since Williams had been to develop a broadly encompassing theory of poetry as a foundational aspect of life. In 1905 and 1906, during the eighteen months after college while he received mental treatments, he had written an initial draft of such an essay. Its contours emerged from conversations with a romantic interest, Marjorie Nott, concerning the great ideas of their moment. He read Emma Goldman's essays as a political fantasy, derided *The Education of Henry Adams*, and "high-handedly dismiss[ed]…H. G. Wells, Upton Sinclair, and Bernard Shaw," none of whom he had read. But Max found helpful ideas in a trio of works. Paul Sabatier's *Life of Saint Francis d'Assisi*, Tolstoy's *The Gospel in Brief*, and Veblen's *Theory of the Leisure Class* "brought [Max] several steps toward Marxian socialism." For Max, these writers clarified a dedication to the "revolution of ethics against economics," which he planned to espouse in a book, planned with the title *The Agnostic's God*. Though never written, he intended to announce in this book his "substitute[ion of] an attitude for a creed as the substance of religion."[20] Max had uncovered the initial ties between poetic expression and social

[19] Annis Ford Eastman to Max Eastman, March 1, 1907; ox 9, folder 31, Eastman MSS I. He searched for a "magazineable" subject after previous efforts at publishing essays had proven unsuccessful. During the summer of 1907, Max wanted to revise an essay on "Poetry as Nature." Bliss Perry, editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, rejected Max's essay on the piece—which the *North American Review* did publish, under the title "The Poet's Mind"—because it did not address "a distinctly 'magazinable' topic," though Perry invited future submissions from Max. Bliss Perry to Max Eastman, n.d., quoted in Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 239.

[20] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 235–237. Here, Eastman's notebook recorded the insight that, had Francis's theories come to economic prominence, they "would have upset the science of economics." Tolstoy and Veblen contributed to an economic class-consciousness. The three combined in what Max called "a systematized study of biography…[that would] take the place of decadent and devitalized Christianity in school and college."

revolution, and resolutely set himself the task of writing a book on the subject. Unable to find an immediate outlet for his essay, "Poetry as Nature," this grander plan would have to wait.

Max redirected his attention to a related interest: "spiritism" and suggestion. In "The New Art of Healing," which the *Atlantic Monthly* published in May 1908, Max addressed his experiences at Sahler's New Thought sanitarium, Gehring's work-cure retreat, and his more recent studies of psychology. He delineated an expansive genealogy of "the religion of mental power," ranging from Christian Science, to mental healing, and "a number of Oriental philosophers, Yogi Healers, dark-eyed Hindus, and Theosophists, who swim in the wake of New Thought."[21] Less removed geographically, but certainly no less exotic, he also traced the Holiness faith healer John Alexander Dowie, "séances," "physicians returned from the 'spirit-land,'" " magicians of all kinds," "miraculous relics of the saints," "mesmerists, evangelists, and crowing little prophets" in his sketch of a mind–body tradition.[22]

Among this assortment, Eastman outlined a less exotic strand, comprised of "a school of physicians…who combine with their medical treatments a serious attention to the mental condition of their patients." Such clinicians employed the rational means of suggestion to arrive at diagnoses of nervous disorders, rather than superstitions and mystifications. For Eastman, these science-minded physicians had "found that one truth which underlies the various visions of the enthusiasts." Their foundation in psychological science set them at a far remove "from the wizards of Christian Science and the wielders of 'thought-vibrations' and 'mental fluid.'"[23]

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[21] Max Eastman, "The New Art of Healing," *Atlantic Monthly* (May 1908): 644–650. Eastman saw that, "in our western view of things … we cannot but recognize an uncommon power in their tradition, arising out of the dark bosom of Asia and the past," (654).

[22] Ibid., 645.

[23] Ibid., 645–646, 646.

The science of psychology that Eastman set out to document rested on the theory of mental suggestion. The mark of the theory's acceptance came in the fact that "to-day no thorough clinical hospital is without a professional suggestionist." What distinguished suggestion as especially scientific, in contradistinction to New Thought, was the fact that it "does not involve any metaphysical theories…or the swallowing of any occult doctrines whatever." Suggestion could be applied through any number of mental methods. The operator might pose as a wizard, his incantations regarded with superstitious awe. He could make claims of transcending bodily existence.

> All these methods, if one believes in them, are good, and they prove by their success the law of suggestion. But the method that is based on a sure truth is the method of the scientist. He reasons with his patient, he stirs in him what moral and religious enthusiasm he can, and to these means he adds tactfully the subtle suggestive power of his own presence.

For Max, suggestion represented "the greatest practical discovery of modern psychology," and though its benefits could be detected in religious and spiritual applications, its greatest benefit came through scientific application, which constituted the truest representation of the practice of a new "suggestive therapeutics."[24] He had seen remarkable improvement in his own physical well-being through Gehring's application of suggestion at Bethel, and this essay served as his public validation of the method. But more than this, Max's characterization of suggestion marked the point at which he departed from his mother's dabbling in mental healing. Where Annis trusted the ministrations of New Thought healers, Max rationalized his own exposure to mental healing as scientific and medical through the elaborate genealogy presented in "the new

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[24] Max Eastman, "The New Art of Healing," 646, 647.

Art of Healing." Max sent the seventy-five dollars he received as payment for the essay to Gehring as a tribute, though the doctor returned the funds.[25]

Even if Max had not succeeded fully in his plans to write about poetry, the summer months at Cherith had at least allowed him to develop a routine for his work at writing, which yielded at least one publication. But the Seneca Lake house also benefited Max by drawing his family close together. In these years, between 1907 and 1913, Max described Glenora as "a kind of a parish that we lived in, my father's and my mother's parish, and I had made myself a kind of first-assistant pagan pastor of it." He led the weekly family service occasionally, and noted the absence of theistic language in his prayers. "[I]n my own mind I was demonstrating that a sceptical philosophy, which affirms only the values of temporal life, can retain what is beautiful and essential in a system of mystical belief."[26] Without surprise, Eastman found the exemplars of that new philosophy in Emerson and Whitman.

In 1909, while his mother studied in the summer session at Harvard, Max preached a "Sermon on Self-Reliance and Magnanimity" at the Cherith gathering. He outlined the need to combine the values of Emerson's essay with the good humor and tolerance advocated by Epictetus. Whitman "took this essay of Emerson for gospel," and suffered public scorn for his audacity in living freely. Thus, Eastman concluded, "It wouldn't do to have an incarnation of Self-Reliance more than once in a while in a world so apt at hating." Still, this did not negate the value of personal independence; self-reliance is "not an ideal for geniuses and freaks, but it is one of the universal laws of spiritual life." In order to avoid the "chaos of animosity" that

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[25] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 273.

[26] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 336, 276.

Whitman suffered, authentic individualism only needed to be tempered by the ideal of magnanimity.[27]

One night that summer, Max discovered an unexpected confidence in his poetic ability. While local children danced through the night to violin music, he recalled intense emotions.

> I found myself sobbing with the insatiable hunger which beauty begets in me. …The next morning…I wrote all in a rush, as though it had been gathering through the night, my poem "To the Ascending Moon."…It was a more important event to me than any other that year, because I was so proud of the unbidden way the words poured out. …[F]or one who romanticized the whole realm of poetry as I did, it seemed a certificate of citizenship there.[28]

The poem validated Eastman's notion, discussed below, of the direct ties between experience and poetic expression, of the power of individual experience for shaping social relations. Melissa Nickle explains that this insight constituted "a new framework of meaning [for Eastman] based upon the authority of the present, the spirituality of life and experience lived to its fullest."[29] Max's conversion of midnight emotions into a workable text authorized his hopes of demonstrating that framework through his writing. Even more, the poem won Eastman the approval of the publisher Mitchell Kennerley, who agreed to bring out a volume of Max's work.

The Sunday gatherings at Cherith also reflected a shift in his mother's religious consciousness. On periodic summer afternoons, Annis hosted a "Supposium" on the lower level of the house, during which her "maturely childlike presence" set her companions at ease to

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[27] Max Eastman, "Sermon on Self-Reliance and Magnanimity," TS, n.d., box 17, folder labeled "Cherith Prayers (and sermon)," Eastman Mss. II. Eastman asserted that "We must grow towards magnanimity as fast as we grow towards self-reliance. For only in a magnanimous world is it possible for such wilfull [*sic*] heroes as Emerson portrays to live happily together," (2). Eastman addresses this sermon in *Enjoyment of Living*, 311.

[28] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 311–312,

[29] Nickle, 28–29.

ponder and enjoy life, so that "an afternoon of Platonic conversation would become as offhand as a swim in the lake."[30] If Cherith was his parents' parish, then its religious quality adapted to their evolving opinions. More and more each year, the weekly services demonstrated a "millennial" and "pagan" quality. Annis Eastman's religious thought increasingly did the same.[31]

In the spring of 1907, Annis decided to revise the Park Church creed, a decision which reputed as "the most discussed event of the Eastman ministry."[32] Thomas Beecher had been "supremely indifferent" to credal concerns, only supplying his parishioners with a loose confession of faith. In the congregation's recollection, Annis and Samuel Eastman came to the church "in a period when a considerable struggle was on throughout Protestantism between conservatives and liberals." According to this tradition, the Eastmans sought both to align the church with the "liberal camp" and, even more "to keep The Park Church a place where people of widely different private opinions could work together."[33] On February 13, 1907, the Eastmans prevailed after struggling through substantial opposition. The new creed comprised five short articles, asserting principally that God "is revealed in nature and human experience," and that

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[30] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 276–277.

[31] According to Max, "[b]y the summer 0f 1907 there was indeed little of the churchly part of Christianity left in my mother's ever-evolving aspiration," (*Enjoyment of Living*, 277). Evidence of Annis Eastman's pronounced theological liberalism in this period can be found, among many others, in her lecture on "Missions Today," MS, November 21, [1909], folder 73, Crystal Eastman Papers. Here, she presented an unvarnished statement of theological liberalization in a vocal critique of missionary motives. The manuscript can be dated to 1909 with its opening reference to the fire that severely damaged Elmira's city hall in November of that year. See "Fire in Elmira City Hall," *New York Evening Post*, November 18, 1909.

[32] Eva Taylor, *A History of the Park Church*, TS, 1946 (Special Collections, Elmira College Library, Elmira, NY), 37.

[33] Ibid., 37–38.

Jesus represented "the Supreme Embodiment of the Spirit of God in the soul of man."[34] This revision shifted the church's loyalties in a theologically Unitarian direction, reflected the impress of Harvard on Annis.

She wrote to Max after preaching the following Sunday, remarking that the service "was one to be remembered (by me) for the truth (or fancy) possessed me. I spoke on the theology of Isaiah and Jesus, and their great sayings seemed to fill the world with light."[35] The cultivation of a concrete link, in the form of her sermon's success, between her own changing theological stance and the congregation she led buoyed Eastman's spirits. But the new creed stirred dissent in the church, centered around Christology. Annis recounted to Max that her opponents "cling to Christ's being more than man and to his miracles. They think it will do harm to shake people's faith in the New Testament as history. They say I sometimes shock and hurt them by the way I speak of Jesus." The critique is surprising in light of the personal intimacy with which Eastman regarded Jesus.[36] More significant, however, it stirred feelings of guilt, leading her to "feel so ashamed and condemned as if I must be all wrong and doing only harm." Preaching seemed as if it might grow joyless, and her spirits lifted only with thoughts of her son: "coming down the hill in the clear starlight and snow I seemed again to stand with you and breathe the air of better thoughts."[37] Over the following weeks, Annis's guilty feelings persisted, and Max wrote to

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[34] Ibid., 39.

[35] Annis Ford Eastman to Max Eastman, February 17, 1907; box 9, folder 31, Eastman MSS I.

[36] See chapter 3, 133–134, 148, above.

[37] Annis Ford Eastman to Max Eastman, February 17, 1907; box 9, folder 31, Eastman MSS I. Eastman remarked that "Clara and Julia" specifically were "not in sympathy with my position." She likely referred to Clara Clemens and Julia Langdon, the daughter and niece, respectively, of Samuel Clemens, whose wife grew up in the church.

console her one month later. "I believe more emphatically every day that your place is there, you are indispensable to Elmira. …And as it is your nature to serve the advance guard, you will have to see people turn away frowning."[38]

Annis Eastman's skepticism "increased as she grew older—or grew young again with her children," to the extent that she had, in the months before her death, lost faith in church institutions. Max partook enthusiastically in his mother's explorations of extraecclesial religion. In October of 1908, after settling into the apartment he shared with Crystal at 237 West Eleventh Street, Max wrote to Annis concerning an article she had been reading that addressed conceptions of church institutions.

> Perhaps churches aren't the final resting place for great minds & hearts. But if liberal mindedness, or truth, takes the heart out of church, as it has developed with us, why so much the worse for church. …And for the fervent at least a liberal church that does maintain its elevation is the best thing of that kind there is. You ought to be happy that you have the imagination to see that what may be dearest to you may not be the ultimate thing. If truth kills the church, why church wasn't founded on a rock, that's all. You preach truth, and your words will stand whether the church does or not.[39]

Evidently Annis Eastman pondered the extinction of the church as a form of social organization, or at least its incongruity with "liberal mindedness or truth." Certainly, she and Max actively tested the boundaries of those concepts in their shared value of scientific reason and experimental living. Max's response also evinces the central difference that ultimately separated the conclusions he and his mother reached; she could not relinquish her emotional and spiritual

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[38] Max Eastman to Annis Ford Eastman, postmarked March 19, 1907; box 10, folder 2, Eastman MSS I. He wrote, further, that disputes over the creed represented "little troubles [that] … seem but flaws inherent in the material out of which you have made a structure of great beauty and endurance."

[39] Max Eastman to Annis Ford Eastman, October 9, 1908; box 10, folder 3, Eastman MSS I.

ties to Jesus and the social connections fostered by church. Given enough time, Max willingly discarded them altogether. He believed that, had she lived longer, Annis would have abandoned the ministry. He wrote that, in her last years, "privately, …she was seeking a place outside the church and was delighted when a movement was set on foot to make her dean of Barnard College."[40] Though the plan never materialized, Annis seems to have appreciated the possibility of a role in academic administration, and, had death not intervened, Annis's skepticism may have landed her among Manhattan's intelligentsia, as had occurred with Max and Crystal.

Removed from the tumult over creeds and churches and mental cures, Cherith comprised an unrestrained playground in which any possibility might arise. Named a "lakeside utopia" in Max's autobiography, Cherith exemplified the late-Victorian turn to nature as a source of revitalization to counteract the stresses of modern living.[41] Remote retreats like Fossenvue on Seneca Lake's opposite shore, the numerous nearby summer assembly grounds, and the more massive Chautauqua assembly in western New York provided contrasting spaces to the surroundings of city and town life, and allowed for leisure in place of busy calendars. At Cherith, the Eastman family cultivated a community of alternative expression and social practice. The language of the prayers recited during the Sunday gatherings grew in their naturalistic references, displaying the paganism and millennialism Max attributed to the place. One prayer from August 1908 boldly proclaimed, "We will not be meek and tame before any adversity which a vigorous

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[40] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 277. Max initially wrote to Crystal in 1907 about the possibility of their mother's appointment at Barnard, but Annis seems not to have imagined that the position would preclude a pulpit ministry. In a letter to Crystal, Max wrote, "[Mamma] is crazy to be Dean of Barnard—no doubt about it—wanted me to tell you so right off. She could lecture and preach plenty enough she says, and she believes she could do it. I am for it too, if it's possible." Max Eastman to Crystal Eastman, postmarked March 28, 1907; box 10, folder 29, Eastman MSS I.

[41] "A Lakeside Utopia" is the title given to chapter 37 in *Enjoyment of Living*, 273–280.

mind can overthrow. …We will join ourselves to those who believe in rebellion, and not suffer continually, nor hesitate to act the imperious part of God in a heroic moment." Lacking all timidity, this language expresses a degree of audacity, perhaps stemming from attempts in Elmira to stifle credal revisions. A recitation from the following month called for action according to the habits of nature: "In autumn we remember liberty. It is the season of the running winds and the leaves that die gaily. It is the time for change and ungovernable motion—time for us to make sure that we are free." The hills of Glenora stirred not only naturalistic wonder, but a revolution of ideals.

Such prayers echoed through Cherith each summer and fall at least through 1914. A typescript clipping—taped to the obverse of a sheet of *The Masses* letterhead, and supplemented by sentences in Max's hand (italicized below)—records a prayer that escaped Max's lips:

> We close our eyes in order that we may behold the universe. We know it is good for us in our small doings,…to pause and remember the earth, how it swings on with restless force forever: …and the far spaces where like an arrow the earth's shadow flies, and patient multitudes of the travelling stars move in the blue firmament. No passions of ours can shake them. *Nor can our thought outspan their orbits, nor our utmost fancy touch the chilly sphere that bounds them, for they dwell in mystery. We dwell in mystery, and we will be like them serene, and strong, and self-dependent, and unswerving to the end*.[42]

Extended quotation of the Cherith prayers in these years reveals the distinctive quality of the place. But for him, they also charted his waning affinity for Christian symbols and practices and his rising sympathy with revolutionary socialism. Recalling a Sunday gathering in September 1911, after returning from a miserable summer in Europe with his wife Ida Rauh, Max commented that his "pagan prayer" represented "the last of those milestones on my march from

[42] "A Prayer," n.d. box 17, folder labeled "Cherith Prayers (and sermon)," Eastman MSS II. Italics denote Max's hand-written additions to the preceding lines, clipped and pasted to the sheet.

Christian evangelism to proletarian revolution."[43] As much as Max encountered the theories and philosophies of psychology and socialism through his studies in the city, the experiential and emotional engine of his turn towards radicalism resided at Cherith. "Thus I managed to combine prayer with revolution. But they were never happy together, and I never prayed even in this godless fashion again."[44]

Still, Max found New York to be a space full of passion and inspiration. In September 1908, during the same month that he reveled in the "gypsy wind" of a Cherith autumn, he moved from Columbia University's Hartley Hall to an apartment on West Eleventh Street in Greenwich Village. In the summer of 1908, Max had returned to work on his book about poetry, and set an ambitious agenda to educate himself back in the city. Beyond graduate studies and teaching undergraduates, though, Max intended to address a number of "purposes— moral intellectual, physical, aesthetic, social, and immoral" that fall.[45] Moving down to the Village proved liberating for Max, adding a conduit for vital experience to course alongside his growing knowledge of philosophy and psychology. He wrote to his mother, "Our house is perfect from my standpoint, and I'm so glad to be away from the knowledge foundry."[46] Perhaps ironically, where the pastoral setting of Cherith had evoked the revolutionary spirit of the urban radicals,

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[43] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 377.

[44] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 377.

[45] Max Eastman to Annis Ford Eastman, September 26, 1908; box 10, folder 3, Eastman MSS I.

[46] Max Eastman to Annis Ford Eastman, October 2, 1908; box 10, folder 3, Eastman MSS I. This letter also gives indication that Max had begun to inquire about Smith Ely Jelliffe's willingness to analyze his mother at his neuropsychological clinic at City Hospital on Blackwell's Island, where his brother Peter worked as a physician. He confirmed the invitation with his mother in a letter to her from October 1, 1908, and Annis Eastman stayed with Max and Crystal in November, when she was treated by Jelliffe.

Max found in his new neighborhood a touch of nostalgia for small-town church life. Living on West Eleventh Street "just where it turns south and against all geometrical propriety runs head on into 4th," Max and Crystal rented an apartment directly across from the North Baptist Church, a fixture in the city since the 1820s, and resident on Eleventh Street since the early 1880s.[47] "There is a baptist [*sic*] church opposite us, and I note that they are to have a basket picnic tonight. I wish I was going."[48] The evocation of a familiar cultural pattern eased Max's transition downtown.

Perhaps more than anything, New York presented limitless opportunities for Max to immerse himself in the poetry of cultural expression. He was particularly struck by one such convergence. On February 13, 1909, Max attended a concert of the Philharmonic Society at Carnegie Hall, commemorating the centennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth. The violinist Mischa Elman performed Mendelssohn's violin concerto and the orchestra played Fritz Stahlberg's *Abraham Lincoln: In Memoriam*. Above the orchestra on the stage, "looking down, meditative and heroic," a cast of Augustus Saint-Gaudens's statue of Lincoln brooded over the music. Addressing the statue, Max wrote to his mother, "I can't speak of that statue without tears. It restores to us, and shows us as our own the heroic arts of Greece. People are saying that we can't have them again—but all we need is the god to believe in, and there we have him, and it is the

[47] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 297. On the North Baptist Church, see *The Baptist Encyclopedia*, ed. William Cathcart (Philadelphia, PA: Louis H. Everts, 1881), s.v. "Brouner, Rev. Jacob H." and "Brouner, Rev. John J.".

[48] Max Eastman to Annis Ford Eastman, October 2, 1908; box 10, folder 3, Eastman MSS I. He described the area around the apartment as "Not a Jewish neighborhood—a mixed respectable quiet home-going house-cleaning neighborhood of general Americans."

climax of modern art."[49] Max had praised Saint-Gaudens' sculptural expressiveness in his poem, "The Saint Gaudens Statues," but in this moment, the artist's evocation of Lincoln drew together a number of insights Max had been contemplating.[50] Looking to ancient Greek aesthetic values, he searched for an alternative expressive model to the overly Protestant caste of American culture. More than this, the young revolutionary pondered the connections between art, politics, and heroic individualism:

> Well, I was thinking of him [Lincoln] and of Plato—and how they were great because they faced the problems of their own age, and lived with the state. And when we worship them, and obey—it will not be in facing the problems they faced nor living in their thoughts, but in living well in our own, and grasping the problems of our own state.

Saint-Gaudens worked to articulate national experience through sculpture, evoking within Max a connection to the idealistic qualities embodied by Lincoln. Max's theory of poetry, still forming in his mind, would come to emphasize this dynamic of articulating experience through aesthetic expression. In this moment, Max was still caught in the formative outlines of the theory. "All this must sound vague and funny—a few words out a great vat of thoughts and intentions. But when you feel your whole organic emotion turn and swing in a new direction, you can't say it in a

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[49] Max Eastman to Annis Ford Eastman, postmarked February 16, 1909; box 10, folder 5, Eastman MSS I. In contrast to the Saint-Gaudens artwork, Stahlberg's piece likely failed to inspire Eastman, as it received universally horrendous reviews. According to one account, the audience slowly trickled out during the performance, so that the hall was half-empty upon its completion. See "Music and Drama: A Lincoln Philharmonic," *New York Evening Post*, February 13, 1909. On the details of the performance, see Merrill Peterson, *Abraham Lincoln in American Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 185; "The Philharmonic Society: A New Tone Poem on Lincoln by Fritz Stahlberg Played," *New York Times* February 14, 1909; and "Lincoln in New York," *New York Tribune*, February 13, 1909.

[50] The poem was later published in Max Eastman, "The Saint Gaudens Statues," in *Child of the Amazons, and Other Poems* (New York: Mitchell Kennerly, 1913), 57.

sentence."[51] Max engaged a process of actively seeking the elements of his theory of poetry, working to assemble a means of explaining the connections he perceived between experience and expression.

Between 1907 and 1913, Max envisioned the possibilities of writing for refashioning the world. Though they never came to fruition, his plans for *The Agnostic's God* and *The Realization of Being* would find partial expression in his work on poetry. But that work would percolate while he continued studies of philosophy and psychology at Columbia University.

Philosophy between the "Oracle on Morningside Heights" and an "Ethical Bohemia"

Max had stumbled into his career as a graduate student at Columbia University. An Eastman biographer writes that, upon his arrival in New York, "[s]entiment had not hardened into conviction, and he had no clearly formed ideas."[52] When Dewey brought Max up to Morningside Heights in the spring of 1907 to study philosophy, he had done so under the awareness that Eastman lacked expertise in the subject, stipulating that he learn along with his pupils. Max's studies in the departments of philosophy and psychology developed out of his inexperience with this course, and branched out into those subjects broadly.

Eastman served as assistant professor through 1909, after which he was promoted to associate, and served one year in that position, until the spring of 1911.[53] Dewey and the

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[51] Max Eastman to Annis Ford Eastman, postmarked Feb. 16, 1909; box 10, folder 5, Eastman MSS I.

[52] Cantor, *Max Eastman*, 26.

[53] *Resolutions Adopted by the Trustees of Columbia College, October 1903 to June 1909* (New York, 1910), recorded under the resolutions approved at the February 4, 1907 meeting of the trustees, no. 189 (p. 5) and the May 6, 1907 meeting, no. 192 (p. 6). Max Eastman is listed as an assistant in philosophy from 1907 to 1909, and as associate in philosophy for 1910–1911, in *Catalogue of Officers and Graduates of Columbia University from the Foundation of King's College in 1754*, 15th ed. (New York, 1912), 43.

university provided a constant point of reference for Max as he formulated a theory of poetry and revolution between 1907 and 1913. Indeed, Max's teaching at Columbia constituted a convergence between his new intellectual explorations and his parents' Christianity. In at least some of his lectures, he quoted from his parents' sermons. In October 1910, Annis wrote to Max: "How many attend your lectures? Are they one of the regular courses—put down in the book?…Please tell me the things in Dad's sermon on Beauty you read to your class—don't forget this!"[54] Annis referred to Samuel Eastman's sermon, "The Ministry of Beauty," which he preached at the Park Church on September 18, 1910.[55] But, as much as Columbia encouraged Max's intellect, the university would move increasingly to the periphery of Max's imagination as he settled among the reformers and revolutionaries of Greenwich Village. The dynamic of movement between these two locations, uptown and downtown, mirrored the complementarity he discovered between philosophy and psychology, on one hand, with poetry and aesthetics on another.

In the fall of 1907, newly graduated from New York University School of Law and admitted to the bar, Crystal left New York to research industrial injuries in Pittsburgh, and Max returned to Columbia. He continued to revise his essay on "Poetry as Nature," which had not yet been published. After receiving a substantial critique of the essay from Dickenson Miller, Max "realized that…[he] had work to do in philosophy and psychology, and even biology" before he

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[54] Annis Ford Eastman to Max Eastman, October 17, 1910; box 9, folder 35, Eastman MSS I.

[55] Samuel Eastman, "The Ministry of Beauty," Religion Collection MC 19, Box A, Folder 10; Booth Library, Chemung Valley Historical Society, Elmira, NY.

could expand the essay into a planned book.[56] So he remained at Columbia, investigating links between poetry and science, and attending Dewey's graduate course on logic.

In Max's years at Columbia, John Dewey exerted an incalculable influence on the form and content of Eastman's thought. The philosopher had come to Columbia from the University of Chicago in 1904, and applied his philosophical approach to increasingly political questions. Dewey functioned as a transitional mentor for Eastman, impressing the young poet-philosopher with an intellect similar to that of Annis Eastman, but one that moved more quickly beyond the theism and moralism of social Christianity.

By the time Dewey assumed his post at Columbia in 1904, he arrived at what Steven Rockefeller has termed an "evolutionary moral relativism."[57] Raised among a trinitarian Congregational family, Dewey moved into broader forms of social Protestantism after college. As an undergraduate, he had been influenced by the legacy of James Marsh's Transcendentalism at the University of Vermont through Henry A. P. Torrey. Marsh, who had asserted the importance of German idealism as an alternative to the systems of Locke and Scottish Common Sense, infused Kantian philosophy into the New England intellectual tradition by bringing out the first American edition of Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection* in 1829.[58] These incursions of German idealism paralleled those of Edwards Park at Andover, which had shaped the early

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[56] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 281.

[57] Steven C. Rockefeller, *John Dewey: Religious Faith and Democratic Humanism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 284.

[58] Robert B. Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 6–7. On the influence of the "Burlington philosophy," see also Bruce Kuklick, *Churchmen and Philosophers*, 159, 231; Rockefeller, *John Dewey*, 51–65.

theology of Samuel and Annis Eastman. Accordingly, Dewey shared an intellectual kinship with Max's parents.

In this connection, Dewey had moved along a trajectory from social gospel theological progressivism in the 1880s towards the instrumentalism he would espouse after the mid-1890s through his emerging form of pragmatism.[59] In doing so, according to Bruce Kuklick, he replaced Christian theological categories with an emphasis on "experience's potential for the continuously enlarging revelation of meaning, and in the evolution of the moral from the physical."[60] This aspect of Dewey's thought found a particularly deep resonance in Max Eastman's theory of poetry, articulated in Eastman's 1913 book *Enjoyment of Poetry*, which later provided avenues of connection to the radical cultural milieu that surrounded him in Greenwich Village.[61]

By the time of Eastman's arrival at Columbia, Dewey had exchanged religion for science, and had gone from exploring Darwin's theological implications in Andover's *Bibliotheca Sacra* to "incorporate[ing] religious value into a scientific conception of nature" and in that move "exorcised it from the supernatural."[62] In this way, Dewey appeared as a mentor well suited to

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[59] Kuklick, *Churchmen and Philosophers*, 230–240.

[60] Kuklick, *Churchmen and Philosophers*, 240.

[61] Dewey's influence on Eastman tied him to other young intellectuals in New York, notably Randolph Bourne, who had also studied with the famous pragmatist at Columbia University. Bourne and Eastman both incorporated into their various programs of social transformation what Casey Nelson Blake names as Dewey's "vision of democratic self fulfillment." Blake, *Beloved Community*, 87. Bourne also collaborated with Eastman in subsequent years, especially in their mutual opposition to U.S. participation in the First World War. Bourne contributed to *The Masses* in October 1916 and June 1917, and in February 1917, at the urging of Crystal Eastman, he and Max helped to form an impromptu antiwar publicity committee on lower Fifth Avenue. See Max Eastman, *Love and Revolution*, 28.

[62] Kuklick, *Churchmen and Philosophers*, 253.

shape Max Eastman's philosophical explorations.[63] As Max later reflected on his days as Dewey's student, he noticed this conspicuous affinity. "[Dewey] filled out so simply the patterns in which I grew up that I can not now say how much he was an influence and how much an enhancing companion."

Not only did Dewey evoke Eastman's youth, but he projected an idealism that matched with Max's new reflections. Dewey seemed "to embody in his social attitude, as Walt Whitman did in his poetry, the very essence of democracy." Dewey and Eastman together could simultaneously speak in and denounce the vernacular of religious liberalism in their efforts to define a new science of experience for society, and thus replace what they saw as religion's outmoded mystifications.[64] As Dewey's student, Max debated the terms of this new science in relation to Dewey's philosophical system of pragmatism.

In the first decade of the twentieth century, pragmatism, conceived as "an account of the way people think—the way they come up with ideas, form beliefs, and reach decisions," had acquired momentum as a philosophy particularly well suited to addressing modern society.[65] At

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[63] Dewey's transformation paralleled Max Eastman's in several ways, and held a relation to the politics of reform that allowed for his easy affinity with Max. According to Andrew Jewett, Dewey had articulated his own understanding of self-realization. See Jewett, *Science, Democracy, and the American University*, 96–97. David Hollinger describes Dewey as "the great secularist" who had reinterpreted prayer as "the attitude of inquiry characteristic of science." Hollinger, "Justification by Verification," 125, 128. In Gary Gerstle's analysis, Dewey represented the full development of an "intellectual gospel," contributing to his position at the center of New York's liberal intellectual culture, itself the heart of American liberalism that radiated critique outward to the rest of the country. See Gerstle, "The Protean Character of American Liberalism." *The American Historical Review* 99, no. 4 (October 1994): 1048–1049.

[64] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 285, 282.

[65] Louis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club: A Story of Ideas in America* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 2001), 351.

the center of the new philosophy's articulation, William James drew Emersonian thought and the sense of "contingency" fostered by evolutionary science into conversation, a pair of forces that Louis Menand identifies as birthing pragmatism out of a "disestablishmentarian impulse."[66] After around 1900, John Dewey offered complementary accounts of pragmatism. In January 1907, James delivered a series of lectures at Columbia University, which had been delivered at Harvard University in November and December 1906, and which he published later in 1907 as *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking*.[67] As James and Dewey undertook parallel work, they together articulated pragmatism's general shape in "the notion…that the meaning of anything is to be found in its fruits, not its roots."[68] The eminent pair advanced a system in which "meanings emerge as cultures test their values in practice."[69] Pragmatism's emphasis on the public "workability" of concepts meant that "[l]anguage was thus crucial for understanding the experience of others."[70] The system's emphasis on adaptability also demonstrated its link to evolutionary science as related to individual and social experience.

Where the Darwinian notion of chaos had spun some nineteenth-century Christians into moral panics, it proffered a vein of creativity and lively possibility to these philosophers. In this connection, Melvin Rogers argues that "Darwin centralized contingency…as the essence of

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[66] Menand, 89.

[67] Max Eastman attended the lectures as one of his first outings, weeks after moving to New York, accompanying James as he walked to Faculty House on Columbia's campus.

[68] Robert D. Richardson, *William James: In the Maelstrom of American Modernism* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2006), 377.

[69] James T. Kloppenberg, "Pragmatism: An Old Name for Some New Ways of Thinking?" *Journal of American History* 83, no. 1 (June 1996): 104.

[70] Kloppenberg, 104.

existence, and Dewey exploited its significance to outline a vision of human enlightenment that at once encouraged self-assertion and cautioned epistemic and practical humility."[71] In Dewey's thought during his first years at Columbia, religion contravened this style of individual liberation. He wrote that "Intellectually, religious emotions are not creative but conservative. They attach themselves readily to the current view of the world and consecrate it. They steep and dye intellectual fabrics in the seething vat of emotions; they do not form their warp and woof."[72]

Here, religion approached the emotions of experience not through careful rubrics of reflection but with instinctively rigid reaction. James Kloppenberg argues that James and Dewey built their philosophy around "experience conceived, not as introspection, but as the intersection of the self with the world."[73] In a pragmatist frame, points of contact between individuals and external forces occupied a superior position to unthinking religious reactions. Because of this difference of emphasis, in Dewey's estimation, religion had ceased to offer creative ways of encountering the world.[74]

Max interpreted his undergraduate explorations of philosophy in 1904 as paralleling the pragmatism of James and Dewey. In an essay at Williams, composed while reading James's work on psychology, Max settled on a perspective he termed as "Affirmative Agnosticism, Pragmatism, Socratic Scepticism, …call it by what name you will, it is great!" In doing so, he "was making one of [his] advance grabs at a whole universe of discourse," so that when he heard

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[71] Melvin Rogers, *The Undiscovered Dewey: Religion, Morality, and the Ethos of Democracy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 6.

[72] John Dewey, "The Influence of Darwinism on Philosophy," in *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy and Other Essays in Contemporary Thought* (New York: Henry Holt, 1910), 2–3.

[73] Kloppenberg, 104.

[74] Dewey, "The Influence of Darwinism," 3.

James's January 1907 lectures and commenced study under Dewey, he "liked the new philosophy [of pragmatism] because it gave a biological foundation to my instinctive skepticism."[75] Dewey's pragmatism elaborated extensively on this score. Along lines similar to Max's ruminations on connections between mental and physical phenomena in "The New Art of Healing," Dewey characterized thought as essentially like physical movement. In Menand's explanation, "Dewey thought ideas and beliefs are the same as hands; instruments for coping. An idea has no greater metaphysical stature than, say, a fork."[76]

Not only this, but pragmatism articulated a distinctive relation between experience and language. James and Dewey both approached pragmatism through their work in the New Psychology during the 1890s, one of the fields of inquiry that fed into the mind- and work-cures that Eastman underwent in 1905 and 1906.[77] As Max worked through the fine points of his theory of poetry, pragmatism provided a crucial way of conceiving the symbolic expression of individual experience through words, or what Eastman would later term the identification of "names."

Beginning the fall 1908 semester at Columbia, Eastman submitted a thesis on "The Moral of Pragmatism" in support of his application for a fellowship in philosophy. Meditating on the implications of pragmatism's "definition of meaning," Eastman strained against the philosophy's potential to entail a new form of faith or dogmatism. He worried that the system "[concealed]

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[75] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 285.

[76] Menand, 361.

[77] For brief reference to the New Psychology, see Menand, 324–326, 354. More substantial treatments are found in Taves, *Fits, Trances, and Visions*, ch. 7; and White, *Unsettled Minds*, especially ch. 2.

under its sheep-cloak the unqualified rejection of certain systems of thought."[78] If inherent, such prima facie dismissals would give the lie to pragmatism's claim to a neutral and overriding instrumentalism.

In pragmatism, Eastman averred, "the definition of meaning and the method are involved in each other; the definition means the method." If the philosophy takes as its approach the "sorting of ideas" based on their outcomes, then "true ideas are obviously ideas which intend satisfactory conduct and results." This exemplified the "pragmatic openness of mind," the tendency which James claimed to have inherited from his reading of John Stuart Mill in the epigraph for *Pragmatism*.[79] Eastman thought he detected a dogmatic note in the implications behind this claim to philosophical openness. "If pragmatism is only a statement of what our ideas mean, …*does* it actually militate against any of the ideas some of us had already pitched upon as true?"[80]

Pragmatism displayed its most practical aspect in its call for "turning away in serious moods from the special problems of an exalted metaphysics." Instead, the system directed its full attention at "giving the mind to the solution of the true problems of the individual and social activity." "True" problems were marked not by their correspondence to an a priori construction

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[78] Max Eastman, "The Moral of Pragmatism, or The Pragmatic Meaning of Pragmatism," TS, 7 (1908), box 17, unmarked folder, Eastman MSS II. The essay was later rejected for publication by one of Eastman's other mentors in the Columbia philosophy department F. J. E. Woodbridge. See Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 301.

[79] Eastman, "The Moral of Pragmatism," 3, 4, 6. James had dedicated *Pragmatism* "to the memory of John Stuart Mill from whom I first learned the pragmatic openness of mind and whom my fancy likes to picture as our leader were he alive to-day." William James, *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1907), front matter.

[80] Max Eastman, "The Moral of Pragmatism," 7–8.

of the moral or the transcendent, but were identified based on outcomes. Dewey struck Eastman as "the one 'pragmatist' who is fully aware that the trueness of the system of thought *is* the harmonized situation which it represents." James's brand of the philosophy seemed overly concerned with reaching a conception of "Reality," a pursuit dangerously close to a sort of metaphysics. Under a superior construction of pragmatism, "it is inevitable that metaphysics here loses the best part of its divineness. It is not explanation of being, nor definition of reality, it is more like an artistic juggling with high generalities." A true pragmatist would dedicate the capacity to "let reality with a large 'R' alone." In doing so, pragmatism could be "seen to be an interpretation of human thinking as science finds it." In this defense of his mentor's approach to pragmatism, Eastman worked his way towards a scientific basis for identifying truth in the world.[81]

Despite the intellectual satisfaction that accompanied his new understanding, Eastman's study of philosophy and psychology seemed cut off from the reality of experience. Moving into an apartment with his sister began to remedy that deficiency. "When we lived together she pulled me toward the social problem; she pulled me downtown." Their Eleventh Street apartment was located in an area of the city that "was soon to be a part of the colorful locale, or state-of-mind called Greenwich Village." Still a bohemia-to-be, the neighborhood buzzed more with hymns of reform than mantras of revolution. Crystal shared a close intimacy with the Greenwich House Settlement, where she volunteered and had taken meals since moving to the city to attend law school at New York University.[82]

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[81] Max Eastman, "The Moral of Pragmatism," 12–13, 17, 20, 17, 20.

[82] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 291, 297, 303.

In the winter of 1909–1910, Max and Crystal inched closer towards radicalism. Crystal had begun her work in drafting workers' compensation legislation for New York State. She also participated in the Women's Trade Union League and, together with other women attorneys—namely Max's future wife, Ida Rauh—assisted in organizing the shirtwaist makers' strike, which broke out in November of 1909. In December 1909, they moved from Eleventh Street to an apartment at 118 Waverly Place. This relocation of six blocks to the southeast placed the siblings more directly in the center of the famous labor action, as, in Max's memory, their new apartment "was just halfway on a rectangular walk between the striking factories and the Jefferson Court Market where the girls were tried." The relocation also placed Max in closer activist proximity to the labor movement, at least to the degree that such an affiliation was possible with his responsibilities uptown at Columbia.[83]

The ripples of reform that moved through Manhattan's Greenwich Village, Lower East Side, and other downtown neighborhoods in the early twentieth century, though not always in affinity with radical politics, still ran after the sort of "vital experience" that Max sought to articulate in poetry and to explain with psychology and philosophy. Max and Crystal both rooted themselves at important centers of activism during their early years in the city, cultivating increasingly elaborate and meaningful personal lives while they pursued social change. In this, they enacted their mother's value of self-realization, pursuing individual fulfillment and social well-being as interrelated causes. For many of their generation, however, according to Christine Stansell, this search was stripped of religious significance for the middle- and upper-class

[83] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 320. Max also assigned importance to the relocation because it brought him into closer contact with a new romantic interest, the genteel suffragist and labor advocate Inez Milholland, who participated in the strike, and was arraigned and jailed on a few occasions at the Jefferson Market Court.

reformers who participated in urban reform movements. “Not the search for ‘God’ but the search for ‘life,’ not indwelling ‘grace’ but ‘experience’ shaped its imperatives, thereby separating its adherents from Christian do-gooders.”[84] Max claimed an identical sense of separation from avowedly religious activists in these years, and wore his agnosticism as a badge of worldliness. His language ran in the direction of “life” and “experience,” and away from the concepts of church and God. He held a much more ambiguous stance towards prayer, however, and, as evinced in his Cherith recitations and his later theory of poetry, retained a vocabulary of earthly wonder, “dwelling in mystery,” and “trances of realization.” The lessons promoted in his mother’s letters left indelible marks on Max’s notion of experience, even as he pressed towards new directions in his own pursuit of self-actualization.

During the months preceding Max’s marriage to Ida Rauh in May 1911, his philosophical and psychological studies gained broader reach and more direct application to the tumultuous social world in Greenwich Village. He began to read more broadly in the literatures of socialism and psychoanalysis. Before Ida, Max’s reading in socialism and class theory had been limited. At Glenora in 1908, Max drafted “a popularization of Veblen’s *Theory of the Leisure Class*, imagining that by explaining the standards of ‘conspicuous leisure’ and ‘conspicuous consumption’ more simply, I could persuade people to abandon them.”[85] Veblen, who had been a distant colleague of Dewey’s at Chicago, departed from Spencerian social Darwinism in his

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[84] Christine Stansell, *American Moderns: Bohemian New York and the Creation of a New Century*, 2nd ed. (2000; Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), 62. Stansell further avers, “Not in the first decades of the century or thereafter would these moderns go to church, pray, or even debate the existence of God; agnosticism was in the urban air they breathed,” (62). Having left aside both structural and functional expressions of religion, in her framing, “religion” was extinct in the Greenwich Village bohemia.

[85] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 293.

insistence that the human economic motive did not stand in isolation from other impulses.[86] But Veblen's economics stopped short of advocating rapid social change, let alone socialist revolution.

By the beginning of 1911, Max was ripe for conversion to revolution. Though he had cultivated "an agnostic, antipatriotic, and extreme rationalism," he was still "in political matters far from a 'wild radical.'" Political moderation frustrated his desire to foster "a kind of pastoral utopia where people would be…more given to dwelling in truth and reality." In this, he "had felt a duty to do something in the cause of this utopia, 'to turn minister or reformer.'"[87] One night during the winter of 1910–1911, riding the Cortlandt Street elevated train home from "one of those Collectivist Dinners at Kalil's Restaurant," Ida introduced Max to the class critique of Karl Marx, and set him on a course for revolution that would hold steady until the early 1930s. The conversation they shared on their ride uptown became a pivot around which Max's thought would rotate. He recalled that "My impulse toward an extreme social ideal and my obstructing sense of the hard facts of human nature were reconciled in a flash by this Marxian idea of enlightened class struggle toward socialism."[88] As Nickle explains, "science and idealism were at last brought together in the cause of remaking the world."[89]

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[86] Menand, 306. Menand suggests a conceptual similarity between the motive behind Dewey's instrumentalist claim that thought does not superordinate action and Veblen's notion of conspicuous consumption, which would have framed philosophy as a demonstration that "we can afford not to work with our hands," (330).

[87] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 353–354.

[88] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 355.

[89] Nickle, 40.

In this, Rauh introduced Eastman to the Village's local interpretation of Marxism, which, according to Gilbert, sparked a "feeling that science could bear the observer to the heart of a problem, and particularly a social problem."[90] Indeed, the conversion-like quality of Max's exposure to Marx through Ida has become a common interpretive trope in studies of Eastman's radicalism. John Waite writes that "The inner turmoil of long years of conflict with atheism, rationalism and other discontents came to a focus for Eastman with the belief that socialism offered a method through which to work with the tools of science for a better world."[91] Even though encounters with Rauh and Village radicals shaped Max's reception of Marx most forcefully, this perspective took its earliest form through correspondence and conversation with his mother and intellectual confidante.

If Max encountered Marx for the first time on a late-night Manhattan train ride, he had previously contemplated socialist political theory in connection with his mother. As Max read Veblen, and eventually Marx and Nietzsche, and drew connections between notions of individual experience, social class, and politics, Annis Eastman puzzled through her continued reliance upon mental healing and exposure to new theories about socialism, religion, and politics. While Max visited Annis in Elmira during June 1909, she recalled attending a political debate with him during which "the socialist doctrines were never made so clear to me before."[92] Later that summer, she returned to the Harvard Summer School of Theology. The theme for the 1909 session had been announced as "Present Religious Conditions and Prospects," and its lectures

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[90] Gilbert, *Writers and Partisans*, 24.

[91] Waite, 16.

[92] Annis Ford Eastman to Crystal Eastman, June 8, 1909; folder 160, Crystal Eastman Papers.

addressed topics ranging from evolutionary theory and psychotherapy to "causes of variation in religious interest."[93]

To Annis Eastman, the lectures shared in common the fact that "the note of socialism or social consciousness is strangely masked." More significantly, Annis pondered whether socialism might offer a functionalist replacement for religion: "[T]he old ideas in them [religions] are no longer existent. Yet the 'social consciousness' of which they almost all speak has its 'scriptures.' Karl Marx's writings are its Bible to many—and I suppose it has sacred places and times [tho'] maybe humanity is its sanctuary!" The socialist tinge to the lectures seemed dizzying to Annis, and she wished that Crystal or Max were present to help untangle them with her. "One man says…[t]he principle of individualism in Protestantism has destroyed itself. …The economist who is lecturing on the Labor movement and religion says that the labor movement is the most religious thing we have, for they have enthusiasm, devotion, and vision—but he is no socialist." If religions as humans had known them stood on the verge of disappearance, was political-economic theory really a suitable replacement?[94] Eastman was unsure of how to assess new theories of economics and politics.

Perhaps a means of resisting the notion of religion's potential eclipse by politics, Annis articulated something like a liberal Protestant Sabbatarianism. Writing from the Breck's estate in Newton, Massachusetts, she mused to Crystal, "I do not enjoy the Sunday entirely given over to

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[93] "Harvard Summer School of Theology," *Harvard Theological Review* 2, no. 2 (April 1909): back matter.

[94] Annis Ford Eastman to Crystal Eastman, July 13, 1909; folder 160, Crystal Eastman Papers.

pleasuring. The need of something corresponding to worship still lives in me."[95] Newly exposed to the range of socialist ideologies and organizing principles, Annis confirmed her own affinity with Christian practices.

The Men's League and Marriage

While Max and Annis Eastman continued their long conversation in letters over the role and definition of religion and morality, and the fine details of pursuing a literary and activist life, the last great movement in which they combined their efforts was pro-suffrage agitation. Through an accident of audacity, Max had begun to organize the Men's League for Woman Suffrage in the spring of 1909, and by the fall of that year he had enlisted Annis's assistance in recruiting members and running the organization. When she was in Greenwich Village to see the psychoanalyst A. A. Brill in November 1909, Max "put her to work with envelopes and addresses right in the same room with me while I was reading philosophy and revising a long essay on Plato. We never had more fun together."[96] Max continued his mother's suffrage legacy in the years when she proved too ill to maintain her own lecturing schedule, and carried it forward after her death in October 1910.

Anna Howard Shaw, who had assumed the NAWSA presidency after Anthony's death in 1906, persuaded Oswald Garrison Villard to support the formation of a pro-suffrage men's association, under the condition that it be organized and run by someone else. "This was done by Mr. Eastman, who, armed with letters of introduction by Mr. Villard, succeeded in getting the names of twelve men of civic influence. Using these names he sent out several thousand letters

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[95] Annis Ford Eastman to Crystal Eastman, July 13, 1909; folder160, Crystal Eastman Papers.

[96] *Enjoyment of Living*, 317–318. The Plato essay ended up being his doctoral thesis, and the kernel of *Enjoyment of Poetry*.

to such men over the State and finally obtained twenty-five members."[97] Annis helped stuff the envelopes.

In the last two years of her life, Annis Eastman's political imagination thrived, envisioning a spiritual element behind debates in New York State's legislature:

> There is to be a great hearing at Albany this week with Anna Shaw and other splendid speakers … and a mass meeting in the Assembly Chamber in the evening. I'd love to be in it! Maybe I shall vote before I die. Can't you feel that Susan B. Anthony is in all this new movement over the whole world? I'm sure death meant an enlarged consciousness to her; her soul goes marching on with the women she fought and bled for![98]

Just as Max organized the Men's League, it seemed possible that suffrage would be realized in New York. Though women would not gain the vote in New York until 1917, Annis was reassured by Max's conviction that the movement constituted "the big fight for freedom in my time."[99]

With the Men's League established, Max actively took up the work of promoting its cause. In early 1910, he toured New York State with his mother's longtime associate Anna Howard Shaw and the wealthy Alva Belmont.[100] Hearing of her son's success in speaking beside the two eminent women, Annis still felt disappointment at her daughter's distance from direct suffrage work: "It is idle to tell you all the praise I heard for you yesterday at Mr. Billings' party.

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[97] Ida Husted Harper, ed., *History of Woman* Suffrage, vo. 6 (New York: J. J. Little & Ives, 1922), 484–485. The League was announced in "Male Suffragettes Now in the Field," *New York Times*, May 21, 1909.

[98] Annis Ford Eastman to Max Eastman, February 21, 1909; box 9, folder 34, Eastman MSS I.

[99] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 306.

[100] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 403. Belmont had provided substantial support to the shirtwaist strike earlier that winter, renting the Hippodrome theater, where Shaw spoke in support of the strike. See Ellen Carol DuBois, *Harriot Stanton Blatch and the Winning of Woman Suffrage* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 116.

…But I am more and more saddened by the fact that there is no woman to stand on your level, no Mrs. Parkhurst or Mrs. Snowden, logical, fair, and yet a woman. I almost wish that Crystal had devoted herself to the suffrage cause, but yet, in the end she will do more where she is."[101]

As had been the case with Annis Eastman's gender-reform rhetoric, Max's pro-suffrage oratory placed the realization of individual identity at its center. Also like his mother, Max took the occasional jab at Christianity's compliance in women's subordination. Speaking to a crowd in Rochester, he singled out John Wesley, who had "advised his wife to 'be content to be a simple, insignificant creature, known and loved by God and me," an instruction that Eastman labeled as "morbid" and outdated. "All of the sentiments which confine woman to her so-called sphere…form part of an inheritance that we ought to get rid of just as quickly as possible."[102]

Continuing on the lecture tour, at Cornell University Max drew a powerful connection between the shirtwaist strikers and their need for the ballot. Quoted in the *Ithaca Daily News*, Eastman remarked,

> This is the sum of my argument: Those suffering shirtwaist-makers in New York who fought a fight for a chance to live decently and found pitted against them in that fight the executives and magistrates of a so-called democratic government, make you vividly aware of the need for citizenship of millions of women less happily situated than you. Against the argument for their need, what reason have you for denying them that citizenship?[103]

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[101] Annis Ford Eastman to Max Eastman, February 13, 1910; box 9, folder 35, Eastman MSS I.

[102] "Woman Suffrage as Man Sees It," *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, January 14, 1911. This sentence, in particular, echoed arguments presented by Annis Eastman in her 1899 lecture, "The Twentieth Century Mother," cited in chapter 3, above.

[103] "Man Who Upholds Votes for Women," *Ithaca Daily News*, February 15, 1910, evening ed.

The shirtwaist strike caused more than activist consternation for Max. His girlfriend at the time, Inez Milholland, had been arrested and was being kept for trial at the Jefferson Market Court. The pressures of his multiple interests multiplied, as he wrote to Annis:

> Dearest,
>
> How to combine being in love, and earning my living, and taking a Ph.D., and running a reform society, with the fulfillment of the desires of filial love is quite a problem, especially when your lady-love is spending part of the time in jail. (gaol?)[104]

The first months of 1910 portended more grief for Max than graduate school and girlfriends. In mid-January, Annis underwent surgery and convalesced at Elmira's Arnot Ogden Hospital.[105] Then, in April, Mark Twain died, who had been a dear figure from Max's childhood at the Park Church. Annis, who had still not recovered from her illness, had written the author's eulogy, but Samuel delivered it in her place while she remained in bed. Max's reaction, written to his mother, indicates the character of his vision of social transformation as conceived in 1910:

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[104] Max Eastman to Annis Ford Eastman, postmarked January 21, 1910; box 10, folder 10, Eastman MSS I. In this letter, Max also reported that Dewey and Woodbridge had approved a dissertation topic on Plato. The letters Annis and Max exchanged in January 1910 also discussed writing methods, and lend perspective on their shared projects of developing careers as writers and intellectuals. Max wrote that "The *North American* say they will take another on the shirt-waist strike & suffrage, & so I have to submit it by the 5th of Feb. I got some surprising blarney down there. … I'll stay in bed tomorrow, just as tho' I were sick, and then write the essay. I always get thoughts when I'm sick, and want to be literary. I believe that's an idea that will revolutionize my life! It's the way to do—rest your body, & let your wheels buzz! It popped into my head, I don't know where from or why. It'll solve a stiff problem perhaps, for I haven't been able to write a word lately, all the life of me going into the joys and sorrows of youth in love." Max Eastman to Annis Ford Eastman, January 27, 1910; box 10, folder 10, Eastman MSS I. Annis replied, "I have the same experience about lying in bed only in my case it takes a low fever to make the wheels really buzz. I haven't had any 'afflatus' this time to speak of. But Mark Twain has written some of his very best things in bed, you know. Tell me how it works when premeditated. Do you mean to <u>write</u> in bed or just think? All of my good things, like the Making of a Woman Min. were <u>thought</u> in bed, usually after party. What a wonderful tonic blarney is! Now do send out a big batch of works so you'll be rich next summer!" Annis Ford Eastman to Max Eastman, January 28, 1910; box 9, folder 35, Eastman MSS I.

[105] Annis Ford Eastman to Max Eastman, January 18, 1910; box 9, folder 35, Eastman MSS I.

> Nobody I loved that way ever died before. Besides, I think of him as the last of those four great Americans—Emerson, Lincoln, Whitman, Mark Twain, and I don't believe I will always be so much alone in thinking so as maybe I am now. I feel as if we were coming to a time when there aren't going to be any great individuals because everybody that's good has got to spend all his time having '"social consciousness."[106]

Max's pro-suffrage reform work has occupied the attention that he had previously devoted to his poetry and philosophy, and threatened to overtake his pursuit of self-development. Later that year, however, he would suffer the greatest loss of his life up to that time.

In the late hours of an early autumn evening in 1910, Max and Crystal received a devastating long-distance telephone call from Elmira. Their mother had collapsed from a stroke. When they arrived at their parents' home, she remained unconscious. Annis struggled in this state for two continuous days, her breathing "loud and raucous and resistless as the detonations of an airplane motor." To Max, his mother's efforts at regaining breath illustrated her vitality: "Her mind's everlasting thirst of experience must have reflected a highly dynamic conjunction of physical forces. In the last year of her life, … she had learned to swim, had begun to speak without a manuscript, had gone to Dr. Brill, the first psychoanalyst to open an office in America, and had decided to leave the church."[107]

Even in death, Annis Eastman proved a resolute reform activist. She left the somewhat scandalous instruction that her body be cremated. Through her decades of ministry, Eastman had overseen more than a sufficient number of funerals to know that she detested the display of bodies after death. To her, this represented a violation of the deceased person's will and sense of social propriety. Writing in an unpublished sermon, she explained, "Why—indeed—should the

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[106] Max Eastman to Annis Ford Eastman, April 28, 1910; box 10, folder 12, Eastman MSS I.

[107] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 344.

worn and wasted body be put on exhibition in our best room, when the spirit is no longer able to protest against the outrage? Would we at any time have allowed a chance acquaintance to gaze upon us in sleep?"[108] In Max's recollection, Annis "had many times expressed a wish that her dead body be burned and disposed of as useless, and no fuss made about it. We all agreed with her and we obeyed her wish." Annis's ashes were spread beside the grave of her son, Morgan, in Canandaigua. [109]

During the weeks following his mother's passing, Max carried on the drudgery of the Men's League without her. Annis Eastman had contributed a vital presence in his life, extended as much of herself as she could through letters. Max reflected that, in her correspondence, his mother "had been pouring a stream of zest and vitality into my languid nerves."[110] Without that vital source, he continued to speak on suffrage platforms into the middle years of the decade.

The months and years immediately following his mother's death functioned as a crucial period of transition for Max. In this time, while he continued to deliver regular pro-suffrage lectures, he directed his attention to other interests. Early in 1911, Max left his position at Columbia in order to focus attention on his authorship of *Enjoyment of Poetry*. Then, in May

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[108] Annis Ford Eastman, "Our Funeral Customs," 3–4, 1910 [dated in Max Eastman's hand], Eastman MSS II. Eastman's cremation brooked enough controversy to receive an airing in the local press: *Elmira Telegram*, October 30, 1910, referencing Willard's support of cremation. Stephen Prothero interprets the practice of cremation in Prothero, *Purified by Fire: A History of Cremation in America*.

[109] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 345. After Annis Eastman's death, numerous tributes were offered in her memory. The Park Church named a Sunday School class in her honor and erected cottage named for her in Madurai, India as a residence for furloughed missionaries. *Elmira Telegram*, June 13, 1915. When Oswego, New York, became the first town in that state to grant women the vote, the local newspaper boasted that Eastman had spoken there. *Oswego Daily Palladium*, June 21, 1913.

[110] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 349.

1911, he married Ida Rauh. By their marriage, Max and Ida scandalized the press in Manhattan and Elmira when she chose not to take Max's surname. A Syracuse news report from December 1911 quoted Max's explanation for their decision in generic terms: "I do not want to absorb her identity in mine. I want her to be entirely independent of me in every way—to be as free as she was before we married." Ida, on the other hand, offered a critique of marriage that Annis would likely have found agreeable:

> All marriages these days are trial marriages. …Everything one does in life is an experiment. Our marriage, however, was not a trial marriage with a feature of a time limit. We have no theories about marriage. …We simply think for ourselves and live naturally. If women could have this freedom in marriage it would raise the standard of marriage. If only marriage should be robbed of the idea of support, of commercialism, of gratitude, it would mean a wonderful advance in its status. I think marriage is merely a legal status. Most thinking people consider it so, I believe. There may be some who still feel that it is a sacrament but the idea is passing away.[111]

If Annis's death and his return to poetry shifted Max's attention away from the Men's League, critical reactions to his marriage renewed his interest for a time, so that he gained a reputation as "the foremost speaker on this question now before the public."[112] In the arguments he advanced in support of suffrage, Max emphasized something like his mother's notion of self-realization. Speaking at Brooklyn's Holy Trinity Church in 1912, Max addressed the topic of "Woman in Politics," and grounded his claims in relation to citizenship: "Full citizenship would be a stimulant to the women; it would be the greatest thing to wake them up, to make them discontented with their condition after they get the ballot. …It would give them knowledge and

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[111] "Is Still a 'Miss,'" *Syracuse Herald*, December 2, 1911, evening ed. Max discussed the scandal in *Enjoyment of Living*, 379–383.

[112] "Votes for Women—Why Not?" *Rome Daily Sentinel* (Rome , NY), January 3, 1912, evening ed.

experience; they haven't them now and never will have until they become citizens."[113] Not merely arguing for women's participation in elections or policy-making, Eastman asserted the value of civic participation as a means of self-cultivation and action. For Max, the link between individual fulfillment and social improvement, promoted so strenuously in his mother's career, seemed obvious and necessary in modern political activism.

In his work for the Men's League, Max attempted a range of methods for popularizing pro-suffrage sentiment. In September 1912, he rented a Vaudeville theatre in Manhattan and, with six of his Men's League colleagues, delivered a suffrage lecture to the masses. Eastman failed to win over those in the audience who had paid to enjoy mid-day amusements, and his remarks quickly emptied the hall.[114]

While Max's participation in the women's movement reveals his roots in reform causes, and demonstrates the extent to which Annis Eastman informed his early political consciousness, his work for the Men's League holds further significance, in that it brought Max to the attention of *The Masses* editors. Cartoonist Art Young had read Max's history of the Men's League, printed in *The Woman Voter*, to the editorial board, who asked Young to contact Eastman. Even more, after assuming editorship, Max's suffrage connections provided the initial funding to keep the magazine running during the immediate months after he assumed editorship, through a pledge of two thousand dollars from Alva Belmont.[115]

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[113] "Conference Discusses the Woman in Politics," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, February 12, 1912.

[114] "None Braver than These: Six Men Face Vaudeville Audience for Suffragettes," *New York Tribune*, September 11, 1912.

[115] "Thus our super-revolutionary magazine owed its send-off to a leader of New York's 400—to the fortune of old Public-be-Damned Vanderbilt." Belmont was married to William K. Vanderbilt. Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 404. Not only this, but after taking on *The*

Poetry and Revolution

By the late spring of 1912, as Max put the finishing touches on *Enjoyment of Poetry*, he had sunk himself directly into the center of U.S. socialist politics. The May 29, 1912 edition of the *New York Call* published a letter to the editor that Max sent from the Waterford, Connecticut, seaside farmhouse that he and Ida had rented for the summer. Addressing the infamous divide within American socialism, as to whether or not violent means should be employed in pursuit of revolution, Eastman stood on the side of sabotage. In the upper-right corner of a typescript of the letter, Max noted that the piece represented "my first political foray."[116]

During the autumn of 1912 and winter of 1912–1913, Max decided to pursue active participation in the socialist movement by finding part-time employment in one of its causes. *The Masses*, which he joined in time to edit the December 1912 issue, offered a chance to engage in lively social critique through is "earthy wisecracking radicalism."[117] As he undertook work on the magazine, Max sought to balance his interests in poetry and revolution, and, despite strong initial skepticism, he became increasingly convinced that *The Masses* would allow him to do so.

Enjoyment of Poetry, published in 1913, culminated Max's thought about poetry, psychology, and experience as it had developed since 1904. His previous work in "The Poet's Mind" connected poetry with Max's studies of mental healing, psychology, pragmatism, and

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Masses, Max's participation with the League remained attached to his reputation around New York, so that in a 1913 letter to the editor, Everett P. Wheeler criticized Eastman and *The Masses*—which he labeled as "a suffragist and Socialist paper"—contributors as "suffragist dyspeptics." "Dyspeptic Suffragists," *New York Times*, December 28, 1913.

[116] Max Eastman, "The Question of Sabotage," TS, 1912, box 1, folder 13, Eastman MSS I. Also see *Enjoyment of Living*, 387.

[117] Gilman M. Ostrander, *American Civilization in the First Machine Age: 1890–1940* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), 181.

aesthetics. Another essay, "Walt Whitman's Art," examined that poet's moral expressiveness. Drafted at Glenora during the summer of 1908, immediately before Max commenced doctoral study, the Whitman essay prefigured themes from *Enjoyment of Poetry* and represented Max's "own theory of poetry and my attitude to life."[118] In this text, Eastman explained that "Poetry exploits in language the concrete world, and therefore leads beyond itself."[119] Through its linking of experience to meaning, poetry offered a means of uniting the self and world. Eastman sought to "[regard] Whitman's art as an effort to communicate experience to the imagination," "to make the world reappear in his pages."[120] Poetry's method for enabling such communication resembled psychological suggestion: "Prose is telling people what you have in mind, poetry is putting it into their minds."[121] In this way, Max infused his literary criticism and aesthetic philosophy with psychological insights gained during his treatments at Kingston and Bethel. Suggestion presented not only a means for mental health, but predicated the pragmatic value of poetic expression. In his assessment of Whitman's approach to poetry, Eastman established an initial ground from which he elaborated a fully systematic theory of poetic language in *Enjoyment of Poetry*.

That 1913 work can be read as a purely literary statement, a critique of the mechanics and pedagogy of poetry in the early twentieth century.[122] But in its theory of poetry, *Enjoyment of*

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[118] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living*, 293. Max Eastman, "Walt Whitman's Art," n.d., marked "Dept. of Philosophy, Columbia University," [1908], box 1, folder 23, Eastman MSS II.

[119] Max Eastman, "Walt Whitman's Art," 30.

[120] Ibid., 32.

[121] Ibid., 36.

[122] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Poetry* (New York: Scribner's, 1913). Literary historian John Timberman Newcomb has recently identified this work as having "garnered substantial

Poetry articulates a total philosophy of experience, meaning, and connection between individuals and society. Conceived during summers at Cherith, then refined at Columbia and in pro-suffrage activism, the book breathes in the language of Eastman's proximity to religious liberalism, philosophical pragmatism, and reform activism—especially in its construction of individual realization—and exhales a poetics of action in which the individual influences social transformation. In essence, *Enjoyment of Poetry* presents a translation of Annis Eastman's concept of self-realization in terms of Max Eastman's agnostic aesthetics. Full of the language of realization—the word appears on more than eighty occasions in the text—*Enjoyment of Poetry* reveals hints and traces of the romantic–evolutionary self as Annis Eastman encountered it at Oberlin.

Eastman's preface revealed the impact of psychology and pragmatism on his understanding of poetry and the teaching of poetry:

> [T]he academic world will some day…cast about for a real science which they may teach to those who are going to read literature to the young. That science will be psychology in its widest sense. For psychology is a knowledge that is general without being merely formal. It will reveal and explain, not the scholastic conventions about literary structure, nor the verbiage of commentators, but the substantial values that are common to the material of all literature.[123]

In this, Eastman emphasized one of the primary interventions he wished to make in the study of literature. Poetry, in his estimation, is not constituted by formulas and conventions, but by the expression of value and experience. Without effective expression, poetry lacked purpose. The

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sales and positive reviews in genteel venues and briefly made Eastman into an icon of renascent romantic sensibility." This put Eastman in a "curiously retrograde position in the modern avant-garde." John Timberman Newcomb, *How Did Poetry Survive?* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012), 59. Also see Lisa Szefel, *The Gospel of Beauty in the Progressive Era: Reforming American Verse and Values* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 187–216.

[123] *Enjoyment of Poetry*, vi–vii.

germ of poetry is in its capacity "to separate names from their objects, and round them into lyrical shape, and make them a new object." Defining poetry in this way allowed Eastman to call out "the poetic in everyday talk" by "giving to any object, or thought, or event, or feeling, the name that makes its nature shine forth to you." In the realization of individual perception of each of these aspects, Eastman sought to cultivate universal attentiveness to poetry as a means of self-actualization.[124] More concretely, the use of poetry, both in its composition and in its recitation, comprised a method for realization, realization of the self but also realization of other phenomena, such as the qualities of an object or the experiences of another individual.

In the act of specifying names, poetry made everyday life intelligible: "[the poet, or the namer] will say that the clouds are *like pop-corn*, and every one will pause and look up at the sky with pleasure. …A boy *gets jumped on* by the teacher; a girl is as *gay as a merry-go-round*. These are all, in their various ways, utterances of the poet among us, increasing our taste of the reality by selective comparison."[125] Where, earlier, Max observed transcendent meaning emerging from formal cultural expressions like Augustus Saint-Gaudens's statue of Lincoln, here, the all-important "utterances of the poet" would arise from everyday people engaging in everyday expression. One could convey his or her own direct experience of an object or action—their own "taste of life"— to others through poetic naming. In this, Eastman differentiated between formal expression and lived expression, corresponding to the "poetry of language" and the "poetry of life."[126]

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[124] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Poetry*, 29.

[125] Ibid., 56. Eastman explored the notion of comparison in "To Reconsider the Association of Ideas," *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology, and Scientific Methods* 7, no. 6 (March 16, 1910): 155–158.

[126] Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Poetry*, 173.

Eschewing accepted social and cultural patterns, the "poetry of life," as opposed to "poetry of language," thrives through "a strong abiding in the present," rather than the ceaseless pursuit of future improvements. In this, Eastman's new poetics drew sustenance from ascertaining the "difference between the realization of being and the occupation of becoming." When one settles into the realization of being, one draws on the "power of lingering with energy." In the poetry of life, "the power of lingering, forgotten since the nursery picture-books were closed, returns, and these the picture-books of maturity grow vivid with the colors of life." Experience, as with any exponent of pragmatism, occupied the central place in such a poetics.[127] Max's notion of the poetry of life drew substantially from, and further elaborated, Annis's imperative that each individual deserved the opportunity to pursue their own maximal capacity for self-expression. By outlining the poetry of life, Max described a method for that sort of self-realization.

But the full effectiveness of close attention to experience-in-the-moment also requires a particular hermeneutics, something akin to "faith." In Max's estimation, "poetry is like religion in that it exists with glorious definition for those who have attained it, but for those who merely look upon it, there is little that appears." To experience and articulate the poetry of experience requires a sort of suspension of disbelief. It involves "a kind of submission to the magic that invests the poet." The special ability of the poet resided in the capacity for direction linking of individual experiences into collective contexts. In this way, poetry superseded religion for its directness, against dogmatism. "The poet, the restorer, is the prophet of a greater thing than faith.

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[127] Ibid., 173, 174, 175.

All creeds and theories serve him, for he goes behind them all, and imparts by a straighter line from his mind to yours the spirit of bounteous living."[128]

Ascertaining the full depth of experience involves entering into a "trance of realization" that allows the poetic aspect of life to "swing down into the most wretched lives or circumstances and illumine them." Such states of realization do not always occur spontaneously, however. The poetry of language can give rise to the poetry of life: "Thus the poetry of words may be regarded as a means toward the poetry of life. It is to that end practical."[129] Here, Eastman assigned literature and works of art a social purpose. In the poetry of language, a writer or painter possessed the ability to influence the poetry of the life by shaping the realizations reached by individuals as they experience the artist's poetic expression.

When published in 1913, *Enjoyment of Poetry* enjoyed a positive reception, especially among left–liberal intellectuals. The *New York Times* listed *Enjoyment of Poetry* under its "Hundred Best Books of the Year" for 1913.[130] Walter Lippman wrote to praise Max's work: "Over the philosophy which saturates it, I gurgled with delight. It is so clear a proof that the new temper of mind enriched whatever it approaches. The best of modern feeling is in this book."[131] And Jack London described Max as "fully sensitized to the poetic atmosphere, and show unerring taste in your convictions."[132] Among recent scholarship, Eastman's work stands as an artifact of ambiguity in indecisive reactions to modernist poetry, then emerging. Steven Biel

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[128] Ibid., 198.

[129] Ibid., 175, 196.

[130] *New York Times*, November 30, 1913.

[131] Walter Lippmann to Max Eastman, April 24, 1913; box 1, folder 14, Eastman MSS I.

[132] Jack London to Max Eastman, May 31, 1913; box 1, folder 14, Eastman MSS I.

argues that Eastman's interpretation of poetry amounted to a "[proclamation of] the inspirational capacity of art and criticism."[133] Where "[t]he process of writing itself was a suspension of action, …the moment of reflection tended inexorably toward renewed action because it resulted in an art capable of inspiring others."[134]

It is in this latter aspect that Max's theory of poetry marks significant points of contact between liberalism and radicalism. As cultural and political radicals sought to transform the contours of society through new forms of public power and new modes of expression, works like Eastman's *Enjoyment of Poetry* spoke to both the new values of art and politics then emerging, and to older ways of defining the human self and the relationship between individual and collective experience.

Conclusion

Max's writing on poetry comprised one half of what he understood as a two-sided commitment to poetry and revolution. In his commitment to poetic expression, Eastman reached back to the romantic–evolutionary idealism inherited from his mother, modulated through more recent encounters with pragmatism and psychology. In his growing dedication to revolution, Eastman reached forward, striving to dismantle and abandon what he perceived as an unjust and destructive political–economic system. Through the early period of his participation in American socialism, Max remained caught between these two commitments, never entirely favoring one over the other.

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[133] Steven Biel, *Independent Intellectuals in the United States, 1910–1945* (New York: New York University Press, 1992), 56.

[134] Biel, 56.

In his struggle to balance poetry and revolution—idealism and realism—Eastman moved back and forth across the seams that ran between liberalism and radicalism. His editorship of *The Masses* afforded an opportunity to manifest his dedication to experimental ideas, and to circulate that attitude through a wide network of subscribers. Seen concretely, Max supervised the relocation of the magazine's editorial office, signaling the magazine's antipathy for progressive reform and its growing affiliation with the radical subculture then burgeoning in the Village: *The Masses* moved from the American Tract Society's building at 150 Nassau Street, an iron-frame high-rise that once symbolized the clout of evangelicalism's benevolent empire, to 91 Greenwich Avenue, situated in the heart of New York's downtown bohemia.[135] Max also renovated the space between the covers of the magazine, altering its layout to reduce the prominence of advertising, and to present artistic, literary, and journalistic content as more centrally visual. "The effect was to liberate the writing and graphics from claustrophobic columns of exposition," writes Stansell. "The page breathed, functional, efficient, inviting—a space not to burrow into, as with the old paper, but to move about in, free-footedly, free-thoughtfully."[136] Max made room in the pages of *The Masses* for the realizations of the poetry of life.

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[135] The evangelical media practices that John Lardas Modern sees as making way for secular practices were exemplified by the activities of the American Tract Society, which vacated its 1895 skyscraper in 1914 due to foreclosure. *The Masses* masthead indicates the location of its editorial offices in the building, at 150 Nassau Street, until July 1913, when the 91 Greenwich Avenue location took its place. John Lardas Modern, "Evangelical Secularism and the Measure of Leviathan" *Church History* 77, no. 4 (December 2008): 801–876. Also see "American Tract Society Building Designation Report," New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, June 15, 1999, Designation List 306, LP-2038; and Stephen E. Slocum, "The American Tract Society, 1825–1975: An Evangelical Effort to Influence the Religious and Moral Life of the United States," Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1975.

[136] Stansell, *American Moderns*, 170.

Even more, standing behind his efforts as publisher, Eastman acknowledged the influence on his editorial writing of the ideas inherited from his mother. In Max's serial column, entitled "Knowledge and Revolution," for July 1913, he reflected that, "I rarely sit down to meditate these paragraphs [*sic*] that there does not float back to my mind the memory that I might have become a Christian minister." Annis's presence lingered in Max's editorial consciousness. Because he "was the son not of an orthodox minister but of a natural heretic," the selection of "a hortatory profession" had always been a possibility. And this tendency aligned Eastman's journalistic vocation with "the tacit assumption of idealistic people that by dint of preaching they could make men unnaturally 'good.'" In this way, Max sought both to identify aspects held in common between his style of criticism and that of his Christian adversaries, and to underscore differences between them: "We do not therefore hold ourselves to be either less or more idealistic than those who preach brotherhood as an artificial emotion and with no method for its achievement. We simply hold our idealism to be more scientific."[137]

In this, Max recognized that his radicalism comprised an alternative gospel to the forms of Christianity he knew, and that he was the preacher of this alternate good news. Indeed, Max's calendar brimmed with a dense schedule of public lectures from 1913 into the 1920s as he sought to advance the moral, political, and aesthetic causes embodied in *The Masses* and its successor publication, *The Liberator*. By 1914, even as Max's attention had begun to shift with full force away from suffrage and towards broader concerns of politics, labor, and class, Max carried with

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[137] Max Eastman, "Knowledge and Revolution: Concerning Idealism," *The Masses* 4, no. 10 (July 1913): 5. Max's repeated use of preaching metaphors and the sermon genre in announcing his political and cultural views evokes an 1861 review of an Emerson text, in which the reviewer noted that Emerson "in all these years has not ceased to preach. … Though his voice is no longer heard in Christian pulpits, yet what preaching can be more practical and evangelical than this?" Frederic Henry Hedge, quoted in Hutchison, *The Transcendentalist Ministers*, 192.

him the intellectual inheritance of a religious liberalism that envisioned individual realization and social well-being as intrinsically intertwined. Though he set Christianity aside, Max never relinquished such a conviction.

CONCLUSION

The opening sentence of Henry May's influential study *The End of American Innocence* offers a simple statement of the wide frame for this dissertation: "Everybody knows that at some point in the twentieth century America went through a cultural revolution." Variously explained in terms of the surpassing of genteel Victorianism by a rebellion of modernist sensibility, or of the displacement of a producer economy by flocks of well-trained consumers, or of ignorant religion's banishment by the triumphal, rational secular, it has proven easy to give pride of place to exaggeration when explaining this "cultural revolution." But May was sensitive to the subtlety of the early twentieth-century moment: "We do not have to choose between the two pictures of prewar America: the end of Victorian calm and the beginning of cultural revolution. Both of these pictures are true."[1]

It is this space of overlap, of simultaneity between disappearance and dawning, in which this dissertation finds its subject. Wedged in the interstices of social rupture, this study comprises an intimate consideration of one case of the transfer of influence from religious liberalism into forms of political and cultural radicalism around the turn of the century. Annis Ford Eastman and Max Eastman, the principal figures in this particular case of transfer, occupied an unstable yet fertile range of intermediary positions between liberalism and radicalism that variously overlapped and diverged as they negotiated the terms by which to arrange individual and collective experience.

As emphasized in the preceding chapters, the examples of Annis and Max Eastman help to reconcile forms of historical analysis that pose religious liberalism and left-wing political

[1] Henry F. May, *The End of American Innocence: A Study of the First Years of Our Own Time, 1912–1917*, new ed. (1959; New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), xxiii, xxv.

radicalism as incompatible and competing social orientations. By recovering Annis Eastman's literary, oratorical, and epistolary contributions, this dissertation underscores the value of her life and career for redirecting scholarly perceptions of a liberal–radical divide. Analysis of her life sheds new light on Max Eastman's early intellectual formation, already familiar to scholars, and provides abundant new detail to inform the historiography of women's religious leadership in the United States.

On the score of resolving the historiographical divide between liberalism and radicalism, the interactions between Annis and Max confirm new interpretations among scholars. Doug Rossinow, in particular, contributes the assessment that liberal reformers and left-wing revolutionaries occupied a continuous ideological and activist range in turn-of-the-century American politics. Rather than comprising opposite ideological camps, he argues, radicals and liberals together made up a "left–liberal tradition" that held sway from 1880 to 1940. "While radicals' rhetoric…often positioned them as sharp critics of contemporary political liberals," Rossinow writes, "in practice those on the left frequently did the work of liberalism, fighting for individual rights and lawful government as well as for the empowerment of 'the people.'"[2] Similar concerns motivated religious liberals in these years, as made evident in the renewal of historiographical interest in religious liberalism. Works by Hollinger, Fessenden, Schmidt and Promey, Wenger, and others uncover the political investments of liberal Protestants and other

[2] Rossinow, "Partners for Progress? Liberals and Radicals in the Long Twentieth Century," in *Making Sense of American Liberalism*, edited by Jonathan Bell and Timothy Stanley (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012), 23. Also see Doug Rossinow, V*isions of Progress: The Left-Liberal Tradition in America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 1–12.

religious actors in shaping turn-of-the-century American life.[3] Combining these historiographies, this dissertation illustrates some of the ways in which religious liberals and political radicals contributed substantially to one another's efforts to transform society.

Separated as they were by generational differences, Max and Annis Eastman cultivated intermediary sites between liberalism and radicalism, where the competing values of their divergent commitments informed one another in the production of distinct cultural, social, and political perspectives. In the exchanges that took place between them, we perceive evidence of change over time not merely in their personal relationship, but in the larger religious, social, and cultural phenomena that surrounded them. In that sweep of change, however, their interactions constituted a moving point of continuity, two sides joined along a shifting seam of transfer between proximate generational perspectives. Religious liberalism, pragmatic socialism, and feminist activism functioned as three especially important fulcrums around which their opinions shifted, and around which they helped to pivot public perception.

In particular, as shown in the chapters above, their language of realization provided a crucial conceptual bridge across which Annis and Max moved while they articulated new visions of experience and social relations. Rooted in the foundational elements of romantic and evolutionary idealism that commingled during the mid-nineteenth century, the concept of realization denoted the work of manifesting—of making real—the potentialities within each individual self. For Annis and Max, the freedom to fulfill individuality predicated society's

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[3] David A. Hollinger, *After Cloven Tongues of Fire: Protestant Liberalism in Modern American History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013); Tracy Fessenden, *Culture and Redemption: Religion, the Secular, and American Literature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007); Leigh E. Schmidt and Sally M. Promey, eds., *American Religious Liberalism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012); and Tisa Wenger, *We Have a Religion: The 1920s Pueblo Indian Dance Controversy and American Religious Freedom* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

optimal well-being. Thus, the concept of realization drove their efforts to leave behind what they understood to be problematic sources of authority and modes of behavior.

For Annis Eastman, *self*-realization constituted the major insight and value that animated her pursuit of personal and professional fulfillment, and that guided her social activism. Eastman developed her particular understanding of self-realization by combining insights from her education at Oberlin College with lessons learned from her experiences as a minister's wife, a mother, and eventually, as a member of the Congregational clergy. As a result of her professional ambition, Annis Eastman's notion of realization centered primarily around the social consequences of subject formation. Her pursuit of ordination as a woman transgressed social expectations of the performance of female gender. Despite this, she sensed her own capabilities for excelling professionally as a minister. Her decision to manifest those capabilities by taking up the work of ministry solidified the importance of self-realization in Eastman's thought as an imperative for social equality. Her own experience of pursuing self-realization led her to assert from the Chautauqua Assembly's lectern, that "the deeper meaning of the modern woman's demand for the franchise is but the expression of a desire…in the nature of woman to add to her sex relation to the world, a human relation."[4] In this declaration, Eastman announced a radical conviction, that gender held secondary significance in shaping identity.

Max Eastman built on, but moved past Annis's concept of self-realization. As he developed critiques of philosophy, art, and politics in his early writings, Max confronted obstacles that related less to his formation of identity than to his expression of experience. In the wake of his abandonment of Christianity, and as he gained new ways of understanding the mind

[4] Annis Ford Eastman, "Woman's Right," ca. 1909, manuscript, leaf 1, Crystal Eastman Papers, 82-M4, Folder 82, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.

through mental treatments and study of psychology, Eastman sought alternative terms through which to explain connections between experience and behavior. Thus, behind his concept of the "poetry of life," he developed the concept of *imaginative* realization. Under this concept, individuals held the capacity to make their distinct experiences intelligible to others by use of poetic forms in everyday encounters. The special power of poetic expression resided in its ability to convey this intangible aspect of identity, to allow humans to "realize" the experiences of others. In this process of realization, Max identified a ground on which to build interpersonal affinity. Imaginative realization presented a method for developing authentic social bonds, and served as the tissue that connected art and politics in his radical vision for social transformation. In his reliance on the language of realization, Max demonstrated that much of the content that formed his secular social vision derived from his mother's liberal religion.

Realization, however, did not denote total affinity between Annis's liberalism and Max's radicalism. As Max increasingly applied his aesthetic concept of the poetry of life to political concerns, he entertained a more thoroughly immanent construal of realization than Annis would have imagined. Especially as he elaborated an American form of communism in the decades after the 1917 Bolshevik uprising, Max left aside the spiritual character that animated his mother's concept of self-realization. Despite such departures, however, Annis and Max shared more similarities than differences in their style of relating individual experience and collective transformation. Theirs is a story about crossed boundaries between differing expressions of Christianity, between religious and secular cultures, between liberal reform and revolution, and between Victorian and modern mentalities.

This give-and-take between mother and son holds further implications for understanding the place of religion in modern American life. If historians have framed Max as a political and

cultural liberator, it is because they also have understood him as a secularizer, an agent of religion's disappearance in the wake of modernism's arrival. When viewed from the vantage of Annis Eastman's influence, however, Max's disjuncture with religion is rendered largely ambiguous. Much of the cultural and political criticism that he marshaled during the 1910s reflected the liberal religious impress of his mother's thought. If Max enacted secularization, he did so incompletely. Recent scholarship has reframed the question of secularization in ways that offer a better account for Annis and Max's rendering of religion. According to Taves and Bender, where classical secularization theory envisioned the progressive erasure of religion, more recent work has called for a "turn to secularism from secularization." This shift acknowledges the simultaneous presence of religion and the secular in the modern era, rather than the displacement of the former by the latter. In this scheme, secularism can be described as "an identifiable set of projects that takes place historically (and contemporarily) in relation to something called religion—a 'something' that it has a large hand in defining and reframing 'secularism.'"[5] As Max left Christianity aside, the projects he undertook outlined sources of authority and meaning that played out alongside, not over top of religion. And as Annis tinkered with mental therapies and new terms for identity, her Christian theologies edged nearer to emerging secular forms. Between Annis and Max, the value of realization remained intelligible in both religious and secular frames, and functioned as a threshold for the projects of social change and personal development that they contemplated.

In our present moment, as demographers uncover a growing segment of religiously unaffiliated Americans, the boundary explorations undertaken by the Eastmans offer a point of

[5] Ann Taves and Courtney Bender, "Introduction: Things of Value," in *What Matters? Ethnographies of Value in a Not So Secular Age*, ed. Bender and Taves (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 5.

comparison by which to consider present-day dynamics. Their movement in and out of Christianity helps to historicize the complexity of religious identification in the United States in the face of Christianity's changing relation to public authority.[6] The mediations between Christianity and secularism exemplified by Annis Eastman and her son in the early years of the twentieth century merit further consideration as scholars work to explain the role of religion in modern America.

Annis and Max's tentative demarcations proved not always to remain stable, and seem sometimes to have moved along lines not always intended by those who set them. Despite his strenuous assertions of lacking religion, Max couldn't help but return to his father's sermons or his mother's prayerful letters. Even though she insisted on her preference for Sunday worship into the last year of her life, Annis found her pulpit dull but the analyst's couch gripping. Even as the Eastmans stood on opposite sides of May's cultural revolution, they also occupied a middle ground in which the terms of that revolution continually tumbled and churned. In this space, in the ground that stretched between Chautauqua and Washington Square, Annis and Max planted anchors of identity as they articulated a language of realization for individual and community.

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[6] Since 2008, the Pew Research Center has documented the growing number of adults who claim no religious affiliation as a new demographic category among Americans—frequently referred to as "the nones"—comprising nearly 20% of the population of U.S. adults. See Luis Lugo, et al., "'Nones' on the Rise: One-in-Five Adults Have No Religious Affiliation," (Pew Research Center: October 9, 2012), http://www.pewforum.org/files/2012/10/NonesOnTheRise-full.pdf; and Luis Lugo, et al., *U.S. Religious Landscape Survey* (Pew Research Center: February 2008), http://www.pewforum.org/files/2013/05/report-religious-landscape-study-full.pdf. The 2015 report of Pew's U.S. Religious Landscape Survey includes a stark assessment: "Once an overwhelmingly Protestant nation, the U.S. no longer has a Protestant majority," (20). See Alan Cooperman, et al., *America's Changing Religious Landscape* (Pew Research Center: May 12, 2015), http://www.pewforum.org/files/2015/05/RLS-05-08-full-report.pdf.

Figure 1. Mary Drake, depicted with her horse, Fanny, helped to resolve Annis Eastman's anxiety over gendered constructions of a preaching vocation. In M. E. Drake, *Fanny's Autobiography: A Story of Home Missionary Life on the Frontier* (Boston: Congregational Sunday-School and Publishing Society, 1894), frontispiece.

Figure 2. Annis Ford Eastman, depicted in the lower-right corner of this newspaper illustration alongside Anna Howard Shaw, Augusta Chapin, and eight other clergywomen, was considered among the most prominent ordained women of the 1890s. *Cold Springs Recorder* (Cold Springs, NY), October 21, 1898.

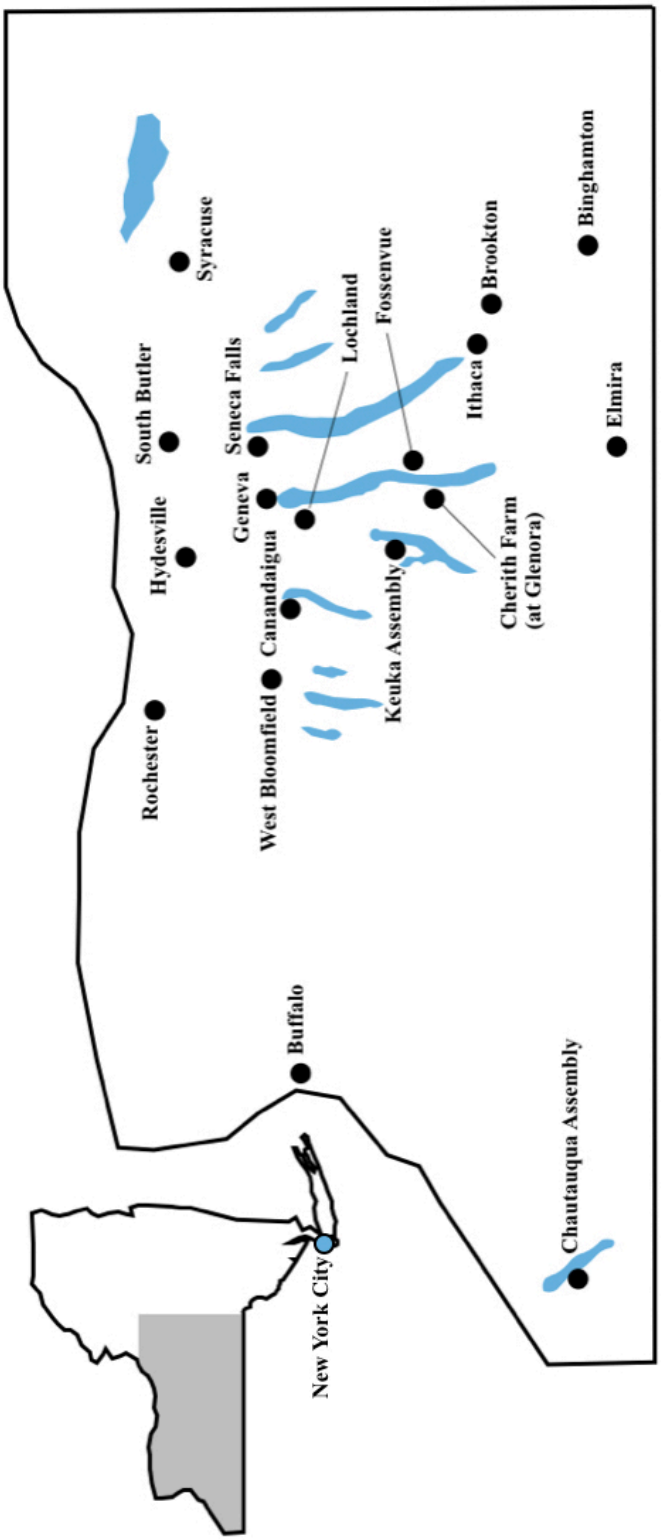

Figure 3. Significant locations in New York State for the career of Annis Ford Eastman.

Figure 4. West Bloomfield Congregational Church. In *Historical Papers Read at the Centennial of the Congregational Church of West Bloomfield, N.Y.* (Canandaigua, NY: Ontario County Times Printing House, 1899), frontispiece.

Figure 5. The Park Church in Elmira, NY. Postcard, 1909. Collection of the author.

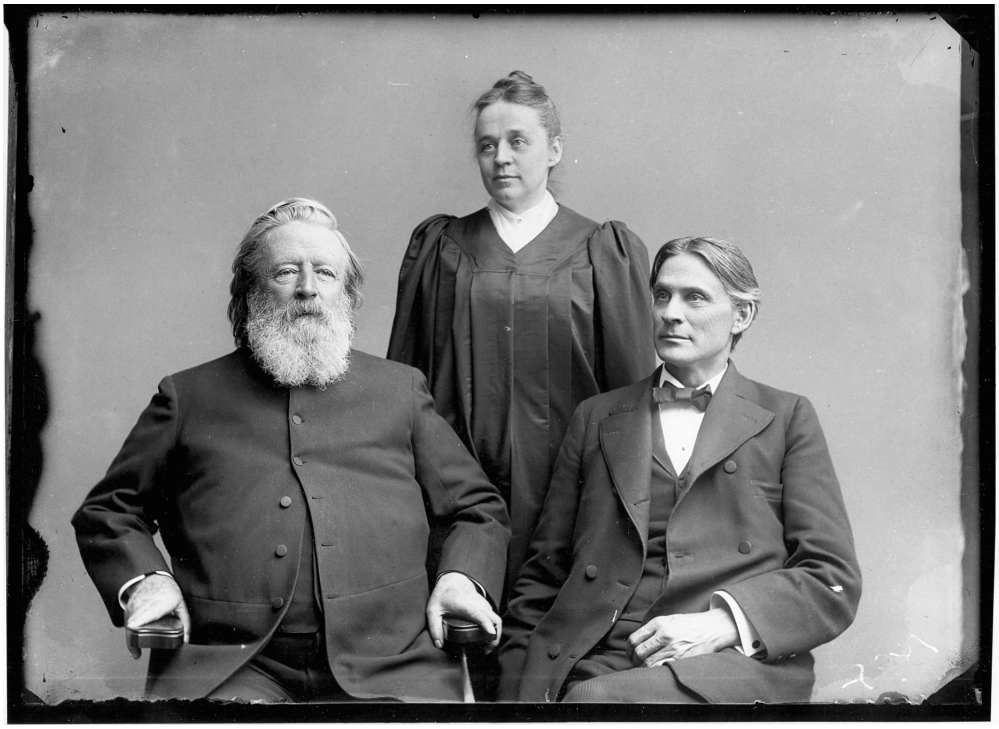

Figure 6. Thomas K. Beecher, Annis Ford Eastman, and Samuel E. Eastman. CL 16, Van Aken Glass Plate Negative Collection. Box VA; Album 2b. Booth Library, Chemung County Historical Society, Elmira, NY.

Figure 7. Interior of the Park Church auditorium. CL 16, Van Aken Glass Plate Negative Collection. Box VA; Album 2a. Booth Library, Chemung County Historical Society, Elmira, NY.

Figure 8. Annis Ford Eastman depicted in "Woman and Home," *Daily Star* (Sandusky, OH) Jan. 8, 1901.

Figure 9. Annis Ford Eastman depicted in "Ministry as Field for College Girls," *Binghamton Press* (NY) Dec. 5, 1905.

Figure 10. Annis Ford Eastman depicted in J. W. Hanson, ed., *The World's Congress of Religions* (Chicago: International Pub., 1894), before p. 571.

Figure 11. Annis Ford Eastman. CL 16, Van Aken Glass Plate Negative Collection. Booth Library, Chemung County Historical Society, Elmira, NY.

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