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## **The Inward Revolution: Sexual Terrorism in The Princess Casamassima**

Elizabeth Carolyn Miller

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## The Inward Revolution: Sexual Terrorism in *The Princess Casamassima*

By Elizabeth Carolyn Miller,  
*University of Wisconsin,  
Madison*

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He would become most acquainted with destiny in the form of a lively inward revolution.

—Henry James, Preface to *The Princess Casamassima*

The day of mere external revolutions has passed [. . .] the only revolution now possible is that most fundamental of all, the revolution of the human spirit.

—Havelock Ellis, “Women and Socialism”

In 1884, one year before Henry James’s novel *The Princess Casamassima* began its serial run in the *Atlantic Monthly*, social scientist Karl Pearson wrote in the *Fortnightly Review*:

There are two, and we might almost say only two, great problems of modern social life—they are the problems of women and of labour. Interwoven in a remarkable and hardly yet fully appreciated manner, they are the ground-tones of modern thought and disguised under many varied forms the chief factors in modern social and political changes. (226)

*The Princess Casamassima* confronts precisely these two “problems”: women and workers in late-Victorian Britain.<sup>1</sup> Critics have long approached the novel with an eye to half of this equation, viewing *The Princess* as James’s uncharacteristic (and not altogether accurate) foray into the world of workingmen and socialist

revolution, noting that “none [of his other work] ventures more upon the portrayal of contemporary events” (Tilley 1), classifying it “among the most ‘political’ of James’s novels” (Esch 318), and singling it out as “sudden and unprecedented in [James’s] career” or as an “anomaly” (Jacobson 41).<sup>2</sup> The other great social problem that James addresses, however, has surprisingly often been ignored in criticism of the novel. Judging from recent criticism, one would think the book was as absent of female characters as a Robert Louis Stevenson story; but in fact, like James’s other novels, women characters absorb an extraordinarily large portion of the novelist’s attention in *The Princess*, and the book is even named after one of them. James’s contemporary critics, in reviewing the novel, were much taken up with analyzing its female characters; but twentieth-century critics, curiously, have not been so.<sup>3</sup>

*The Princess*’s female characters have perhaps received so little attention because critics have focused on coming to terms with James’s surprising and uncharacteristic decision to write about socialist and anarchist terrorist groups, which were, of course, primarily male.<sup>4</sup> In my reading of the novel, however, James’s employment of the themes of anarchism and terrorism serves predominantly as a means to investigate the book’s more pressing concern with gender and the role of women in late-Victorian London. As Pearson suggests, the “woman question” and the “workers question” did overlap in crucial ways at this time, and so they do in this novel. Yet, the book’s male revolutionaries are oddly ineffectual—“a sort of people who [. . .] had not among them so much purpose as would be [. . .] required to drown a kitten,” as one of James’s contemporary reviewers phrased it (Review of *PC*, *Athenaeum* 175)—while the female characters supply the novel’s social disobedience and threat. Women, I would argue, are the real source of terror and anarchy in this novel. In portraying such women, James identifies a coming revolution distinct from, though related to, the workers’ revolution: the revolution in women’s social roles. Although it will be an “inward revolution,” as described in the above epigraphs, James’s novel suggests that the transformation in women’s social roles will nevertheless be as painful a process as a strictly “political” revolution, with all the attendant terror.

*The Princess*’s concern with female “sexual terrorism,” by which I mean women’s anarchic disruption of socio-sexual norms and codes, can be easily situated within debates about gender in the late nineteenth century. Economically and politically, Britain in the 1880s was in a slump. James himself wrote of his new home in a January 24, 1885, letter to Grace Norton: “the ‘decline,’ in a word, of old England, go[es] to my heart,” and he marvels that he will be alive to see “this great precarious, artificial empire [. . .] expended, struggling with forces which perhaps, in the long run, will prove too many for it” (*HJL* 67). The widespread perception of Britain’s decline, after a century in which it had been the most powerful nation in the world, was often attributed to a host of cultural anxieties about gender, centering on a fear that the British were becoming a degenerate and/or effeminate population.<sup>5</sup> These fears came to be manifested in a paranoia about male effeminacy as well as a “scientific” preoccupation with female deviancy. As Bram Dijkstra has claimed, “the later nineteenth century used Darwin’s discoveries to transform the scattershot gender conflicts of earlier centuries into a

'scientifically grounded' exposé of female sexuality as a source of social disruption and 'degeneration'" (3). British scientists such as Havelock Ellis, Karl Pearson, and others contributed to this cultural discourse, and Max Nordau's *Degeneration* (1895) explicitly linked scientific concerns about gender with an invective against nineteenth-century literature's role in cultural degeneration.

In the literary world, this gender crisis played out in part as a critical backlash against the women writers who had dominated mid-Victorian English fiction. Elaine Showalter has noted that "after 1880, women novelists, while ever more numerous in the marketplace, entered a period of critical decline [. . .] male professional jealousies erupted in critical abuse of women's emasculating effect on the English novel" (17). Gaye Tuchman likewise claims that between 1880 and 1899, "men of letters, including critics, actively redefined the nature of a good novel and a great author" according to an ideal of "'manly' literature" (8).<sup>6</sup> James's contemporary critics, coming from this cultural milieu, responded to *The Princess* in terms that reflected such gender debates. Many of James's reviewers complained of an enervated quality in the novel, referring to his style as "dainty" and "delicate" ("Socialism" 177, 178) and charging his work with a "want of virility" ("Slumming" 179). Although this anti-effeminacy rhetoric is misogynist, the contemporary critics do at least zero in on a significant aspect of *The Princess* by registering its unorthodox gender makeup, an aspect that has been largely overlooked in recent criticism. In fact, the reviewers' accusations of effeminacy may stem in part from a heightened cultural sensitivity to *The Princess's* own deep-seated anxieties about gender roles.

Structurally, for example, the pre-eminence of *The Princess's* attention to women's anti-social impulses is obvious. The title of the novel is our first clue that this is the case. It has gone largely unremarked how odd it is that James decided to name the book after the Princess Casamassima, formerly Christina Light of James's 1875 novel *Roderick Hudson*. In *Roderick Hudson*, she makes a brief, unnamed early appearance, and is not seen again until page 134. Similarly, the Princess does not make her first appearance in the novel that bears her name until page 190. Even in a novel as long as *The Princess*, this leaves the full first third of the book unblest by her presence. Moreover, after her first appearance the Princess is frequently absent from the action and the novel remains Hyacinth Robinson's story: the narration is told from Hyacinth's point of view and follows the action of his life. However, like other title figures that remain elusive far into the narrative (such as *Moby Dick*), the Princess is in many ways the absent center of the novel. A revolutionary and a would-be anarchist, she is the heart of the book's investigation of modern womanhood as a threat to the social order. While *The Princess* is a novel allegedly about socialism and socialist revolution, in actuality it is taken up with portrayals of female *anti-socialism*, a term I will use to describe the seemingly instinctual tendency that *The Princess's* female characters exhibit toward disrupting and/or destroying social order. The novel's title character, as I will argue, is James's most subtly worked out study of female transgression in a novel riddled with women criminals.

The novel's central concern with female criminality is clear from its first scene where Mrs. Bowerbank visits Amanda Pynsent ("Pinnie"), the guardian of

young Hyacinth. Mrs. Bowerbank, as we soon learn, is a warden (or “female turnkey” [PC1 56]) at the Millbank women’s prison, where Hyacinth’s mother, Florentine Vivier, is serving her sentence for the murder of his father, Lord Frederick.<sup>7</sup> The purpose of Mrs. Bowerbank’s visit is to ask Pinnie to let Florentine, now on her deathbed in the prison infirmary, see her son before she dies. The visit serves, however, to immediately provide readers with a summary of the murder on which Hyacinth’s identity turns: as Mrs. Bowerbank describes it, “nothing was proved except that she stabbed his lordship in the back with a very long knife, that he died of the blow, and that she got the full sentence” (57). The novel begins, therefore, with a murder that in many ways resembles a revolutionary political assassination. The murderer is lower class and French while the victim is an aristocrat, which already presents an overdetermined circumstance. Besides the obvious reference to the French Revolution of the 1790s, still very much in the cultural consciousness of 1880s England, France remained a hotbed of anarchism and revolutionary activity at the time *The Princess* was published,<sup>8</sup> and as we learn later in the novel, Florentine’s father (Hyacinth’s grandfather) was himself an ardent revolutionary back in the home country. Florentine’s method of killing Lord Frederick—stabbing him in the back—is likewise reminiscent of a premeditated, stealthy assassination rather than a crime of passion that would presumably occur in a face-to-face conflict. Nonetheless, this murder was not a political or revolutionary crime: it was a domestic crime, for Lord Frederick had been Florentine’s lover. We can read the murder, therefore, as an act of sexual terrorism: a domestic assassination magnified to a broader political scale through parallels with revolutionary activity. Angry at her upper-class lover’s refusal to acknowledge his illegitimate child, a common Victorian story, Florentine revolts against the gendered script of self-renunciatory shame and stabs him in the back with a long, phallic, knife; instead of killing her baby, like Hettie in George Eliot’s *Adam Bede*, she kills the young aristocrat.

Against the backdrop of Florentine’s emblematic crime, the beginning of the novel presents other images of criminalized women, and even harmless Pinnie begins to act the part of the criminal in the presence of Mrs. Bowerbank. Pinnie sees Mrs. Bowerbank as “an emissary of the law,” and during her visit Pinnie is “unable to rid herself of the impression that [. . .] somehow the arm of the law [. . .] was stretched out to touch her” (58–59). After the visit, she describes to her neighbor, Mr. Vetch, how she came to adopt Hyacinth and “defended herself as earnestly as if her inconsistency had been of a criminal cast” (71). Pinnie’s sense of internalized criminality, despite the fact that she seems to have led the most innocent life imaginable, haunts her until her dying day: her last words, “I couldn’t—couldn’t help it!” (372), constitute a final confession of a misconduct that no one suspects her of but herself.

While her rigorous internalization of her culture’s legal and criminal institutions may make Pinnie the perfect representation of the modern Foucauldian subject, in this novel her sense of her own criminality is also inseparable from her gender. Pinnie lives, as the novel shows, in a society where to be a woman leaves one open to constant suspicion, such that her fear of the “arm of the law” seems

less a paranoia than the internalization of a gendered panopticon. This point is reinforced in the depiction of her work as a dressmaker, quintessential women's work, which, as Scanlan has noted, is criminalized through a parallel with Florentine (also a dressmaker): "For [Hyacinth's] mother, the murderess with the knife, is substituted Pinnie, the seamstress with her needles and scissors" (390). Furthermore, Pinnie's fantasies of criminal culpability are soon literalized in a stay (however brief) at the women's prison, for Pinnie and Hyacinth do eventually make the trip to Millbank Prison to see Florentine, and the symbolic value of this women's institution looms large in the novel. The trip to the prison aggravates Pinnie's internal sense of perpetual wrongdoing, and she "had no confidence that once she passed through the door of the prison she should ever be restored to liberty and her customers" (78). In a way, this turns out to be true: Pinnie's guilt about exposing Hyacinth to the horror and sordidness of the truth about his criminal mother leads to a degeneration of her health and her business after the prison scene.

Strangely enough, however, the actual female criminals who inhabit the prison seem to be hardly women at all. They are described as "dreadful figures, scarcely female [. . .] of lumpish aspect" (82), as though their crimes had robbed them of their femininity. Florentine appears similarly unwomanly. Although Pinnie remembers Florentine Vivier as the lively woman that her name suggests, "pretty" and "her idea of personal [. . .] brilliancy," now "there was no beauty left in the hollow, bloodless mask that presented itself [. . .]. She looked unnatural [. . .] and terribly old [. . .]. Above all she seemed disfigured and ugly, cruelly misrepresented by her coarse cap and short, rough hair" (84). These descriptions tap into late-Victorian social scientists' theories of female deviancy. That James was attempting a social-scientific realism in the Millbank Prison scene is clear from a letter he wrote to Thomas Sergeant Perry in December 1884, where he mentions his visit to the real-life Millbank in preparation for writing the novel and boasts, "you see I am quite the Naturalist" (*HJL* 61). Rachel Bowlby has articulated the connection between naturalist and social-scientific methods, claiming that, "The period of naturalism (1880–1920, approximately) is contemporary with the rise of the social sciences, and there are significant parallels between the two practices [. . .] [including] their common project of showing the 'facts' of a society in a plain, unembellished form" (10). James's attempt at naturalism in this scene extends to a scientifically accurate, for his day, representation of criminal women. Degenerationists, criminal anthropologists, and other late-Victorian social scientists believed that anti-social behavior in women was consistent with a preponderance of masculine traits.

That *The Princess* presents the female prisoners as defeminized or unwomanly may seem to contradict the assertion that the novel is interested in exploring *femaleness* as an agent of corruptive, anti-social, even terrorist transgression; but the theories of Havelock Ellis and other criminal anthropologists suggest that criminal women's masculinity is symptomatic of a specifically female form of anti-socialism. Ellis, for example, writes in *The Criminal* that if "the criminal woman is compared to the normal woman, she is found to approach more closely to the normal man than the latter does, while the corresponding character (feminility) [*sic*] is not found so often in the criminal as in the normal man" (53).

Such an understanding of female deviance pervades James's novel. It is a remarkable feature of the book, for example, that many of the women seem larger-than-life and often are literally much larger than "normal," feminine women. Mrs. Bowerbank, to begin with, is described as a "big, square-faced, deep-voiced lady who took up, as it were, all that side of the room" (*PC* 61) and as "a high-shouldered, towering woman, [who] suggested squareness as well as a pervasion of the upper air, so that Amanda reflected that she must be very difficult to fit" (55). Pinnie, the dressmaker, is always attuned to norms of female body size and shape, and Mrs. Bowerbank is depicted as outside of these norms. Millicent Henning, who appears as the little girl next door in the novel's initial scene with Pinnie and Bowerbank and later emerges as a full-grown woman and one of Hyacinth's love interests, is also far beyond the normal female size. She has "large protrusive feet" (91), for example, and Pinnie, looking up at her, tells her "You're too tall for a woman" (92). Millicent responds, "Well, I enjoy beautiful 'ealth," and "she spoke with a certain artless pride in her bigness and her bloom, and as if, to show her development, she would have taken off her jacket or let you feel her upper arm" (92). Indeed, Millicent seems to get larger and larger as the book goes on. Near the end, when Hyacinth goes to see her "He heard an immense rustling on the staircase, accompanied by a creaking of that inexpensive structure [. . .] she instantly thrust her muff, a tight, fat, beribboned receptacle, at him, to be held while she adjusted her gloves to her large vulgar hands" (521).

Millicent's larger-than-life size is indicative of her significance in the novel; despite her seemingly unladylike heft, she is explicitly linked to a new, urban type of femininity that the novel is at particular pains to represent. The narrator claims, for example, "there was something about her indescribably fresh, successful and satisfying. She was, to her blunt, expanded fingertips, a daughter of London, of the crowded streets and hustling traffic of the great city; she had drawn her health and strength from its dingy courts and foggy thoroughfares" (92–93). James's contemporary critics were remarkably interested in Millicent, and she was discussed in almost every review of the novel. This interest, I would argue, emerges from the degree to which she represents a recognizable shift in late-Victorian, lower-class, urban womanhood. Many of the contemporary reviewers, indeed, noted Millicent's correspondence to a familiar new "type." The *Saturday Review*, for example, called her "a cockney *pur sang* [. . .] a capital study" (Review of *PC* 183), and the *Graphic* asserted "she is by far the finest creation that has ever come from [James's] pen" (Review of *PC* 184). The *Literary World* called her "the most real character in the book [. . .] a delightful type of the blooming cockney girl" ("*The Princess Casamassima*" 190); Annie Logan, writing for the *Nation*, claimed "the London shop-girl Millicent Henning—who, by the way, is typical—is perfect in her superabundant health and slang [. . .] and her hopeless, unconscious vulgarity" (193); and the *New York Times* referred to her as "the type of the London girl [. . .] her physical structure is of the opulent kind, and her bodice hardly restrains her bouncing charms" ("Slumming" 179).

If Millicent, in all her apleness, represents a new "type" of London femininity, Hyacinth represents her masculine counterpart, and yet, like her, he little fits the physical norms of his sex. The name "Hyacinth," to begin with, does



not exactly convince readers of their hero's adherence to an ethos of masculinity.<sup>9</sup> His physical description compounds the effect of his name: Hyacinth, we are told, "had never got his growth," and "his whole figure [was] almost childishly slight," but his "features were perfect" (*PC1* 104). He is feminized not only in that he is "exceedingly diminutive," but also in that "his features were smooth and pretty; his head was set upon a slim little neck [. . .] and he was altogether, in his innocent smallness, a refined and interesting figure" (62–63). He also takes a dandyish care in his dress: "the observant eye would have noted an idea in his dress (his appearance was plainly not a matter of indifference to himself)" (104). Despite the fact, however, that Millicent reads Hyacinth's daintiness as physical evidence of his aristocratic heritage (he "had a very delicate hand—the hand, as [Millicent] said to herself, of a gentleman" [104]), the narrator associates Hyacinth just as much with lower-class London as Millicent: "with his sharp young face, destitute of bloom, but not of sweetness, and a certain conscious cockneyism which pervaded him, he was as strikingly as Millicent, in her own degree, a product of the London streets and the London air" (104–05). "Hyacinth had roamed through the great city since he was an urchin," we are told, and he "liked the streets at all times" (106).

Despite their significant association with London, however, neither Millicent nor Hyacinth represent the degenerate "town type" that had been theorized by contemporary sociologists such as J. P. Williams Freeman, who claimed in *The Effect of Town Life on the General Health* that with each generation in London, families would become more and more corrupt, so that it was theoretically impossible for a fourth generation Londoner to exist (5). If they defy this sickly prognosis, it is still striking that the two characters explicitly identified with London so little fit the physical norms of their gender, as though London itself has an androgynizing effect on its residents. From early on, indeed, Millicent and Hyacinth cut a peculiarly ambiguously gendered pair. When they meet again after not seeing each other since they were children, Hyacinth, in an intriguing role reversal, "blushed all over" (*PC1* 101) and "blush[ed] again" (102) in the presence of the young lady, while Millicent has to remind herself to stay within the bounds of acceptable "womanly" conduct, reflecting that since "she had been fond of kissing him, in their early days [as children] she would have liked to say to him that she stood prepared to repeat this graceful attention. But she reminded herself, in time, that her line should be, religiously, the ladylike" (103). When Hyacinth takes her to a coffee shop, Millicent

partook profusely of tea and bread and butter, with a relish of raspberry jam, and thought the place most comfortable, though [Hyacinth] [. . .] was visited by doubts as to its respectability [. . .] [and] was too excited, too preoccupied, to eat; the situation made him restless and gave him palpitations; it seemed to be the beginning of something new. (107–08)

On their first "date," therefore, Hyacinth plays the role of the nervous female, anxious and unable to eat. Later in the novel, their relationship continues to be

marked by gender crossing—Hyacinth remembers “the shock he once administered to her by letting her know that he wore an apron” at work (531). And, though they are the same age, Hyacinth “felt, nevertheless, as if she were older, much older, than himself—she appeared to know so much about London and about life” (108).

In their relationship, therefore, Millicent plays the role of the older urban denizen, “in the know” about the city, and thus can be read as an allegory of the expansion of roles and opportunities that London offered women in the late-Victorian era. As Deborah Parsons has claimed, “By the late nineteenth century, women’s access to the metropolis was expanding, both in terms of leisure and employment. The new woman, the working girl, and the female shopper are all types of female presence associated with the city of modernity” (43). Millicent, indeed, is shamelessly comfortable in the city. She believes herself to be “perfectly acquainted with the resources of the metropolis” (*PC1* 91), and “trots about” (276) alone, even at night, on various errands. When Hyacinth “had said to her that the less a respectable young woman took the evening air alone the better for her respectability,” she “remarked that if he would make her a present of a brougham, or even call for her three or four times a week in a cab, she would doubtless preserve more of her social purity” (276). Millicent knows that “street-walking” at night opens her up to doubts about her “social purity,” yet she makes a convincing argument for rebelling against such strictures. As a working woman, she cannot do her errands during the day, yet her salary doesn’t allow the luxury of cabs in the evening. Here, James is engaging with a contested issue of his day; *The Princess* is contemporary with the 1887 case of Miss Cass, a milliner shop-girl arrested for “streetwalking,” as discussed by Walkowitz. Although the courts dismissed the charges, they “also noted that no respectable women would be found walking on Regent Street at 9:00 in the evening.” A public uproar ensued, defending the right of respectable “girls” to be out on the streets at night, which resulted in the police commission “prohibiting arrests of streetwalkers without a citizen complaint.” As Walkowitz notes, “The false arrest of Miss Cass for streetwalking [. . .] epitomized the charged and ambiguous nature of gender encounters in London’s West End, an urban center that was traditionally male territory, an eroticised zone of commercial sex, yet also a fashionable shopping area for ladies” (128–29).

Although the Cass case occurred one year after James published *The Princess*, it provides a telling illustration of the conflicting pressures a London shop-girl such as Millicent would have experienced. She lives in a culture suspended in an ideology of female domesticity, but which has seen the development of a market of service jobs for young, urban women—jobs that keep them away from the sanctified domestic realm. Millicent, in fact, seems to be rarely at home: as Pinnie notes, “the domestic circle had not even a shadow of sanctity for her” (*PC1* 96). Instead of retreating to the domestic bliss of the hearth after work and on Sundays, she enjoys all the public amusements of working-class London, a population that comes alive at night. Millicent has an air of “accomplished survival” and revels in “the wantonness of her full-blown freedom” (95). She works for one of the many new department stores that had proliferated in late-

nineteenth-century London's West End, modeling the store's pre-made clothing: "she put on all these articles to show them off to the customers, and on her person they appeared to such advantage that nothing she took up ever failed to go off" (96), and she brags about her success in this profession: "You should see me work off an old jacket!" (112).<sup>10</sup> Although her job associates her with a traditional conception of the city as a place where women's bodies are employed as spectacle for a male gaze and as commodities for sale, the novel also offers many detailed accounts of "her attachment [. . .] to any tolerable pretext for wandering through the streets of London and gazing into shop-windows" (95). This enthusiastic consumption positions Millicent in the relatively recent development of the city as a place where women are also free to be admirers of the urban spectacle; thus, she fulfills the double role of women in the late-nineteenth-century city, as discussed by Parsons:

The "spectacle" has been connected with the "feminine"; presumably due to the idea of women in the nineteenth-century city as displaying themselves as objects for an erotic gaze (as prostitutes, performers, debutantes) and "for sale." Yet, in the same period, the crowd that consumes the city spectacle has also been defined as feminine (the desiring shopper) and enticed to spend. (38)

Indeed, Millicent represents both ends of this female spectacle-consumption exchange in the city, as shop-girl and as shopper. Bowlby has described the new consumer culture of the late nineteenth century in terms of a parallel with male domination, arguing: "the making of willing consumers readily fit into the available ideological paradigm of a seduction of women by men, in which women would be addressed as yielding objects to the powerful male subject forming, and informing them of, their desires" (20). This reading, however, ignores the fact that many of the actual consumer encounters that occurred in the city's new shopping districts were between women, shop-girls and female shoppers. Millicent's customers, for example, are "most of them ladies" (*PC1* 585). Although a class differential was usually at work between women shoppers and shop-girls, James's novel suggests that there was some overlap between the two roles; Millicent, shop-girl by day, is herself an enthusiastic consumer at night.

Where does this woman-to-woman cycle of urban consumption leave the city's men? Hyacinth, as suggested by his diminutive appearance, is in fact slowly being edged out of London's consumer marketplace by Millicent and her ilk of modern, new, women-centered shops. He is employed as a bookbinder, and although he is a master of his trade and is constantly referred to as an "artist," as Scanlan shows us, "by 1885 bookbinding was itself an anachronism" (385), "a trade on the verge of becoming obsolete" (399). Rapid shifts in the publishing industry meant that most bookbinding, by this time, was done by machines. Thus, Hyacinth's livelihood, at the time of the novel, is set to be displaced by the culture of inexpensive, mass-produced commodities sold by shop-girls like Millicent in department stores like the Army and Navy Stores where she works.<sup>11</sup> Millicent's connection to a new, feminized marketplace of mass-produced consumer goods

is just one way that, in spite of all her attractions, she comes to represent the horror of a voracious female appetite figured as both threatening and monstrous in *The Princess*. Pinnie, for example, “regarded [Millicent] as a ravening wolf and her early playmate as an unspotted lamb” (PC1 95). At another point, the narrator tells us that Millicent’s “sociability was certainly great, and so were her vanity, her grossness, her presumption, her appetite for beer, for buns, for entertainment of every kind. She represented, for Hyacinth, [. . .] the eternal feminine” (159). Hyacinth understands “the eternal feminine” to be an eternal urge to consume, and Millicent’s constant references to her hunger and thirst throughout the novel support this association.

That Millicent’s insatiable urge to consume is also, somehow, an anarchic urge to destroy is clear from the novel’s constant references to her “primitive” and revolutionary instincts. Curiously, Millicent is not at all interested in the socialist revolution, yet Hyacinth sees her as embodying its spirit, which he links with a kind of primitivism. For example, Hyacinth refers to “her primitive, half-childish, half-plebeian impulse of destruction, the instinct of pulling down what was above her, the reckless energy that would, precisely, make her so effective in revolutionary scenes” (268), and he refers at several other places in the novel to “her primitive passions” (387), the “vague, primitive comfort” she affords (584), and so on. Here, James is again in keeping with the social-scientific orthodoxy of his day. Since the work of Spencer in the 1870s, Victorian anthropologists had theorized that “the repression of immediate impulsive response was the essential mechanism of evolutionary progress in both the intellectual and the moral sphere” (Stocking 227). The supposed lack of full civility or full evolution in certain groups (including women, children, criminals, and “primitives”) was accounted for by the belief that they were “governed more by impulse, deficient in foresight [. . .] [and] unable to subordinate instinctual need” (229). Hyacinth’s reference to Millicent’s anti-social “impulse” can thus be read as his belief in her latent, primitive instinctualism, in need of regulation by the more “civilized” men in her life.

That Hyacinth categorizes Millicent with the hordes of instinctual, nonrepressive masses is a testament to the degree to which he views himself, as a male, outside of this group, though he is in the same social class as Millicent. In contrast, Captain Sholto, an aristocratic acquaintance of Millicent and Hyacinth’s, classifies both of them within the scientific subclass of those lacking the capacity to repress: “pronounc[ing] them a dear delightful, abominable young couple; he declared it was most interesting to see how, in people of their sort, the passions lay near the surface” (PC1 279). Sholto’s understanding of the lower classes as instinctual is thus analogous, in its theory and intellectual grounding, with Hyacinth’s understanding of women such as Millicent. Indeed, Sholto seems to relish, lasciviously, the role of the late-Victorian “scientific” observer of the masses. Although upper-class and prone to calling socialists “abominable little conspirator[s] against society” (350), he believes himself to be “exempt from every prejudice” (352), in the classic scientific pose. Furthermore, his revolting observations about lower-class women are symptomatic of Victorian scientific “objectivism” when it comes to sexual science: “That was rather a nice little girl

in [the public house]; did you twig her figure? It's a pity they always have such beastly hands" (275), or "My dear fellow, I have seen many women, and the women of many countries, [. . .] and I have seen them intimately, and I know what I am talking about" (231), or, on Millicent, "Now *there* was another London type, plebeian but brilliant; and how little justice one usually did it, how magnificent it was! But she, of course, was a wonderful specimen" (231).<sup>12</sup> Here, Sholto is reminiscent of, for example, Francis Galton, whose "most rigorously quantitative physical anthropology was an attempt to obtain accurate measurements of the buttocks of a veritable 'Venus among Hottentots'" (Stocking 93–94), or Pearson, who performed field work among London's prostitutes and "was more compelled by the subject than he was willing to acknowledge" (Walkowitz 145) and who claimed that "of the middle classes [. . .] we are frequently told that the sex-instincts of man and woman are very unequal. A like inequality among the hand-working classes can hardly be asserted by any careful observer" (Pearson 239). This parallel again points to the extent to which *The Princess* is uniting the theme of revolutionary terrorism (often viewed as symptomatic of lower-class primitivism) with an exploration of gender-role upheaval.

The fact that Millicent is uninterested in militant socialism or socialist terrorism and yet becomes associated with its anarchic impulse can be accounted for by the extent to which the revolutionary threat she embodies is a specifically sexual threat. Rather than menacing society through Joan-of-Arc-like revolutionary militancy, Millicent figures as anti-social through the force of her sexuality. At the end of the novel, like Florentine before her, Millicent appears to be having an affair with an aristocrat—the dissolute Sholto. In our final image of her, she is static under Sholto's gaze, a striking departure from her everlasting walking and moving throughout the rest of the novel. Hyacinth goes to see her at the shop and is met with this image:

She was exhibiting [an] article to the Captain, and he was lost in contemplation [. . .] his eyes travelling up and down the front of Millicent's person, he frowned, considering, and rubbed his lower lip slowly with his walking-stick. Millicent stood admirably still, and the back-view of the garment she displayed was magnificent. (*PC1* 585)

Although this description appears to suggest that Sholto is in control of Millicent, freezing her in his gaze like a connoisseur Svengali, it is important to remember that throughout the novel, Millicent's goal has been to marry a wealthy man as a way of moving up in the world. In her fixation on marriage, she is consistent with the characterization of many literary shop-girls at this time. James's previous novel, *The Bostonians*, featured feminists who, as Showalter has described, "lament their lack of success with shop-girls, who are stubbornly romantic about their suitors and always 'cared far more about Charlie than about the ballot'" (28). We can view this as the shop-girls' ideological mystification, but, mindful of Monica in Gissing's *The Odd Women*, we can also view it as their understandable pursuit of an *immediate* escape from lives of drudgery (although marriage often turned out to offer only more drudgery). So, we might consider, who is in control

in this scene: Sholto or Millicent, the gazer or the “object” of the gaze? Though Sholto is unlikely to marry anyone, Millicent is equally unlikely to be taken advantage of by anyone. Although we do not know what happens between Millicent and Sholto after this, we have been prepared throughout the novel to consider her as extraordinarily adept at getting what she wants, whereas Sholto always looks a bit like the Princess’s fool, admitting “she’ll tell you I’m a tremendous ass, and so one is” (PC1 344). Their final scene invites us to see Millicent as transfixing Sholto in a revelation of sexual power—his response, rubbing his mouth with his walking stick, almost seems to infantilize him in her presence.

If this scene does suggest the anarchic potential in Millicent’s sexuality, capable of dismantling the class and gender strictures of her society through an unorthodox sexual pairing, it also suggests her sexual toxicity, for, after witnessing this suggestive scene, Hyacinth kills himself. Although Millicent and Hyacinth did seem to love each other, each aspired to a higher match than the other. It is not clear whether Hyacinth had irrevocably made up his mind to commit suicide before visiting Millicent. We do know that on his way to her shop, he is visited with fantasies of running away with Millicent: “a vision rose before him of a quick flight with her, for an undefined purpose, to an undefined spot [. . .] he might at last feel her arms around him” (PC1 584). Millicent seems unlikely to have agreed to such a proposal, but the sight that Hyacinth next encounters, Millicent posing for Sholto, can only have exacerbated his thanotic drive. Although in modeling for Sholto, Millicent is really just doing her job, Hyacinth figures the scene as a great betrayal, calling himself “the interloper” (585). This reinforces the novel’s thoughtful treatment of the conflicting role of the fin-de-siècle working woman: newly employed in the burgeoning consumer economy, yet still subject to expectations of womanly conduct that conflict with the expectations of the labor market.

That Hyacinth’s attraction to Millicent would end in his destruction is subtly apparent from the beginning of the novel. Even when Millicent was a child, living next door to Hyacinth and yet to develop into a buxom cockney woman, she is depicted as possessing a sexual taint. In the novel’s first reference to her, on the second page, she is “nursing a dingy doll” (PC1 54), and Hyacinth later remembers her as the “little girl who, in Lomax Place, years before, was always hugging a smutty doll” (107). This image, central enough to be repeated three times, foreshadows her future sexual potency, but also associates her with motherhood, which even at this early stage of the novel has become a trope for criminality because of the book’s early focus on Florentine. Soon after this early appearance of Millicent, little Hyacinth announces to Pinnie, “Millicent Henning dirtied my face when she kissed me” (62), associating the dirty girl with sexual contagion. Pinnie responds, “Millicent Henning is a very bad little girl; she’ll come to no good,” to which Hyacinth responds “I don’t think she is bad; I like her very much,” even though, we are told, Hyacinth generally

hated people who were not fresh, who had smutches [*sic*] and streaks.  
Millicent Henning generally had two or three, which she borrowed

from her doll, into whom she was always rubbing her nose and whose dinginess was contagious. It was quite inevitable she should have left her mark under his own nose when she claimed her [kiss]. (62)

From the first pages of the book, therefore, Millicent is tied to dirty kisses and contagious, corruptive sexuality. This early kiss is bookended with another kiss scene in the revised edition of the novel, published in 1909 (twenty-three years after the 1885–86 version that I discuss here). For the new edition, James changed the final meeting between Millicent and Hyacinth, their day spent together in the park shortly before Hyacinth's suicide. In the 1886 edition, they merely stroll on together at the end of the forty-first chapter, but in the 1909 version, another sentence was added:

Soon after which, the protection offered by the bole of a great tree being sufficiently convenient, he had, on a large look about them, passed his arm round her and drawn her closer and closer—so close that as they again paused together he felt her yield with a fine firmness, as it were, and with the full mass of her interest. (PC2 556)

Because this scene happens shortly before the scene with Sholto, Millicent's sexual betrayal of Hyacinth is all the more clear in the novel's second edition, and the significance of their early, childhood "dirty kiss" points more obviously toward Millicent's sexual toxicity and her role in Hyacinth's demise.

Millicent constitutes only half, however, of the women Hyacinth loves, and only half of the women by whom he is betrayed. If Millicent relinquishes Hyacinth in favor of a gentleman, the Princess relinquishes him for a man who is *less* gentlemanly. Pulled between the two sides of his dual nature, as a revolutionary like his mother and a gentleman like his father, Hyacinth can, ironically, meet neither woman's desires. Hyacinth's relationship with the Princess, however, is by far the more unconventional of the two, not only because she is far outside of his social class but also because she forsakes him for someone even more "common," Paul Muniment. Paul is a chemist described as "tall and fair and good-natured looking, but you couldn't tell [. . .] whether he were handsome or ugly, with his large head and square forehead, his thick, straight hair, his heavy mouth and rather vulgar nose, his admirably clear, bright eye, light-coloured and set very deep" (127–28). The Princess's attraction to Paul, despite his "rather vulgar nose," lies in his dedication to the revolutionary cause, the cause that Hyacinth has abandoned. The Princess desperately wants to "go deep" in the movement, but as a revolutionary who is female and upper class, she is not trusted by her male co-conspirators, including Paul, who tells her, "I don't trust women—I don't trust women!" (456).<sup>13</sup>

In fact, the Princess's attempts to make herself useful in the revolutionary underworld are rejected again and again. Her interest in becoming involved in the revolution led to her meeting Hyacinth in the first place; she calls him up to her box at the theater because "I wanted to know something, to learn something, to ascertain what really is going on; and for a woman everything of that sort is so

difficult" (*PC1* 197). Yet, despite all her attempts, the Princess is never really accepted into the revolution's inner ranks. After donating much of her fortune to the cause, Paul says to her, "I should let you know that I *do* consider that in giving your money—or, rather, your husband's—to our business you gave the most valuable thing you had to contribute," to which the Princess responds, "You don't count then any devotion, any intelligence, that I may have placed at your service [. . .]?" Again, Paul tells her, "You are not trusted at headquarters." Angry, she replies, "Not trusted! [. . .] I thought I could be hanged to-morrow!" In his typical callousness, Paul says: "They may let you hang, perfectly, without letting you act" (579).

The Princess's inability to gain acceptance in the inner world of the revolutionaries can be explained by the extent to which this world resembles a "boy's club," an organization that depends upon a patriarchal hierarchy of men, excluding women to maintain the homosocial dynamic of the male familial structure. Hyacinth's vow to the leader Hoffendahl, for example, as Esch points out, resembles a man-to-man marriage ceremony (323). The vow represents Hyacinth's final initiation into this male organization; he calls the ceremony "the most important event of his life," an expression often used in reference to one's marriage, and he describes the event using marriage-like terms: "I pledged myself, by everything that is sacred. [. . .] I took a vow—a tremendous, terrible vow—in the presence of four witnesses" (*PC1* 327). He later refers to "the very remarkable individual with whom I entered into that engagement," referencing Hoffendahl (329). This individual, Hyacinth says, "made me see, he made me feel, he made me do, everything he wanted" (330). When the Princess asks him what he vowed to do, Hyacinth says, "I gave my life away" (327); Hoffendahl, he says, "will require my poor little carcass" (329). The ceremony, therefore, marks Hyacinth's yielding of his body to another man, parodying the origin of the marital institution—the passing of the ownership of the woman's body from the father to the husband. During the ceremony, Hyacinth "sat on the bed" (331), and three men witnessed the vow, including Poupin, who long played the role of surrogate father in Hyacinth's life. Hyacinth compares the vow to the vows that "the Jesuit fathers [take] to the head of the order" (333), again emphasizing the patriarchal structure of the revolutionary organization. Inspired by Hyacinth's solemn vow, the Princess asks, "Don't they also want, by chance, an obliging young woman?" Hyacinth responds, "I happen to know [Hoffendahl] doesn't think much of women [. . .]. He doesn't trust them," to which the Princess responds, "That's a very difficult opinion to reconcile with others which it is important to have" (329).

Ironically, the Princess's interest in the revolution began as a way of escaping the same sort of patriarchal institutions on which the revolutionary brotherhood is modeled. For the source of the Princess's revolutionary fervor is not her "boredom" or "capriciousness," as her male allies suspect, but her deep reservoir of rage against the society in which "she had been married by her people, in a mercenary way, for the sake of a fortune and a title, and it had turned out as badly as her worst enemy could wish" (249). She has experienced, first hand, the nightmare of naturalized, economically determined institutions of oppression.



Speaking of her marriage to the Prince Casamassima, the Princess tells Hyacinth (as summarized by the narrator), “If he could have seen her life [. . .] the evolution of her opinions [. . .] would strike him as perfectly logical. She had been humiliated, outraged, tortured; she considered that she too was one of the numerous class who could be put on a tolerable footing only by a revolution” (250). It is clear from the context of the discussion that “numerous class” must reference her sex. In fact, the root of the Princess’s anger is that “in the darkest hour of her life she sold herself for a title and a fortune” (259); and from *Roderick Hudson*, we know that it was following her marriage that “Christina had launched her mysterious menace” against the world of the Prince (443). In other words, like Millicent, the Princess has prostituted herself; unlike Millicent, she has become aware of the objectification of such a position. Nevertheless, the novel suggests no way for a woman to move ahead outside of prostitutional relationships; those women who can’t sell themselves (such as Pinnie and Lady Aurora) merely fade away. Being objectified and prostituted gives the Princess common ground with socialist laborers, but it also criminalizes her. After living with a husband so jealous and suspicious that he “turned [her] out of his house by physical violence” (*PC1* 577), however, she is well aware that, as a woman, she is always-already a criminal anyway. Given these circumstances, no wonder the Princess turns to a life of “political crime” as the only way to change the conditions of her existence.<sup>14</sup>

The Princess thus becomes involved in the socialist revolution in part because she believes that it will improve the condition of women as well as the lower classes. She says to Paul, “Don’t you consider that the changes you look for will be also for [women’s] benefit? [. . .] If I didn’t hope for that, I wouldn’t do anything” (498). This was also the hope of late-Victorian British feminist socialists such as Eleanor Marx, who believed that a socialist state would provide women with “the same educational and vocational opportunities as men” (Showalter 47) and thus preferred the socialist movement to the bourgeois women’s movement of her day.<sup>15</sup> If the Princess believes socialism to be the answer to “the woman question,” however, it is clear that the male revolutionaries in *The Princess* are less interested in the amelioration of sexist oppression. Paul tells her, “I don’t think [the revolution] will alter your position”; even, he says, his sister Rosy “will continue to be, like all the most amiable women, just a kind of ornament to life” (*PC1* 498–99). Indeed, Paul does not even seem to believe sexist oppression exists. When the Princess comments to Paul, “It’s far better, of course, when one is a man,” he responds, “I don’t know. Women do pretty well what they like” (451). The Princess’s difficulty in drumming up interest in women’s oppression among male socialists is reminiscent of late-Victorian radical women’s experience in Pearson’s Men and Women’s Club, as described by Walkowitz. Pearson’s club included men and women in a frank discussion of sexuality, in order “to determine the natural capacities of women and their proper social role for the improvement of the race” (147). The women in the group, however, eventually became alienated by the men’s lack of concern with women’s oppression. Although Pearson identified as a Socialist and was sympathetic to women’s oppression, he, like the other male members of the group, still believed that the doctrine of women’s rights “was unscientific because it was based solely on

individual rights rather than on an appreciation of women's social duties" (148), and the club was marked by "a discourse of power, where men dominated and intimidated women" (136).

Frustrated by the male revolutionaries' lack of trust in her, the Princess attempts to make her own homosocial, familial revolutionary alliance with another woman. When she meets Lady Aurora Langrish, another upper-class woman who is interested in leveling the social system, the two women immediately connect. Lady Aurora tells Hyacinth, "If I were a man, I should be in love with her," and she "wonder[s] whether we might work together" (PC1 429), while the Princess "laid her white hand on Lady Aurora's, gazing at her with an interest which was evidently deeply sincere" (431), and says, "dear lady, we must make a little family together" (433). Lady Aurora responds to her advances, "indulging in the free gesture of laying her hand upon that of the Princess" (435). Soon, the Princess "was always inhaling Lady Aurora's fragrance, always kissing her and holding her hand" (483), and "before the winter was over Hyacinth's services in the slums were found unnecessary" (477). Both of the women have, previous to this, been figured as sexual threats to their society because of their unwillingness to fulfill the "normal" sexual relations expected of them. The Princess is separated from her husband, and Lady Aurora is something of a sexual exile who has "got out of it" (221), as she refers to her aristocratic obligations. Worn out by a life as one of seven unmarried daughters, none of whom are handsome and whose father has a title but no wealth, Lady Aurora has dropped out of her set. She tells Hyacinth, "I do as I like, though it has been rather a struggle. I have my liberty, and that is the greatest blessing in life, except the reputation of being queer, and even a little mad, which is a greater advantage still." Hyacinth admires her and believes she "was not a person to spare, wherever she could prick them, the institutions among which she had been brought up and against which she had violently reacted. [. . .] she appeared to have been driven to her present excesses by [. . .] the conservative influences of that upper-class British home" (222).

Lady Aurora's "excesses" include being in love with Paul, so she shares the Princess's fascination for working-class men. The Princess has developed the reputation of being, as Millicent puts it, "a bedizened jade" whose "own husband has had to turn her out of the house" (204), and Paul believes she is "a monster" (227) who reels in unsuspecting, lower-class men such as Hyacinth and "swallows 'em down" (226). The Princess is also continually referred to as "perverted" in light of her interest in working-class men. According to Madame Grandoni, "her opinions are perversity itself" (349); Hyacinth considers his relationship with the Princess "an unnatural alliance" and his stay with her at her country home "a perversity" (356); and when Vetch goes to see her, "it came over him that she was incongruous and perverse, a more complicated form of the feminine character than any he had hitherto dealt with" (465). For a while, the alliance between these two "perverse" women seems to be a success. They go into the slums to do work together, and "the two ladies had liked each other more, almost, than they liked any one" (438). Not surprisingly, their relationship is threatening to Hyacinth, who reflected that they, "were evidently on the point of striking up a tremendous

intimacy, and as he turned this idea over, walking away, it made him sad, for strange, vague reasons, which he could not have expressed" (435). Hyacinth's inexpressible emotions obviously stem from jealousy, and in part from sexual jealousy. However, he may also be anxious about the formation of a woman-to-woman revolutionary group that could render him worthless, like the feminized mass culture in the city (marked by the female shopper/shop-girl exchange) making bookbinding obsolete.

Hyacinth's fears, however, prove to be groundless, as the alliance between the Princess and Lady Aurora does not last. As Paul's relationship with the Princess develops, the union between the two women fades. When Hyacinth goes to see Lady Aurora near the end of the novel, each recognizes that "the Princess had [. . .] combined with [Paul] in that manner which made [Hyacinth's] heart sink and produced an effect exactly corresponding upon that of Lady Aurora" (540). She begins to talk of trying "to cultivate the pleasures of her class" as a means of alleviating her depression and says, "I dare say I shall begin to go to balls—who knows?" (540). Hyacinth, however, doesn't believe this will help her: "there passed before his imagination a picture of the poor lady coming home and pulling off her feathers for ever, after an evening spent in watching the agitation of a ball-room from the outer edge of the circle, with a white, irresponsive face" (541). Lady Aurora's anti-social impulses are thus extinguished by her unrequited love for Paul, and in this way she is reinstated into norms of feminine behavior. The last words she utters in the novel are, "Oh, I don't mind dying" (541).

Although the Princess's attempt at establishing a female familial revolutionary association structured according to homosocial bonds like that of the male revolutionaries fails, and Lady Aurora withdraws from the cause, the Princess's threatening, anarchic sexual transactions are merely redirected to another location. Although her innate "perversity" is no longer manifested in a relationship with Lady Aurora, the Princess's relationship with Paul becomes the new site for her "monst[rous]" desires (227). Paul, of course, is far below the Princess in social rank, but their relationship is marked by a deployment of power on Paul's part, enjoyed by the Princess in a way that can only be understood as masochistic. When Paul speaks rudely to her, she "blushed on hearing [the] words, but not with shame or with pain; rather with the happy excitement of being spoken to in a manner so fresh and original." She realizes that "this very different type of man appeared to have his thoughts fixed on anything but sweetness; she felt the liveliest hope that he would move further and further away from it" (450). When Paul admits to her "I have always had a fear of women," she replies, "But you are the sort of man who ought to know how to use them" (453). Paul's own seemingly latent sadistic impulses are encouraged by this. He tells her, soon afterwards, "If I was your husband I would come and take you away" (499), as though he would force her to submit to him. The Princess in effect trains Paul to deploy power against his "betters," as a means, it seems, of gratifying her own masochistic desires.

Throughout the novel the Princess's desires are to some degree masochistic; as Christina Light, her desires were similarly configured. For example, in *Roderick Hudson*, she tells Roderick that the kind of man she wants is a "conqueror,"

which he is not: “I want someone so much better than myself! Your voice [. . .] condemns you [. . .] it’s not the voice of a conqueror” (234); and she claims that she would say to a man who “wished to do her a favour,” “I beg of you with tears in my eyes to interest me. *Be a brute, if necessary, to do it*; only be something positive and strong—something that in looking at I can forget my detestable self” (187–88, emphasis mine). The self-loathing and masochism in these lines becomes realized in *The Princess*, where she can finally exclaim to her lover Paul, “you are such a brute!” (PC1 579). The Princess’s masochism has the effect of sexualizing her political efforts in support of the revolution, making her potential acts of terrorism, and those acts she supports, a source of sexual pleasure. For example, her masochistic impulses are represented as extending into other areas of her life via supposedly political actions. When the Princess gives up her large country house to move to a “mean and meagre and fourth-rate” section of London, Hyacinth believes she “had wished to mortify the flesh” (417). Her new eating habits, devoid of the luxury of her past existence, are similarly referred to as “mortifications” (422). These allusions suggest that not only is the Princess, like Millicent, representative of the primal, destructive force of femininity, but she achieves sexual pleasure in such anti-social destruction. This has the effect of pathologizing the Princess’s revolutionary impulses, thereby dulling the political impact of her pleas for class equality as well as women’s rights.

Sexual masochism at the hands of a “brut[ish]” male is a dubious way to represent anxiety about female power. Yet James’s subtly worked-out portrait of the Princess produces an odd textual effect, wherein her “mortifications” seem another way for her to promote her interest in destroying society. The Princess’s masochism, on the one hand, re-normalizes her into conventional, submissive femininity; on the other, her “brut[ish]” lover is a chemist from Lancashire with a “vulgar nose,” an alcoholic father, and a laundress mother, which makes a significant difference given that she is still the wife of a Prince and that an heir to the Prince’s title has not yet been born. The Princess’s relationship with Paul is an assault on social hierarchies she is bent on annihilating, an attack especially perverse in its subtlety. Her pleasure in being submissive to those “below” her threatens the foundations of power in her society. Still, the degree to which the Princess gives up her own power to do this is troubling for feminist readers. Although the women’s movement in Britain benefited from the organization of labor and the democratization of the political system at the turn of the century, the relationship between the Princess and Paul is a reminder that ideologies of sexism and classism are not wholly mutually constitutive phenomena.

In the Princess’s masochistic relationship with Paul, Millicent’s relationship with Sholto, and Lady Aurora’s retreat to her upper-class home, the last chapters of the novel move toward a containment, however awkward or problematic, of the anarchic and disruptive drive of its female characters. Yet even here the containment is ambiguous, as it is coupled with the suicide of the novel’s central *male* character, while the future of the women characters is left open. James’s novel resists an easy re-normalizing of gender roles, while expressing a deep discomfort with the real power that women were beginning to assert in the public sphere of the late-Victorian era.

In response to such shifts in women's social roles, Pearson asserts in his essay "Woman and Labour" that men of science should attempt "to direct, for we cannot possibly check, the revolutionary forces at work that they shall tend to the greater rather than the less stability of the body social" (243). This attempt at "direction" can be linked to Pearson's interest in eugenics: a science that allowed men to regain control over women's muddled deployment of their sexual and reproductive powers. James's novel is a literary counterpart to such efforts. In his preface to *The Princess*, for example, James offers a description of how he came to write the novel. "This fiction," he claims, "proceeded directly, during the first year of a long residence in London, from the habit and the interest of walking the streets [. . .] and as to do this was to receive many impressions, so the impressions worked and sought an issue, so the book after a time was born" (33). This birth metaphor—James passively "received" impressions of the city, the impressions "worked" inside of him, and "sought an issue," until the book was born, genetically constituted of a union between James's mind and the city—puts James in the role of a woman and a mother. Yet it also, like Victor Frankenstein in Mary Shelley's earlier novel, proposes a model of reproduction and birth that entirely excludes women, analogous to Pearson's vision of eugenic, scientific sexuality. *The Princess*, in its anxiety about women's new social roles and its depiction of the anarchic potential of female sexuality, seems a literary attempt to expose and represent, if not direct, the revolutionary forces at work within late-Victorian British women.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup>In consistently dividing "women" and "labour" in his essay, Pearson neatly ignores the many British women who fit into both groups, an elision that speaks strongly to my argument in this article.

<sup>2</sup>DeVine has recently argued that James's treatment of revolutionary politics in *The Princess*, which many critics have charged with vagueness or inaccuracy, is less a failing of the novel than a parodic indictment of the biased reportage such events received in the London press. Her argument challenges a critical tendency to read James as out of his depth when discussing revolutionary politics.

<sup>3</sup>Parsons and Ledger both make intriguing reference to the novel's treatment of the character Millicent Henning, but neither offers a sustained analysis. Sypher discusses gender in *The Princess* in a 1988 article ("Anarchism and Gender"), revised as a chapter in her 1993 book *Wisps of Violence*. Our readings of the novel, however, focus on quite different aspects—Sypher is primarily concerned with the narrator and the extent to which the narrator and Hyacinth reflect James's own views about anarchism, while I am predominantly interested in the novel's female characters. Gender is also central to Graham's analysis of the novel, and her treatment is in many ways analogous to mine, particularly her understanding of "the novel's anarchist melodrama as a screen for the underlying theme of sexual subversion" (193). I believe, however, that she overstates her case in reading the novel as an allegory strictly of male homosexual sexual deviance. In part, she does this by ignoring the female characters and the wrench that their relationships with Hyacinth throw into a reading of him as homosexual.

<sup>4</sup>Whether James's characters are anarchists, nihilists, or militant socialists has remained something of a mystery, as he uses the terms interchangeably. Tilley has shown in some detail that James received almost all of his information about these various groups from the London *Times* and has located one-to-one correspondences between articles in the *Times* and many of the characters and events in *The Princess*. The *Times*, however, as Tilley shows, had its own trouble keeping the groups straight; their general policy seems to have been "anyone who threw a bomb or stabbed an official was an 'Anarchist,' unless he was Russian, when he was nearly always a 'Nihilist.'" But the background of his acts—his motives, his beliefs, the nature of the organization to which he belonged—went unexplained" (23). That James's characters don't have a clearly defined revolution-

ary philosophy reinforces my argument that terrorism and anarchism here function largely as tropes or vehicles for other sorts of anxieties.

<sup>5</sup>For an elaboration on this topic, see, for example, Arata, Hurley, Showalter, or Walkowitz.

<sup>6</sup>See Showalter or Tuchman for more detailed accounts of this phenomenon.

<sup>7</sup>Most of the novel's critics, from James's contemporaries on, take for granted that Lord Frederick was Hyacinth's father (e.g., Graham; Hutton; "*The Princess Casamassima*"; McGurl; Scanlan; "Slumming"; Sypher; Tingle), even though Lord Frederick's family denied it. I would also like to take Hyacinth's mother's word about the father of her child, for to do otherwise risks falling into the novel's systematic imagining of women as untrustworthy and criminal. The novel itself, however, does *not* take Hyacinth's aristocratic parentage as a given: Hyacinth and Pinnie both make an active decision to believe that Lord Frederick was his father, as a careful reading makes clear (see, for example, *PCI* 167–68). Furthermore, the book is full of illegitimate children and unfaithful or illegal marriages, which has the effect of casting every character's origins into doubt. Readers of *Roderick Hudson* know that the Princess is illegitimate, though it is not brought up in this novel. Millicent Henning's paternity is questionable, given her mother's liaisons: "The freedom and frequency of Mrs. Henning's relations with a stove-polisher [. . .] were at least not a secret to a person who lived next door [Pinnie]" (94). Poupin's "wife was somehow not his wife" (474), and so on.

<sup>8</sup>James's travel memoir *A Little Tour of France*, published in 1884 (right before *The Princess*), includes some description of the pervasive revolutionary activity in France, which James disapprovingly refers to as "the red radicalism of France, the revolutions, the barricades, the sinister theories" (168).

<sup>9</sup>Graham also discusses Hyacinth's effeminacy and notes: "James's choice of the name Hyacinth for the sexually ambiguous hero [. . .] aligns him with the decadent writers who used this name to blur the gender boundaries between heroines and heroes" (27).

<sup>10</sup>Judging by the address, Brewer identifies her place of employment as the Army and Navy Stores, which opened in 1871 (*PCI* 595 n. 34).

<sup>11</sup>Meissner has read the declining nature of Hyacinth's profession as James's "attack" on "the Pre-Raphaelite school of William Morris which had [. . .] succeeded in elevating craft work such as bookbinding to a respected high art form" (58). I would argue, however, that instead of attacking Morris's campaign against mass-produced goods, James's novel is merely showing (correctly) its ultimate helplessness in the face of the coming tide of consumerism and mass culture. Meissner's reading of this aspect of the novel is symptomatic of his understanding of Hyacinth as having a "misguided sense of art" (59) and of being a "poor reader" (61), on the basis of his early attachment to cheap periodical romances. I believe, in contrast, that Hyacinth is not so much a "poor reader" in the sense of having an ill-equipped critical apparatus, as a "poor reader" in the sense of being unable to afford literature that costs more than cheap periodical romances.

<sup>12</sup>Graham reads Sholto as an upper-class, homosexual "cruiser," hoping to "commit a peccadillo in the company of virile working men" (193), but she ignores the fact that Sholto's interest in the working-class male revolutionaries is motivated by his attempt to get in the Princess's good graces. Cut off from such groups herself because of her sex, the Princess sends Sholto out to get information on the cause (see, for example, *PCI* 197). Sholto drops his ties with the revolutionaries entirely once the Princess drops him, and, in light of his predatory attitude toward sexual relations with lower-class women, seems to act heterosexually, if misogynistically.

<sup>13</sup>In the 1909 edition, this is changed to the even more telling, "I don't trust women—I don't trust clever women!" (*PC2* 470).

<sup>14</sup>Graham maintains that without the background knowledge of "the Princess's illegitimacy, of which only readers of *Roderick Hudson* would have any inkling [. . .] the Princess, a female firebrand, appears insufficiently goaded in her rage against the status quo" (201). But I would argue, in contrast, that *The Princess* makes the case that her rage is rooted in the conditions of existence for her sex, surely an adequate explanation.

<sup>15</sup>Sypher has noted,

By the 1880s socialists were violently split in their view of "the woman question." On the one hand the leadership of the SDF and some other non-Marxist socialists argued for postponing "the woman question" as a secondary concern, or even for leaving the family just as it was. On the other hand, a number of socialists, among them Friedrich Engels and Eleanor Marx, argued both for elaborating the connection between the oppression of women in the family and the exploitation of workers and for actively supporting women's emancipation. (*Wisps* 3)

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