

Pathologizing the Female Body: Phallocentrism in Western Science

By Stephanie E. Libbon¹

A woman's body reaches to the end of the world
Deeper than any meaning, further than what she knows,
Long, endless, yearning, unappeasable, profounder
Than our touches, unconquerable, never to be mastered--

Theodore Holmes "Woman's Body"

Introduction

The history of the human body is, as Michel Feher states, a field where life and thought intersect (11). It is a locus that reflects the laws and prohibitions of different cultures at different times. As such, it is the point of inscription for a civilization's norms relative to the individual in society, the relationships between the sexes, and the hierarchy of order. The history of the human body is also the history of medical research, political activism, and labor relations and, as Snezhana Dimotrova notes, "the history of institutions such as marriage, family, army, school, etc., which impose the ruling values" (19). To trace the evolution of the human body as it has been conceived and conceptualized at different times in different places is to trace the evolution of human culture in general. To trace the evolution of the female body as it has been compared and contrasted with the male body down through the ages is to reveal not only the prevailing ideologies of woman as she has been envisioned throughout the centuries in various societies, but likewise to trace the changing status of women and the patriarchal reactions to these changes.

To explore what Sondra Farganis designates the "phallogentric construction of sexuality," this investigation exhibits how for most of Western history, woman—and more specifically, the female body—was conceptualized on the basis of masculine parameters that defined her not relative to a normative standard for woman, the female body or female sexuality but rather relative to a normative standard for man, his body and his sexuality. Limiting my research to Western culture, this study demonstrates how science, and in particular biomedical science, was used and misused to uncover “facts” of woman’s inferiority in order to legitimize male superiority and maintain male authority. To underscore this myopic reading of experiential research and data, this examination illustrates that, while professing to be a neutral searching for empirical truth, Western science was indeed quite biased as it was dominated by men, shaped by men, and hence reflecting the ideals, the desires and the fears of men.

In his well-known work *Making Sex*, Thomas Laqueur contends that the conception of human sexuality evolved from the ancient Greeks' one-sex model to modernity's two-sex model as events surrounding the French Revolution prompted a desire to see difference and therefore a need to create difference. In particular, Laqueur argues that it was the struggle for power between those advocating enfranchisement for women and those opposed to this which led to the reconstitution of the human body and

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in particular the female body. Extrapolating on Laqueur's assertion that the female was conceived as an inferior version of the male in Antiquity and an opposite but complementary version of the male in the Enlightenment, this work demonstrates how, by the late nineteenth century, woman came to be designated not only the opposite of man--physically, intellectually and morally--but then also opposing man. Expanding the scope of Laqueur's research to encompass additional fields of scientific inquiry, this study reveals to what extent men of science (mis)read the findings in their respective fields in order to maintain their control of power and of women. Using numerous primary sources, This analysis illustrates how the scientific abstraction and obstruction of woman at the end of the nineteenth century led to yet another reconstitution of the female body—this time a pathologizing and criminalizing that branded “unruly” women as sexual deviants and social miscreants.

A Brief History of the Human Body: The Single-Sex Model

The human body has not always been neatly categorized into the two binary sexes we now identify. It was, in fact, only with the advent of the eighteenth century that distinction was made between specifically male-sexed and female-sexed bodies. In Antiquity, philosophers and physicians alike viewed the human body not as two opposites that contrasted or complemented one another, but rather as a single anatomical form containing both sexes. This is not to say men and women were seen as anatomically exact or possessing hermaphrodite characteristics. Rather, the female was held to be a lesser version of the male--to be at a lower stage of development. According to the writings of ancient Greeks, there was a hierarchical order to life that placed all living creatures on a vertical continuum. Those bodies possessing the lowest heat or energy were located at one end of this spectrum and those possessing the greatest at the opposite end. By locating humanity at the hottest end and men above women, the Greeks defined humans as the most perfect life form and men, by reason of their excess heat, more perfect than women (Galen, *Body*, 2.630). Despite this disparate ranking, men and women were not seen as different in kind, but rather only in the degrees of heat embodied in their corporeal humours.

Of these humours, blood was seen as the most precious and life-giving. When purified through heat, blood was held to reach its most refined state--that of semen. While both men and women were believed to contain all the essential fluids, there was great debate when it came to semen. Aristotle claimed only men had the heat necessary to convert blood into this purest form (2.5.741a8-16, 4.1.765b55ff). Hippocrates, on the other hand, held that both men and women had the necessary heat and energy to produce semen (Aristotle 6.1, 6.2). Taking a medial stance, Galen maintained that the female did produce semen but that hers was thinner and cooler than the male's, and thus indicative of her lower standing in nature (*Body* 2.631). In accordance with the single-sex perspective, Galen likewise saw no difference in men's and women's genitalia other than their configuration and placement.² “[A] woman has testes with accompanying seminal ducts very much like the man’s one on each side of the uterus, the only difference being that the male’s are contained in the scrotum and the female’s are not” (*On Semen* 4:596). The

² Not allowed to dissect human bodies, Galen, who is considered the father of experimental physiology, derived his theories from observations of animals and, as Laqueur notes, from the dissections of Herophilus, a third century B.C. Alexandrin anatomist (*Making Sex* 4).

male, having the hotter body, necessarily carried his organs on the outside, whereas the woman, being of a cooler nature, carried hers on the inside.

Despite the increase in anatomical investigations prompted by the autopsies of the Renaissance period, experts continued to believe in the existence of only one sex. In fact, the more they dissected and visually represented the body, the more convinced they were that the female body was merely an inverted version of the male. With the continued belief in a single-sexed body and with the male body upheld as the norm, the Renaissance, like the Classical period before it, had no precise equivalencies for modern terms we now give genitalia. Indeed, the Renaissance body was far less fixed and constrained by categories of biological difference than modern concepts of the body. The fluidity and instability of “sex” as it was defined in the single-sex model is exemplified in medical accounts from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that report individuals changing sex. In the medical journal of Ambroise Paré, the foremost French surgeon of his day, there is an account of a young girl whose organs were thrust outward when she ran in a quick and ferocious boy-like manner (31-32). This transformation brought on by an expansion of extraordinary heat and energy reflected the continued belief in the Galenic hypothesis that it was greater heat which distinguished men from women and that women’s sex organs were indeed merely inverted versions of the male organs.

While it was a common belief that women could become men, the opposite was not held to be true. In *Questoreum medico-logalim*, the major medical jurisprudence text of the Renaissance, the Italian Paolo Zacchia maintains that women could turn into men, but men could not turn into women. “Heat,” he says, “drives forward, diffuses, dilates; it does not compress, contract, or retract. . . . members which project outwards will never recede inwards” (qtd. in Laqueur *Making Sex* 141). With heat seen as the sign of perfection on the metaphysical continuum, it was impossible for the male body, as the more perfect, to slip back into the less perfect female form. This is not to say, however, that men could not become effeminate in their mannerisms and appear to be less than manly, but this did not alter their physical make-up or their social rank.

The Binary-Sex Model

The scientific revolution that occurred at the end of the seventeenth century began undermining the Galenic model. But it was not so much the new scientific discoveries and advancements that brought about the rejection of Galen’s theories as it was the cultural, political and intellectual changes taking place in the eighteenth century. Following on the foot heels of the French Revolution, which saw women as well as men fighting for the ideals of liberty, woman’s proper role in society became a hotly debated issue. Despite the fact that women had struggled along side men to gain greater social freedom, the majority of educated men opposed giving women more civil and personal liberties, believing, rightly so, that these liberties would lead to increased public and private power for women. But to justify this position within the framework of enlightened thought that postulated a rational individual sexed but unaffected by gender, proof of natural inequalities had to be found to counter the appeal for natural rights. Experts and laymen alike now turned to science, and in particular to biology, to defend the position that women were unable to function autonomously inside or outside of the domestic realm. To support these claims, anatomical distinctions between the sexes were sought and found. While there was no definitive moment in time when the claim was made that

there were indeed two separate sexes, the various struggles for power between men and women as well as between feminists and antifeminists sparked the need to see an inequality. This need for disparity led to a new perception and reconstitution of the human body. A "biology of incommensurability" (*Making Sex* 6), as Laqueur calls it, emerged as ontological evidence supporting natural inequality was now used to designate specific social roles for both men and women.

To prove difference was more than skin deep, scientists investigated and analyzed everything from the organs to the muscles, the nerves, and the skeleton. As early as 1775 the French physician Pierre Roussel reproached his colleagues for considering woman similar to man except in the sexual organs and noted that even her inner organs were different and therefore determined the types of roles for which she was best suited. "The nerves, vessels, muscles, and ligaments are thinner, finer, and more supple and therefore indicate the kinds of duties for which the female is naturally predetermined" (5). Roussel's thesis was that woman's more sensitive nature, as indicated in the finer quality of her internal make-up, precluded her from higher thought processes: "Because of their greater sensitivity, based on organic reasons, women are incapable of functioning in the 'higher sciences.' Their opinions are much less expressions of their reason as they are mere impressions on their minds" (Roussel 22). In 1776 Paul-Victor de Sèze took Roussel's premise a step further when he asserted rational thought was actually harmful to the female constitution.

While it is true that the mind is common to all human beings, the active employment thereof is not conducive to all. For women, in fact, this activity can become quite harmful. Because of their natural weakness, greater brain activity in women would exhaust all the other organs and thus disrupt their proper functioning. Above all, however, it would be the generative organs which would be the most fatigued and endangered through the over exertion of the female brain. (228)

It was, however, more than the delicate construction of the female nervous system and other internal organs that precluded woman from rational thought. Even in her skeletal make-up scientists and physicians uncovered evidence of woman's mental inferiority. Noting that the female skull was smaller than the male skull and that her brain therefore contained less mass, these experts concluded that women had to have inferior intellectual capabilities. Although the German philosopher and lawyer Theodor Gottlieb von Hippel cited lack of education as the reason for women's lesser intellect as early as 1792 and the German anatomist Samuel Thomas von Soemmerring noted in 1796 that the female skull was relatively larger than the male skull when compared to their respective skeletons, the majority of their contemporaries chose to see intelligence as an innate characteristic independent of education and relative skull size.³ This misuse of science

³ The Scottish anatomist John Barclay undermined Soemmerring's observation in the 1820s when he observed that children's skulls too were larger relative to their overall body size. Thus for Barclay, and many of his contemporaries, the relatively larger female skull signaled women's incomplete growth. This contention would be picked up and continued throughout the nineteenth century. Indeed, Arthur Schopenhauer, whose *Parerga und Paralipmena: kleine philosophische Schriften* (1852) would see eleven reprints and be popular well into the early twentieth century, reiterates this claim when he notes that women were "a kind of intermediate stage between the child and the man" (296).

not only buttressed arguments against women's participation in the public spheres (43), as Londa Schiebinger notes, but simultaneously also confined her to the private sphere by finding corporeal evidence for her domestic inclinations.

The French physician Pierre-Jean-Georges Cabanis pointed to woman's weaker, more delicate constitution as indicative of her more passive nature. "[The] weakness of the muscles causes an instinctive disgust for violent exercise; it leads to amusements and . . . to sedentary occupations" (1:221). The German anatomist Jakob Fidelis Ackermann emphasized the same weakness and passivity in 1788 when he noted, "The female sex leads for the most part a sedentary lifestyle and does not occupy itself with such duties as would require sustained physical power and muscular strength. Moreover, her bones and muscles are weaker and her nerve pathways thinner" (146). The wideness of the female pelvis was also cited as proof of her complacent nature in that it supposedly hindered greater activity. "The movements of the female sex are additionally hampered by the wide placement of the hips, which makes her gait slow and ponderous" (Honegger 158).⁴ Thus, the make-up of the female body not only predetermined a more passive lifestyle, but within this narrower sphere of activity, also destined woman for more domestic roles.

This search for difference did not stop with the physical body. As medicine and philosophy began to conflate in the eighteenth century, the soul now too became incorporated into this pursuit. As early as 1703 the German physician George Ernst Stahl wrote in his *Theorie medica vera* that the soul was indivisible from the body, responsible for movement and therefore life within the physical body. In 1754 the Swiss physician and university professor Albrecht von Haller wanted to prove that a force he surmised as the soul remained within the body even after death. In his experimentation with corporeal movements, he distinguished irritation (movements evoked through muscular reactions) from sensitivity (movements evoked through pain reactions) on living creatures. Once he was able to prove one could evoke movement even out of dead bodies, it became scientifically easier to disprove a link between the physical world and a transcendental. For the French physician Julien LaMettrie this meant that morality was no longer something deigned by God, but rather found already within the physical body.

If all the abilities of the soul are dependent on the proper organization of the brain and the body as a whole, in other words, the soul is entwined within this organization, then what we have in the human body is a very enlightened machine. If this is the case, this machine (i.e. the human being) no longer needs a God to reveal the moral code, theologians or other virtuosos of salvation to enlighten it, nor those versed in metaphysics to teach ethics because good and bad is embodied directly within the corporeal material. (58)

Once physical reactions became categorized according to the sexes, with the female labelled as more sensitive (i.e. emotionally reactive) and the male as more physical (i.e. tending toward the more muscular reactions), it was only a matter of time before morality too was categorized in this manner. Where in 1703 Stahl had argued that sensitivity was itself an expression of the soul, in his 1775 work *Système physique et*

⁴ All translations are mine unless otherwise noted. I wish to give special thanks to my colleague, Geoffrey Koby, for his assistance with the German translations.

*moral de la femme*⁵ Roussel now argued that female sensitivity far surpassed male sensitivity--physically as well as morally. A quarter of a century later, the anatomist Jacques-Louis Moreau de la Sarthe, one of the founders of moral anthropology, reiterated that the sexes were not only different, they were “different in every conceivable respect of body and soul, in every physical and moral aspect” (15).

While it may appear ironic that woman was confined to the biological at the same time she was being raised to a higher level of moral sensitivity, this too was argued to have organic reasons. Anatomical discourses had not only construed woman as more passive, lethargic, and domestic, but now were pointing to her lack of sexual desire as well. Whereas woman's greater delicacy and sensitivity allowed her to be categorized as morally superior to men, this was because her sensual side was supposed to have become increasingly more suppressed as society progressed. In stressing the distinction between civilized and less-civilized populations, the English physician Elizabeth Blackwell asserted a decrease in sexual urges the more advanced a society became. “Beasts,” she claimed in 1894, “have no mental component in their sexual relations; primitive people and the working classes have relatively little and are thus unchaste; civilized people have a dominant mental component and thus value chastity highly” (34). The physical sciences supported this notion that the sexual urges of the female were mental and not physical and indeed even more mental in nature than those of the male, who was already established as being more active and aggressive. Eighteenth century phrenologists regarded the cerebellum as the site of sexual instinct (Young 47-49). With an already smaller brain established, it followed that a smaller cerebellum indicated a lower sex drive. In addition, once spontaneous ovulation in some mammals was discovered, physicians drew a correlation between women's menstruation and oestrus in animals. If women had any sexual desire at all, it biologically had to occur only during periods of fertility, i.e., when the woman was menstruating. With virtues and moral tendencies seen as separating civilized man from the animals as well as his own primitive past, scientists and physicians alike now correlated woman's lack of sexual desire with her greater moral inclinations, which in turn were interpreted as a sign of increasing civilization. Many professional works such as John Millar's *Origins of the Distinctions of Ranks* (1793) now defined woman as the moral barometer and the vanguard that improved society. As such, the behaviour of women was seen as the most reliable reflection of a civilized society.

Despite this alleged moral superiority, woman was still deemed inferior to man in all other respects. Where science had initially rejected the Galenic belief that the female was merely an inferior, inverted version of the male, its methods of empirical investigations now once again drew the same conclusions, albeit this time in a social versus corporeal respect. In 1808 the German surgeon Philip Franz von Walther refers to the male of the species as the positive and the original of which the female is merely a copy and a negative one at that and more importantly, the reverse or inverted (*umgekehrte*) version. “The masculine is something, in and of itself, purely positive in all its attributes . . . thus the original. The feminine is purely negative, existing only in contrast to and through the masculine . . . It is not just a difference of genitalia, instead, the feminine is in every respect the *inverted* masculine” (373-75) [emphasis mine]. By describing the woman as being a *negative* man, lacking all the qualities that made up the

⁵ This treatise became the standard reference work used by anthropologists, psycho-physiologists, and gynecologists for years to come in both France and Germany (Honegger 143).

“original,” Walther reiterates a tone that would echo with increasing resonance as the nineteenth century unfolded. In 1822, the German physician and psychiatrist Johann Christian August Heinroth defines woman not just as man’s opposite, but in a more positive bend, as his necessary complement, something Jean Jacques Rousseau had already claimed as early as 1762. In contrast to Rousseau, however, who saw the male as able to live a full life without the female (*Emile* 1278),⁶ Heinroth, believed each of the sexes required the other to reach a complete state of being. “The general natural concept of the sexes is antipodal duality . . . linked by a reciprocal determination, i.e., they mutually create and preserve each other and cannot exist without the other” (104). Several years later the German zoologist Karl Ernst von Baer defines this polarity more precisely by delineating the biological “facts” science had uncovered.

In man, the mind prevails—in woman, the emotions. The former takes pleasure in the production of thoughts, the latter in the mental reception of feelings. Man’s aspirations are directed outward towards a broader sphere; woman cares for the narrower circle of the family. Man’s purpose is creative; woman’s essence is conservative and protective. Knowledge and ideas guide the will of man; in the action of woman sentiment prevails over thinking and guides her though in a less clearly conscious manner. (513)

In 1830 the German physician J.J. Sachs takes this scientific analysis a step further to explain how physical complementarity leads to complementary social roles.

The male body expresses positive strength, sharpening male understanding and independence, and equipping men for life in the State, in the arts and sciences. The female body expresses womanly softness and feeling. The roomy pelvis determines women for motherhood. The weak, soft members and delicate skin are witness of woman’s narrower sphere of activity, of home-bodiness, and peaceful family life. (Qtd. in Schiebinger 69)

In 1840 the German anthropologist Carl Ludwig Michelet helps cement the idea of engendered social roles by recapitulating the different psychological proclivities of each sex that made them more suited to function in one particular social arena while precluding them from the other.

a. Woman leads more of an emotional life; . . . The inner order of the familial circle completely consumes the moral significance of woman. . . . Woman abandons herself to the impressions of the moment and lives in the enjoyment of an undivided unity with nature. Woman is the born enemy of the law . . .

b. Man, in contrast, is validated only through that which he achieves as a part of the whole: and he judges himself and others only according to this. The sphere of his effectiveness is the State, because it is based on laws and general

⁶ When comparing men and women in *Emile*, Rousseau notes that “[m]en and women are made for each other, but their mutual dependence is not equal. Man is dependent on woman through his desires; woman is dependent on man through her desires and also through her needs. He could do without her better than she can do without him” (1278).

principles. . . . The activity of thought, the productivity for the general welfare is accorded to the man exclusively. In art, in science, and in politics, he alone pioneers new trends and creates new forms. (126ff)

Woman had become not just the opposite of man, she had become his physical and psychological complement and as such was confined to particular roles within society--specifically, those to which her male counterpart was not confined.

The Pathological Sex

In the course of the nineteenth century, this new designation of social roles based on scientific "evidence" of woman's lesser intelligence and greater proclivity for domestic duties would be advanced with increasing urgency. In particular, this would occur the more vocal and adamant women became about rejecting these roles. Indeed, the ensuing tensions that would arise between the sexes as the century progressed were already being suggested in terminology that not only carried the concept of woman as man's opposite, but as some of the above citations were already suggesting, as his opponent. For Walther, in 1808, woman has become the "*pure negative*" (374). In 1822, Heinroth describes the sexes as "*opposite/opposing Duality*" (104). By 1840, the terminology has become much sharper as Michelet now refers to woman as "*the born enemy of the law*" (126). And enemy is exactly how woman would come to be seen, especially the New Woman who would threaten not only the contemporary definitions of womanhood, but in so doing, destabilize those of manhood.

As the nineteenth century unfolded and women's movements came increasingly to the fore, women began asserting themselves more openly. Their refusal to stay within "male-determined" boundaries rose at an alarming rate. Their questioning of male authority and status in social hierarchy too became more frequent. Woman was no longer the complacent companion whose sole purpose was to make man whole; instead, she had now become his adversary--competing with him for place and privilege. Even in the sexual arena, woman was rejecting the passive role for a more active one as she challenged the notion that the proper lady had no sexual impulses of her own. Once the dissatisfaction of women could no longer be repressed or denied, the medical community, and in particular the sexologists who were gaining prominence in the latter half of the century, now began discussing these recalcitrant women and in particular the New Woman in pathological terms. Most evolutionists, Bram Dijkstra observes, quickly identified feminists as a prime example of degeneration (213). As early as 1870, the American physician and university professor Nicholas Cooke was noting the harmful effects of feminism in *Satan in Society*. On the issue of women's rights he states, "She will become rapidly unsexed, and degraded from her present exalted position to the level of man, without his advantages; she will cease to be the gentle mother, and become the Amazonian brawler" (86). In his 1898 essay "On the Physiological Debility of Women," the German pathologist, Paul Möbius, argues that the development of intellectual capabilities in women would lead to sexual deviants: "If we wish to have women who fulfil their responsibilities as mothers, we cannot expect them to have a masculine brain. If it were possible for the feminine abilities to develop in a parallel fashion to those of a male, the organs of motherhood would shrivel, and we would have a hateful and useless hybrid creature on our hands" (14). Even the Swiss neurologist and psychiatrist August

Forel, who Dijkstra indicates was considered a moderate sexologist by many, warned against the degeneracy of feminism in *The Sexual Question*.⁷ "The modern tendency of women to become pleasure-seekers, and to take a dislike to maternity, leads to degeneration of society. This is a grave social evil, which rapidly changes the qualities and power of expansion of the race, and which must be cured in time or the race affected by it will be supplanted by others" (137). Otto Weininger, perhaps the most (in)famous misogynist of the day, described the harm emancipated women could do to society as akin to the harm done by the mentally deficient or the criminal. "As children, imbeciles and criminals would be justly prevented from taking any part in public affairs even if they were numerically equal or in the majority; woman must in the same way be kept from having a share in anything which concerns the public welfare, as it is much to be feared that the mere effect of female influence would be harmful" (339).

Ironically, while the suffragette was seen as too masculine and therefore possessing atavistic characteristics indicative of degeneration, the sexually hyperactive woman was also seen as expressing a form of regression since the more advanced, civilized woman was believed to have lost most if not all sexual desires. Thus both "aberrations"—the virago and the nymphomaniac—were linked with degeneration and with disease. Richard von Krafft-Ebing, one of the most renowned sexologists of the period and a specialist in nervous disorders, did much to advance such ideas in his seminal work *Psychopathia Sexualis*.⁸ "Woman," he states, "if physically and mentally normal, and properly educated, has but little sensual desire" (8). Those women who did have sexual drives, and worse yet, those with voracious appetites, suffered, according to Krafft-Ebing, from a pathological condition called hyperesthesia—an abnormally increased sex drive found in "degenerates infected with hereditary taint" (46-47).⁹

Another theory suggested that the very sexual woman, and in particular the autoerotic woman, would become increasingly "masculinized" the more she awakened her own sexual senses (Dijkstra 157). In their study *The Female Offender* (1893), the Italian phrenologists Cesare Lombroso and Guglielmo Ferrero too warned of this possibility, claiming woman "would become excessively erotic, weak in maternal feeling [and would, through] her love of violent exercise, her vices, and even her dress, increase her resemblance to the sterner sex" (187).

Along with the idea of physical disease came new theories of mental illness. In Krafft-Ebing's work, which did much to advance the study of sexual dysfunction, hysteria is an often-diagnosed malady responsible for a multitude of psychological and physical ailments. As an accompanying symptom of nymphomania, Krafft-Ebing defines hysteria as a disease of the sexual organs and "hyperaesthesia of the senses." For his part, Otto Weininger believed hysteria was a purely psychological affliction in that it was a reaction to woman's unconscious desire to repress her true nature. It was, as he states, "the organic crisis of the organic untruthfulness of woman" (266). In sharp contrast to Krafft-Ebing and others who held the "normal" woman lacked sexual desires, Weininger

⁷One of the first in-depth treatises on sexual hygiene, *The Sexual Question* was translated into sixteen languages.

⁸First published in 1886, *Psychopathia Sexualis* was so popular and in such high demand by experts and laymen alike that it was already in its twelfth edition by 1902.

⁹Claiming these nymphomaniacs were morally devoid of all powers of resistance, Krafft-Ebing asserts their pathologies often forced them to turn to prostitution in order to find satisfaction and relief (323).

saw the lewd, lustful, lascivious woman as the norm. Claiming the female was “completely occupied and content with sexual matters” (89), he describes her as “sexuality itself” (299). Woman, he states, was “essentially a phallus worshipper” (250). Continuing, he describes her as soulless, possessing neither ego nor individuality, personality nor freedom, character nor will (207). Lombroso and Ferrero express many of the same ideas when they allege that woman was “deficient in moral sense, and possessed of slight criminal tendencies” (263). Women were held to be like children, incapable of understanding or controlling their true natures. Consequently, Lombroso and Ferrero claimed that woman, like the child, did not have the reasoning ability to tell right from wrong and therefore had the same propensity for lies as did the child (182). These assertions are stated even stronger in Lombroso’s earlier work, *Criminal Man* (1876), where he categorizes woman not only with children, but also with the darker races, social deviants, and criminals.

With Darwin's *On The Origin of Species* (1859) espousing ideas of evolution as well as ideas of devolution, the vast majority of antifeminists were able to give credence to their sexist and racist biases as they were now able to justify correlating woman with the “lower” races. Karl Vogt, perhaps the best known craniologist of the day, did much to advance such theories in his *Lectures on Man* (1864). Noting that Caucasian women, by virtue of their smaller skulls, were closer in nature to children and the lower races and thus inferior to the men of their own race, he claims:

The type of the female skull approaches, in many respects, that of the infant, and in a still greater degree that of the lower races; and with this is connected the remarkable circumstance, that the difference between the sexes, as regards the cranial cavity, increases with the development of the race, so that the male European excels much more the female than the Negro the Negress. (180)

Expressing the misogynistic perspectives so pervasive among late nineteenth century intellectuals, Vogt continues, “[w]e may be sure that, whenever we perceive an approach to the animal type, the female is nearer to it than the male” (180).

Increasingly, woman would be linked with the primal and the animalistic. For Möbius, woman was a feebleminded creature, who, “just like the animals, since time immemorial, has done nothing but ceaselessly repeat herself” (8). P.J. Proudhon, the French sociologist and journalist, saw in her the struggle between a civilized veneer and her true penchant for lewdness. Because nature had given her a “weaker ego,” he maintains, “liberty and intelligence . . . struggle less fiercely in her against the animalistic tendencies” (44). For his part, Arthur Schopenhauer linked woman’s predilection for artifice to an animalistic instinct for survival.

They are dependent, not upon strength, but upon craft; and hence their instinctive capacity for cunning, and the ineradicable tendency to say what is not true. For as lions are provided with claws and teeth, and elephants and boars with tusks, bulls with horns, and cuttle fish with its clouds of inky fluid, so Nature has equipped woman, for her defence and protection, with the art of dissimulation . . . It is as natural for them to make use of it on every occasion as it is for those animals to employ their means of defence when they are attacked . . . (298-99)

Correlated as she now was to the beasts, men increasingly began to see woman as taking on a feral, predatory air. Indeed, Schopenhauer points out that woman's true nature was "to look upon everything only as a means for conquering man" (301).¹⁰ As the embodiment of nature, and polyandrous predatory nature at that, Dijkstra notes that woman was now seen as the opponent of man and the world of ideas (236). The suffragette, who demanded the same rights as man, and the sexually active woman, who demanded the same pleasures as man were now defined as degenerate and harmful to society.

Concerned that the New Woman and other recalcitrant women would lead to society's downfall and the dissolution of the race, many scientists and physicians, adhering to a Baconian tradition that called for a virile science to conquer and control Mother nature, now sought to master human nature and woman's sexual nature in particular. Having labelled woman as intrinsically diseased and debauched, experts and laymen alike now took institutional measures to impede any further social or political disruption on her part. Under the guise of "curing" her of her ailments and moreover protecting society in the process, the unruly woman was now forced either into compulsory hospitalization, often with accompanying surgical mutilation, or incarceration. In both instances it was the woman who protested and rallied against male control and regulation of herself and her body who was locked away, sequestered from society, in an effort to compel her to return to a the silent, submissive role man had eked out for her.

Where science had aided in shifting man's perspective of the human body from a one-sex model to a two-sex model, and in the process had elevated woman from an inferior version of the male sex to a different but complementary sex, it was now being employed towards a more nefarious aim. Exploited to legitimize the inequality of the sexes and hence the continued suppression of woman, science, for all its assertions of being a neutral search for empirical truth, had proven itself not immune to the powers of socio-political interests and cultural influence. Any rise in status woman may have gained with the advent of the Enlightenment and the scientific revolution, any hopes for greater liberties that she may have fought for in the French Revolution, had all but vanished by the late-nineteenth century as men once again defined and confined her as the deviant monster Aristotle had described over two thousand years earlier.

¹⁰ How extreme Schopenhauer was in his misogynistic attitudes can be seen in his blaming women for the French Revolution and all consequent ills. "May it not be the case in France that the influence of women, which went on increasingly steadily from the time of Louis XIII, was to blame for that gradual corruption of the Court and Government, which brought about the Revolution of 1789, of which all subsequent disturbances have been the fruit?" (307).

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