From Republican Motherhood to Race Suicide: Arguments on the Higher Education of Women in the United States, 1820–1920

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Why is it, that, whenever anything is done for women in the way of education it is called "an experiment,"—something that is to be long considered, stoutly opposed, grudgingly yielded, and dubiously watched,—while, if the same thing is done for men, its desireableness is assumed as a matter of course, and the thing is done? Thus, when Harvard College was founded, it was not regarded as an experiment, but as an institution. . . . Every subsequent step in the expanding of educational opportunities for young men has gone in the same way. But, when there seems a chance of extending . . . the same collegiate advances to women, I observe that . . . the measure [is spoken of] as an "experiment."

Thomas Wentworth Higginson

Scholars studying American social and intellectual history are just beginning to address the question of why women's higher education has perennially been conceptualized as a revolutionary experiment, as the social critic and reformer Thomas Wentworth Higginson observed in 1881.[1] Before the last decade, American educational history was peripheral to the study of American history. Moreover, educational history was dominated by booster portraits of elite male institutions, usually seen through the eyes of their presidents. The exceptions to the male bias of educational history, Thomas Woody's two-volume *A History of Women's Education in the United States*, written in the late 1920s, and Mabel Newcomer's *A Century of Higher Education for American Women*, issued in the 1950s, stood alone for many years, although they too demonstrated the conceptual difficulty of studying American women's higher education.[2]

A progressive historian, Woody was interested in "out-groups," in this case women, and chronicled their struggle to gain access to institutions of education created mainly for men. For Woody, access meant success and progress; women, by virtue of being admitted to a formerly male educational bastion, would ultimately achieve intellectual, social, and even political liberation.

Newcomer, a professor of economics at Vassar College, sustained this liberal outlook. Focusing on the women's colleges, she cited their propensity for innovation and noted the high proportion of notable women achievers they produced. For Newcomer, as for Woody, women's entry into higher education was a significant positive marker.

The social and political events of the 1960s, the concomitant rise of a new social history, and the emergence of many more educated, articulate women interested in the status of women gave birth to a revisionist school of women's higher educational history. Aggrieved by the documented discrimination against educated women and angered by the meager victories of even the most educated women in the professions, these social and intellectual historians saw the history of women's education darkly. They began to question the equation of access with progress, arguing that coeducation and even the separate women's colleges reinforced patterns of women's subordination in academe.[3]

At the same time, a vocal chorus of disaffected graduates of the Seven Sisters also lambasted women's education. They wrote popular books like *Peculiar Institutions* and *I'm Radcliffe! Fly Me! The Seven Sisters and the Failure of Women's Education*, books whose titles testify to their authors' disgruntlement.[4]

Beginning in the 1970s, post-revisionist scholars have struggled to shed both booster arguments and dark diatribes. Their concern with women's experiences as students and faculty and their analysis of the development of women's culture within coeducational and single-sex colleges display a new appreciation for the complexity of their subject.[5] To these approaches historians must add another: a focus on arguments for and against women's higher education. Only then can we better understand the interaction between the historical context and real changes in the lives of educated women. Such an examination of the ongoing discussion and its social and intellectual setting will make clear the need to reevaluate the periodization of the history of American women's education in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Moreover, exploration of this realm reveals that in the complex history of women's education there is a central paradox: that success, overwhelming success, triggered as many problems (within the movement and without) as would have total failure.

In what follows I will briefly discuss the arguments covering women's higher education in three significant periods:

1. The Romantic period (1820–1860) or, to use Linda Kerber's term, the era of "Republican Motherhood."
2. The Reform era (1860–1890), which saw the opening of the women's colleges and a vigorous debate about women's higher education. In this period I find the rise of Respectable Spinsterhood.
3. The Progressive era (1890–1920), in which the first generation of college women began entering the professions, triggering a conservative reaction that I term the "Race Suicide Syndrome."

The Romantic Period: 1820–1860

Historians have documented that Puritan culture was suspicious of women; it classified women as evil. Woman's intellect was also considered inferior to man's, and extensive learning for women was deemed inexpedient and dangerous. In a religiously oriented society, higher education meant the production of ministers; thus males could immediately attend Harvard and Yale with a view toward assuming ministerial roles. Women, locked in a private sphere, were barred from all formal education.[6]

By the 1820s a major shift had occurred in women's roles in American culture. Post-revolutionary American society was permeated with an optimism about individuals derived from two sources: liberal enlightenment thinking and romanticism. Rather than stressing women's evil nature, the new ideology elevated and idealized women's capacity to be pure, moral, and sentimental. What impact did this new cultural definition of women have on women's education? In "The Cult of True Womanhood" and other essays, the historian Barbara Welter argues that the romantic image of woman was anti-intellectual. A woman was supposed to be passive, to indulge in domesticity, and to lead a circumscribed intellectual life. Innocence and emotionalism reigned to the detriment of intellect. The virtuous female was thought to be threatened by too much education.[7]

However, it is clear that this same romantic image could work on women's behalf. Romanticism put an emphasis on perfectionism. Educational reformers began to pit romantic images of women against the frivolous "ornamental" woman who lacked education and was nothing other than a dilettante.

In *Women of the Republic,* Linda Kerber notes that the new republic, anxiously seeking to produce a virtuous citizenry, assigned women roles as influential caretakers. Although women were not expected to participate in the public domain, they were given access to education and drawn, if only indirectly, into the new republican experiment by their responsibility to educate their sons. In this period, seminaries like Emma Willard's Troy and Mary Lyon's Mount Holyoke opened; the historian Anne Firor Scott finds that Willard's Troy was a seedbed of feminism rather than a citadel of domesticity.[8]

The new romanticism operated on women's behalf in other ways. Romantic ideology, a phenomenon discussed by Susan Conrad in *Perish the Thought,* equated genius with such qualities as intuition, emotional empathy, and insight, qualities preeminently associated with women. By laying claim to special emotional and moral traits, women could cultivate intellectual roles as teachers, translators, and social reformers.[9] Concomitant with these cultural changes, economic factors were also operating to provide a rationale for women's education. By the 1820s, America was becoming increasingly industrialized, and factory work was beginning to replace family production. In New England, at least, young women were not needed as much as before to tend farms; neither were they expected to busy themselves in home crafts or to devote themselves to domestic chores. As men moved into the urban economy or ventured West, they delayed marriage. Sensing these changes, families in the 1840s seem to have engaged in what David Alimendinger calls a "life-planning" strategy which promoted the education of daughters. A seminary education would allow women to teach, add to the family income, and support themselves until they entered marriage.[10] The common-school movement, with its demand for a cheap labor pool, dovetailed nicely with other social and economic changes that encouraged, indeed forced, women to become educated for teaching roles in the public sphere.[11]

The Era of Reform: 1860–1890

Thus far historians studying women's history in general and educational history in particular have concentrated their attention on the pre-Civil War era. Our understanding of the links between the Civil War and the growing demand for women's higher education are thus minimal. In general we know that war causes disruption in social values and also allows some crossover in sex roles. Moreover, in wartime women often are allowed access to careers because their skills are in demand. During the Civil War, for example, women figured more prominently in public activities such as nursing. We also know that contemporaries believed that a superfluity of single women existed in New England as a result of the war. Addressing Mount Holyoke graduates in 1873, William Tyler claimed that there were 30,000 more young women than men in the region; he thus welcomed the opening of colleges for women. Vassar's president, John Raymond, spoke in 1870 on the "Demand of the Age for the Liberal Education of Women and How It Should Be Met." He declared that "statistics in our time place it beyond a peradventure that multitudes of women must remain unmarried." Moreover, Raymond sounded a new cultural note. He coupled the statistical reality with the conclusion that it would be an "insult to woman" if she had to sit and wait for a man. As he noted, "Under certain circumstances it is good *not* to marry." According to Raymond, it was one of woman's unquestionable rights to serve her country. Hence women, no less than men, should be provided with the kind of education that promoted independent activity and prepared them for work. The Vassar curriculum with its innovations in science training reflected his concern that women be capable of taking their place in an increasingly professionalized society. While Raymond often envisioned women as helpmates in science, rather than as leaders, he still broke with a tradition in stressing that single women had a right to their autonomy and to education.[12] By the 1870s, then, "respectable spinsterhood," not "republican motherhood," was seen as the raison d'être of women's higher education.[13]

Beyond a demographic shift, what had caused such a tremendous transition in arguments for women's higher education? Historians have not pursued this question sufficiently. In 1870, John Raymond astutely connected the movement for women's higher education with the pre-Civil War women's rights movement. He admitted that a vanguard had awakened the public's attention to women's quest for autonomy. While he personally found some of the women's rights leaders to be "vixens and viragos," he noted that "extremists always precede and herald a true reform." Those who followed in the wake of the original agitation might "gather whatever fruit it may have shaken from the tree of truth."[14] To what extent was the opening of women's colleges an attempt to forestall more radical social change? To what extent was this movement part of a larger social reform history? These questions have yet to be sufficiently explored.

In 1868, John M. Greene, in encouraging Sophia Smith to endow a women's college in Massachusetts, stated: "The subject of women's education, woman's rights and privileges, is to be the great step in the progress of our state."[15] In the late nineteenth century, the desire for women's higher education took on the quality of a millennial-like reform movement, not unlike other communitarian reforms that dotted the American landscape in the pre-Civil War era.[16] Conventionally, most social historians conclude that the post-Civil War era was a kind of dark ages, bereft of social reform or behavior. Ronald Walters, for example, concludes that the reform impulse had entirely spent itself by the 1870s. Moreover, to many the Gilded Age has been, in the words of Geoffrey Blodgett, "a vast gray zone of American history, monotonous and inconclusive, an era of evasion, avoidance and postponement, . . . one sterile of purposes."[17]

This standard interpretation is based on a tainted vision of politics in the post-Civil War era and on a paucity of studies in cultural and social history. Women's history and social history are just beginning to challenge this stereotype. The movement for women's higher education must be seen as an extension of the romantic and evangelical reform tradition. It was also an effort to achieve women's equality. Hence, those historians who have focused narrowly upon the history of the organized suffrage movement and view the 1870s and 1880s as the doldrums also miss the import of the social movement for women's higher education.[18]

Indeed, by the 1870s the debate about women's educability had become, at least in middle-class American society, what the abolitionist debate was before it and the suffrage debate after it—a large-scale movement, amorphous, with different intellectual strands, involving the energies of many middle-class women and men. Vassar president John Raymond alluded to this movement when asserting that "the whole world is astir with a sense of the coming change."[19]

Like those other organized movements, the movement for women's higher education had its "antis," in particular a set of doctors and educators who continuously unleashed fears about the deleterious effects on women's biological and social roles. The ideology of the anti-movement, like the ideology of the movement for women's higher education, deserves serious attention, which it has not received from scholars as yet. Most historians cite as the chief malefactor Dr. Edward Clarke of Harvard University, who in 1873 published *Sex in Education: A Fair Chance for the Girls,* in which he argued that higher education would damage women's health and ultimately inhibit their reproductive capacity. Clarke's book caused quite a stir; within a year it went through twelve printings.[20]

Clarke's book and the ensuing controversy are commonly cited by historians of higher education as illustrative of the negative climate surrounding the founding of the women's colleges in the 1870s and 1880s. Historians suggest that as a result, many of these women's institutions became defensive; they compromised their lofty educational ideals and succumbed to genteel domesticity, health regimes, and upholding rather than revolutionizing the cultural norms of "true womanhood."[21] This is, I think, misleading. Clarke's book stimulated a debate which if anything only heightened the revolutionary quality of the struggle for women's higher education. M. Carey Thomas recalled that as a young girl she was "haunted by the clanging chains of that gloomy little specter, Dr. Edward Clarke's *Sex in Education.*" Alarmed by his rhetoric, the adolescent Thomas encouraged her mother to read his book and was relieved to learn from her that broken-down invalids like those described by Clarke did not really exist. That her mother scorned Clarke's dire predictions and encouraged Thomas in her quest for collegiate training demonstrates important

information about women's ambitions in the late nineteenth century and the intergenerational context of women's higher education, and introduces the historical questions of family strategies—the relationship between family culture and women's higher education.[22]

It also made the first generation of women students extraordinarily conscious of their pivotal role in proving to the world that women were men's intellectual equals. As one alumna of Wellesley's class of 1879 recalled: "We were pioneers in the adventure—voyagers in the crusade for the higher education of women—that perilous experiment of the 1870s which all the world was breathlessly watching and which the prophets were declaring to be so inevitably fatal to the American girls."[23] Here we return to Higginson's theme of "experiment," for the first generation of college women confronted the experimental, revolutionary, and adventuresome quality of women's higher education. While Higginson noted its negative implications—that women always had to prove themselves to a suspicious male world—there is of course another aspect to experiment: that daring, bravado, and adventure, that sense of being a pioneer and of course that desire to uphold extraordinarily high norms. Subsequent generations of women lost that excitement, and the nature of women's higher education changed. Clarke's dire predictions did not dampen the women's college movement. Wellesley and Smith opened in 1875, and others followed soon after.

The Progressive Era and the Backlash—The "Race Suicide Syndrome": 1890–1920

Most historians view the Progressive era as a period of advance when college women entered the professions of medicine, law, social work, and academe. But it was also a period of reaction. This reaction took different forms and emanated from a variety of groups. In 1908, boasting of the remarkable success of women's higher education, Bryn Mawr's president, M. Carey Thomas, took note of the changing public perception of college women: "Our highest hopes are all coming gloriously true. It is like reading a page of Grimm's fairy tales. The fearsome toads of those early prophecies are turning into pearls of radiance before our very eyes. Now women who have been to college are as plentiful as blackberries on summer hedges."[24] Whereas her generation had been ignominiously labeled fearsome toads, the new college woman was rapidly becoming a prized pearl. The pioneer band of college women had been so successful in weathering the dangerous experiment that in the twentieth century college attendance for women was not a sacerdotal or strange experience, but a socially sanctioned endeavor. Vassar professor Elizabeth Hazelton Haight commented on this success in 1917, stressing that unlike the "stern pioneer" many women now "wear their learning lightly like a flower."[25]

But herein lay a paradox and a dilemma. Soon the staunch pioneers, especially the first generation of academic women at the women's colleges, would be as troubled by their amazing success as they might have been over their failure. As early as 1900 many of them viewed the rising tide of more socially acceptable college girls as a grim fairy tale indeed—one that spelled death to the dedication they deemed requisite for the intellectual life and the spread of a disease they termed dilettantism.

If women faculty winced at the price of success within the internal college climate, they would soon find themselves confronted by an even thornier set of problems stemming from the growing popularity of college life. In the words of Mary Cheyney, secretary of the Western Association of Collegiate Alumnae, the "very success of the movement, which amounts to a great revolution affecting one-half the human race, has roused men to resist its progress."[26] Not so surprisingly, the 1900s saw a backlash against the women's colleges. Many male educators and doctors viewed the lengthening lines of candidates in the secondary schools with alarm. They believed the women's colleges were "institutions for the promotion of celibacy," producing a disappearing class of intellectual women who were not marrying and hence were committing race suicide.[27]

In 1908, coincident with Thomas's speech about formerly fearsome toads turning into pearls, G. Stanley Hall, a professor of psychology at Clark University, published an article entitled "The Kind of Women Colleges Produce." In it he lambasted Thomas and other "spinster" presidents and

faculty who called upon women to be self-supporting and to uphold in high regard the ideal of scholarship and to train for a definite career. Hall railed: "The ideal of our colleges for young women, especially those whose regimentation is chiefly feminine, is not primarily wifehood and motherhood, but glorified spinsterhood." Women's colleges were, according to Hall, in the hands of misguided feminists."[28]

By 1905, a diffuse but increasingly outspoken group of educators, psychologists, doctors, and journalists had registered their alarm at the low marriage rates of women's college alumnae. Even President Theodore Roosevelt was concerned about celibacy. In a 1905 speech before Congress in which he condemned low marriage rates and the equally scandalous practice of birth control, he popularized the term "race suicide." The incapacity or unwillingness of the Anglo-Saxon race and particularly its highly educated members to marry and reproduce unleashed fears that within a generation or two they would die out. Presumably the leadership of the nation would then be left in the hands of immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe whose fertility was quite high, but whose intellect was deemed inferior.[29]

Viewed from this angle, M. Carey Thomas's statement about toads turning into jewels takes on another meaning: no doubt she hoped to assuage the fears of opponents who continued to relish and rely on the image of the college woman as a peculiar creature. In effect, then, from the very beginning the women faculty at the women's colleges had been battling a psychological war on two fronts: they hoped to challenge the larger culture and to change women's role in society, and in so doing they were engaging in a subversive, radical act. At the same time they wished to maintain the image of women's colleges as reputable and respectable institutions, a difficult task given that they were functioning within an inhospitable social climate for women's higher education and professionalization.

In this tangled conversation about women's education it is extremely significant that often the first generation of college-educated women who became academics wound up fueling their enemies' arguments. They had built their identities on the ideology of the select few: so long as there were only a token handful of women seeking intellectual careers, a system of special patronage and fatherly advising favorable to their careers had operated. Moreover, the tolerance for the select few meant that only someone like Madame Curie might succeed; faculty women could never settle for being average. They set appallingly high standards for themselves and for their students.

Shocked and dismayed by how few women wanted to follow the scholarly path, some faculty balked at what they called the universalization of collegiate norms. Average women were getting the B.A. and coming to symbolize the "College Type." But as Margaret Deland astutely noted in 1910: "[The] occasional women who did so-called unwomanly things, that is, unusual things generally left to men . . . who have distinguished themselves . . . were conspicuous, because they were strays. Achieving women are not very conspicuous now, simply because there are more of them."[30]

Ironically, then, on one level, proponents and detractors of women's higher education had a mutual investment in the ideology of the select few. For the faculty at the women's colleges, any dilution of the norms or shift from the high standards threatened their status. So long as a raison d'être for college attendance was scholarship and was wrapped up in vows of renunciation, successful academic women appeared irrefutably to be geniuses and would be tolerated. Wary opponents of women's higher education were also satisfied with this equation; they could always explain away or dismiss (even while they praised) the remarkable rare exceptions. But the popularization of collegiate life caused them alarm. They were distraught because more women than they had expected were earning Phi Beta Kappa keys and seeking entry into the professions. However, only rarely did these antifeminists focus directly on their fears of feminization of colleges and professions. In 1901 Hugo Munsterberg, a professor of philosophy at Harvard, voiced his alarm: "In the colleges and universities men still dominate, but soon will not if things are not changed; the great numbers of young women who pass their doctoral examinations and become specialists in science will have more and more to seek university professorships, or else they will have studied in vain. And here, as in the school, the economic conditions strongly favour the woman; since she has no family to support, she can accept a position so much smaller that the man is more and more

crowded from the field. And it may be clearly foreseen that, if other social factors do not change, women will enter as competitors in every field where the labour does not require specifically masculine strength. So it has been in the factories, so in the schools and so, in a few decades, it may be in the universities. . . ."

While in 1904 Munsterberg could acknowledge with relief that "professional chairs for the most part belong to men," he still worried over the ultimate feminization of American culture. Any success he attained would be devalued because women had demonstrated equal achievement. "The triumph in . . . competition is no honour if it consists in bidding under the market price. In fact, it is not merely a question of the division of labour, but a fundamental change in the character of the labour."[31] Such fears confirm the argument made by Margaret Rossiter in *Women Scientists in America:* that the growing numbers of women in the professions threatened many academic men who were caught up in defining their career paths as professional rather than amateur.[32] Like other professional men, Munsterberg was anxious to divorce himself from the cheapening effect that feminization has on the status of any profession.

Ultimately, the pioneers would discover that there was a price to be paid for an explanation of college generations that revolved around the fact that a first generation of staunch scholars were, happily or unhappily, passing from the scene. Defenders of the women's colleges were giving their opponents some potent psychological weapons. By 1920, critics and advocates agreed that the experience of the first cohort of college-educated women who went into the professions and who remained single was not representative of normal womanhood. This kind of defense was at one level useful in soothing fears and dismissing doubts about the future status of women's higher education, but it also helped to mythologize the select few, and worse, it labeled them as deviant. Of course the ideology of the select few had always had this vulnerable underbelly—one was intellectually select and prized, but one stood apart and was different from ordinary women.

The negative implications of this "extraordinary woman" approach can be clearly seen in a defense of women's higher education entitled "Education and Fecundity," written by Nellie Seeds Nearing and published in 1914 by the American Statistical Association. She argued that the "average woman . . . who went to college in the early days . . . was not the type who would have been apt to marry in any case." Just who were the pioneers? They "consisted largely of the woman who had some special talent which she wished to develop and practice, the woman of strong intellectual proclivities, who preferred not to engage in the domestic occupations usually relegated to women, and the woman who, because of personal unattractiveness, knew or feared her lack of popularity among men." The contemporary college woman, somehow, was irrefutably different. "Today it is the normal, not the unusual girl who goes to college. . . . It has become a common comfort. . . ." Nearing also believed that a college education had become desirable because it polished off a woman's cultural education.[33]

Mollifying the opponents of women's colleges by emphasizing the conventionality of the collegiate experience for women drew attention away from the fact that marriage rates for college-educated women remained lower than those for the rest of the eligible population. In 1923, Vassar economics professor Mabel Newcomer found that as of the summer of 1922, of 4,424 alumnae surveyed, only 55.6 percent had married. Although Vassar women, she noted, were marrying more, and marrying at younger ages, the total picture was one of deviation from the national averages of marriage rates, which usually hovered around 90 percent.[34] Nellie Nearing had understood this, but she took pains to explain the tremendous disparity by factors other than education. She was led back to economic arguments that noted that educated people expected a high standard of family living and that it was difficult for women to find husbands who could meet this elevated standard.

The constant need to explain away such potent statistics highlights as well the culturally charged climate of the first quarter of the twentieth century, in which marriage and family were deemed by Freudian dicta to be universally desirable experiences craved by all normal women. World War I temporarily masked the shifting social scene that produced hostility toward professional women. Writing in 1938, Marjorie Nicholson, a professor at Columbia University who had received her B.A. in 1914, commented: "We of the pre-war generation used to pride ourselves sentimentally on being the 'lost generation,' used to think that because war cut across the stable

path on which our feet were set we were an unfortunate generation. But as I look back upon the records, I find myself wondering whether our generation was not the only generation of women which ever really found itself. We came late enough to escape the self-consciousness and belligerence of the pioneers, to take education and training for granted. We came early enough to take equally for granted professional positions in which we could make full use of our training. This was our double glory. Positions were everywhere open to us; it never occurred to us at that time that we were taken only because men were not available. . . . The millennium had come; it did not occur to us that life could be different. *Within a decade shades of the prison house began to close, not upon the growing boy, but upon the emancipated girls* [emphasis added]".[35]

By the end of the 1920s, renunciation of marriage in favor of professional life was equated with a race of "warped, dry creatures."[36] Reconciliation of marriage and career became the watchword of the 1920s. Educated women "wearing their learning lightly like a flower" attempted to combine career and marriage. But lacking the support of institutions and bereft of a feminist movement, such attempts were often thwarted.

In the 1920s and continuing into the 1930s and 1940s, critics still questioned the value of women's higher education. Detractors insisted that college attendance posed innumerable dilemmas for modern American women. Thus, at some level, higher education for women was still being discussed as an experiment, the view that Higginson had castigated some forty years before. Unwilling to accept the permanency of women's entrance into academia as students or as scholars and unable to accept professional advancement of women in a wide range of careers, critics still dubbed such advances by women as "revolutionary," their worth still to be proved. But despite doubts, American women's entry into and success within higher education permanently altered their life courses and changed as well the social and intellectual course of the nation.

Notes

1. Thomas Wentworth Higginson, "Experiments," *Common Sense about Women* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1882), p. 199.
2. Thomas Woody, *A History of Women's Education in the United States* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1980; originally published by Science Press, 1929); Mabel Newcomer, *A Century of Higher Education for American Women* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959).
3. See, for example, Jill Conway, "Perspectives on the History of Women's Education in the United States," *History of Education Quarterly* 14 (Spring 1974): 1–12; P. A. Graham, "So Much to Do: Guides for Historical Research on Women in Higher Education," *Teachers College Record* 75 (February 1975): 421–29; P. A. Graham, "Expansion and Exclusion: A History of Women in American Higher Education," *Signs* 3 (Summer 1978): 759–773.
4. Elizabeth Kendall, *Peculiar Institutions* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1975); Liva Baker, *I'm Radcliffe! Fly Me! The Seven Sisters and The Failure of Women's Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1976).
5. For example, see Lynn Gordon, "Coeducation on Two Campuses: Berkeley and Chicago, 1890–1912," in *Women's Being, Woman's Place: Female Identity and Vocation in American History*, ed. Mary Kelly (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1979), 171–94; Patricia Foster Haines, "For Honor and Alma Mater: Perspectives on Coeducation at Cornell University, 1868–1885," *Journal of Education* 159 (August 1977): 25–37; Patricia Ann Palmieri, "Here Was a Fellowship: A Social Portrait of the Academic Community at Wellesley College, 1890–1920," *History of Education Quarterly* 23 (Summer 1983): 195–214.
6. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, "Vertuous Woman Found: New England Ministerial Literature, 1668–1735," *American Quarterly* 28 (Spring 1976): 19–40.
7. Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood" in *Dimity Convictions: The American Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1976), pp. 21–41.
8. Linda Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980).

9. Susan Conrad, *Perish the Thought: Intellectual Women in Romantic America, 1830–1860* (Secaucus, N.J.: Citadel Press, 1978).
10. David Allmendiger, "Mount Holyoke Students Encounter the Need for Life Planning, 1837–1850," *History of Education Quarterly* 19 (1979): 27–47.
11. On the common school movement, see Carl F. Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780–1860* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983). Also see Nancy Hoffman, *Women's True Profession* (New York: Feminist Press, 1981).
12. John Raymond, "The Demand of the Age for the Liberal Education of Women and How It Should Be Met," in *The Liberal Education of Women*, ed. James Orton (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1873), pp. 27–58.
13. For a discussion of the culture of spinsterhood before the Civil War, see Lee Chambers-Schiller, *Liberty, A Better Husband: Single Women in America. The Generations of 1780–1840* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1984); Patricia Ann Palmieri, "'This Single Life': Respectable Spinsterhood" *American Quarterly* forthcoming (review of Chambers-Schiller, 1984).
14. Raymond, "Demand for Liberal Education," p. 50.
15. John M. Greene to Sophia Smith, January 7, 1868, Smith College Archives.
16. On the reform spirit, see John L. Thomas, "Romantic Reform in America 1815–1865," *American Quarterly* 17 (Winter 1965): 656–681.
17. Ronald G. Walters, *American Reforms, 1815–1860* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978). Geoffrey Blodgett, "A New Look at the Gilded Age: Politics in a Cultural Context," in *Victorian America*, ed. Daniel Walker Howe (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976).
18. The traditional interpretation that views the 1870s and 1880s as a quiet era can be found in Aileen Kraditor, *The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, 1880–1920* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1971), p. 4. Recently, some scholars studying women's higher educational history have challenged this conclusion. See Sally Gregory Kohlstedt, "Maria Mitchell: The Advancement of Women in Sciences," *New England Quarterly* 51 (March 1978): 39–63.
19. Raymond, "Demand for Liberal Education," pp. 50–51.
20. Edward Clarke, *Sex in Education or A Fair Chance for the Girls* (Boston: J. R. Osgood, 1874).
21. Sheila Rothman, *Woman's Proper Place* (New York: Basic Books, 1978).
22. M Carey Thomas, "Present Tendencies in Women's College and University Education," *Educational Review* 25 (1908): 64–85, reprinted in *The Educated Woman in America*, ed. Barbara Cross (New York: Teachers College Press, 1965), p. 162.
23. Louis McCoy North, "Speech for '79 and the Trustees at Semi-Centennial" (Wellesley, Mass.: North Unprocessed Papers, Wellesley College Archives, 1979).
24. Thomas, "Present Tendencies," p. 162; See also Julia Ward Howe, ed. *Sex and Education: A Reply to Dr. E. H. Clarke's "Sex in Education"* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1874).
25. Elizabeth Hazelton Haight, "Pleasant Possibles in Lady Professors," *Journal of the Association of Collegiate Alumnae*, 11 (September 1917): 10–17.
26. Mary Cheyney, "Will Nature Eliminate the College Woman?" *Association of Collegiate Alumnae*, 3rd ser., 10 (January 1905): 1–9.
27. William L. Felter, "The Education of Women," *Educational Review* 31 (1906): 360.
28. G. Stanley Hall, "The Kind of Women Colleges Produce," *Appleton's Magazine*, September 1908, p. 314.
29. On race suicide and its relationship to immigration and other cultural issues, see Linda Gordon, *Woman's Body, Woman's Right: A Social History of Birth Control in America* (New York: Grossman, 1976).
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