SCHOOL-TIME FOR GIRLS: THE DEPICTION OF FEMALE EDUCATION IN LATE NINETEENTH-CENTURY AMERICAN SCHOOL STORIES

by

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For my parents and Patrick

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

Author: Biesiada, Brittany, A. PhD
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Title: School-Time for Girls: The Depiction of Female Education in Late Nineteenth-Century American School Stories
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This dissertation defines the literary genre of the American school story for girls from approximately 1845 to 1910. While recent critical studies have examined the American common school story or the women's college novel, no scholar has surveyed the genre of American school stories for girls in the second half of the nineteenth century. Instead, the British school story tradition, such as the *Tom Brown's School Days* series and twentieth-century girls' boarding school stories such as those by Angela Brazil, has overshadowed the American genre. I also argue that the study of the girl's book has focused on domestic (family) stories over the school story. By defining the American school story for girls, this project fills a critical gap and argues for how the school story is an important subgenre of the girl's book that depicts the nineteenth-century girl in an educational environment with new personal and professional opportunities.

The first half of the dissertation provides a genre and historical overview, while the second half consists of case studies of specific educational sites and types of experience. The first chapter provides a guiding definition of the school story and examines its subgenres. I split the school story into the following subgenres: the common story school, the seminary or boarding school story, and the college novel, and describe their common tropes and characters. The second chapter details the history of American women's education and provides relevant examples of fictional school depictions. In chapter three, I analyze girls' seminary (boarding school) schools including *The Boarding-School Girl* (1848) by Louisa C. Tuthill, *Hester Stanley at St. Mark's* (1882) by Harriet Prescott Spofford, and *Betty Baird* (1906) by Anna Hamlin Weikel. This chapter argues for the religious, personal, and professional goals that motivated the girl characters to attend school, and how the fiction depicted society's expectations for these girls. Finally, chapter four examines three Vassar-focused college novels, specifically the first two

books in *The Three Vassar Girls* series (1883-1892) by Elizabeth W. Champney and Julia A. Schwartz's *Elinor's College Career* (1906), to argue that the college experience created networks to help further the lives of women, while also working to maintain homogeneity.

INTRODUCTION

The rural, often red, schoolhouse is an emblematic image of nineteenth-century life, the setting for many children's daily lives:

> The little schoolhouse with its flagpole on top and its two doors in front, one for boys and the other for girls, stood on the crest of a hill, with rolling fields and meadows on one side, a stretch of pine woods on the other, and the river glinting and sparkling in the distance. It boasted no attractions within. All was as bare and ugly and uncomfortable as it well could be, for the villages along the river expended so much money in repairing and rebuilding bridges that they were obliged to be very economical in school privileges. The teacher's desk and chair stood on a platform in one corner; there was an uncouth stove, never blackened oftener than once a year, a map of the United States, two blackboards, a ten-quart tin pail of water and long-handled dipper on a corner shelf, and wooden desks and benches for the scholars (Wiggin 41).

This schoolhouse description, set in the 1870s, could easily have been lifted from a short story or an educational magazine from the period. However, this specific schoolhouse belongs to Kate Douglas Wiggin's *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* (1903).[1] Rebecca's small common school in Maine fits the description of many small-town common schools in the period. It is only attended by 20 students in an unsegmented classroom, presided over by an eighteen-year old female teacher, Miss Dearborn. The students learn from their own textbooks, with some at different levels than others. The village inhabitants control the decision-making for the school's upkeep, hiring, and even texts for the students. Like other girls her age, Rebecca will attend a common school followed by a women's seminary, with her mother planning on her becoming a teacher (14). Her mother, from a wealthy family, had also attended an academy and boarding school for

young ladies (26). While many of the attributes in *Rebecca* aptly describe educational practices in the 1870s, the text is not widely regarded as a school story for or about girls.[2] Instead, the text has long been regarded as a girl's book, a genre of American children's literature that focuses on a girl's domestic life or development. While the school story for girls can be considered a subgenre of the girl's book, it has lacked the critical attention of domestic or series texts. Instead, the focus on the domestic aspect of the girl's book has restricted how scholars examine the fictional portrayal of girl's education in the United States in the nineteenth century and privileged domestic experiences over educational opportunities. By neglecting to analyze these school stories or scenes of education, critics have ignored how education was portrayed by women authors to girl readers. Kristine Moruzi and Michelle J. Smith, describing the value in recovering girls' print culture in 2014, explain that "School stories, in particular, are drawing substantial interest because of their centrality to the history of girls' reading, their engagement with cultural ideas about the education and socialization of girls, and their enduring popularity with book collectors" (xiv). My project has developed to examine this literary tradition, the school story for girls, and define it as its own genre, as well as consider how the school story widens the experiences available in the girl's book.

"School-Time for Girls: The Depiction of Female Education in Late Nineteenth-Century American School Stories" defines and catalogues school stories for girls to theorize this understudied genre. This project seeks to explore literature produced in the period of roughly 1845 to 1910 as a notable, new "school-time for girls," during which American girls and women were attending and teaching in a variety of school settings for the first time. This project unites subgenres of the school story that have received separate critical attention—such as the women's college novel and the American common school story—under one heading, the school story for

girls. By re-recombining these subgenres, I can draw conclusions about how authors were choosing to depict girls' education, and unite more "respected" stories for adult audiences with traditionally marginalized stories for children. As the school story operates for both a child and adult readership, bringing the subgenres together creates a more complex and accurate understanding of the genre. Focusing on the school story "girl" or young woman, this project investigates how women authors envision the schoolgirl and their female teachers, as well as their attempt to shape how the public interprets these figures and their place in education.

While my project focuses on school stories for girls, the school story for/or about girls may be a more apt description, as the stories here are not bound up exclusively in what contemporary readers consider the "girl" student. Instead, I use "girl" in this project, as both reader and subject, in the same way as Shirley Marchalonis in her landmark study of women's college fiction from 1865 to 1940, *College Girls: A Century in Fiction*:

> 'Girl' as used in these texts denotes a stage in female development, movement from child to girl to woman, and the term in context is not one of belittlement, but a definition of an age and status group: young and unmarried, characterized by innocence, unworldliness, virginity, and youthful freshness. The girls in this fiction are going to be women, but they are not there yet. They themselves know that womanhood awaits them after graduation. Times have changed and today the word applied to young college women would be nonsensical and offensive (7).

The "girl" in the school story is usually (and broadly-speaking) older than ten up to a college-aged, unmarried woman. She is a student or a teacher. Readers of these stories would have also varied based on publication type, venue (such as for a juvenile magazine), and subject. Primarily,

younger girls or young adult girls were reading boarding school stories, while adult audiences were reading college novels and common school stories.

While reexamining the school story is a timely project, this dissertation is also built upon the recovery of and scholarship on the girl's book. Critical attention has been paid to the girl's book tradition by such scholars as Beverly Lyon Clark, Michelle Ann Abate, Joe Sutliff Sanders, and Gwen Athene Tarbox, to name a few.[3] Their focus on the domestic, tomboys, orphan girls, and Progressive-Era girls' fiction, respectively, has explained recurring depictions of girls in the nineteenth century, but has also failed to examine the girl in her daily environment—the American school. Again, as Moruzi and Smith commented in the introduction to their anthology, the American school story has been viewed as secondary to the expansive British tradition.

While this project seeks to unite subcategories of the school story, it also addresses how the school story needs greater inclusion in the canon of children's literature as a girl's book. School would have been a life-altering part of a girl's life as one of her first opportunities outside of her home and interacting with peers; the fictional depiction of school life would also impact what readers believed about school's possibilities. These stories depict a new and contested experience not available to all readers (women's single-sex colleges, for example), and both normalized women attending school and promoted the reputation of women who sought the highest levels of education. As such, school stories have importance as a children's genre, an adult genre, and a crossover genre. Stories in this project depict particular types of girlhoods; we must consider who they include, leave out, and what networks of social relations they create for more insight into the girl's book and how it functioned as its own genre.

Methodology and Previous Studies

While the basis of this project is genre studies, it is also indebted to previous recovery work on nineteenth-century women writers. The texts in this project were selected to demonstrate tropes from the school story genre and to widen the understanding of the girl's book genre. My project investigates neglected works by women authors, as all the texts (and the majority of the authors) in this project are not widely known, though some like Elizabeth W. Champney's *Three Vassar Girls* series are beginning to see critical study and appreciation. The selected texts portray education as a privileged opportunity—largely for white, middle-class city and farm girls, which reflected the girls who were attending higher education institutions. These depictions marginalize the experiences of girls in poor school districts, urban schools, or racially or culturally diverse girls. However, school narratives fill an important gap in the girl book genre as they describe girls in social situations with peers, considering or occupying a professional role, and attempting an intellectual task/pursuit.

The texts in my dissertation have been doubly marginalized as popular texts by women and for girls (children) and therefore have been ignored for critical study. Historically, the project of recovering women authors has had to unravel associations of women writers with the popular (considered non-literary writing) and male authors with "serious" work for critical study. For example, while Karen L. Kilcup brings feminine and masculine literary traditions into dialogue in *Soft Canons* (1999), stigma still exists around women's writing and children's literature. Women and children have long been subordinated together, and their texts have been often dismissed.[4] As Jane Tompkins in *Sensational Designs* (1985) argues, texts that were written for children or have been re-positioned as children's texts have also been viewed as less than valuable than adult texts, as they have "come to be thought of as more fit for children than for adults" (xii).

In reappraising school stories, my project connects literary production with growing educational opportunities and the cultivation of women-centric networks. We know that women formed reading circles or suffrage or other protest groups, but educational networks (such as alumni groups, classmates, or the continued correspondence between teachers/mentors and students.) also contributed to women taking on more advanced professions or moving to new places (i.e. teachers going out West).[5] Girls reading these school stories also found themselves as part of a new network, engaged in thinking about their possibilities with and after their education. Depictions of school-based networks thus are integral to women's genres of fiction.

While much recovery work was done of nineteenth-century American women writers in the 1980s and 1990s, more work is still being done to recover women writers or writers of "popular" texts, particularly those for child audiences. Nina Baym, Judith Fetterly, Majorie Pryse, Mary Kelley, Cathy N. Davidson, Ann Douglas, Joyce Warren, Shirley Samuels, Jane Tompkins, and Karen Kilcup have all contributed to the project of bringing nineteenth-century women writers into the literary canon. However, as Judith Fetterley reflected in a 1994 issue of *American Literary History*, recovering women writers after the publication of her landmark *Provisions: A Reader from 19th-Century American Women* (1985) centered on "major" authors and biography. Fetterley argued that literary criticism and literary histories that work like Nina Baym's *Women's Fiction: A Guide to Novels by and about Women in America, 1820-1870* (1978) were still needed. [6] Literary history was still lacking, according to Fetterley, because noted women writers were still absent from the major literary histories but now not "marginal" enough to warrant their own studies (604). Instead, we need to stop privileging the "literary," or a masculine tradition, and recycling, as Fetterly calls them, the "problematic" labels of "major and minor figures" (604). These so-called "minor" authors are valuable. Many of the authors of the

school stories in my project may have been considered "minor" by earlier critics for writing in a children's or popular genre (or series fiction), but scholars today reject these reasons for marginalizing a writer or work.[7] When we marginalize a particular group, we lose its readership and culture. Rethinking the reading of women and children teaches us about the historical realities of the literary period and its readerships.[8] The authors in this project have built their own subgenre (girls' school story) and contributed to popular thought about women's education.

Scholars should situate canonical and non-canonical texts together to put them in conversation, gaining a fuller understanding of the period and its literary tastes. As Nicole Tonkovich explains: "Such work makes women visible in heretofore overlooked surroundings and situates their writings within an existing tradition of American literary history" (242). For example, Angela Sorby examined the "schoolroom canon" of poetry and how poems such as those by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, though obviously not a woman writer, came to be taught in classrooms, and what reading a poem as part of an educational context does to its meaning and the poem's legacy (xii-xiii).[9] Many texts were rejected by the academy because they were taught in the classroom. However, when we discuss popular or otherwise non-canonical but still literary texts alongside canonical texts or authors, we can consider how they reflect the trends, style, or opinions of the canon or its period. For instance, Rita Boda considers Harriet Prescott Spofford's *Hester Stanley at St. Mark's* (1882) a type of *Jane Eyre* (1847) text because it features a protagonist from the South Sea Islands, like *Jane's* Bertha Mason from Jamaica, although Hester (unlike Bertha) is non-threatening (118). Likewise, Chapter Four in this dissertation puts Elizabeth W. Champney's *Three Vassar Girls* series (1883-1892) into conversation with Henry James' *Daisy Miller* (serialized June-July 1878, 1879 book) to demonstrate how the series disputes James' ideas about young women travelers as irresponsible or flighty; instead, the

Vassar girls' group network makes them more secure as travelers. Both Spofford and Champney speak back to now canonical writers and argue in favor of their women characters. Arguing for women's relationships as powerful and stabilizing, these authors depict networks of women to inspire readers.

Overall, texts that have been singled out by the academy are not full or accurate representations of their time periods, but rather aesthetically significant to later generations. Popular texts, on the other hand, fill in the gaps that these canons create: telling us about readership trends, cultural trends, and values. By balancing them together, we establish a truer picture of writing in the period. School stories have received limited attention as a children's genre (primarily in the British tradition), but some critics have considered scenes of schooling or educational implications in texts written for adults.[10] For example, Jaime Alves Osterman's *Fictions of Female Education in the Nineteenth Century* (2009) analyzes how girl characters deal with and react to institutional forces in texts written for adults. Osterman's project differs from mine in that I am focusing much more on texts for children and young adults. While her authors such as Elizabeth Stoddard and Frances E. W. Harper were only recently recovered by feminist scholars, they are still more widely taught in classrooms and anthologized than the texts written for children this project examines. Yet, our projects share the same purpose: "exploring narratives of formal female education to better understand how nineteenth-century Americans perceived and represented the distinct life stage of female adolescence, and how they imagined the process of institutional sex-role socialization that would involve socials and other organizations in the activity of molding adolescent girls into ideal American women" (4). Together, both of our inquiries identify the portrayal of a specific adolescent period for girls in nineteenth-century texts. As Osterman describes, girls' education postpones marriage, and

"affords them a new vantage point from which they can view childhood and adulthood as a set of expectations and demands constructed by others" (143).[11] In conversation with Osterman, my dissertation argues for how girls' both reject and conform to these expectations.

My project and work on school stories in general has grown in large part due to libraries' digital collections (their digitizing and making available nineteenth-century texts and periodicals) and an increased awareness of school stories and attempts to make them more accessible. For example, Allison Speicher's recent book on common school stories not only demonstrates a renewed interest in scholarship about American school stories, but also showcases a recovery project of periodical stories. Scholars such as Wernimont and Flanders, Alison Booth, and Susan Belasco have urged digital humanities projects to continue recovery work on women authors.[12] As Susan Belasco argues it is important to bring texts out of the archives to make them accessible to scholars and to create a "sustainable infrastructure for future scholarship" (330). My project has built upon the work of such previous scholars, like Speicher, and of archives to make these texts more widely available. In 1995, Shirley Marchalonis lamented how difficult it was to locate college novels for study, especially because girls' series "have never been considered literary treasures" worth preserving (6).[13] Despite the increased availability of texts through digitizing, school stories are still difficult to search for in archives and online databases as they vary by type (children's and adult periodicals, short stories, or novels) and are not often clearly labelled. Libraries and databases often do not label "school stories" as such, making it challenging to generate online searches or provide a precise number of school stories written or available in the nineteenth century.[14] However, print publications are also beginning to increase the visibility of this genre. For example, an anthology of *Girls School Stories, 1749-1929* (2014), edited by Kristine Moruzi and Michelle J. Smith, represents a variety of time periods, nations,

and audiences including children and young adults. With the publication of this anthology of selected school stories and excerpts, the work of women writers for girls and an entire tradition of this genre is now more accessible to scholarship and ripe for an extended scholarly project focusing on the neglected American tradition, which Moruzi and Smith highlight as lacking study on relationship of the "development of the British genre and its adaptation to colonial and American readerships" (xiv).

Children's literary studies has similarly established its own canon of and argued for its worthiness as a subject of research and criticism. In his article about the history of children's literature archives and his analysis of their significance to the field, Kenneth Kidd argues that the presence of the children's literature archive elevates the genre: "Like the canon, the archive promises coherence and totality, reinforces the idea of a literary heritage" (2). To Kidd, the establishment of archives or special collections of children's materials facilitated the study of children's literature and turned it into an academic specialty, as well as giving children's literature scholars more credibility (6-7). Kidd summarizes his argument about the significance of the children's literature archive:

> By preserving children's materials, and conferring upon them special (primarily historical but also affective) value, the archive asserts the research value of children's literature within the broader culture of academic and university research. By valorizing materials as research worthy, even materials like children's books and comic books (shocking!), the archive affirms not only scholars but the institution, functioning as a showcase for such and helping maintain the institution's status as research-intensive. Thus, the valorization of children's materials is bound up with the politics of university-level research and teaching (9).

Books in archives are preserved because they are seen to have value: literary or historical. However, children's literature, in particular, shows that the collectors who accrue and build these collections have the power to shift "cultural capital": "Private collectors often collect material of dubious academic capital—say, children's literature—because (you guessed it) they *love* the stuff, which later accrues value in the university field" (11). Thus, by continuing the project of recovering work from the children's literature archive, we argue for its significance whilst acknowledging the deeper, more "personal" connection that child readers feel for the material.

However, the British school story tradition has largely monopolized critical attention for the school story genre.[15] Critics have traced the British tradition from the *The Governess* to the incredibly popular *Tom Brown's School Days* series to the boom in twentieth-century girls' boarding school stories by such authors as Angela Brazil, Enid Blyton, or Elinor Brent-Dyer.[16] When readers and scholars discuss girls' school experiences, the boarding school girl from the British tradition is largely what comes to mind, and this girl has overshadowed American school experiences. I argue that the school story in America deserves its own attention as a genre and a subgenre of the girl's book (within children's literature). The boarding school girl is a representative depiction, but it does not singularly define the American literary school girl.

While literary critics ignored American school stories, the history of American school and of women's education, in particular, has been discussed widely by educational historians. Among these historians are Carl F. Kaestle, David Tyack, Elisabeth Hansot, and Jurgen Herbst. Several have focused on women's colleges, including Barbara Miller Solomon, Helen Horowitz, Thomas Woody, and Lynn G. Gordon.[17] This project is indebted to the work of these historians, especially in the lived experiences of schoolgirls and teachers they chronicle. In conversation with these historical realities, I theorize women's fictional depictions of school experiences to

explain how the school story genre developed its identity and why it focused its attention on certain norms and activities over other (often) more historically representative ones.

My project also follows the genre-studies approach of Speicher's study of common school stories in America, and of Marchalonis' study of college novels. Speicher argues that the fictional depiction of common schools "intervened" in education reform efforts and spurred it forward, through "perpetuat[ing]" and "normaliz[ing]" the school experience (4, 5). While my project accepts this argument, it also acknowledges that many of the girls in my school stories were representing a privileged class and part of the fictional project was to perpetuate an idealized school experience—one that was not available to all. Whereas common schools were a co-educational space, school stories for girls usually privileged an all-female experience that excluded certain races, classes, and religions, while consolidating the cultural capital of white bourgeois America.

Marchalonis, like Speicher, thinks of the women's college experience in terms of how it could perpetuate specific ideas about womanhood, but she also sees it as a limited enclosure. The women's college experience, to Marchalonis, "redefined women's space and offered role models for success within that space" (1), preparing girls for "entrance into women's sphere of marriage, home, family" (23-4). She sees women's colleges as a "green world," a Shakespearean term for a magical forest, where women could focus on their themselves and their personal transformations (24-5). My own interest in girls' education grew out of this idea of a "preparatory" or "transformative" space. Like Marchaloni, I view the "green world" as limited in both space and "women's time," as women can mature and "transform" during college, but their graduation marks the end of this period (27, 25). The women's college is physically enclosed, as well, signaling "self-containment, [being] of a separate world" (26). However, Marchalonis believes

though the colleges are depicted with their own "emphases, codes, languages, and values; it is not wholly isolated, for it has ties to the outside" (68).[18] She reads the novels' focus on "female friendships and female bonding, not turned inward towards exclusivity, but opening out to a wider world… the pleasure of difference—different people, backgrounds, attitudes, behaviors—that make the college years so rich an experience" (68). However, I see the enclosed space of college as more exclusionary; some different types of people encounter each other (primarily across class or religious boundaries), yet there is limited representation, and again, college is a limited time marked by a definite closing (commencement) that puts an end to these narrow encounters. This transformative moment, then, is limited in scope and only available for a specific group.

Alongside women starting to attend college, ideas about adolescence as a developmental life stage were beginning in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.[19] Girls and women were beginning to marry later and work longer, as they also pursued higher education. Following the Civil War, many women were left in communities with dwindling male populations and faced with the possibility of never marrying, turned to occupations. Girls, for the first time, had a longer time "to themselves" before seeking marriage. I argue that the school story, both a physical and temporal space, depicts what we now consider an "adolescent" stage of development—a time for personal reflection, transformation, and knowledge-seeking as girls sought to decide their future paths and what their future selves would look like. That future lies in institutionally cultivated networks of like-minded women. These networks are the way for women to continue to grow beyond their isolated "school-time" experience,

Project Outline

My project is divided into two halves, the first focused on the genre and historical background and the second on connecting the two through case studies. The first half explains the school story's development as literature for and about girls in America, and outlines the three major subgenres: common schools, seminaries/academies, and college novels. I do not discuss other forms of school experience, like homeschooling (which was declining in the nineteenth century); instead, I focus on the rapidly expanding depictions of these three school types in the nineteenth century.[20] I continue by examining these three settings (with an additional discussion of normal schools) in their historical context and describing the educational movements that precipitated and fostered these school environments and their depictions. These sections move chronologically from common to seminary to colleges as the common school movement largely spurred educational developments for girls, and led to the need for normal schools to educate the new class of young female teachers. Additionally, this movement matches many girls' life trajectories, as they would attend common school then boarding or normal school and, in some cases, college. The second half of the dissertation continues this chronological organization with case studies focused on seminaries and colleges at the fin de siècle. These schools present older girls, women as both teachers and students, and the exclusive women-defined space, as described by Marchalonis. Continuing the focus on girls' personal development and transformation through education, these studies focus on all-girl spaces as they captured readers' fascination and offered the most aspirational image of education with institutionalized networks and the possibility to imitate them. Essentially, the first half sets up the foundation of the project and the second half examines its claims and interrogates them.

My first chapter defines the genre of the school story for girls and breaks down how the school story functions in different school settings. My basic definition of it is this: a story set

primarily in a school or one that deals with a student or teacher identity. For example, as discussed in my fourth chapter, while the novels in Elizabeth W. Champney's series, *The Three Vassar* are travel narratives, I argue that their emphasis on student identity structures the girls' travel experience. Thus, all the girls' travel is situated against the context of their college experience and allows the novels to be read as school stories. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the American school story genre in the period as compared to the more widely written-about British school story and describes common settings for the school story in America, including boarding school stories, common schools, and college stories. It also provides an overview of their recurring plot structures, characterizations, and describes some typical tropes such as having a conflict with a teacher or participating in school events.

The second chapter uses histories of education to describe significant political movements and social changes in women's education, and then contrasts the realities of school settings with the fictional depictions from Chapter 1 to showcase how the fiction was limiting in its scope and who it was representing. I compare the differences between the experience in girls' school stories (targeted to a more privileged minority) and the lived experience from the wider majority of American girls. The chapter opens by breaking down the types of schooling available and the changes made in different periods in education (Early America, Early Republic-Antebellum, and postbellum through World War I). Then, I describe the most significant types of education for girls: common schools, normal schools, private schools or seminaries, and colleges. I consider the population for each type of school, including the region, class, race, and religion of its students, and the growth of each school in the period. Finally, I examine the role of women as teachers, and the changes in policy, environment, and teaching styles at different types of schools.

In the third chapter, I analyze the fictional construction of boarding schools in *The Boarding-School Girl* (1848) by Louisa C. Tuthill, *Hester Stanley at St. Mark's* (1882) by Harriet Prescott Spofford, and *Betty Baird* (1906) by Anna Hamlin Weikel, tracing their progression of anxiety about female education and employment. I argue that these three novels demonstrate evolving opinions of women's education, from the mid-century emphasis on True Womanhood and republican motherhood as reasons for educating women to a later desire for women to become teachers and support their families. While Tuthill's novel emphasizes True Womanhood as the highest achievement for girl students, *Hester Stanley* and *Betty Baird* show more possibilities for women to teach and become employed, as well as marry. I also examine the range of depictions of female teachers in *Hester Stanley* and *Betty Baird*, as the relationships between teachers and students are important in school stories. *Hester Stanley* displays teachers who are reluctant and economically forced into the role as opposed to *Betty Baird*'s teacher-reformers who exemplify the "New Woman." While a feminine-coded profession, teaching is marked by class expectations, and is still not fully acceptable as a career to all girls by the end of the century, as *Betty Baird* proves. Overall, the chapter examines the reasons behind sending girls to secondary school, and the limits of their education in the face of social expectations for middle- and upper-class American girls.

My fourth chapter focuses the depiction of networks of education and alumni groups in three novels about college-aged women, either at college or on a study-abroad. I focus specifically on the first two books in the *Three Vassar Girls* series (1883-1892) by Elizabeth W. Champney and Julia A. Schwartz's *Elinor's College Career* (1906). I argue that both authors consider who gets to go to college, where they can attend, and the legacies of a college education, as the Vassar girls internalize and promote Vassar abroad, and Elinor deals with the pressure of

attending college as a second-generation student. The Vassar series presents educational travel as an opportunity for girls to learn about themselves and their desired professions before marriage, thus quelling public fears about female graduates refusing to marry or have children. However, Schwartz examines college life through girls of differing economic backgrounds, including a poor girl who is attending college expressly to begin a career. I argue that while both novels begin to promote alumni contributions to college, *Elinor* questions the homogeneity of students in women's colleges. I also use the novel's plot to raise the question of what will happen to women's colleges if their graduates stop marrying, having children, and sending their daughters back to attend the college? While neither novel offers a wholly democratic view of college, *Elinor's* depiction of a queer futurity for women's colleges suggests that colleges and alumni will have to accept new types of college girls, eventually creating a more diverse college community.

Ultimately, I hope that my project on children's literature and American girls' school stories will encourage further scholarly research on intersections of literature and education. While a few specific American school stories have received critical attention, scholars have not attempted to research, compile, and catalogue American school stories for girls in the latter half of the nineteenth century. My project fills a critical gap by examining often-overlooked school stories, situating them within an historical and educational framework, and describing how they depict women forming networks from their educations. Through these fictional portrayals, stories about school formed clear models, legacies, and powerful networks.

CHAPTER 1. THE AMERICAN SCHOOL STORY FOR GIRLS AND WOMEN

When readers think of schoolgirl characters, a few immediately come to mind. Sara Crewe of *A Little Princess* (1887, novel 1905),[21] one of the most famous examples of a nineteenth-century boarding-school girl, with a riches-to-rags story set in an English boarding school. Red-headed *Anne of Green Gables* (1908), whose lively personality fills the Avonlea common schoolroom. Or readers may prefer another red-headed schoolgirl *Madeline* (1939) walking in a row with her schoolmates, at a Catholic boarding school in Paris. Hermione Granger, the smartest girl at Hogwarts and model student who even used a Time-Turner to take more classes than time permitted (1997-2007). While each of these characters is memorable for her intelligence, bravery, and personality, these examples, set in England, Canada, and France, raise the question: Where are the American schoolgirls? Is the American girls' school experience less memorable or magical, perhaps?[22]

Instead of schoolgirls, the most famous American girl characters are primarily domestic characters.[23] For example, naming American girl characters conjures images of tomboys like Jo March in Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* (1868-9) or Susan Coolidge's Katy (*What Katy Did*, 1872), female bildungsroman characters (girls who girls who develop into women) in popular series such as *Betsy-Tacy* (by Maud Hart Lovelace, 1940-1955) or *Elsie Dinsmore* (by Martha Finley, 1867-1905), or even the girl-detective, Nancy Drew (first novel 1930, revised version 1959), who spurred a period filled with girls' series and girl detectives. Even the active and adventurous character Nancy Drew has a domestic element—she lives at home with her father. While these girls attend school at some point, the focus has been on their home lives or character development, not their time at school. But that doesn't mean that the American schoolgirl is not

valuable or does not have something meaningful to say about girlhood. This dissertation reexamines the American girl school story to situate her into the girl book genre—to argue that a girl character's school life is just as important as her domestic life.

While schoolgirl characters in Britain primarily attend one type of school (the boarding school), American schoolgirls attend a variety of types of school, making her difficult to categorize into one kind of experience. The domestic, on the other hand, is a simpler categorization. Perhaps, then, the issue with the American schoolgirl is not that authors have nothing to say about her—she appears in fiction a great deal—but rather she is not so singularly defined in one school setting. The identity of the American schoolgirl, as we know her today, was created and fostered in the nineteenth and early-twentieth century, alongside the creation of a separate children's literature market. While girls had long attended school, they came into their own in this period as school terms became longer and mandatory, as girls grew into teachers with substantial training, and as colleges for or including women opened. There was not one singular type of American schoolgirl; instead, there were many: girls in rural common or district schools, urban schools, private academies or seminaries, colleges, co-educational schools, single-sex schools, and religiously-affiliated schools (not to mention their regional educational differences). These American schoolgirls are linked to this moment in time (roughly 1845 to 1910), as the title to this project suggests, in ways that reverberate all the way to today as more women, for instance, graduate from school and college than their male counterparts.[24] This dissertation, then, examines how nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century writers conceived of the American schoolgirl and how she was influenced by her women teachers. This study limits itself to school stories focused on American girls and women, written by and for women, to understand

women's specific perspective on their education, teacher identity, professionalization opportunities, as well as marriage and domestic life.

This chapter will define girlhood and the "girl book" genre, to which the school story belongs. It will also provide an overview of the American school story genre in the period as compared to the more widely written-about British school story, another reason why scholars typically neglect American schoolgirls. It also identifies common settings for the school story in America, including common school stories, seminary or boarding school stories set in America, and college stories. It provides an overview of recurring themes and characterizations of students and teachers to firmly define the American school story for girls and its variants.

1.1 American "Girl Books"

While contemporary readers and critics of children's literature easily recognize its genres coded as explicitly masculine or feminine, such as "boy books" (adventure stories) or "girl books" (domestic or tales dealing with the home), these categorizations were invented by the nineteenth-century literary market. Subsequently, Beverly Lyon Clark labels the two primary genres of American nineteenth-century children's literature according to these gender-divided lines: the boy book, or bad-boy book, which are largely anti-adult, and the family story, or the domestic story (*Regendering* 13). However, as Clark explains, children's literature was less bifurcated in the nineteenth century, with girls reading what we consider "boy books," as well as the sentimental tradition aimed at both sexes (*Kiddie* 110, 114). Sarah Wadsworth clarifies that juvenile fiction began to be separated by gender in the mid-to-late nineteenth century (44-45). Likewise, Gillian Avery explains that writing specifically to boys or girls developed into its own profession in the same period (190). However, the "boy book" was recognized and developed as a separate market before the "girl book," because boys were assumed to not read writing for girls

so they needed books specific to their interests (Wadsworth 56). In contrast, girls were reading boys' adventures stories instead of didactic or moral stories that were designed to prepare girls for their future domestic roles (Wadsworth 58-9).

"Girl books" have largely been viewed as part of the training nineteenth-century girls were given to become "proper" young women or "little mothers," as described by Gillian Brown and Melanie Dawson. According to Brown, for girls, play was viewed as "mimesis of adult activities" which led to the production of gender-specific toys (such as dolls) and domestic objects (like sewing kits) to better "prepare girls for motherhood and childcare" and housekeeping (25, 27).[25] Similarly, Dawson explains how girls were "encouraged to act out scenes of maturity, take on domestic duties, and develop self-monitoring skills" in a "miniaturizing" (66) of a girl's future adult role, with "childhood play enacting womanhood through domestic duties and similar behaviors with no obvious transition out of childhood and into adulthood" (68). In other words, girl behavior was commonly viewed as "fixed," with girlhood acting as a "predictor" for womanhood (Dawson 74). When girls' activities are viewed as "predictors," then, they "undercut seeing girls' development as transformative" (Dawson 75). Essentially, girls' play was instructive and meant to guide their development into womanhood. In contrast, boys could have a "carefree childhood" while girls play was regulated (Dawson 80).

In contrast to Dawson's view of girlhood as indiscernible from womanhood, Anne Scott MacLeod, in her study of domestic realism for girls, makes the distinction that many girl's stories focus on the transition from childhood to young adulthood (*American Childhood* 14). But while she argues that these stories depict children as "adults-in-progress," MacLeod describes the transition out of childhood to womanhood as a deeply painful loss (23). She reads the girls as "romantic children" who, despite their promising personalities, "dim" as they age and do not

rebel but rather settle into their "conventionally acceptable careers as teachers" (23, 25, 27). MacLeod similarly reads adulthood as a loss of individuality, and thus interprets the typical ending of many girl's books—marriage—as a conservative education into "proper" womanhood. MacLeod argues that, for girl readers, the clear message was that "puberty would be for her the beginning of her imprisonment in a 'women's sphere.' She would surely understand that for her the central task of adolescence as defined by her culture was to trim her qualities of mind and character, whatever they might be, to fit the model society had prepared for her" (29). Many of MacLeod's examples fit the categorization of the domestic (family) stories, which was the prevailing genre of the girl's book, followed by the school story.

Girls' domestic fiction largely developed in the mid-nineteenth century and dealt with family life, morality, and class issues. Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* (1868-9) is an exemplar of the genre. Analyzing Alcott's lasting impact in melding the domestic, sentimental, and motherhood with a realistic writing style, Clark describes *Little Women* as "perhaps the first American book explicitly directed to girls as an audience, at a time when children's literature was only starting to undergo gender segregation" (*Kiddie* 105).[26] However, Gail Schmunk Murray dates girls' domestic fiction to the publication of Susan Warner's *The Wide, Wide World* (1850) and includes authors such as Alcott, Martha Finley, and Harriet M. Lothrop in this category. Murray traces domestic fiction to the School Sunday movement which saw children as possible "saviors" to correct the ills of the world (54). Building on this connection to morality, her working definition of girls' domestic fiction focuses on the home and family, where women "usually served as the superior moral force, guiding others (usually male) to a reformation of their character" (Murray 54). The domestic's recurring themes were orphaned children, class differences reflecting the poor as honest but lacking refinement, and illness as catalyst for

"religious conversion or moral reformation" including a child's death (Murray 60-1). The authors of girls' domestic fiction were usually from New England, with many of them attending boarding school there (54). Similarly, the protagonists of girls' domestic fiction often "occasionally failed in exemplary behavior" but could reform, a description that largely coincides with the boarding school story model, marking a direct connection between the domestic and one type of school story.

Despite this obvious connection, studies of the girl book have failed to consider the other major site in a girl's life, the school, especially as many girls also served their communities as teachers. While characters in domestic works may attend school, the schooling is not a primary feature of the narrative unlike in a school story. However, a school story may appear as part of a girl's book series, such as Alcott's *Little Men* (1871) focusing on the male students of Plumfield with a Jo as a teacher/mother figure or Elizabeth Stuart Phelps' *Gypsy's Year at the Golden Crescent (1867)*, which sends an older Gypsy to a girl's seminary after three previous books were dedicated to her home life and childhood. Scholars' choice to focus on the domestic has led to the marginalization of the American school experience for girls, as if it is something that a girl suffers through to get back to the home. Instead, school stories show the value a girl can have outside the home, with schools as a space for personal and moral growth.

1.2 British versus American School Stories

The American school story tradition is rich with depictions of school life for girls, but has been overshadowed by the critical focus on the British school story tradition such as the *Tom Brown's School Days* series and in girls' series such as those by L. T. Meade, Angela Brazil, Elinor Brent-Dyer, or Enid Blyton.[27] While school stories have been published on both sides of the Atlantic during the nineteenth century, British school stories experienced a period of high

output and widespread popularity in the twentieth century, which led to the association of the genre with this century. The girls' school story in Britain boomed between the start of World War I (1914) and the 1960s (Simons 165-6). In both Britain and America, depictions of boarding school girls by authors like Brazil and Brent-Dyer were incredibly popular, though they were primarily read by girls who never attended a boarding school (Simons 166). These boarding school stories promoted, according to Judy Simons, a "myth [of] overcoming barriers both of age and social class" (166). Despite their middle-class values, boarding schools were romanticized as a site for freedom for girls, where they could form important friendships and be taken seriously as headmistresses.

The British school story for girls is largely set in boarding schools, or public schools, which have close associations with the upper and middle-class. In Great Britain, public school means a private, independent school where students pay a fee to attend, unlike American public schools, which are publicly funded through taxes. British public schools are funded exclusively through these fees and subsequently serve the upper-classes. The characters attending the boarding schools in twentieth-century British school stories were primarily middle-class (Simons 177).

Expansion for women's education was happening at roughly the same time in Great Britain and the United States, though the United States saw some milestones earlier. In America, the common school movement (in the 1830s and 1840s) began creating change in the way girls were educated, with school expansion happening in the mid- to-late-nineteenth century. English girls learned from attending dame schools (as American girls did before the common school movement) and from governesses. In the Victorian period, English girls witnessed the creation of such boarding schools as the Cheltenham Ladies' College in 1853 and the Roedean School in

1885. Girls began attending school and gaining literacy in greater numbers due to the 1880 Education Act, which made education mandatory for all children (between the ages of five and ten). However, women's colleges were implemented in America before Great Britain, as Oberlin College, the first co-educational college in the United States, opened in 1833, and Mount Holyoke (as a college) was chartered in 1836. The first women's college in Great Britain was Bedford College in London in 1849, with Cambridge's college for women, Girton College (1869) and Oxford's Lady Margaret Hall (1878, first to award degrees to women) and Somerville College (1879) following. The first generation of American women students had already been attending college by this point.

Much like its American counterpart, British school story for girls has been a marginalized genre, alongside children's literature and the girl's book more broadly. As Rosemary Auchmuty and Judith Humphrey have discussed at length, the British boarding school story for girls, with its status as popular fiction and children's literature, has been seen as unworthy of critical attention. In particular, the girls' school story genre has been marginalized as, in a notable example, stories for girls take up only one chapter in Isabel Quigley's discussion of British school stories, *The Heirs to Tom Brown* (1982). Girls' school stories have been relegated to second-tier, as their important period is seen as following the popularity and trends of the genre of boarding school books for boys. Prior to this booming period for British girls' school stories (1914-1960), the school story was, unsurprisingly, largely a genre for boys since public schools were only open to them. Despite this, texts by women about all-girl school spaces were extremely popular before 1914; notable boarding school stories include: Sarah Fielding's *The Governess, or The Little Female Academy* (the first modern school story and perhaps the first children's novel, 1749), a story set in an all-girl's boarding school under the watchful eye of Mrs.

Teachum; Dorothy Kilner's *Anecdotes of a Boarding-School* (1790); Emma Worboise's *Grace Hamilton's Schooldays* (1865), Meade's *A World of Girls: The Story of a School* (1890), and the aforementioned "Sara Crewe: or, What Happened at Miss Minchin's" (December 1887, St. Nicholas Magazine) *or A Little Princess* (1905) by Frances Hodgson Burnett.

The British boys' school story genre has been identified by P. W. Musgrave as beginning in the mid-nineteenth century (primarily with *Tom Brown* in the 1850s) and fading out before World War II (1, 9). *Tom Brown's Schooldays* highlights the relationships between boys and masters in a public school, forming friendships, and games, while there are few descriptions of academic work as is typical of the genre (59-61). The book also follows Tom's development into a Christian gentleman (58). British boys' novels in the 1800s either followed a *Tom Brown* trajectory and focused on public schools or were like Frederic W. Farrar's *Eric* (1858) and focused on private schools, which are less exclusive but still paid with tuition (147). Musgrave describes the genre following out of favor in the twentieth century because of a move toward diversification, stories that spoke to both child and adult readers, and standardization, or stories that followed the same plots, characterizations, etc. (239).

However, alongside the British boys' school story, the American boys' school story developed in the form of the campus novel. As Travel M. Foster describes it, the postbellum through World War I American campus novel focuses on homosocial bonding and "scenes of undergraduate merriment" (465). These novels model "friendship as a democratic ideal for dispensing with conflict" and resolve through unity between the students (Foster 465). While the British boys' school story declined after World War II, the American campus novel has continued through the twentieth century; Christopher Findeisen argues that the expansion of

higher education has made the conventional bildungsroman obsolete and instead re-formed it as the American campus novel of the twentieth century (285).

As Mavis Reimer categorizes girls' school stories of the 1880s to 1950s, the genre includes boarding-school school stories, private-school stories, day-school stories, and college stories ("Traditions" 218). For instance, early boarding school story author L. T. Meade's (1844-1914) protagonists largely continue the same the structural model as boy's school stories in which some event/action forces a character into a new environment. For Meade, trouble at home removes a girl to a school space where she then creates some sort of disruption to the established school order ("Traditions" 218). Like Meade's work, I demonstrate that American authors use a similar plot trajectory in their boarding school stories. As Reimer describes it, Meade revises her schools based on critiques of girls' finishing schools and creates "the school as a new imaginative space for her girl readers" ("Worlds of Girls" 208). She presents the girls as rebelling against the school until they discover that the school's work goes against patriarchal notions for their future ("Worlds of Girls" 208-9). In the American context, more of the school stories follow a path to marriage.

In general, pre-1900 boarding schools in America and across the pond follow similar trends that reinforce gender roles, domesticity, and proper behavior for girls. For example, despite the English public school setting, Hodgson Burnett's novel *A Little Princess* has much in common with its contemporaries in American boarding school stories. Focusing on girls who do not fit in at school for social, familial, cultural, or class differences, these boarding school stories trace the struggle and eventual success of a new student to be accepted by her schoolmates and improve academically. Burnett's basic plot of an English girl sent from India to a boarding school by her wealthy father to learn about how to join English society is strikingly like that of

Harriet Prescott Spofford's earlier *Hester Stanley at St. Mark's* (1882), in which Hester is sent by her wealthy father from the South Sea Islands to an American boarding school to receive a formal education. Both girls must learn to fit in with their father's home countries after their own lives abroad. They also struggle to learn obedience to teachers at their new schools, as they are used to being obeyed by others.[28] However, while *A Little Princess* is considered a classic of children's literature, *Hester Stanley at St. Mark's* and similar American boarding school stories have fallen into relative obscurity. American literary criticism had to recover Spofford's work, and her children's work is still among her most understudied. Additionally, critics focused on promoting American exceptionalism and national difference may have had a difficult time with Spofford's Polynesian heroine outshining her American classmates.

In the early twentieth century, Angela Brazil's boarding schools marked a change in the genre, that critics such as Judy Simons and Quigley have seen as revolutionizing and dominating the school story for girls, as Simons credits her with "invent[ing] the modern schoolgirl" and influencing all writers that followed her (173). Brazil (1868-1947) began publishing boarding school stories in 1906, and wrote from the student's point of view, a unique narrative style at the time. With the goal to entertain, not reform, Brazil's stories set the tone for the twentieth-century genre. Her most productive writing period was from 1909 to 1925, as the school story became the dominant genre for girl readers, following the shift in education that came after the Educational Acts of 1902 and 1907 (Simons 169, 176). The Educational Acts of 1902 allowed funding for religious instruction in Anglican and Catholic Church-owned voluntary elementary schools, and one important result was the growth in secondary schools for girls. According to Simons, Brazil's protagonists, usually around 14-15 years old, were middle-class girls, usually

"the plucky prefect, the madcap heroine, the spirited head girl" (165). Simons attributes some of Brazil's success in America due to her use of these bold figures.

Following in the footsteps of American writers who used tomboy figures, Brazil went further with the girl character's wildness and boldness, depicting their tendency to "flout authority with… confidence and the carelessness" (Simons 168). Unlike her English predecessors in the genre, Charlotte M. Yonge and L.T. Meade, Brazil "made the wild, impulsive and sometimes transgressive heroine central to the school story" (Simons 167). Previous tomboy figures, despite their adventurous personalities, were never actually transgressive. Like Louisa May Alcott's Jo March, they inevitably settled down into domestic life. They were not, ultimately, "unorthodox creatures in conflict with dominant mores governing female propriety," as Brazil's were (Simons 173). Prior to 1900, in both British and American school stories for girls, the girl protagonist usually attends school to improve her behavior, grow morally, and/or become prepared for domestic life. She is, as Simons labels, the "self-sacrificial prototype" (171). However, Brazil's stories, with their middle-class orientation, featured a more democratic influence, as the girls were seen to be equal to their prefects and headmistresses (172).

Differing from Brazil, her contemporaries and followers, English writers Elinor Brent-Dryer (1894-1969) and Enid Blyton (1897-1968) returned to a more traditional model of the girls' school story that reflected nineteenth-century English and American boarding school traditions. In Brent Dryer's most famous contribution to the genre, the *Chalet School* series (1923-1970), originally set in Austrian Tyrol, different girls attend the school with behavioral issues and are reformed through interactions with the headmistress and social interactions with classmates. As seen in Chapter 3, this sequence follows the nineteenth-century American model. Though Brazil became influential in modernizing schoolgirls to seek out equality and use their own authority,

American school stories previously had their schoolgirls fight with headmistresses or older students. However, they were usually unsuccessful. Blyton, too, follows the model of Brazil by emphasizing rambunctious schoolgirls in her *Naughtiest Girl* series (1940-1952), whose title is self-explanatory. Like Brent-Dryer, Blyton's "naughty" girl gradually reforms after making friends and becoming social at school. Again, this follows the earlier reform model. Overall, while Brazil is credited with changing the school story genre, both her predecessors and contemporaries show the lasting impact of the reform model in school stories for girls.

1.3 Defining the American School Story for Girls

While I suggest that the American school story for girls is an undefined subgenre of both the girl book or the school story, it usually follows the basic outline of its parent genre, the school story. As M. O. Grenby describes it, the recurring elements of the school story are that: it is "set almost entirely in a school; it takes the relationships between the scholars and their teachers as its primary focus; and it contains attitudes and adventures which are unique to school life" (90). As Grenby says, since the "later nineteenth century, almost all Western children have attended school," thus, realistic depictions of children's lives must deal with school in some way, even if only to explain its removal from the story (91). School stories, then, present an opportunity to explore the diverse needs and social and intellectual development of girls. For instance, Hester Stanley's father sends her to a boarding school because she has behavioral issues, and we witness the individual processes of her growth and reformation. However, each type of school story discussed here (common school, seminary, and college) tends to present similar types of characters that signify real backgrounds (i.e. New England Anglo- Protestant girls in seminaries or rural schoolteachers in common schools). Yet, the school is crucial in depicting some difference in the girls—her class, her background, and tangible goals.

My expanded definition for an American school story for girls incorporates two categories: 1. A story set primarily in a school with a girl protagonist, or: 2. A story that focuses on a female student or female-centered teacher identity, not the setting. The protagonist may be either a female student or teacher of varying ages. In the first category, stories set in a school address personal growth, student-student relationships, student-teacher relationships, or some combination of these. In stories focusing on female teachers, the plot may center on the teacher's social integration into a community rather than her relationships with her students. In the second category, also usually centering on identity formation, a school story may never show any scenes inside a classroom or even interactions between teacher and student. Instead of a classroom, the story may focus on social interactions within the school such as in the dormitories, cafeteria, and other communal spaces within the school or in the nearby community. For example, while the novels in Elizabeth W. Champney's *The Three Vassar Girls* series (1883-1892) are clearly travel narratives with the protagonists traveling from country to country, I argue that their emphasis on college student identity influences the girls' experience, so it situates their travel through the lens of Vassar. Arguably, the novels would offer a very different perspective if the girls did not attend college or if they represented a different kind of school.

The type of girl protagonist present in school stories varies largely based on the type of school she is attending and her role as teacher or student. Reflecting the mixed readership of the nineteenth century, the school story is a crossover genre, with both adult and child readers, and often features protagonists that are more "little women" than girls. Girls could be teaching or attending college at sixteen. For instance, a common school story, "A Hoosier Idyll" (Sept. 1885) by Louise Coffin Jones, describes the activities of a first-time but well-liked teacher at a subscription school. It seems an unlikely selection in a school story for girls' category because it

offers a heavy description of the town's adults and their day-to-day farm community lives. However, the main character, the teacher, is only seventeen years old and is away from home, like many other schoolgirls or young teachers. Thinking about and beyond age, therefore, this project uses a wide conception of the term "girl," as explained by Sally Mitchell.

In Sally Mitchell's discussion of the changing place of the girl in Victorian England, she provides a working definition of "girl" that is useful for defining American girl characters in school stories. Mitchell explains a shift in terminology beginning in the 1880s by examining middle-class advice manuals and draws a class and gender distinction between "young lady" and "young person" (244). A "young lady" is the "stereotype of leisured femininity, particularly the newly idle dependents who had become a status symbol for middle-class men," while the term "young person" comes from the Factory Acts, in which children were defined as under fourteen, and men and women as nineteen and over (Mitchell 244). However, the term "girl," which Mitchell identifies as becoming "enormously popular in the last quarter of the nineteenth century," is more ambiguous. It includes: work-girls, servant girls, shop girls, college girls, etc. (244).[29] According to Mitchell:

> The 'girl,' then, is neither a child nor a (sexual) adult. As 'young person' unsexed the worker, so, in a somewhat different sense, did terms such as college girl, girl graduate, working girl, or bachelor girl unsex her middle-class counterpart. The 'young lady' at home is on the marriage market, but a 'girl' is not husband-hunting. The ascription of immaturity and liminality gives her permission to behave in ways that might not be appropriate for a woman (254).

Like the school space itself, Mitchell's definition of "girl" suggests liminality, or in-between state; the girl is neither at home nor seeking a husband. This definition is most similar to what we'd consider a young adult today. American girl school stories feature protagonists of varying ages. Terms such as juvenile readers or "little girls," as well as a girl's age or school grade, offer a greater degree of distinction of a character's or text's intended audience. Stories with older

students or teachers would appeal to a crossover audience. School stories may, therefore, center on what we would consider adolescents or young adult women, especially if their characters are working as a teacher (often a girl in their teens) before marriage. Notably, school stories focusing on female teachers often end in a marriage, suggesting a conclusion to their childhood and entrance into full adulthood as a wife.[30]

The wide variety of character ages and maturity in school stories also makes it difficult to define the exact readership of these texts because the nineteenth-century literary market had not fully separated child from adult readers. As Nina Baym characterizes it, novel readers were seen as young and feminine, no matter their age. Lyon Clark also clarifies that, in the nineteenth century, "children and youths are assumed to be part of the audience for novels –for fiction that is not yet segregated into children's stories and adults' books" (*Kiddie* 50). However, as the century went on, and children (or more specifically their purchasing parents) were discovered to be a lucrative market, magazines and novels were developed with children in-mind (*Kiddie* 51). To mark the split between adult and juvenile literature, Clark uses the *Atlantic* magazine which reviewed children's literature during the period but largely stopped after 1898 (*Kiddie* 56).

The school story for girls, then, is a varied and wide-reaching genre, both a part of children's and of adult literature. The genre is perhaps best understood when split into its subgenres, defined by its school setting: common school, seminary, or college. This way, the stories can be grouped based on their similar characterizations, geographical settings, and attitudes toward education. They also focus on specific institutional expectations and shaping public opinion about them. Common school stories emphasize teachers' lives, while seminary and college stories study student-student and student-teacher interactions as the basis for

developing girls into mature women. Each type of story represents a different population and educational experience, and has its own recurring thematic elements.

1.3.1 Common School Stories

Common school stories, as defined by Allison Speicher, are stories that are set in a rural community with a schoolteacher protagonist (Speicher 2). Perhaps the broadest in terms of representation, common school stories are set in different regions of the United States but still share similar plot points (Speicher 2). Common school stories, like the other stories in this project, largely respond to and create the meaning of schooling for readers; as Speicher articulates it, "The context in which common school narratives appeared, a historical moment when popular schooling was being debated and expanded, gives them their educational force. By offering a particular vision of what schooling did, could, or school look like, common school narratives intervened into the conversation surrounding education reform" (4). Common school stories grew out of the common school reform movement of the 1830s to the 1860s, while the stories typically were written from 1830s to the 1880s (Speicher 13). These stories reflect the reform in the North and Midwest, while later narratives (post-1869s) reflect changes in Southern common schools, which maintained old-field and subscription school models for longer (Speicher 13-14). In general, common schools reflect a rural sensibility, with fewer depictions of urban schooling (Speicher 14).

Common school stories were published in a variety of periodicals and read by children and adults. When the story does not focus on a particularly young protagonist, its periodical type is helpful to identify stories specifically written for a juvenile audience. For instance, we can be certain that children were reading *The Youth's Companion* or *St. Nicholas*. However, even in these children-designed periodicals, adults were still part of the readership. As Wadsworth

explains about periodical culture, there is a "problem of matching readers and texts" (2). Meaning that, despite their focus on a child, adolescent, or adult protagonist, the readership cannot always align with its characters or with an "intended" audience. Parents, teachers, and other figures in communities were also certainly reading child-oriented periodicals and novels to their children or to evaluate them, meaning that common school stories had a broad crossover readership.

While most girls in America were attending common or district schools, many common school stories focused more on the teachers than the students, making them seem to be a more "adult-centered" genre. Unlike the primarily women-authored stories of women's seminaries or colleges that tended to focus on private schools on the East Coast, common school stories were published by both male and female authors across the United States and were not centralized in or representative of one geographic region (Speicher 6).[31] As a result, they were written for a variety of audiences and represent both male and female school experiences, with many centered on a schoolmaster or schoolmistress/schoolma'am as the protagonist.

Child and adult readers were using school stories for three reasons, as Edward Eggleston defines: instruction, entertainment, and artistry, which sounds very much like the common children's literature refrain of "instruct and delight" (Speicher 6). However, these uses also reflect the readership of both children and adults. The messages and depiction of schools could be filtered through parents, who were controlling the education of their children. Especially in terms of common schools, parents controlled the type of school they sent their child to and made important decisions about how the common school was managed, including the selection of the schoolmaster/mistress and their children's textbooks. Readers of school stories learned what kind of education to expect and hope for, as the "specificity" of school stories replace the "grand

generalizations" of school reformers' writing (Speicher 7). With these literary depictions, reformers could better articulate their own arguments, and the public had a newfound emotional connection to the classroom, even ones they may not have personally experienced.

While the common school story was written by both male and female authors about schoolmaster and schoolmistress protagonists, this chapter will cover women-authored stories about women. The chapter will discuss periodical publications because of their pervasiveness in the nineteenth century. Speicher's recent project analyzed the common school story in general and drew conclusions about both male and female characters. Her analysis of the common school genre focuses on four recurring plot points: "the spelling bee and school exhibition, school romance, teacher-student adoption, and violence against teachers" (2). Since my dissertation focuses on girls and women, my recurring plots differ from Speicher's.

This section will discuss the plot points of: romance and marriage, (the depiction of) teaching as hard work, corporal punishment, and boy students' relationship to a female authority figure.[32] These are the most prominent recurring plots from my research. They also match up with two of Speicher's plots: school romance and violence against teachers. However, Speicher's discussion of school romance dealt mainly with male teachers and female students or the age dynamics at play in classroom romances, whereas my analysis focuses on how marriage is promoted as a reward to female teachers. Overall, I aim to examine these two plotlines with more nuance about how they are adapted for female characters. Additionally, these topics best center on the idealization of teaching as a moral profession for women and the way it was promoted as a pathway to marriage to attract female teachers. The stories selected in this section offer a range of ages for teachers, though many are very young, first-time teachers or have been teaching a few years before marriage. Notably, despite the growth of normal schools in the nineteenth century,

there is little mention of attending a normal school as preparation for teaching, suggesting perhaps the prevalence of these students teaching in more urban environments. The stories featured may also pre-date the widespread development of normal schools. Finally, many of these stories feature a young girl becoming a teacher directly after finishing school; placing this character in a teaching role immediately (and bypassing the normal school) means that she will meet a potential husband sooner. As my argument shows, many of these stories see marriage as the final pathway for teachers, and the normal school may be interpreted as delaying this process or offering a woman too great an opportunity for professionalization (i.e. a career that may not lead to marriage).

In romance plots, the teenage schoolmistresses are often first-time schoolteachers, moving to a new community to work. In Louise Coffin Jones' "The Hoosier Idyll" (Sept. 1885), a young schoolteacher moves to a new community in Indiana, is embraced by her students, meets a young man with similar interests and becomes engaged to him. The story's driving force seems to be placing this girl into a marriage, as the main character attends local and school events that involve the entire rural community and thus, are also chances to meet new, eligible men. With women finding shortages of marriageable husbands, taking a teaching post in another place becomes a way to find a domestic partner through a career. Similarly, in "Waiting Upon Sue" (Dec. 1875) by Shirley Penn, a 13-year old male teacher courts one of his students, Sue, who attends his school while visiting her uncle. Sue, because of her change in setting for education, also meets her future husband, with the common school becoming a site for not only education but marriage and completing what is considered a women's future path. These stories tend to end with the marriage plot, and do not indicate whether the woman continues teaching after her

wedding, suggesting that the trope of being "saved" from a bad situation (spinsterhood, poverty, etc.) by marriage is endemic to common school narratives.

Common school narratives promote teaching as a pathway to marriage, with few suggesting that the profession is a long-time option for a woman. The school stories use that reality and intentionally depict teaching in a rural common school as difficult work with limited pay and advancement to further the idea that a woman should teach for a while but ultimately leave the profession to marry. To make marriage more enticing, the teaching profession has to be portrayed as something difficult and unappealing. With its low pay, difficult students, and lack of resources, teaching in common students was, in reality, a hard occupation, and one that many women did not continue beyond a few years. For example, in Constance Fenimore Woolson's "Cicely's Christmas" (Dec. 1871), Cicley Wild moves from a district-school to teach in an urban school under the urging of her rural beau, who has moved to the city for improved professional opportunities. She assumes that he will marry her, but he becomes distant and distracted by city life. The story traces events of a ruined Christmas day after Seth breaks plans and Cicely finds herself wandering the city, lost. She struggles to find an open restaurant and watches as a potential suitor becomes engaged to another woman. The story ends, thankfully for Cicely, with Seth offering a desired gift of diamond fringed earrings and the promise to marry now that he has received a job promotion. The assumption is that Cicely, despite her teaching career, has little interest in continuing the profession, waits for a husband to marry her, and wants to move to the next phase in her life. She does not consider what her life could be if she remained a teacher and saved for those fringed earrings on her own. Marriage is still seen as the highest position to which a woman can rise.

Marriage could offer a way out of the hard work of teaching, but writers recognized that marriage was another kind of trap for women, and pushed for more opportunities beyond teaching. Teaching was often depicted as too difficult for a woman to take on for her entire life, with the undesirability of teaching a common school due to the position's hard work, low pay, and misbehaving or overpowering students. These rebellious students frequently appear in common school stories as burdens and negative influences that the teacher must overcome or defeat. Reformers often portrayed teaching as a worthy vocation to combat the difficult life-style. In Laura Oakwood's "Mary Lee's Dream" (Sept. 1873), Mary Lee plans for a man she does not love, Andrew Jones, to ask for her hand in marriage, which she will accept, "for a love-less marriage is better far than the cheerless life of the old-maid teacher" (162). At over 25, Mary Lee feels that her options are limited and she is willing to accept marriage over the hard life of a teacher and the stigma of spinsterhood. Andrew proposes, Mary Lee accepts, but she feels that her marriage is a "miserable bondage" and she grows irritable from her husband's constant worship, while their children fear Mary Lee and pity their father (163). Over time, Mary Lee's "intellect narrowed, and she became so addicted to scolding and fault-finding," that she finds herself wishing to be back in the schoolroom (163). Waking up, Mary Lee discovers it was a dream, a vision of the future, and she decides to remain a teacher, "toil[ing] on, finding new pleasure in her labor, content with the pure love of innocent hearts" (163). She is now content and looks to God for a later reward, thinking of all the minds she has molded (164). The moralizing story takes the conventions of a woman marrying to escape the toils of teaching and flips it on its head, with marriage depicted as the soul-killer and teaching as noble, intellectually-stimulating, and personally fulfilling work. While remaining honest about the difficulty of teaching, this story instead promotes teaching as a vocation and a duty that will see its reward

from God, as it was promoted by common school reformers. Reformers tried to draw male teachers to the low-paying and difficult job by publicizing it as vocational work rather than a profession. While a profession was a career that should pay well or lead to advanced opportunities, a vocation was service-oriented and morally driven. Reformers hoped that this emphasis would draw a higher caliber of men to teaching but only drew more women. This story shows how the vocational message was also used to keep women teaching when they may be unhappy or underpaid.

"Mary Lee's Dream" also includes this forward-thinking theme, "Men must open some other avenues for women to earn their bread or be forever content to take to their arms unloving wives" (162). Seen repeatedly in the fiction, as in Caroline Orne's "Olivia Weston," (1842), a girl takes a job as a schoolmistress in a country village to provide for herself or her struggling family and ultimately finds her solution (or salvation) in marriage. Yet, as Oakwood argues, women need more options for professions, so marriage is a love-match, not an escape. However, Oakwood fails to provide exactly what those options may be. Instead, the story's message focuses on making men aware of why their wives may be unsatisfied in their marriage. The story places the burden of working out this problem with men and only gives women the vocation of teaching as an (unsatisfying) conclusion.

Continuing this trend of promoting teaching as a morally upright position and seeking to dissuade against the use of the rod in the classroom, school stories do not accept women teachers as violent or needing violent means. For the women who choose to work as teachers, despite the poor working environment, they had to deal with high expectations for their behavior in the classroom. Common school stories idealize teachers and demonize those who resort to using corporal punishment. Instead, they promote either a hardworking woman or (in Speicher's

definition) a mother-teacher model, one frequently used in reform writings (138).[33] The mother-teacher is beloved by her students and teaching is a "prelude to mothering" (Speicher 138). She is like a Mary Poppins figure, with a "magical touch" (Speicher 139). The other figure, the hard-worker, like in Oakwood's text, will find reward in the afterlife or, as in Mary Irving's "The Teacher Trial and Reward" (1853), through witnessing her students' triumphs (Speicher 139). In Irving's "The Teacher Trial and Reward" (1853), despite becoming afraid of an unruly boy in her class, she asks for his help and to be his friend. He accepts and later apologizes for his behavior. Meeting years later, the teacher discovers that the boy has become successful because of her intervention in his life.

Stories that use corporal punishment demonstrate its horrors as a warning to readers and to work to maintain these two teacher identities. Corporal punishment is particularly detrimental to both the hardworking and mother-teacher models. It goes against ideas of women's natural motherly qualities and against bourgeois morality more generally. Fanny Fern's "Little Bessie or Little Prim's Model School" (1853) showcases the worst results when a teacher uses corporal punishment. An irritable and aptly named teacher, Miss Prim, grows angry when a four-year-old Bessie (who is only attending school because her widow mother has to go to work) hugs another student (331). Prim ties an apron over Bessie's face and smothers her cries until the sobs stop and Bessie is dead (332). Terrifyingly, Prim faces no punishment because Bessie's mother is poor (332). As "Bessie" illustrates, when teachers see punishment as the solution to every issue, causalities, both literal and to the positive relationship that could exist between teachers and students, will result.

The woman teacher also argues against corporal punishment used by other teachers, as in Mrs. James Neall's "Patty Dree, Schoolmarm" (1872), where the plucky new teacher Patty

disputes with town officials about using the rod in her class. The students are shocked by her kind treatment, calling them "young ladies and gentlemen" instead of the usual "varmints, barbarians, [and] hoydens" (545). However, the students believe that she will inevitably hit them, as it was a "gentle" female teacher who began the brutality that others followed: "She had been followed by a succession of school-marms, incapable and exasperating, and less tolerant to the pupils than the overbearing male tormentors they had experienced. Ignorance and discontent had ripened; and a new schoolmarm was the signal for open defiance" (546). Patty gains the trust of the students when she protects a boy from the beating of a town official, and the class learns that Patty will never hit them. This ensures their love for her.

"Patty Dree" combines the elements most commonly seen in common school stories for women, hard work to gain trust over unruly students, refusing corporal punishment, and the reward through romance ending in marriage. While women teachers want to be seen as authority figures, male students are reluctant to submit to women. As common school teachers were often not much older than their students, sometimes graduates of the same school, and diminutive in stature, they were not intimidating to the older boys in their classes. Female teachers were deliberately placed in classes during the farming season to avoid conflict with the strong and unruly male students. These boys do not want to be told what to do or be seen as having their wild ways "tamed" by a little country schoolmistress. "Patty Dree," for example, models this convention. While Patty tells the children stories and refuses to threaten them when misbehaving, one older boy and class leader, Hazel Sims, resents her, saying, "I sha'nt obey her, fur one: she ain't nothin' but a school-girl herself" (545). Patty is even a year younger than Hazel, who does not want a "girl" to rule over him. Despite her kindness to him, he refuses to believe in her authority until she stands up for him and protects him from abuse by another town authority

figure, Whapsy (547-8). After the town sends Whapsy away for beating Hazel, Patty turns the school into a model institution, under "wise and firm control" (550). While nursing Hazel's injuries, Patty and Hazen bond and eventually get engaged. Again, the common school story falls back on its marriage ending.

1.3.2 Women's Seminary Stories (or Boarding School Novels)

The closest American version of the British girl boarding school stories are academies (antebellum) and seminaries (postbellum), private schools for girls that accepted boarders or day pupils. In the seminary stories of the late nineteenth century, like in Meade's plots, a main girl character undergoes a great personal change over the course of the novel, usually involving both academic and social progress. She typically grows from interactions with a kind teacher or headmistress and overcomes the prejudice of a mean teacher and/or student. The main character usually begins as disliked and then earns the favorite or top girl status. The main character is frequently discriminated against for perceived cultural difference, class difference (manifested through clothing or other monetary markers), personality differences, or a combination, and eventually the conflict is successfully resolved among the schoolgirls. The novels usually have Christian themes (such as honestly, piety, making penance) and didactic reform. After the conflict is reconciled, the text usually concludes in a successful graduation or ceremony that shows off improved learning or behavioral development.

The seminary novel will also typically describe a variety of academic and social functions, including graduations, ceremonies, or theatricals, as well as a parties or events with boys from an adjacent boy's academy. Recurring tropes include: sneaking off to see boys, a masquerade or a play/performance, a student-led rebellion, and the death of a student. Seminary schoolgirls are more privileged than common school students and teachers, and can spend their

time with plays, parties, or rebelling over a perceived teachers' slight. However, they also continue the focus on a girl's marital potential—seeing her pursue or "crush" on local boys who may be a future husband. Yet, like Fern's "Little Bessie," the school is a place where actions have serious consequences, and girl students' behavior can be the difference between life and death, as I will discuss at length in Chapter 3. Like common school stories, the teacher maintains her important status. In seminary stories, there is usually a kind teacher or headmistress who greatly influences the protagonist; the headmistress can also be largely absent from the story or all-observing. A kind teacher is also usually contrasted with a mean teacher, who is unfair to the protagonist or biased against the protagonist or students. For example, Spofford's *Hester Stanley's* angelic Miss Marks is beloved, while Miss Brown stereotypes and abuses Hester. In Anna Hamlin Weikel's *Betty Baird* (1906), the headmistress is related to the protagonist and observes her from afar, contrasted with the evil Miss Leet, who favors Betty's nemesis and spies on the girls, a grievous offense in school stories.

While the school story genre broadly appeals to readers for its depiction of social interactions among girls, the seminary genre speaks to a privileged middle-class experience. Most of the seminary stories take place at a fictionalized New England or East Coast school. Most of the schoolgirls are also from the East. However, outsiders, either culturally (from the South or another country) or by class (a poor student usually accepted through personal connection), can be main or minor characters. The outsider's trajectory can either be social acceptance by her peers or an expulsion from the school because she does not conform their behavior to match expectations. In seminary stories, the primary motivating factor for the protagonist is usually pressure from family or peers to socialize appropriately, succeed academically, or follow other cultural expectations. For example, in Weikel's *Betty Baird*, the

social hierarchy of the girls—built around their family reputation, status symbols (clothing and hair style), and seniority among students—replicates life outside the school, where power is built on social capital. Other students or the entire student body may also experience a moral or social change because of a main character or an influential teacher.

The main character is frequently either elevated above the other girls based on her appearance, manners, intelligence, or some combination of admirable attributes or is depicted as an "imperfect" girl figure who needs to change over the course of the novel.[34] This "imperfect girl" is not necessarily a "naughty" girl (deliberately mean or "bad") but rather a girl who displays different types of behavior and personality than her peers. Both types of girls are depicted as struggling with their development into adulthood. Girls' boarding school stories frequently depict a girl discovering the "proper" behavior and place for her future as a woman.[35] However, by depicting girls who need to change/reform, girls are clearly not always little caretakers or mothers; girl characters had personalities that made them dynamic. There is something special in the girls that captures both the reader's and the character's peers' interest.

Seminary stories often display many of the same character types. The typical schoolgirls found in a boarding school story are: the school pet or a young "angelic" student, the smartest girl in school, the most beautiful girl in school, an older student mentor/friend, and the enemy of the protagonist. Some of these features can also overlap in one character.

As seminary stories primarily deal with class or cultural conflict, the girls may structure their social lives around hierarchies (based on class and familial status) that replicate those from their personal lives and which the text usually critiques. The characters are frequently judged based on family connections, breeding, and appearance, not their character. The story usually resolves this conflict with the protagonist's inner character (or a moral reformation) making her

worthy of her classmates' affection and respect. Outsider characters can typically be the story's protagonist or an antagonist. For example, in Louisa Tuthill's 1848 novel, *A Boarding School Girl*, a rich but gauche Southern student, Arethusa Slam, rejects educational values as for "bluestockings," misreads her Northern peers and gets expelled. In contrast, the title character of *Betty Baird* experiences the criticism of her classmates because she is poorer than they are and from a rural community. They view her as a "country bumpkin" with unfashionable clothes and only gradually accept her after an influential visitor praises her. Finally, in Nora Perry's *Hope Benham* (1894), Perry flips the genre's expected convention on its head, as the rich girl is rejected by her peers for being too showy and spoiled by her family; in contrast, the poor girl with a strong personality is widely beloved. Hope Benham's father is new money, but she is well-liked at school for her sensitive and fastidious nature. In contrast, the text's plot centers on reforming a girl from a prestigious Boston society family, Dorothea Dering, who, despite her wealthy family, is blunt, vulgar, and largely unaware of any fault in her manners. Her sheltered upbringing has made her unable to adapt to the expectations of the New York boarding school. Through her friendship with Hope, Dorothea gradually understands how to change her behavior.

School story antagonists are generally depicted as needlessly cruel, jealous, foolish, or otherwise prejudiced against the protagonist to better highlight the positive transformation of the protagonist in the face of such adversity. In Tuthill's *A Boarding School Girl*, Marion, along with her best friend Kate Murray, serve as the text's antagonists to the main character, Frances, as they decide to make their roommate's life difficult. Marion repeatedly makes misguided choices throughout the text, and Kate is heavily motivated by class and familial connections in deciding with whom to socialize. School story antagonists are typically students in competition with the protagonist for friends or grades. A mean teacher may also be an antagonist. The school story

antagonist is either reformed to befriend the protagonist or dismissed by the narrator as too flawed—lacking in manners, sense, or personal character—to make amends with the protagonist. However, their perceived threat to the social order is lessened if the author makes their behavior seem ridiculous, as Tuthill does with Marion.

In addition to internalizing their outward behavior, girls in school stories are deeply concerned with their decisions about who they will become in their future, as displayed through their interactions with teachers and schoolmates. The main character (or another problematic figure) usually needs to reform their behavior to social and gender norms by the novel's end. School, therefore, is a space for friendship and some misbehaving, but these transgressions eventually need to be corrected and the characters atone. Girls who do not reform are either sent home or ostracized from the group. Nineteenth-century seminary school stories typically end with some form of acceptance for the main character's future, whether in marriage or an accepted female profession like teaching.

Part of the girls' socialization in seminary novels deal with forming appropriate, class-based relationships with their peers. For the girls, this means adhering not only to the rules of the school, but to the social codes amongst them. Surveillance, a technique used by teachers to watch over students, is widely disparaged by schoolgirls and being a "spy," or a tattler going to the teacher, is amongst the worst possible offenses for a girl. However, as teachers could not be everywhere in a boarding school environment, school girls were used to monitor their peers. Girls who monitor or spy were heavily critiqued in the literature as breaking their peers' trust.

Unlike common schools where all action happens in the classroom, boarding schools feature private or communal spaces for the students to gather without teachers. Girls who betray what happens in these spaces to teachers have broken the bonds of their peers. For example, in

Tuthill's novel, the girls reject surveillance and view "spying" as one of the worst offenses that a girl can commit against another. A student, Bell first encourages main character Frances to break the rules and visit her dormitory wing called Massydony, as the girls do not follow that rule and moreover, "Nobody tells tales in Massydony" (18). Bell informs Frances that she can break the rules without fear because the other girls have an understanding that they will not tell on each other. However, Bell will need to teach Frances about how to "maneuver" in the school as "it takes a deal of time to plan how to escape the prying eyes of Mrs. MacOver and her myrmidons" (19). Despite not having to worry about the other girls, it still requires effort to learn how to avoid the headmistress and other teachers. Mrs. MacOver's name even implies oversight, looking "over" the girls. The "myrmidons" refer to a group of people from Homer's *Iliad* but can also refer to a group of faithful servants, law enforcement, or even sycophants.[36] By Bell's tone, we can infer that she sees the loyal teachers more as a gang of sycophantic enforcers, who are on the watch for what they can report back to their leader. While this may be an exaggeration, Bell draws a line between the students and those who may report on them, the teachers.

The schoolgirls attempt to assert their collected authority to have one myrmidon, an assistant teacher, Miss Dracy, removed for being a spy. Bell spearheads the action against Dracy by bringing a petition to have Dracy fired. Dracy, a faithful teacher, is unfairly accused and when Frances defends her, she is accused of being a spy herself. With this insult, Frances slaps and pushes Bell out of the room (35). That Bell accuses Frances of spying and Frances reacts so strongly—to physically hit Bell—is a clear sign to readers that spying and tattling is a serious crime among schoolmates. However, Frances' refusal to tell on Bell and the other girls redeems her in their eyes; they see that she is not a spy or a rat. Instead, suffering through a week-long solitary confinement, she becomes a hero for suffering rather than betraying her peers, even

those who "injured her" (40). Spying is treated as a betrayal of trust because seminary novels teach how the appropriate ways to socialize with peers. These novels want to teach girls how to interact with their peers before they reach adulthood and forming trust-based relationships is crucial.

Finally, seminary novels do not depict much in-class learning, but rather academic interactions with teachers or descriptions of studies are used to further a plotline. For example, two characters may compete for social superiority based on an in-class recitation. Nonetheless, these scenes of learning speak to larger cultural and educational norms in America, and the expectations for an American schoolgirl in the late nineteenth century. Academics are usually used to establish superiority in some students based on who is "first" in class, and can be also be used as markers for development. Academic challenges or contests, such as the one in *Hester Stanley*, are also used by teachers to motivate students to improve.[37] The students, too, view academics as important so long as they impact the social relations or hierarchy between students in some way, i.e. establishing one student as superior over another. The novels do not treat academics as important for their own sake or the intellectual development of the girls; to do so would mean suggesting that school could lead to a career or a woman with a mind of her own.

Anna Weikel's *Betty Baird* differs from previous boarding-school story examples as it sets more of its scenes inside the physical classroom. However, the novel still uses academic learning primarily as a vehicle for plot movement and character differentiation, not to comment on girls' education more broadly. The classroom is established as a space of competition, with learning used as a tool to separate students from themselves and even teachers, as Betty competes in a Latin recitation against her nemesis, the judgmental and petty Miriam. The students do not believe that Betty has the Latin experience she claims and want to see Miriam

beat her in a Latin class recitation used as an informal competition, as they will both have to memorize and recite a passage in front of other students. Notably, anticipation builds within the school so much that the entire school will attend the contest, facilitated by the Latin class taking place in the main school-room, the largest classroom space. The schoolgirls are eager to see Miriam beat Betty, to see the "impertinent 'new girl' put down" (90). By holding the contest in this large classroom, Weikel uses a routine academic activity (recitation) as the climax to a plot point and its resolution will change how Betty is viewed by the other girls. During her recitation, Miriam "stumbled and stuttered through the lines," but she still gave one of her best performances (93). Betty, while initially nervous to perform in front of the school, recites with a "clear and melodious" voice as she is stirred forward by the lines that she genuinely loves (94). Unlike Miriam, Betty receives no corrections and is the clear winner of the challenge. She repeats to the school that she has read four books of Virgil to clearly establish that she was truthful. The girls change their opinions of Betty, reflected in calling her pretty and tall. A popular classmate even lauds Betty. The girls' congratulations through physical compliments reflect their preoccupation with appearance as an indicator of status. Miriam, who continues to resent Betty, subsequently loses her popularity as her friends begin to side with Betty. Competition between students and rewards of merit, for example, can be viewed as a positive strategy to generate collective student interest and instill hard work, as Miriam is motivated to work harder on her Latin than she has previously, and asks the best Latin students to help her to prepare.

1.3.3 College Novels

With the opening of Vassar College in 1865 marking one of the first women's colleges in the United States, the subgenre of women's college novels was born, written between 1865 to

1940. Both Shirley Marchalonis (*College Girls: A Century in Fiction* [1995]) and Sherrie A. Inness (*Intimate Communities: Representation and Transformation in Women's College Fiction, 1895-1910* [1995] have written comprehensive studies on American girl college fiction.[38] Marchalonis analyzes how this fiction conceptualized a new, separate space for women, while Inness focuses on figure of the college girl herself. While Inness describes the variety of scenes in college novels, she also points out that some plot features were common: "studying is given scant attention, while playing in the championship basketball game, concocting a batch of fudge, producing a class play, or joining a literary or social club might occupy a whole chapter. Life outside of school is glossed over" (13-14). Like seminary novels, college novels also prioritize scenes about the students' social lives, but do this to encourage an image of a multi-faceted student. Both Marchalonis and Inness argue that college novels depict college as a liminal space where girls have advanced opportunities but that this is only possible within the confines of the college space and time. As Marchalonis describes it, college fiction reflects changes in attitudes about college women and their authors: "The pioneer narratives of the early years gave way to the celebration of a special life, then to series books that exploited the women's college background, and finally to another, far less positive, set of serious examinations of the college experience" (1, 3). Marchalonis and Inness both emphasize plots and themes, while my approach is historically grounded, considering how the novels reflect the lived-experiences of college girls and the concerns of the writers. However, I agree with Marchalonis that most college novels were written about all-female spaces, despite the fact that most women attended co-educational colleges, because these spaces attracted the most attention and interest (3). Co-educational colleges were more controversial to the public-at-large who were concerned with women

student's impact on their male classmates. Instead, readers wanted access inside the special space of a women's college, and writers could more closely control the image of the college girl.

Much of women's college fiction was focused on favorably portraying both women's colleges and college students to encourage potential students and maintain a positive public presence. According to Inness, the readership of college girl novels were girls age 14-21; readers were also girls who were considering college and could afford its tuition (upper or midle-class girls) (15). College graduates also wanted to read college fiction to remind them about their past experiences or their alma mater (15).[39] In fact, many authors of college novels were women graduates, who based their novels on some part of their personal experience, until the 1890s when novels focused on fictional colleges (Inness 15-16). After the 1890s, the college novels were read more widely for a "description of life at women's colleges in general" (Inness 16). Readers, then, use college novels to imagine, reminisce, or try to understand both the college experience and the college girl herself. The texts themselves, perhaps more than any other subgenre in this study, showcase how their characters are readers of the genre. As Inness explains, "College fiction constructed itself as a valid way to learn about school life by describing fictional characters who themselves read and profit from college girls" (14). Using the example of *Jane Allen of the Sub-Team* (1917), Inness explains how Jane uses her reading as basis for her behavior and follows the model of a popular college student character (14). However, before girls could use college fiction as their model, the genre first had to conceive of itself and its main character.

In the 1870s, the college girl was still a nebulous figure—in the minority of her peers and venturing into an unknown experience. Parents were fearful of how college would influence their daughters and impact her future—both positively or negatively. Using a study of seven Vassar

students, Dr. Edward Clarke's *Sex in Education* (1873) became a landmark text on women and college—arguing that academics hurt women's health, leading to anxiety and constitutional fragility. Opponents of women's colleges held up this as an example as to why women should stay in the home. In one of the earliest college novels, Olive San Louie Anderson's *An American Girl and Her Four Years in a Boys' College* (1878), the characters read Clarke's text and find it appalling. However, one of the students later commits suicide, blaming an "inherited tendency" (i.e. genetic), but seemingly proving Clarke's point (Marchalonis 10). The book uses this to critique Clarke's influence, as it causes the community to blame the suicide on stress from her studies or an unrequited romance (165). Instead, the text aims to use a strong female character to advertise the positive potential of women students. Thus, some early fictional women college students were written as overachieving, successful students to compensate for Clarke's negative ideas.

The early college girl, described by Inness as the "all-around girl," acts as an outstanding role model for college women (meant to contest Clarke's conceptions of women college students), while also suggesting that college women would still follow conventionally acceptable roles. She is both subversive in that she takes on leadership roles and shows that she has a mind of her own but is still non-threatening. As Inness explains, "The same texts that support such socially transgressive behavior as women pursing higher education, athletics, and student government positions, also caution the reader that these activities are only permissible for women within the environment of college" (10). In response to 1880s-1890s statistics about women not marrying and backlash to having women in classes at co-educational institutions, college girls began acting in more clearly feminine-coded ways (Inness 7). The all-around girl character developed to both show that girls in college were healthy, intelligent, and strong—in

direct contrast to Clarke—but were also feminine and would marry after they graduated college. She was in direct contrast to the New Woman, a college-educated, white, middle-class who rejects feminine ideals (Inness 101). Instead, the all-around girl is the model for college girls, "act[ing] as the cultural norm of the desirable behavior for a college woman" (Inness 99).

The all-around girl can be unconventional in college—taking on leadership roles like going out for sports or running for club or class president—but this must end when she graduates. As Marchalonis describes it, college is a particularly rewarding and enjoyable "green world" for women because they can participate in these kind of roles. She defines the "green world" (referring to a magic forest) as a place "with its own rules; it offered women more room to define themselves than they could find anywhere else" (4). However, this is also a limited-time opportunity, because it will eventually end. College novels are often vague about what their graduates will do after college if they are not getting married. Such characters can be seen as "adrift" after they graduate because they have lost a community and their sense of independence (Inness 99, 106). As a result, girls will sometimes fill their time before marriage by taking a role on-campus or in an alumni organization, like Elinor in Julia A. Schwartz's *Elinor's College Career* (1906). For example, in Margaret Warde's *Betty Wales Decides* (1911), Betty Wales goes back to work on campus before marrying, but this still just a stop-gap, not a permanent position. Girls are usually described as sad to graduate or desiring to return to their alma mater, because this was a time in their lives that focused on an all-women community and opportunities that they do not have when they return to the "real world." For many girls, this time is depicted as the best in their lives.

While in college, the all-around girl does well academically (but is not a "grind" or someone who studies exclusively), participates in sports or activities, and is well-liked. This

character also follows specific codes for expected behavior: she "perpetuated a myth of the 'natural' course of a student in a women's college that encouraged readers to be only mildly aggressive in academics, to maintain a stereotypical feminine appearance, and to view marriage as a necessary, if not appealing, stage in a woman's life" (Inness 98). These expectations suggest the high standards that college girls were expected to maintain. She had to walk a thin line between being social, feminine, and academically successful. In *Betty Wales Decides*, juggling multiple activities and academics is praised as "one of the most valuable things you can learn at this college" (71-72).

Unlike Inness and Marchalonis, I believe that college novels are not only "green worlds" but that they also acknowledge the anxieties and pressures of academic work and a college career. This distinction means that college is not only a temporal space where girls can safely engage in unconventional or leadership roles, make friends and go to parties. The all-girl environment also has its drawbacks. The students put pressure on themselves and their classmates to succeed. The students undertake real work here. Suggesting that girls face pressure to do well academically from themselves, their peers, and their families means that the college experience holds real weight in girls' futures. While college girls felt expected to conform after college, taking on work and pressure was a newfound experience worth recognizing—one that would later connect to women taking on more professional roles and careers. As I discuss in chapter 4, *Eleanor's College Career* showcases both parental pressure and peer pressure for the girls to succeed. Myra, for example, feels personal disappointment when she fails a class, but feels even more shamed by her university peers. While her focus had been on having fun, she also learns that academics are a key expectation of her time at college. In contrast, in Anna Chapin Ray's *Sidney at College* (1908), a studious student, Janet Leslie, has to join a club and learn to balance her

schoolwork and academics; she had been criticized for being too much of a "grind" or a "dig" before this. While the novels suggest that this balance should be easy for girls to achieve, I argue that moments of "learning," for Myra and Janet show that this balance is not as natural as it is depicted. In Helen Dawes Brown's *Two College Girls* (1886), the two main characters change each other—one learning to enjoy herself and the other to study more. This common plot line reflects that the all-around girl is not a "natural" personality, but, as I argue, it must be worked at. Indeed, the all-around girl has to work to maintain this "extraordinary" ability—to be good at everything and be able to manage it all. Even today, we see pressure on high school or college students to be "well-rounded," meaning academically successful, active in clubs or sports, and spending time doing community service.

Part of this anxiety is built on the fictional college girl's fear of expulsion because it will mean personal and familial embarrassment, as well as the end to the college community and any future professional work. As shown in *Elinor's College Career*, the second-generation Elinor feels tremendous pressure from her peers, her mother, and even her teachers, as they constantly remind her that she represents the college with her actions or choice to dismiss college norms. They expect her especially to be an "all-around" success. As Inness illustrates, "The all-around girl must maintain high academic standards, not for personal ambition or to gain the praise of faculty members and parents, but because her achievements reflect on the institution of women's higher education" (102). However, I argue that despite the novels' depiction of successful all-around girls, they also reflect the anxiety that the girls felt at being forced to balance these roles, whether they wanted to or not, to not disappoint anyone. For example, this anxiety is shown by girls hiding from others when they receive a bad mark or crying over a missed answer in class. College girls, both real and fictional, had to constantly represent their colleges and maintaining

this high level of pressure did take a toll. While Marchalonis claims that writers were forced to insist that "college girls were just like other girls," they were, in fact, markedly different (4).

I argue that the fictional college girl reinforced social norms and patriarchal hegemony. She was primarily Anglo-American, Christian, and middle or upper-class. Most of the girls who attend the all-women's colleges (which were exclusive and more expensive than co-educational schools) could afford them, but some were scholarship students or girls who had taught to raise money for their tuition and expenses. Marchalonis argues that "wealth and class are seldom keys to success in the fictional college worlds, which do not promote exclusivity. It is certainly possible, in an America that foregrounded assimilation rather than ethnicity, that these young women, fictional or real, might serve as models for those aiming at upward mobility" (5). Marchalonis focuses on the narratives' tendency to pair up girls of different class or regional backgrounds. She reads novels like *Two College Girls*, in which a western girl and a New England girl learn from one another, as showing that college is a place for "mind opening" (17). However, I see these regional and class differences as limiting what college and its purported democratic admissions can do; these girls are all ultimately still part of and reinforce the same social class. Whether they are from different regions, they are still rich and white. If they are from different classes, this is only a limited time of interaction. Including "poor" or scholarship girls is meant to signify that college is democratic but, as Inness explains, "just because a few poor girls enter college does not mean that college is equally accessible to rich and poor" (Inness 111). Instead, the inclusion of the "scholarship girl" and the suggestion of her "upward mobility" by attending college is meant to assuage readers that "all classes have access to social mobility" (Inness 112). She is largely a token figure, meant to represent opportunity, but she does not actually achieve more than her rich counterparts. Her presence does not explain how limited

scholarships actually were or how long she had to teach to earn money. While Marchalonis sees these novels as indicating that girls of different classes can learn from one another, I argue that this learning is not long-lasting and does not go far enough. The girls may differ in class, at times, but they do not differ in race or cultural backgrounds. The college novels of this period are unwilling to depict girls' who would truly struggle to fit in, African-Americans, Catholics, Jews, for example, and instead focus on a "safe" assimilation, which is still only limited to a girls' time in college.

By setting their stories in their previous colleges or similar fictional boarding schools, many authors of college novels limited their representation to a more privileged vision of America. Many authors of school stories articulated their feelings about the future of women's education through their fiction. Authors of women's college novels were frequently reflecting on their own time in college, and all authors would have attended a form of elementary education. In contrast, common school stories were more often used to further reformers ideas about issues like corporal punishment and promote the roles of teacher, mother, or teacher-mother to women readers. While I can unite school stories based on their settings and repeated conventions, my study of the genre is enhanced by reviewing the story's historical period, which saw common school reform, the founding of normal schools, and funding for women's colleges. The next chapter will reflect on the events that precipitated the fiction and briefly discuss moments where the history and fiction align.

CHAPTER 2. GROWING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Lucia B. Downing remembers with astonishing detail the day-to-day activities of her first teaching position in the Keeler District School in Vermont in 1882 when she was only fourteen-years-old:

> From nine to twelve and from one to four I was supposed to spend in the schoolhouse, and I can't see how I ever managed to put in the time—six long hours every day—with four pupils!... And when each pupil had read and ciphered and spelled and passed the water and recessed and recessed and passed the water and spelled and a lesson in geography and read and spelled, there was usually an hour before I dared dismiss them… Parents, what few there were, I suppose were glad to be relieved of the care of their offspring, and no one ever suggested a shortening of the hours. I had to earn my salary! (Finkelstein 180).

Despite popularized images of a crowded one-room schoolroom, Downing only had four pupils and struggled to fill the time. She dared not "knit or crochet" on the job, nor did she sing or draw well (180). Instead, she did her best to teach her pupils and take up their day—recognizing that her job was also to watch the children while their parents worked. This frank view of a day in the life of a teacher is not what a reader typically experiences in a school story; there is too much focus on the schooling itself and on the lives of the majority of the people attending school—the poor and middle-class.

While many women's school stories reflect a privileged, separate education from men, the reality for many girls was that their families could not afford elite Eastern women's seminaries or colleges. Instead, the average American girl's education greatly differed from the

fiction, with its emphasis on female friendships, school activities, and personal—not intellectual—development. In reality, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century women students were seeking advanced educational opportunities (such as college) and were often met with resistance from those more concerned with women's impact on male students' classroom experience than on widening women's experience. Thus, to establish the historical background for school stories, this chapter will review the broad historical periods in women's education, the factors contributing to women's educational expansion, and the shifting public opinion on women's evolving educational rights. To best represent all types of American women, I will consider what educational opportunities were available to women based on their class, race, and geographic location, as well as to compare how the school story genre represents and departs from most women's lived experience.

The chapter's primary purpose is to explain how specific types of schooling developed for girls and the trends at these schools, including demographics, types of socialization, and the expectations for students. To do this, the chapter begins with a broad historical overview and defining of terms, then discusses the educational movements in different periods. The chapter will cover: private schools (academies and seminaries), common and high schools, normal schools, and colleges. It will also consider women's domestic lives and/or careers, as much of the discussion around women's education dealt with how a woman would use her education after graduating. Finally, women will be considered in their educational roles as both students and teachers because of the interconnectedness of these identities for women in the period, as women attended teacher-training normal schools to fill a growing need for teachers and many women's seminary teachers advocated for and influenced their girl pupils to become teachers or open their own schools. Ultimately, this chapter serves to illustrate the shifts that made the nineteenth

century a time of rapid expansion for women's education. It also helps to understand the education of school story authors and, with their own biases, backgrounds, and motivations for depicting girls' school lives, the types of experiences that they left off the page.

2.1 Establishing Types of Early Schooling in America for Boys and Girls

Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century schools in America do not neatly conform to the terms of private and public that define today's school categories. As David Tyack and Elisabeth Hansot describe it in their history of coeducation in America, the word "public" would eventually "designate a school that was free, supported by taxation, and controlled by clearly designated public authorities (usually a mix of state and local)" (121). Simply put, contemporary public schools in America are free for students (excepting possible fees or costs for uniforms, supplies, etc.) and are funded through property taxes, whereas private schools require tuition and other expenses and may be religiously-affiliated. In the early national period (1780 to 1830), schools in America were not free, run by the government, or primarily funded though property taxes. Instead, a child's education varied greatly based on a variety of factors. While the family's class, race, and religion matter significantly, regional differences in the North, South, and Midwest, and whether a family lived in an urban or rural area also impacted the educational options for their children. School options varied widely and included dame schools (taught by women in the community in their homes), groups of families in a community who formed "subscription schools," expensive adventure (venture) schools or private teachers, rural district schools, and charity schools (Kaestle 3-4).[40] Pre-dating public schools in America are common schools, but these were not necessarily free and primarily apply to elementary education. Education historian Carl F. Kaestle defines a common school as "an elementary school intended to serve all children in an area" (xi). He contrasts the common school with an "expensive

independent school," as well as free charity schools, and further makes a distinction between common schools and "common pay schools" which had more expensive tuitions (xi).

In the early national period, white children usually attended some form of elementary schooling, though urban and rural schooling varied greatly (Speicher 8). Most white children in rural areas of the Northeast and Midwest attended district schools, which were locally run, taught by itinerant teachers, and "financed by some combination of property taxes, fuel contributions, tuition payments, and state aid" (Kaestle 13). Parents had a great deal of power in the district school system, as they controlled the selection of the teacher and their children's textbooks, subjects taught, and the length of school sessions. They also usually rotated boarding the teacher within their homes (Kaestle 22). In contrast, in the South, parents either hired a teacher for their "old-field school" (what we think of as a log cabin school) or the schoolmaster picked his own location and tuition; these limited options resulted in a smaller number of children attending school in the South (Kaestle 13). Rural school sessions and children's attendance largely rotated around farming seasons. Overall, a community's primary educational concern was the cost and maintaining control (Kaestle 21).[41] In contrast, children in urban areas were largely taught in common pay schools, where parents were charged quarterly fees, or at dame schools, which were inexpensive, run from the woman's home, and prepared small children for either further schooling or domestic tasks (Kaestle 30, Tyack and Hansot 19).[42] Those who could not afford the school fees would send their child to complete an apprenticeship or attend a church charity school (Kaestle 31). Finally, the wealthiest parents sent their children to boarding schools or hired private tutors (Kaestle 31).

While girls received some schooling, it was informal forms at best, since many schools were not open to girls (Tyack and Hansot 46). They were primarily educated in the dame schools.

Boys would typically continue from a dame school to a local district school, but for many girls, the dame school was the extent of their education (Tyack and Hansot 19). Most girls could not attend Latin grammar schools, but a minority of privileged girls were attending private venture schools, which later became academies (Tyack and Hansot 18, 19). While a few of these private academies did exist for girls before the American Revolution, they grew significantly in size and number throughout the nineteenth century.[43] While most children saw at least some school-time, it was not always consistent or at all thorough, especially since it was viewed as secondary to their responsibilities at home and the economic demands on the farm.

2.2 Early Education for Women in America

With seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Anglo-Protestant American women firmly rooted within the domestic sphere as mothers and caretakers, their educational training was mainly focused on domestic skills and only gradually spread to a more formalized education taught by women themselves. Barbara Miller Solomon, in her landmark history of women in American higher education, explains that, in the eighteenth century, Anglo-American women expanded their duties "within family enterprises to include management of dry goods shops, tavern keeping, furniture making, printing, and publishing, among other activities" (3). Women could also work as midwives, and run family businesses in the event of a death (or prolonged absence) of a spouse (Solomon 3). Beyond acquiring domestic skills, girls in New England were also required to learn reading and writing as part of the domestic economy (Solomon 3). As favor grew for public education over what parents could provide at home, dame teachers were formally hired to teach young children (Tyack and Hansot 20). Dame schools introduced children to literacy, simple religious texts, and some basic arithmetic, as well as kitting and sewing for girls (Tyack and Hansot 19). Dame schools also essentially served as a childcare

service—the children were looked after while their parents worked. What were once in-home dame schools gradually evolved into public summer schools for girls, leading to a significant shift in the educating of girls and the professionalizing of women teachers (Tyack and Hansot 14).

In rural communities, women teachers moved from the home into the classroom in the summer months, when most men and boys were working on farms. Women taught girls in the school buildings in the summer for a variety of reasons, though economic cost was foremost. The community did not have to use expensive firewood to heat school buildings in the summer months and, most importantly, female teachers were cheaper to employ than male teachers (Tyack and Hansot 20). Older boys also worked the farms in the summer and could not cause disciplinary problems for women teachers (Kaestle 19). Later educational leader Horace Mann and others argued for women teachers on the basis that women were the best caregivers for children and women gradually became accepted by the educational institutions.

John Locke and Mary Wollstonecraft heavily influenced ideas about education, as well as how a girl's education impacted her marriage-ability. Enlightenment thinker John Locke argued that a child was born with his/her mind as a blank slate (a "tabula rasa") that learned from his/her environment. The "tabula rasa" concept stressed the importance of the person doing the instruction, and forms of education that would both instruct and delight. As Seth Lerer explains, "By denying the possibility of innate ideas, Locke and his followers transformed the child into a product of his or her education" (105). If all children were blank slates, then a girl's and boy's minds were equal. Mary Wollstonecraft also argued that women must be educated to develop fully, and promoted co-education between boys and girls (Solomon 10). However, public opinion on education for women centered around marriage. While some recognized that

education would help women in communities who would never marry (due to a lack of eligible men), the primary concern was that an education "might unfit a girl for her subservient role as a wife" (Solomon 6). Instead, the rise of the belief in a woman's training to become a "lady" in England spread to America and the focus for educating girls was to on being "polished but congenial" instead of trained in skills or as intellectuals (Solomon 6). The ratification of the Constitution in 1789, leaving women without a nationally-protected right to vote, cemented that American male leaders did not want or envision the generation of educated women that was to come (Solomon 11).

2.3. A Turning-Point: Advocating for Women as Students and as Teachers: 1790-1860

Between 1790 and 1850, women's education in the America experienced a significant period of growth in both coeducational schools and private, single-sex schools. Early compulsory attendance laws, the common school revival movement, and the first normal schools in Massachusetts changed the way children were being educated, and moved women's position as educators forward. Educational innovators, such as Emma Willard and Mary Lyon, were creating women's seminaries and pushing for women to attend these more advanced schools and to work as teachers.[44]

In the early nineteenth century, girls also began to regularly attend common schools, most of which were one-room schools (Tyack and Hansot 46). The expansion into co-education for women happened rapidly.[45] By the middle of the century, girl students nearly equaled boy pupils in common schools, and by 1890, girls outnumbered boys in high school graduates (Tyack and Hansot 46, Solomon 46). However, expansion varied across the North and South, as academies for girls sprung up across the Northeast while the South was largely slower to educate women in schools (Solomon 21).[46] The growth in Northern academies continued steadily until

about the 1850s when more normal schools (for teacher-training) and public high schools were available to students (Solomon 23-24). This expansion of education influenced all classes of girls in America as both students and teachers, though the extent of their educational experience varied on public attitudes, finances, and access.

The catalyst for change in women's education came from a combination of factors related to traditional values based on religion, marriage, and motherhood. Women's educational expansion not coincidentally arose alongside the Second Great Awakening, during which women found more responsibility in the Church as a means for personal growth and promoted the idea of the Christian wife and mother. The concept of republican motherhood, the idea that mothers should shepherd her children's upbringing into true and civic-minded individuals, contributed to the view that women needed a formal education, as mothers were needed to raise "virtuous citizens in the new nation" (Solomon 15-6). Linda Kerber analyzes the role of women and state in Enlightenment texts, and its relationship to the republican ideology developed in America, defining the republican mother "as a "political role for women. It made use of the classic formulation of the Spartan Mother who raised sons to sacrifice themselves to the good of the *polis*" (188). The role of motherhood in America then was both domestic and political (Kerber 203). Americans needed women to educate their children as republicans, with Kerber explaining that "the notion that mothers perform a political function is not silly; it represents the recognition that political socialization takes place at an early age, and that the patterns of authority experienced in families are important factors in the general political culture" (204). Thus, the recognition of the role of the republican mother (to educate and socialize children) had a prominent role in furthering support for women's education; just as the republican mother

showed how women could combine politics and domesticity, it also proved that domesticity could be combined with advanced education.

While public views on women's education were primarily concerned with whether a girl's education would impede her from marrying, the overabundance of unmarried women in some communities began to shift public thought to seeing education as a solution. Solomon points to the demographic changes in "older sections of the country (except in the South)" that led to more open-minded opinions on educating local women, "Where men were marrying later, or where men's venture west or to sea put women in the majority, many females had little chance of marrying. Their families understood the utilitarian advantages of educating such daughters, who as schoolteachers could support themselves and alleviate financial pressures on the family" (16). By educating women who were unlikely to find husbands, a family could create a financially-independent woman, who would not have to rely on her parents to finance her adulthood.

In addition to religious and economic motivations, women also began to attend school and work outside the home as a result of nineteenth-century industrialization, and this in turn lead to the development of more time in women's lives before marriage.[47] With industrialization reducing the time spent on domestic labor, women had greater leisure time or the opportunity to seek employment outside the home (Solomon 16-17). Solomon described this as a "period between girlhood and marriage… in which female youth could pursue a variety of interests and employments" (31). Middle- and lower-class girls sought work in textiles and manufacturing factories (Solomon 17, 31). Northern upper-class girls were expected to spend this time "socializing," and some were even sent to female academies to fill time or develop (Solomon 17). After academies, wealthy young women were not expected to work; they instead participated in

charity work or other "benevolent activities" (Solomon 32).[48] In contrast, other graduates of academies "who could not afford to be 'ladies' usually embarked on schoolteaching" (Solomon 32). Women's newfound careers as school teachers was one direct result of girls' spending more time in structured school environments.

The rise of teaching as one of the few socially-acceptable occupations for women resulted from a number of social factors: greater numbers of girls attending public schools and in turn, needing teachers; teaching's lack of social or financial status; and a lack of firm regulations to become a teacher (Solomon 32). As an extension of the principals guiding republican motherhood, women were viewed as suitable to teach small children.[49] However, women primarily became teachers out of financial need, to support themselves or contribute to their family household, as we see of the teacher Miss Brown in Spofford's *Hester Stanley.* However, women also took on the job because men were unwilling. For men, teaching was low-paying and a last-resort or a job for a college student before becoming a professional (Solomon 32). Women were willing to teach and cheaper to employ, as they were paid much less than their male teachers. Women's schooling and teaching became, for many, part of a cyclical process: "Girls not only attended district schools but taught in them; then some used the money they earned to attend academies, where they studied and taught. In time some opened schools of their own" (Solomon 17). Lower-class women, like college student Ruth in *Elinor's College Career,* would later teach in public schools to save up to pay for their college tuitions, often leaving college to teach and returning once they raised enough funds. While Southern girls were largely not permitted to teach, many graduates of Northern female academies followed in the paths of their own teachers (Solomon 21). Driven by "economic necessity, religious zeal, and intellectual curiosity," women teachers at elementary schools outnumbered men by the end of the nineteenth

century (Solomon 17, 33).[50] Ultimately, women's educational growth in this period is directly correlated to views on religion, republican motherhood, the growing need for a greater population of teachers, and, of course, marriage suitability.

2.4. Entering the Academy: Women as College Students: 1860-1920

Not long after the first women's right convention, the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848, women began actively campaigning for admission into college. While some colleges were open to women before 1848 (notably, the co-educational Oberlin College), most refused to admit women. The solution for many colleges seeking to avoid integration was to open a women's college, creating "privately sponsored coordinate female college attached to an institution for men" (Solomon 47). Many women's academies also formally became women's colleges in this period. Once colleges opened or became coeducational, they received a surge of female applicants. The growing enrollment of women in colleges faced questions of what exactly women would use their educations for and how their presence was impacting male students. Thus, attending a coeducational college did not necessarily mean equality for female students, as professors were overwhelmingly male and often reluctant to teach women, classes could be segregated between women and men, and women students were often blamed for course enrollment issues. In this period, women attending college became more normalized but many were still skeptical about the purpose of women's education and its impact on the domestic family structure.

Women gained access to higher education in this period because of a combination of the growth of schooling itself and the impact of women's work during the Civil War and on Reconstruction. During the Civil War, women worked in a variety of fields beyond teaching, including nursing and doctoring, farming, in factories, and in household management because of

the labor shortage (Solomon 45). Following their time spent working, women in the Reconstruction began considering new professional opportunities. This raised questions about women's equality and women began to work for suffrage. In addition, during Reconstruction, many male abolitionists began to support college education for women, seeing it as a "reward for women's contributions during the war" (Solomon 46). These men did not want black men's suffrage connected to women's, and instead supported women's education as a consolation (Solomon 46). While divided on issues of suffrage, women activists and the heads of women's clubs all supported women's higher education (Solomon 46).

In addition to the mounting political support, the country needed more teachers and in turn more educated women. To better prepare their teachers for the classroom, states founded teacher-training normal schools, which became heavily populated by women. More women were also attending high school and subsequently teaching. In particular, women "with an "evangelical missionary spirit" were eager to begin educating former slaves (Solomon 45). The resettlement of African Americans, Western expansion, and increased immigration to the United States created a need for more teachers to meet the population demand (Solomon 45). Again, an imbalance of men and women also drove women into the teaching profession, as men died during the Civil War, leaving young women without possible marriage partners (Solomon 45).

Finally, the expansion of universities in the United States, intended for white men and African American men, led to more women having access to college. While the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862 is best known for creating land-grant institutions in the United States for the study of agriculture and mechanic arts, the second Morrill Land Grant Act of 1890 was highly influential in aiding women in attending college. This act mandated that states receiving federal funds could not discriminate in their admissions or provide separate but "just" facilities, which,

in turn, led to the founding of seventeen black colleges. While women were not explicitly named in the act, it also did not explicitly exclude them and paved the way to allow women to apply for admission (Solomon 52-3). Based on their need for federal funds, public institutions had to admit women applicants (Solomon 53).[51] Between 1850 and 1870, the models for colleges for women were: the "private women's college, religiously-oriented coeducational college, the private coordinate women's college, the secular coeducational institution, both public and private, and the public single-sex vocational institution" (Solomon 47). Women's colleges often grew out of women's seminaries or were based on their model, while coeducational colleges were largely based on Oberlin College (Solomon 47). Gradually, coeducation began the dominant mode and many new universities, excepting in the South, opened as coeducational (Solomon 47).

2.5. Types of Schools for Women in America

Following the discussion of how women's educational options expanded, this section will examine several types of schools: academies and seminaries, common schools, normal schools, and colleges. I will describe how influential schools began and their impact on popular opinions about women's education. I will also put fictional depictions into conversation with these real-life examples when applicable. Ultimately, I hope that this section will prepare the reader for the case studies of seminaries and colleges in Chapter 3 and 4, respectively, and provide insight into the types of schools that were not as popular in the fiction. Many girls attended common and normal schools and their absence from the fiction signals its preoccupation with wealthy and exclusive types of education.

2.2.1 Academies and Seminaries

While private schools for girls certainly existed in America before 1790, the nineteenth century marked a surge in the number of seminaries and academies opened for women, many by female educators. The terms "academy" and "seminary," described by Thomas Woody in his two-part history of women's education in America, are similar, with "academy" preferred as an

earlier term, and "seminary" used to describe later schools (Woody I, 329). Confusingly, some women's academies were also called "colleges," as they "combined secondary and collegiate types of programs," but they were not technically colleges (Solomon 24).[52] However, the rise of the female seminary and women's college are directly connected. Woody, citing the rapid spread of seminaries across the country, argued that "throughout three quarters of the nineteenth century the seminary was the dominant agency of woman's advanced education. After 1850, the college—first only nominally, then actually—became a competitor" (363). The college, then, grew out of the success of women's seminaries from the 1830-1860 period, with colleges later surging past seminaries after the Civil War (Woody 395). During 1830-1860, changes in legislation such as the Morrill Acts, the availability of high schools, the work of women's educational leaders, and new societies or institutes, such as the New England School of Design for Women (1853) helped pave the way for growth in women's secondary education (Woody 364).

Among the earliest of what we would consider "private" schools" were a convent school of the Ursuline Sisters in New Orleans that taught day and boarding students in 1727, a boarding school established in 1742, the Bethlehem Female Seminary in Pennsylvania, and John Poor's Young Ladies' Academy of Philadelphia established in 1787 (which would later become the first chartered female academy in America). In 1788, at the Bethlehem Female Seminary, students rose at 5 a.m., had breakfast at 6 a.m. along with a hymn, and classes began at 8 a.m. (Woody 331-2, Reichel 29-33). The girls were expected to be quiet in the halls, punctual, and attend Chapel daily. They were also expected to be well-behaved for lunch, after which they had time for recreation and to prepare for afternoon classes and recitation which lasted from 1-4 p.m. (Woody 331-2, Reichel 29-33). In seminary novels, girls are typically seen attending meals,

Chapel, and preparing for recitations. In terms of courses, a Bethlehem graduate's diploma from 1790 would list "spelling, reading, writing, English-grammar, arithmetic, geography, rhetoric and composition" as her achievements (Woody 337, Reichel 68). Sarah Pierce's Litchfield Academy (1792, incorporated 1827) in Connecticut was also well-known, though other academies in the period, such as Leicester and the Westford Academy, both in New England, were coeducational (Woody 341).

Arguments for women's education in the nineteenth century suggested that women were equal to but different from men, and they deserved an education (Tyack and Hansot 30-1, Kaestle 27). This argument was "largely the creation of middle- and upper-class writers" who focused on advocating for women's seminaries, where they could attend school separate from boys but receive an education like that at boys' academies (Tyack and Hansot 31). However, writers also argued that despite girls being able to handle rigorous academic work, girls were training to become "better wives and mothers" (Tyack and Hansot 39-41).

Between 1830 and 1860, educators were focused on building schools for girls and sending former students to become teachers at other seminaries or high schools. While most of the best-known academies are known in the Northeast (specifically New England), female academies spread in the South and West (depending primarily on the state), with the first female seminary of the nineteenth century, Moravians' Female Academy, opening in Salem, North Carolina in 1902 (Woody 341, 393). As Solomon explained, "Outside New England public support for female academies also grew in response to local situations. Formal education in the South (limited of course to whites) advanced more slowly, in part because of the greater devastation the region experienced during the revolutionary war" (21). Nineteenth-century female academies also tended to open in the same region as men's colleges, also burgeoning in

the period, and taught many of the same subjects as men's colleges (Solomon 22-23). They had a rigorous reputation and competed with early women's colleges for students. As Tyack and Hansot describe, "The foremost schools—those of [Emma] Willard, [Mary] Lyon, and [Catharine] Beecher, for example—were far more experimental in methods of teaching and discipline than the Latin grammar schools that prepared boys for college and more academically rigorous than many of the colleges that those boys attended" (42). However, most female academies were three-year programs, which not all students managed to complete with a diploma (Solomon 23).

Among the subjects in Woody's survey of 107 schools between 1830-1871, most seminaries offered: natural and mental philosophy, chemistry, astronomy, English grammar, rhetoric, and algebra (418). While subjects are typically mentioned in the fiction (studying for an exam, struggling in a specific subject), they do not receive extended depictions. However, recitations are most often seen especially as competition between students. Admission ages also varied, with some schools accepting girls at age 12, 14, and 16, depending on the school (Solomon 22). Mount Holyoke, for example, only accepted students age 16 and older (Woody 361). Fictional seminaries also depict girls of a lower and upper classes, with the older girls often around 17; the younger ages are more difficult to judge.

Among the most influential of the female seminaries in the nineteenth century were the Hartford Female Seminary (1823, incorporated 1828) in Connecticut, the Troy Seminary (1821) in New York, the Ipswich Female Seminary (1828) in Massachusetts, and Mount Holyoke Female Seminary (1837) in Massachusetts. The Troy Seminary, established by Emma Willard, placed an emphasis on mathematics and teacher-training, at one point producing at least 25 teachers a year (Woody 345-6). The Ipswich Female Seminary (1828), run notably by Zilpah

Grant and Mary Lyon, also trained its teachers, as "in the first generation of seminaries... the teacher supply was not yet equal to the demand" (Woody 351). However, Ipswich also modeled the individualized student-faculty relationship that drew attention from authors of school stories. At Ipswich, the number of pupils per teacher was twenty, then reduced to fifteen as they brought in more teachers of specialized subjects (Woody 351). The school was also remarkable in that it assigned each teacher to a section of students to "be the friend and adviser of each," as well to be familiar with their "health, habits, intellectual improvement, and moral and religious state" (Woody 351). However, the rigorous three-year course did not have many awards, only a diploma, which few students completed (Woody 352).

Arguably, the Mount Holyoke Female Seminary (1837), established by Mary Lyon, was the most boundary-breaking female academy because of its emphasis on public fund-raising and its accessibility to lower-class students. Lyon founded the school specifically to be "(1) for middle class girls, (2) much less expensive than most female seminaries, and (3) was to provide for domestic labor by students" (Woody 358). Lyon used a "fund-raising appeal directed to families in modest circumstances" to create her school with the "promise of low tuition for young women 'fitting' to be teachers but with little in the way of resources" (Solomon 20). She ultimately raised $15,000 for her school, and the school relied on gifts and donations, as well as low teacher pay and the students' own domestic labor to function (Solomon 20, Woody 358).

Mount Holyoke's relationships between faculty and students are emulated in fictional depictions of seminaries, which sought to make teachers seem beloved by their students. Mount Holyoke wanted to create a close environment between students and faculty, advertising itself as "one family" for teachers and students (Woody 359). Seminary novels also see girl students look to their teachers or headmistress as models and as mother-figures, often after the death of a

mother. For example, in *Betty Baird*, the headmistress is Betty's aunt, who does Betty's hair before a social event, acting as a mother-figure. The teachers are often kind-hearted and develop one-on-one relationships with the protagonists, as they supervise their moral development. At Mount Holyoke, the students were each responsible for domestic work, but the school did not teach it; instead, the girls were expected to learn domestic tasks at home, from their mothers (Woody 360). The school, then, firmly separated the realm of the domestic and the academic, while still training the students for their futures as mothers and wives. Indeed, while seminary novels are concerned with their girl characters' development, they do not spend significant time instructing them in domestic arts; instead, the focus is on socialization and moral reform—though the implication that the girls can't get that at home is a troubling point present in the fiction and discussed at length in Chapter 3.

In addition, Mount Holyoke was a unique and more democratic school, which was able to accept poorer students by having all the students domestic chores—under the guise of it being difficult to find good help and for the students' exercise (Woody 361). In this way, Lyon was able to keep tuition low, with the annual charge being sixty dollars for sixteen years (Woody 361).[53] Students who attended were expected to stay for at least a year (Woody 361). According to Solomon, "Mount Holyoke succeeded more than the others in giving opportunities to poorer Yankee girls in their twenties and thirties, more than one-third of whom came, as David Allmendinger shows, from families whose real estate in 1850 was valued at $2,000 or less" (Solomon 24). Indeed, after 50 years, the school succeeded in graduating 2,000 of the approximately 12,500 enrolled (Woody 361). The school eventually accepted students from across the country, and its alumna primarily became teachers, wives/mothers, missionaries, and, in a much smaller number, physicians (Woody 361). However, Lyon's school is largely an

outlier when compared to fictional depictions. In fictional seminary novels, scholarship or poor students are ostracized from the wider social community with student seeking to reinforce social hierarchies, not dismantle them.

Ultimately, female seminaries had a lasting impact on women's education in developing both colleges and public schools. Seminaries were used as a model for public high schools and their graduates proved that women could teach in common schools before the establishment of the normal schools (Tyack and Hansot 41). These educators also taught in some of the first co-educational public schools, as "public-school advocates wanted to attract the daughters as well as the sons of the 'first families' to the public-school system, and modeling high schools on effective private seminaries was one way of showing local elites that public schools could equal private ones" (Tyack and Hansot 42). The common school reform of the 1830s-1840s, in part in response to frustrations with private schools, would try to drive home that argument.

2.2.2 Common and High Schools: The Common School Reform

Changing attitudes about women's education resulted in a growing population of girls in rural common schools, pre-dating even the common school reform. More students attended rural common schools in the Early Republic period. As Kaestle describes, even before the common school reform movement of the 1830s, "Beginning at least as early as the late eighteenth century, the proportion of children attending each year was rising, particularly among girls and in the Northeast" (15). While Kaestle cites possible links between religion and school enrollment, specifically in a Protestant commitment to literacy, or economic development for rising enrollment, he believes that, overall, the number was due to girls: "The expansion of enrollments in the rural areas and small towns of the Northeast seems most directly explained by the increasing acceptance of the direct system of control and by the increasing provision of

schooling for females" (26). This acceptance of girl's education, argued for by Benjamin Rush in *Thoughts Upon Female Education*, published in 1787, was noticeable in rural areas and in girls being admitted to Northern schools (Kaestle 28).

The rising enrollments in rural schools and the need for more children to attend urban schools were major components in the common school reform. In urban areas, pre-1800, children were educated in independent pay schools, dame schools, or by through boarding schools or private tutors (Kaestle 30). Those who could not afford the pay schools sent their children to an apprenticeship or a church charity school (Kaestle 31). While England debated over educating their poor, between 1800 and 1825, Americans grew in favor of education, hoping to use it to reduce poverty and crime in cities (Kaestle 33-5). While we think about education today as promoting social mobility, the elites and conservatives at the time were not; instead, they saw education as creating good American citizens and promoting "social stability," with schooling reducing crime, creating literacy for immigrant children, and largely "saving children from their [poor] parents" (Kaestle 35, 39).[54] America used English models for Sunday schools, weekday charity schools, and infant schools as the charity school system grew (34). Quakers, women, and volunteer associations were especially important in promoting literacy and education for urban children, including for black children (Kaestle 38-39). However, educators began to want to move away from charity schooling as a solution and into state-funded education. Many of the charity schools were merged and eventually became the common school system (Kaestle 57).

Specifically, Massachusetts, spearheaded by Horace Mann as secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education, wanted public/common elementary education for its children and became a leader in the common school reform movement (Herbst 12). Mann argued that the "nation's welfare and prosperity" depended on its schools (Herbst 14). In New England, this

desire was promoted by both the Massachusetts Whig Party who rejected private and charity schooling and the urban well-to-do who wanted to do something about the growing population of poor, orphaned, or homeless children who were often illiterate or unable to speak English, as well as the middle and working-class for its obvious benefits for their children (Herbst 13-14, 17-18).[55] According to Jurgen Herbst in his book on teacher education and professionalization in America, for the Whig Party, "Schooling would guarantee that only the deserving ambitious poor would rise to fame and wealth and that those less well trained would keep their place in the supporting, lower ranks of the economic hierarchy" (Herbst 14). While education is contemporayily seen as a tool for social mobility, the Whigs saw it as maintaining their preferred social hierarchy. Reformers like Mann and Henry Barnard wanted common schools that would unify, create order, and develop decent citizens (Herbst 17-18). They wanted to see English taught in schools (leading to the use of Noah Webter's primers in common schools) (Herbst 19). They saw teaching English, the "common national language as the primary responsibility of the public schools" (Herbst 18). Barnard, in particular, was concerned about the illiterate having the right to vote, stating that "The right of suffrage should be withheld from such as cannot give the lowest evidence of school attendance and proficiency" (50).[56] Mann also promoted Christian, denominational schools (Hernst 19). They saw the common schools as producing American citizens in the way that they believed they should be—namely converting the illiterate or immigrant masses into English-speaking citizens who look more like their Protestant, middle-class ideal (Herbst 18).

Reformers across the country did not want to rely on funded private schools or charity schools for the country's education. As a result, most states abolished "rate bills," charges for parents for a school, in the 1850s and 1860s (Kaestle 117). Gradually, schools in the North

shifted from independent pay schools to free common schools, while the wealthy continued to send their children to academies (Kaestle 117-18). However, high schools, which were primarily academies in the period, finally began to open as public schools. Reformers argued that creating high schools would a create a more "coordinated" system of education (Kaestle 118). However, reformers also mis-categorized academies as expensive and exclusive, while ignoring the privilege afforded to students in public high schools (Kaestle 118). Children attending a public high school were primarily middle-class, because working-class families could not afford to lose their children's income while they attended a secondary school (Kaestle 118). In addition, black Americans were unwelcome in secondary schools, while women primarily attended academies but eventually outnumbered their male peers in public high schools (Kaestle 118). The growing number of women attending secondary school also funneled more young women into the normal school system.

2.2.3 Normal Schools

Intersecting with both the interests of common schools and private female seminaries were the normal schools, teacher-education schools for both men and women, though many were women-only. As educators from female seminaries encouraged their students to teach and common schools were in desperate need of educated instructors, normal schools developed into a professionalizing opportunity for women who would otherwise not have had access to secondary education or a regular occupation. Teaching, with its clear associations to motherhood, was promoted as a pathway to the ideal of True Womanhood, rather than in conflict with it (Tyack and Hansot 43).[57] As described by Tyack and Hansot, teaching was "sanctified by religious and political values… [and] offered a meager but respectable livelihood for single women" (43). Even before the normal schools existed, female seminaries served as the preparation for women

to become common school teachers, with educators like Mary Lyon, Zilpah Grant, Emma Willard, and Catherine Beecher promoting teaching as a future for women (Tyack and Hansot 41, 43; Woody 352).[58] In fact, the graduates of female seminaries who became teachers "exceeded the number of graduates of public normal schools, at least into the 1850s" (Tyack and Hansot 43). These educators successfully created a network of education for women by creating a pipeline of instruction: graduating young girls then sending them back into schools as teachers. Notably, Beecher placed many of her graduates in schools in the West, as she tried to encourage Western education, and even called for a national normal school (Tyack and Hansot 43; Woody 375). For fictional girls attending both common schools and seminaries, teaching is promoted as a possible career; however, it is only socially acceptable for the poorer or scholarship girls.

The first normal school in America opened in Massachusetts amid the common school reform of the 1830s-1840s with calls for more professional teachers and a desire for individuals who would make teaching their life-long profession, not a temporary placeholder.[59] Male schoolmasters were usually taking a break from college, preparing for another career, or were transient individuals (drifters or disabled in some way) who were underprepared to teach, because the teaching profession was underpaid, undervalued, and seasonal, as students took summers off for farm work (Herbst 22-4).[60] Many male New England college students were supported by the American Education Society and taught for three months out of their four years at college, with colleges even arranging their winter vacation schedule to accommodate them (*Paupers* 91-93). According to David F. Allmendinger, Jr. "In the first half of the nineteenth century, at least one-third of all New England students took leaves of absence each year after the winter vacation in order to teach" (*Paupers* 92). Women, however, were teaching to sustain their livelihoods. Women teachers were primarily widows or young girls fresh out of school, and

taught during the summers when male students were on the farms (Herbst 23). Many working-class or farm girls became teachers in the space between school and marriage (Herbst 29).[61] However, women teachers were quickly outnumbering male teachers in Massachusetts; according to Maria A. Vinovksis and Richard Bernard's figures on teachers in Massachusetts, women outnumbered male teachers in 1837 in common and private schools, and the number continued to rise up to 77.8% in 1860.[62] Overall, common school teachers had a high turnover rate and their communities often complained about "unqualified, ill-tempered, and incompetent teachers" (Herbst 23). Massachusetts educational reformers hoped to make teaching a more regular and respected vocation.

With the 1830 establishment of the American Institute of Instruction in Boston, Massachusetts school reformers wanted to attract and professionalize male teachers to fill their district elementary schools. They set about creating state-funded normal schools for elementary teacher instruction (Herbst 58-60). While they hoped to draw young college- or academy-educated men to teaching, especially for understaffed rural schools, they settled for more men in rural areas (Herbst 59). Reformers especially needed teachers for rural areas, which had high enrollments, low funds and lacking facilities/supplies, and short school sessions (Herbst 60-1, 83-4, Kaestle and Vinovskis). To re-brand the teaching profession, they accepted the seasonal nature of the profession and focused on making it a vocation (a calling to serve) rather than a profession; thus elevating its respectability without largely changing the pay or school-year structure.[63] Reformers advertised the "citizen-teacher," who "in Massachusetts, the free and intelligent citizen will, for a time, quit his business, his workshop, or his farm, to fight, for the sake of his children and the state, a more vital battle against immortality and ignorance" (Herbst 60). However, as Herbst points out, the reformers "remained oblivious to the by then clearly

apparent trend toward increasing numbers of women teachers" or to the fact that women were available to teach year-long and would therefore not be seasonal workers (60).

Between 1839 and 1845, Massachusetts opened the first state-funded normal schools: Lexington (later West Newton and Framingham), Barre (later Westfield), Bridgewater, and Salem specifically targeting teachers for rural schools (Herbst 60-2).[64] Of these schools, Lexington (1839) and Salem (1854) were for women-only, and Barre (1839) and Bridgewater (1840) were for both men and women (Herbst 62). For entrance, students had to take an academic examination, prove their character, be in good health, and "declare their intention to teach in the common schools after they finished their course" (Herbst 62). Those who declared were given free tuition, but students also had to pay for their own board, books, and other supplies/expenses (Herbst 62, 65). At Lexington and Barre, women applicants had to be 16-years-old, while men at Barre and Salem had to be at least 17-years-old (Herbst 62). The early course of study was usually over a year, but varied if students needed to leave to earn their tuition (Herbst 62).[65] The curriculum was primarily focused on what the normalites (attendees of the normal schools) would be teaching in the common schools and deliberately avoided curriculum (such as ancient languages) taught in colleges (Herbst 62-3).[66] Thus, normalites primarily learned spelling, reading, writing, grammar, geography, and arithmetic, as well as piety and morality with the Bible used as a text for instruction (Herbst 62-3).[67] There was also some model teaching or participation in a model school, so that normalites could learn classroom instruction skills and management (Herbst 63).

The early normalites primarily needed a re-education of what they learned or should have learned in common school. Cyrus Pierce, the principal at Lexington complained about the preparation of the normalites at his school (Herbst 69). The women who were applying to

Lexington were primarily from common schools and had been working or at home for the 4-5 years since graduating; they had been unable to pursue secondary education or more advanced instruction (Herbst 69).[68] As a result, Pierce saw his school as teaching student remedial concepts and even felt that students needed more years of training than the normal school was providing (Herbst 69).

At the Framingham and Westfield normal schools, most of the normalites were women who came from farm families. The average age of normalites entering the women-only schools of Lexington, Framingham, and West Newton in the mid-1800s was between 18- to 19-years-old (Herbst 67).[69] While there were older female students (mid- and late 20s) at Framingham, most enrollees were 16-years-old in the 1840s, and 17-years-old in the 1850s (Herbst 66). They primarily came from farming or other blue-collar backgrounds (Herbst 67-8). At the coeducational Westfield (once Barre), over ¾ of the students were women (Herbst 74). Women largely entered the school earlier than men, with women entering at around age 19 and men at about 20.5, perhaps due to economic or family reasons (Herbst 71-3). It would have been easier for women to leave farm-families earlier than men, who were expected to work. Most female students, again, were between 16- to 17-years of age (Herbst 71). Like Framingham, most parents of Westfield normalites were farmers, but there was a noticeable rise in white-collar families attending in the 1860s to 1870s (Herbst 72).[70]

In the mid-1800s, the only other opportunities for advanced education for women were high schools and academies (or early colleges). However, women were limited by geography, funding, and whether the schools were open to women. Many high schools were in cities and not all were co-educational (Herbst 66). Academies were also an expense, requiring money for tuition as well as room and board (Herbst 66, Kaestle and Vinivskis 27). In 1840, there were

about 75 academies in Massachusetts (Herbst 66, Kaestle and Vinivskis 27). Academies advertised their schools to "adult young ladies" or "young ladies of mature age," reflecting their older population of women in their twenties (Herbst 80). Like normal schools, the academies largely accepted girls over the age of 16 (Herbst 80). Though fictional boarding schools sometimes depicted younger girl students, in reality, these girls would have been day students and not boarders (Herbst 80). Fictional academies are largely portrayed as expensive boarding schools for girls who can afford them, but some poorer fictional girls attend school because of a family connection to teacher/headmistress or scholarship. Yet, the normal schools would have been more likely for these girls because of their tuition release policy. Indeed, the Westfield normal school competed with the reasonably-priced Mount Holyoke Female Seminary for its female students, with both drawing on girls from farm families (Herbst 80-1). The normal schools came to be seen as "people's colleges" because farm and blue-collar families had the opportunity to send their daughters to more advanced schooling (Herbst 81).

While the creators of the first normal schools were hoping for more professionalized male educators to fill their common schoolrooms, women largely outnumbered their male colleagues in Massachusetts.[71] As Herbst illustrates, most of the early normalites at the Massachusetts schools, were "girls or young women who sought temporary employment as teachers; others were older single women or widows who had no other opportunities to support themselves" (4). In the 1850s, more older women attended normal schools, as they were turning to teaching out of economic hardship, likely due to the death of a husband or provider (Herbst 78). Unsurprisingly, the number of women normalites increased over men during the Civil War (Herbst 76). Ultimately, the early Massachusetts normal schools from the 1840s-1860s did not succeed in creating more regular and professional teachers, as many normalites never became a

teacher or only taught briefly (Herbst 83-4). Most men used the normal school as advancement for another professional career, which we can attribute to the still low-paying district schools (Herbst 83).[72] Women, too, often left teaching when they married, though others used it as a means to "survive spinsterhood or widowhood" (Hersbt 83). Gradually, teaching became a primarily female profession, as reflected in the Massachusetts normal school numbers.

Through the 1870s to the end of the century, normal schools gradually spread from rural areas to cities, from the East Coast and the Midwest to the South and West, and expanded beyond their original focus on elementary education.[73] Influenced by the pedagogies and work of previous educators, new normal schools sought out more advanced curriculum (Herbst 98). Despite still needing improvements to rural elementary schools, normal schools began teaching more advanced courses, preparing teachers for high school instruction, specialties, and administrative careers. Course time lengthened from a year to two years for elementary training, and two years for high school teaching instruction. The goal became "experimental and advanced work" in the normal schools, now viewing teaching as a "scientifically based professional education" (Herbst 91).

Yet, urban normal schools found more success than their rural peers for a variety of reasons. Many normal schools attached to high schools to segue students into its program or began teaching college-level courses, with some normalites going to college after normal school. For example, high schools in the period were primarily in cities, and the Boston Normal School was established in 1852 in place of a high school for girls (Herbst 92). However, as the students needed more preparation before the normal schoolwork could begin, like their peers at the earlier rural Massachusetts normal schools, they introduced a two-year high school curriculum, then students would start the normal school curriculum, with the school being renamed to Boston

Girls' High and Normal School in 1854 (Herbst 92).[74] The urban normal schools had greater success in retaining teachers for its local schools because of the higher pay in city schools, as well as the advanced preparation that came from high school then normal school training (Herbst 94). By virtue of attending high school, the students at the normal schools were also older and better-prepared.

Normal schools in the Midwest were influenced by the schools in Massachusetts, and their choices largely reflect or depart from its example. Like Massachusetts, some schools offered free tuition if normalites taught in-state after graduating (often for a mandated amount of time). The rural schools were primarily filled with students from farm backgrounds, and urban normal schools were more advanced and had a greater retention of teachers. However, the normal schools largely emphasized the growth of professional and high school training at expense of preparing rural teachers.

Authors of common school narratives used romance and marriage to promote the profession to young women. While many common school narratives focus on a male schoolmaster, the reality is that most teachers were women. However, authors did recognize and were honest about the difficult conditions for young female teachers—they often had to move from home, live in a new community, work with disruptive students, and were paid low wages. They may be asked to use corporal punishment or feel compelled to argue against it. Authors, aware of the reality that women often turned to teaching for a chance to find a husband in a new community, used this narrative to shape their stories. After either a difficult transition or a satisfying turn in the classroom, a young teacher would find, either in her classroom or in the community, a suitable husband. Marriage was written as their happy ending to promote the profession as something more economically compelling than a vocation. Yet, marriage endings

also ensure that fictional women teachers do not rise in their field. Female fictional teachers were never taking on a permanent profession; instead, they were filling time or working to help their families. Indeed, despite their work in the normal schools, women were not advancing to administrative educational positions. However, some did segue from normal schools to college.

Overall, normalites still did not remain as teachers, instead women often left after marrying. However, Iowa's normal school, with its use of a model school and focus on modified requirements for different fields/needs, was extremely successful in educating and keeping professional teachers (137-9). In a trend following other successful normal schools, the Iowa State Normal School eventually became Iowa State Teachers College in 1909, the State College of Iowa then 1967, and finally, University of Northern Iowa. Like female seminaries, normal schools gradually shaped college education for women in America.

2.2.4 College

By the early twentieth century, college was an appealing personal and professional option for young women. Though the female college student was in the minority both in total number of students enrolled and among college-aged women (ages 18 to 21),[75] she was still an important indication of how attitudes toward college had shifted, as both parents and daughters began to seriously consider and save for a college education (Solomon 62). While early college students depended upon their families' approval and financial support, later college women worked to support their educations, if only partially (Solomon 63, 70-1). However, both nineteenth and early twentieth college students largely attended the school of their parents' choosing, especially if the parent was an alumnus (Solomon 63, 71).[76]

In the nineteenth century, most college students came from the middle-classes, with the highest and lowest classes eschewing college for different reasons. While poor Americans could

not afford the expense of college or commit to the financial planning required, wealthy Americans (old elites and new money alike) prepared girls for a "life of leisure" by educating them "privately at home, in boarding school, and through travel aboard" (Solomon 64). In contrast, middle-class parents, as well as some farmers, were sending their daughters to college, as they saw college as leading their daughters to more upwardly mobile lives (Solomon 63-4, 68). However, by the early twentieth century, though more affluent girls were attending college, the population had become at least somewhat more diverse, with more immigrant girls attending college (Solomon 71, 75-6). Despite this, African American women were still a rarity in colleges, as only 0.3 of female college students were black in 1911 (Solomon 76). They were especially rare at women's private colleges (Solomon 76). Solomon attributes the overall low higher education rate of African American women to their "parents [being] too poor, and because most schools did not want them" (Solomon 76). Instead, more black women received teacher training or industrial training until after World War I (Solomon 76, 145). Fictional representations of female college students as largely upper and middle-class, white, and Protestant reflected many college students until post World War I.

While class, race, and ethnicity affected what kinds of girls went to college and when they attended, the cost of college cannot be underestimated as a determining factor. Cost for college varied based on geographic location and type of school. The most expensive schools were the private schools in the Northeast (Solomon 65). For example, Michigan tuition was $30 in 1905, while Smith's tuition cost $100 (Solomon 65). However, cost could vary amongst public schools as well, as the University of Illinois cost $20 in 1868, but was $60 at Boston University in 1873 (Solomon 65). Room and board, as well as transportation, factored into the expenses, so most girls attended colleges locally (Solomon 65). Scholarships were few and far

between and still could not support students' costs entirely; eventually some women even took out loans (Solomon 72-4). Other women supported themselves through college—through teaching, saving, and returning to college or through other means of employment whilst in college (Solomon 70-71). However, most attendees' families could afford the tuition, making college a markedly privileged experience.

Despite pointing to the early twentieth century as the beginning of the boom for women's college enrollments, women had been attending college in the United States since the 1830s, with the establishment of Oberlin College in Ohio, the oldest coeducational liberal arts college in the United States. Founded in 1833 by Presbyterian ministers, the college's motto was "Learning and Labor," as its students worked in manual labor to attend the college instead of paying a tuition. Beginning to admit black students in 1835 and allowing women to earn bachelor's degrees in 1837, Oberlin's commitment to coeducation and diversity predated the Morrill Acts and became an influential model for coeducation. Schools following in the Oberlin model "justified coeducation in ethical and religious terms of the equality of souls, male and female" (Solomon 50). Despite technically being a coeducational school, women did not attend classes with men at Oberlin. Instead, men and women attended separate classes, and women were usually placed into a female department (Solomon 50).

However, coeducation became the dominant model for women's college experience, despite its limited representation in the fiction. In fictional depictions, most girls attended single-sex colleges with female professors, thus representing the wealthiest population of students. Yet, after the 1870s, with most new colleges opening as coeducational, more women enrolled in these institutions than in women's colleges (Solomon 47, 58). While public colleges, especially state universities, were originally reluctant to admit women, they eventually had to bow down to

pressure from the Morrill Act (Solomon 52-3). In the 1870s, more public and private colleges became coeducational, as this was more economically feasible than opening a separate institution for women (Solomon 47, 50). According to Mabel Newcomer, in 1870, only 29% of colleges were coeducational (approximately 168 colleges out of 582), and the number jumped to 43% in 1890 (approximately 465 colleges out of 1082). Likewise, only 12% of colleges were women-only in 1870 (approximately 69 colleges out of 582) and that number only rose to 20% in 1890 (approximately 216 colleges out of 1082), showing the steady rise in coeducation compared to the availability of single-sex colleges for women (Newcomer). Finally, by 1910, 58% of the 1083 colleges in the United States were coeducational, while the percent of women-only colleges dropped to 15% (from approximately 216 colleges in 1980 to about 162 colleges) (Newcomer).

Despite most women attending coeducational colleges, the majority of college novels were written about the single single-sex college experience for a variety of reasons. Women at coeducational colleges were often made to feel unwelcome or even taught in segregated classrooms, whereas single-sex colleges guaranteed greater acceptance from the all-women community. Many authors wrote about the institution they attended, largely one of the Seven Sisters Colleges, leading to a skewed representation. An author could also bypass describing the difficulties women faced on coeducational campuses by setting her novel in a single-sex campus, thereby cementing it as an idealization of a women's-only space that could focus on female friendships and activities without dealing with the male gaze or on-campus romance. Finally, the novels made the expensive private, single-sex colleges accessible to lower-class readers or to impressionable academy-age readers still deciding about their college careers, perhaps helping authors to sway their audience to their alma mater or a similar college. Thus, the fiction focuses the single-sex college experience over the more historically-accurate co-educational experience.

It is important to acknowledge how these novels were deliberately constructed to portray the most idealized version of college during a tumultuous time to sway popular opinion.

Between 1870 and 1912, women's education experienced fluctuating periods of strong opposition to and acceptance of women's college enrollments. In the 1870s, critics used new science or medical arguments to attempt to discredit the growth of women's education. For example, Darwin's claim that women were inferior to men was used as evidence. Dr. Edward Clarke's *Sex in Education* (1873) was also tremendously influential in asserting his opinion that women's studying was a danger to her health, based on a study of seven Vassar students. However, other studies, including, Dr. Mary Putnam Jacobi's essay, "The Question of Rest for Women During Menstruation," went against Clarke's findings, and promoted positive findings on the benefits of women's education (Solomon 57). The wave of criticism died down in the 1890s until a boon in enrollment between 1900 and 1912 generated fears that women were outpacing men in educational enrollment and achievement (Solomon 57-8). Critics in the early twentieth century were primarily concerned with women students' impact on male students, and some colleges turned to segregating classes for men and women or limiting course enrollments (Solomon 58-9). Women were, at times, even blamed for low male course enrollments, with critics or professors claiming that they were "driving away" the male students (Solomon 60).[77] As a result, single-sex colleges were promoted by critics of coeducation.

Women's colleges were founded out of women's seminaries, many of which offered similar curriculum as colleges; to create religious educational institutions for women; or to keep women out of men's colleges. Many single-sex, coordinate colleges were originally created to avoid coeducation at elite institutions. Resisting admitting women, Harvard and Columbia created Radcliffe College in 1894 and Barnard College in 1889, respectively, with their faculty

serving as "Visitors," and female students earning degree "equivalents" (Solomon 55).[78] Brown University, similarly, established its own women's college, Pembroke College. However, other seven sister colleges, Vassar (1865), Wellesley (1875), Smith (1875), and Bryn Mawr (1884) were endowed as religious institutions, with Bryn Mawr specifically founded as Quaker (Solomon 47). They all sought to produce educated, Christian, domestic women (Solomon 47-8). While Vassar College is often cited as the first women's in the United States, both Elmira College and Mount Holyoke Seminary pre-date Vassar, though Vassar was accredited before either of these colleges (Vassar History). The Mount Holyoke model, a seminary that grew into a women's college, was arguably the most influential for single-sex colleges.

Colleges for women and coeducation primarily flourished in the North and Midwest, with Southern colleges, Catholic colleges, and colleges for black students largely developing later in the period. In the South, college education took longer to grow, and single-sex education was the dominant mode (Solomon 47). Southern women's academies, such as Mary Baldwin, Judson, and Agnes Scott, eventually became colleges (Solomon 49). However, there were only seven Southern universities that admitted women in 1912 (Solomon 53). Overall, Southern women needed to go to the North or Midwest for more educational opportunities (Solomon 56). Early black colleges were largely founded by white missionaries in the 1860s and 1870s and began as coeducational, but in the 1920s, Spelman and Bennett became accredited as single-sex women's colleges (Solomon 50, 145).[79] By the 1930s, black women had become the majority at black coeducational colleges (Solomon 145). Finally, Catholics started single-sex women's colleges in the late 1890s, after opening their own colleges for men and women's seminaries or convents (Solomon 50). As Catholics advanced economically, the number of women's Catholic colleges

also grew significantly in the 1920s, a period that marked significant diversity in college student populations (Solomon 144-5).

In the post-World War I years between 1910 and 1920, more women enrolled in college as college education became more normalized and accepted, and this period marked more diverse applicants and college students, specifically African-Americans, Catholics, and Jews (Solomon 121).[80] Of these, Catholics entered non-Catholic colleges, both private and public, and were the most accepted, while African-American numbers were still the lowest at mainstream institutions (Solomon 143, 145). Jewish students were also widely discriminated against, as men's private colleges sought to limit their enrollment numbers. Echoing this, women's private colleges referred to this as the "Jewish problem" and monitored their enrollments (Solomon 143). By the 1920s and 1930s, African-Americans, Catholics, and Jews were not an unusual presence on public and private college campuses, but they did face discrimination from college organizations, such as fraternities and other social groups (Solomon 164-5). In this period, Catholic and black colleges had the strictest regulations for its women students (Solomon 159-60). Despite these advances in diversity, the cost of college at both private and public was still high to many middle- and lower-class Americans (Solomon 146).

As college novels primarily represented the private, single-sex college experience, they disproportionately reflected the lives of female professors; but they did capture the impact that professors had on student lives. While most professors in the period were men, some women did teach at coeducational institutions or serve as deans (Solomon 90). However, women professors at single-sex colleges had to be single (Solomon 89). Thus, both single-sex women's colleges and women's college novels perpetuated the idea that being a female professor required being unmarried, which was not the case at coeducational institutions. Similarly, with novels primarily

focusing on social activities instead of the classroom, readers do not witness the learning-style shift that college students experienced, as, by the turn of the nineteenth century, courses were taught as lectures and group seminars in place of recitation models (Solomon 88). However, college novels did capture the important relationship between student and faculty, especially as female students seemed to forge stronger bonds with women professors (Solomon 89). Students also observed their professors' attitudes in and out of the classroom, and were highly influenced by interactions with faculty, which could "either strengthen or diminish a young woman's aspirations" (Solomon 88). At coeducational colleges, women were more likely to encounter male professors and could be met with positivity or negativity, as some male professors mentored women, while others like Woodrow Wilson were embarrassed to be teaching women (Solomon 88-9). Professors' views of women as inferior were sometimes clear, sometimes not (Solomon 89). Either way, professors seriously impacted the enjoyment of the college experience, as Solomon described that "undergraduates' letters home conveyed enthusiasm generated by particular professors; in later recollections it was the personality or style of a favorite professor that had created lasting impressions" (Solomon 88). At single-sex colleges, students had greater access to their professors, as the professors were young, lived in-residence, and ate in campus dining halls, and novels captured this level of familiarity between student and faculty. For example, while Ruth in *Elinor's Education* had what can be called a "crush" on her female professor, the professor did identify and foster Ruth's talent on a professional level. She was also more readily available to Ruth, as she lived on-campus. At college campuses, female professors did encourage girl students and create "favorites" among them (Solomon 89).

Finally, college fiction reflected and promoted the high standards to which women students were held. College novels required that its students be "all-around" girls, girls who were

intelligent, did well academically, social, and were still conventionally feminine. By promoting this idealized view of a college student, authors hoped that college girls would be accepted by the public. This ideal also reflected the concept of "whole woman," promoted by college educators (Solomon 92-3). The "whole woman" had to consider her "physical, intellectual, and moral elements" while at college (Solomon 92-93). However, the college girl gradually began to recognize and question her feminine-centered schooling (Solomon 92-93). Questions about gender expectations and the limits of their professional futures are present in the case studies in the next two chapters, as I examine how girls in seminary (boarding school) novels and college novels accept their socially-promoted roles and when they depart from being an "all-around" to being truly singular.

CHAPTER 3. BOARDING SCHOOL STORIES FROM TRUE WOMANHOOD TO NEW WOMANHOOD

As educated nineteenth-century women were exploring their employment possibilities, some turned to writing to describe their experiences with education. As Barbara Miller Solomon describes, "Novels written by educators often dealt with the advancements in and anxieties about female education. The woman teacher had 'the power of awakening of her pupils' through 'heroic and striking examples'; however, she also had the obligation to affirm the value of domesticity" (36). Solomon's description of the anxiety felt by female educators depicts the stakes in this chapter's texts, all written by educated women: *The Boarding-School Girl* (1848) by Louisa C. Tuthill, *Hester Stanley at St. Mark's* (1882) by Harriet Prescott Spofford, and *Betty Baird* (1906) by Anna Hamlin Weikel. These female authors sought to inspire their readers to want to attend school and make it an appealing experience. However, they also had to be careful to highlight the Christian and domestic nature of their protagonists to ensure that readers did not see that education was overly radical. The respective authors of the texts featured in this chapter each find their own balance between promoting the domestic and the desire for a life beyond marriage. While boarding school novels are primarily read as conservative and Christian, this chapter argues that the texts' social ideas evolve largely in accordance with the changes in the education and views on women's social roles. However, they also complicate the idea that views on female education and employment throughout the century followed a straight progression upwards; instead, the novels show how educated girls also struggled to fit in against merging ideas of True and New Womanhood.

This chapter analyzes how girls adjust to a new school environment, their employment options after completing school, and their representation as adult women at the texts' end. The

chapter will move chronologically through the three seminary (or boarding school) books. While both *The Boarding-School Girl* and *Hester Stanley at St. Mark's* are explicitly Christian, Tuthill's novel is the most overtly Christian and socially conservative. I also argue that the second novel in the chapter, *Hester Stanley*, with a racially ambiguous protagonist is the most radical. The last novel in the chapter, 1906's *Betty Baird*, briefly describes the "New Woman," recognizing her coming importance to feminist movements and her impact on more active schoolgirl figures and the college girl of the early-twentieth century.[81] However, *Betty Baird* stops short of turning its protagonist into a New Woman, because education does always not equal progressive views.

While these three novels display important conventions of the boarding school genre, they are also important representations of how girls of different classes, races or cultures, and regions could be treated by their peers in a closed environment. The fictional boarding schools are microcosms of their characters' cultures, with the schoolgirls playacting their future roles as mothers and teachers, certainly, but also deciding their future social circles and civic causes. As part of the girl book genre, these texts exemplify how a girl's education is negotiated with her morality, domesticity, and ambition as part of a complete identity. What these fictional girls learn at school will determine their academic, social, and personal futures, and these texts illustrate how they develop their religious practices, prejudices, and social interactions through their education.

Reflecting the conventions of the boarding school genre, each novel focuses on the socialization of its title character, her struggle to adjust as the "new girl" in the school, and the explicit ways that classmates judge each other and negotiate social relationships. While the novels selected reflect traditional conservative norms of the genre, *Hester Stanley* and *Betty*

Baird also serve as unique case studies on race, class, and, in *Betty Baird's* case, a meta-commentary on the boarding school genre. *Betty Baird* self-consciously comments on the established boarding school story genre, though the protagonist misreads most of her early school situations.

Ultimately, all three texts consider what girls are worthy of a boarding school education and how the education will serve to reform any character flaws or behavior issues, typically reading a girl for marriage. The texts consider if and how a girl's education prepares her for the future of True Womanhood or a different (but still positive) kind of future. In each novel, new students who stand out for racial, class, or regional differences are treated differently by their schoolmates; some authors argue for acceptance, while others promote a narrative of exclusion and elitism, suggesting that only a few should rise to the future of the True Woman. *The Boarding-School Girl* analyzes class difference and the type of girl who is worthy to become a True Woman. While Tuthill argues for a Christian morality, her text is largely unforgiving of characters who fall outside the white, Anglo, Northern elite category. She is highly concerned with the kinds of girls who can't be redeemed by a boarding school education and uses them to model a poor life trajectory for readers. Spofford is also concerned with the Anglo-American girls who cannot be reformed by education, but she uses them to critique white womanhood and the idea that True Womanhood is the ultimate reward. Instead, she flips Tuthill's convention of displacing outsiders and uses a racially different character to model both a reform narrative and the kind of life possible outside the bounds of the True Womanhood's domesticity. Finally, *Betty Baird* also questions the class eligibility for a boarding school education and whether she will pursue a life defined by True or New Womanhood. The lower-class Betty seems primed to expand her possibilities and take on a career. However, despite her professor father and her

desire to help her financially struggling family, Betty's future still goes back to marriage and not college or a serious career. She instead takes on feminine-coded pursuits (gardening, writing, jarring goods, working in a library), as many of the women in college novels do as well. While the boarding school is always a site of reform, the results and outcomes vary widely, as defined by the girls' different racial, class, and period constraints. Ultimately, this chapter analyzes how these boarding school texts present largely conservative approaches to a schoolgirl's development into womanhood and where they depart to acknowledge alternative paths such as teaching.

3.1 Christianity in the Classroom or Educating to Reform Girls into Ideal "True" Women: *The Boarding-School Girl* (1848) by Louisa C. Tuthill

"Can you not love me for my own sake?" fifteen-year-old Frances Jerome, the title character in Louisa C. Tuthill's novel for girls, responds to one of her schoolmates after being asked about the identity and reputation of her family (45). This question is at the center of Tuthill's school story, which focuses on the social relationships between the girls who, attending the fictional East Coast Blazington Female Seminary, are all primarily wealthy.[82] In response, the girls seem to answer a resounding, "NO," as they reinforce the class and status differences between the nouveau riche (or the "musherroons") and those of established wealth within the hierarchy of the school. Tuthill's school serves as a microcosm of the society the girls will join as adults, and does not promote girls' education as a pathway to employment or self-reliance, but instead re-inscribes the four attributes of True Womanhood as described by Barbara Welter: piety, submissiveness, domesticity, and purity (Welter 152). Tuthill's example of a boarding school education reflects the beginning of the movement of women's education in American, which was built on Christian values—women as republican mothers and their education as

training to raise their future families. As such, Frances goes through the stages of a typical boarding school story—a girl undergoes a personal and Christian transformation to be accepted into her schoolmates' community— and her education is merely a means to True Womanhood.

While this connection to True Womanhood is indicative of pre-Civil War views on female education, Tuthill's novel explicitly links the boarding school experience to sustaining privilege, as Tuthill derides any girl who falls outside expected social norms. Tuthill critiques any girl who isn't the "right kind": rich, white, Northern, pious, and hard-working. While the school experience is a time of maturing, in which an overly indulged girl can be reformed, Tuthill's novel also acknowledges that education can't save all girls. Implicit in Tuthill's depiction of female schooling is the threat of the girl who can't—or refuses—to be "educated"; she is the prototypical "bad girl" who fails in some attribute of True Womanhood or is a cultural or lower class outsider. While Tuthill is afraid of girls who are too far gone to change at schools, like the characters of Arethusa and Marion who will be discussed later in the chapter, she also seems against the idea of education as democratic. Despite its purported claim to promote a Christian theme of goodness, forgiveness, and redemption, the text is unwilling to help lower-class girls. Instead, education is for a certain set of girls to continue their path to True Womanhood; other girls are expulsed from the narrative.

While Louisa C. Tuthill was primarily known in her time as a writer of juveniles and etiquette books, both largely conforming to social norms for women, her history of architecture in the United States suggests a deeper belief in the power of education for women. Born in Connecticut to a merchant-class family, Tuthill was educated in New Haven and the Litchfield Female Academy (Allaback 205). She married a lawyer and editor of *The Microscope* magazine, Cornelius Tuthill, but became a widow early at the age of 29. With four children to support, she

turned to writing and became successful for such books as *The Young Ladies Reader* (1839) and *The Young Lady's Home* (1839). She later used Ithiel Town, Esq.'s architectural library, open to scholars and notably to women, in his home in New Haven to research her book on architectural history.[83] As a woman writer, Tuthill used her education and research to promote her vision for architecture and good taste in America; she did the same with her views on women's education in her boarding school novel. Tuthill's career was built on promoting values of True Womanhood, marriage, and motherhood, but her book on architecture also sees woman as promoters of taste, suggesting a broader vision for women than the one she crafts for Frances in her novel.

As an early example of a girl in a boarding school (or more commonly in America, an academy), Frances' character directly engages with the anxieties about higher education for women, specifically how to ensure a girl graduates with the intended principles of True Womanhood and not an overinflated sense of ego. The text's main problem is reconciling a character's ambition and pride with humility; while Frances must succeed academically at school, she must also be a humble Christian. As Solomon describes of women attending academies in the first half of the nineteenth century, "Independence was a double-edged ideal: while a young man was applauded, a young woman at best received ambivalent approval from family and society in her struggles to strike out on her own. How could she do this as a female and meet the requirements of the True Woman?" (30). Tuthill manifests the same anxiety over Frances, a schoolgirl working too hard at academics—with a desire to be "first girl—instead of being educated to become a better Christian mother and wife. Tuthill's protagonist has natural intelligence and the desire to work hard, but Frances is also an "egoist," so much so that her family hopes her time at school will change her (161).[84] Frances' uncle, Captain Mears, instructs

Frances to not reveal her familial identity (and its social status) to her schoolmates in a strategy to rid Frances of the ego that she developed from a "long indulgence at home" (161). By not discussing her family, Frances will allow the girls to assess her on character and intelligence alone; in exchange for fulfilling her uncle's task, Frances will receive an award (a family secret) worth ten thousand dollars.[85] However, Frances is immediately judged for her presumed lack of connections and believed to be of the socially inferior class of "new money." Mears' instructions also fundamentally alter public perception of Frances' personality as readers can assume that as an "egotist," she would have bragged about her father, an American minister to a foreign court, stationed in Washington. Due to her uncle's interference and her later interactions with her schoolmates, Frances eventually conquers her ego and develops into a True Woman.

As illustrated by Tuthill's portrayal, the boarding school becomes a site for girls to be repaired from the effects of overindulgences at home. While girls were previously educated by tutors or home-schooled, the novel implies that these situations were not enough to turn a young woman into a True Woman. Instead, the home can spoil a girl, develop her ego, or create bad habits, like novel-reading. While some girls can behave properly at home with their families, Captain Mears is anxious over the girls who are "burdocks" —coarse and unrefined—outside of that environment (4).[86] The school, with its reinforcement of Christian values, can correct these errors, so long as the girl is willing and hard-working. Captain Mears' instructions serve as a guarantee that his niece will be bettered by school.

Through her uncle's instructions to be unselfish, helpful to the other students, and submissive and respectful to her teachers, Frances is molded into the ideal schoolgirl and future True Woman.[87] Captain Mears, and by extension Tuthill, provides a behavioral model for how readers should conduct themselves at school, and suggests that success at school is predicated on

how the teachers and other students view a student. As such, Mears urges Frances to win over her teacher, eat all her food, and to not ask too many questions but ask enough to show she is listening (3-4). He also encourages her to say her lessons "boldly" to show confidence in herself and the material (4).[88] His advice focuses primarily on showing respect to her teacher. He prioritizes politeness and obedience as the keys to facilitating a successful relationship with a female teacher, and these traits also develop the submissiveness needed for a True Woman. He also tells Frances not to lie to her classmates, to lend to others and not borrow, and to avoid "meanness" (4). Lastly, he primes Frances on sharing and serving food to others, instructing her to share her "goodies" with her roommates, even going so far as to promise to send some oranges so that Frances will have the opportunity to share (4).

Mears' instructions prioritize Frances' conduct over any specific scholarly advice but also suggests that student's behavior is central to academic success. Notably, Mears does not specifically tell his niece to receive high marks, reflecting the text's focus on learning socialization with peers over academic education. Instead, academic success seems to be a byproduct of listening to her teacher, asking questions, and saying her lessons. The idea that the heroine will get good grades is taken largely for granted in favor of promoting how to interact with her peers.

While socializing with her schoolmates, Frances believes that not talking about her family would be difficult as it would be her "highest enjoyment" when away from them. However, without the option to talk about them, Frances instead begins to practice the attributes of True Womanhood through her interactions with her teachers and peers (5). In instructing his niece to be "tell no tales" about herself and to be obliging and generous, Mears (and Tuthill) crafted a well-behaved, studious, and docile young woman without much to distinguish her except the fact

that the other girls know next to nothing about her background. With her honesty, intelligence, neatness, and manners, Frances attracts the best type of friend: nonjudgmental and kind but also extremely wealthy and from a good family, the school favorite, Meta Sevane.[89] Meta quickly befriends Frances because she, unlike the other girls, does not flatter her and instead tells her to study more (24). Frances follows her uncle's advice regarding honesty, but she also practices mothering and teaching as she attempts to improve Meta's behavior. As nineteenth-century girls were sent to school to better become republican mothers, Frances is practicing these skills with Meta and later with a student she adopts into her family. While Frances offers Meta strategies to make genuine personal improvement, Meta provides Frances with social cachet and credence among the girls as they gradually learn to accept her.

Tuthill's novel refuses education as an equalizing or leveling force, as the girls refuse to accept schoolmates outside their class. While monetary capital is important in paying for a girl's education, cultural capital is even more so—it decides who will become the girl's friends and her future social circle. Through Meta and Frances' friendship, Tuthill suggests that social equals can identify one another without explicit confirmation. For example, while Meta is unsure about Frances' wealth, she does note Frances' taste, neatness, and austerity, as she "dresses very neatly and prettily, not extravagantly, that is, she don't wear any ornaments excepting a nice, plain, little watch" (24). Meta is certainly aware of the social implications of associating with individuals of unknown social background, as she later says of a new Southern student, Arethusa Slam, "You do not think I would condescend to associate with a vulgar person whom nobody knows" (78). The irony in this statement is that Frances is such a person, but her manners and appearance mark her as elevated as opposed to Arethusa's outward vulgarity. Throughout her text, Tuthill continually re-inscribes the social hierarchy by removing characters of new money

from the text until Frances adopts a poor orphan as an illustration of her fully-formed True Womanhood before marriage. Ultimately, Tuthill's novel uses education to further the strict agenda of True Womanhood and punishes those who do not conform, as they are banished from school, killed, or left friendless and unmarried. One such student is depicted as a regional or cultural outsider, who in her failing in True Womanhood, is expelled from school.

3.1.1 Northern versus Southern Students

Though the Blazington Female Seminary largely showcases an East Coast educational experience, Tuthill includes one Southern student, Arethusa Slam, as the embodiment of the class of new money and a girl dangerously out of order. Tuthill's decision to include a regionally different student, when most academies were attended by Northern and Midwest girls, includes a marginally represented group.[90] Pre-Civil War, Southerners would send their daughters to the North for schooling, but they stayed in the South in the late antebellum period as "the sectional strife over slavery intensified suspicions of northern institutions" (Solomon 21). However, the novel largely uses Arethusa as a stereotype of Southern belles lacking formal education and as a social upstart. Arethusa is Frances' foil, a "bad girl" who cannot be reformed by education. By displacing this "bad girl" into an "othered" figure, Tuthill further promotes her ideal educated girl as rich and Northern—this kind of girl can become a True Woman.

Arethusa is depicted as an outsider to the other types of girls at the school. From her dialect (she is the only student to speak with an accent and abbreviate her words when speaking), readers can interpret her as either new money, which her behavior supports, and/or Southern. She is certainly new money, as she takes every opportunity to showcase her family's wealth through flashy clothing and excess packages and luggage, even self-identifying as "parlour boarder," for which her father is paying more than one hundred dollars a school quarter (30). She

simultaneously brags about what her father can clearly afford to pay and being a privileged parlour boarder, a pupil who is paying more for their own room at a boarding school.[91] However, Arethusa's place of origin is never revealed, with the girls even asking if she is from this country. While Arethusa's dialect does not mean that she is definitively Southern, as dialect could be used for other regions or classes, I read her as Southern because of the distance of the school from her home, as she calls it an "out of the way place," and her father's view of education for women (29).[92] There is also no identification that she is not an American.

Arethusa's father's desire to limit her education to the "ornamental" links her to Southern education for women. The South largely followed the North in education for girls and expanded as Northern educators, such as Emma Willard, began building academies and sending teachers to the South (Farnham 50-1, 62-64). In the Antebellum era, literacy rates for women lagged behind those in the North, for, according to Christie Anne Farnham in her book on Antebellum Southern women's education, "as late as the 1850s, one woman in five was still illiterate in the South" (37). In the mid-eighteenth century, wealthy girls' education developed from private tutors to French (adventure or "venture") schools, which emphasized "polite education, accomplishments, or the study of the ornamental branches" (Farnham 39).[93] These French schools often developed into boarding schools that focused on improving women for marriage, "emphasizing [teaching] taste and the arts" and "style over substance" (Farnham 43). The academic preparation was elementary, if at all, and focused on the arts, while still limiting creativity (Farnham 43). While academies developed in the 1800s in the South, many struggled financially (Farnham 58). Though these new academics were a scholarly improvement to the French schools, with Northern teachers emigrating in the 1840s, it is unlikely that Arethusa attended such an academy and more than likely attended a French-style boarding school (Farnham 64).

In Arethusa's conversation with the schoolgirls about her previous education, her comments suggest a French-style schooling. The Northern girls seem equally unfamiliar with a Southern education or her dialect, going so far as to ask if Arethusa is a "native of this country," which Arethusa misinterprets as meaning an "*abrogoins*," or a Native American (30).[94] This misunderstanding is meant to cement Arethusa's lack of formal education, as well as her obvious disdain for scholarly education. The girls question if she's learned rhetoric, astronomy, or philosophy, with the expectation that she would have some knowledge of those subjects, but she has only finished geography and grammar. Her father only sent her to school to take music classes and draw because "it is the fashion to be accomplished," not for a genuine desire for improvement (29).

Arethusa's education is meant to be in name only, with her schooling in the arts preparing her for marriage and domesticity. As a wealthy Southerner, Slam's parents would not have sent her to school to prime her for employment, rather, according to Solomon, "her education should fit her to be a lady–polished, competent, and subservient" (Solomon 21). As Farnham similarly described, as marriage selection became more focused on "personal attractiveness and affection," parents began to send their daughters to school to "refine the rough edges of behavior and language" (43).[95] For Arethusa's family, education is all about perception—an educated woman looks better on the marriage market, but she can't be too educated. Arethusa's father believes that she would be "laughed at as blue-stockin's," or an intellectual woman, if she was more educated (30). However, the girls later laugh at Arethusa for her unrefined behavior, suggesting a correlation between a lack of education and behavior. If the Northern girls at school laugh at Arethusa, it's likely that her behavior will be viewed as unacceptable outside of school as well. This message also promotes education for readers who may have concerns about becoming too

"intellectual" after attending school. Tuthill largely promotes a middle-ground for women's education, something beyond the Southern style of ornamental education but stopping before training women for employment. She does, however, agree that education should be used to smooth a girl's behavior in preparation for marriage.

Tuthill uses Arethusa, a regional outsider, to promote what she sees as the worst traits in upper-class girls: silliness, a lack of intellectual study, and novel-reading. She conflates romance, regional difference, and novel-reading into one character to serve as the ultimate corrupting influence to the other schoolgirls. Arethusa brings a large quantity of novels to school to circulate among the girls, and insists that no one tell the headmistress, recognizing that they would be not be allowed. Arethusa's books are described as particularly troubling: "Novels and romances translated from the French and German, some of them of the most corrupting character, such as no young lady should be willing to look into" (31). That Arethusa has access to salacious romance novels suggests a lack of refinement, i.e. what kind of family allows their daughter to purchase and/or receive such books? The novels produce "exaggerated, over-excited feeling" in the girls, making them feel as if they were "injured, defeated individuals, equal, in their own estimation, to some of the persecuted heroines over whose sorrows they had lately wept" (32). The girls fail to complete their recitations and even create an unfair petition against a teacher, with only Frances and Meta exempt from the novels' corrupting influence.[96] In contrast, Marion Telfair, the most beautiful girl in school and already unconcerned with schoolwork, becomes more ridiculous and fixated on romance after reading Arethusa's novels and even conjures up a fictitious romance between herself and a local boy.[97]

Arethusa is the direct counterpoint to Frances, with behavior contrary to everything Mears advised and unlike a True Woman. Arethusa does not make friends with teachers, does

not obey rules, turns up her nose at school food, and brags extensively about herself and her family (4-6). Arethusa also turns in Marion to Mrs. MacOver after Marion's scheme to meet a boy goes array.[98] Frances, in contrast, refused to reveal a confrontation with Bell even when faced with her own suffering, whereas Arethusa easily tattles on Marion.[99] The only thing Arethusa does correctly is act generously by sharing with the other girls, but what she shared (novels) is something she should not have to begin with. Where Frances is quiet, respectful, and reluctant to share details about herself, Arethusa is vulgar, loud, and overly promotes her wealth.

The text again suggests that social equals can always spot one another, as Arethusa, lacking cultural capital, cannot see her socially superior, Frances. Whereas Arethusa believes Frances is a "musherroon," a dialect version of "mushroom," a person who suddenly rose to social prominence, Arethusa is herself viewed negatively by the girls of the school.[100] Arethusa is the first character to use the term "musherroon" to refer to Frances, but she misuses the term, believing it to be a person having a two-story house, no marble fire-place, and having only one servant (65). She sees herself as "'stocracy" (aristocracy), which, to her, means having a four-story house, multiple servants, fireplaces in multiple rooms, etc. (66). As Arethusa says, "If that isn't belonging to the 'stocracy, I don't know what is" (66). Of course, the joke is that Arethusa does not know what the aristocracy is; she confuses lavish displays of wealth with the aristocracy, as well as "musherroons" as middle-class. Instead, musherrons are viewed as social upstarts. Arethusa's outlandish behavior marks her as such an upstart, not a refined member of the aristocracy. Arethusa's lack of education, bragging, and penchant for excess mark her as "vulgar," with Meta later calling her a "vulgar person whom nobody knows" (79). There is a hint of irony in Meta calling Arethusa someone that "nobody knows," as she has warmly befriended Frances,

who is also an unknown. However, Frances lacks that vulgarity which is Arethusa's defining trait, and this distinguishes them.

Finally, Arethusa's behavior and negative influence comes to a head about the quality of the school food and leads to her expulsion in a clear example of the "bad girl" figure that the school story cannot reform. One of the underlying fears of the girl's story school is that there are girls who cannot learn to change. As Arethusa has already shown herself to be vulgar, a novel-reader, and a tattle-tale, she damns herself to expulsion when she cannot conform to polite behavior. While Frances' uncle tells her to eat what's in front of her without complaint, Arethusa believes the butter at school is "rancid" and not fit for pigs (67). Egging her on, Bell has the idea of starting a "butter rebellion," to which Arethusa has the idea to throw their butter-plates out the window during tea (68). While Bell says that she will write notes to all the girls to take part in their rebellion, she instead tells them to reach for their plates to appear to take part but not to throw them. At tea, Arethusa sees the girls reach for their plates and throws her out the window, only to be laughed at. Bell claimed that Arethusa planned the rebellion and she only wrote the notes so that no one would interfere in Arethusa's plans (70). While Bell certainly instigated Arethusa's actions, she is pardoned but Arethusa is expelled. Arethusa's expulsion can be viewed as the result of her bad choices in circulating the novels and then participating in a ridiculous rebellion. However, Bell and the other girls deliberately let Arethusa embarrass herself in what they knew was a poor decision. Perhaps if Arethusa had been more accepted by the other girls, they would have discouraged and perhaps dissuaded her from the rebellion. Arethusa is failing at True Womanhood, but her greatest failure may be in her lack of self-awareness; she lacks the ability to see that her behavior is wrong or that the other girls dislike it. Arethusa is herself a social upstart who will not conform to social expectations because she cannot see that

she is acting outside of them. As the story's "bad girl," she is a threatening presence because the school experience is unable to fix her and the only solution is to remove her and send her home. However, that's the worst fate for a girl in a school story—to return home—because to go home means the end of education and the beginning of adulthood. She will not fit in with the educated—and True—women of her class. As Tuthill cements Arethusa Slam as a corrupting and troubling figure by dismissing her from school, she similarly identifies other problematic figures in her text, the beautiful but vapid Marion Telfair and the smartest girl in school, Bell Rowe.

3.1.2 "Bad Girls" that Don't Grow Up and the True Woman

While the text works to promote the Christian theme that being a good person is more important than heritage or lineage, it also sacrifices lower-class (Lucy) or upwardly mobile girls (Bell) to further the education and lives of upper-class girls (Frances or Kate). In Frances' journey to True Womanhood, her academic success overtakes Bell Rowe's, who is not dissatisfied with the change in academic rank. Bell's plot is largely meant to further Frances' own development into a True Woman, even at the expense of her own life. Throughout the novel, Bell, repeatedly gets into trouble—creating a petition against a teacher, fighting with Frances, reading novels, and associating with Marion—and despite being the smartest girl in school, shows little desire to maintain her class rank. Bell's actions seem largely motivated by a desire to gain favor with the other girls and act on behalf of them. For example, she starts the petition against Dracy because most of the girls dislike the teacher. She dissuades the other girls from following Arethusa's "butter rebellion" because she is looking to embarrass an already-despised student. She does not seem to want to retain her position as first girl, as when Frances admits her desire for first position, Bell confesses, "You have nobody to fear but Bell Rowe, and she has not

much ambition, or she would study harder than she does" (17). While Bell recognizes her own intelligence, she admits that she neither wants to work hard or get further in school, yet she previously described the work her blacksmith grandfather did to move up socially. For a character who should promote social mobility based on work, Bell is strangely unwilling to work hard herself. Her downfall seems to be in her unwillingness to work to maintain her social position.

Ultimately, Bell's poor judgment in agreeing to a scheme of Marion's to disguise themselves and leave school results in her death, while also being used to further Frances' personal development. While Frances is visiting Meta and her family at Greendell, Marion and Bell arrive, disguised as two Italian nuns, to meet Meta's older brother Warren and his friend, a Polish nobleman, Count Rinaldo. The girls walked the ten miles from school in hot robes for the romance-obsessed Marion to meet the "Count," who is only Warren's school friend, Arthur Tollman, the son of a "plain Western farmer, a genuine backwoodsman" (101). Marion, blinded by her love of novels, has lost the ability to see her social equals, or recognize that the "Count" is not who he pretends to be. Instead, Marion falls prey to the common romance trope of disguise. In romances, genteel women were frequently tricked into a dalliance with a disguised lower-class man. Despite her education, Marion's judgment has regressed, as has Bell's.

The narrative uses Bell's death as a lesson for the characters, with the novel becoming increasingly moralizing. After Bell returns to school and recognizes herself as being "guilty of a piece of folly and indiscretion," she quickly becomes ill, fatigued, fevered, and dies (98). Before her death, Bell calls out for Frances, telling her that she is going home to God and wishes that had begun to "love and serve God" sooner, now knowing that the soul is what matters (105). Bell's death is a warning and lesson for readers in that the intelligent Bell should have known

better than to follow the foolish Marion in her scheme and to don a disguise, but it problematically holds Bell to higher standards than Warren's disguised friend, Arthur Tollman. Bell's death teaches her to repent (as she did before her death) and be a Christian focused on serving God, not partaking in foolish schemes to maintain friendships.

However, the problem with interpreting Bell's actions as a lesson is that they contrast directly with Arthur Tollman's, another descendant of a socially mobile hard worker. Arthur pretended to be a Count to entertain himself and Warren, and to deliberately punish Frances: "to punish you for having so carefully concealed at school every thing about yourself" (135). Presumably, Warren and Arthur viewed Frances as a social upstart or descendant of a working-class individual, like Arthur, and saw her unwillingness to describe her family as deception. His disguise as the "Count" is arguably a far worse sin than Bell's disguise for it is cruelly motivated. Yet, the narrator claims that Bell's death caused both Arthur and Warren to become more religious, and the text gives them a second chance which it denied Bell. Arthur even ultimately marries Meta, Warren's sister. The audience then sees two upwardly mobile individuals, Bell and Arthur, who both participate in disguise schemes and do not act with "Christian values," but Bell is punished with death while Arthur can repent and marry into an arguably wealthier and more socially-connected family. While Bell is also punished for not wanting to work hard at school and maintain her social status, does she deserve to die? With this double standard, the text is much harsher on the girl student and is troubling in that it eliminates the smartest girl at school and a character who directly promoted upward mobility.

Following in Arethusa and Bell's footsteps, Marion Telfair is also harshly treated by the text and serves as another illustration of the warning for readers: Disobedient or "bad" schoolgirls can be sent home, die, or simply be left alone. Marion was the sole student who did

not experience a change after Bell's death, as she "had wept so often at fictitious sorrow, that her heart was hardened to real suffering" (107). Bell dies from her mistakes, punished as though she should have been known better, but Marion is simply far too gone to be changed and is left to her own decline: "Although her own imprudence had led Isabel Rowe to make the effort which was the cause of her death, no self-condemnation troubled the light-minded, unfeeling girl, no compunctious visitings awakened her conscience" (108). Marion cannot see past her novels and fantasies to experience a religious or personal conversion. Instead, she is the opposite of the True Woman with her "vanity, affectation, and sickly, morbid sensibility, induced by the reading of sentimental poetry and wild romance, seem[ing] to encompass the soul with a wall through which no holy influences can penetrate" (108). While Marion wrote a letter about the funeral, it "left no serious impression upon her volatile mind" (108). Marion is not a woman to be trusted with the charge of Republican Motherhood, yet the text makes no significant effort to change or reform Marion.[101] She ends the text by rejecting Frances and claiming to have no desire to visit her. The audience does not see her continuing her school friendships, as it does for Frances, Meta, and Kate. Instead, she lingers as an example of what schoolgirls should fight against—romantic notions and silly behavior—or risk losing out on True Womanhood and marriage. In a moment that may foreshadow Marion's future, she is rejected by Arthur for flirting with him and playing up her illness. He disliked the "sickly sentimentality and affected delicacy which some girls display," and accurately saw it in Marion's own display, which is "so affected, so pedantic, and pretending!" (100). Instead, he desired "good sense, and a sweet temper," which is the text's model for young womanhood (100). With the rejection of this suitor and the implication that suitable partners would also want "sensible" partners, the question lingers: Who will Marion marry? Will she marry at all? As with Arethusa Slam, the text questions, what will society do

with this girl? The text offers no firm conclusion. Yet, it lingers between promoting True Womanhood and an educated, respectable woman; her education is key to her marriageability.

In contrast to Arethusa, Bell, and Marion, Frances undergoes a full religious conversion to cement her development into a True Woman and the fulfillment of its tenets. Before being further affected by Bell's death, Frances' spiritual awakening occurs during a solitary confinement, given as punishment for striking another student (Bell). During Frances' week-long solitary confinement, she keeps a journal, reads letters from her mother and the Bible, and reflects on the consequences of her uncle's rules, specifically the girls accusing her of being a spy for the teachers. Through keeping a journal and recording her reaction to her mother's letter and Bible-reading, Frances finally reveals some of her interiority to the audience.[102] In a letter from her mother, Frances learns that her mother saw her as a "little egotist," primarily motived by "worldly" concerns (50, 48-9). Frances' mother explains that her daughter was focused too much on public opinion and gaining the love of her friends, and she hopes that Frances will instead focus on the most important motivator, acting for the love of God (49-50). She urges her daughter to "do unto others as you would have others do to you" as she interacts with the other schoolgirls. While Mears began the narrative by giving Frances guidance on how to act at school, Frances' mother clarifies why this advice was necessary and how to actually succeed with it. This clarification reestablishes the centrality of a mother in a girl's life, but also shows how a girl can become misguided through training in the home. The "indulgences" at home led Frances down the path of "egotism" and she needed the socialization and outside training of a school to get back on the perceived right path for a young woman. Much like Arethusa, Frances also needs school to smooth her "rough edges" in preparation for marriage.

As Frances reads the Bible, she realizes that she has been proud and lacking in character,

"What a proud, self-sufficient girl I have been! I seem never to have thought humility a Christian virtue," but this attention to her self-sufficiency also reveals the text's conflict with Frances' academic ambitions (51). With the solitude to reflect on her character, Frances identifies pride and self-sufficiency as poor traits, but these traits can also be associated with her success at schoolwork. The question for Frances is how to balance schoolgirl ambition with Christian humility; she wants her to be first girl but also a good Christian, which the text sees in conflict. She has been prideful in how she wants other people to view her, but she has also been ambitious in her success. She has been so focused on her schoolwork that she has not been a True Woman, submissive and pious: "I am so much occupied with my studies that I have hardly time to think of anything else," even declining to help another student with their work as she needed to study herself (16). With no directive from her uncle to do well academically, Frances is ambitious for her own sake. Tuthill will promote an academically successful heroine so long as she is humble and motivated by God. After Frances' time spent in solitary confinement, she emerges to overtake Bell as first girl and develop a better relationship with her peers, as she has now been "acting from higher and nobler motives… The warmth of her nature had been repressed" (72). Frances is both better at school and more popular with her schoolmates after her conversion to Christian humility. The model the text presents is one that associates success with Christian values. For the girl reader, it is socially acceptable to be successful so long as your intentions are humble.

Furthermore, Frances' academic and social success occur after she has learned humility, so that she will handle both in a way the text deems appropriate for a young woman and a Christian, identities that are inextricably linked in this story school story. Notably, after Bell's death, Frances has conveniently lost her greatest academic competition and so can study with

"less ambition." Faced with the prospect of morality, Frances becomes even more pious: **"**She did not study less when the term again commenced, but it was with less ambition and stronger desire for greater usefulness" (108). Her desire for "usefulness" gives a Christian connotation to the ambitious desire to gain intelligence at school and reconciles the perceived disconnect between ambition and Christianity.

Finally, for Frances to complete her conversion into True Womanhood, Tuthill suggests that the last step is to practice her role as a Republican Mother by raising a child, as the boarding school story mimics what Tuthill sees as a woman's life trajectory. At the end of the text, Frances adopts Lucy Lee, an eight-year old poor orphan, who was sent to the school because is she a relation of Mrs. MacOver, and is successful at turning her charge into a young lady. She leaves Lucy as a surrogate-daughter to her own mother when she marries. The exchange between Lucy and Frances, in which the poor orphan is adopted and accepted into a wealthy family is beneficial to both parties, as Frances' mother tells her, "Your care of our little Lucy, and the conduction of her education, will be a great advantage to *you*," as it enables Frances to practice at mothering before "graduating" to marriage (137, my emphasis). While Lucy is accepted into the Jerome family, her role seems to be that of a replacement for Frances, both filling the hole left by Frances and allowing her to leave, making it unclear what Lucy's life's purpose will be.[103] Lucy claims she cannot replace Frances but merely "follow her example now; as I did when she was a boarding-school girl. I owe all my happiness in life to her, and, through God's blessing on her instructions, my hopes of heaven" (139). Lucy's proper education from a "boarding-school girl" has made her a Christian, and for this text, that seems to be the only education it cares about for a girl.

3.2 The Racial and Cultural Difference of *Hester Stanley at St. Mark's* (1882) by Harriet Prescott Spofford

Following in the footsteps of Frances Jerome, the wealthy Hester Stanley is sent to Waterways' boarding school by her father to tame her unruly behavior and turn her into an acceptable young woman. Indeed, Hester does master her temper, become successful in her studies, and display a humble and repentant personality. While this can be read as a simple boarding school-reform case, Harriet Prescott Spofford's racially ambiguous protagonist adds a racial and cultural component to the main character's reform, as Hester is educated in an American school on American culture and Christianity to later return to the South Sea Islands and educate the Polynesians. Through drawing repeated attention to Hester's "dark" body, Spofford seems to displace readers fears about girls' bad behavior onto this body. However, she calls into question the seemingly clear dichotomy between Hester the savage and her American classmates. With the use of this other-ed character, Spofford critiques cultural stereotypes while also privileging American culture. Most importantly, Spofford uses Hester's character step outside the bounds of traditional white American or Anglo-girl characters as Hester's desire to be a teacher works outside of the trajectory for an upper-class Anglo-American girl in the period. While Hester's teachers represent the missed opportunities caused by their gender and economic status, Hester, existing outside of the American social economy, has more agency to pursue a life beyond marriage. Ultimately, *Hester Stanley* offers a unique perspective women who can fulfill their professional desires and who is stifled by situation.

I argue that Spofford's novel attempts to portray the limits that women faced in their professional and personal choices. Spofford uses Hester, a character with an uncertain parentage, to showcase professional opportunities outside the norm for upper-class American girls in the period, but she doesn't fully give Hester a choice in her future either, as the text often privileges

American culture and offers imperialist ideas. Yet, she compares Hester's ability to become a teacher with two teachers in the text, who represent missed opportunities caused by their gender and economic status.

Hester is also contrasted with her Anglo-American classmates in unexpected ways, with Hester acting as the positive example and the Anglo-girls ending the text unreformed. I argue that Spofford uses Hester's body as a visible marker of difference between herself and the Anglo-American girls at the school, so to use Hester as an example of unruly girlhood reformed. However, instead of the outsider being un-reformable, Hester is one of the few girls who is successfully changed by her education. Thus, while leaving us with a mature Hester well on her way to becoming a teacher, the text also concludes with two problematic classmates, Marcia and Margaret. Leaving these characters' arcs unresolved suggests that Spofford doesn't know how to deal with Anglo-American girls of unruly behavior and questions the effectiveness of their education. Unlike Tuthill who expelled, killed, or left her characters unmarried, Spofford forgives and marries her flawed characters. In the process, she calls into the question the dominant narrative that education can change a wayward girl and that marriage is the highest goal, or reward, for a woman.

Hester Stanley was originally published as a serial in *The Youth's Companion*, titled "At St. Mark's: In Nine Chapters" in 1881, published as a novel in 1882, and called a "girl's classic" by the *Youth's Companion* in 1900.[104] *The Independent* (1883) described the novel as a "pleasant and picturesque and healthy description of school life" with a plot about the "daughter of an American merchant….with her ungoverned and ill-regulated mind" who learns from a "noble teacher." Indeed, the story follows a schoolgirl, who I place at around 12- to 14-years-old, who will eventually correct the error of her ways as she learns from her peers at the New England

Waterways' boarding school and especially from Miss Marks, who is so beloved that the titular school, St. Marks, is nicknamed for her. Spofford, who was educated at the Putnam Free School in Newburyport, Massachusetts and the Pinkerton Academy in New Hampshire, would have been familiar with New England private schools. Yet, I argue that the novel goes beyond its reform story in the way it both displaces anxieties about Anglo-American girls' behavior and presents Hester's professional future compared to her teachers and peers.

3.2.1 Hester's Body

Hester Stanley is broadly a school-story reform plot, centered on a flawed schoolgirl who will eventually correct the error of her ways, but its cultural difference plotline serves to displace anxieties about Anglo-American girl's behavior onto Hester's body. When Hester arrives at the New England Waterways' boarding school (or St. Marks) from the South Sea Islands, she has a terrible temper, a lack of formal education, and excessive pride. *Hester Stanley* is strikingly like Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* (1847), one of Spofford's favorite novels, in the boarding school setting and main characters with short tempers and outbursts, as Rita Bode highlights (117-8). After being raised in the South Sea Islands, Hester now must fight against teachers' and classmates' preexisting notions of her as a "savage" or a "heathen," and what they preconceive to be "strange" behavior. Hester has not received a formal education beyond periodic sessions, only briefly attending a nuns' school and receiving training from Polynesian women in the arts (16-17).[105] While she has significant talents in that she can dance, embroider, speak three languages, play guitar, sing, and swim, she struggles to read in English and does not even know that "the world [is] round" (8, 16-17).[106] She is also "perpetually doing something that startled those about her" through her temper and impulsive reactions (21). Hester's tantrums and overly emotional responses do not necessarily stem from her South Sea Island upbringing, as the teachers and

students presume through cultural stereotyping. Instead, her behavior is directly tied to the death of her mother at a young age and being raised instead by servants (21). It is perhaps easier for Hester's classmates to view her outbursts as part of racial or cultural difference rather than to recognize the potential for the same behavior in themselves, thus displacing class-based behavior fears into racial stereotypes. Indeed, readers of girls' school stories should recognize a familiar flaw, whether it be anger, vanity, or even novel-reading, in a main or supporting character in these school stories. These girls are either reformed, die, or—perhaps most threatening to their society—are sent home to disappointed families. Hester's reform plot functions on a more exaggerated scale as Anglo-readers can offset fears about their own development onto Hester's bodily difference.

At the start, Hester's physical body is used as a visible marker of difference between herself and the Anglo-American girls at the school. Hester is first described to the audience in corporeal terms as "a dark little body in a black gown, who sat alone in the big bay-window that overlooked the harbor" (3). While the audience knows that Hester was raised in the South Sea Islands with her father, an American merchant, they are told nothing about the identity of Hester's mother (3).[107] As such, Bode argues that "central to her questioning of racial issues in this work is her positioning of Hester, for which establishing her American lineage, Spofford deliberately makes Hester's race indeterminate" (117). Hester could be part-Polynesian since Hester's skin is repeatedly referred to as "dark" or "brown" throughout the duration of the school year. However, many girl characters (especially those in girl's bildungsroman novels) are referred to as "odd" in appearance or having "brown" skin which is frequently seen in tomboy characters.[108] Bode argues that while Spofford may suggest Hester's dark skin to be tanned from the sun, her "refusal to assign a definite racial identifier to Hester… opens up possibilities of an

equality that nineteenth-century America was steadfastly resisting" (119).[109] Hester may, therefore be part-Polynesian on her mother's side. Yet, she never fully clarifies her history, as the closest she comes is saying, "I suppose I'm a Polynesian… I'm dark enough, you see,– I'm so tanned. But papa is an American" (7). She hedges in her identification, "supposing" that she is Polynesian, and uses her skin-tone as the reason for this association instead of her upbringing, raised by her father's Polynesian servants in their customs (which she is shown to have embraced as she lovingly recounts them to her peers while listening to a contemporary *Harper's Bazaar* article about Samoa).

Yet, despite her comfort with her home in the South Sea Islands, she suggests that she is not a full citizen or has a full cultural identity, as she says she's never had a home or "even… a country" (5). Hester knows that her father is an American but she does not see herself as one. She describes her father's intention for her future, saying, "I *must* study. Papa means me to be a teacher out there, where they need them, and I can do them good" (6). Her phrasing creates a line between Hester ("I") and the people, "they," living "out there" (6). As Bode explains, Hester's words "imply a recognition of separation and difference that fits with the novel's emerging language of imperialist ideology. Her assumption of responsibility hints at hierarchy" (119). However, "them" is used twice, once to refer to teachers, which Hester will become, and the South Sea Islanders. There's slippage—despite knowing she should be aligned with the American or teachers, Hester is not so separate from the islanders she hopes to educate. The link between Hester and the South Sea Islanders, then, will be her profession, but it is her American and Christian education that will enable this future, as American Protestant teachers were carrying out much of the missionary work of the late nineteenth century.[110]

3.2.2 Who Wants to Be a Teacher?

Indeed, Hester embarks upon her education to become a teacher and her ability to have a profession (especially one that she actively desires) marks her as different from both Miss Marks and the cruel Miss Brown, women who were both were forced into teaching as a second choice. They broadly represent their contemporaries who were unable to pursue a calling because of social expectations or economic factors. Hester, in contrast, is encouraged to teach by her father and sent to school specifically to become a teacher.

Thus, Hester's education at St. Mark's consists of learning her subjects, Christian principles, and behavior appropriate for a young woman, as well as teacher-training through observing two teachers, Miss Marks and Miss Brown. Unsurprisingly, many young women attending female seminaries in the nineteenth century learned about and modeled their teaching styles on their educators, going on to disseminate the pedagogical practices of the early generations of female educators. While the text appears to offer a clear dichotomy between the angelic Miss Marks as the ideal teacher and the angry and widely despised, abusive Miss Brown as the anti-model, the two women have more in-common than it initially appears as both were forced into teaching as a second choice. They represent those women who were unable to pursue their first calling because of economic or social reasons.

Miss Marks appears to be the ideal model for Hester because of her gentle demeanor, fairness, and willingness to help Hester personally. Knowing that Hester would be laughed at by her classmates for her current knowledge-level, Miss Marks hears Hester's lessons privately until she is ready to join her class (18). She adapts her teaching to encourage Hester's interests. For example, she compares Hester's beloved fairies to oxygen and hydrogen, connecting education to fantasy (116). The relationship between Hester and Miss Marks resembles a mother and daughter, as Miss Marks comforts Hester after her outbursts and does not exact unfair

punishments on her. Hester even sees an image of Miss Marks as "a "great, white, carved angel" as she comforts a sick student (35). Spofford imagines an ideal teacher to be a fair, white, loving mother-surrogate and critiques corporal punishment used by teachers on students.

Miss Marks also uses rewards of merit, an honor and type of ephemera common in the nineteenth century, to motivate and praise students. However, Miss Marks' rewards of merit go beyond a typical certificate or paper; instead, she offers students the privilege of participating in a special activity, swimming, and in awarding a gold watch to teach the value of time to her students (127).[111] The prize is for the best scholar in the school, as well as "general personal excellence and improvement and deportment," creating competition between the girls as they attempt to improve in their academics and in their everyday behavior (129).

As Miss Marks rewards her students' behavior, Miss Brown still uses corporal punishment, and the text shifts the blame from bad student behavior to the system of employing impoverished teachers. While Miss Brown is intolerant of Hester and the girls' behavior in general, she gains sympathy as the victim of economic hardship.[112] Hester, as a cultural outsider without knowledge of American behavior expectations, particularly upsets Miss Brown. Miss Brown not only calls Hester names like "heathen" (12), "twopical [tropical] tiger" (15), "cannibal" (81)," "an evil spirwit in this school" (124), etc., but she is also the only teacher in the text to practice corporal punishment by shaking and boxing Hester's ears. As Richard H. Brodhead describes, educators' opposition to corporal punishment developed alongside the development of disciplinary intimacy ("discipline through love") in the American middle-class (17-18). While the middle-class Marks practices love, the lower-class Brown forgoes it, linking her suitability to teaching to her class. Indeed, Brown lacks the patience and temperament to handle the girls, and only began teaching mathematics to support a sick mother and two sisters

(82). She needed to make money and as a woman, had few options. As a teacher, she would make a lower salary than a male counterpart, but she would be able to help support her family. However, as the narrator describes her as the "person designed to make almanacs and obliged to shepherd sheep," Miss Brown has become angry and nervous from dealing with the students, who reciprocally dislike her (25). Miss Brown's experience as a teacher was not unique; despite many teacher characters who are kind, nurturing, and examples of how republican motherhood can be translated into teaching, Brown's disdain for her unwanted profession reflected the feelings of many first-time teachers. As Solomon describes of the experience of early women school-teachers, "Teaching as a vocation proved more demanding and discouraging than many anticipated… Recalcitrant pupils, uncooperative parents, indifferent school boards, inhospitable communities, and general isolation made the job seem hopeless. In the face of such difficulties, it is not surprising that many left after a short tenure" (33). Miss Brown, too, leaves the school to marry the head of the boy's school, who had been impressed with her "devotion" to her students after following the swimmers to the boys' school. By moving to a new community to teach, Brown, like her contemporaries also found another opportunity for marriage, as many young women saw relocating to teach as opportunity to meet more potential husbands (Solomon 33). The audience can also read this ending as Miss Brown finally finding a more satisfying life and upward mobility in marriage, or just displacing her unsuitability to a new school, as the girls feel sorry for the boys across the bay.

Just as Miss Brown became a teacher because of necessity, Miss Marks was also forced into teaching. Miss Marks immediately bonds with Hester because she had "dreamed of leading the same life that fate seemed to have marked out for Hester's future, and had longed to help forward the race in obscure corners of the earth" (20). However, an unspecified "circumstance

had forced her" to give up her dream, suggesting perhaps a similar family situation to Miss Brown's (20). More likely, though, is that Miss Marks' was not allowed to pursue missionary work as an unmarried woman. Solomon describes how it was viewed as "unacceptable" for unmarried women to serve as missionaries in what were deemed- "dangerous places like Africa, India, or the Far East" (34). While there were a few exceptions who did receive permission, most women had to be married to a minister to pursue such work (Solomon 34). Though the narrator describes Miss Marks' choice as a close substitute for missionary work, as it was "as useful a lot at home," Marks' disappointment is evident (20). In the sweet and ideal Miss Marks, then, there are echoes of the similarly unfulfilled Miss Brown—women who are forced into roles they do not want because of family, religious, or social obligation. Miss Marks feels as if she "had her own youth and childhood back again in her" because of her interest in developing Hester, and served as an example of a woman whose pupil could achieve what she couldn't—a message that is also repeated later in the chapter in *Betty Baird's* sequel (20).

Hester can be read as a fulfillment of what Miss Marks had hoped for herself; her identity as Polynesian-American gives her the fluidity to travel where an American woman could not. However, she is also seemingly without a choice in this profession, as her father made clear his desire was for her to be a missionary and teacher. But Hester does not need to work, as her teachers do, because her father is a wealthy merchant. Many evangelical women pursued teaching because of religious beliefs, but, again, Hester's father does not show particularly strong religious feelings. Hester was only recently baptized as a Christian and it's unclear if her "teaching" will be Christian in nature, since she embraces the Samoan cultures and religious beliefs. Yet, the implication is that Hester can't become a part of the domestic culture or True Womanhood in America. Neither motherhood nor marriage is presented as an option for her, and

she does not consider staying in America beyond her schooling.[113] Hester only briefly thinks about motherhood when visiting her friend Marcia Meyer's family, and is horrified by the violent and out-of-control children. She compares her future work to what Marcia will be doing at home with her younger siblings, and Marcia agrees, calling it "civilize[ing] my little savages!" (62). Hester, then, sees her eventual role as a teacher as more palatable than this depiction of motherhood. While Hester's racial difference may somehow bar her from participating in the system of (white) True Womanhood, Spofford may also be suggesting that the ideal is not all it's cracked up to be. Instead, Hester may find salvation (and superiority) in another feminine pursuit, teaching. As Spofford marries her problematic characters Miss Brown and Marcia to male suitors, she may be suggesting that marriage is not a first choice, after all.

3.2.3 Fears About American Girls' Behavior

As Hester is first presented to the audience as an outsider with a "savage" upbringing who needs to reform, the turning point for her character's personal transformation comes from an alteration with another student that suggests that American girls also need "civilizing" at school. During a performance of *Cinderella*, Margaret Payson, a schoolmate of Hester's, becomes jealous of the attention and praise that Hester receives from the audience for her performance of the fairy godmother, "Here we are doing our very best, and everybody used to applaud us so, and now nobody seems to see a soul but this little wretch, who doesn't have much to say, anyway. She acts just as if she thought she really *was* a fairy!" (76).[114] Margaret decides to "do something"—showing that she purposefully hinders Hester's performance—during the last scene when Hester removes her to cloak to reveal herself as the fairy godmother (78). Margaret trips Hester by sticking out her foot, causing Hester to fall onto the other actors. Hester reacts immediately:

> "Her nose was bleeding, but her eyes were blazing. She made a rush for Margaret Payson, before any one could hinder, tore down the lofty structure of her false hair, till the stage was strewn with switches, snatched away her plumes, her veil, her great ruff, her beads, her ribbons; and goodness only knows what she would not have done if, at that moment, the curtain had not begun to drop, and Miss Brown had not run upon the scene… and snatching Hester in her arms, carried her, kicking and screaming, out of sight" (79-80).

Hester's actions go outside the norm for "appropriate" behavior in that she immediately reacted violently to the tripping and attacked Margaret, even going so far as to bite her in retaliation for the deliberate slight. Hester's friends are embarrassed by her "mortifying" behavior, as all of Hester's progress at has been thwarted (80). However, Hester quickly realizes how badly she has behaved, feels ashamed, and sobs, talking to herself, while tearing at her hair (83). She later blames her "savage" upbringing for her actions, but also seeks redemption and is even willing to be dismissed from school, though she ultimately is not (85, 91).[115]

However, Margaret, an American student, deliberately attacked Hester to embarrass her, and the reverberations of her actions suggest that unruly American girls are a greater problem than Spofford acknowledges. While Miss Marks holds Margaret to a higher standard, as she is in the "advanced class, nearly twice the size of her victim," she also struggles with assigning a fair punishment to Margaret who "deliberately" set out to trip Hester and potentially injure her (93). Though Hester's "indulgent" reaction was not entirely out of character for her thus far, Margaret's deliberate choice shows "envy, malice, and meanness" (93). While the girls in *A Boarding-School Girl* embarrassed Arethusa Slam, they did not set out to cause her physical harm, nor did Marion mean for Bell to become ill when they ventured to Meta's home. Margaret, then, represents a new level of vitriol of which American girls are capable. However, claiming

that Hester has requested no punishment for Margaret, Miss Marks takes no action against Margaret and claims that knowing her "impunity" is due to Hester is punishment enough (94). While this solution elevates Hester in the eyes of the other girls, readers also receive a mixed message: the injured party is punished and the jealous American girl is set free. Hester becomes the moral superior in turning the other cheek to her slight, and Margaret, now the "savage," is marked by her actions. As Miss Marks' is unable to conceive of a way to truly punish Margaret, the text is similarly unsure of what to do with disorderly American girls. While Miss Marks, the audience, and even Hester herself can blame her island upbringing for outbursts, Margaret and Marcia's actions have no such origin. The text thus displaces contemporary anxieties about girlhood and behavior onto Hester's body and cultural difference to "reform" her by the end of the text, but the lack of punishment for Margaret signals the ways in which American girls are not reformed by the school system.

Hester's best friend and an older girl at school, Marcia Meyer, in the strongest example of this lack of reformation, is the text's most enigmatic figure, as the text repeatedly draws attention to her flaws but has no problem in resolving her plot with a marriage. Throughout the text, Marcia makes snarky remarks and makes trouble, as she does in sneaking off with a group of girls to visit the boys' school. As Marcia laments being caught and her certain loss of the watch prize, Hester finally admits to her, "I'm afraid you're going to be a very bad girl!," declaring what the audience has already realized (181). With this startling confession, Marcia finally breaks down and promises not to say anything "naughty" again and the girls pray together (182). Here, it's Hester who convinces Marcia to repent and pray—a "heathen civilizing" a Christian—with Spofford inverting the plot expectation. Hester's anger and misunderstandings with her teachers are largely explained as the result of cultural difference, lacking a maternal

influence, and being over-indulged by servants, whereas Marcia's behavior, as well as some of the other girls, is largely dismissed without explanation. In fact, Marcia laments how hard it is to keep her promise to behave, since it "seems as if everything I wanted to say was bad" (182-3). Marcia rejects any genuine self-reflection that would force her to change her behavior. She sabotages her academic improvement with her desire for fun and fails to recognize the consequences of her actions beside those that directly impact her. Even a disastrous night swim to the boys' school that could have nearly killed Miss Brown and got a male teacher fired can only get Marcia to admit, "I ought to be sorry. I know it was wrong. But –but- we had a good time!" (184). Marcia's desire for a "good time" ultimately outweighs her moral compass, but aside from losing the school competition, she suffers no permanent consequences beyond disappointing Hester.

Thus, while Hester largely acts as a moral compass for Marcia, Marcia's character failings are never fully resolved in the text. In her last dialogue, Marcia says that she will return to Miss Marks' school for the following school-year, and remarks that "perhaps [Marks will] make a saint of me before she gets through with me. She's a saint herself!" (193). This line is meant to compensate for not reforming Marcia's character over the course of the novel and to suggest that Miss Marks will eventually correct her behavior, but readers may question why Marcia hasn't been effectively "schooled" by now. She's an outlier in the school story, as she never seems to grow but the audience is meant to assuaged by this line and her eventual marriage that she becomes a socially-acceptable woman.

However, Marcia's marriage may have another implication—that educators teach students differently based on their future trajectories. While Marcia believes that Miss Marks will eventually reform her, she may, in fact, be mistaken. Teachers in the period had goals for

their students' liberal educations, as recounted by Solomon, "Learning, teacher training, religious vocation, and social status: each of these goals had appeal for some more than others" (25). While "discreetly… instruct[ing] their pupils to achieve as much as possible," they still recognized the realities of many women's futures, and as such, "advised students who expected to marry differently from those who would remain single" (Solomon 25-6). Women who planned to marry would have to be obedient to their husbands and have more limited options than their counterparts who planned to remain single (Solomon 26). For students, how they used their newfound education was dictated by the tenets of True Womanhood and "an amalgam of personal needs, quests, and obligations discovered either at school or afterward" (Solomon 27). Miss Marks sent Hester to visit Marcia's family, where Hester witnessed how Marcia had to help with her younger siblings. She is likely aware that Marcia's family expects for her to marry and have children of her own. Marks' specific training of Hester, as a surrogate for her own missed opportunity, is likely very different from how she approaches teaching Marcia, whose future will vary widely from Hester's.

The text's conclusion further cements how Hester's and Marcia's futures will be diverge, as well as how their academic development has contributed to their respective paths. At the school's final exhibition, in front of the school trustees, the students' families, the neighboring boy's school, and community members, Hester watches Marcia recite Latin and pause, reddening, losing her train of thought until her love interest, Joe, whispers it to her from the front row. While Hester's own recitation was not stressful, as she has become a competent student, Marcia relied upon Joe to help finish her performance. The moment so shook Hester that she remembers this "terrible" moment years later when she is "a woman of wealth and authority, at the head of a corps of teachers, bringing her islanders up into the light, as she called it, and coming every few

summers to visit Marcia and Joe" (185-6). Yet, Marcia's hesitation may not signal unpreparedness, but discomfort with public speaking. Female students were expected to learn to speak while knowing that as True Women, they were expected to be silent in church, often resulting in their discomfort with public speaking in front of men (Solomon 28). Hester's comfort with her reading-exercise may be meant to signal her future as a teacher.

Ultimately, while Hester evolves into an excellent and obedient student, Marcia does not display a significant growth. Instead, the text excuses her misbehavior as Marcia marries the boy she snuck off with at school. Marcia, though not pious or obedient, can still marry in the tradition of True Womanhood while Hester, on the other hand, follows her "calling" to become a teacher. One of Hester's first students was Marcia, who laments her lack of remorse over sneaking to the boys' school, "You're a regular little missionary, Hester. You haven't mistaken your calling. But it's no use; you can't make anything out of me. I shouldn't wonder if I was really good for nothing" (184). Marcia's self-doubt reverberates to the audience, who cannot know for certain if Marcia missed her calling or even had one, as her only path seems to be marriage. Yet, how to reconcile calling Marcia "good for nothing" with seeing her married, arguably the most important role for a woman in the period? Ultimately, *Hester Stanley* questions this presumption—that marriage is the highest position to which a woman can rise. Instead, Hester, as a loving teacher, shows an alternative route. Yet, Hester, who can move between two places, the South Sea Islands and the Americas, is not bound to the same structures that confined Miss Marks and perhaps her schoolmates. Hester, without the pressure to marry, can make a home where she chooses.

3.3 A Meta-Textual Boarding School Novel: *Betty Baird* (1906) By Anna Hamlin Weikel

At first glance, Anna Hamlin Weikel's *Betty Baird* (1906), the first in a series of three novels,[116] seems to be merely repeating the boarding school story trope of an outsider (separated by class) finding acceptance from her classmates to successfully marry. Yet, *Betty Baird* self-consciously comments on the established boarding school story's class tensions and uses Betty's character to signal the genre's shift to the dynamic, active schoolgirl figure, the hallmark of the genre in the twentieth genre.[117] While still concerned with following gender expectations, the character of Betty diverges from the Christian-reform focused-protagonists to reflect more closely the New Woman, even as the text registers the tensions and fears still associated with sending girls to school. While Betty's father wants her to marry and become a True Woman, Betty signals a changing tide and reflects the growing women's workforce. She still conforms to traditional values, though, as she makes no mention of attending college despite the enrollment growth for women in the early twentieth century. The *Betty* series thus serves as a bridge between the boarding school genre and the college novel of the early twentieth century, which will embrace the New Woman more whole-heartedly. The New Woman, as contrasted to the conservative figure of the True Woman, marked a more transgressive role for women in society. The term was popularized in the 1890s as representing independent, active women, frequently depicted in activities like bicycling and smoking. Reflective of women's growing roles in the workforce and in education, the New Woman was not confined to the domestic and instead sought increased social visibility for her causes, such as the suffrage movement.

Written by a lesser-known author than the other texts in this chapter, the rarely-discussed *Betty Baird* series examines the impact reading boarding school novels before attending such a school.[118] Betty, as a lower-class rural student accepted because of family connections, is quickly judged and ostracized by her upper-class students. However, the narrative becomes one of

acceptance as her good nature endears her to the upper-class girls. Yet, Betty, as a reader of boarding school novels, seemingly should have been prepared for this difficult assimilation as new students usually struggle to fit in. The stories also focus on privileged, upper-class experiences. However, the novel does not reconcile whether Betty is merely a bad reader and has ignored the class dimension or if the novels promote unrealistic plot lines that their readers then internalize and expect. Ultimately, however, a real-life Betty would have been an unlikely candidate to attend a boarding school and Weikel portrays an idealized version of such events.

Betty also deals with a period of merging ideas about True and New Womanhood, as she seems poised to take on a career to help her struggling family with their expenses. While she engages in feminine-coded job roles, expanding her education or taking on a serious profession is not considered. While Betty seems to be a precursor for female college students, the boarding school narrative does not seem ready to embrace a New Woman and instead falls back to marriage tropes and the idea of school as a breeding ground for True Women.

3.3.1 "Schoolgirl Clannishness": Learning to Read in a School Story

When Betty Baird's title character, Elizabeth "Betty" Baird, is introduced to the audience, she appears as a classic boarding school protagonist: in need of behavioral changes, from a small community, and likely to be a social outsider to the girls at the school. Betty is the 14-year old daughter of the Presbyterian minister of the village of Weston, most likely in Pennsylvania.[119] Betty is intelligent with a strong memory but is also an incessant talker who needs to think before she speaks (31, 14). Her father, Dr. Baird, tells Betty that she is sometimes "too impetuous and enthusiastic" and needs to conform to the ordered structure of school life (14). Her "sun-browned hands" suggest that she is frequently outdoors and signals to readers that she may be a tomboy, a familiar girls' archetype, who will lose her adventurous, outdoor habits in

favor of more lady-like behavior by texts' end (4).[120] Betty's father sends her to an expensive boarding school, The Pines, that would be out of their price-range if not run by Dr. Baird's cousin and Betty's namesake, Miss Elizabeth Payne. He hopes Betty will be educated and able to support herself in case he is unable to do so later in life (10). Her father warns Betty that her schoolmates will have more ornate clothing and be familiar with luxury, unlike Betty's humble village roots. He hopes she will be able to maintain her "simplicity" and not be swayed by their fancy clothing and tastes.

Betty acts as the representative for a type of a girl reader in America: the reader of boarding school books. The text relies on the assumption that, in and prior to this period, American girls enjoyed and read large quantities of boarding school books. Betty is from a small village and is unlikely to attend such a school, and instead indulges in the fantasy of what she believes it would be like. Betty accesses her books through the Sunday-School library, though it is limited in what it can offer and cannot fulfill her appetite for boarding school books (16). If we read Betty as a model for the reader of these books, we can infer that readers were lower-class or rural and used Sunday school libraries, or even middle-class and accessing the books through circulating libraries. Betty is generally well-read beyond school stories, illustrated by frequently quoting poetry, such as Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven," and discussing her admiration for George Eliot's character, Maggie Tulliver, from *The Mill on the Floss* (1860). In addition to well-known literary texts, Betty frequently describes the plot or character elements of fictionalized school stories, which are used to explain boarding school tropes and foreshadow how Betty will differ from them.[121]

Once Betty learns that she will be attending a boarding school, she looks to boarding school protagonists for models on how to act in school.[122] Among the types of school-girl that

Betty considers are the Christian model of a "good" schoolgirl, exhibited in her "beloved Lillie Bent in 'Four Years at Lakeside,'" who was "good, and unselfish, and darned her roommates' stockings, nursed the other girls when they were sick, and was gentle and kind to the timid new ones?" (17). She also thinks of the conniving ringleader type and the beautiful but proud girl: "She could be a fascinating madcap like Peggy in 'Good Times at Irvington,' playing pranks, the leader of all the midnight feasts, the ingenious contriver of all the different forms of forbidden fun?" and the "proud, dark-haired Rose Reeves of the Belle Haven School…so exclusive that all vied to gain her friendship" (18). However, Betty quickly dismisses the thought of being like Rose, "Loving little thing that she was, she could not, even in thought, bear the sense of loneliness" (18). Instead, Betty hopes to form friendships with her peers and will likely look to emulate the "Lillie" figure, as a student who gains favor with her strong moral character. Betty's priorities for her school-time experience repeat those of other boarding-school protagonists: she hopes to make friends and be first girl.

Betty Baird's primary plot conflict is the disparity between what Betty has read in boarding school novels and what she experiences at a boarding school due to her lower class status. Since boarding school stories are her favorite genre of books, Betty assumes that she will know how to behave at school, claiming that her reading of such fictional texts as "'Four Years at Lakeside' and 'Good Times at Irvington'" has fully prepared her (2).[123] She falsely believes that her schoolmates will be eager to meet her as she is a new student (18). Betty plans to prove to her schoolmates that she is not stuck up and is indeed unselfish and kind—traits that she believes she needs to succeed at socializing in school from reading boarding school stories (18-9). She imagines that after meeting her, the schoolgirls will "crowd around her and she would tell them about Weston and Edith, and show them her father and mother's pictures… She felt sure

there never were such nice girls as those at The Pines" (18-9). Her expectations are for the girls to immediately embrace her, which goes against the skepticism that new students are frequently met with in the novels. As a reader of school stories, Betty should be aware of this, but she believes that her personality will so quickly prove itself that she will sway them with no trouble. What Betty fails to realize is that she does not fit the mold of the boarding-school girl. She is poorer than her classmates. Both of her parents try to warn Betty by explaining that her belongings will not be equal to those of her classmates (13). However, Betty has not had to think about fine clothes or impressing her classmates, as she has always been around girls of equal social stature and goods. The Pines will be her first experience in class difference.

Beginning with Betty's arrival at The Pines, clothing is used as a marker of social difference and to illustrate how Betty's upbringing differs from that of the other girls at the boarding school. While Betty's mother attempted to provide her with two made-over school-dresses and one evening dress, Betty's clothing is ill-fitting and old-fashioned (46-7). Betty believes that her new clothes make up an "unparalleled wardrobe" because she is only familiar with the local Weston fashion (46). Betty is, of course, being set up for a rude awakening; her focus on personal character and female friendship in her boarding school books has blinded her to the class differences between herself and the genre's characters, as well as to her schoolmates.

In a scene designed to introduce the new student to her peers, Betty and the audience quickly learns the difference between her and her schoolmates, and how Betty has misread the boarding school experience. While Betty hopes to show her new bead chain and books to her schoolmates (and perhaps be invited to a midnight feast) on her first night at the school, she instead experiences the girls judging her attire as she enters the dining-room (40). Accompanied by an illustration of Betty standing alone in her too-long, black silk dress while the other girls

gaze upon her, the text describes the girl's shyness and apprehension. The other girls see her looking "old-fashioned" in a dress that "gave her the appearance of a child masquerading in her mother's clothes" (52, 53). Attempting to talk to one girl at her table, Betty is met with a "cold, distant stare" and a curt response that she correctly interprets as, "Why should the new girl address her?" (54). The moment is "her first snub" (54). Like similar scenes from *The Boarding-School Girl* and *Hester Stanley*, the girls are only eager to meet girls whom they view as socially equal. Despite being determined to give her classmates another opportunity to get to know her in class, Betty only experiences more snubs, as the girls deliberately exclude her from their conversations. She hears them discussing her "outlandish dresses" and messy hair, calling her a "country gawk," and identifying her as "a poor Presbyterian's daughter, a sort of charity pupil" (59). Where *Hester Stanley* pointed to racial difference as the reason that Hester was alienated and disliked, Weikel identifies class difference as separating Betty from the other girls—Betty is too "country" for the urbane and wealthy girls. Seemingly cementing the point that Tuthill made about lower-class girls' failure to truly join their upper-class schoolmates, Betty recognizes that the boarding school girls are fundamentally different from her and seem united in their dislike of her:

> So far as she could tell all the girls were alike, and all hated her. She could not comfort herself with the thought that every bright girl at school has a jealous enemy, for these disliked her because she was not their kind. She was an intruder and had invaded their table. She had, herself, enough schoolgirl clannishness to know what that means, for she had more than once made eyes secretly at Edith when some undesirable girls tried to share their walk home from school (60).

Betty, as a leader among the girls of her village, anticipated that she would immediately be accepted by the other girls. She did not anticipate how different the girls would be, as her cousin explains to her, "You have always lived in a village, where every one knew you and where you have had things very much your own way. The girls here have had a different kind of life…You will find them very self-possessed and inclined to be critical" (66). While Betty may have anticipated some criticism or jealousy from the other girls, she did not expect to be viewed as an "undesirable" based on her upbringing and clothing. Betty's "schoolgirl clannishness" is a recurring theme in school stories, as an outsider protagonist is at odds with the rest of her schoolmates until she can win them over.

However, Betty should have been more prepared for this "clannishness" as a reader of school-stories; instead, Betty learns to "read" social situations based on clothing as a marker of status. In an explicitly metatextual moment, Betty's friend, Lois, mentions the protagonist of "Four Years at Lakeside," "Wasn't it awful the way Lillie Bent was treated at first by the other girls?" (80). Betty responds, "Well, since coming here I can sympathize with her. You wouldn't believe girls could be so mean as they have been to me" (80). Betty should have anticipated the disdain from the other girls, as the boarding-school characters in her books experienced it. Betty, however, only focused on the positive experiences of boarding-school characters. She envisioned herself transferring her village leadership position to the new school without a period of transition that readers of this genre would know to expect, as Weikel self-consciously indicates in the reference to the fictional book. Betty explains that the girls at this school care only about "stylish" clothing and for the first time, she cares too: "Do you know, I never thought at all about clothes, but since coming here and hearing the girls talk about my dresses (and I was so glad about them too!), and even disliking me because my things are not stylish (that is the only word

they seem to know), I have thought more about my clothes than in all the years of my life. It makes more difference to those girls whether your dress is an inch too long than whether you know your lessons" (82-3). Indeed, it is not an academic or personal moment that endears Betty's to the rest of the girls, but a party where influential adults respond positively to Betty's attire and personality.

Instead of the expected "Cinderella-moment" in which Betty appears in a stylish or extravagant dress, she receives positive attention for unflattering hair and an old-fashioned dress in a moment that proves that Betty does not need a makeover to gain favor. Betty stands out to adults for looking different and maintains their attention because of her personality. This scene would be encouraging to middle- or lower-class readers—who would likely never see the inside of a boarding school and deal with its social realities. They would not have to learn firsthand that Betty's acceptance is romanticized. This scene models acceptance based on personal character and overlooks social differences, which Tuthill attempted to depict in *The Boarding-School Girl* but continually fell back on social hierarchies. The reception, then, acts as a turning-point for Betty as the other girls apologize to her and finally accept her into their group. Despite knowing that the girls disliked her for her clothing, Betty accepts their apology and finally receives the group membership that she so desired.[124] While her dress does improve over the course of the text, Betty's fashionable development is modeled as a natural response to paying more attention to clothing and changing taste, not as an attempt to dramatically change herself to fit in amongst her peers or pretend to be of a higher social class.

3.3.2 The "New Woman" at School

In a significant moment as a new student, Betty is given a large part in the Christmas play as the New Woman. A senior, Mary Livingstone, is given the lead in the play, but Betty, a new

student, receives a prominent role as the "New Woman." While the other girls are jealous, Miss Payne selects Betty partially because she wanted a younger girl for the role, one who was still in "short skirts" (133). Indeed, when Betty is later in the costume of the New Woman, the men are offended until they learn Betty's age; they then see her behavior as a prank, implying that if she had been older, she may have selected this garb as an expression of being a New Woman, not playacting as one, and this would have a more serious offense (138).[125] By choosing to include the New Woman in the play, however, Miss Payne is already promoting the term to her students. Selecting Betty may also reflect Betty's class difference and the idea that as a lower-class student, she may have a more active role in society and the workforce. Notably, the narrator makes no effort to explain or contextualize the term to readers, suggesting that Weikel is confident that readers already know its meaning, while the New Woman's function in the play is not explained nor is the play's overall plot described.

Betty herself demonstrates personal understanding of the New Woman by designing her own costume. Her costume is described as a "short black skirt, a mannish coat with a stiff-bosomed shirt, smart linen collar, and natty bow tie. These, with a low derby hat on her short fair hair, gave a peculiarly piquant and boyish effect. Tan riding boots with leather leggins and a little riding whip competed The New Woman of the play" (133). The New Woman costume depicted is not especially remarkable except for the riding gear, which signifies the healthiness of the New Woman. Her whip and riding boots connect to the widespread perception of the New Woman as athletic, and her participation in the distinctly upper-class male activity further suggests that the New Woman is as capable as her male counterparts. Betty later adds twists a piece of paper into an "imitation cigarette" as she walks "jauntily" to her rehearsal, suggesting her confidence in the costume (134). Feeling like a "lad of fourteen," Betty embodies the masculine connotations of

the costume and violates gender norms (134). Creating a faux-cigarette and play-acting with it suggests that Betty believes that smoking is an important part of being a New Woman, but she also recognizes it is unacceptable for a girl of her age and status. Betty's exploration of the New Woman is within the context of a play, instead of an essay or speech for example, and suggests that the New Woman is a "role" that can be put on and taken off, not a genuine identity. Yet, that a schoolgirl is exposed to this identity within the female-centric boarding school environment signifies a more progressive move in this genre toward women's roles and futures.

Betty enjoys play-acting at being a New Woman until she is seen by two important men and religious leaders, the Bishop and the church rector. She is then torn between fear at their opinion of her costume and delight in possibly fooling them into believing she is a boy. Betty is fully enjoying her costume until she realizes that the men will see her, then she tips her hat further to disguise her face and appear to be a boy (134). She is embarrassed that they will see her attire and faux cigarette without realizing that is only a costume. Betty knows her costum is inappropriate as it depicts her with a cigarette, but it also suggests that dressing as a New Woman is also not acceptable for a young woman. When Betty recounts the story to Lois, she is "alternately shivering with fear lest she had been discovered, and shrieking with laughter as she felt that maybe she had deceived them into thinking she was a boy" (135). She hopes that her New Woman garb is so close to masculine that she could fool people into believing she is a boy and takes delight in the possibility of their mistake. Betty later learns from Miss Greene that the two men laughed very hard at her and asked if that was a new standard of dress for the schoolgirls (137). They told Miss Greene that they saw a girl dressed as a New Woman with riding gear and a cigarette (138). Betty's primary concern was in clarifying that she had a fake cigarette, suggesting that this is the part of the costume of which she is ashamed. Yet, it was

Betty who linked the image of a New Woman with smoking a cigarette—she sees it as part of the New Woman—and her playacting at smoking suggests a curiosity for it. She rejects it immediately because it goes against her upbringing as a lady but Betty enjoys wearing the costume when she's alone.

Betty's interactions with the Bishop's grandsons establish the boys' perception of the New Woman and Betty herself. After the play, Betty is introduced to the Bishop's two grandsons, Reginald, 15, and Paul, 17, who is studying for the priesthood. Paul asks if Betty likes her role, the New Woman, "Do you like a mannish woman?" Betty laughs and responds, "But I am only a little girl," which does not answer the question but implies that she is too young to know what kind of woman she wants to be (151). Again, Weikel sidesteps the issue of her feelings on the New Woman by having a young girl handle the issue. However, she slyly elevates Betty and promotes equality, by having Reginald comment on Betty's performance, as she is the "first girl he ever knew who was equal to a boy" (162). Reginald's observation about Betty is meant as a compliment of her skill as a young performer and her overall manner, but his choice of words reflects the underlying concern of the chapter—that a "New Woman" may too closely resemble a man, so much so that Betty believed that she could have fooled adults with her costume and "jaunty" walk. While Betty was selected for the role because of her young age, Betty's implicit enjoyment of and success at playing the New Woman role creates an opportunity for similar young readers to explore what being a New Woman means and to consider how they too can be "equal to a boy."

3.3.3 Betty's True and New Woman Role Models

While *Betty Baird* references the New Woman conceptually in the context of the play, Weikel also includes several models of professional women. Betty's aunt, the preceptress, Miss

Payne, is a more hands-off educator than the previous headmistresses, as she depends upon her teachers to watch over the students. She is largely absent from the girls' everyday lives. She is described as significantly busy with writing, lecturing, and participating in clubs—also exhibiting more of the variety of professions (writing, lecturing) available to women by the turn of the century and the social involvement common among New Woman (63).[126] Likewise, the popular teachers Miss Greene and Miss Spice spend their time doing settlement work in New York City, where Miss Spice teaches in the evenings, and raising money for poor children.[127] Miss Greene is described as the "soul of fair play" by the narrator, and she shares a special closeness with Betty, bonding over a shared love of poetry (72).[128] Betty follows in her teachers' footsteps, not in pursing teaching, which she realized was not her "forte" after attempting to teach a Sunday School class, but instead in progressive social reform (202). Betty's leadership, organization, and social abilities are better suited to creating an "order" amongst the girls of her village to contribute to the settlement work of Miss Greene and Miss Spice, who are raising money to send poor children on short trips to the country or the seaside (204). With the motto of "As I am able," the girls promote personal service, sell honorary membership badges, and bake treats to sell at a festival, with the one hundred-dollar proceeds sent to Miss Greene and Miss Spice (205-210.[129] She offers an example to readers of the type of social change that women can foster and participate in.

However, the two female mentors that most influence Betty are offered by the narrator as diametrically opposed: the cosmopolitan Miss Greene and the local Mrs. Baird, Betty's mother: "Between these two, similar in breeding and feeling, though so far apart in their experiences of life, both representing in its highest type the 'grand old name' of gentlewoman, Betty received rare training in all the essentials of perfect womanhood" (268). Miss Greene, Betty's favorite

teacher and the school supervisor when Miss Payne is away, is not only a "much-sought confidante and adviser of the young," but "a woman of the world, cultured by contact with leaders of thought and action, both here and abroad; not only of a teacher, but a writer on the great educational topics of the day, and a participant in many of the advanced philanthropic movements of the metropolis; in all respects a woman of action" (267). The model for an influential teacher in *Betty Baird* is a woman who is not only a teacher but also a cultured writer, philanthropist, and confidante/adviser, who is simultaneously in touch with girlhood and the wider world. In contrast, Betty's mother is described as:

> "cultivated in all the good old home culture of which New England is justly proud (for she had moved to Pennsylvania from New England), was all of women the *most unworldly*. Education she had of the highest degree. She was widely read in the masterpieces of ancient and modern literature, and thoroughly conversant with the topics of the times, as presented in the leading newspapers and magazines; yet she conceived her duty to lie chiefly, if not entirely, with her home and her husband's flock. To them she was ministering angel, counsellor, guide, and friend" (267-8, my emphasis).

Betty's mother, raised in New England, is well-educated, well-read, and familiar with current events, but she is entirely focused on affecting local events. While Miss Greene is involved in the intimate lives of her students, she is also distinctly active in her own causes. Adult Betty is the result of a girl who has learned from an active, cosmopolitan teacher/leader and a nurturing, locally-located mother—arguably the previous model of success for schoolgirls. However, Weikel has already described Betty as uninterested in teaching, so the audience knows that she will not pursue this path. While Betty demonstrates growth as she now possesses a distinctive "style" and "charm," and her experience with the Order has made her "thoughtful and gentle…

growing, intellectually and spiritually, far more than she knew," her career path and personal future are left open (256, 250). While Betty dressed up as a "New Woman" and suggests that Miss Greene is herself a "New Woman," the narrator never names them as such.

Though Betty has learned from a "True" and a "New Woman" and the text recognizes this combination as an ideal, Weikel is unable to posit a future for her heroine that describes how she will use these attributes.

In her sequel, however, Weikel does some revisionist work to promote the message of the New Woman. Betty returns home after her graduation and attempts employment to help her family pay off their mortgage. Her mother sees Betty's employment as temporary—something to occupy the last of her girlhood, while her traditional father strongly wants his daughter to marry and learn to keep house. However, Weikel makes it clear that Betty wants to work and contribute to her family's finances. That Betty feels compelled to help her family speaks to her social class, as in the nineteenth century, "social class influenced the employment of educated young single women… [as] affluent families often believed that a lady should not take a paid job" (Solomon 32). Betty tries a variety of employments: writing for publication, selling preserves, and acting as a librarian before eventually finding success in working for an interior design studio, as she had briefly demonstrated a talent for interior talent in the first book.[130] Underneath Mrs. Baird's support of her daughter's pursuits is regret over her own education: "I think in many respects my education was a mistake, even for my generation, and assuredly it would be for Betty's. It was not general enough. A variety of interests gives proportion, health, and preserved equilibrium" (*Ventures* 14). Unlike her daughter, Mrs. Baird is shy and "if it had been necessary for to earn her own living it would have been impossible" (*Ventures* 14-5). Instead, she feels that the notably New Woman activities of "gymnasium, boating, swimming, and skating, or the

organization of an altruistic society like Betty's Order of the Cup would have helped her to overcome her inherited feebleness of nerves, and made facing the world easier and even pleasant!" (*Ventures* 15). Likewise, the village librarian 50-year-old Miss Hunt, admires Betty's tenacity and bravery in submitting her stories for publication when she, herself, was too afraid to send out poems she had written in her youth. Indeed, Miss Hunt thinks of the change between women, "How different girls were now, going to college and writing unblushingly for publication!" (24). This older generation of women, likely educated in boarding schools or seminaries themselves, regret not going further and pursuing publication or more vigorous activity. For them, Betty is an emblem of what they could have been. Yet, for readers, Betty is as much of a New Woman as Weikel could reasonably portray. The text makes no mention of the potential of college for the intelligent Betty, though she interacts with college girls at the library. For Betty, her family likely could not afford to send her to college (though they are also intent on her marrying soon). Ultimately, Betty can play-act as a "New Woman" while at school, but once she graduates, the expectation for her future still collapses back to marriage.

In Weikel's final scene of *Betty Baird*, she ensures that her protagonist graduates as Valedictorian and gives a Commencement speech, but her final image is one that reflects the same limiting vision of womanhood, still holding back their educational and professional potentials. The narrator describes Betty's new dress and her enjoyment of it, as well as how she's changed since coming to school; yet, this change is described as entirely physical, with the narrator noting her height, "sweet face," softened hair, and eyes (277-8). Betty's speech is of an "unusual weight" for someone her age, but the audience hears nothing of it (278). Instead, the audience is told of a dog who sits by Betty's side while she speaks. As Betty receives bouquets of flowers after her speech, Weston local Elder Huggentugler comments in the last line, "She's

the purtiest posy of 'em all" (279). While Weikel sees intellectual growth and philanthropy as women's work in *Betty Baird*, she collapses back on physical appearance in the conclusion to her school story—perhaps recognizing the way that appearance and clothing still dictate perception.

France, Hester, and Betty's school experiences showcase the way education was evolving for women, as we see them able to graduate into mothers, teachers, and even a burgeoning "New Woman" because of their schooling. However, they also explore the complex feelings about changing roles for women. This chapter is not a straight line from True to New Womanhood; Hester is likely the most progressive of the three protagonists in this chapter and she exists outside of traditional American-girl expectations. Despite her professor father and New Woman teacher-models, Betty shows how girls, even at the turn of the century, were still struggling with balancing marriage, education, and work. Instead, many of the characters in this chapter are still subject to the boundaries of perceived social expectations. At their core, these seminary stories for girls offer microcosms of their lives to come, lives that will still be judged on class, culture, financial status, and appearance— whether or not she is the "purtiest posy of 'em all," despite what's inside her head (Weikel 279).

CHAPTER 4. 'WE BUILD COLLEGES': THE AMERICAN COLLEGE GIRL AND COLLEGE NETWORKS

When, in the first book of Elizabeth W. Champney's *Three Vassar Girls Aboard* (1883), a character laments the lack of chateaux in America, Vassar College student Barbara Atchison responds, "We do better. We build colleges" (*Abroa*d 78). Travel narratives like the *Vassar* series traditionally bemoan America's lack of historic buildings compared to that of Europe's. But instead of focusing on what the country lacks, Barbara looks to the future and emphasizes how the young nation is staking its reputation on building colleges like her own Vassar College and on the success of these colleges' graduates. Equating a young girl's lack of riches to Vassar's current state, Barbara argues that the college's beauty will grow as its alumnae take care of it, "Girls don't usually have a great many jewels. Vassar is young yet, and she will gain her diamonds as years go by. She has done enough for us, and it is for us girls to decorate her in return" (*Abroad* 78). Barbara, herself, plans eventually to make a gift to the university of a chapel window. Champney argues that, with these beautifying gifts, Vassar will one day rival the picturesque beauty of French chateaux. With her belief that graduates will get their "jewels" after graduating, Champney spreads a key message implicit in the college novel genre: graduates will (and should) form networks and donate to their colleges. Colleges can only grow if their graduates succeed and give back. Champney's not-so-subtle push for alumnae to donate to their colleges suggests the desire to promote female college education and the networks its produces as—like the Vassar vines—ever-growing, expansive, strong, and beautiful.

While the link between the college's exterior beauty and its reputation may strike today's readers as lacking the descriptive substance of what a college education can offer for women, the *Three Vassar Girls* books and the other Vassar-alumna-authored college novel examined in this

chapter, Julia Augusta Schwartz's *Elinor's College Career (1906),* illustrate what college looks like on the interior—the studying, the internalizing of a college reputation, and the growth of its students. While the Vassar girls travel away from their campus as they go abroad, the girls' minds are still very much on their college back at home. Throughout the *Three Vassar Girls* series, the titular protagonists display a deep concern for how people across the world view their university, and they attempt to promote it wherever they go. The series is a dynamic example of the college novel, with its students applying what they've learned to the real world and interacting with people from other cultures. Schwartz's *Elinor's College Career* discusses the varied reasons for its characters going to college, but it also highlights the fact that girls were now seeking education for its own sake—not to become a better Christian wife and mother as in boarding school novels. Schwartz's characters seek academic success for more than just the superiority of being "first girl." Rather they desire to use their education to create professional lifes or to create networks of educated women who might help one another. Her novel focuses on the complex relationships between friends, students and teachers, and mothers and daughters to illustrate the pressures that this generation of women faced when attending college. In both *Vassar* and *Elino*r, going to college means holding oneself to a high standard.

Yet, as these novels illustrate, college novel authors selected the kind of girls to represent this new generation of women's colleges and excluded anyone who didn't fit their idealized vision. The educated women represented in these novels are largely a homogenous group of wealthy or rising middle-class Protestant, Anglo-American women. Despite the growing population of immigrant college women in the early twentieth century and the fact that Schwartz herself was Jewish, neither author includes any significant racial or cultural diversity in the three novels represented in this chapter.[131] Instead, they focus on the typical population of an elite

private college, although both authors do include lower-class women, such as Ruth in *Elinor's College Career*, who work or teach to attend college on their own dime to gain access to better career opportunities.

Despite their privileged characters, the three novels in this chapter, Champney's *Three Vassar Girls Aboard* (1883) and *Three Vassar Girls in England* (1884) and Schwartz's *Elinor's College Career* (1906), are concerned with democratizing women's experiences in college and travel. Both novels are written by Vassar alumnae and focus on Vassar student characters. Champney represents one of the first generation of women college students, while Schwartz considers the life of a second-generation student, Elinor, at a private women's college. In both novels, the authors depict a group of Vassar friends with one lower-class member. In Champney's first novel, two characters pitch in to help a third, Saint, afford the European trip abroad. While Schwartz's Ruth earns a scholarship to remain in school, her friends help her to fit into the college community that sees her as an outcast. Schwartz's novel also focuses on the growth of the titular Elinor, from her fixation on her identity as a second-generation college student and desire to go abroad to eventually appreciating college as she recognizes the inherent privilege in her life. Elinor values college because of her friendships and forges a special bond with the lower-class Ruth. Both authors represent attending a women's college as a special gift, which, the alumnae, in turn, seek to bestow onto other women. What *Elinor*, touches on, though, is the lack of choice that less privileged girls have in their college careers, and the illusion of democratic merit in college admission.

For both the Vassar girls and Elinor, attending college creates a network of potential alumnae with a similar, shared experience.[132] For example, the *Vassar Girls* series depicts different girls traveling with friends or among the network of alumnae, illustrating how attending

Vassar has created new opportunities with their peers.[133] The students in *Vassar Girls* and *Elinor* become aware of what the college experience has done for them and will do for their futures, and they plan to give back through sending their daughters to the college (like Elinor's mother), donating financially to the college, or spreading its reputation abroad. In these three novels, what stands out most are not the ivy-covered walls of a college exterior but what the college experience creates—both a network of educated women who can rely on each other, and, crucially, a population of women who have been kept out. Despite showing girls making friends outside of their usual social classes, these novels ultimately exclude the population of immigrant girls who were attending college as well as other girls from diverse backgrounds.

Thus, in this chapter, I argue that novels about private women's colleges depict both literal and metaphorical networks of privileged experiences. As part of the college novel genre, the novels themselves are part of a mass market network. They create an image of the college girl and, by extension, the networks available to her. However, the novels give very different messages for buyers or readers of circulating libraries versus others those borrowing from a district or Sunday school library. From reading college novels, lower-class girls may not learn about the work required to get to college for their girls in their position: working as a common school teacher, raising and saving money, or fighting for a hard-to-come-by scholarship. In contrast, while reading college novels, upper- or middle-class girls might easily picture themselves as college girls and part of the privilege that affords.

Indeed, *Three Vassar Girls* and *Elinor* depict literal networks of college women that are built on this exclusive experience: graduating classes, college girls traveling together, alumni associations, and familial college legacies. The *Vassar Girls* series, itself, creates a network of Vassar alumnae; its plots are linked through stories of siblings, cousins, friends, and

acquaintances who travel together simply because they all went to Vassar. While both novels register their characters' limited career expectations (which women's college education could do little to alter, at least at first), the college experience itself links elite women in a new way. The Vassar degree conveys trust and worthiness, as the girls know that they can travel safely (sometimes even without a chaperone, as Champney strongly urges for and I discuss later) because they share the same pedigree and values. Both *Vassar Girls* and *Elinor* show the strength of alumni groups to raise money and connect students post-graduation.

However, as I illustrate in this chapter, *Elinor* also exposes the cracks in privileged college networks by raising the question: Are these networks as democratic and meritocratic as they purport to be, or do they only benefit the elites? Of course, these networks benefit their privileged students. The novels representing the college girl fail to address the girls who are left out of colleges and these networks, such as immigrant women or African Americans, and who do not receive the same institutional and peer-to-peer support as these women college graduates. This support continues after college in the form of legacy admissions—where the children of alumni may receive preference in the admission process. I argue that *Elinor* considers what happens to privileged colleges and their networks if their alumnae remain single and do not have daughters to send to their colleges (eliminating their legacy at the college) or decline to donate to them. Ultimately, I argue that the novels in this chapter ultimately promote women attending college and marrying as expected because these practices continue the economy of women's colleges (and the college novel genre itself), even as they dismantle any claim to democractic meritocracy in college education.

4.1 Postponing Marriage for Travel and Self-Expression: The *Three Vassar Girls* series (1883-1892) by Elizabeth W. Champney

In each volume of Elizabeth W. Champney's *Three Vassar Girls* series (1883-1892), three college girls journey to a new country or region where they invariably see the sights, interact with new people, and discover more about their respective interests. Over the course of the eleven-book series, Champney's Vassar girls visit France, Spain, England, South America, Italy, Russia, Turkey, Palestine, and the Southern and Western United States, among others. While they may interact with girls from different universities or academies, they do not enroll at other institutions, although they may recruit a girl to attend Vassar. The first two books in the series follow the same titular "three Vassar girls," but beginning with the third book, the series introduces rotating protagonists, usually linked by a friendship at Vassar or a loose familial connection to a previous character. The readers of the series, then, encounter a network of Vassar girls: sisters, cousins, friends, and acquaintances, so that the advantages of a Vassar education, and the legacy admissions that enable it, are clear. The texts are appealing in their ability to maintain a certain consistency; despite changing protagonists and locales, readers can count on illustrations from Champney's husband, American artist James Wells Champney,[134] detailed accounts of homes and attractions, and marriage endings. Yet, the series has only recently received critical attention and was previously ignored for these same attributes.

Champney's implementation of these elements combine to form texts that offer young women global spaces to explore themselves, and discover professional interests. While many of the characters do marry, the text does not present marriage as the only satisfying conclusion to a woman's life. Instead, the girls represent the soon-to-be-coined New Woman.[135] The series serves as an advertisement for a college education, the college community, and travel for young women—all of which guide the characters to their professional interests and creates lasting

female friendships. While traveling, the girls have more agency than in a closely monitored-school environment, precisely because Vassar's education has prepared them and they do not need to be chaperoned. Unlike in a boarding school story, where girls may have to learn to behavior appropriately, there is no such behavioral focus because they are already ambassadors and exemplar of their school. This frees them to learn cultural, historical, and professional knowledge through their travel.

Built on an elite pedigree, Vassar College was chartered in 1861 in Poughkeepsie, New York as a women's college meant to be equal to the education received at Yale and Harvard ("A History"). Through its alliance with Yale, Vassar formed a network to connect its students to respected male students (and perhaps marriages). The first 353 students enrolled in 1865, paying $350 for tuition and residence ("A History"). As Champney was an alumna of Vassar's second class in 1869, she could design her protagonists' identity around what being a "Vassar girl" in this period meant and determine what that legacy would be. As an early alumna, Champney could ensure that the Vassar influence spreads through her novels' depiction—creating a legacy abroad, doing the same cultural work as her characters. Moreover, Champney was one of the earliest women writers of college novels, and her novel would influence not only what it means to be a Vassar girl, but also what an American college girl looks and acts like.

In this early college novel series, Champney's primary concern was establishing a respectable college girl type and attracting future college girls—suggesting a beginning of the democratic college dream built on merit and upward mobility. To attract these students, Champney's college girls do not seek education to attract men. Instead, the girl's concerns are: friendship, professional vocation and success, and marriage, in that order. A hallmark of college novels is the relationship between the female students. The *Vassar Girls* also make it clear that

marriage is at the very end of their list or not on it at all. Much of the expected courtship between characters takes place off the page, while the girls' scholarly exploits make up the text's primary concern. By leaving the marriage plot off-page, Champney makes it clear that a happy marriage is merely an after-effect of the real task: finding their own selves. In concluding her texts in marriage, Champney therefore works to satisfy contemporary critics of female education, but does so in a way that promotes long-lasting female relationships and education, engendering a generation of readers who want to be "Vassar Girls."

In each place that the girls visit, the audience simultaneously learns about the architecture and history of the location, and the physical book becomes a part of this democratizing experience. The reader can afford to purchase the book or is reading it from a circulating library, but may not be able to afford their own European tour. The book's illustrations feature images of the main characters, local people, or objects, but primarily depict the places the girls are visiting in varying degrees of detail. Some illustrations are also meant to replicate Maud's sketches for the reader. Much as Barbara carries her guide-book everywhere, and uses it to recount facts to her friends, readers could use this book as their own travel guide both on actual travels or to learn through the Vassar girls. Notably, Barbara's omnipresent "vermillion-bound guide-book" resembles the illustrated cover of the novel; it is, too, a striking red, with an illustration of the three main characters adorning it (*Abroad* 28).[136] Champney, in fact, did take a tour of Europe with her husband in 1873-1876 and published her own travel fiction in *Harper's Magazine* in 1876.[137] By using her husband's illustrations for many of the text's historic or scenic sites, Champney chooses what images will guide and enhance her reader's experience through their journey, letting the reader see through the eyes of the Vassar girls. As such, the physical text of the book becomes its own travel guide and educational tool for readers.

While there are eleven books in the *Vassar* series, this chapter will focus primarily on the first two books in the series: *Three Vassar Girls Aboard* (1883) and *Three Vassar Girls in England* (1884), because they deal with the same three core characters, Cecilia (or "Saint") Boylston, Maud Van Vechten, and Barbara Atchison and complete a narrative arc about the college experience—both in college and life post-graduation. In the first book, the three girls are rising juniors and are spending their summer touring Europe, chaperoned by Maud's married older sister, Mrs. Lily Arnold. The first book concludes with a possible engagement for Saint but also with Barbara still not having chosen a profession. The second book picks up two years later, follows the girls through England as they travel with Barbara's English cousins, and concludes with Barbara's marriage and vocation as a teacher. The third book, *Three Vassar Girls in South America* (1885), focuses on Maud and two new Vassar girls, beginning the shift to rotating characters that Champney makes in the later texts, and ends with Maud's engagement. Notably, Saint remains unmarried as she pursues her music career and continues to make occasional appearances in other texts in the series.[138]

For the audience to distinguish among the three characters, Champney gives each a different appearance and set of interests. Maud is wealthy, from New York, and interested in becoming an artist. Her sister has offered to chaperone Maud and her friends around Europe, as she must meet her husband in Nice later in the summer. Barbara, described as having "a lot of money and nowhere to go," is the daughter of a Western officer and widower from Colorado (*Abroad* 15-16, 123). She enjoys fine and showy dress, and does not have any clear professional goals. Finally, Saint is a clergyman's daughter from Boston, whose primary interest is in music. Saint, notably, is the only character with financial difficulty, as she can ill afford the tour but joins her friends because she is fluent enough in French to speak on behalf of the group.

Traveling in a group of four will also lower the total costs, and Barbara offers to help pay for Saint's portion. The main characters are easily identifiable on the cover of the book, as their illustrations perfectly match these descriptions. The fashionable Barbara with her travel guide is in the center; on the left is Maud, who carries her "Japanese parasol and sketch-box;" and finally, with the appearance of "a nun, or a saint, in flowing gown of sackcloth" is the aptly-nicknamed Saint, wearing her glasses and much-mentioned waterproof (*Abroad* 28, 19).

This chapter argues that Champney's novel promotes female professionalism while recognizing the still-limited opportunities available to women college graduates. The series promotes travel and freedom for college women before marriage, suggesting that they can be trusted to travel without a chaperone because of how well the college experience has prepared them to be respectable citizens and travelers. While the Vassar girls are able to travel between semesters, however, they also recognize—and reflect for readers—the reality of limited educational experiences for women after college. Despite being able to attend college, many professional doors were still closed to women after getting their A.B. degrees. Still, the novel suggests, the networks of women brought together by their college experience offers perhaps the most promising future for educated women to bring about change in their own lives and in the lives of future college women.

4.1.1 Without a Chaperone

The first text in the series, *Three Vassar Girls Abroad*, is explicitly concerned with dispelling fears about female travel and promoting female education. While a chaperone is meant to provide guidance on proper etiquette and look after her charges' well-being, *Three Vassar Girls* flips this convention, as the girls' chaperone, Mrs. Arnold, is the one who needs to be looked after. This works to establish college girls as responsible adult women who are explicitly

concerned with how they are representing Vassar abroad. As the first generation of college women, like Champney in her role in writing the series, they would be creating the reputation of the "college girl," and they take this role seriously. Throughout the first two books, the title characters frequently discuss how they are spreading and representing the reputation of Vassar. As new people witness their behavior, the girls are aware that anything they do will reflect on Vassar. In some cases, it is even the girls who explain that they are from Vassar or even what Vassar is to people who have never heard of the school. Through carrying the responsibility of introducing Vassar to the world, the girls internalize the school's reputation, as they repeatedly refer to what it means to be a "Vassar girl" and the need to project that image when they travel. The Vassar girls see themselves as ambassadors of a respectable, educated womanhood—largely the message that women deserve higher education—but they are also exporting their explicitly Protestant and American vision of womanhood (Robey 367-8).

In one of the only scholarly sources on the series, Molly K. Robey discusses *Three Vassar Girls in the Holy Land* (1892), using Amy Kaplan's concept of "Manifest Domesticity" to characterize the Vassar girls as "global social housekeepers." In essence, the Vassar girls "expand the zones of domesticity," as Kaplan says, "extending the 'empire of the home' geographically …and professionally to include teaching, art, evangelism, and medicine as appropriately feminine pursuits" (cited in Robey 367). They participate in what Robey terms a "double movement" in which the girls are "transforming themselves through encounter with the foreign, then working to assimilate various foreign elements into an American world order" (Robey 367). A key export for the girls is the message of female education, using Vassar as representative for this.

While depicting Vassar girls abroad, Champney's message is clearly directed at her domestic readers, telling them that the new college girl need not be feared. In 1880, a few years prior to this book's publication, 40,000 American women were enrolled in college, only 1.9 percent of the population in their 18-21 age group (Solomon 63 and 64, citing Newcomer survey). While the presumption may be that only wealthy American girls were attending college, according to Barbara Miller Solomon, "established eastern elites" and new millionaires "educated daughters privately home, in boarding school, and through travel abroad" (Solomon 64). Instead, it was the middle class who sent their daughters to colleges, though it required extensive financial planning for most (Solomon 64-65). The Vassar girls are spreading their message of college education domestically to their reader, and as well abroad in-text, as a constant advertisement for what readers can achieve and hope for if they attend an American college, including a successful professional future and a happy marriage.

To further push this point, the text explicitly critiques a non-Vassar girl and the girls' chaperone, Mrs. Arnold, by portraying her as largely useless, more "frivolous" than the college girls themselves (*Abroad* 25). Throughout the text, the Vassar girls prove they are responsible and respectable travelers. Despite Mrs. Arnold being older than the girls and having visited France several times, the girls direct and manage the visit; Mrs. Arnold is "apt to lose her head" in an emergency (*Abroad* 25). As a result, Saint acts as the interpreter, Barbara directs the group with her map and guide-book, and Maud provides the correct tips on social etiquette (*Abroad* 25). By having the Vassar girls unquestionably lead the trip, Champney interrogates whether college girls require physical chaperones to travel abroad, and makes her opinion clear as Mrs. Arnold is "living proof of the absurdity of a chaperone for earnest American girls" educated at Vassar (*Abroad* 25).

For this reason, the text also directly engages with contemporary cultural depictions of young women traveling, referring to Henry James' *Daisy Miller* (serialized June-July 1878, 1879 book) to explain what appropriate behavior is for women when meeting a man abroad. *Daisy Miller* was only published about five years prior to the first of the *Vassar* series, but the novella was a widespread success.[139] *Daisy Miller* depicts Frederick Winterbourne's relationship with the title character, an American girl traveling through Europe. Daisy has a reputation as a flirt or conducting herself inappropriately with men, including Winterbourne himself. She ultimately dies of malaria, contracted while out at the Colosseum at night with a young man. Champney uses the infamous character as a foil to her Vassar girls. Though both the Vassar girls and Daisy travel with poor chaperones, the Vassar girls with Mrs. Arnold and Daisy with her mother, the Vassar girls know how to conduct themselves with suitors abroad. Daisy is friendly when meeting new men and her behavior is contrasted with Maud's in *The Three Vassar Girls Abroad*. While visiting the Hotel Cluny, Maud is approached by a Frenchman, who asks if she needs assistance with her sketch-box. Maud deliberately pretends to mistake him for a porter, thwarting his attempt to flirt and be alone with her. Barbara believes Maud handled the situation appropriately on her own, saying, "I think you managed him very nicely. I suppose he thought all American girls were like Daisy Miller, and had never heard the proverb, -There are two kinds of girls, girls who flirt, and girls who go to Vassar College" (40). Unlike Daisy Miller, who craves attention, the girls place decorum above all else. This textual moment reinforces why readers should want to be Vassar girls, presenting them as the "right kind" of girls.

The scene at the Hotel Cluny also suggests that, because Vassar builds character, its college girls are equal to, if not better than a married woman. The girls don't need a chaperone because they have already internalized appropriate behavior through their college experience.

However, they are at a disadvantage because of their youthful appearances. Otherwise, Barbara argues, she would be just as good of a chaperone as Mrs. Arnold. Barbara claims that a chaperone is judged on her outward appearance—if she appeared to be married, then she is just as good a chaperone as an actual married woman. She argues that she already appears more dignified than Mrs. Arnold, is taller, and could wear her diamond earrings to look married, as "only married ladies in France wear diamonds. Then I would like to see anybody dare speak to us" (43). Maud, however, thinks Barbara is still too young-looking, "What we need to some old-looking person. As you say Sister is no better than one of us. She's prettier and flightier than we are. I am sure I am always chaperoning her when we are together. Saint has never been molested, and she has been to nearly all the churches in Paris alone" (43). Maud's view of her sister as an unsatisfactory chaperone is also based on her youthful appearance. If she looked older, this would be a real deterrent to male suitors. However, Maud's observation also suggests that something in the chaperone's manner matters; her sister is "flighty" and light-headed whereas a chaperone should be serious. Saint, with her nun-like appearance, dress, and demeanor, is not as approachable, but she has also traveled to appropriate spots—churches, where she is unlikely to be accosted on her own. The text suggests that if college girls act a certain way, like Saint, then they will be judged as reliable and left unbothered on their travels.

While individual character matters, the key to the argument for the girls to be able to travel without a chaperone is that they travel in a group. The college network is essential because it enables girls to do things together that they would not be able to do on their own. Mrs. Arnold proves this idea when, alone on a train, she becomes ill and is robbed. She is notably not with the Vassar girls and instead befriends an English woman sharing her compartment. Mrs. Arnold asks the English lady if she knows her friend, a baroness, and by great coincidence, she's a cousin to

the baroness. With this familiar connection and some compliments, the English woman gains Mrs. Arnold's trust. The English woman claims that they are passing the spot of what was a chemical company and tells Mrs. Arnold to the open the window and smell the fumes (*Abroad* 65-66). As Mrs. Arnold does, the woman chloroforms her with a handkerchief and robs her. Mrs. Arnold later wakes up alone, missing her valuables, but fails to realize that it was her friend who robbed her, believing instead she was pickpocketed by a man on the train. She is even grateful to the thief, claiming, "I do not know what would have become of me if I had not happened to make the acquaintance of an English lady" (*Abroad* 65). She sees the incident as proof that the group "should always travel together" (*Abroad* 65). What separates the girls from Daisy Miller, then, is both their respectability and their network—they ensure that no young woman is left alone. The girls must inform Mrs. Arnold that she was chloroformed by the English lady. However, the incident is not presented as frightening as it could have been, as Mrs. Arnold could easily have been stranded without money, unable to find the girls, or worse, hurt or killed. Instead, it's meant to embarrass Mrs. Arnold and show that she was too trusting of others when traveling abroad (69). Maud feels as though she shouldn't have left her sister alone, and she's proven right, but the irony is, of course, that Maud is not the chaperone here (65).

The girls are self-assured travelers whose strengths work well together, and readers are meant to question their need for a chaperone, viewing them as evidence of how a strong college education will generate appropriate interests in art, history, music, and a desire to learn when traveling. The girls can appreciate the objects they see when traveling because of an advanced education in history. Mrs. Arnold lacks this education and does not even smile once while at a historic chateau, illustrating her lack of knowledge (*Abroad* 77, 77). Saint says explicitly that an "a visit to Europe before one had studied history would be a great mistake" (77). Barbara, earlier

in the text, argues that "well-conducted, earnest American girls do not need a chaperone," especially if traveling in small groups (43). The girls do not need to learn to behave—unlike the lessons that might be learned in a boarding school story, for example—but rather can use their trip to gain cultural, historical, and professional knowledge. The Vassar girls certainly understand the need for an older and responsible female chaperone. However, the text demonstrates their ability to travel on their own so they do not need a chaperone in the second book, and it offers a model for young women traveling—safe in groups with other educated women or with an *actual* chaperone.[140]

4.1.2 Professional Options for Women

While Mrs. Arnold insists that their trip abroad is for pleasure, the girls plan to enrich themselves and explore professional pursuits while visiting (20). Artist Maud spends her time visiting galleries, sketching the sights, and painting. Saint, who plans to study music in Munich when she graduates, attends musical concerts and practices. She also enjoys visiting churches and is interested in seeing sights from Waverly's books. Barbara, however, lacks a clear vocation and, while this theme recurs in the first book, it becomes the primary plot line of the second book. Barbara's narrative seems to question why she needs a college education if, as a woman, she cannot follow her passion for mechanics, but ultimately it argues that a Vassar education and network can leads her to an alternate career that is both fulfilling and socially accepted.

In the first book, Barbara frequently laments her lack of vocation and hopes to find one while traveling. For this reason, she admires both Maud and Saint, telling them, "How satisfying it must be to have a purpose in life like Maud's, to be an artist or musician like Saint's. Now I have no specialty, no particular talent. Perhaps I will find one during this tour" (*Abroad* 21). While Barbara does not specifically call her desire a "profession," she does refer to it as

something more provocative—a "purpose in life," hence, a "vocation" (*Abroad* 21). Barbara is the only Vassar girl to describe herself as open to marriage, but she does not conflate marriage with a purpose in life, nor does she use the trip to attempt to find a suitable marriage partner. While Barbara later jokingly laments that both Saint and Maud have men interested in them and she does not, she never attempts to substitute a suitor for her lack of a calling; instead, she views them as separate affairs of the heart: "Dear me, just to think, here are you and Saint who are wrapped up in Art and Music, and have no heart left for anything else, and two splendid young men fall in love with you at once, –and here is little me, with no pre-occupation and never a shadow of an admirer. If this sort of thing holds out I shall go back to Colorado" (*Abroad* 123). For Barbara, a full life always includes a passion beyond a man.

During the girls' trip to England (in the second book in the series), however, we learn that Barbara does in fact have a talent, one she cannot pursue it as a profession because of society's gender expectations. She laments her position, acknowledging an alternative future that she will never have:

> "Not music, like Saint, or art like Maud; she had no specialty. 'I wish I had been more of a 'dig' at college,' she said to herself, 'and yet I always stood fairly in my classes, particularly in mechanics. If I had been a boy I would have finished off at the Institute of Technology, and perhaps have turned out an inventor, but as it is what's the use? There is no need of my doing anything. Maud is always talking about being independent, and the pleasure there is in being able to stand alone. Now it seems to me absurd to stand when one has a chance to sit, and people are always politely shoving out easy-chairs to me'." (*England* 97-8)

Barbara identifies herself as an average student rather than a "dig"—a contemporary slang term for a diligent student, suggesting someone who figuratively "digs" into their schoolwork.[141] At first, then, she connects the academic success of digs with potentially greater career opportunities; although she has performed acceptably at school, had she been a dig, she may have had more choices. Barbara's explicit acknowledgement of a missed opportunity in her academic work is different the typical plot in a boarding school novel where academic success would inevitably befall the protagonist (despite having marriage and teaching as her only real professional options). Unlike Maud and Saint, Barbara's desired profession is not gender-appropriate. Saint is pursuing music because her family is not financially stable, meaning that she must earn a living. Maud, on the other hand, is an amateur artist, who later makes practical use of her training as an artisan when, again, her family falls into financial trouble. Barbara, however, departs from gendered norms by harboring professional ambitions in the one area in which she does excel: mechanics. Mechanics is not coded feminine (unlike teaching, writing, interior design), reflecting the still-prevalent need for acceptance of and encouragement for women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields. Ultimately, then, Barbara's language expressly connects her lack of opportunity with her sex rather than lack of effort, because "if I had been a boy, I would have finished off at the Institute of Technology" (*England* 97).[142]

Barbara has thought enough about this to know what Institute she would attend; as a student at Vassar, she would have likely meant one of the Polytechnic or Technological Institutes on the East Coast, which, like women's colleges, were also founded in the mid-nineteenth century. She was likely referring to two of the oldest technology schools in the country: Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, founded in 1824 in New York, or New York University's Tandon School of Engineering, founded in 1854.[143] Her other options may have been the

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), founded in 1861, or the Stevens Institute of Technology in New Jersey, founded in 1870. Of these four institutes, only MIT admitted a woman in the nineteenth century. Vassar graduate, Ellen Swallow Richards, was admitted in 1870 to continue her work in chemistry.[144] Champney, who graduated 1869, may have known or heard about Richards' through the Vassar network. Richards' acceptance was an exception, though; she was the only admitted woman and was accepted as a "special student" ("Ellen"). Yet, just because a woman was successfully accepted did not make the prospect easier or more welcoming to other applicants. Rensselaer's admission history of potential female students reflects the larger attitude toward female students, who were still struggling to find social acceptance on campuses with men. Eight women completed a mathematics course in 1835 at Rensselaer but the first women did not graduate with degrees until 1946 ("Beginnings" and "The First Women"). The first woman applicant in 1873 was discouraged as she would be the only female student; it was this singularity—being the only woman on-campus or one of a few—that discouraged women from pursuing admission at such Institutes, as well as at co-educational colleges ("The Long Wait").[145] Recognizing the difficulty of achieving her dream, Barbara considers settling into the "easy-chair" being put forth to her (*England* 97). Barbara recognizes all the "privileges and opportunities" she has been afforded by her wealthy, "beautiful life," and is stifled only by a desire to serve that she cannot fulfill: "Superior advantages imposed more of responsibility; what could she do with her education?" (*England* 97, 98). The crucial word in her question is "could;" even with her money, what could she, limited by her options as a woman, do? During her time abroad, Barbara dedicates herself to answering that question.

Barbara's two primary strategies for figuring out a path for herself are trusting in God and observing what a woman of comparable education and status, Miss Gladys Featherstonhaugh,

does with her life in another country. In Portugal, Barbara continues to lament her lack of a calling or a love interest, feeling as though "an aimless life is hardly worth the living" (*Abroad* 213), but she overcomes her aimlessness when she experiences a spiritual awakening after witnessing a Catholic priest making a pilgrimage. She takes to heart his call for renunciation, self-denial, and self-sacrifice as the path to Jesus (213).[146] Rather than searching for a husband, Barbara pursues this self-sacrifice during her trip to England. While Barbara finding her professional calling through religion seems to undermine the need for a college education, she arguably needs her Vassar classmates to travel abroad. With a deceased mother and limited options, Barbara would not have been to travel otherwise. Maud and her sister therefore become her gateway to this religious and self-defining experience.

Barbara meets her own gateway to new professional opportunities in the second novel in the series, *Three Vassar Girls in England*, in which Barbara encounters a rival and foil, Miss Gladys Featherstonhaugh, a student of Girton College in Cambridge. Like Vassar College's relationship with the then all-male Yale University, Girton College is a constituent college of Cambridge University; it was founded in 1869. Champney links the two schools through Saint's comment on Gladys' and the girls' shared educational background, "If she's an enthusiastic Girton girl, of course, she's interested in the experiment of higher education for woman on our side of the water, and there's a bond of union at the outset" (23).[147] Despite this "bond," Barbara and Gladys butt heads from the onset. Whereas Barb is fashionable, light-hearted, and kind, Gladys is formal, opinionated, and looks down on the Vassar girls while touring Haddon Hall (21-22). Concerned about her opinion, Maud reflects, "If Miss Featherstonhaugh is a person to be prejudiced by such a trifle why she's not worth minding. I've no doubt the Girton girls waltz and romp when they are alone and unobserved, as we thought we were" (22-3). However, after

Barbara lets Gladys win in an intercollegiate tennis match, the girls develop a tenuous friendship, strengthened as Gladys helps Barbara serve as a patron to local children.

Gladys is instrumental in teaching Barbara about how to use her college education to aid others—a socially acceptable message of philanthropy that can make female education more palatable to critics. She patronizes a local boy with a passion for flowers by teaching him botany. Yet, Gladys sees her generosity as "selfishness" because she enjoys it: "An education would be hardly worth the trouble of acquiring if it were to benefit only one's self" (102). This message promotes education in the familiar vein of True Womanhood, a woman using her education for self-sacrifice and charity. Up to this point, the privileged Barbara has lacked any comprehension of the lives of the impoverished. For example, she offers to help a poor, dying woman by sending her flowers, jelly, or money, failing to grasp what could truly help her (*England* 102, 105). One of her Vassar classmates even remarks that Barbara was "a girl of extremes, but quiet, persistent; self-sacrifice was not in her line" (*England* 228). After Gladys' example, however, Barbara proves her classmates wrong when she offers to care for a motherless girl with scarlet fever, giving up an opportunity to read an essay to a literary society on the "Higher Education of Women in America" (*England* 105, 108-110).

She also teaches a local boy about mechanics. Through her philanthropy, then, Barbara combines self-sacrifice with her passion for mechanics, reconciling her earlier problem of calling. Barbara agrees to teach literacy to a local boy, "Cutery Joe," a young locksmith from Manchester who went to jail for breaking into houses, but she also insists on using Harry's laboratory to teach Joe the "first principles of mechanics" (108). While Champney does not give Barbara the opportunity to be an inventor, she does let Barbara utilize her skill through teaching: "I was an enthusiastic student, and perhaps teaching will be my forte. If he is to be a machinist, I know just

the preparatory training he ought to have" (108). She uses her knowledge of an advanced subject to teach a boy in his profession. This altruistic view of education is a method of promoting careers for women without threatening the social order, instead connecting them to a long-standing Anglo-Christian tradition. These experiences make Barbara realize that she wants to teach and help the poor, likely working at a charity school, where she can support herself and "do good at the same time" (*England* 188-9). Conveniently, she learns that her deceased aunt has left a large sum of money for philanthropy, specifically to build a temporary home for "children of factory operatives, with school and hospital attached," to which Barb happily decides to devote herself (*England* 195). Ultimately, Barbara's narrative proves that the college experience is indispensable to discovering one's calling. While she pursues philanthropy, she only finds this vocation through travel facilitated by the Vassar network, where she also learned the material for teaching mechanics.

4.1.3 The Vassar Reunion: Networking and the Promise of Future Graduates

While the text concludes with the marriage of Barbara and John Featherstonhaugh, Champney deliberately subverts the reader's expectation for a wedding scene, instead pointing to scenes of college friendship and an alumnae reunion. As the narrator describes it, "If this were a love-story instead of a story of friendship, we might tell how John Featherstonhaugh proposed in his wooing" (213). But instead, the story skips over it completely. The reader does learn that John and Barbara use the Featherstonhaugh Manor as a home/school for children, with John designing a new wing for this purpose. Saint goes to Weimar, Germany to pursue her music as a pupil of Hungarian composer Franz Liszt. While she accepts money from Barbara, she plans to use it to take on one of Barbara's talented music students, essentially passing on her own knowledge to benefit another in the network of Vassar connections (213-4). Though Saint

reappears later in the series, she remains unmarried. In the third *Vassar* book, Maud marries Barbara's cousin, Dick Atchison. However, she first goes to work after her family hits hard times. Moving to New York, Maud has a studio on Broadway where she decorates plates and tea cups as a designer for a porcelain manufactory (231-2). Maud feels "satisfaction" in using her art to economically support herself: "I recognized the fact that what little talent I possessed was of the merchantable order, and I determined to perfect this lower gift instead of straining after the unattainable. Now I have the satisfaction of knowing that I could not have spent my time more profitably if I had known what was coming" (231-2). Maud realistically adapts her college her education to a career, although it is problematic that Champney must first reverse Maud's economic situation (much like Betty Baird falling into financial straits) to enable the transition. Ultimately, the three girls stay friends, as "Vassar has twisted our threefold cord so tightly that the strands can never fall apart" (237).

Just as Champney's concludes the novel with friendship over companionate marriage, the most significant event at the end is, similarly, an annual Vassar reunion at Delmonico's in New York. It is fitting that a series focused on a network of women should highlight how these alumnae continue to meet after they graduate. Champney creates a world populated with Vassar graduates, reuniting to re-experience what their school did for them in the first place. Maud describes the meeting and its social importance in a letter to Barbara:

> It…brings girls in fashionable life who are in danger of forgetting the old traditions, and of frittering away their being upon society into contact with earnest students and workers who need to drop their hobbies for a time and learn a lesson in rest and recreation. The girls are very interested in and influence one another in a very salutary way; struggling

> merit meets social recognition, lethargic minds are stimulated, selfish hearts warmed, solitary souls gladdened. It is like a church, and better (223).

Thus, each woman gets what she needs in a reciprocal relationship with the other female alumnae. They give credit to Vassar for "development of latent energies, whose existence we never suspected, and a pruning of individual extravagances," while the reunion itself holds a similar "leveling out" purpose (228, 231). The women also learn what their peers have accomplished, with Champney describing them in detail and variety. The list is long: attaining another degree; discovering an asteroid; going on missionary trip to Japan; holding musicales; writing a work on Protoplasm; giving a lecture on the Death Penalty; working with an Apache and Comanche school; working as a surgeon at a Women's Hospital; being admitted to the bar with a better score than her husband; discovering a new species of algae; working as a fashion editor; composing music; working in prison reform; studying theology; working on mathematics; translating; and working as an architect (226-7). With this varied list of accomplishments, Champney undermines Barbara's earlier sense of entrapment, and the reader must wonder why she couldn't pursue a degree at the Technology Institute. Arguably, the problem was that Barbara didn't believe that she could become a mechanic. However, another interpretation is that Champney did not see these professions open to the first graduates like herself and Richards when she graduated. But at the time of writing the *Vassar Girls*, over twenty years after her college graduation, Champney may have seen more advancement. In this period, it's difficult to imagine all the alumni doing these things, but the point is that Champney is telling the audience that they could do these things.

While Barbara, Saint, and Maud follow female-coded professions, the Vassar reunion demonstrates the larger range of careers that a woman can pursue if she attends Vassar. In fact,

the alumnae are not at all impressed with Barbara marrying an Englishman: "Vassar girls are a little *exigeantes,* even after graduation, you see. Only the very highest success, or a magnificent failure will satisfy them—mediocrity is the one unpardonable sin" (228). Despite these claims to the extraordinary possibilities opened up by a Vassar degree, Champney's protagonists still marry and have traditionally feminine careers in teaching, charity, music, and art. None of the original trio becomes a doctor, scientist, or engineer. While Champney opens the door to these possibilities, she tempers expectations in her own protagonists, choosing a more relatable and perhaps accessible model for her readers, a group of still burgeoning college women. Instead, she focuses on the future that the Vassar network offers: women seeking careers, traveling, and calling upon their Vassar sisters to help them achieve more.

4.2 The Girl Who Doesn't Want to Go to College: *Elinor's College Career*

In the unexpected opening lines to Julia A. Schwartz's 1906 novel, *Elinor's College Career* newly 16-year-old college freshman Elinor Offitt mentally chants, "I don't want to—I don't want to—I don't want to—go to college—go to college—go to college—I don't want to – go to college" (3). This is a sharp contrast to the Vassar students before her, who rejoice over their entrance into the Vassar network. While the title character tells herself that you "have to—go to college," her soon-to-be-friend and fellow freshman Myra Dickinson is so excited that she even tells the train conductor about it and then mistakes a passing "mass of brick buildings" comprising an insane asylum for the college (5). In this way, Schwartz sets up a contrast between the two young, braid-wearing girls and thereby introduces two types of college girls: "It seemed natural for [Elinor] to be ready to enter college at the age of sixteen, because her ambitious mother had planned for this from her very birth. Undoubtedly circumstances were different with this impetuous fellow traveler whose evident delight showed that she was going to college of her

own accord" (4). Elinor quickly reveals to Myra that her mother has been planning for her daughter to follow in her own footsteps, and Myra then feels impressed to meet "a real granddaughter of the college" (5). As Elinor's mother was an early daughter of the women's college, Elinor is now a second-generation student or a "granddaughter," as she is repeatedly called over and over, such that it becomes her defining characteristic. Unlike Elizabeth Williams Champney's characters in *Three Vassar Girls*, who parade around the world sharing their enthusiasm for Vassar College, Julia Augusta Schwartz presents a protagonist who is itching to get away..

Part of the difference in attitude can be attributed to different periods in the history of women's college education. Champney, a graduate of one of Vassar's earliest classes, wrote her Vassar novels during the 1880s to 1893. As Sherrie A. Inness describes, "Historians of education refer to the Progressive Era, particularly the years from 1880 to 1910, as the 'golden era' of the Northeastern women's colleges" because of high enrollments and more popular representations of women college students beginning in the 1890s (1-2). According to Willystine Goodsell, between 1890 and 1910, enrollment increased by 348.8 percent at women's colleges in the United States (26). Still, women only made up 39.6 percent (or approximately 140,000) of all students enrolled in college in 1910 (Newcomer 46). In contrast, Schwartz attended college and set her novel during what is considered as "the second generation" of American college women, from 1890 to 1910 (Inness 1). Like Champney, Schwartz was also a "Vassar girl," but her representation is a distinct response to this "second-generation" culture, as well as to the college girl's representation in popular culture as more active and athletic.

While Champney went on to social prominence as the wife of an artist and author of travel fiction and two long-running girls' series, less is known about Schwartz's life after college.

Originally from Albany, New York, Schwartz graduated from Vassar in 1896. She received a post-graduate fellowship to stay at Vassar to earn her Master's degree in English Literature in 1897, after which she was a teacher in Omaha, Nebraska from 1897-1898 ("Bulletin" 75). She was primarily a writer for children and wrote books for classroom use. She was well known enough to be included in a 1910 list of authors of common school books, as well as a 1907 compilation of Jewish authors in *The American Jewish Year Book* ("Some Authors" and American Jewish Committee). She eventually moved to LaJolla, California, where she participated in groups such as the Sierra Club (Vassar Archive). In Vassar's 1939 Alumni bulletin, Schwartz is as a teacher and writer. With no married name given or children listed, Schwartz presumably remained single.

Schwartz's own college career at Vassar was undoubtedly important to her, as she gave updates to the Vassar Alumnae Office, and published at least two college novels, in addition to a collection of stories about Vassar, entitled *Vassar Studies* (1899). In her preface to the collection, Schwartz writes that the reason college stories are written is "to embody in literary form for the alumnae of a particular institution memories and impressions of their college days," and to "endeavor to present before the public a truthful picture of the life in such a community" (*Vassar* iii). Much like Champney, however, Schwartz wrote to entice a future generation of potential students to Vassar's legacy. The influence of Schwartz's time at Vassar is evident in the representation of Vassar traditions, including the daisy-chain, Hall Plays, and Field Day, as Vassar notably was the first women's college to hold a Field Day in the United States in 1895, when Schwartz would have been a junior ("Vassar Traditions" and "Field Day").[148] While Schwartz never names Elinor's college, it is an all-girls school located near New York City, as the girls meet there and then take a train to the college (105, 5). With these details and

Schwartz's background as an alumna, the college is almost certainly Vassar College, located in Poughkeepsie, New York.[149]

While Schwartz's college novel is not unique in depicting college life, with its balance of social events, clubs, athletics, academics, and attending Chapel,[150] or even in offering a protagonist who doesn't want to attend college, *Elinor's College Career* does showcase the types of academic pressures that are typically ignored in college novels and the personal pressures motivating girl students. Elinor is judged more harshly by her family, her peers, and her college's faculty because she has been groomed to attend college and is a second-generation student. She is highly attuned to the expectations cast on her and she is deliberate in her actions—in friendly smiles and careful compliments to the girls—because she knows she is being observed. For instance, on the train to school, she is mortified when caught staring at her own nose: "A granddaughter of the college to be observed blinking at her own nose before a whole carful of students!" (9). She takes her disdain for the college out on her work, and studies very little. Elinor is a popular student with status and gravitas as a "granddaughter," and so other students internalize and imitate her behavior. Elinor learns that, just as she is being watched and judged as a college student, reciprocally, her peers model themselves on the example she sets; this creates a parallel between the way that the image of the American college girl was simultaneously being represented and created by the fictional portrays in novels. However, what *Elinor's College Career* points out is that many young women lacked choice in choosing where to attend college. Elinor, who should be the ideal model for a college education, instead exposes the cracks in that image and shows how the carefully-constructed image of a well-rounded college girl could be brought down.

Schwartz considers the women's college as a delicate economy, balancing the kinds of girls it admits against those it keeps out. The crux of the novel is the question: Who should get to go to college? In other words, who gets the privilege to be a "college girl?" The novels built around her continue to promote her as desirable; these novels also create an economy built around promoting, enrolling, and financial sustaining women's colleges. However, Schwartz's novel questions the college girl continuing to give back to her alma mater (and in turn to the fictional genre that crafted the college girl image). Instead, Schwartz offers the potential for non-reproductive futurity, one in which college admission promotes merit over legacy. Recognizing the economic realities preventing the women's college system from being truly democratic in this period, Schwartz critiques both the college system and the novel genre. While she is unwilling to fully commit to this non-reproductive future, she raises questions about privilege, elitism, and the financial realities burdening college women, marking an important step in turning the college girl from a novel construction to a deserved reality.

4.2.1 Why Attend College?

The answer to this question is more assumed than answered in Champney's novels. These Vassar girls attend, we presume, for the same reasons they travel: to pursue career interests in music, art, and service. However, Schwartz's characters answer forcefully and differently, speaking to the variety of interests motivating later generations of young women. Schwartz focuses not only on the reasons for her title character to have a college career, but also on those of her three very different freshman roommates. As Schwartz moves through each of their four years at college, she focuses on the experiences and personal growth of each girl in turn, culminating with Elinor's election as class president in her senior year. Myra Dickinson, the first student Elinor meets, playfully describes how she has been overshadowed by her three

roommates: “I am merely radiant—a typical American. It’s living four years with a granddaughter [Elinor], a genius [Ruth], an influence in the community [Lydia]” (318). As evidenced by her dialogue, Myra is enthusiastic, funny, and scatterbrained but with an endearing personality. Elinor, of course, is the “granddaughter,” who is a popular, if unmotivated student. Ruth Allee, unlike the other girls, is poor. She had taught school to afford her tuition, but eventually receives a scholarship to stay.[151] Ruth’s peers considered her a “genius” for her talent in writing, even as they also view her as erratic and strange. Finally, Lydia Howard is confident and intense, a natural leader, whom Elinor initially mistakes for a senior (11). Elinor, Lydia, and Myra represent the overwhelming majority of affluent college girls who could afford college with ease. Ruth, on the other hand, represents the minority of scholarship students who worked their way through college. As Inness describes of those in Ruth’s situation, “In the Progressive Era, all of the Northeastern women’s colleges enrolled students who worked their way through school, but these women never composed more than a fraction of the student population, which is not surprising considering the economic hardships that confronted them” (116).

While the number of girls enrolled in college was rising, those who attended were still in a privileged minority. Early college students were primarily middle-class and/or the daughters of farmers seeking greater financial stability and upward mobility (Solomon 64, 68). Many girls from farming backgrounds had to pause their college careers to take time off to work or teach to raise money for their funding (Solomon 69). However, college students gradually became more affluent as more upper-middle class girls began attending college. As Barbara Miller Solomon describes the shift, “In the economic prosperity of the decades preceding World War I, upper-middle class parents found college a convenient parking place for adolescent daughters; only the old elites continued to keep their daughters out” (Solomon 71). Many of these upper-class

students attended their parents' alma maters, whether public or private colleges (Solomon 71). Otherwise, girls who wanted to attend college were limited by the cost of tuition and what their family could afford, as well as by the location of the school, since the most expensive schools were in the Northeast and transportation to college was an additional expense (Solomon 65). Private colleges were the most expensive, with tuition and board costing $350 at Mount Holyoke in 1908 (Solomon 65).

While the girls' varying reasons for attending college are rooted in personality differences, they are even more rooted in their class positions. Elinor, of course, is attending college because of her mother's wishes. Myra's desire to attend college is primarily social, and reflects her inevitable future as a married woman in society: "I came for the fun… I really did, and I'm not ashamed to say so. All the boys I know have gone to college, and some of the girls. And I don't intend to be left out of anything" (23). Myra plans to make friends in college and attend social events, forming a network of friends. Notably, she considers college more as an experience than an education, something she could "miss out on" if she stayed at home. Lydia, on the other hand, comes for the work, as "that is taken for granted. Work is the theme of our college course" (24). Lydia's plans reflect the New Woman since she also comes to college for "the sake of the atmosphere. Nowhere else can you secure such an unconventional and democratic spirit. Nowhere else can you obtain the broad and thorough training so essential to one who hopes to take an effective part in supporting the social fabric and acting as an influence in the community" (25). While Lydia is the wealthiest of the four girls, she nonetheless identifies a woman's college as the place to develop her "democratic spirit" through public service (25). Yet, Elinor, Myra, and Lydia's reasons aren't so different—all are looking to develop and

leverage social connections. Given this reality, the college as a democratic site comes into question.

Despite Lydia's assertion, the only student who truly comes for the "work" is Ruth, who had been employed as a teacher to pay for college and now plans to become a writer (23). She nearly has to leave college before her sophomore year to return to teaching to pay for the rest of her education. However, she applies for a scholarship and the president grants it, telling her that "she was worth more than four hundred dollars a year to the institution" (91). As the only lower-class girl in the group, Ruth acts as the token poor girl. Inness argues that this character exists to be the "convenient recipient of charitable handouts" and to "reinforce the desirability of bourgeois identity" (111-2). As Inness describes it, the poor girl "creates the illusion that poverty is easily transcended; no matter how dismal her financial straits, inevitably she is rewarded with a scholarship or a job that allows her to stay in college," as seen here in the quick resolution to Ruth's financial problems (112). Yet, the education system is not as democratic or merit-based as Ruth's award suggests. For young women hoping to attend college, scholarships were scarce at both coeducational and women's schools (Solomon 72). In general, there were fewer scholarships available to women than to men, largely because of limited funds and the difficulty of raising money specifically for women's education (Solomon 72). As in Ruth's case, the scholarships that were available were usually chosen by the president, dean, or by private donors, clubs, or women's organizations (Solomon 72-73). However, a scholarship would not cover the entire cost of college (Solomon 73). Rather, as Ruth aptly depicts, a scholarship recipient would still need to seek employment. While Ruth works as a university mail carrier and as editor for the school magazine (although it's unclear if this is a paid position), most women college students had difficulty finding socially-acceptable employment opportunities (Inness 119). According to

Elizabeth E. Boyd, students at Vassar held positions as assistants in the library or observatory, delivering mail to the dormitories, tutoring, and writing for the newspaper (Inness 117-118, citing Boyd 441). After receiving her scholarship, Ruth rejoices: "I'm coming back to college. Do you understand? One—two—three years more of study! Three years of books and friends and beautiful things" (93-4). Yet, even the pragmatic Ruth who attends college for the "right reasons"—to learn to write to have an upwardly mobile and eventually middle-class career—is swayed by what Myra and Lydia describe as their own reasons : for "fun" and "atmosphere." While Ruth experiences a surge of confidence to learn that her "worth is more than four hundred dollars a year" (91), the question remains: at what number is her worth capped? While the poor girl exists, as Inness suggests, to make it seem that the "social system and educational system are democratic and all-inclusive," the attention given to Elinor's character showcases its bias toward elite and legacy students (112).

4.2.2 Elinor and Ruth: Class Difference and "Crushes"

Despite Lydia having the most money among her friends, Elinor is the most judgmental and class-biased of the characters; her classist tendencies are her defining characteristic next to her status as a college "granddaughter." For Elinor, beyond attending college to please her mother, the purpose of college is to form valuable and lasting social connections. Lydia, who claims to have been attracted to college for its "democratic community," is willing to befriend the lower-class Ruth, whose intelligence she admires (19). Whereas Elinor sees college as an opportunity to advance socially, Lydia looks to learn from people of diverse backgrounds. Despite depicting the all-women's college as overwhelming Anglo-Christian, the Jewish Schwartz sides with Lydia, characterizing it as a democratic mixing ground for people of

differing socio-economic backgrounds. Elinor, therefore, must overcome her own classist prejudice by the end of the novel in order to embody what the ideal college girl should be.

One scene is used to convey Schwartz's message of college as a place to learn from women of different socioeconomic classes. In their junior year, the girls host a group of peers and friends in their dormitory to celebrate Lydia's performance in a college play. Seated next to each other, eating ice cream and laughing, are girls of mixed classes: an artist's daughter, the smartest first-year student whose "father earned his living in some inconspicuous and reported fashion"; the sophomore class president who couldn't afford both a new dress and a new winter coat; an actual heiress; a girl from a small village who'd never been away from it before; and a senior who has traveled the globe (230-1). The girls are counterpoints to each other: for every well-traveled girl, there is one has never left home; for every heiress, there is a poor girl. Tellingly, their conversation centers on a "definition of the ideal college woman of the present" (232). Some say that the college girl "is exactly like other girls, while others claimed that she was different, or else she would have stayed at home. One mentions an essay on the subject in a current magazine said that the writer evidently required college graduates to be just about perfect" (232). The college girl is arguably represented in popular culture of the time as perfect: an all-around excellent student with a healthy body. However, Lydia and Myra hesitate to call themselves "perfect"; Myra, in particular, feels that she doesn't want to "measure up to what is expected" (232-3). Her struggles with attaining good grades and Elinor's own anxiety about pleasing her mother suggest that beneath the college's girl faultless exterior is a struggle to "measure up" to the ideal they saw represented in college novels. Schwartz draws attention to college as a "selfish place" where girls focus on themselves, perhaps to the detriment of their classmates, as, for instance, when one girl laments being sick and feeling miserable with her

friends too busy to comfort her (233). While Ruth suggests that their goal should be self-sacrifice, the girls feel uncomfortable with such heavy "moralizing" in a casual environment (233). Schwartz appears to deliberately let the question of what a college girl should be hang in the air unanswered. Whatever the response, however, the college girl is not perfect; for one thing, she is not as inclusive as Schwartz would have you to believe.

Absent from the ice cream party, and largely from the college experience depicted in the novel, are girls of different races; while the scene represents differences in class, there is no racial diversity. At start of the twentieth century, more "daughters of immigrants" were attending college, making up 23.8 percent of women at colleges in 1911, and yet none of the women represented here appear to be from immigrant parents (Solomon 76).[152] The picture, however, accurately represents the lack of African-American women attending college in this period, especially at liberal arts colleges, with this population comprising only 0.3 percent of the total women college students in 1911 (Solomon 76).[153] While Anita Florence Hemmings was the first African-American woman to graduate from Vassar in 1897, she passed as white and the college was unaware of her race when she graduated. As Solomon describes of women's colleges, "From the turn of the century, Wellesley, Smith, and Radcliffe had a few black graduates. Other predominantly white institutions like Vassar, Mount Holyoke, and Bryn Mawr, hardly welcomed black students" (Solomon 76). While college is a melting pot for socioeconomic differences, Schwartz does not suggest any racial "mixing," perhaps representing her personal experience in college as a Jewish student at a primarily Anglo institution.

Even so, Schwartz's title character must overcome her own class-biased bias. She judges her schoolmates based on their external appearance and finds her social relationship with the poor Ruth the most difficult to endure. At first, she is reluctant to befriend Myra because of her

scatterbrained personality, and she thinks that Lydia's attitude is too superior. However, she is harshest on Ruth, critiquing her clothing and possessions at length. Unsurprisingly, Elinor has been "exceedingly well-trained" to look after her own belongings, and she makes careful note of things like Myra's "real alligator-skin" bag on the train (6). The desks in her dormitory also designate social status: Lydia, the wealthiest girl, has a carved mahogany desk; Elinor's desk is bird's eye maple; and, finally, Ruth's desk is secondhand, which Elinor observes with "a curious little smile of exultant dismissal" (35). Elinor treats Ruth politely to maintain face, but she also holds her at arm's length. From their first meeting, "Her first glimpse of Ruth's vivid face, strange intense eyes, and cheap clothes had offended her taste. She decided at once that she did not like this girl and never would. To have such a queer, disagreeable roommate thrust upon her was the crowning misfortune of that dreadful day" (23). Deciding to never become friends with the girl, Elinor avoids interacting with Ruth and hopes for a single room alone next year (89). With the exception of Myra and Lydia, the other girls at school view Ruth as "queer" because of her "genius" as well as her lack of social refinement. Elinor, for example, describes Ruth as "the queerest person with the least common sense I ever saw" (27).

In contrast, Ruth sees something admirable in Elinor's manner and repeatedly praises her, seeking friendship. Elinor struggles with Ruth's admiration, because she does not want feel the "burden of responding in some way or other. In the novel freedom of her college life Elinor was finding it easy to revolt against the rules and duties which had oppressed her childhood. She intended not to accept a single new obligation of any kind, let alone the troublesome claim implied in Ruth's attitude. That girl must be taught her proper place" (46). In other words, Elinor does not want to be polite to Ruth; she only wants to interact with those she considers her friends in college. Although she appears to rebel from her mother's wishes, in actuality she re-inscribes

social norms because she does not want to associate with the lower-class Ruth, or to deal with Ruth's "gush," including the poetry and stories the girl writes for her (53).

Ruth's "gush" over Elinor signals a common relationship between women in college girl novels: the same-sex crush. Elinor's rejection of Ruth's friendship not only stems from their class differences, but also from Elinor's discomfort with Ruth's overt affection. As Inness explains, crushes were a part of both college life and fiction. The crush (also called a "rave, a "smash," or a "mash") is "a strong emotional relationship between two women that was perceived in the 1890s as typically existing between two high school or college-age women" (Inness 47).[154] The crush, argues Inness, does not go against heterosexual or patriarchal norms; instead "the homoaffectionate crush is considered by educators and parents as just one stage a woman undergoes before arriving at 'normal' heterosexual adulthood through marriage to a male. In addition, the crush is confined to the college, where it can be policed by students, administrators, and faculty members" (46). In this period, the college crush in fiction did not involve "explicit sexual contact," but instead included "displays of affection such as gift giving, poetry writing to the beloved, and often frequent kissing and hugging" (47). For example, in *Elinor,* there are small moments of affection (a hand on the face) exchanged between the girls to signify their relationship. In college novels, Inness argues, the "*right* kind of crush" integrates and assimilates students into the social groups of the school, serves to "socialize outsiders into the community," and spreads "the hegemonic codes of the institution" (47, 53). A desirable crush would be one between a freshman and senior, with the senior passing on college values and lessons to the younger student (Inness 53).

An undesirable crush would be one between a student and teacher, as it does not assimilate the student into a student social group and it also limits student-centered power

(Inness 57). Ruth's first crush is on her young English teacher, Miss Ewers, who mentors Ruth on her writing. However, after Miss Ewers leaves for a better position, Myra consoles a devastated Ruth, explaining that a teacher "has her own friends" and that Ruth should care more for her "contemporaries," as she has "been so much absorbed in Miss Ewers that you neglected others. I'm quite sure new friends will come to take her place" (199-200). Because she has focused on a teacher, she remains an outsider in the school community. She laments, for instance, "I never have anything," whereas the other girls have parents, siblings, homes, and money (200). When Miss Ewers leaves, however, Ruth turns her attention to her second favorite person, Elinor, and begins to assimilate more into the college.

For her own sake, Elinor does not want to form a crush with Ruth because of her lower-class status, especially since she sees the crush as something that can elevate her personal status (Inness 60). She displays disdain or discomfort whenever she is around Ruth or is presented with evidence of Ruth's feelings for her. In a sense, Elinor, despite her upper-class status, is also "not adequately socialized into the community" because she will not accept a crush (Inness 60). For this reason, Elinor is an example of a "well-liked student who expresses uneasiness about crushes, yet later discovers their positive aspects and is herself drawn into one" (Inness 59). Ultimately, her worries about Ruth betray her own reciprocity of feeling; she becomes angry when Ruth pretends to be injured and even faints when she believes that Ruth is in danger (183, 210). Myra then attempts to persuade Elinor to give into the crush with Ruth, because recognizes the social acceptance it represents, telling her that "anybody else would be flattered [by Ruth's attention]" (220). Myra realizes why Elinor fears a relationship with Ruth: "Nothing about her pleases you… You took a prejudice against her at the first sight because she looked queer, I suppose, and you are deathly afraid of anything conspicuous. Lately I do believe that you are

fighting against the chance that maybe you will begin to be like her some day. You're queer yourself" (182). Elinor's greatest anxiety is that her classmates will look down on her, and she later asks Myra, "Do they talk of Ruth and me together—together?" (220). Because Ruth's mother is in asylum, she fears that she will appear ridiculous for being associated with her. She also identifies Ruth's moods, her lack of taste, and other unregulated behavior as reasons for disliking her (220). However, her overreaction to being seen with Ruth reveals her true feelings: "She is worrying me wild. Keep her away from me. Don't let her touch me or speak to me. Sit between her and me at the table to-night. Please, please, don't let her come near me or I shall scream. Always—always sit between her and me! Don't let her look at me! I am afraid of her. I don't like her. Her mother is crazy already, and she is a genius. I hate, hate, hate—" (220-1). Ruth, overhearing this, withdraws from society until Elinor convinces her to stay, and ultimately chooses to embrace their relationship in their junior year. Over the course of the senior year, , both girls benefit from the relationship, with Ruth becoming more confident and Elinor finally relaxing around her friends.

4.2.3 The Influence of a Second-Generation Student

Once Elinor reconciles her class-based conflict with Ruth, the text turns its focus to the primary conflict in the novel: between Elinor and her mother. What Elinor never seems to understand, however, is the privilege inherent in their disagreement. Elinor repeatedly says that she came to college "because my mother wanted me to… It isn't my fault that I'm here. I myself wished to travel and study abroad" (25). She never reflects on how lucky she is to have the opportunity to go to college because she can afford it and likely has been attending an exceptional academy in preparation for it. For Elinor, attending college is second-choice to a European tour, which the audience later learns may still happen after she graduates. If the tour is

only postponed, then why is she so angry to be attending college? The text attributes Elinor's unhappiness to rebelling against her mother, but I argue that the lack of choice in the matter is more pressing.

When Elinor first arrives at college, she already knows her way around because of previous visits with her mother. She is familiar with what to expect because she "had been reared in an atmosphere of college reminiscence" (13). While many young women were motivated to attend college on their own and had to receive their parents' permission, Mrs. Offitt is a pressuring mother who wants her daughter to achieve more than she could, or perhaps who wants to relive her college days through her child. In the 1880s to 1890s, according to Solomon, many mothers were pushing their daughters into attending college, especially widows who were "living on a fixed or declining incomes, realized the economic value of an education" (68). While earlier mothers had graduated from female seminaries, later mothers were college graduates who, like Elinor's mother, were pleased to see their daughters go to the same institutions (Solomon 68). Unsurprisingly, according to Solomon, "The numbers of mothers and daughters with common dedication to college education increased over the period from 1870 to 1920" (68). Elinor, then, by holding the distinction of the being a second-generation student, is part of a new group of college students. Her discontent with the situation signals both how far women had come—to be able to attend college and be so privileged as to not want to go—and the challenge of living up to these expectations.

Mrs. Offitt's college experience was a part of breaking down of barriers as a first-generation student, but her daughter's own wishes push against her mother's desires in a clear downside to the alumna network. While her mother felt "exceptional in her generation because of her education," Elinor feels "distaste" for her mother's "intellectual arrogance" and is "oddly

humiliated when people commented admiringly upon her unusual advantages in heredity, training, and opportunities. Such praise seemed somehow to expose her defenceless before criticism; for to whom much is given, from her must shall be expected. And this rebellious young granddaughter was incurably diffident" (13-14). Elinor is obstinate, and she always wants to "choose the opposite side in an argument," so, when faced with "her mother's enthusiastic loyalty" to college, she develops a "critical attitude" towards it (31). It's difficult to know whether Elinor really has no personal interest in academic advancement or a career or if she just wants to spite her mother. She does work hard in her studies or have any specific ambition for life after college. Given this lack of career aspirations, the audience may expect Elinor to get married, but she does not even mention this; beyond travel, there's no sense of what Elinor wants other than living outside of her mother's shadow.

Despite high expectations, Elinor fails some of her classes. When she does, even her professor comments on her heritage: "I flunked in Greek and the professor said, 'With your equipment, Miss Offitt, we have anticipated much from you.' I don't care. I have my own life to live, and I'm not fond of study and I shan't work any harder over books than I have to, so there!" (29). When Elinor is questioned about why she doesn't care about studying when her public persona is otherwise very important to her, she returns to the argument that she should be able to do what she wants with her life (242). She understands what her presence in the college represents and resents it: "It's horrid. I want to be like everybody else and not be fussed over. These teachers here talk about my splendid preparation and exceptional advantages till I feel exactly like that old Pharisee who went up to the Temple to pray and offer thanks because he was not as other men are" (30). In other words, she feels that her "exceptionalism" makes people expect too much of her.

Elinor goes so far in her rejection of college as arguing that grades don't matter, until she is finally presented with an opportunity to renounce college life (63). Ruth, tellingly, is the one to argue that grades represent how hard they work and symbolize the boundary between them and what other girls are longing for: "Oh, Elinor, just think of the hundreds and hundreds of girls who are longing for college, hungering and thirsting for the chances some of us are throwing away. It is treacherous, it is wicked—" (63). Ruth knows what it feels like to long for something beyond her grasp and to have to work to get and maintain it. Elinor, however, doesn't realize what she has until her junior year, when her mother offers her the opportunity to leave college and go to Europe with brother. Amazingly, Elinor, recently named to a class leadership role, decides to remain with her friends for their last year together. While she continues to devalue academics, her newfound relationship with Ruth and the other girls is important to her.

Elinor continues to ignore her studies until her senior year, when as class president, she clashes with a professor, Miss Padan. Elinor finally learns that her presence as a granddaughter of the college doesn't just mean being judged by the faculty, but that she has a real influence on the other students and the future of the college itself:

> "The students admire and look up to you far more than you realize. As a college granddaughter you are considered to represent the best results of this method of education. Even more distinctly than upon the ordinary student a responsibility rests upon you. This is the responsibility for proving to the world that college training produces the highest type of womanhood. This purpose assuredly is not to be attained by being untrue to your best self. A set of girls here notice that you slight your opportunities and decry your advantages. They are growing more and more ashamed of conscientious study. They treat the faculty with patronizing indifference if not antagonism" (284).

Elinor learns just what her status as "granddaughter" represents: what college training can produce. As discussed in Chapter 2, women began to attend academies and colleges partially in response to the needs of republican motherhood (educating women would produce better mothers and subsequently better children) and *Elinor* extends that argument. College women have daughters who go to college who have daughters who to college. If one of these granddaughters or great-granddaughters disrupts the system, then what will happen to college training? Miss Padan explains how Elinor's bad behavior could have widespread effects. She has been displaying "discourteous neglect of recitations, crude bluffing, a lazy waste of time, contempt for those students who place their work first… It is an attitude which if cherished in such a limited body as this college will inevitably tend to lower the institution and to ruin it in its intrinsic value as well as in the estimation of the world" (286). Miss Padan argues that a single student could ruin an entire college. While the *Three Vassar Girls* and other representations have done much work in promoting the college girl domestically, *Elinor's College Career* argues that what is of foremost importance for women's education is the students themselves. It suggests both the fragility of women's educational opportunities and a sense of fear at what changing attitudes could do to specific institutions of higher education..

Faced with her own infleunce on the college and with the importance of sustaining its future, Elinor quickly shapes up and becomes a more conscientious student, so much so that she is horrified when she witnessed first-hand the kind of "corruption" that her behavior has had on others. She overhears two junior girls who, fully aware of Elinor's presence criticize the college: "They didn't care. They talked—talked against the college—my mother's college. They said it is narrow and provincial and namby-pamby" (322). They call the school "stifling, smothering, deadening," and one even plans to leave (323). The other student claims that she would leave but

that she has a scholarship: "She said that she came here because she had no money to go somewhere else—anywhere else. She said that if she had been at liberty to do so, she would certainly have chosen the best" (323). Sounding much like the old Elinor, this junior wishes she had more choice in her education. However, Elinor fails to recognize this similarity in circumstance and instead defends both her mother and the college. More importantly, she takes ownership of the school as "her college," although she does not confront the other girls or defend the school directly to them (322). Elinor has been confronted with a vision of a student who is just like her—trapped by situation, forced to come to this school with no other opportunities—but all she feels is anger at the student's ingratitude. She doesn't see the parallel between students without choices. Though more girls are attending college, the ones without choice are primarily those without money.

4.2.4 Queer Futurity

While Champney's novel praises Vassar for transforming its students into successful, professional women, Schwartz focuses on the social fulfillment provided by college relationships. However, without a professional or heterosexual love ending, Schwartz's novel, centered as it is on the negative relationship between a mother and daughter, complicates the positive alumnae networks and legacies depicted by Champney. Without substituting Elinor's same-sex crush for a marriage or giving her protagonist a clear career path, Schwartz raises the real question of what these girls, especially Elinor who lacks purpose and drive, will do with their degrees. Myra will enter society, Lydia will work for social organizations, and Ruth will move west to become a writer. Elinor will perhaps marry and continue working with the alumnae association. Still, to assume Elinor will marry, as Myra seems to think, is emphasize heterosexual expectations to which Schwartz never fully commits her novel. Myra goes on dates, but Schwartz provides few

romantic details about the other girls. On Founder's Day in their senior year, however, the men they invite to school are telling: Lydia has a cousin visiting, Myra has a cadet from the military school in town, Elinor's brings her brother, and Ruth has "one of Miss Ewers' fellow instructors from the western university" (320). Indeed, Ruth, who participated fully in a crush relationship and is moving west, is more likely to end the narrative in a heterosexual relationship than the protagonist. All the audience can be sure of is that Elinor plans to work for the alumnae association and to secure funds for future students.

Elinor's role as alumnae fund-raiser and not a producer of more college-daughters opens the text up to questions of a queer, non-reproductive futurity for college women, and concerns about what that would mean for still-growing women's colleges. The text concludes with Elinor's class promising to pledge ten thousand dollars in the next five years to start a scholarship, and with Elinor making an anonymous donation for one thousand dollars, giving up her European tour so that another girl may go to college. Schwartz wants the audience to see this moment as transformative: Elinor has learned the value of college and plans to pass it on. She will participate in the similar cycle as her mother by sending other women's daughters to school. Yet, she is continuing the cycle of sending girls to college without answering the question of whether or not they themselves want to go. Schwartz's protagonist, who at first rejects her mother's college legacy, comes around to the value of college (especially in forging social relationships), but the text's repeated lack of choice, first Elinor and then the junior attending based on the scholarship, precludes college-aged women from making their own decisions.

Whether Elinor marries and continues her mother's legacy or remains single is ultimately not important. Instead, the text's resolution opens the door to questions of women's productive futurity in relation to college. College novels traditionally promote heterosexual endings for their

college girls and offer crushes as a pathway to marriage—because to tell its graduates not to marry would result in the colleges' decline or true democratization of its student population—neither of which private women's colleges appeared to want at this moment in time. College novels, then, participate in an economy of promotion for colleges, in which the college benefits from its depiction in popular culture, while the literary market capitalizes on a successful, if formulaic, genre. However, what happens when a college novel challenges (even if unintentionally) the economy in which it participates? *Elinor's College Career*, with its students who don't want to be a part of a college network, raise numerous questions: What happens if girls don't change their minds about the value of college or if they decide to defy their mothers and attend a college of their own choosing? or if mothers stop having daughters to send to college? All of these scenarios challenge the enrollments of women's colleges, aligning Schwartz's novel with a queer, nonreproductive future.

In order to consider queer, alternative pathways for women's colleges, it may be helpful to compare Schwartz with her contemporary, regionalist writer Sarah Orne Jewett, who is well-known for her depiction of non-reproductive New England communities and spinsters (1849-1909). Sarah Ensor describes how spinsters help readers to conceptualize a queer ecocriticism, which is intransitive, rejects a future "outside of the realm of objects," and sees the future as not "yes or no, but the future, which and whose, where and when and how" (414). Applying Ensor's argument about "who" gets the future to the college novel, the question is: what will happen if new kinds of students attend college? How can the college continue its economically profitable future if its students are not directly contributing back (in the form of children) to the college? Unlike a mother, the spinster "stands in a slanted relationship to a place and time that she will tend but will not—and cannot—directly pass on" (416-7). If a college woman grows up into a

career-focused woman, or even a spinster, then she may not "pass on" future students to her alma mater. Questions about college women's marriageability abound in this period, especially as birth rates in the United States declined, with women's colleges determined to showcase how their graduates continue to marry after matriculating.[155]

Therefore, one might expect *Elinor's College Career* promote the legacy of women sending their daughters to college—firmly establishing that they do marry and procreate—but instead, it functions like Jewett's *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (1896) in both promoting single women's individual freedoms and drawing attention to the problem their non-reproductivity creates for society at large. As Holly Jackson discusses in relation to the depiction of sterility in Jewett's novel, *The Country of the Pointed Firs* depicts "a tension between the celebration of nonprocreative women and an uneasy awareness of the demographic consequences of their lifestyle signals the novel's engagement with fin-de-siècle discourses concerning the end of American whiteness" (264).[156] Jewett and Schwartz both contend with fears over declining white birthrates and anxiety over "race suicide," the anti-feminist and anti-immigration fear that "'willfully sterile' white Americans would be outnumbered and overpowered by racial minorities" (Jackson 265). The New Woman, in particular, with her education and career opportunities, was linked to race suicide and worries about American men's masculinity (Jackson 265). Combatting these fears were women's college novels that depicted healthy girls, deliberately not made sick by the stresses of college, who will marry and reproduce. Jackson argues that the Bowden family reunion, likewise, celebrates Anglo-Norman lineage in a show of "white cultural dominance" (280). However, the family's declining numbers are on display at the reunion; the "perpetuation of a homogenous community relies on the reproduction of its constituent homogenous families, the climatic family reunion depicts the consequences of

individual inferiority on larger social formations, specifically the nation" (Jackson 281). If the homogenous community of a women's college similarly relies on reproduction, then it too might threaten to become a sterile or infertile community. What will happen to women's colleges then, if girls like Elinor stop participating in the heterosexual economy? The answer is that the colleges will either close, with no students to keep it going and no donations from alumnae, or they will have to open their doors up to more poor students like Ruth (foreshadowing student loans) and to the minority groups (who have been absent from college literature) who have been largely shut out of private female institutions. This would finally make the college experience more democratic as it becomes less about who can afford it and more about who deserves and wants to attend university. Homogenous communities will be unable to maintain the status quo and be forced to mix students.

In conclusion, what *Elinor's College Career* does by subverting Champney's alumnae networks is open them up to more women: who goes to college and where they can go. Both novels show the strength of women's alumnae networks; those in families and between peers are clear and powerful. Champney promotes groups of women finding strength and new opportunities together, based on the networks enabled by their college. While Champney's novel offers a groundbreaking final image of a group of successful career women gathered together as a symbol of what college alumna could achieve, Schwartz's novel goes even further. She suggests opening up that room to an even wider group, unconnected by legacy or privilege, looking past boundaries of class, race, and religion. While *Three Vassar Girls* asks what the girls can do to repay their college and beautify their campus, *Elinor* asks how the college funds itself and whether it will open its ivy-covered walls to new, deserving students.

CHAPTER 5. CODA

This dissertation rethinks the American girl's school story and its place in the girl's book genre. The case studies in Chapter 3 and 4 get to the heart of how these school stories need to be better analyzed as part of the girl's book genre. As I suggest, the girl students were all deeply concerned with fitting in among their peers and with how they could create lasting friendships. The protagonists usually had to reform or change something about themselves to fit in. Frances had to tame her ego, Hester had to quell her violent reactions, and Betty had to learn the truth about her style and social stature. Myra had to get better grades and Elinor had to start better representing the college. Finally, the Vassar girls learned how to fit in while traveling to other cultures. All of these characters had to recognize a failure in themselves and work to improve it. The authors suggest that all girls need to do the same to become a successful (adult) woman in society. But I think that these changes also need to be made for the girls to form successful friendships.

Female friendship is at the heart of these novels and a major part of the girl's book. Sharon Marcus defined this as the plot of female amity, but my project focuses on the way that the girl's school story genre represents educational institutions facilitating these friendships. Before marriage, a girl has a deep relationship with her family but she also needs to learn how to socialize among her community and peers. School becomes the gateway for girls to learn how to make friends. In college novels, as described by Inness, female friendship is treated as practice for marriage relationships. A girl can safely practice a serious relationship that is non-romantic with a female peer and learn from this experience before courting with a boy. Arguably, these relationships help women form successful hetero-normative relationships.

However, the relationships that girls form at school can become more than just friendship. As I argued in Chapter 4, girls form social and professional networks at school. They form networks with their friends, their teachers, and their schoolmates. These relationships can develop into the friendships that will last for their adulthood—they may turn to teachers as permanent mentors or gateways to professional positions. Maria Mitchell, a famous professor of astronomy at Vassar in the 1870s and 1880s, used her position to effectively create careers for her students, as she personally selected one of her students to replace her in her position (Solomon 89). In fact, until 1923, all Vassar astronomy professors were students of or descended from students of Mitchell's (Solomon 89). This speaks to the power of women-oriented networks and the exclusionary nature of these groups, as I discuss below.

The scene at the end of the second *Vassar* novel is an exciting imagining of what kind of networks women can form after their education. They can turn to schoolmates with professions in every arena and find new opportunities or ideas. While this scene is mainly a fantasy, it is a gateway to the way that authors see the future of education and their female relationships. While many authors suggest that education won't interfere with a girl's marriageability or will improve it, they also urge their girl readers to form school friendships for other reasons. They hope that these relationships could be the key to getting women out of the marriage market and into new opportunities that they create for themselves. In Chapter 1's common school story "Mary Lee's Dream" by Laura Oakwood, the author asks men to recognize that, until women have more personal and professional possibilities, they will make for unhappy wives. I argued that the authors I examine do not offer a solution to this problem, other than pointing to teaching as a profession. However, I believe that they also see female friendships and the networks that women can build in school and college as the means to a solution. Properly cultivated, these

networks might extend past the "green world" of college and into their real lives—into reading groups, suffrage organizations, alumni networks, and new careers.

However, these networks remain exclusionary as long as formal schooling is a privileged experience. Even today, for instance, legacy admissions have come under heightened scrutiny. Harvard's 2020 class is over 36% legacy students. For the university, legacies can mean increased financial donations from alumni. But for non-legacy students, this can be another barrier to entry to exclusive groups. Recently, the public has been engrossed by a 2019 college admissions bribery scandal that highlights issues of meritocracy, money and power, and legacy. The scandal, nicknamed "Operation Varsity Blues," came to the public's attention in part because of the alleged involvement of two Hollywood actresses, Lori Loughlin and Felicity Huffman. Loughlin, Huffman, and other wealthy parents have been charged with allegedly using the services of William Rick Singer, a college admissions counselor, to bribe either college admissions officers, college coaches, or college entrance exam administrators to secure higher test scores or college admission for their children. Singer also allegedly used fraudulent donations to a charitable organization to hide bribery payments. Universities such as Yale, Harvard, Stanford, and the University of Texas at Austin have been caught up in the allegations. Public debate around the scandal has centered on the idea of meritocracy; are students really admitted to college based on merit? The myth of elite universities is that only the best and brightest are admitted, but the reality of legacy admissions suggests that this is more complicated. Indeed, for some, this case is evidence of the need for admissions procedures like affirmative action to even the playing field.

But, in the late nineteenth-century girl's school stories I examine, we also see college students expanding their circles. Of course, in order to ensure democratic and meritocratic

networks and to begin to break down the walls of entrenched privilege, characters such as Elinor and Ruth would have to maintain boundary-breaking relationships past their college years. More women would have to accept into their newly formed networks women outside their own race, class, and religion. The novels examined here are, admittedly, still a long way from that. I hope, therefore, that scholars can pick up where this project ends and explore where education, networks, and boundary-breaking friendships begin to create real change for women's lives. Only then will we see a solution to the problem in "Mary Lee's Dream" and an ending where a woman doesn't have to compromise her personal and professional ambitions.

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NOTES

[1] Though published in 1903, *Rebecca* and its sequel are set in the 1870s, as Rebecca's dairy entries in the series date as "187-".

[2] Instead, *Rebecca* is a girl's book or a domestic.

[33] Beverly Lyon Clark dedicated a chapter on domestic stories in *Kiddie Lit* and has a book about cross-gendering school stories. Michelle Ann Abate's *Tomboys* examines the literary history of tomboys, and Joe Sutliff Sanders analyzes the depiction of girls as orphans. Gwen Athene Tarbox describes collectivism in Progressive Era fiction for girls and includes a chapter on college novels.

[4] In *Kiddie* Lit, Clark discussed the marginalization of children's literature as "Kiddie Lit" in the academy, and the relationship between feminism and childhood.

[5] See Mary Kelley's *Learning to Stand and Speak* (2006).

[6] Furthermore, Fetterley describes the many possible literary histories that were missing at the time of her article's publication (604).

[7] In *Kiddie Lit*, Clark describes how children's literature was not considered a "minor" genre in its time but was subsequently reconsidered as such by critics/scholars.

[8] I would be remiss here if I did not acknowledge the gap in the representation of non-white authors in my project. Most school stories for girls were written by white authors but I hope to find a larger sample as I continue my research beyond the dissertation.

[9] By analyzing poets such as Longfellow and John Greenleaf Whittier in their pedagogical context, Angela Sorby reveals more about the process of their work's canonization. Patricia Crain's *Reading Children: Literacy, Property, and the Dilemmas of Childhood in Nineteenth century America* also contributes to the field of childhood studies, imagining children as readers and how their literature became adult "property."

[10] Work is also being done on children as their own authors. For example, Victoria Ford Smith considers the collaborative authorship between authors and children, re-writing children back into the canon of children's literature.

[11] While other studies see school as a separating or postponing space, Osterman's work "delineate[s] a body of literature that places young females in educational institutions simultaneously public and private" (145). While the texts depict education as giving girls' new opportunities such as to "challenge traditional feminine roles and norms while on the very threshold of adulthood," they still show characters dealing with real concerns about institutions such as class, race, etc. (145, 142).

[12] In response, however, Theresa Strauth Gaul, in a 2009 *Legacy* special issue on recovery, argues that what is available in print (anthologies, reprints, critical editions) is still the most valuable because of its accessibility for reasons sch as classroom use or dissertation focus (243).

[13] Marchalonis detailed her struggle in creating a list of college novels: "Discovering and locating all fiction about women in college is impossible; the problem is particularly great with juvenile series for girls. Advertising in the backs of some volumes lists titles I have not been able to find; if these books still exist, they are buried in deposit libraries" (6). She found her sources in secondhand shops and only found those texts that were popular enough to be saved and/or printed in large quantities (6).

[14] However, Routledge's recent collection of *Girls School Stories, 1749-1929* (2014), edited by Kristine Moruzi and Michelle J. Smith, is a diverse representation of the genre including texts from Britain, America, Australia, and Canada. Divided by common thematic elements, this anthropology represents the range of school stories experiences for girls across time and nation. It is an excellent collection that highlights the need for continued scholarship on this genre.

Girls' books often include subtitles such as "A Story for Girls" or feature a girl's name in the title itself. They are also usually categorized by the library or database as a "girl's book," making them easier to locate than school stories. For example, there is a significant list of girls' series books compiled by Children's Literature Research Collections of the University of Minnestoa Libraries that is an excellent starting point for scholars. This list was also extremely helpful in my project.

[15] For example, *The Encyclopaedia of Girls' School Stories* (2000), the first volume in a two-part encyclopedia of school stories, neglects American stories, with the focus on the British tradition (as well as some Australian, Canadian, and New Zealand stories).

[16] As Judith Humphrey explains, "Brazil is one of the 'Big Four' of girls' school fiction together with Elsie Oxenham, Dorita Fairlie Burce and Elinor Brent-Dyer, and these authors were commercially very successful between the wars and for many years afterward" (3). She totals the school stories by each author: Brazil wrote 50, Brent-Dyer wrote about 71, Oxenham had 52 at her peak of popularity, and Bruce wrote 28 (3-4).

[17] Broadly, these historians contribute information to my project about common schools, co-education, college, and women's education generally.

[18] Osterman also views schools as both closed and open, public and private, in this way.

[19] See G. Stanley Hall's two-part *Adolescence*, the first of which was published in 1904.

[20] I also do not discuss normal schools, but this is due to a lack of available sources. I have been unable to locate a significant quantity of fictionalized accounts about normal schooling. Instead, I focus my attention on the depiction of teachers in common school schools. I plan to work more with normal schools in a revised version of this dissertation.

[21] The short story's full title is "Sara Crewe: or, What Happened at Miss Minchin's" and was serialized in *St. Nicholas Magazine* in December 1887. The story was expanded into a novel in 1905 and published as *A Little Princess: Being the Whole Story of Sara Crewe Now Being Told for the First Time*.

[22] There are certainly American girl's books that are set in or deal with girls' school experiences, such as *Rebecca* or the *Betsy Tacy* series. My point is that these American examples are not the first to come to mind, or are better known for their family dynamics than school narratives.

[23] For discussions of American girls' series books, see LuElla D'Amico and Emily Hamilton-Honey.

[24] As reported by the National Center for Education Statistics.

[25] However, girls were not excluded from the "reckless manner and spirit of play," frequently seen in depictions of tomboys (Brown 25).

[26] Clark describes how though Alcott may have written *Little Women* with girls in-mind, the binding of the original printing looked like an adult book (*Kiddie* 110). The text blended the categories of adult and juvenile (*Kiddie* 111).

[27] For book-length studies on British writers of girls' school stories, see Rosemary Auchmuty and Judith Humphrey.

[28] See Janice Kirkland for a description of the evolution of the character of Sara Crewe.

[29] Mitchell notes that "girl" includes "schoolgirl," but in Victorian usage, she is not a child and is probably over eleven-years-old (244).

[30] Mitchell sees this as the space between childhood and sexual adulthood. It is this space that allows for girls to work without "remain(ing) childish" whilst "protecting" girls from sexual threats (Mitchell 245, 253). Mitchell reads "girl" as suggesting "prolonged latency rather than inappropriate masculinity," in which girls are able to have "working relationships" with men without "erotic tension" and "evade the 'danger' that a woman with economic and social freedom might prefer not to marry" (253). While Mitchell's description is based in developmental or sexual maturity, I also interpret young adult girls to be "latent," in that they are "existing as potential," because they are not fully formed into women. Thus, I posit that the school space affords girls with potential for a future that is not yet determined, going against ideas of an already inscribed womanhood.

[31] Women did not exclusively write these texts and there are some male-authored boarding or college novels, such as T.S. Arthur's *Cecilia Howard* (1844).

[32] Corporal punishment is not unique to common school stories; it also appears in seminary stories. However, reformers' concern about corporal punishment is perhaps best displayed in these common school depictions.

[33] For more on the mother-teacher figure, see Patricia Crain's *The Story of A* and Sarah Robbins' *Managing Literacy, Mothering America.*

[34] In Kimberley Reynolds' discussion of girls in Victorian children's literature in *Girls Only?*, she describes the central girl characters as "young rebels and madcaps" who appear to be "youthful versions of the rebellious heroines in adult fiction" (98). The girls were "outspoken, intelligent, a marvelous story-teller and instigator of outrageous schemes" (98). As Reynolds explains, these "naughty girls" seem to present new values but actually conform to traditional values of femininity (98).

[35] This is frequently seen in tomboy characters; for more, see Michelle Ann Abate and Sharon O'Brien.

[36] I am using the Oxford English Dictionary's definition.

[37] In *Hester Stanley*, Hester became more interested in learning when the subject matter interested her, so her teacher used myth and fairy stories to engage her imagination.

[38] Inness has also written on depictions of college girl athletes in her article, "'It is Pluck –Is it Sense?': Athletic Student Culture in Progressive-era Girls' College Fiction."

[39] Inness describes the audience for boarding school books to be pre-teens (15). However, Marchalonis argues that these novels were for adults: "That the central characters were young women—girls—does not make this fiction for the young" (5). She uses stories published and reviewed in legitimate venues like Scribner's as her evidence (5).

[40] For a longer explanation of adventure schools, see Farnham pages 39-43.

[41] Furthermore, Kaestle explains, "The chief goal of northern district-school committees and southern subscription-school organizers was to provide children with rudimentary instruction at low cost under firm community control" (21).

[42] Some women did teach outside of the home in the early national period, primarily in summer sessions in Northern districts. Women were not usually employed as teachers in the rural South (Kaestle 20).

[43] For example, the Aimwell School for the Free Instruction of Females was founded in Philadelphia in 1796 by Quaker Anne Parrish. Some girls attended school at the elementary and secondary levels at town schools, adventure schools, or academies (Solomon 15).

[44] I will largely refer to academies and seminaries for girls interchangeably. Most of these schools were private and had boarders or day pupils.

[45] The largest expansion of schools in America in this period occurred between 1830 and 1850 (Solomon 15).

[46] Many important female educators were in the Northeast, promoting female education and some opened influential girls' schools. These educators include: Sarah Pierce, Emma Willard, Catherine Beecher, Zilpah Grant, Mary Lyon, and Almira Phelps (Solomon 17). Southern schools tended to be family-owned or minister-directed, but were also subject to Northern influence, as many Northern schools also sent their graduates to teach in the South (Solomon 21).

[47] This time, as Solomon explained, "prolonged the period of youth" (31).

[48] This is not to say that women who married never utilized their education or worked. As Solomon notes, "Alumnae reports from Troy, Oberlin, and Mount Holyoke suggest the large extent to which wives of other professionals participated in their husband's activities" (38). An educated woman largely became a positive attribute for a man seeking a spouse (Solomon 37).

[49] Horace Mann didn't invent this idea but did capitalize on it: "By the 1830s, a significant shift in rhetoric accompanied approval of female schoolteaching. Horace Mann cited woman's tenderness, gentility, and patience as qualities contributing to her success as a teacher-qualities usually associated with a good mother" (Solomon 32).

[50] It's important to note that women who became teachers were not necessarily opposed to marriage or never married. Some women taught in the interval before marriage. Others saw moving to a new community to teach as opening up a greater possibility to marry, because she would be exposed to new potential husbands outside of her former community (Solomon 33).

[51] The first state colleges to accept women were: Iowa (1855), Wisconsin (1867), Kansas (1869), Indiana (1869), Minnesota (1869), Missouri (1870), Michigan (1870), and California (1870) (Solomon 53).

[52] Many of the oldest women's colleges began as female seminaries and officially became colleges later (such as Salem College in North Carolina). Several early girl's seminaries that later became women's colleges, including "Mount Holyoke, Mills, and Rockford… (which) were qualified to be rechartered as colleges in the 1880s" (Solomon 49). This has resulted in several schools claiming the distinction of the first women's college (Solomon 24).

[53] The school was separated into four 10-week quarters. For the first quarter of the school's life, board was $13 and tuition $3 with the following quarters' tuition to be decided later (Woody 359).

[54] As Kaestle describes, "The argument that mass education would make workers unfit for their station and spread sedition and dissent among the lowest orders was almost totally lacking" (35-6).

[55] Herbst continues, "The very diversity of ethnic background and religious tradition, the variety of languages and dialects spoken, and the apparent crudity or simplicity of life-styles

prompted many of the older residents to demand that these newcomers and their children be converted to the ways of the established citizenry" (13).

[56] Quoted from Barnard's *Report on the Condition and Improvement of the Public Schools of Rhode Island*, originally submitted November 1, 1845.

[57] As Tyack and Hansot further explain, "The public's conviction that marriage and motherhood should be women's ultimate destiny was so powerful that Beecher and others insisted that teaching was an ideal preparation for motherhood and that teaching-trainings were not seminaries for producing celibates" (43).

[58] Further supporting this, "Willard, Lyon, and Grant began their careers at an early age as teachers in common schools" (Tyack and Hansot 43).

[59] The movement was called a revival because it was based on old ideas, such as Thomas Jefferson's call for public elementary schools in Virginia in his "Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge" in 1779.

[60] A male teacher in Massachusetts in 1837 made, on average, a monthly age of $23.13 (Herbst 26). They went up to $43.63 in 1849 (Herbst 26, footnote 34). Women's salaries were 40% of men's (Herbst 26).

[61] As Herbst describes, with the "near simultaneous arrival of industrialization and the common school revival," Massachusetts girls could choose between working as teachers or in mills, but teaching offered better pay and environment (29). In the 1840s, the weekly wages for a Massachusetts public school teacher also "averaged $0.39 higher than in several of the cotton mills" (29).

[62] Massachusetts Board of Education Annual Reports, used by Herbst (203, footnote 32). This data was also used in Kaestle and Vinovskis' book.

[63] Whig reformers did not want to pay for better schools and their xenophobic views made them "fear teachers who were unfamiliar with local conditions" (Herbst 65).

[64] The Lexington normal school moved to West Newton (1844) and again to Framingham in 1853. Barre closed in November of 1841 due to the death of its principal, and moved to a new location, Westfield, in September 1844 (Herbst 70-1).

[65] At Lexington and West Newton, students could enroll three times a year: September, January, and May (Herbst 65). At Framingham, semesters began in September and in March (Herbst 65). Men and women often enrolled at different points in the year, depending on when they were working as teachers. For example, based on the farming schedule, men primarily taught in the winter whereas more women were attending school in the winter. Horace Mann recommended that first women teachers start in the summer when boys on the farm (Herbst 70).

[66] Later normalites desired to learn more advanced subjects, like their college-educated peers and this "desire to become like academy and college teachers" would plague normal schools (Herbst 63).

[67] With time permitting instruction, additional subjects could also include: rhetoric, logic, geometry, bookkeeping, navigation, surveying, history, physiology, mental, and natural philosophy (Herbst 62).

[68] As Herbst explains, "Unlike young men planning to go to college, the young women who applied to Lexington had not received preparatory training either in academies or privately from a local minister or tutor" (68).

[69] The specific ranges are: 18.27 for Lexington, 18.35 at West Newton, and 18.61 at Framingham (Herbst 67).

[70] During the Civil War and late 1860s, women made up 90% of the Westfield student body (Herbst 71).

[71] The American Institute of Instruction had hoped for male teachers by portraying teaching as a "citizen's duty" (Herbst 74). However, Horace Mann and the Massachusetts Board of Education were satisfied with the women teachers (Herbst 74).

[72] Herbst also notes that normalites were "on the move both socially and geographically, and only few stayed or returned to play the role of country schoolmaster or schoolmistress" (84). Indeed, some teachers would leave a rural area for a better-paying placement in a city, as well as leaving the profession altogether.

[73] In the 1840s: normal schools opened in New York and Pennsylvania; in the 1850s, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Michigan, and Illinois; in the 1860s, 1860s: Kansas and Wisconsin; and in the 1870s, Iowa (Herbst 94).

[74] The schools eventually separated in 1872 as the normal curriculum needed more attention (Herbst 92-3). The school went from a one-year training course to two-year (Herbst 93). It eventually transitioned to become the Teachers College of the City of Boston, then Boston State Teachers College, and finally, Boston State College (Herbst 93).

[75] The average approximate college age for women became 18 to 21 in the early twentieth century; previously, women in their 20s and 30s were attending college after working to afford it (Solomon 70). With more applicants, colleges eventually "shifted so as to favor younger applicants" (Solomon 70). For example, at Radcliffe College, the average age of graduates was 29; in 1920s, the average age was 21.5 (Solomon 70).

[76] The parental influence was not just from men, as the period went on, more girls had mothers who had graduated college and had families, creating the beginning of second-generation college women (Solomon 68).

[77] This was University of Wisconsin President Charles Richard Van Hise's "'sex repulsion' theory—that as soon as one sex dominated numerically, fear of competition drove the other out" (Solomon 60). G. Stanley Hall's influential *Adolescence* (1904) also argued against women as college students as making them unsuitable for marriage. Hall's theory of "sex attraction" was another way to object to having women attend college (Solomon 60).

[78] Notably, several Ivy League men's colleges have only recently begun admitting women, Yale and Princeton in 1969 (though Yale admitted graduate students in the 1890s), Dartmouth in 1972, and Columbia in 1983 (though it is also still affiliated with Barnard). Harvard and Radcliffe merged in 1977. Though the University of Pennsylvania admitted women as special students in 1876 and granted its first degree to woman in 1880, it did not admit women as four-year students to an undergraduate degree program until 1933. Brown established a Women's College in 1891, which merged in 1971. Cornell University was forced to admit a woman in 1870 because of an allotment from the Morrill Land Grant Act, and because it used money from New York State (Solomon 51-2). Vassar College has also been coeducational since 1969.

[79] A notable exception is Wilberforce in Ohio, which was founded by African-Americans, not white missionaries (Solomon 50).

[80] It's worth discussing how prevalent attending Chapel was in college novels. While many college novels depict its students attending Chapel, they show little resentment toward the real-

life college requirement. *Elinor's College Career*, despite being written by a Jewish author, shows its students attending their required Chapel session. Yet, some students in the period had changing religious opinions, brought on the rise of Darwinism and scientific discoveries in the period (Solomon 91-93). As a result, students began to protest the Chapel requirement of many colleges, beginning with male college students (Solomon 92). As early as the 1880s, some colleges removed their Chapel requirements, while evangelical schools kept the requirement for longer (Solomon 92).

[81]Such as the active schoolgirls of Angela Brazil.

[82] The exact location of the school is not revealed beyond the fictional "Blazington." However, the school is located on the East Coast, as Mears is described as dropping Frances at the Blazington rail depot before continuing on the train to New York (7).

[83] Why she wrote a history of architecture is unclear but, according to Sarah Allaback, "Writing for children caused her both to begin theorizing about the connections between moral development and architectural design and to realize that she, a mere woman writer, might actually make a difference" (199). She completed over four hundred pages on *The History of Architecture from the Earliest Times; Its Present Condition in Europe and the United States* (1848), the first history of architecture published in the United States (Allaback 199). The text offered various types of architectural examples in its mission to promote taste. The book was dedicated to the ladies of the United States, which, to Allaback, "implied that women were accepted aesthetic critics with the power to influence public artistic standards" (Allaback 207).

[84] We can consider Frances a blank slate who has learned from her environment, like Locke's theory of the blank slate. Frances reforms herself based on her uncle's advice and her school environment. In this way, the text argues that the school (education) is more suited to creating True Women than the home.

[85] The mystery surrounding Frances' family and her own person is shared by readers of the text, as they do not know much more about her than her classmates. With a third-person narrator, the audience sees little of Frances' interiority except for a few portions of her journal later in the text. As Mears claims that the girls will learn about Frances "in good time, just as well as if you made yourself the heroine of your own story," Tuthill nudges her readers who know that Frances is, of course, their heroine even if they know little about her personality for much of the text (5).

[86] Mears' fears for his niece are later materialized in the character of Dorothea in Nora Perry's *Hope Benham: A Story for Girls* (1894), who is repeatedly surprised by how her classmates react to her selfish and outlandish behavior.

[87] With Frances entering a seminary for girls, it's notable that the advice on how to succeed at school is provided by her uncle, not a mother or sister figure, and that he goes so far as to pay her for her good behavior. We can presume that with the advice coming from a respected male family member, Frances may be more likely to accept it. However, Mears still feels the need to essentially bribe his niece to follow his advice, promising to tell her a secret worth 10,000 dollars at the end of the year (6). What does this say about his faith in his young niece, or conversely, why he believes this behavior merits such a reward? Mears' reward is directly linked to a negative view of woman, seeing what he instructing Frances to do as "quite equal to keeping a secret, which they say is teetotally impossible for a woman" (6).

[88] Mears is seemingly confident in his niece's ability to learn and recite the material, as he offers no instruction on how to successfully learn her lessons. However, the audience has no prior knowledge of Frances' academic education (which was presumably private tutoring) before beginning at the boarding school.

[89] Meta's invitation comes a full four months before the other girls begin to accept Frances. While the text attributes Frances' eventual social acceptance to her intelligence and an improvement in her manner, I argue that Meta's influence is also a convincing factor for the girls.

[90] Southern girls were slower to attend academies and seminaries in the North, as their educational movements largely developed later.

[91] Many schools had day pupils, common boarders, and parlour boarders. Frances would be considered a common boarder, while Arethusa is a parlour boarder.

[92] If she lived in a Northern rural area, she would have been taken to be a metropolitan area, because she had come into society (balls, etc.) the previous year.

[93] As Farnham described, in the mid-1700s, "schools ranged from simple day schools teaching only French and needlework, to fashionable boarding schools teaching a wide-range of subjects: music, drawing, dancing, grammar, history, geography, and, occasionally, other academic subjects in addition to the three Rs" (37).

[94] Marion here calls Native Americans as a "noble race," as she is familiar with "Cooper's novels" (30). It's notable that it is Marion who mentions James Fenimore Cooper, whose novel *The Last of the Mohicans* was published in 1826, as she is depicted as fascinated with romance and would be more likely to read novels than the other girls.

[95] However, the decision to send a girl to school to make her more marriageable was certainly not limited to the South. As Solomon describes of late eighteenth-century women, "The American girl at the upper levels spent more time socializing, giving the impression of independence and freedom noted by many observers, including Alexis de Tocqueville. Parents readily paid for the education of an indulged daughter in an academy as a way to keep her busy, under control, and perhaps, make her more marriageable" (17).

[96] Frances and Meta gave perfect recitations while, notably, first-scholar Bell did not. Bell is also the first to ask if Arethusa will circulate the novels, and despite her good grades, appears inclined to get into trouble.

[97] Marion now insists on calling Frances by "Jeromia," and is sure that she will be "discovered to be an heiress, or a fondling, or a foreign princess" (45-46). Marion believes that Frances' mysterious identity will culminate in a romance novel ending. However, Frances urges Marion to "not to build her castles in the air too high," but Marion does not listen (46).

[98] Marion created a faux romance with a local apothecary shop boy, even going so far as to cast them as "Isabella" and "Edward" (the boy's real name is Hobbs). She writes a poem to "Edward" from "Isabella," ties it to a rock, and throws it outside, only for it to be discovered by Mrs. MacOver. Arethusa easily gives up Marion to MacOver, saying that the note contains Marion's handwriting and that Marion pretends to be in love with the boy.

[99] Frances, in contrast, displays thoughtfulness as she refuses to discuss Marion's situation with Mrs. MacOver in front of the other girls. The narrator does not explicitly reveal what Frances says or did not say about Marion, only that Frances told Mrs. MacOver about Arethusa's books. As a result, Mrs. MacOver bans the books but does not expel the girls: "Mrs. MacOver very prudently refrained from punishing either of the girls by expulsion from

school. She, however, determined to keep a stricter watch over the whole school; and thus, as it ever is, the misconduct of a few was the cause of serious inconvenience to the many. They were no longer allowed to go to the village without one of the teachers, nor to borrow books of any kind to read in their own rooms" (65).

[100] The definition of "musherroon" is taken from the Oxford English Dictionary.

[101] Marion hazes younger students and is punished, but this punishment does not generate any character growth as it did with Frances.

[102] With the third-person narrative style, the audience knows only the behavior that Frances is presenting to the other girls. The narrative device of Frances' journal allows the audience to see what Frances is experiencing due to her uncle's experiment, and what Frances was like before beginning school.

[103] Arthur Tollman and Bell Rowe's grandfather—men—are the characters offered as examples of achieving and continuing upward social mobility. However, Bell's death cuts short any opportunity for continuing her family's social growth. Lucy is the only girl character to be shown as integrated into the upper class but the Jeromes view her largely as a replacement for Frances and the text offers no discussion of movement beyond that role. Lucy's presumed home-schooling by Frances also ironically removes Lucy from the opportunities of a boarding-school education.

[104] Spofford originally published *Hester Stanley* as a serial in *The Youth's Companion*, titled "At St. Mark's: In Nine Chapters" (1881). It was later published as the novel, *Hester Stanley at St. Mark's* (1882). There are two other books in the *Hester Stanley* series: *A Lost Jewel* (1891) and *Hester Stanley's Friends* (1898), which feature some of the same characters, but are not school stories and do significantly advance Hester's story as a character.

[105] Of her schooling, Hester admits to Marcia, "I've never been at school, you know. That is, only a little, now and then, when I felt like it, at the nuns' school" (7). She goes so far as to say she is a "dunce" (7).

[106] Hester can speak English, French, and Tahitian, but she struggles to read in English (16-7).

[107] Comparing *Hester Stanley* to *Jane Eyre*, Bode argues, "Spofford modifies her Jane-figure significantly by giving her Bertha Mason's island background. Hester, from the south sea isle of Samoa, shares with the Jamaican Bertha what Susan Meyer calls Bertha's 'odd complexity of race' (1996: 67)" (118). While Bertha is "threatening" in *Jane Eyre*, Bode argues that Hester is the "story's central point of attraction, drawing to herself characters and readers alike" (118).

[108] Here, I reference descriptions made by Dawn Sardella-Ayres and Ashley Wilson in their papers on the "North American girls' bildungsroman" panel at the 2017 Children's Literature Association conference.

[109] Bode compares the image of the interlocked "brown" and "white" fingers of Hester and her friend Maud to reflect the nineteenth century American motif of the "light and dark-skinned child" motif, such as Eva and Topsy of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (188).

[110] In her argument Bode also cites Karen Sanchez-Eppler's research that "by the 1880 the United States was the world's largest source of Protestant missionaries to the 'heathen'" (2005: 187)" (119).

[111] Miss Marks also offered Hester her own personalized reward beyond a certificate: "She learned very quickly, although sometimes she forgot as quickly; and a reward of merit that Miss Marks allowed her was permission to go into the laboratory during the chemical

experiments to see water boil in a sheet of paper, or chlorine bleach a spray of rose-leaves, or else to listen to the recitation of the class in astronomy" (120). Notably, even Miss Marks' rewards are learning experiences in and of themselves.

[112] Brown is depicted with a lisp throughout the text, presumably to soften the impact of her repeated insults of Hester and make her less threatening.

[113] Throughout the text, Hester is not interested in boys, though Marcia is continually seeking out Joe at the boy's school. Hester's disinterest may be due to a younger age than Marcia or because Spofford had no intention of pairing her with a love interest. Hester's father, too, sent her to boarding school specifically to become a teacher, with no mention of the possibility of marriage.

[114] The play environment itself is critiqued for creating competition between the girls over casting and attention, as they became jealous when Hester performed better and received more audience attention than they anticipated. Miss Marks even later admits that she's had "misgivings about these plays, and now I see plainly that it is wrong and unwise to have them here. What passions they excite! This is the very last" (81). Spofford suggests that these type of school activities may cause too competition among girls, yet encourages such competition in academics through Miss Marks' reward of the watch.

[115] Even after being punished by Miss Marks, Hester continues to feel guilt, going so far as to exclaim that she believes she'll never be fit to associate with "people of gentle behavior" and that "it's no use to try and civilize me! I had better go back to my savages!" (92).

[116] The first book is the only school story; the other two books, *Betty Baird's Ventures* (1907) and *Betty Baird's Golden Year* (1909) describe Betty's life after graduating from the seminary.

[117] This figure is best known from early twentieth century British schoolgirls, such as those by Angela Brazil, as described in Chapter 1.

[118] Weikel presumably based at least some of Betty's experiences on her own life, because of the choice of Betty's last name: Baird as a tribute to her father, Benjamin Baird Hamlin. Like Betty, Weikel's father was a clergyman from Pennsylvania. While relatively little is known about Anna Hamlin Wikeln, who used the pen name Weikel, she was originally from Pennsylvania, and was one of three children, Benjamin, Mary, and Anna. Based on an encyclopedia about residents from Blair County, Pennsylvania, Wikel's father was Rev. Benjamin Baird Hamlin, a pastor and later elder of Methodist Episcopal church of the Altoona district (Wiley and Garner 170). Anna later married Henry (Harry) H. Wikel, who worked for the YMA and YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) in both New York City and Italy. Wikel also wrote several articles on early childhood education for educational magazines in the early twentieth century, which she published under her own name (Wikel). However, for the *Betty* series, Wikel used the pen name Weikel. Since Weikel published on education and children's issues and her father worked for the YMCA, we can presume that she was involved in some capacity with social and education reform, and Betty also actively participates in Christian charitable efforts.

[119] Betty's mother is described as having "moved to Pennsylvania from New England," leaving me to believe that Weston is in Pennsylvania (268). It is most certainly located on the East Coast, as Betty mentions helping with teachers' settlement work in New York, as "her home [Weston] was only a few hours' ride from the city" (204). The Weston locals also discuss trends in New York fashion and the schoolgirls mention traveling to New York. In addition,

Miss Payne sends one of Betty's dresses to a New York dressmaker (132). Betty later travels home in a suit purchased in New York (200).

[120] See Michelle Ann Abate's *Tomboys*.

[121] I am working under the belief that most of the school story novels in *Betty* are fictional, as I have been unable to locate copies or listings of/for them.

[122] Again, the protagonists and texts mentioned by Betty are likely inventions by Weikel, composed from common boarding school tropes.

[123] This references the belief that reading novels teach the way to behave (for example, Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* among others).

[124] Lois, in contrast, "knew the cause of their prejudice, and it took her longer to feel friendly towards them than it did Betty, who found it so nice to have a friendly crowd around her that she was willing to accept their motives at their own valuation" (112-3).

[125] In acting in the play itself, Betty is reported to have been a "vivid" performer (146). Her skill at acting is due to retaining her "old childish habit of 'make believe'" (145-6).

[126] Betty even mentions Payne's absence, which has resulted in a closer relationship with Miss Greene, "If she weren't so busy I think she would be nearly as funny and good to us as Miss Greene, but— next to the Mother there is no one like Miss Greene for understanding" (141).

[127] This is a reference to the settlement movement.

[128] Their close relationship eventually leads to Miriam claiming that Betty is Miss Greene's "pet," as she has received a large part in the school play despite being a new student. However, Miriam is biased against Betty (143). In response, the other schoolgirls defend Betty's intelligence and her rise in popularity. As such, I would not claim that Betty receives preferential treatment from Miss Greene in the way that Miriam does from Miss Leet.

[129] The Order badges are made of aluminum in the shape of a cup with the words "Order of the Cup." Betty orders a dozen badges to sell, and Lois later orders a hundred more for the order to sell.

[130] In the first book, Betty tries to apply what she learned from Miss Greene, "whose chief recreation was the study of artistic home decoration" (194). Betty is given a seed picture, which disappoints her in that it disrupts her design for the room (197-8). This brief foray into interior design foreshadows Betty's career as an interior decorator later in the series, notably authoring a series on household decoration for *The Domecile* magazine.

[131] However, Champney's final novel in her series does feature a Jewish character, suggesting some attention to the growing and changing college population. See Molly K. Robey's reading that focuses specifically on the treatment of this Jewish character in the *Vassar* series.

[132] This also happens in the Vassar series—see *Three Vassar Girls in the American We*st.

[133] Girls could travel before with chaperones or family.

[134] Champney's husband primarily illustrated the series; however, some illustrations are attributed to other artists, as intended on the title page of the first book of the series, "With nearly a hundred and fifty original illustrations by 'Champ' (J. Wells Champney) and other distinguished artists." The subsequent books in the series continue to acknowledge "other distinguished artists" as illustrators.

[135] The term "New Woman" was first used in 1894.

[136] Each text in the series was printed in an illustrated hardback edition and a cloth hardcover with a gold gilt inlay on the text and on the spine. The illustrated covers varied for each title but all were extremely colorful and highly decorated with a front and back cover design. The

first edition was in a brown hardcover in cloth, while others were featured in colors such as yellow or a dark red. The cloth hardcovers typically feature the title in gold gilt lettering with an image from the title location (in gold gilt) set between two pillars.

[137] See the Vassar Encyclopedia entry on Champney by the Vassar Historian Colton Johnson.

[138] Cecilia Boylston later appears in the fifth book in the series, *The Three Vassar Girls on the Rhine* (1887), and the ninth, *The Three Girls in Switzerland* (1890). She is mentioned in passing in books three and four.

[139] James' play version of *Daisy Miller* was actually published in *The Atlantic Monthly* in 1883—the same year as the publication of *The Three Vassar Girls Abroad.*

[140] Maud specifically says they do not have a "chaperone to be responsible for" on this trip (*England* 19). She also laments that they have may have received the reputation of "giddy" girls because of her sister's behavior (19). However, without her, she is sure that they will have no such issues.

[141] The definition of "dig" is taken from the Oxford English Dictionary.

[142] In *The Three Vassar Girls Abroad*, Barbara similarly mentioned being fascinated by the gypsy quarter in Granada, "I wish I were a man, that I might study them more closely" (149). She cites George Borrows' travel accounts with the Romani, known as "gypsies," as what sparks her "imagination" (149). Barbara is stereotyping the Romani people as "evil," "tricker[ous]," and as thieves, based on his account (149). However, the use of language ("I wish I were a man") and the recognition that men could perform certain tasks that women are not is a recurring indication of the inequality of gender roles.

[143] Rensselaer is the oldest continuous school of science of technology in the United States. Tandon is the second oldest private engineering and technical institute in the United States.

[144] Tandon became coeducational in 1957, while Stevens became coeducational in 1971.

[145] This information was found in online exhibit, "Women at Rensselaer," composed of resources from Rensselaer's Institute Archives and Special Collections.

[146] However, Barbara also makes a point to critique Catholicism at the same time, so that her feelings are not confused with Catholic sentiment.

[147] Gladys is very strong in math, the "eighth wrangler" in her University class (106). This examination "consumed six hours daily for nine days, and ranged from differential calculus to optics to spherical astronomy" (106). The inclusion of this detail establishes that women students can take and pass difficult examinations.

[148] Schwartz evokes many Vassar traditions, such as the daisy-chain, Convocation, Hall Plays, Field Day, Class Tree ceremonies, Founder's Day, the Senior Howl, and even signs on doors to indicate students are studying. Schwartz would have been a student on campus for the first Vassar Field Day on November 9, 1895 ("Vassar Traditions" and "Field Day").

[149] If not Vassar, it is a fictional all-girls private college in the same approximate area.

[150] Though Schwartz was Jewish, all her protagonists appear to be Anglo-Christians as they all regularly attend Chapel and offer no discussion of any religious differences. However, Vassar had a Chapel requirement for its students until 1926, which may also explain this.

[151] Schwartz may have identified most strongly with Ruth, as she also wrote for the *Vassar Miscellany* and later became a writer. As Ruth received a scholarship to remain at Vassar during her undergraduate degree, Schwartz received a post-graduate fellowship for her Master's degree.

[152] Solomon is citing an Immigrant Commission report of 1911.

[153] Solomon is citing an Immigrant Commission report of 1911.
[154] For more on crushes in college history, see Inness. For the connection between crushes and race suicide, see Inness (51-52).
[155] This refers to both the work of G. Stanley Hall and Thomas Clarke.
[156] For more on gender and sexuality in *Pointed Firs*, see Ammons.