

*Study from Nature: Women, Mobility, and the
Politics of Urban Vision in Harper's Weekly, January 1860*

by

Catherine A. Steinmann

B.A., The University of Toronto, 1990

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

FINE ARTS (ART HISTORY)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

December 2004

© Catherine A. Steinmann, 2004

Abstract

Nestled among the classified ads on the back page of the January 21, 1860, issue of *Harper's Weekly* is a cartoon that marks a moment of anxiety in the public life of the New York middle class on the eve of the Civil War. Set in the increasingly illegible streets of the rapidly changing city, this fragmented lithograph represents, in two frames, four women—two white, one black, one unidentifiable—walking on a pavement during and after the passing of an omnibus. *Harper's* published the image, titled *Study from Nature*, in a moment when issues of citizenship, civic capacity, and national belonging were rapidly coming to the forefront of public consciousness, especially in New York, which was a nexus for feminist, abolitionist, and black manhood suffrage movements.

The pages *Study from Nature* sits among are spatially analogous to the physical environment of the street. Similarly, the image mimics the spatial experience of a viewer standing in that street, at once describing and formally manifesting the visual change that was at the core of new challenges to urban legibility. In this respect, the image serves both as a guide for the viewer and as a visual puzzle that re-presented to that viewer many of the changes in vision that inhabitants of the city were experiencing—changes that occurred alongside the rise of industrial commercialism, increasing urban density, and developments in fashion, architecture, and systems of urban transport.

I argue that *Study from Nature* participated in a set of regulatory discourses that produced and responded to concerns over the visual metamorphosis of free black and bourgeois white women, their increasing freedom to move about in metropolitan space, and their mounting resistance to ideologies that denied them subjective personhood. Emphasizing civility and sartorial self-discipline, *Study from Nature* attempted to order the intractable bodies circulating within it, creating a comic, admonitory fantasy of fear and subjugation. Through satire, the cartoon imposed punishment for acts that transgressed performative standards of race and gender, thereby depoliticizing social relations and deflecting the conflicts and inequities of New York society onto the individual inhabitants of the street.

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Table of Contents	iii
List of Figures	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Introduction	1
Chapter One <i>Reading, Looking, and Public Space</i>	9
Chapter Two <i>Image, Vision, and Viewer</i>	22
Chapter Three <i>Social Resistance, Social Critique</i>	33
Afterword	66
Bibliography	69
Figures	74

List of Figures

- Fig. 1 *Study from Nature*
Harper's Weekly (New York), January 21, 1860, page 48
- Fig. 2 Page 48 (back page)
Harper's Weekly, January 21, 1860
- Fig. 3 *Sea-Side Studies*
From *A Broadsheet of Good Things*
Harper's Weekly, January 21, 1860, page 40
- Fig. 4 *Habits of Our Modern Savages*
Harper's Weekly, April 18, 1860, page 112
- Fig. 5 *Young Ligneus, a great boaster of his female conquests. . . .*
Frank Leslie's Budget of Fun (New York), December 1859, page 8
- Fig. 6 *The Miscegenation Ball*
Lithograph by Bromley and Company, 1864
Collections of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
- Fig. 7 *The Big Boot Mania*
Harper's Weekly, May 9, 1860, page 96
- Fig. 8 "Cham, the great French caricaturist . . . thus prophesies pictorially for the
present year of 1857"
Untitled illustration
Harper's Weekly, January 17, 1857, page 35
- Fig. 9 Walking dress
American, c. 1860
Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Gift of Mary Pierrepont Beckwith, 1969 (CI 69.33.4a-d)
- Fig. 10 *How the Gamblers Spend the Afternoon in Slush Times*
Harper's Weekly, January 15, 1859, page 48
- Fig. 11 Advertisement for *The Lady's Guide to Perfect Beauty*
Harper's Weekly, March 17, 1860, page 27

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the many people whose encouragement and assistance have been invaluable to me during the writing of this thesis. First and most importantly, I would like to extend deep thanks to Professors Maureen Ryan and John O'Brian, my advisors, who have provided extremely valuable critique at every stage of writing and who have been unfailing in their support and patience. For their helpful comments and heartening response at the round table presentation of this thesis, I would also like to thank Professors Marv Cohodas, Carol Knicely, Rose Marie San Juan, Charlotte Townsend-Gault, Hsingyuan Tsao, and Bill Wood. I am also grateful to Lily Liew, Michael Mao, and Jane Young in the Department of Art History, Visual Art, and Theory for helping me with slides and other logistics.

For their feedback during practice runs of the round table presentation, as well as for stimulating discussions of many of the issues this thesis is concerned with, I would also like to thank my fellow graduate students in art history, especially Paloma Campbell, Maja Dujakovic, Jamila Dunn, Juan Gaitan, Jeff Khonsary, and Jasmina Karabeg, as well as the interdisciplinary assortment of critical colleagues I have been privileged to associate with at Green College, particularly Lissa Beauchamp, Avi Craimer, Emma Cunliffe, H el ene Deacon, Jamie Doucette, Yaari Dyer, Kathryn Furlong, Ian Grieg, David Haley, Fiona Kelly, Kristina Llewelyn, and Victor Zatsepine. I would also like to gratefully acknowledge the useful suggestions I received from the members of Professor Ryan's fall 2003 graduate seminar at UBC, when this thesis was a seminar paper.

The New York Public Library's Humanities and Social Science Library and the libraries of the New-York Historical Society, Northwestern University, Simon Fraser University, and the University of British Columbia all provided access to the materials upon which this thesis has been built. I would like to thank the librarians at these institutions for their intelligent and helpful guidance with the research process.

Finally, I must extend special thanks to my mother, Jane Steinmann, for her encouragement, critical input, patience, financial support, and love, which have been critical to my success at the University of British Columbia.

Introduction

Nestled among the classified ads on the back page of the January 21, 1860, issue of the New York newspaper *Harper's Weekly* is a cartoon that marks a moment of anxiety on the eve of the United States Civil War (fig. 1).¹ This lithograph consists of two fragments, between which sits a caption that reads:

STUDY FROM NATURE.
VIEW UNDER A PASSING OMNIBUS. When the omnibus passes, the owners of the above feet come into view, as below, and the proverb about deceptive appearances is thus verified:

The upper fragment, which presents a scene viewed from the perspective of an observer looking under an unrepresented horse-drawn omnibus,² depicts four pairs of feet in motion on a pavement—women's feet, emerging from long skirts and petticoats pulled up and away from the dirt of the street. This view, its boundaries determined by the limited aperture allowed by the high clearance of the omnibus, invites the unwary observer to speculate about what lies outside its frame, something of which is revealed an instant later in the lower fragment. There the scene is presented from the same vantage point after the omnibus has passed. What had earlier been hidden from view is now visible: the women's upper bodies, moving along the street in front of a backdrop that suggests the divided panes of street-level

¹ *Harper's Weekly*, January 21, 1860, 48.

² The omnibus was a common form of mass transit at this time in New York, like the horsedrawn streetcar, which was similar but ran in tracks laid flush with the road. Omnibuses had very large wheels and a correspondingly high clearance. See Leslie M. Harris, *In the Shadow of Slavery: African Americans in New York City, 1626–1863* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), 76–77.

shop display windows. The woman on the far right, shod in delicate, feminine boots over white stockings, is, we now see, black; two of the three other women, all of whom are wearing tall, masculine, protective boots, are white. These two women, whose dress suggests middle-class respectability, are fine-featured and demure in affect, their expressions alert and purposeful. The black woman, her features grotesque and swollen, her costume overstated, is caricatured: head tossed back, breast thrust out, eyes half-closed, she floats forward proudly on an incongruously balletic step. The remaining woman, back turned, face and hands hidden from view, race unarticulated, occupies an ambiguous central space that separates black from white.

Study from Nature is about many things, all interrelated and densely layered, all having to do with movement, its proliferation, and its constraint in New York's urban spaces and in its larger civic sphere at the end of the antebellum era. As its divided image reveals, *Study from Nature* is a comic critique of women, race, fashion, and public presence in the crowded space of the city street. As its title suggests, the cartoon refers to discourses of *nature* and natural science, which in the mid-nineteenth century were frequently invoked, in both humorous and serious contexts, in the effort to order, classify, and control the movements of the street's unruly human inhabitants. The caption that follows the title, "view from a passing omnibus," indicates that the image is also concerned with *views*, viewing, and the restrictions and freedoms of the gaze; with *passing*, a movement performed by the omnibus and momentarily enacted by the black woman; and with the *omnibus* itself, a mode of public transportation that was increasingly enabling the rapid circulation of bodies in

urban centers.³ The remainder of the caption, “When the omnibus passes, the owners of the above feet come into view, as below, and the proverb about deceptive appearances is thus verified,” points to the significance of *feet*, another means of movement, one whose attire could be constraining or liberating, symbolic or practical; of *deceptive appearances*, a spectre that, in a moment of increasing racial amalgamation, contestation of gender roles, class mobility, and accelerated urbanization and industrialization, inspired deep anxiety in a white, male-dominated middle-class sphere eager to solidify its porous borders; and of *verification*, a desire for which was growing among middle-class inhabitants of the fast-changing metropolis as the urban landscape became ever more fluid and unintelligible.

Study from Nature plays humorously on the shock value of a black woman being mistaken for white, transforming contemporary bourgeois concerns over issues of gender and race into a comic, admonitory fantasy of fear and subjugation. As such, the cartoon belongs to a larger mid-century newsprint culture that both produced and gave visual and textual witness to ideologies of citizenship, national belonging, and sexual, racial, and class identity in an increasingly diverse and chaotic urban setting. My aim here is to explore these concerns, considering the ways *Study from Nature*, through what and how it represents, and to whom it proposes to represent, articulates a crisis surrounding the mobility, metamorphosis, and political activity of women within the increasingly fluid space of the New York street.

³ New York omnibus and horsecar routes were expanded in the 1850s. In 1855, 593 omnibuses traveled on 27 routes in Manhattan, and horse-drawn cars ran on street railways on Third, Fourth, Sixth, and Eighth Avenues. See Harris, *In the Shadow of Slavery*, 76–77, and Metropolitan Transport Authority of the State of New York, “New York City Transit—History and Chronology,” at www.mta.info/nyct/facts/ffhist.htm (December 12, 2004).

Framing this crisis in visual terms and inscribing it within the moving figures it depicts as well as within the viewer's own itinerant body, *Study from Nature* attempts, through a satirical form of urban ethnography, to order and map those transforming bodies' surfaces as registers of immutable essences, employing a visual notion of identity to assert political privilege through categories of race and gender. As Judith Butler has argued, "interiority is an effect and function of a decidedly public and social discourse, the public regulation of fantasy through the surface politics of the body."⁴ Butler describes gender as "a corporeal style, an 'act,'" one that is not reflective of, or expressive of, an essence but rather is an idea constituted through performances of gender. Gender is itself performative—where, in Butler's terms, "'performative' suggests a dramatic and contingent construction of meaning"—and is continuously and variously constructed as a strategy of cultural survival under contingent and limiting historical circumstances.⁵ Thus, Butler contends, gender is a cultural fiction, one that is regulated by punishment: "The historical possibilities materialized through various corporeal styles are nothing other than those punitively regulated cultural fictions alternately embodied and deflected under duress."⁶ *Study from Nature* functioned, I argue, in just such a punitive manner, participating in a regulatory discourse that monitored gender performance and, in a similar way, racial performance, by means of a critique of fashion, of a "surface politics of the body."

Staged within the constrained physical space of the modern street, the image uses

⁴ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York and London: Routledge, 1990), 136.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 139.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 140.

visual fragmentation to pursue a desire for coherence, but it is in this very effort at rendering the scene intelligible that it points to the intractability and opacity of vision and viewing in the New Yorker's changing world on the brink of war and confrontation. The image also points to a lacuna in understandings of modernity and urbanization in that city's pre-war years, suggesting the need for a reassessment of the role of women in its spaces; I will return to this point most fully in the Afterword.

In this paper, I will consider *Study from Nature* in three chapters. The first chapter surveys the cartoon's primary contexts—the changing conditions of the New York street the image represents and was circulated and consumed in, the city's print culture and newspaper publishing industry, public space as constituted by acts of reading and looking at printed images and words, and the texts and images that surround the image in the spaces of the newspaper it appeared in. In this chapter I will draw on David Henkin's study of public reading in antebellum New York to demonstrate that the city constructed in printed words and images was intimately linked to the city constructed in bricks and mortar and to the public life of its inhabitants.⁷ As a component of *Harper's Weekly*, as well as of larger mid-century print discourses, *Study from Nature* thus did not only depict a public performance and recreate an act of seeing. Its consumption was an act as constitutive of public life as those acts were—an act not merely reflective of, but also generative of, urban experience.⁸

⁷ David M. Henkin, *City Reading: Written Words and Public Spaces in Antebellum New York* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 5.

⁸ David Scobey, "Anatomy of the Promenade: The Politics of Bourgeois Sociability in Nineteenth-Century New York," *Social History* 17 (1992), 204. Drawing on the notion of the "performative utterance," which comes from J. L. Austin's *How to Do Things with Words* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962), Scobey describes public behavior as "performative"—not a report on the social identity of the people

In the following two chapters I examine the public debates and spaces the image represents, parallels, and constitutes, drawing extensively upon *Study from Nature's* surrounding images and texts to attempt an understanding of the cartoon. In chapter two I begin to explore visual aspects of the image, the ways its form relates to its content and to the character and politics of urban vision it participates in, and the disparity between the viewer the image seeks and the newspaper's actual readership. *Harper's Weekly* may have offered the possibility of political access to its large and diverse readership, including literate women and blacks, whose opportunities for civic participation were limited, as well as, possibly, illiterate readers, on whom the visual aspects of the paper would not have been lost.⁹ Yet, I will argue, the image attempts to address itself to a particular, desired male viewing subject, postulating his presence in the New York street while at the same time, paradoxically, revealing his constructed and fantastical nature. As I will try to establish, that subject can be only imaginary, not simply because he finds no corollary or referent in a specific, living individual, or because he does not represent a valid generic equivalent of the image's typical reader, but, more importantly, because he is intended to be emblematic of a wished-for civic class that shares a coherent, comprehensible collective subjectivity, a solid position at the top of a hierarchical social structure, and a firm grip on political privilege.

In chapter three, I turn from an analysis of the image's fragmented form and the

involved, but a constitutive enactment of it; see 204 n. 3. Henkin, in *City Reading*, also describes public acts as constitutive performance, with a focus on reading rather than promenading.

⁹ See Henkin, *City Reading*, 13, for a discussion of antebellum New York newspapers and their readerships. For a discussion of the readership of *Harper's Weekly*, see the chapter "'Harper's Weekly'" in Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines*, Vol. 2, 1850–1865 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957), 469–87.

problem of the viewer to a consideration of the women represented in the image, exploring the way they are represented in light of attitudes toward race and gender relations in the specific historical context of pre-Civil War New York, especially, abolitionist and feminist movements, regulations concerning civic participation, and fears surrounding social mobility and imposture. *Study from Nature* itself, like a number of other components of *Harper's Weekly* and other newspapers I will explore, constituted, I argue, part of a set of discourses that attempted regulation in an unruly public sphere. Drawing on John Kasson's study of the politics of nineteenth-century bourgeois American manners, Judith Butler's discussion of the politics of gender performance, and David Scobey's analysis of the mid-nineteenth century New York promenade, I will attempt to demonstrate that, through the reinforcement of codes of public behavior and dress and of notions of surface as an index of essence, these discourses served to depoliticize social relations, suppress political action, and obscure problems of civil rights the New York middle class was confronting.

Both in seeking a particular kind of viewer and in participating in a discourse that effectively served to regulate performances of gender and race through satirizing the dress and behavior of the women it represents, the image points to the dream of a well-ordered public realm, one in which classes were readily recognizable, gender and race relations were stable, and social inequalities were fixed. At the same time, however, *Study from Nature* shows this dream—one that would have been confined to a male-dominated, elite minority—to be untenable. The cartoon reveals itself as a comic fantasy of subjugation and exposes anxieties over the heterogeneous character of the image's actual audience and of the city's larger population, the breakdown of urban social relations, the illegibility of the street,

the increasing mobility of blacks and women, and their mounting resistance to discourses that suppressed political action and denied them subjective personhood.

In her study of caricature and public conduct in Britain and the United States in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Martha Banta discusses the cartoon as a form of comic art that operates by placing caricatured bodies into contact within the projected space of an image. The cartoon derives its authority, "its power to punish or instruct," she argues, through visual forms aimed at repetition, inversion, exaggeration, and "other tricks of surface mystification" that reveal uncomfortable truths about the subject it satirizes.¹⁰ It is through a depiction of the abnormal that implicity refers to accepted norms—and a resulting differentiation of "we" from "they"—that *Study from Nature* created its punitive social critique, making use of humorous visual distortion to reinforce the validity of the ideals it supported and commenting on collective human behavior in the social space of the New York street.¹¹ Thus, throughout this study, humor and the visual will be of primary concern. The image derives its power from humorous visual devices, but it is also a visual document of, and an embodiment of, social conflicts that revolved specifically around problems of vision.

¹⁰ Martha Banta, *Barbaric Intercourse: Caricature and the Culture of Conduct, 1841–1936* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 4, 52.

¹¹ See *ibid.*, 4, for a discussion of this type of visual distortion.

Chapter One

Reading, Looking, and Public Space

I.

Urban streets constituted a major space of public exchange and sociability in nineteenth-century New York, a rapidly growing metropolis that by 1860 had a population of over 800,000, or over a million including Brooklyn. Newspapers, magazines, prints, and guidebooks depicted the life of the New York streetscape as representative of the city's energy, diversity, intricacy, and cosmopolitanism, but also of its instability and disorder, and of the incongruous elements it harbored.¹² The street, filled with vitality and confusion, was also perceived as being ripe with danger. Walt Whitman, who frequently proclaimed his love for the jumbled disorder and thrilling diversity of New York life, felt the threat of urban tumult in its public spaces, in 1856 describing the metropolis as "one of the most crime-haunted and dangerous cities in Christendom."¹³ Many feared that, in the crowded, chaotic space of the street, traditional social relations, behavior, and manners were breaking down.

So apparently dense with meaning, the street was becoming perplexingly illegible,¹⁴ and contemporary literature portraying the city concerned itself in large part with guiding readers through its chaos. The guidebook *Miller's New York As It Is* related, "Persons who . . . visit [the] great city would gladly accept the services of some . . . guide, who could conduct

¹² See David Scobey, *Empire City: The Making and Meaning of the New York City Landscape* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), 174–80. Population figures are from John F. Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility: Manners in Nineteenth-Century Urban America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1990), 71.

¹³ Quoted in David S. Reynolds, "Of Me I Sing: Whitman in His Time," *New York Times Book Review*, October 4, 1992, 27.

¹⁴ Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility*, 70.

them through its perplexing mazes, pointing out what there is to see, and how to see it."¹⁵ As the rapid expansion of the capitalist economy of the city challenged the power of its inhabitants to keep pace with its changes, textual and visual urban sketches that served as aids in the recognition of the new social types the transforming city engendered became increasingly popular.¹⁶ These social types were often as illegible as the complex social processes they were a part of,¹⁷ often prompting resident and visiting writers to order them according to a classificatory impulse. One Englishman said of an 1865 visit to Broadway:

The moving panorama of human life . . . on the Broadway Pave, presents a curious . . . picture to the student of ethnology. There you may see the lean lanky Puritan from the east, with keen eye and demure aspect, rubbing shoulders with a coloured dandy, whose ebony figures are hooped in gold.¹⁸

Broadway was the iconic street in the city, a place of infinite variety that at once epitomized civilization and civility and embodied an unruly confusion, a space of disorder in which social differences existed in hazardously close proximity with each other. Depictions such as this themselves became a means of elevating and inscribing boundaries and classificatory order on its ever-changing, unregulated public space—precarious, unstable, and charged with all the

¹⁵ *Miller's New York as it is, or Stranger's guide-book to the cities of New York, Brooklyn and adjacent places: Comprising notices of every object of interest to strangers. . . .* (New York: James Miller, 1866), 128. Quoted in Scobey, *Empire City*, 174.

¹⁶ This phrase is Scobey's; see *Empire City*, p. 174.

¹⁷ Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility*, 72, 82.

¹⁸ James Burn, *Three Years Among the Working-Classes in the United States* (London: Smith, Elder, 1865), 117–18. Quoted in Scobey, *Empire City*, 175.

danger and potential of metropolitan life.¹⁹

Anxiety over the difficulty of reading strangers in the street was stressed by numerous writers, who emphasized the great degree to which commercial society had mercilessly wiped away individual human qualities and reduced people to mere caricatures. In his study of the politics of nineteenth-century American manners, John Kasson has argued that, indeed, the immense popularity caricature enjoyed as a genre during the nineteenth century marked an effort to record, through absurd exaggeration, this process of social change.²⁰ Humorous magazine and newspaper street sketches performed the same role as urban sketches and guidebooks, only at a satirical level. *Study from Nature* is just such a satirical sketch. As prescriptive as it was descriptive, it not only represented the New York landscape, it also ordered it and suggested how it should be seen, making it representable to a public for whom visibility was increasingly indexed as social legibility.²¹

In 1860, New York, which was pivotal in the mid-century transformation of the American publishing industry, controlled one-third of U.S. periodical circulation and half of its lithography production.²² The city was at the center of an emergent national print culture that was promoted by innovations in illustration, printing, and book production, by an increase in mass-marketing enabled by an expanding rail-distribution network, by the establishment of "omnibus houses" that consolidated markets for books, primers, and

¹⁹ Scobey, *Empire City*, 175.

²⁰ Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility*, 70, 81.

²¹ Here I am drawing on Scobey's argument in the chapter "Imagining the Imperial Metropolis," in his *Empire City*; see especially 174–75. On the notion of the visible as an index of social position, see also Shawn Michelle Smith, *American Archives: Gender, Race, and Class in Visual Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), introduction, 3–10.

²² Scobey, *Empire City*, 26.

journals, and by the rise of best-selling, manufactured star novelists—all factors that enlarged a diverse American reading public. The proliferation of “news” as a transient but easily gathered, consistently reproducible commodity produced a new regime of information that constructed its readership as a national market, addressing them as what David Scobey describes as “communicants in a triumphant commercial order subordinated to the metropolis.”²³ According to Benedict Anderson, the national practice of reading daily newspapers “has served historically as a key template of national consciousness, ‘creating that remarkable confidence of community in anonymity which is the hallmark of modern nations.’”²⁴

Harper Brothers, like such firms as Western Union, the American News Company, and the New York *Tribune*, played a major role in creating a new kind of public sphere in the mid-nineteenth century in which middle- and upper-class Americans increasingly consumed news, business reports, and visual and narrative depictions of themselves as a public.²⁵ Frank Luther Mott argues that the 1850 launching of *Harper’s Magazine*, a collection of commentary, fiction, and illustration, was the most important factor in the establishment of a new era in American publishing. Harper Brothers added two other periodicals in the subsequent two decades: *Harper’s Weekly*, which focused on news and politics and was

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ See Scobey’s chapter “Metropolis and Nation” in *Empire City*. On news as a commodity and the new regime of information, Scobey (*Empire City*, 26) draws on the work of Anderson, who argues that the national practice of reading daily newspapers “has served historically as a key template of national consciousness, ‘creating that remarkable confidence of community in anonymity which is the hallmark of modern nations.’” See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (New York and London: Verso, 1991).

²⁵ Scobey, *Empire City*, 24–25.

aimed primarily, although not exclusively, at a middle-class readership, in 1857, and *Harper's Bazaar*, a fashion magazine designed to appeal to middle-class women, in 1867.²⁶

Harper's Weekly was established partly in response to the success of *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, which was founded in New York in 1855 by an engraver from the *London Illustrated News*. *Harper's Weekly* assumed a more genteel attitude than *Frank Leslie's*, however, and was aimed at a higher socioeconomic class of readers. From 1857 to the beginning of the Civil War, *Harper's Weekly* took a moderate, cautiously conservative editorial position on volatile issues of the day such as slavery, partly in keeping with the conservative politics of the Harper family and partly in an effort to retain the southern component of its readership, which totalled 120,000 nationwide by 1860, the year *Study from Nature* was published.²⁷ For example, *Harper's Weekly* downplayed the implications of the militant abolitionist John Brown's raid of the United States arsenal and armory at Harper's Ferry, Virginia, using cartoons in some of their late 1859 and early 1860 issues to create a picture of slaves as contented with their lot and uninterested of the prospect of revolt.²⁸ Similarly, after Lincoln was nominated to the Republican party, in May 1860, *Harper's Weekly* took a neutral, wait-and-see stance, offering details to readers on Lincoln, his views on slavery, and his party's platform.²⁹ It was not until after the Civil War began

²⁶ Mott, *A History of American Magazines*, Vol. 2, 1850–1865, 4, 30–31, 383–405, 469–87.

²⁷ See the chapter "Harper's Weekly" in Mott, *A History of American Magazines*, Vol. 2, 1850–1865, 469–87. See also Scobey, *Empire City*, 26–27.

²⁸ See, for example, the cartoons in *Harper's Weekly*, November 26, 1859, and January 28, 1860.

²⁹ See *African American History in the Press, 1851–1899: From the Coming of the Civil War to the Rise of Jim Crow as Reported and Illustrated in Selected Newspapers of the Time*, vol. 1, 1851–1869 (Detroit: Gale Research, 1996), 147–48.

that the paper adopted a Unionist point of view and turned toward support of abolition.³⁰ Thus, the unsympathetic image of blacks presented in *Study from Nature*, a cartoon that predates the paper's antislavery, pro-civil rights stance, is consistent with the its early, conservative editorial policies.

II.

As a newspaper cartoon, *Study from Nature* takes on complex meanings in relation to the layers of visual and textual narrative that surround it as well as to the entangled discourses such narrative layers create in relationship to each other. Thus the cartoon can be better understood within the context of the back page of the January 21, 1860 issue of *Harper's Weekly* and the text and images that appear with it there (see fig. 2). *Study from Nature* can also be better understood in relation to its placement within larger contexts: the other sixteen pages of the January 21 issue, *Harper's Weekly* as an unfolding visual and textual work with shifting graphic and editorial policies, other New York newspapers and magazines, and the diverse visual and verbal discourses these newspapers generated and responded to. As Boss Tweed pointed out when he cried, "I don't care what they print about me; most of my constituents can't read anyway—but *them damn pictures!*" the impact of the visual is integral to the force of a cartoon, and a cartoon's visual component may reach more readers;³¹ thus, vision is central to this consideration of *Study from Nature*. The verbal is also important to this study, however, not only because texts surround the image in the January 21 issue of

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Quoted by Banta, *Barbaric Intercourse*, 4.

Harper's Weekly, but also because the cartoon, which is divided by a caption, is itself partially textual in nature.

The newspaper space of the issue of *Harper's Weekly* in which *Study from Nature* appears embodies and is analogous to the public space it describes at a number of levels. The newspaper's printed pages and the metropolitan streets were both public spaces, and both were visited by an ever-expanding swell of New Yorkers, often simultaneously. The paper's columnar grids mimic the city's grid of streets—spaces in which, just as in columns of newspaper text, disparate elements, notable among them civic debates and advertising, found themselves juxtaposed.³² Not unlike the street scene it describes, *Study from Nature* shares space with an overwhelming and chaotic array of elements. On the back page of *Harper's Weekly*, where it was published (fig. 2), the cartoon sits among a collage of texts and images: a cartoon that comments humorously on tensions between Catholic and Protestant immigrant Irish, and a collection of advertisements—for help wanted, a Baltimore inn, Lea & Perrins' Worcestershire sauce, a prepared glue, an anti-arthritis wine, an asthma remedy, and a cure for "the relief and cure of suffering females" in the form of a "uterine catholicon." In the rest of the issue, the image finds company with stories about Napoleon's scheme for Italy and a fire at Pemberton Mills in Lawrence, Massachusetts, that killed some two hundred workers, as well as book reviews, notices of new British magazines, news from Europe, Asia, and the Caribbean, a report on the activities of Congress, and an engraving showing a ball at Tammany Hall commemorating the battle of New Orleans, among many

³² I am drawing here on Henkin; see *City Reading*, 5, 15.

other items. Just as people, things, spaces, and ideas accumulated in the city street in an apparently random manner, the parts that make up the back page and the larger January 21 issue were to some degree perhaps coincidentally rather than intentionally gathered together, yet, as I will show in the chapters that follow this one, important connections are evident among them as well.

The words of newspaper texts and images such as *Study from Nature* that described and gave shape to the city did so not only at an abstract and discursive level; they also found material form in newspapers within public space and played a role in the experiences of everyday life. As Henkin has pointed out, "newspapers did not simply resemble the streets of Manhattan; they littered them as well."³³ Situated in an ephemeral publication circulated on the street and carried on the body through urban space as well as into the domestic interior, *Study from Nature* enacted and encouraged public movement, while at the same time inviting the reader to engage with it in the interior spaces where newspapers were read, to play with it like an optical parlor game, cutting it into pieces and reassembling it, trying to make sense of the fragmented outside world it refers to from within the perhaps more contemplative and apparently coherent sphere of the inside. Henkin has emphasized, however, that newspapers in antebellum New York also frequently functioned outside of the domestic sphere; they were displayed, sold, and often discarded on the street, to be sure, but they were also read in public, and public reading constituted an important component of everyday public

³³ Ibid., 5.

performance.³⁴ Thus a *Harper's Weekly* reader encountering *Study from Nature* while looking through the paper in a public setting would likely have been able to experiment with taking the image apart and putting it back together only at conceptual level, yet that restriction would itself have reproduced the physical restrictions that reader commonly experienced in urban space. In any case, acts of reading within the urban environment, whether performed indoors or outdoors, were not, Henkin argues, inherently private experiences, lodged within the individual reader's consciousness. Reading was not merely a means of understanding, coping with, or escaping from city life, but rather was a constitutive component of it.³⁵ While an issue of *Harper's Weekly* might provide its readers with guidance in the understanding of their relationship to and place within the city, the act of reading the paper was itself, for them, inseparable from primary urban experience.

III.

Urban spaces and reading are, historically, deeply interconnected; cities and print both bear a strong relationship to capital and the expansion of commerce, and, because of this relationship, urbanization and print culture both occupy significant positions in the history of modernity. In the nineteenth century, print culture and the written word were important in facilitating and creating the networks of communication that were necessary to the processes of urbanization and the growth of cities; that growth both resulted from and encouraged the expansion of communication technologies, of which the city itself was a

³⁴ *Ibid.*, Introduction, 1–25.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.

major component.³⁶ Henkin argues that the broader implications of such connections to the study of the nineteenth-century city remain insufficiently explored:

Any insistence on the historical interconnectedness of cities and reading runs counter to the way we typically construct their modern incarnations. In the historical imagination, the nineteenth-century city appears as a place of cacophonous commotion, while the nineteenth-century reader sits in silent solitude, engrossed in the pleasures of a novel. These images are not without basis . . . yet they are deeply misleading. To begin with, beneath the bustle and noise of any big city lies a broad foundation of quiet agreements and assumptions. In antebellum New York, for example, both residents and visitors needed all kinds of knowledge in order to function in a world of strangers. From a street name or an omnibus destination to the existence of a vacant apartment or haberdashery, from the location and nature of a riot to the exchange value of personal property, crucial bits of information undergirded all the activities, gestures, and encounters that comprised city life. Increasingly, this information came in the form of writing or print.³⁷

As I have noted, historians of nineteenth-century urban culture have concerned themselves with the ways city dwellers have tried to understand their relationship to their chaotic and rapidly changing surroundings. The notion of the city as a text that can be read has become a popular one within studies of urban history. While discussions of the legibility and illegibility of the city make use of textual models to describe non-textual environments³⁸—Mary P. Ryan's study of urban parades describes "the vocabulary and

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 4–5.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

syntax by which social and cultural order was created," for example³⁹—it is important, Henkin contends, not to overlook the fact that cities such as New York functioned as signifying structures in large part through the availability and consumption of actual texts. The public acts of reading Henkin calls "city reading" pervaded a wide spectrum of activity and geographical space in the growing metropolis. "Cut loose from personal authority and circulating promiscuously in a world of strangers," newspapers, among other printed documents, "provided new vehicles and new models for communication" in the New York environment. "Around these urban texts," he writes, "a new kind of public was born."⁴⁰

As Henkin has noted, the role of commercial print culture in the construction of urban publics and intersubjectivity has been analyzed by a number of scholars, among them Jurgen Habermas, in his analysis of public opinion and the transformation of the public sphere during the eighteenth century,⁴¹ Benedict Anderson, in his study of newspapers and novels in the formation of the modern nation-state,⁴² and Michael Warner, in his study of the political uses of print in Revolutionary America.⁴³ Although there is much that distinguishes these writers' ideas from one another, for all of them, in a given set of historical circumstances, it is the practices of reading, centered around and represented in particular genres, rather than the ideas presented in a text or group of texts, that make it possible for

³⁹ Ibid., 5, referring to Mary P. Ryan, "The American Parade: Representations of the Nineteenth-Century Social Order," in Lynn Hunt, ed., *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 131–53.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 6–7.

⁴¹ Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1989).

⁴² Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

⁴³ Michael Warner, *The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990).

people to understand their relationships to each other and to constitute themselves as a public body or a collective subjectivity. Henkin argues, however, that the idea of the public as a physical space is perplexingly absent from the publics theorized by these writers, publics that he sees as idealized and abstract in both concept and practice: "Far from emphasizing the physical congregation and confrontation of people in open spaces," their discussions "often turn public space into a metaphor for a set of physically placeless encounters, an aspatial context for political dialogue and debate."⁴⁴ Henkin argues instead for a discussion of the antebellum New York urban public as one that was rooted in the spatial experience of the physical city and structured around the collective practice of reading. The streets, as major sites of public interaction, shared public experience, and experiences of the reading self as public spectacle, are the locus of his reconstruction of that public.

Study from Nature's status as an image-text that acted through its own consumption within lived metropolitan space is, from this perspective, critical. The image lends itself at both the textual and visual levels to an analytical approach of the kind Henkin argues for, not only because of its status as a component of a newspaper that would have been distributed and read in the street and that paralleled and helped constitute that street, but also because the street is itself the subject of the image and the image's form mimics the spatial and temporal experience of a viewer putatively situated in that street. In this light, *Study from Nature* can be understood as part of the discourse of printed word and printed image that arose within pre-Civil War urban print culture, a discourse that was integral, not extraneous

⁴⁴ Henkin, *City Reading*, 10.

to, constructions and perceptions of city life, one that was both created by and creative of public space and urban subjectivity.

Chapter Two

Image, Vision, and Viewer

I.

Just as the pages *Study from Nature* sits among are spatially analogous to the physical environment of the street, the image itself mimics the spatial experience of a viewer standing in that street, at once describing and formally manifesting the visual change that was at the core of new challenges to urban legibility. In this respect, the image serves both as a guide for the contemporary reader and as a visual puzzle that re-presented to that reader many of the changes in vision that inhabitants of the city were beginning to experience—changes that occurred alongside the rise of industrial commercialism, developments in fashion, architecture, and systems of urban transport, and increasing urban density. Jonathan Crary has argued that, in the first half of the nineteenth century, a “reorganization of vision” took place that was “inseparable from a massive reorganization of knowledge and social practices that modified in myriad ways the productive, cognitive, and desiring capacities of the human subject.”⁴⁵ Vision was relocated within the human body, producing a new kind of observer whose modernization involved an “adaptation of the eye to rationalized forms of movement.” This adaptation, which corresponded to increasing rationalization and control of the human subject at institutional and economic levels, occurred as a result of an “increasing abstraction of optical experience from a stable referent,” an “uprooting’ of vision.”⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press), 1992, 3. See also chapter 1, “Modernity and the Problem of the Observer,” 1–24.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 113.

Momentarily immobilizing the viewer, incorporating that viewer's body into a mechanical apparatus, and requiring him or her to participate in a predetermined unfolding of visual experience, *Study from Nature* employs techniques of visual manipulation similar to those of certain optical devices and environments—such as the diorama, a “machine of wheels in motion” of which the observer was a component—that Crary sees as paradigmatic of the nineteenth-century reorganization of vision and the change in the status of the observer. Thus the diorama, first given definitive form in the 1820s by Louis J. M. Daguerre, was different from the static panorama painting that had appeared before it, in the 1790s, in that it denied the spectator the autonomy and physical mobility the latter had allowed.⁴⁷

Study from Nature positions the viewer in a physically and visually constrained position within public space, at street level, where he or she looks from one side of the road underneath the omnibus toward the other side. Held still for a moment while glancing under the omnibus—an animated mechanical apparatus that moves across the field of vision, briefly creating a tiny window that limits that field—the viewer is caught in a place and in a moment that narrowly dictate the spatial boundaries and temporal course of the viewing experience. Directing the observer's body, the image locates that body in space, determining the movement of its eyes, insisting upon the fleeting, compartmentalized nature of its optical experience. The upper frame presents the viewer with the disembodied feet that seem to belong at the bottom of the image, the lower frame the footless torsos and heads that seem to belong above. Even after the omnibus has passed, nowhere is the putatively whole scene

⁴⁷ Ibid., 8, 112–13.

presented to us in reunified form, its bodies reassembled. This spatial fragmentation, brought about by the mobility of the uniquely urban technology of the omnibus, proceeds cinematically, in sequential frames, from the view encountered in a downward glance to that encountered in an upward one. It is a fragmentation that mimics the temporal movement of the eye—and the cognitively fractured experience—of an observer standing in the position the image suggests. *Study from Nature*'s fragmentary composition points out the multiplicity of vision and impossibility of pure access to coherent space in an urban environment increasingly defined by transience and technological complexity. For its viewer, as for Crary's observer, perception is kinetic and temporal, vision inextricably bound to movement, to "experiences of flux and obsolescence."⁴⁸

The movement of the omnibus in *Study from Nature* is central to the operation of the image and its relationship to the viewer. A relatively new technology in the 1850s that had expanded widely throughout Manhattan by 1860, the omnibus was a form of public transportation, similar to the horse-drawn streetcar except that it ran in tracks laid flush with the road, enabling it to move faster. The omnibus enabled passages, allowing for unprecedentedly rapid circulation of people throughout the city and unprecedented mixing of disparate social types.⁴⁹ Its increasing presence encouraged both a physical mobility—the movement of bodies and technology through the streets—and a social mobility—as in, for example, the black woman's attempt at "passing" in the scene represented in *Study from*

⁴⁸ Ibid., 20–21.

⁴⁹ Harris, *In the Shadow of Slavery*, 76–77.

Nature.⁵⁰ The omnibus had a profound effect on ways of seeing within the spaces of the city.

Walter Benjamin noted that, in Europe, vision came to be privileged over hearing for riders of new forms of public transportation, such as the omnibus:

Interpersonal relationships in big cities are distinguished by a marked preponderance of the activity of the eye over the activity of the ear. The main reason for this is the public means of transportation. Before the development of buses, railroads and trams in the nineteenth century, people had never been in a position of having to look at one another for long minutes or even hours without speaking to one another.⁵¹

The two frames of *Study from Nature* are structured around the omnibus' movement through time and space, a composition that emphasizes the ways the omnibus affected visual fields in urban settings and that points out the important roles circulation and technology both played in the changing antebellum city.

II.

As Crary notes, Benjamin's writings, particularly those on Baudelaire,⁵² have contributed much to popular notions of what the mid-nineteenth-century urban observer was and how that figure emerged from a heterogeneous array of convergent new technologies, new spaces,

⁵⁰ The appearance of the omnibus in an image that deals with black-white tensions such as *Study from Nature* may also allude, however obliquely, to tensions surrounding a policy adopted in 1860 by some New York railway and streetcar companies that allowed blacks equal access to streetcars. See *ibid.*, 270–71.

⁵¹ Walter Benjamin, "The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire" (1938), in *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism*, trans. Harry Zohn (London: NLB, 1977).

⁵² See Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire*, and Charles Baudelaire, "The Painter of Modern Life" (1863), in Charles Baudelaire, Norman Cameron, and Peter Quennell, *My Heart Laid Bare and Other Prose Writings* (London: Soho Book Co., 1986).

and new economies.⁵³ An iconic, long-problematized, and now clichéd figure in the discourse of modernity and urbanization that interested Benjamin is that of the *flâneur*, an ambulatory male observer of everyday life, a window-shopper, a consumer of what Baudelaire calls a “phantasmagoric” stream of commoditized images of people and goods, at home amid the metropolitan marketplace’s “ebb and flow of movement.”⁵⁴ This gendered construct was not exclusively a European one; descriptions of a detached, peripatetic masculine observer’s encounters with the crowded city occur frequently in the works of such American writers as Edgar Allan Poe, Walt Whitman, and Nathaniel Hawthorne.⁵⁵

Harper’s Weekly and other New York newspapers in the years 1857 to 1860 are rife with narratives and cartoons that assume the point of view of a curious, flâneur-like male figure who strolls through the city, observing and commenting on street affairs. “The Lounger,” a column ostensibly featuring notes and remarks of a writer who “saunters about town staring in at many windows . . . overcome and powerless with the sense of multitude he beholds,”⁵⁶ is the most consistent manifestation of such a putative figure in *Harper’s Weekly*. A number of such narratives are, like *Study from Nature*, set in the environs of or on the public omnibus. In *The Man About Town*, for example, a column in the April 11, 1857 issue of *Harper’s Weekly*, a wry, itinerant, detached male spectator describes the “comedy of intrigue” he observes on an omnibus:

⁵³ Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, 19–20.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁵⁵ See the chapter “The Flâneur in America” in Dana Brand, *The Spectator and the City in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). One such example, Poe’s “Man of the Crowd,” is discussed later in this thesis.

⁵⁶ *Harper’s Weekly*, June 11, 1859, 4.

If all the world is a stage, and the men and women on it are players, I must say that the portion of it known as the Broadway lines of omnibuses is devoted to the light-comedy business. . . . Any body who chooses may, at the expense of six cents, see . . . Congrevian heroes playing their light-comedy parts in the Broadway stages. . . . To divest the subject of all allegory, I simply state, in my capacity of a man about town, that the omnibuses of this city are fast becoming places of assignation; places where chance rencontres are had, which ripen into vicious intimacies; where impudent men not unfrequently outrage modest women, and Intriguers of the old school of comedy display themselves to an admiring audience. Who is it that has not, at some period or another, observed this comedy of intrigue in the omnibus? The sedate and well-dressed Lothario returning up-town from his business; the sudden entry of some dashing-looking woman, whose hoops are marvelous in dimensions; the *oeillades* passing from the one to the other; the significant coughs; the feet that grope after other feet in the straw; the getting out of the lady, and the getting out of the gentleman immediately afterward. All this is so palpable, leads so evidently to intrigue, and is of such frequent occurrence, that before long ladies will find it to their disadvantage to be seen in omnibuses.⁵⁷

As many critics have pointed out, the flaneur described by Benjamin and Baudelaire as well as by some nineteenth-century American writers is, like Crary's observer, essentially a male figure, one that has often been constructed as an embodiment of the "male gaze" and an emblem of male freedom and power in the gendered space of the city.⁵⁸ Elizabeth Wilson, among other scholars, has challenged this pervasive construct as a fictional orthodoxy of modernity, however. Wilson has argued that, far from being a solid projection of male

⁵⁷ *Harper's Weekly*, April 11, 1857, 227.

⁵⁸ Elizabeth Wilson, "The Invisible Flaneur," *New Left Review*, no. 191 (February 1992), 98. See also Lynda Nead, *Victorian Babylon: People, Streets, and Images in Nineteenth-Century London* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 24.

authority, the flaneur is an unstable figure who, "caught up in the violent dislocations that characterized urbanization," "represented not the triumph of masculine power, but its attenuation." Wilson has noted that the notion of the flaneur as a "masterful voyeur" tends to ignore the ambivalence of the role and obscures the "enormous anxiety" the discourse on the flaneur expresses. Indeed, for Wilson, the flaneur can be only an imaginary figure, one "to be deconstructed, a shifting projection of angst rather than a solid embodiment of male bourgeois power."⁵⁹

Like a number of other visual and textual narratives in *Harper's* in the years surrounding it, *Study from Nature*, I argue, positions a figure not unlike this imaginary flaneur as its reader-observer, pursuing a desire for his existence and his dominance, yet also, intentionally or otherwise, configuring him as a scopic archetype who—like the anxious flaneur Wilson describes—is a manifestation of masculine crisis. The image seeks this authoritative if hopelessly apparitional figure as viewer in an attempt to enact his solidification, just as it uses visual fragmentation to articulate a longing for spatial coherence, but it is in this very effort at rendering that viewer, and the bisected bodies circulating within the image, intelligible, that it points to them as unmanageable and unruly. The coherent, flaneur-like male viewer is a discursive construct, not an empirically locatable figure, and in pointing to him as the image's desired viewer, I mean to emphasize that his construction is a reaction to the variety that characterized the body of bourgeois and other men and women

⁵⁹ Wilson, "The Invisible Flaneur," 97–99, 103.

that historically comprised the readership of *Harper's Weekly*.⁶⁰ It is precisely against the impossibility of the flaneur's hegemonic materialization as viewer—the irreversibility of his fictional status—that a heterogeneous *Harper's* viewership, and a diversity of viewing and moving subjects in the streets, emerge and become legible.

In contrast to the flaneur, the actual, living white male bourgeoisie of 1860 New York was already aware of this heterogeneous array of viewers, already confused by the chaos and increasing illegibility of the modern city, already in transit and transforming as a class, already disoriented by the crowd of which it formed a part. Confronted with the visual metamorphosis of bourgeois and free black women, by their increasing freedom to move about in metropolitan space, and by their mounting resistance to the subjugatory discourses that male members of the white middle class often used to claim and exert privilege, that bourgeoisie was further destabilized. It was this reality that made the fantasy of the powerful, coherent male viewer appealing in *Study from Nature's* comic fantasy, if only to that class and gender of New Yorkers, among whom the publishers and writers of *Harper's Weekly* figured prominently. The image fails to maintain the integrity of the viewer it seeks, presenting instead a shifting, uncertain figure who, although equally imaginary, found closer corollaries in lived urban space, and allowed the anxieties the image produced and responded to to be laid bare. *Study from Nature* thus at once articulates this fantasy and reveals it to be untenable, pointing out the disparity between that wished-for, definable subject and the overwhelming, incomprehensible heterogeneity of the image's actual audience—a

⁶⁰ See "Harper's Weekly," in Mott, *A History of American Magazines*, Vol. 2, 1850–1865, 469–87. See also Scobey, *Empire City*, 26.

heterogeneity that parallels the uncontrollable diversification and semantic disintegration of the urban street that the image represents.

Study from Nature addresses this imaginary, flaneur-like viewer as the physiognomist of the street, naturalist of an unnatural environment, who characteristically goes, in Benjamin's words, "botanizing on the asphalt."⁶¹ Attempting to satisfy the naturalist's classificatory inclination, the image invites the viewer to impose a mock-scientific order on that environment. The title *Study from Nature* humorously identifies the image as a study of natural history, proposing an investigative observer gazing at zoological subjects unselfconsciously on display in a "natural" world. Another cartoon found elsewhere in the same issue of *Harper's Weekly*, on a full-page spread of visual satire mocking the city and country lives of urban dwellers and, especially, fashion, depends for its comic effect on a similar attitude. In this image, titled *Sea-Side Studies* (fig. 3),⁶² two men read aloud from their guidebooks about the fine, colorful, soft-skinned "creatures" that may be seen along the coast, a spectacle that, the books relate, will bring pleasure to any "lover of nature":

IMPERTINENT COUSIN (reads): 'The rocks along our Coast may be seen studded with these beautiful zoophites. The skin is soft, and the tentacles are of the finest violet, mingled often with pink, mauve, green, and yellow; indeed the colors vary so much in different individuals, all alike beautiful, that it is impossible to describe them rigidly. During the ebb of the tide, these creatures may be contemplated on a fine day to great advantage, and few spectacles are calculated to afford more pleasure to a lover of nature.' 'H'm! here are two lovely specimens, Fred; you take

⁶¹ See Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire*, 36, and Wilson, "The Invisible Flaneur," 97.

⁶² *Sea-Side Studies*, from *A Broadsheet of Good Things*, by John Leach, *Harper's Weekly*, January 21, 1860, pp. 40-41. This image is on p. 40.

one, I'll take the other!

In the cartoon, the “beautiful zoophites” that the men propose to collect with the nets they carry turn out to be women, who blend like the animals they are likened to into the landscape, the shapes of their hoop skirts echoing the shapes of the rocks they stand among. *Habits of Our Modern Savages* (fig. 4),⁶³ a cartoon from the April 18, 1860, issue of *Harper's Weekly*, similarly represents women as exoticized objects of ethnographic inquiry, this time returning readers to the New York streets and lampooning a phenomenon that Anthony Trollope complained about in his 1862 *North America*: that of women in crinolines pressuring men to give up their seats on New York omnibuses.⁶⁴ In this cartoon, which is set in a Broadway omnibus, a woman inconveniences male riders with her enormous hoop skirt, her ridiculous fashion habits evidence of her quaintly “savage” nature.

In these images, as in *Study from Nature*, natural science is invoked as a means of ordering “creatures” of a world of artifice that signals the encroachment of industrialization and commodity culture. The cartoons propose that the key to understanding the women they represent is their appearance. They imply that a reading of the women’s bodies will reveal a gendered and racialized interiority, an essence or depth, that, as the analogies to the animal and “primitive” worlds suggest, links them to a subordinate position in the human social hierarchy.⁶⁵ By humorously positing a notion of women as creatures of a legible bestial

⁶³ *Habits of Our Modern Savages*, *Harper's Weekly*, April 18, 1860, 112.

⁶⁴ Anthony Trollope, *North America*, ed. Donald Smalley and Bradford Allen Booth (New York: Da Capo Press, 1951), 191.

⁶⁵ I am drawing here on the model of nineteenth-century American subjectivity formulated by Smith in *American Archives*; see especially her introduction, 3–10.

order separate from the domain of culture, reason, and civic responsibility, these images sought to reinforce constraints on their movements—in public space, but also within the political sphere.

Chapter Three

Social Resistance, Social Critique

I.

Harper's Weekly published *Study from Nature* just over a year before the United States Civil War broke out, in a moment when issues of citizenship, civic capacity, and national belonging were rapidly coming to the forefront of public consciousness, especially in New York, which was a nexus for feminist, abolitionist, and black manhood suffrage movements. In *Harper's Weekly*, these movements were a common subject of columns and cartoons that tended to take a cautiously conservative editorial stance, in keeping with strategies aimed at retaining both the southern and northern components of the paper's readership.⁶⁶ Four years earlier, in the case of *Dred Scott v Sandford*, the United States supreme court had decided that no blacks—whether enslaved or free—were or could become citizens of the United States. The court also ruled that slaves did not become free when brought into free territory. Chief Justice Roger B. Taney wrote in the court's majority decision that blacks "had no rights which the white man was bound to respect," and that "the negro might justly and lawfully be reduced to slavery for his benefit. He was bought and sold and treated as an ordinary article of merchandise and traffic, whenever profit could be made by it."⁶⁷

⁶⁶ See "Harper's Weekly," in Mott, *A History of American Magazines*, Vol. 2, 1850–1865, 469–87.

⁶⁷ *Dred Scott v Sandford*, 60 U.S. 393 (1856). In the Missouri Compromise of 1820, the United States Congress had made slavery illegal in a portion of the federal territory included in the Louisiana Purchase. After Dred Scott, a slave, accompanied his owner, Sanford (misspelled as "Sandford" in the court's transcript), into this territory, he sued Sanford in federal court for his and his family's freedom. The case was dismissed by the Supreme Court on the grounds that Sanford and Scott could not be considered citizens of different states because, under the Constitution, blacks were not citizens. Chief Justice Taney also ruled that the Missouri Compromise was unconstitutional in that it denied slaveholders their property without due process. This

The decision became an important catalyst in debates that would divide pro- and anti-slavery forces. In October 1859, three months before *Study from Nature* was published, the militant abolitionist John Brown brought this division into sharp focus when he and twenty-one followers captured the United States arsenal and armory at Harper's Ferry, Virginia, killing a number of its defenders. Brown had intended the takeover to be the first step in forming an emancipation army, but the arsenal was recaptured the next morning by Lieutenant-Colonel Robert E. Lee. Brown was hanged for treason, insurrection, and murder in December 1859, under heavy news coverage, especially in *Harper's Weekly*,⁶⁸ the event sparking a national furor and heightening tensions over the issue of slavery. Five months later, in May 1860, Abraham Lincoln was nominated to the Republican Party and, in November of the same year, he was elected. This led to the South's secession from the Union, setting the stage for the Civil War, which broke out in 1861, and, in 1863, abolition.⁶⁹

In the years leading up to the war, emancipationist and black manhood suffrage movements intersected at many points with women's movements, especially after 1848, when the first women's rights convention was held in Seneca Falls, New York.⁷⁰ In these interconnected antebellum discourses, the figures of slave and woman, bondage and

decision was to be reversed in 1868 by the Fourteenth Amendment.

⁶⁸ *Harper's Weekly* was among the newspapers that gave extensive coverage to the Harper's Ferry raid in 1859. See *African American History in the Press, 1851-1899*, 95-144. John Brown's raid is also mentioned briefly in the January 21, 1860 issue of *Harper's Weekly*.

⁶⁹ The Emancipation Proclamation, announced by President Abraham Lincoln in September of 1862, took effect on January 1, 1863. For a discussion its implications, see Harris, *In the Shadow of Slavery*, 270-88.

⁷⁰ See Karen Sanchez-Eppler, "Bodily Bonds: The Intersecting Rhetorics of Feminism and Abolition," in *The Culture of Sentiment: Race, Gender, and Sentimentality in Nineteenth-Century America*, ed. Shirley Samuels (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

marriage, were often conflated. Suffragist Elizabeth Cady Stanton exclaimed to the New York women's rights convention of 1856, "A woman has no name! She is Mrs. John or Mrs. James, Peter, or Paul, just as she changes masters; like the southern slave, she takes the name of her owner."⁷¹ Karen Sanchez-Eppler argues that feminist and abolitionist discourses were both structured by "the problems of having, representing, or interpreting a body," and that the rhetorics of the two movements recognized that the legal and political subordination of both women and blacks was predicated on physical difference from "the cultural norms of white masculinity" that obstructed their claims to personhood.⁷² Assertions that a woman's reproductive organs determined and restricted her intellect and psyche, or that the black body was innately inferior to the white, anatomically predisposed to subservience⁷³ or even representative of a separate species,⁷⁴ brought the female and the black body into focus as the foundation of a broad subjection but also, specifically, of exclusion from civic and political participation. Thus, according to Sanchez-Eppler, "the social and political goals of both feminism and abolition depend[ed] upon an act of representation, the inscription of black and female bodies into the discourses of personhood." Some abolitionists and feminists

⁷¹ Quoted in Sanchez-Eppler, "Bodily Bonds," 95.

⁷² Sanchez-Eppler, "Bodily Bonds," 95.

⁷³ Ibid., 94. Sanchez-Eppler writes: "Subservience, one doctor explained, was built into the very structure of African bones. The black was made into a 'submissive knee-bender' by the decree of the Almighty, for 'in the anatomical conformation of his knees, we see "genu flexit" written in his physical structure, being more flexed or bent than any other kind of man.'" Her quote is from Dr. Samuel A. Cartwright, "Diseases and Particularities of the Negro Race," *De Bow's Review* (1851), excerpted in James O. Breeden, ed., *Advice Among Masters: The Ideal in Slave Management in the Old South* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980), 173.

⁷⁴ See Shawn Michelle Smith's chapter "The Properties of Blood" in her *American Archives* for a discussion of the work of Josiah Nott, a polygenesist, scholar of hybridity (he argued that the interracial child, as a mixture of two separate species, was a true hybrid and thus sterile), and pro-slavery apologist in the years preceding the Civil War.

sought to reclaim the body by inverting the patriarchal reading of it, by making what had been a site of subjugation into an emblem of that subjugation, transforming the body into a means of strengthening their rhetorical power.⁷⁵

If a white male bourgeoisie seeking to retain its privilege attempted to prevent the inscription of black and female bodies into subjectivity, *Study from Nature* at once participated in and problematized such efforts, which were meeting with escalating resistance as middle-class white women and free black women, like those represented in *Study from Nature*, began to circulate with increasing independence in the New York streets, spaces that fostered new forms of female behavior. Drawing on challenges to the identity of the flaneur, Lynda Nead has recently criticized feminist historians such as Janet Wolff and Griselda Pollock for accepting the Baudelairian “roll-call” of the mid-nineteenth-century city’s population and for reinscribing orthodoxies that relegate middle-class women to the private sphere or to a limited range of “reputable” public places. Framing her study around mid-nineteenth-century London, Nead has demonstrated instead, through an analysis of contemporary letters, newspapers, and other primary source documents, that unaccompanied, respectable middle-class women were indeed a significant presence in the

⁷⁵ Sanchez-Eppler, “Bodily Bonds,” 93–95. Sanchez-Eppler finds that, in spite of this similarity of aims, the alliance delineated in feminist-abolitionist texts is an uneasy one, and that “although the identifications of women and slave, marriage and slavery, that characterize these texts may occasionally prove mutually empowering, such pairings generally tend toward asymmetry and exploitation,” erasing “the particularity of black and female experience, making their distinct exploitations appear as one.” The basic dilemma of feminist-abolitionist rhetoric is, thus, she finds, the “difficulty of preventing moments of identification from becoming acts of appropriation.” Nevertheless, such associations did occur in feminist and abolitionist discourses of the period this paper addresses and thus formed part of the discourse the *Harper’s Weekly* cartoon participated in. See also Sanchez-Eppler, *Touching Liberty: Abolition, Feminism, and the Politics of the Body* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993).

streets. Such women were much more present than recent studies of urbanization have acknowledged, Nead argues, and they had an agency that has heretofore gone unrecognized in historical studies.⁷⁶ A similar situation evidently existed in New York, as discussions in the pages of *Harper's Weekly* and other newspapers from this time, as well as some studies of the women's rights movement and the activities of middle-class women, strongly suggest. New York shared some of the conditions of nascent modernity that Nead associates with London, although in New York public life also took shape against a very particular set of historical circumstances and national tensions. In fact, New York was a city often characterized in its newspapers' pages as one in which men and women enjoyed greater mobility than in European cities.

One threat suggested in *Study from Nature* is, then, that of bourgeois white women extending their boundaries within bourgeois male space. Another threat the image suggests is that of black women encroaching upon bourgeois white space. Through the deception brought about by her appropriation of middle-class dress in the image's upper frame, the ambulatory black woman addresses a newly intensified white bourgeois fear of a particular kind of urban movement in the free streets of the north, the deceptive act of mobility known as "passing." The phenomenon of "passing" was one whereby, it was feared, blacks would pose as or be mistaken for white, subverting the visual order according to which it was possible to classify people and threatening a mixing of the races and a breakdown of social

⁷⁶ Nead, *Victorian Babylon*.

order.⁷⁷ The menace of sexual relations between whites and free blacks is suggested frequently in the pages of *Harper's Weekly* and other contemporary New York newspapers. In a cartoon from the December 1859 issue of *Frank Leslie's Budget of Fun*, for example, "Young Ligneus," a white bourgeois man said to be "a great boaster of his female conquests," has proudly invited a group of his friends to "witness his triumph" as he meets a secret admirer; in the event, however, he is shocked to discover that the "unknown charmer" is black (fig. 5).⁷⁸

Social and legal restrictions on interracial marriage both created and reflected the relationship of fascination and repulsion that characterized the relationship of white men and black women.⁷⁹ A poem published in *Harper's Weekly* on July 28, 1860, six months after *Study from Nature* appeared in the paper, articulates the same anxieties surrounding deceptive appearances in the city streets the cartoon represents. Titled *The Policeman's Mistake*, the poem revisits the history of Southern white male aggression toward black women in the form of a Northern white policeman's fear of and sexualized attitude toward a black woman. It reads:

'Twas the last hour of daylight—
 The twilight had come—
 When a weary policeman
 Was thinking of home;
 But he still lingered kindly
 On Broadway's wide pave,
 For his aid to the ladies
 He cheerfully gave.

⁷⁷ Smith, *American Archives*, 34.

⁷⁸ *Frank Leslie's Budget of Fun*, December 1859, 8.

⁷⁹ See "The Properties of Blood" in Smith, *American Archives*, 29–50.

'Twas the last hour of daylight—
 Night's shadows drew nigh—
 When close at his elbow
 He heard a soft sigh.
 At his side stood a lady,
 Young, graceful, and small,
 In the tip-top of fashion—
 Hoops, flounces, and all.

Only one thing displeased him
 (Just like all the men!)—
 A thick veil o'er her bonnet
 Was fastened just then.
 That her fair face was hidden,
 Provoking it was!
 But he whispered, "Dear madam,
 Are you wishing to cross?"

And she bowed, but was silent,
 As round her he threw
 His brave arm to protect her,
 And tenderly drew
 The sweet demoiselle closer
 And closer, till they
 Had successfully threaded
 The maze of Broadway.

When her foot touched the curb-stone
 She threw back her veil,
 And—oh! [] consternation!
 Policeman grew pale!
 Then out spoke the fair lady,
 "Dar, now! lem me go!
 Golly! massa perleese, you
 Stop a-huggin' me so!"

'Twas a capital tableau,
 Rich, racy, and rare!
 How he stood, blank—confounded—
 His eyes all a-stare,
 Thus to find he'd been hugging

A darkey—oh yes!
 How he started and put, then,
 I leave you to guess.⁸⁰

Here a policeman is shown to be vulnerable to misapprehensions of racial identity in the city streets, a situation that must have been particularly frightening to *Harper's* readers in that it affected a protector of the white bourgeois public. The eroticized aspect of the encounter—the policeman finds the experience of hugging the black woman to be “rich, racy, and rare”—parallels the widespread antebellum white male view and treatment of black women as sexual as well as economic commodities.⁸¹

An 1864 political lithograph titled *The Miscegenation Ball* (fig. 6)⁸² that caricatures a Republican campaign celebration articulates the fear of interracial mixing that Republican politics incited by depicting white men paired with black women, dancing and flirting with one another. Ironically, like *The Policeman's Mistake*, such anti-emancipation propaganda, in its attempt to manufacture fear of amalgamation, willfully ignored the evidence embodied by the large population of biracial slaves during the antebellum period that generations of Southern white male slaveholders raped their black female slaves, augmenting their wealth in the bodies of their own mulatto children, who could provide added slave labor or be sold at a profit.⁸³

⁸⁰ *Harper's Weekly*, July 28, 1860, 470.

⁸¹ See “The Properties of Blood,” in Smith, *American Archives*, 29–50.

⁸² *The Miscegenation Ball*, lithograph by Bromley and Company, 1864. Collections of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Reproduced here from Smith, *American Archives*, 37.

⁸³ Smith, *American Archives*, 34–39.

White fascination with the sexuality of black women emerges elsewhere in the January 21, 1860 issue as well. Its "Humors of the Day" column includes three sets of comic verse, titled "Silly Songs for Sable Singers," each of which is written in a caricatured black dialect. The first of these songs tells of the physical allure of a biracial slave:

WHEN first I lib wid Massa Prue,
Miss Dinah swep de kitchen:
Her cheeks were black her eyes were blue,
O Gosh! she was bewitching!

Chorus.
Lubly Dinah! de belle ob Carolina!
Red-nosed 'possums, ring-tailed 'coons,
All in lub wid Dinah!

Dis nigger see her as she sat
A churning ob de butter:
She make my heart go pit a pat,
And all dat I could utter
Was—Lubly Dinah! etc.

I flop down plump upon my knees,
Though in my Sunday trowsers,
And den I try my lub to please,
By breedin' tender vows, Sirs.
Lubly Dinah! etc.

Miss Dinah said she'd marry me,
So Massa found de shiners;
Now in my cabin you may see
Two Sambos and two Dinahs!

Chorus.
And they're all like Dinah! de belle ob Carolina!
Black-nosed blue flies, ring-tailed 'coons,
All in lub wid Dinah!⁸⁴

⁸⁴ *Harper's Weekly*, January 21, 1860, 35.

“Sable singers” were the white performers of blackface minstrelsy—an entertainment that was thought to have begun in New York in the 1840s and that reached its popular heights in the 1850s—who blackened their faces with cork.⁸⁵ The verses published in *Harper’s Weekly* refer humorously to the songs they typically performed, many of which were themselves humorous.⁸⁶

Finally, a droll section of the January 21, 1860 issue’s “Lounger” column on the problem of “Nudity in Art” centers on the question of white slavery. Here the writer asks whether Erastus Dow Palmer’s 1858 sculpture *White Captive* can be regarded as a portrait or not and, depending on that status, whether its nude figure ought to be covered, for modesty’s sake, in drapery. Although Palmer is said to have intended the sculpture as a representation of a young white girl captured, stripped of her clothing, and bound by savage Indians,⁸⁷ the column’s conclusion that, since a slave is not a person, a representation of a slave can never be a portrait—and therefore that its nudity is not indecent—surely would have found

⁸⁵ For the phrase “sable singers” in reference to white performers in blackface, see Fredrika Bremer, *The Homes of the New World; Impressions of America* (Hemmen i den Nya verlden; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1853). Available under “Historical Primary Sources” at the University of Wisconsin-Madison’s library Web site: <http://libtext.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/HistPriSrc/HistPriSrc-idx.pl?type=header&byte=7> (December 12, 2004); see letter 17, Columbia, South Carolina, May 25, 1853.

⁸⁶ On blackface minstrelsy, see Library of Congress, American Memory Project, “African American Sheet Music, 1850–1920,” selected from the collections of Brown University Library, at <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/award97/rpbhtml/aasmhome.html> (December 12, 2004).

⁸⁷ Palmer’s *White Captive* is now in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (acc. no. 94.9.3). See the curator’s description at http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/ambl/hod_94.9.3.htm (December 12, 2004).

resonance in the context of contemporary debates over slavery and the personhood of women and blacks.⁸⁸

II.

Study from Nature depends in part for its humor on the dissonance generated by an unsettling visual metamorphosis, a physical transformation of creatures supposedly of a "natural" world within an urban atmosphere of artifice, where bonnets stand in for plumage, fashionable commodities for the markings that distinguish species. This metamorphosis is particularly apparent in the attire of the feet. The black woman, perhaps a freed slave resisting a life of labor by dressing "up," has rejected practical footwear, covering her feet instead in delicate, feminine, insubstantial boots, while the white women have chosen masculine, utilitarian boots, a trend for which was growing among bourgeois New York ladies. In representing the white women attiring their feet in such a style, the image points to a subversion of expected gender performances that was actually occurring in New York as well as in Europe. The men's-boot style, which, like the bloomers of the women's fashion reform movement, enhanced mobility symbolically as well as practically, was satirized in

⁸⁸ The discussion in "The Lounger" is one of many discussions of Palmer's sculpture in New York newspapers around this time; see, for example, *Home Journal* (New York), November 19, December 3, and December 10, 1859. The discussion may also have reminded readers of Hiram Powers' *The Greek Slave* (1844), a sculpture very popular in mid-nineteenth-century America. According to Joy Kasson, in *Marble Queens and Captives: Women in Nineteenth-Century American Sculpture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), Powers' statue portrays a Greek girl captured and put up for sale by Turks in a Middle Eastern slave market. Miniature copies of the statue became very popular in the second half of the century. Kasson notes, "on its display at the Crystal Palace in London in 1851 it inspired the British satirical magazine *Punch* to remind readers of the actual fact of American slavery with a parodic companion piece "The Virginian Slave." (67) The "companion piece" referred to here is in *Punch* 20 (1851), 236.

another 1860 *Harper's Weekly* cartoon, *The Big Boot Mania* (fig. 7),⁸⁹ in which a young, stylishly dressed, middle-class woman chooses a pair of men's cavalry boots over the dainty boots she is offered in fashionable shoemaker's establishment on Broadway.

The big-boot fad was discussed three years earlier in the same publication. In the "Chat" column of January 17, 1857, titled "The New Female Metamorphosis," a female writer connects the women's rights movement and the transgression of traditional gender roles with the fashion for big boots, proposing that "ladies" might better be termed "laddies" with their adoption of this and other masculine attire. She begins:

Fashion is a cunning jade. While strong-minded females have in vain been bawling long and loud for woman's rights, and with tooth and nail doing their utmost to pull man down from his pre-eminence, Madame la Mode has quietly slipped, and almost unconsciously, into the prerogatives of the opposite sex. Pulling on masculine boots, she strides *manfully* through our dirty streets "in spite of wind and weather," and now buttoning herself in a fashionable coat or jacket of the day, she elbows our Broadway dandies with the conscious air of one who would say, "I'm a better man than you." Boots, coat, and —. *to be continued*, must we add, as to an unfinished tale (tail?). So Cham, the great French caricaturist, would seem to think, who thus prophesies pictorially for the present year of 1857. [see fig. 8]. . . .⁹⁰

The illustration accompanying this column shows a street scene in which a woman dressed in a men's-style swallowtail coat gazes at a man wearing a knee-length skirt heavy with

⁸⁹ *The Big Boot Mania*, *Harper's Weekly*, May 9, 1860, 96.

⁹⁰ "Chat: The New Female Metamorphosis," *Harper's Weekly*, January 17, 1857, 35.

flounces and petticoats (fig. 8). This vision of men taking revenge by dressing as women takes advantage of the same kind of humorous inversion used in *Study from Nature*.

The big-boot craze apparently met with disdain from men. In "Prattle and Tattle," a *Harper's Weekly* column from March 21, 1857, a female correspondent shows us something of the contestation that took place in the pages of the newspaper in her response to the critic "Thalberg," who, she asserts, had criticized ladies in an earlier issue of the paper for the "awkwardness" brought on by their adoption of large rubber boots. Criticizing Thalberg for his hypocrisy, the correspondent for "Prattle and Tattle" writes:

And what do you suppose, in the estimation of our critic, contributes especially to our "awkwardness"? Nothing less sensible and useful than our invaluable India-rubber boots! When, in former days, we promenaded the streets all snow and mud, unprotected by aught beyond "paper-soles" and thin French gaiters, there was no epithet strong enough to characterize our folly in the language of most gentlemen.

Now that we are slightly more rational, and endeavor to save our understandings from the desecrating mud of this New World city, and to take a walk without likewise taking a cold, we are pronounced "inelegant" and "ungraceful," and to be looking like "ducks wading across the mud." (Ducks here, remember, is a term of opprobrium, not of endearment!) But, dear me! if for once or twice in our silly lives we happen *not* to be thinking of how we look—whether we are elegant or the contrary, and if inelegant endeavoring to brave it heroically—pray for Heaven's sake, leave us alone!⁹¹

⁹¹ *Harper's Weekly*, March 17, 1857, 12.

This writer goes on to point out that not only Thalberg, but men generally, objected to the boots. But, she notes, in their very inelegance, the practical boots that women were beginning to enjoy allowed not only freedom and mobility but also resistance to the male gaze:

Who is it shrugs his shoulders, frowning grimly, or grumbling gruffly, at the French shoemaker's "little bill," each item of which endures about one earthly day of winter's wear? Can it be the same person who looks with disgust, not to say apprehension, at our reasonable though unbecoming boots, because, forsooth, his Sultan's eye can not be gratified by the sight of pretty ankles? Impossible; yet so it is. . . . Here we come to the root of this masculine opposition, which I do believe is nothing more or less than a secret fear that the seizure of some other manly garments may follow the adoption of these boots. There's something in it, too, for I will own to you, in strictest confidence, of course, that enjoying and reveling in the freedom of my boots, I have often thought, with a sigh, how charming it must be to be a man! No skirts to lift from the mud, no flounces to think about! Such aspirations are very dangerous, and must be repressed at all hazards; there's no doubt about that. So let me change the subject.⁹²

The "Chat" columnist of January 17, 1857 also discussed the "new masculine attire" at some length, although she did remark that Americans were less susceptible to the new fashion for boots than Londoners had been. New York ladies, the columnist wrote, had

hardly reached yet, however, the extremity of our less fastidious English friends, as may be learned by the following advertisement, which we publish gratuitously from the *Illustrated London News* of December 13, 1856:

⁹² *Harper's Weekly*, March 17, 1857, 12.

LADIES' RIDING TROUSERS, Chamois
 Leather, with black feet. 53 Baker Street (near
 Madame Tussaud's Exhibition). W. G.
 TAYLOR (late Halliday).

The men may well revenge themselves by taking to shawls,
 muffs, and petticoat sacks!⁹³

The masculine clothing trend is also described in various other newspapers around the time of *Study from Nature's* publication. For example, in the New York newspaper *Home Journal* on December 24, 1859, we learn in an article titled "The Lady-Gaiter Mania" that the trend among women for masculine attire was also on the rise in France, where men's-style gaiters, vests, gloves, boots, and hats, as well as masculine hobbies, were the rage among ladies:

Of the passion for *gaiters*, in France, at present, the correspondent of the Times writes: —
 "... This tendency to the imitation of male attire does not stop at the hunting gaiters. We see this winter the feminine overcoat more exactly imitated on the masculine model than ever before; they wear masculine vests, masculine bosoms, with the collars, decorations and buttons complete; they wear dog-skin gloves, Scotch boots, and hats almost masculine; they carry and use a *bouche l'oeil*, drive fast horses and frequent the fencing and pistol galleries, and finally go to the Women's Club. . . ."⁹⁴

The fad for masculine attire extended beyond men's-style clothing for women specifically to military attire as well, as the *Home Journal* columnist notes in the same article:

⁹³ *Harper's Weekly*, January 17, 1857, 35.

⁹⁴ *Home Journal* (New York), December 24, 1859, 2.

All that precedes in regard to female attire is only a restoration of the modes already many times adopted and discarded. . . . Generally, when a mode is changed and an old one substituted, it change sits name, but that is all. But now we hear of a new mode which has just invaded certain fashionable saloons, and which is absolutely new. This is the military uniform for women. The campaign in Italy, the entry of the victorious army into Paris, and the reputation of the class of *vivandières*, gave birth to the new idea. The costume of the *vivandières* was found so beautiful that some ladies determined to adopt it, not its entirety, for that would approach too nearly Bloomerism, but to combine it with their present toilet. Thus, while they preserved their ample robes, their skirts of fifteen yards circumference, mounted on a cage, they would discard the present corsage for the corsage, or vest, as it is called, of the *vivandière*.⁹⁵

Military styles were also being adopted in American women's clothing at this time, as the front closure, shoulders, and bodice cuffs of a woman's walking dress from around 1860 in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (fig. 9) demonstrate.⁹⁶

As Kasson has noted, one of the most prevalent and most scathing means of critiquing advocates of women's rights in the mid-nineteenth century was to invert the traditional gender roles of female subordination and male domination; *Study from Nature* performs just such an inversion.⁹⁷ This inversion of male and female gender roles is alluded also in a volume of "wit and humor in paragraphs" by George Denison Prentice, editor of the *Louisville Journal* and a comic writer of some repute in pre-Civil War America, that is

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Walking dress (American), ca. 1860, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Mary Pierrepont Beckwith, 1969 (C.I.69.33.4a-d). It is tempting to link the taste for military styles among American women to a pre-Civil War military buildup, but major military preparations had not yet begun in January 1860, and it appears more likely that transatlantic exchanges in fashion and feminist politics were responsible for the fad.

⁹⁷ Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility*, 136.

advertised in a column directly below the figure of the black woman in *Study from Nature* (see fig. 2) on the back page of the January 21, 1860 issue of *Harper's Weekly*. The advertised book, *Prenticeana*, published by Derby & Jackson in 1859,⁹⁸ includes various witticisms on the subject of women that provide a window on the character of humor prevalent in the antebellum period. In keeping with the context of the subordination of women that *Study from Nature* takes up, the book includes various humorous inversions that cast men as the subordinates of women. For example, *Prenticeana* jokes, "A man recently got married in Kentucky one day and hung himself the next. No doubt he wanted to try all varieties of nooses to see which he liked best."⁹⁹ Also striking in the context of the issues suggested by *Study from Nature* are jokes that articulate fears around women's empowerment and assuage those fears through ridicule. One derisive example centers on the possibility of women being permitted to make contracts: "A bill is pending in one of our western states to empower women to make contracts. They should by all means be authorized to contract—they have been expanding too much."¹⁰⁰ Another example focuses on the prospect of female jurors: "If women were jurors, as some of them claim that they ought to be, what chance would you ugly old fellows stand when indicted?"¹⁰¹ And a third example mocks feminists' calls for women to be elected to Congress: "Lucy Stone recently made a speech insisting that the election of women, as well as men, to Congress would improve the character of that body.

⁹⁸ George Denison Prentice, *Prenticeana* (New York: Derby and Jackson, 1859).

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 146.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 180.

We suspect that the habit of "pairing off" would be even more common than it is."¹⁰² These jokes parallel the role reversals and scorn *Study from Nature* humorously employs to address the threat of female resistance. Interestingly, the opening phrase of the *Prenticeana* advertisement, "Laugh! Laugh!! Laugh!!!" appears, but for the thin border that divides her from it, very nearly as a caption for the black woman in *Study from Nature*; the eye cannot help but take in with a single glance her image and the phrase, which appears virtually as a subliminal instruction to the reader about how to view her.

The inversion that *Study from Nature* and the *Prenticeana* jokes employ are not simply comic fantasies of a world upside-down, however, since women were actually beginning to achieve the civic and political power both satires allude to, and, at the same time, bourgeois white women were taking to the streets in exactly the kind of masculine attire the cartoon depicts. Like their real-life counterparts who were adopting masculine dress, the white women in *Study from Nature* make inroads into male space by adorning their feet as men are expected to, and the cartoon attempts regulation of this transgression of gender performance through punitive humor. Meanwhile, the black woman's incursions into middle-class white space are achieved in the flimsy boots middle-class white women more customarily wore, and she is similarly mocked for her transgression of racial performance. In fact, like her boots, her dress and, particularly, her heavily trimmed, low-brimmed bonnet, are closer to the opulent and richly ornamented styles depicted in fashion plates in American magazines such as *Godey's Lady's Book* and *Peterson's Magazine* than are the white women's

¹⁰² Ibid., 204. "Pairing off" refers to a decision made by members of opposing sides of a measure to coordinate their votes in order to affect legislative decisions in particular ways.

plainer garments. Her cameo brooch, although highly fashionable (Queen Victoria made the cameo wildly popular during her reign¹⁰³), seems to serve as a badge of her own subordination. Cameos often featured profiles of classical inspiration, and the inclusion of a cameo in the black woman's attire in a cartoon generated in the white press may relate to the same impulse that inspired the white practice of assigning names of classical origin to slaves.¹⁰⁴

Both black and female bodies are represented in *Study from Nature* as fluid and constantly transforming, perplexing the urban naturalist and challenging the ability of the image to guide him, but the fact that the black woman wears feminine boots while the white women wear masculine, militaristic boots also places her in an unmistakably asymmetrical, gendered relationship to them, underscoring the power relations that define them socially. The plumage-like aspect of the black woman's bonnet trim subtly emphasizes the imbalance suggested by this gendered relationship, suggesting that, as a black woman, she is even closer to nature and further from culture than the white women. Her ankles are on display to the viewer while those of the white women are hidden, reinscribing the gendered and the racialized relationship, casting her as commodity and object of desire.

In fact, the hiding and revealing of ankles is a major comic theme in newspapers of the time. In a small snippet of humor in the January 21, 1860 *Harper's Weekly* titled "Reasons Why I Wear Crinoline," supposedly "extorted from MISS BUSSELTON, by one

¹⁰³ See Walter L. Arnstein, *Queen Victoria* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 44 n. 2.

¹⁰⁴ See *African American History in the Press, 1851–1899*, 17, regarding this practice of naming. For a cartoon from the November 26, 1859 issue of *Harper's Weekly* that represents this practice, see page 139 in the same volume.

who owns himself a Brute," the fifth "reason" is: "Because—well, you know one doesn't always want to have one's ankles criticised."¹⁰⁵ A cartoon titled *How the Gamblers Spend the Afternoon in Slush Times* (fig. 10), from the January 15, 1859 issue of *Harper's Weekly*, depicts women walking along the street next to an omnibus. The women lift their skirts in order to avoid dirtying them in the freezing winter slush, thereby revealing their ankles for the voyeuristic enjoyment of a group of idle gamblers—incidentally a class of men heavily associated with treachery and deceit in antebellum America¹⁰⁶—who are spending the afternoon riding the omnibus and enjoying the views from its windows. The female correspondent who defended the big-boot craze in the paper's March 21, 1857 "Prattle and Tattle" column pointed out elsewhere in the same text that certain men, whom she characterizes as "amateurs in limbs," made it a practice to station themselves on Broadway in spots that enabled them to ogle women's legs and feet:

One word, however, I must say. I have my fears that the universal practice of wearing these useful boots, which quite conceal our neat insteps and well-turned ankles, will have the effect of interfering with the habits and pursuits of those gentlemen who seem to spend their time, on muddy days, in watching our fair forms while we traverse the most dirty parts of Broadway. Those who follow this pastime with earnestness, generally, to use the language of street-sweepers, take a crossing, and adopt it as their own. Here they stand, by the hour together, seriously inspecting the little feet that pick their way so carefully, and [are] only too happy when a stage, stopping in the middle of the road, gives occasion for more than usual display.

¹⁰⁵ *Harper's Weekly*, January 21, 1860, 35.

¹⁰⁶ Karen Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-Class Culture in America, 1830–1870* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982), 16–18.

Readers of *Harper's Weekly*, with the problems of race relations and the sexualized identity of black women imprinted on their consciousness, may have understood the black woman whose threatening identity performance is satirized in *Study from Nature*—like the black woman taken for white in *The Policeman's Mistake*—as a symbol of sexual danger in the diverse and unruly space of the mid-nineteenth-century New York street. Drawing on the work of Mary Douglas, Mary P. Ryan has shown how sexuality was a powerful metaphor for relationships of diversity and proximity in the big city. In a largely male construction of urban space, relations with women provided symbolic models for how to establish order out of social multiplicity in situations of close physical proximity.¹⁰⁷ Sexual dangers, according to Douglas, can be “interpreted as symbols of other relations between parts of society, as mirroring designs of hierarchy or symmetry which apply to the larger social system.”¹⁰⁸ Thus, as Ryan points out, the behavior of women on the streets, compulsively monitored at every level of bourgeois discourse in the nineteenth-century city, might serve as a double for “other social differences that were imperfectly ranked and ordered in everyday life and poorly sorted in urban space.”¹⁰⁹ In the chaotic streets that represented archetypical cases of what Douglas calls “untidy experience,” cautionary discourses encouraged the maintenance of distinct gender dichotomies and the controlling of sexual boundaries. These discourses were manifestations of an obsession with the imposition of order on the unstable space of the city,

¹⁰⁷ Mary P. Ryan, *Women in Public: Between Banners and Ballots, 1825–1880* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 75.

¹⁰⁸ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (New York: Praeger, 1966), 4. Quoted in Ryan, *Women in Public*, 74–75. Here Ryan discusses Douglas's anthropological interpretations of sexual danger in relation to urban spaces in nineteenth-century American cities.

¹⁰⁹ Ryan, *Women in Public*, 75.

the hazards of which were mapped by contemporary cartographers of urban space who played on contradictory images of the sexually dangerous and the sexually endangered woman.¹¹⁰

The black woman and white women in *Study from Nature* can be seen to embody these sexually dichotomous identities of “dangerous” and “endangered,” respectively. The sexual connotation of the black woman’s exposed ankles is unmistakable, and that her legs and ankles are available for viewing while those of the white women are hidden is also significant. She provides just the kind of “unusual display” mentioned by the “Prattle and Tattle” columnist, in this case in lifting her skirts to avoid the mud of the street rather than to climb into a stage. Her skirt rides high enough to reveal not only a noticeable portion of leg but also a titillating glimpse of her underclothes. As a black woman, she is constructed as sexually forbidden yet sexually available. More than one reader of *Harper’s Weekly* may have, in effect, “started and put” at the “rich, racy, and rare” experience of seeing her black face in the bottom frame of the image after having enjoyed a view of her ankles in the top frame. Indeed, the two-part structure of the image promotes a kind of safe voyeurism for the viewer, who was offered access to the illicit pleasure and surprise of a black body in the kind of peep-show view afforded by the scene underneath the omnibus—whether a white male viewer reinhabiting a fraught and unstable social relationship to women in public or a female or black viewer re-enacting her own experience of objectification or resistance. *Study from Nature* allows white women, meanwhile—those represented in the image as well as white

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 75–76.

female viewers of the image—to remain respectable, if unruly in their politics and exasperating in their fashion tastes.

III.

Study from Nature warns the viewer of the perils of an inability to properly “read” a strange woman on the street, but it also attempts to serve as an aid to visual literacy. Designed as a lesson, the image provides the supposed urban detective—a guise associated with the flaneur—with clues to the visual deciphering of the black woman in the slippages apparent in her imitation of bourgeois white dress. Indeed, the image suggests that it is possible to appraise this stranger by the initial view of her feet and legs alone—of legs adorned in the lilywhite stockings usually reserved for more formal evening dress, of the steel rim of her cage crinoline emerging from beneath the hem of her skirt, of a showy petticoat showing too much, of a skirt lifted improperly high yet in one place allowed to touch the ground, where it collects dirt.¹¹¹ Thus, in many important aspects of her performance of gentility, the black woman in *Study from Nature* fails to “pass” within the public context, the time of day, and the class and identity she aspires to, even in the view provided by the image’s top frame alone. This reading is confirmed in the bottom frame. Her vacant countenance displays none of the requisite bourgeois reserve and self-restraint, her bonnet’s trim seems gaudy, her huge cameo brooch vulgar, her posture exaggerated. Here the image attempts to vindicate surface as an indicator of essence, offering the viewer a specular omniscience. That deficiencies in taste and

¹¹¹ C. Willett and Phyllis Cunnington, *The History of Underclothes* (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 1992).

decorum force her to give up her game to the savvy viewer before her face is revealed is claimed to be no coincidence; instead, it is intended to point out that, as a member of a race innately unsuited to respectability, she is by her very nature incapable of getting it right.

“Those to be avoided are such as wear tawdry finery, paint their faces, and leer out of the corners of their eyes,” advised Eliza Leslie in *Miss Leslie’s Behaviour Book* of 1859, warning her readers to avoid coarse figures such as the black woman in *Study from Nature*.¹¹² That this woman has carelessly allowed her skirt to skim the pavement, where it gathers dirt, is another a clue to her vulgarity, as an article titled “War on Long Dresses” in the New York newspaper *Home Journal* on January 7, 1860 humorously suggests. Posing what it describes as a “scientific problem,” the article begins with a poem:

Round woman the pure
Floats an air, we are sure
That is sacred from all profanation;
But those eddies of dirt
Swept up under her skirt—
How get they their purification?¹¹³

The article goes on to condemn the “make-believe women” who have been “turned loose” in the streets, criticizing their habit of attempting to masquerade as something they are not. “Because a queen or a duchess wears long robes on great occasions, a maid-of-all-work, or a factory girl, thinks she must make herself a nuisance by trailing through the street, picking

¹¹² Quoted in Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility*, p. 141.

¹¹³ *Home Journal* (New York), January 7, 1860, 2.

up dirt and carrying it about with her," the text continues. "Show over dirt is the one attribute of vulgar people."

To a bourgeois readership for whom appearance—especially of the face, but also of dress—served as an index of essence, the visual misrepresentation addressed by *Study from Nature* must have seemed particularly insidious. An advertisement in the March 17, 1860 issue of *Harper's Weekly* for *The Lady's Guide to Perfect Beauty* (fig. 11) articulates apprehensions over the misrepresentations made possible by costume. This guide, according to the advertisement, would aid readers in "the art of determining the precise figure, the degree of beauty, the mind, habits, and age of women, notwithstanding the *Disguise of Dress*."¹¹⁴ An advertisement on the back page of the January 21 issue (see fig. 2) for sewing machines signals the new commercial availability of that homemaker's aid, which, along with the patterns published in ladies' magazines of the day, had made it easier for women to sew fashionable clothing at home.¹¹⁵ Changes in clothing-production technology in the 1850s had also begun to allow off-the-rack fashions to mimic couture, and the possibility that anyone could now wear bourgeois fashions posed a threat to social legibility.

Indeed, this problem of "over-dress," of dressing above one's station or of dressing up too much for a given occasion, was one that received considerable attention in the press. A "Mrs. M. L." revealed her concern over this problem when she suggested in the March 1860 issue of the popular Philadelphia women's fashion magazine *Godey's Lady's Book* that American ladies should look to France as an example of appropriate dress. In Paris, the

¹¹⁴ *Harper's Weekly*, March 17, 1860, 27

¹¹⁵ This advertisement, in the lower right corner of the page, is for the Finkle & Lyon sewing machine.

author notes, women observe a “class-dress.” No one there, she claims, thinks “of dressing the same as her neighbor, who is in a rank of life superior to herself. Servants will not attire themselves like the bourgeoisie; these, again, do not imitate their superiors in rank or station.”¹¹⁶ In the “Centre-Table Gossip” column of the January 1860 issue of *Godey’s*, “over-dressing” is characterized as among “national sins against good taste.” Connecting this error in taste in part to class mobility, the writer asserts that “the mind that has been bent upon money-getting has not had time for the cultivation of the taste which alone can properly direct its disbursement.” Over-dress is itself described as a class marker—a phenomenon that is, “to the cultivated, ever a token of under-breeding, more commonly called vulgarity.” Another class marker is the practice of dressing inappropriately for a particular time of day or setting: “the richest toilet, if in actual good taste, is made ridiculous oftentimes by an improper time or place.” Even so, the writer reassures the anxious reader, a clear-headed attitude will allow such blunders to be recognized: “good sense ever discovers pretension, and meets it, if not with sarcasm and ridicule, with involuntary pity and excuse.”¹¹⁷

Guides such as *Study from Nature* promised to help the middle-class reader navigate the complex and rapidly changing human landscape, one that is constructed in *Harper’s Weekly* and other papers in and around January 1860 as rife with deceptive characters. In an article from the *Home Journal* on January 7, 1860 titled “No False Coin, After All!” that is clearly intended to assuage readers’ fears of such characters, we are told that deceptive

¹¹⁶ *Godey’s Lady’s Book*, March 1860, 231–32.

¹¹⁷ *Godey’s Lady’s Book*, January 1860, 89.

appearances ultimately will not actually deceive, and that social transparency will instead prevail:

—It is rather startling to hear that nobody is successful in deceiving. Yet a great lecturer says so: —“A man passes for what he is worth. . . . *The world is full of judgment-days*, and into every assemblage that a man enters, in every action he attempts, he is gauged and stamped. In every troop of boys that whoop and run in each yard and square, a new comer is well and accurately weighed in the course of a few days, and stamped with his right number, as if he had undergone a formal trial of his strength, speed, and temper. A stranger comes from a distant school with a better dress, trinkets in his pockets, with airs and pretensions. An older boy says to himself, ‘It’s no use, we shall find out to-morrow.’”¹¹⁸

Other advertisements, cartoons, and articles in the January 21, 1860 issue participate in the humorous cautionary discourses that inform *Study from Nature*. A book advertised directly to the right of the image on the same page, titled *Self-Help*, promises to provide guidance in “character and conduct” to the reader in much the same way the image itself does. An advertisement elsewhere on that page for Anna H. Drury’s *Misrepresentation* (see fig. 2), a novel that centers on the frauds perpetrated by a confidence man, marks the same concern with social legibility as the cartoon does.¹¹⁹ This concern also informs a piece of serialized fiction that appears in earlier pages of the January 21 issue, Wilkie Collins’s *The Woman in White*, a mystery novel that plays on mistaken identity, issues of class mobility, and the role of clothing in deception and fraud.

¹¹⁸ *Home Journal* (New York), January 7, 1860, 2.

¹¹⁹ Anna H. Drury, *Misrepresentation* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1859).

IV.

Study from Nature points to the importance of public ritual in the establishment of class boundaries, revealing that, while public behavior and appearance could stabilize class identities and social hierarchies by making them visible, imposture, masquerade, and deceit posed threats to modes of social ordering that depended on visual cues. As an image that attempted to manage the viewer's encounter with both women and blacks in the city streets, it also has much to tell us about the role of gendered and racialized performances in class relations and hierarchies and about the establishment of sexual identities in the public sphere. What might have accounted for the obsessive attention to public dress and conduct the image articulates? Why are the women depicted in it so scathingly critiqued for their sartorial transgressions? Why was the visible so important to, yet at the same time so obscuring of, the political? *Study from Nature*, I argue, used a visual notion of identity to claim political privileges based on gender and race. The cartoon formed part of a discourse of control that attempted to enforce codes of public appearance and behavior in a symbolic resolution of real social conflicts over racial and gender inequalities. Using the distracting spectacle of dress and public propriety to deflect attention from the political, the image claimed actual political power for its desired viewer.¹²⁰

Gender is, according to Butler, a construct continuously realized through "acts of gender," but it is also one that continuously hides its constructed nature. In Butler's words, gender "regularly conceals its genesis; the tacit collective agreement to perform, produce, and

¹²⁰ I am drawing on Scobey's arguments in "Anatomy of the Promenade," here; see especially 225.

sustain discrete and polar genders as cultural fictions is obscured by the credibility of those productions—and the punishments that attend not agreeing to believe in them.” Thus acts of gender serve as a distraction from the constructed nature of what they constitute; the construction creates a belief in the “naturalness” of gender.¹²¹ The joke in *Study from Nature* turns, I contend, on such a “natural” construction of gender, just as it turns on a “natural” construction of race.

The cartoon provides us with a window into culture and politics in antebellum New York, bringing sharply into focus the power of what Scobey calls “civilizing rights” to obscure the problem of “citizens’ rights”¹²² in a civic environment that was asserted to be but in important ways did not prove to be democratic and egalitarian. In his study of the politics of bourgeois sociability in nineteenth-century New York, Scobey has analyzed the promenade, a primary rite of sociability that involved “seeing and being seen, in public and in motion,” in a display and mutual affirmation of “respectability” that served as a test of inclusion within the city’s gentry. The promenade, he argues, created a middle-class public not as one that not gathered together to engage in deliberative discourse but as one that embraced “a contentless ritual of salutation” in which substantive discussions were frowned upon.¹²³ The establishment of solidarity through social exclusion and an emptying of discourse was, Scobey contends, a politically potent strategy in a capitalist democracy, one that repressed politics in order to implicitly assert political authority. Thus, a genteel culture apparently

¹²¹ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 140.

¹²² Scobey, “Anatomy of the Promenade,” 205.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 203.

void of or even opposed to the pursuit of republican politics was revealed as both prior to and necessary to the pursuit of that democracy.¹²⁴

Significantly, this culture of specular ritual reached its height during the 1850s and early 1860s, the period leading up to and encompassing the secession crisis, since it was at that time that the ascendance of ritualized sociability paralleled most clearly the profound ideological, economic, and political conflicts that were dividing elite New Yorkers from one another as well as from other city dwellers. As Scobey points out, the privileging of social form over political content in dramas of mutual recognition, exclusion, and subordination reached far beyond the promenade itself, however, and into other cultural practices and ways of mediating class and political tensions in the city. These included the “cult of manners” as well as the larger “empire of ‘Culture’”; absorbed in these, a half-anxious, half-confident bourgeoisie laid covert claim to political power through regulating and disseminating a culture of refinement that masked high ideological stakes.¹²⁵ Kasson has also stressed that the codes of behavior that informed that culture of refinement served in opaque ways to support structures of privilege and domination.¹²⁶ In *Study from Nature*, we are able to see codes such as these in operation—codes that emphasize civility and sartorial self-discipline, that impose punishment through satire for acts that transgress performative standards of race and gender, and that deflect the conflicts and inequities of New York society onto the individual inhabitants of the street, while at the same time providing standards according to which entire genders and ethnic groups were assessed and subjugated.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 223–25.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 225.

¹²⁶ Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility*, introduction.

V.

Kasson has characterized the nineteenth-century metropolis as a voluminous and challenging text, one whose rise created a crisis of meanings, a semiotic breakdown. Especially in American cities, where urban upheaval was dramatic, the inability to understand others and to represent oneself was seen not only an obstacle to meaningful public life but as a vulnerability that left one open to elaborate deceptions of the kind *Study from Nature* alludes to.¹²⁷ Poe explored these issues in his short story "Man of the Crowd" (1840), in which the narrator, expert at "reading" the crowd, sits as the story opens in a London coffeehouse, scrutinizing each passerby and effortlessly apprehending every nuance of class and character, identifying each as a token of a social type—clerks, pickpockets, tradesmen, gamblers, gentlemen—whose inner character is apparent from such external traits as figure, costume, posture, gait, and facial expression. As night falls and the character of the crowd changes, however, Poe's narrator spots an idiosyncratic elderly man who confounds his social typology, his ability to understand the underlying essence that surfaces mask, pointing out the limits of his system of classifying members of the crowd according to appearance. Pressing his nose to the glass of the coffeehouse window, the narrator tries in vain to assess the stranger, but the window is not simply transparent. Rather, it serves as a mirror of his own subjectivity: the narrator also beholds his own reflection, suggesting a relationship

¹²⁷ Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility*, 77.

between viewer and viewed that is less detached and objective than the narrator claims it to be.¹²⁸

The glass of the shop windows that constitute the background of the street scene represented in *Study from Nature* is similar to the glass Poe's narrator unwittingly beholds himself in. Like the narrator of "Man of the Crowd," the image invites readers to use its own physiognomical methodology to penetrate the surface of its story in order to reveal its underlying meaning, pointing out the interdependence of readers and those they read, of the included and the excluded, of "we" and "they," in the spaces of *Harper's Weekly* and in the public spaces the paper describes and creates. The anonymous woman who stands between the white women and the black woman, facing the glass, her back turned, not only embodies the critical threat that an unidentifiable, unreadable woman in public poses, but serves as a double for a conflicted viewer—a viewer caught in the dichotomized discourses the women represent: black-white, female-male, danger-endangered, slave-free, marginal-central. For this viewer, the glass, into which he or she gazes with the anonymous figure, provides a mirror of his or her own reflexivity.

The mysterious woman who gazes into the window, her figure completely absorbed within the "disguise of dress," is unclassed, unracialized, unmappable. Her modest dress and heavy boots associate her with the white women, her feathery bonnet with the black woman; the signs the viewer depends upon to assess her identity are thus contradictory. Her boots point to her masculinization and her mobility, however, and to her corresponding

¹²⁸ I am indebted to Kasson's interpretation of Poe's story here. See Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility*, 82–86.

appropriation of urban space. A shadowy figure, she is not on display, not a mere image; rather, like the viewer, she is a detached, peripatetic observer, herself a witness to the phantasmagoric flow of bodies and commodities that reveal themselves in moments and fragments within the spaces of the city. Doubling the viewer's gaze, she too is window shopping, looking into the glass, consuming through its divided panes split triangular images—perhaps ladies' fashions on display—that echo the shapes the women's bodies take on in their crinolines. The outline of her figure dissolves on one side, suggesting her evanescent, metamorphic nature and her tendency, like that of the flaneur, to disappear into the crowd. This fugitive woman is a mobile, modern, urban subject.

Afterword

Study from Nature is but one of a much larger group of newspaper images that promise to address a gap in historical knowledge, a gap whose understanding promises a shift in our understanding of the ways visual culture intersected with social relations at a time of civic and national crisis. The image invites a consideration of the ways reading and looking at illustrations and cartoons in the popular press constructed particular kinds of visual subjectivity in the diverse landscapes of northern U.S. cities in the middle of the nineteenth century. In urban environments characterized by disorder and mobility, social change was often marked by visual transformations that rendered the city's populace increasingly illegible, and newspaper illustrations attempted to provide guidance to the disoriented urban viewer.

Mid-nineteenth-century United States newsprint culture constitutes an important visual arena that has not been extensively investigated in studies of print media, art history, and urban experience. This study opens the door to a larger study of the role of satirical newspaper images in constructing gendered and racialized urban identities within the public and domestic spaces of that city during the period leading up to and encompassing the United States Civil War. During these years, approximately 1855 to 1865, caricatures and cartoons of African American and white women in the city's newspapers became a focal point for the negotiation of these questions, articulating concerns over the visual metamorphosis of women of different classes and races, over their increasing freedom to move about in metropolitan space, and over their increasing threat to bourgeois privilege.

In the pages of newspapers such as *Harper's Weekly* and *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, a multi-layered, often-contradictory visual critique emerged that at once responded to and generated anxiety over these social changes. It was through optical play, the invocation of movement, and rhetorics of natural science, as well as through references to fashion and sartorial change, that these images sought to bring visual order to an urban world of artifice that signaled the encroachment of industrialization and commodity culture. Locating these satirical images within the context of the fast-changing editorial strategies of the newspapers in question, it will be fruitful to consider how, as part of a transforming industrial newsprint culture that constantly moved images and texts through the urban spaces they described, these images participated in the construction of a contested public sphere.

To consider the ways popular illustrations and cartoons can enrich our understanding of the ambiguous, uneven historical context of New York in the mid-nineteenth century, in subsequent research I will expand my studies of newspapers in that city's archives as well as draw upon recent accounts of mid-century visual and media culture, political history, and urban space. Historical studies of antebellum New York newspapers certainly exist in the literature, but my investigations have shown that studies of the ways visual aspects of the city's newsprint culture intersected with social relations and the crisis of the modern at this crucial historical moment are limited to brief sections in larger works on other subjects and to a small number of narrowly topical journal articles. The area I propose to explore is thus rich with possibility for new scholarly contributions, and it has profound resonance in relationship to an understanding of constructions of public subjectivity within

changing urban environments today. My examination of the key role visual culture plays in the formation of public consciousness and the ways newsprint constituted and gave witness to new scopic forms, spatial shifts, and other manifestations of modernity will contribute to contemporary studies of visual culture, nineteenth-century North American urban history, race and gender relations, and cultural geography.

Bibliography

Primary Sources: Periodicals

Frank Leslie's Budget of Fun (New York)
December 1859

Godey's Lady's Book (Philadelphia)
January, March 1860

Harper's Weekly (New York)
January 17, March 17, April 11, 1857; June 11, 1859; January 21, April 18, May 9,
1860

Home Journal (New York)
November 19, December 3, December 10, December 24, 1859; January 7, 1860

Other Primary Sources

Bremer, Fredrika. *The Homes of the New World; Impressions of America* (Hemmen i den Nya verlden). New York: Harper and Brothers, 1853. Available under "Historical Primary Sources" at the University of Wisconsin-Madison's library Web site: <http://libtext.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/HistPriSrc/HistPriSrc-idx.pl?type=header&byte=7> (December 12, 2004).

Burn, James. *Three Years Among the Working-Classes in the United States*. London: Smith, Elder, 1865.

Cartwright, Samuel A. "Diseases and Particularities of the Negro Race." *De Bow's Review*, 1851.

Dred Scott v Sandford, 60 U.S. 393, 1856

Drury, Anna H. *Misrepresentation*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1859.

Miller's New York as it is, or Stranger's guide-book to the cities of New York, Brooklyn and adjacent places: Comprising notices of every object of interest to strangers. . . . New York: James Miller, 1866.

Poe, Edgar Allan. "Man of the Crowd." 1840.

Prentice, George Denison. *Prenticeana*. New York: Derby and Jackson, 1859.

Trollope, Anthony (1862). *North America*. Ed. Donald Smalley and Bradford Allen Booth. New York: Da Capo Press, 1951.

Secondary Sources

African American History in the Press, 1851–1899: From the Coming of the Civil War to the Rise of Jim Crow as Reported and Illustrated in Selected Newspapers of the Time. Vol. 1, 1851–1869. Detroit: Gale Research, 1996.

"African American Sheet Music, 1850–1920," selected from the collections of Brown University Library, Library of Congress, American Memory Project. Available at <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/award97/rpbhtml/aasmhome.html> (December 12, 2004).

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (New York and London: Verso, 1991).

Arnstein, Walter L. *Queen Victoria*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

Austin, J. L. *How to Do Things with Words*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962.

Banta, Martha. *Barbaric Intercourse: Caricature and the Culture of Conduct, 1841–1936*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Baudelaire, Charles, Norman Cameron, and Peter Quennell, *My Heart Laid Bare and Other Prose Writings*. London: Soho Book Co., 1986.

Benjamin, Walter. "The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire" (1938). In *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism*, trans. Harry Zohn (London: NLB, 1977).

Blumin, Stuart. *The Emergence of the Middle Class: Social Experience in the American City, 1760–1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Brand, Dana. *The Spectator and the City in Nineteenth-Century American Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

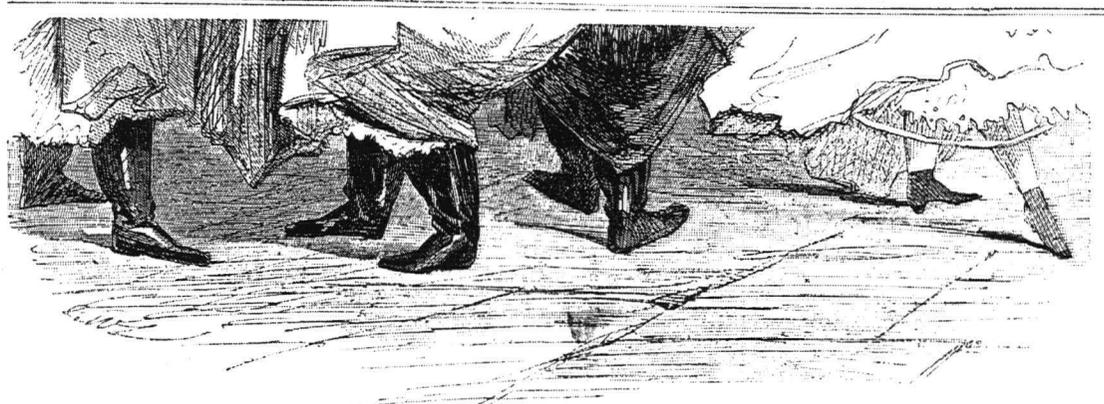
- Breeden, James O., ed. *Advice Among Masters: The Ideal in Slave Management in the Old South*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York and London: Routledge, 1990.
- Crary, Jonathan. *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture*. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2000.
- . *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1992.
- Douglas, Mary. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. New York: Praeger, 1966.
- Habermas, Jurgen. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Trans. Thomas Burger. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1989.
- Halttunen, Karen. *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-Class Culture in America, 1830–1870*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982.
- Harris, Leslie M. *In the Shadow of Slavery: African Americans in New York City, 1626–1863*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003.
- Henkin, David M. *City Reading: Written Words and Public Spaces in Antebellum New York*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998.
- Kasson, John F. *Rudeness and Civility: Manners in Nineteenth-Century Urban America*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1990.
- Kasson, Joy. *Marble Queens and Captives: Women in Nineteenth-Century American Sculpture*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990.
- Metropolitan Transport Authority of the State of New York, "New York City Transit—History and Chronology" (December 12, 2004), www.mta.info/nyct/facts/ffhist.htm.
- Mott, Frank Luther. *A History of American Magazines*. Vol. 2, 1850–1865. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957.
- Nead, Lynda. *Victorian Babylon: People, Streets, and Images in Nineteenth-Century London*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000.

- Reynolds, David S. "Of Me I Sing: Whitman in His Time." *New York Times Book Review*, October 4, 1992, 27.
- Ryan, Mary P. *Civic Wars: Democracy and Public Life in the American City during the Nineteenth Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.
- . "The American Parade: Representations of the Nineteenth-Century Social Order." In Lynn Hunt, ed., *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 131–53.
- . *Women in Public: Between Banners and Ballots, 1825–1880*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990.
- Sanchez-Eppler, Karen. "Bodily Bonds: The Intersecting Rhetorics of Feminism and Abolition." In *The Culture of Sentiment: Race, Gender, and Sentimentality in Nineteenth-Century America*, ed. Shirley Samuels. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- . *Touching Liberty: Abolition, Feminism, and the Politics of the Body*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993.
- Scobey, David. "Anatomy of the Promenade: The Politics of Bourgeois Sociability in Nineteenth-Century New York." *Social History* 17 (1992), 203–227.
- . *Empire City: The Making and Meaning of the New York City Landscape*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002.
- Smith, Shawn Michelle. *American Archives: Gender, Race, and Class in Visual Culture*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.
- Stansell, Christine. "Women, Children, and the Uses of the Streets." *Feminist Studies* 8 (1982), 309–335.
- Warner, Michael. *The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990.
- Willett, C., and Phyllis Cunnington. *The History of Underclothes*. Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 1992.
- Wilson, Elizabeth. *The Contradictions of Culture: Cities, Culture, Women*. London: Sage, 2001.

———. "The Invisible Flaneur," *New Left Review*, no. 191 (February 1992), 90–110.

———. *The Sphinx in the City: Urban Life, the Control of Disorder, and Women*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.

Figures



STUDY FROM NATURE.

VIEW UNDER A PASSING OMNIBUS. When the omnibus passes, the owners of the above feet come into view, as below, and the proverb about deceptive appearances is thus verified :

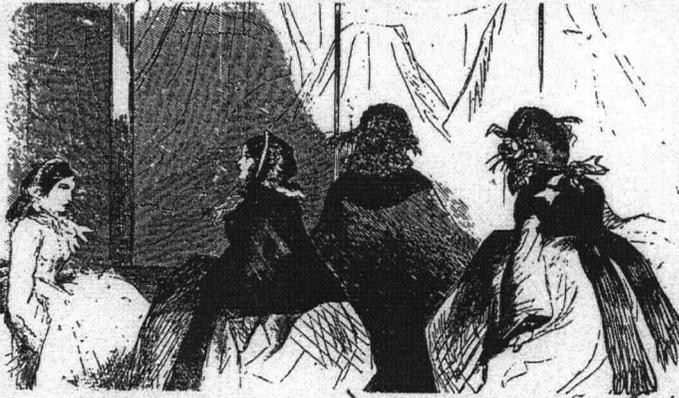


Fig. 1 *Study from Nature*
Harper's Weekly (New York), January 21, 1860, page 48



STUDY FROM NATURE.

VIEW UNDER A PASSING CLOUDS. When the clouds pass, the owners of the above feet come into view, as below, and the proverb about deceptive appearance is thus verified.



THE ROMAN CATHOLIC REVIVAL.

First, 3 A.M. of a foggy morning. Protestant PATRIFAMILIAR (sighs). "What's the matter, Biddy? Thieves? Eh! Fire?" Biddy. "The parson said I was to call you to come to mass to be converted." PATRIFAMILIAR. "What! go to be converted at three in the morning in January? Why, this is worse than the Inquisition. Tell Father Murphy that I'd rather die in my parson's."

Coleman's Eutaw House, Baltimore.

This popular House has been thoroughly renovated, and opened by ROBERT N. COLMAN, late of the Aster House and St. Nicholas Hotel, and offers superior accommodations to families.

"No Meal Complete without it." L.A. & PERDUE'S WORCESTERSHIRE SAUCE. JOHN DUNGAN & SONS, Wholesale Agents.

FAMILY PROVISIONS. A few Family Agents WANTED at home, or to travel, on salary or commission, for the LARGEST ILLUSTRATED PAPER in the world, the GENUINE FINEST AND BEST. For "Confidential Terms," apply to MARY LOUISE MARSHALL & Co., Publishers, New York City.

\$3000 a year. Greatest discovery yet! These Premiums awarded! Agents are making fast money, selling like hot cakes! Now, send, and ready! Profits \$50 per cent! See full particulars in our new Catalogue, sent by mail, with full particulars, to MARY LOUISE MARSHALL & Co., Publishers, New York City, N.Y.

PRENTICEANA;

OR WIT AND HUMOR IN PARAGRAPHS. By the Author of THE LOST LADY.

The volume contains more than Two Thousand of those witty and humorous paragraphs which, for the last thirty years, have not failed to bring a smile or hearty laugh to all those who appreciate "a good thing."

Single copies by mail, post-paid, on receipt of price by DERRY & JACKSON, Publishers, New York.

Author's Note.—It is useless to describe the contents of Prenticeana. Those who have suffered from its distressing paroxysms know full well what it is. James Watson's Excursion, prepared by Joseph Burnett & Co., Boston, has seldom failed to afford immediate relief, even in the most severe cases, and consequently it has effected a permanent cure. One Dollar per bottle.

DR. J. B. MARCHESI Celebrated Uterine Catholicon. For the Relief and Cure of Suffering Females. Climate and the natural habits of females in our country a variety of diseases which this Catholicon will cure and cure. It can be relied upon in any case of Painful Menstruation, Irregular Menstruation, Premature Discharge, Leucorrhoea, Ulceration of the Uterus, Fallopian, Laceration, &c. When every thing else has failed, this article is never taken without benefit. No suffering female should leave it untried. A pamphlet, with full symptoms, treatment, &c., sent gratis by mail, or delivered by any Agent. It is sent in every language, or sent by mail, or delivered by any Agent. Address: REV. J. B. MARCHESI, M.D., 11 Park Row, N. Y.; J. H. PARK, Chemist at Chicago; WEEKS & LITTLE, Boston; or GALLAGHER & Co., Philad. J. B. MARCHESI, M.D., Cuba, N. Y.

Spalding's Prepared Ghee! ECONOMY! Dispatch! Save the Pieces! Useful in every house for roasting, Frying, Croquet, Glaze, &c. Wholesale Depot, No. 40 Cedar Street, New York. Address: BERRY & SPALDING & CO., No. 40 Cedar Street, New York. Put up for Sale in Cans containing four, eight, and twelve pounds—a beautiful Lighthouse Ghee—Ghee, and containing wash powder.

HARPER & BROTHERS, FRANKLIN SQUARE, NEW YORK. Have just Published:

SELF-HELP.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS OF CHARACTER AND CONDUCT. By Samuel Smith, Author of "The Life of George Stephenson." With a Complete and Exhaustive Index. Three Volumes, 12 parts.

[From the London Standard Review.] Mr. Smith, the biographer of George Stephenson, has written a book called Self-Help, in which he has collected a wonderful amount of matter showing how men get on in the world. The literary merit of the work is very great, and the authors have so successfully presented the difficulty of wearing him a command and pleasant narrative a long string of anecdotes. Both readable of common-sensibility and language of all-own aptly illustrated by Mr. Smith, whose profusion of biographical anecdotes seems inexhaustible.

HARPER & BROTHERS will send the above Work by Mail, postage prepaid, to any part of the United States on receipt of seventy-five Cents.

THE COURT OF DEATH.

A Large and Splendid CHROMO-LITHOGRAPHIC ENGRAVING 25 by 21 inches of the Great and Famous Representation of THE COURT OF DEATH. Has been published by the undersigned, by HENRIEUX FRANK.

The register and lowest price for each Engraving is 25, and at this price about 1,000 copies are usually sold, and under the assurance that 100,000 OF THE COURT OF DEATH will be sold, they are sold at ONE DOLLAR EACH. Each purchaser who receives a certificate of proprietorship in the Original Engraving, worth \$25.00, and is entitled to an equal share in the final distribution, to be made by the certificate holders when the 100,000 engravings are sold.

Published from the venerable Rembrandt Plate, now in the 6th year of its age! "I have seen the Chromo-Lithographic Engraving of my Painting of the Court of Death, recently executed by Mr. G. G. Colton, (the present proprietor,) by Harvey, Major & Knapp, of New York, and was very much struck by its extraordinary and accurate copy of the original painting. REMBRANDT'S COURT OF DEATH. For One Copy, \$1, and postage 15 cents. Six Copies for \$5, postage free. Agents wanted that to make from \$20 to \$40 per year above expenses, in canvassing for the work. All who are above expenses and have a partner, will want a copy. \$1 15 from agents will secure one copy, a letter of agency containing terms and 40 descriptive and historical pamphlets for distribution. The demand for the pictures show they were heated (the 11 has far exceeded the power of the printer to furnish them; but we have them for never failed to fill the orders from the country to the day of writing. To avoid mistake, the Name, Town, County and State should be plainly written. Address: G. G. COLTON, No. 21 Park Row, N. Y. P. O. Box No. 8,911.

ANTI-ARTHERIC WINE.—A CERTAIN GOUT AND RHEUMATISM.

PREPARED BY FENKLE & LYON'S, Wholesale Druggists, 15 Broadway Street, New York.

MISREPRESENTATION.

A NOVEL. By Anna H. Drury. Author of "Fanny and Fernand," "Rathory," &c. Two Volumes, 12 cents.

[From the London Spectator.] There is no being writer of fiction who might not be proud to have produced such a novel as Misrepresentation. But there is not one among them all who could have written it except Mrs. Drury herself. Mrs. Drury is in every respect a thoroughly original and original writer. It is not the general outcome of an individual mind. The story is singularly well constructed. It is not a short one, but so close is its texture that not a page could be spared. The characters are numerous and distinctly marked, and they talk like men and women, not like puppets, or like a book. The action throughout is worthy of the reader, never ceases or lingers, always rising to the point, and leaving the reader's mind the impression that the author has covered her meaning in the most forcible of words she could have chosen for the purpose.

[From the London Athenaeum.] This is a novel with a good plot, which is well and carefully worked out. The characters are every one of them human beings, and not more like such. The author steadily holds her own position, and does not allow the wind of her story, nor allow the reader to stand back the thread of the conduct, and are all of them very good and human. "Misrepresentation" will be read with interest, especially by those who had themselves shut up in the house with the couple and cold and other things brought by November and its fog.

[From the London Leader.] We hope our readers will get the work. The characters are admirably drawn, and the whole subject of "Misrepresentation" is treated with great skill by the talented writer.

HARPER & BROTHERS will send the above Work by Mail, postage prepaid, to any part of the United States on receipt of Fifty Cents.

FENKLE & LYON'S SEWING MACHINES. Have invented the Improved Model at the FAIR OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTION, with the highest premium for THE BEST SEWING MACHINE WORK. Also, the highest premium at the FAIR OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTION, THE NEW JERSEY STATE FAIR, and a grandly OFFICE ON BROADWAY.



SEA-SIDE STUDIES.

IMPERTINENT CORSEY (reads). "The rocks along our Coast may be seen studded with these beautiful zoophites. * * * * The skin is soft, and the tentacles are of the finest violet, mingled often with pink, mauve, green, and yellow; indeed the colors vary so much in different individuals, all alike beautiful, that it is impossible to describe them rigidly. * * * * During the ebb of the tide, these creatures may be contemplated on a fine day to great advantage, and few spectacles are calculated to afford more pleasure to a lover of nature." "H'm! here are two lovely specimens, Fred; you take one, and I'll take the other!"

Fig. 3 *Sea-Side Studies*
 From *A Broadsheet of Good Things*
Harper's Weekly, Jan. 21, 1860, page 40



HABITS OF OUR MODERN SAVAGES.

Scene—A BROADWAY OMNIBUS.

JONES *loq.* "The stage was full, Sir, when she got in, and that good-natured fool, Smith, gave her his seat, and smashed his hat in trying to stand up. As for the lady, sir, she never looked at Smith, or seemed to know there was such a person, but calmly overwhelming Rogers and me in her flowing drapery, took out her portemonnaie, and desired Old Hunks to hand up her fare to the driver."

Fig. 4 *Habits of Our Modern Savages*
Harper's Weekly, April 18, 1860, page 112



Young Ligneus, a great boaster of his female conquests, having received a letter from an unknown charmer, to meet him at the corner of Washington Parade Ground, invites three friends to witness his triumph. The fond pair were to recognise each other by a nosegay in their hands. The result!

Fig. 5 Young Ligneus, a great boaster of his female conquests. . . .
 Frank Leslie's Budget of Fun (New York), Dec. 1859, page 8

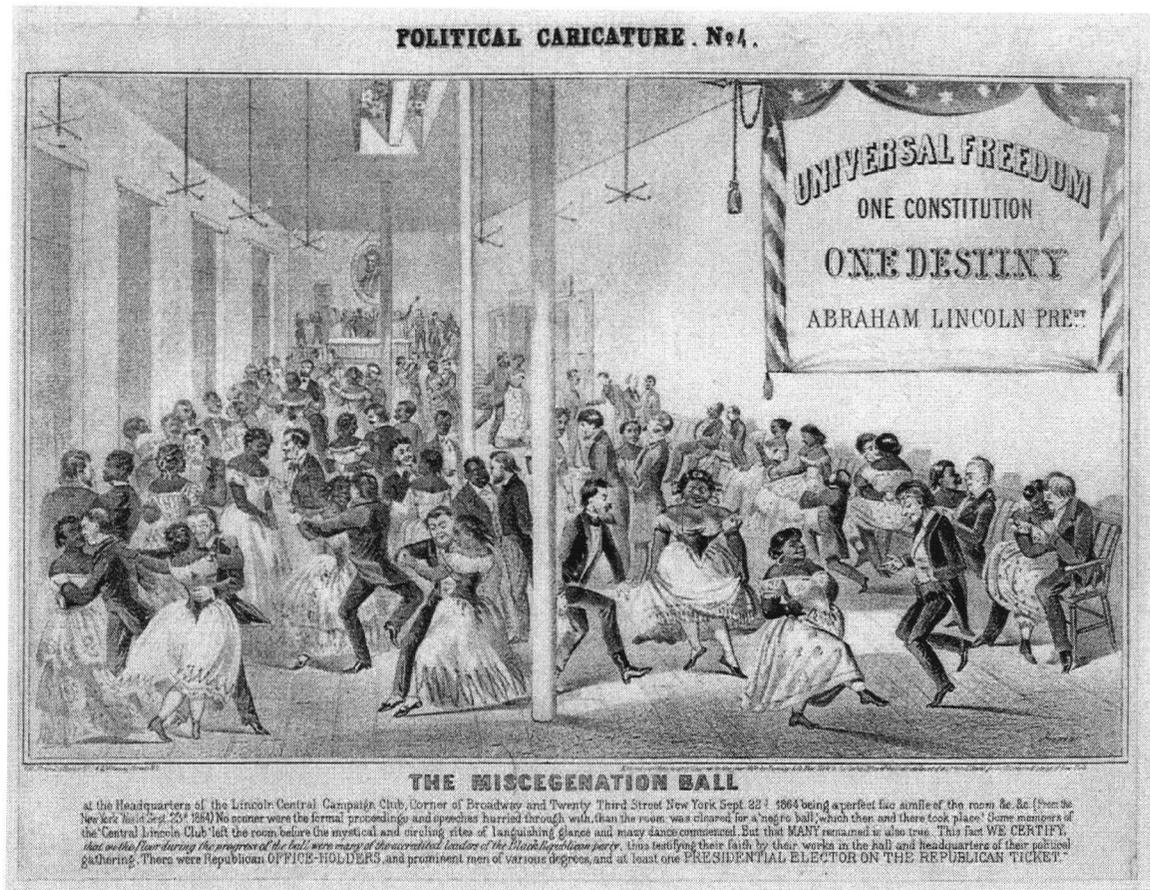


Fig. 6 *The Miscegenation Ball*
 Lithograph by Bromley and Company, 1864
 Collections of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.



THE BIG BOOT MANIA.

Scene.—A Fashionable Shoemaker's on Broadway.

POLITE SHOEMAKER. "A pair of boots, miss? I think these would be about your fit."
 YOUNG LADY. "Well, no; I think I would prefer those yonder" (points to a pair of cavalry boots just made for Colonel Sabretash of the Dragoons).

Fig. 7 *The Big Boot Mania*
Harper's Weekly, May 9, 1860, page 96



Fig. 8 "Cham, the great French caricaturist . . . thus prophesies pictorially for the present year of 1857"
Untitled illustration
Harper's Weekly, January 17, 1857, page 35

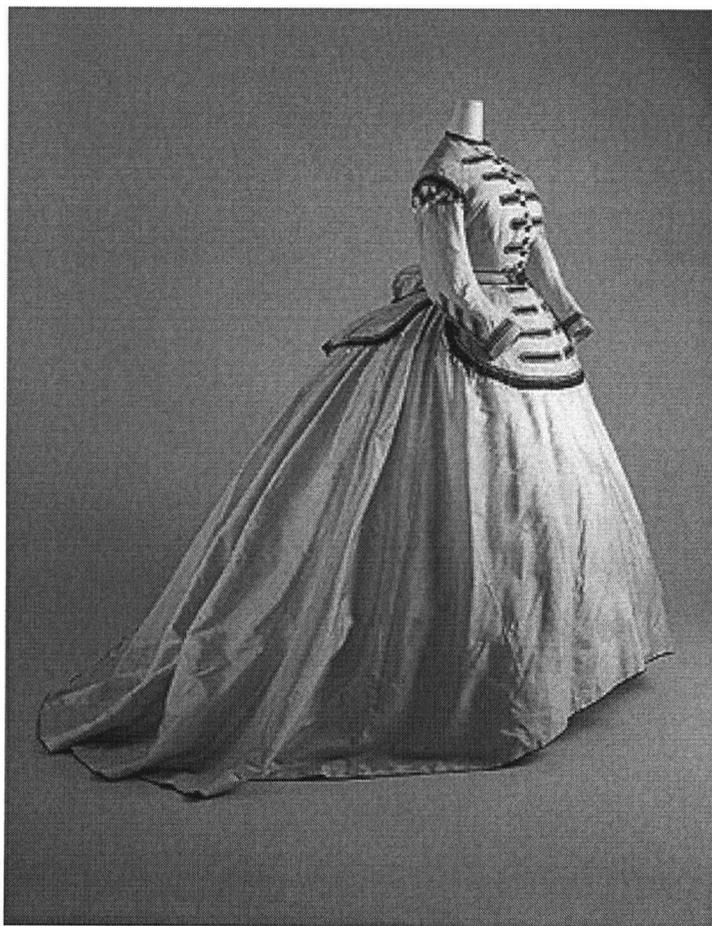


Fig. 9 Walking dress
American, c. 1860
Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Gift of Mary Pierpont Beckwith, 1969 (CI 69.33.4a-d)

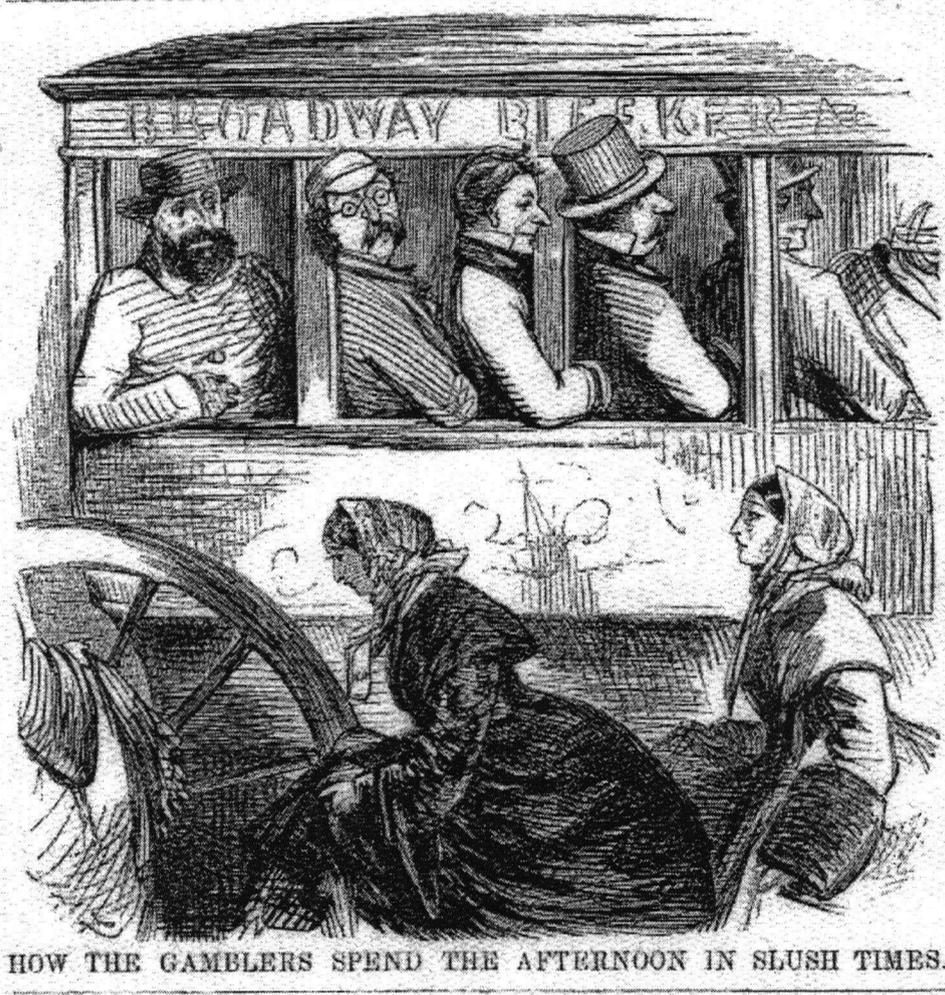


Fig. 10 *How the Gamblers Spend the Afternoon in Slush Times*
Harper's Weekly, January 15, 1859, page 48

The Lady's Guide
to
Perfect Beauty.

Being a complete Analysis and Classification of Beauty
in Woman; also, External Indications, or the art
of determining the precise figure, the degree of
beauty, the mind, habits, and age of
women, notwithstanding the

Disguise of Dress.

One volume, price \$1 00.
Single copies by mail on receipt of price.

DERBY & JACKSON,
Publishers,
New York.

Fig. 11 Advertisement for *The Lady's Guide to Perfect Beauty*
Harper's Weekly, March 17, 1860, page 27