

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

**ProQuest Information and Learning
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
800-521-0600**

UMI[®]

.

A

**“THE EXCITEMENT OF AN AFTERNOON CALL”--
RE-FRAMING THE REGIONAL AND THE MODERN**

**Through the Poetry
of
Jeanne Robert Foster**

by

Cathy Elizabeth Fagan

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in English in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2002

UMI Number: 3047215

**Copyright 2002 by
Fagan, Cathy Elizabeth**

All rights reserved.

UMI[®]

UMI Microform 3047215

**Copyright 2002 by ProQuest Information and Learning Company.
All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.**

**ProQuest Information and Learning Company
300 North Zeeb Road
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346**

© 2002

CATHY ELIZABETH FAGAN

All Rights Reserved

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in English in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

17 April 2002 Marc Dolan
Date Chair of Examining Committee

18 April 2002 Jean Kucharski
Date Executive Officer

Professor Marc Dolan Marc Dolan

Professor Jane Marcus Jane Marcus

Professor David Reynolds David Reynolds
Supervisory Committee

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Abstract

**“THE EXCITEMENT OF AN AFTERNOON CALL” –
RE-FRAMING THE REGIONAL AND THE MODERN:
Through the Poetry of Jeanne Robert Foster**

by

Cathy Elizabeth Fagan

Advisor: Dr. Marc Dolan

Jeanne Robert Foster (1879-1971) was an American poet and journalist of the late-nineteenth and the first two-thirds of the twentieth centuries, whose work glosses both positive and negative aspects of America’s shift from a nation of small, rural communities to one of urban development. Her poetry, set in the Adirondack communities in which she grew up, contrasts the importance of individuality and the value of the natural world to the devaluation of human life and the exploitation of nature inherent in what the twentieth century came to define as cultural, social, and economic progress. Immersed in the modernist movement as an author and editor, Foster responded to her encounters with modernity by turning to her mountain heritage for ways

to cope with the demands of a new world. While she is a regionalist poet, Foster embodies a modernist trend toward understatement, iconic use of images, and introspection apparent in the art of such poets as Robert Frost and Ezra Pound, her friend and mentor. Although her early poetry depended on end-rhyme and iambic pentameter, Foster adopted the natural rhythms of Adirondack speech, as well as the lilt of the psalms to create the texts which best reflect her vision of a modern world informed by the experience of past generations.

This dissertation, the first scholarship to evaluate and analyze Foster's work in a full-length study, locates her texts in a juncture of regionalism and modernism. The importance of Foster's work lies in her reconstruction of site/sight through which the reader may encounter authentic sentiment, and construct/deconstruct influences of race, class, and gender in the context of modernity. By confronting both the intellect and the emotion divided by a modernist aesthetic theory of fragmentation and alienation, Foster extends her poetic vision "beyond the mountain," transforming her traditional, regional texts into strategies for evaluating and interpreting the modern world. Her art offers the contemporary reader a version of reality through which to re-vise modernist textual interpretation according to a plurality of meanings contextualized by the quotidian, not based on any political or academic agenda.

ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are used throughout this dissertation for economy and clarity.

AP	<i>Adirondack Portraits</i> , by Jeanne Robert Foster
JBW	John Butler Yeats
JRF	Jeanne Robert Foster
LC	Richard Londrville private collection
MC	William M. Murphy private collection
MFNY	<i>The Man from New York: John Quinn and His Friends</i> , by Benjamin L. Reid
NOY	<i>Neighbors of Yesterday</i> , by Jeanne Robert Foster
NYPL	Foster/Murphy Collection, New York Public Library
WBY	William Butler Yeats

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	Abstract	iv
2	Abbreviations	vi
3	Chronology	vii
4	Introduction	1
5	Chapter One: Sense of Place; Sense of Self	20
6	Chapter Two: The Adirondack Region	91
7	Chapter Three: Foster and the Parameters of Gender	137
8	Chapter Four: A Regional Move Toward the Modern Voice	210
9	Chapter Five: The Maelstrom of Modernism	263
10	Conclusion	326
11	Bibliography	344

CHRONOLOGY

Of Jeanne Robert Foster's Life

March 10, 1879	Birth of Julia Elizabeth Oliver
1881	The Olivers move to Leonardsville, Minerva Township
1887	The Olivers move to Chestertown
1887-1889	Lives with Francis and Mary Putnam, Johnstown (base/Crane Mtn)
1889-1890	Lives with Jacob Davis, and Duane Fuller, uncles
1890-1891	Lives with Erastus Griffin, uncle
1893	Contracts rheumatic fever; her heart is damaged permanently First published article, "Autumn Leaves" for <i>Vermont Farm and Home</i>
1894-1895	Licensed as a teacher in Warren County; 3 rd level, 2 nd level
1896	The Olivers move to Glens Falls
1897	Marries Matlack Foster in Philadelphia, clerk of Orphans Court, 8/25
1897	Travels the western U.S. and Mexico with Matlack JRF and Matlack take up residence at 19 East Avenue, Rochester, NY
1900	First extended visit in New York City Meets David Dodge, editor of <i>Vanity Fair</i> magazine Jeanne begins modeling, using the name Jean Elspeth
1901	Helps her parents buy the home on Albany Avenue in Schenectady
1900-1903	Introduced to Harrison Fisher by David Dodge Begins modeling for Charles Dana Gibson Appears in the <i>New York Times</i> , the <i>Sunday Telegraph</i> , the <i>New York Journal and Advertiser</i> , <i>Spur</i> magazine, <i>McClure's</i> , the <i>Ladies Home Journal</i> , <i>Cosmopolitan</i> Performs as an ingenue for the American Stock Company (8 th Ave./42nd St.) using the name Jean Elspeth
1903-1905	Works for William Randolph Hearst as assistant fashion editor Meets Evelyn Nesbit
1905	Moves to Boston to care for her sister, Francesca
1905-1910	Attends extensions of Harvard and Boston University Studies with professors Charles Copeland, William James, Josiah Royce, George Santayana, and George Herbert Palmer. First place prize, <i>Boston-American</i> , \$50.00 in gold for best student letter regarding the paper's editorial policy
1910	Becomes a journalist for the <i>Boston-American</i>
1906	Formally joins the New York Theosophical Society
1907	Featured in <i>The Harrison Fisher Book</i>
1909	Meets Albert Shaw Hears Annie Besant speak in New York City

- 1910-1916 Journalist and arts editor for the *American Review of Reviews*; maintained associations with the journal until 1933, when it became the *Literary Digest*
- 1911 First trip abroad: JRF goes to Paris, and parts of Ireland and England writing for the *Review*
Meets John Butler Yeats at Petitpas
- 1912 Publication of JRF's work on the songs of the Civil War, in *The Photographic History of the Civil War*; ten volumes published by the Review of Reviews Co. Ed. Francis Trevelyan Miller, Dudley H. Miles; American photographer, Mathew Brady
- 1912 Trip to Scotland and Ireland; meets Æ, George Russell
- 1913 Armory Show of modern art
Publication of "Art Revolutionists on Exhibition in America" in *Review of Reviews*
Begins working as a volunteer social worker, "lady on the block" in New York City
- 1914 Trip to London to cover the outbreak of World War I
Goes to Sligo to meet the Yeats family
Meets William Butler Yeats at a poetry reading at Manhattan's Nat'l Arts Club
Reviews Vachel Lindsay's *General Booth Enters Heaven and Other Poems*; establishes a long standing friendship with Lindsay
- 1915 Meets Aleister Crowley
Takes Matlack with her to travel to the San Diego Exhibition, also travels to Santa Barbara and Victoria
- 1916 Publication of *Wild Apples*
Publication of *Neighbors of Yesterday*
- 1918 Meets John Quinn; begins working as Quinn's assistant
Begins writing articles about the Czechoslovakian struggle for independence
- 1920 Trip to Paris; establishes close ties to Gwen John and sees portrait, *Mere Marie Poussepin*
Trip to Czechoslovakia, guest of President Tomáš Masaryk
Begins support of the Red Cross
- 1921 Trip to Europe (meets Quinn there) to survey, purchase art; meets Brancusi, Derain, Picasso, Satie, Braque, Cézanne, Gris.
Meets and establishes a friendship with Ezra Pound
Records the interview between Quinn and James Joyce
Remains in Paris through the fall to work for Quinn's collection
Acts as American literary agent for Pound, continuing until 1928

- 1922 Death of John Butler Yeats; interment at Chestertown, NY
Works in New York to get Eliot's *Waste Land* published
- 1923 Publication of *Rock-Flower*, Boni and Liveright
Trip to Rome, Berlin, Paris, w/ Quinn; meets Ford Madox Ford
Becomes American editor of the *transatlantic review*
Remains in Paris through the fall, working for Quinn's collection
Acts as literary agent for Ford, continuing until 1929
- 1924 John Quinn dies
- 1925 Works with Quinn's associate, Thomas Curtin, as well as with
Henri Roché to save Quinn's monumental collection of
modern art
Acts as American editor for the literary magazine *This Quarter*
Edits and seals the John Quinn Collection of letters/ manuscripts
for the NYPL
- 1926 Dispersal of the John Quinn Collection in New York and Paris
Trip to Europe: visits the Pounds and works for art and literary
clients
Second interview with Joyce
- 1927 Final trip to Europe, working for art clients in France, visiting
W.B. Yeats, London
Death of JRF's mother, Lucia
Official resignation from the *Review of Reviews* (although she
wrote for them until the mid-1930's)
- 1928 *Marthe*, a one-act play is published in Frank Shay's *50
Contemporary Plays*
- 1928-1930's Works with the New York State Constitutional Convention,
Albany, researching and writing; also free-lance editing,
proofreading, writing
- 1932 Death of JRF's brother, Elwyn
- 1933 Death of JRF's father, Frank
Death of Matlack Foster
Gives up the New York City apartment, moving to Schenectady
Supports herself with various part-time and free-lance work
- 1938 Begins career with the Municipal Housing Authority, Schenectady
- 1947 Death of JRF's sister, Cara
Death of Albert Shaw
Establishes the "Golden Age Club" for Schenectady senior citizens
- 1955 Retires from the MHA
- 1959 Schenectady Citizen of the Year
- 1959-1970 Scholars and authors begin seeking JRF's help in their research
- 1961 Gift of manuscripts and letters to the Houghton Library, Harvard
- 1963 Facsimile reproduction of *Neighbors of Yesterday*, Riedinger and
Riedinger, Ltd.

- 1970 Honored by Union College, Schenectady, New York, honorary
doctorate, June; collapses at the ceremony
- September 22, 1970 Death of Jeanne Robert Foster; interred at Chestertown, New York
William M. Murphy is appointed Literary Executor of Foster's
estate
- 2001 Publication of the Foster biography, Janis and Richard Londrville,
*Dear Yeats, Dear Pound, Dear Ford: Jeanne Robert
Foster and Her Circle of Friends*
- Summer, 2002 Publication of *Prodigal Father Revisited: Artists and Writers in
the World of John Butler Yeats*; contains several essays on
JRF.
- September, 2004 Anticipated conference on the life and work of Jeanne Robert
Foster: Chestertown, New York

INTRODUCTION

When Jeanne Robert Foster looked back on her life from the vantage point of her long years as an employee of the Schenectady Municipal Housing Authority, the time between 1900 and 1933, spent in a whirlwind of journalism and modern art, may have seemed more elusive than the far older North Country memories she inscribed within her Adirondack poetry. In 1961 she wrote to Dorothy Pound: “I wish I could see you and Ezra. The Paris days, those enchanted years, were so wonderful. I have the photograph of Joyce, Quinn, Ford and Ezra in my living room [. . .]” (Foster/Murphy Collection, NYPL). The next year she wrote to her friend Noel Riedinger-Johnson: “No matter what happens, I am still walking on the Champs Elysées with Pound, listening to Joyce in his apartment, at dinner with Ford Madox Ford and the current wife; late breakfast at the Cafe Dome, living, breathing life as it exists in Paris [. . .]” (AP xl). While she could escape occasionally to the enchantment of 1920’s Paris through souvenirs, letters, art and memories of some of the world’s most artistic people, the Adirondack mountains figured in her daily life. In a letter to friend Sara O’Connor in October, 1962, Foster wrote:

I am passionately devoted to the Adirondacks; they are in my blood. I have seen many groups of mountains in various parts of the world but none so beautiful. I am revising a new book of true Adirondack stories (in verse). It is not probable that I shall be watching the seasons very long, but I hope God will let me finish this book. (AP xxxviii)

As the daughter of a country schoolteacher and a lumberjack, Foster's memories crystallized images of the people, the customs, and the natural landscape in which she grew up, creating a mixture of memory and nostalgia in her poetry, informed by her keen comprehension of a changing America in a modern world. To understand Foster's contribution to our apprehension of modernity and the literature it has produced, we must come to this knowledge as she came to it, through her origins, her vision of herself, and her poetry.

Foster's lived during in fascinating intersection of Adirondack frontier, middle class urban, and international communities. Her participation in the bourgeois culture of America's late nineteenth century was a prelude to her immersion into the modernist ethos of the first thirty years of the twentieth century. In her fifties, Foster withdrew to the rural community life of upstate New York, from the Depression years to her death in 1970. Her professional career as a journalist had begun with her contribution to Mathew Brady's photojournalistic history of the Civil War, and it went on to span developments in art, politics, feminism, and international relations throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Certainly her most glamorous life experiences occurred from 1900 through the 1920's, when in various roles from model to journalist to literary agent, Foster knew and was known by many of the great artists of the day. Three decades of immersion into the international cosmopolis informed Foster's view of world events, enabling her poetry to tell the story of the forever wild Adirondack park in a voice authentically regional in its attention to the provincial and quotidian, yet steeped in urbanity and pluralism.

Foster was born to poor country life, and passed from home to home within her extended family as resources grew or dwindled. When she was just seventeen, she married a man twenty-seven years her senior, and through his generosity enhanced her rudimentary education through the Harvard and Boston University extensions. By 1909 Jeanne Robert Foster was becoming the agent of her own life, using her skill to support herself and her family. Graced by beauty and a quick, talented mind, Foster found her life crossing the lives of such personalities as Charles Dana Gibson, William James, the Yeats family, Pablo Picasso, and Ezra Pound. Foster worked continuously in the fields of journalism, literature, and art throughout the advent of modernism in the United States from the point at which she began writing for Albert Shaw in 1911, covering the Armory Art Show of 1913, acting as a European correspondent through World War I, and moving into the heady days of the 1920's in Manhattan, the ten-year prelude to the Depression. In 1933 she left New York City to care for family in Schenectady, took a position with the newly established Municipal Housing Authority there, and continued her work as a civil servant until her retirement in 1959. From 1916 to 1930 she published four books of poetry and one play. She also edited and introduced the John Quinn collection of letters and manuscripts housed at the New York Public Library, acting as literary agent for Ford Madox Ford and Ezra Pound, as well as functioning as American editor of the *transatlantic review* and *This Quarter*. Foster's work from 1933 to her death in 1970 was collected posthumously by Noel Riedinger Johnson, and is still in print, *Adirondack Portraits: A Piece of Time*.

Such an overview of Foster's life and work indicates that she was, as were many

bright, beautiful women of the modernist era, a tangent to the powerful circle of talented men who shaped the image of the word in the first third of the twentieth century. Shari Benstock's comprehensive study, *Women of the Left Bank*, has revealed the many ways in which such women as Djuna Barnes, Sylvia Beach, Nancy Cunard, Mina Loy, and Edith Wharton, among some two dozen others, not only supported and advanced the work of male modernists, but also supported and advanced the work of modernism. These women addressed the complexities of modernity in powerful texts which confront the "despair, hopelessness, paralysis, angst, [. . .] sense of meaninglessness, chaos, and fragmentation of material reality" traditionally assigned to patriarchal definitions of modernism (*Women of the Left Bank* 28). Citing H.D. as the most extreme example of the difficulties faced by women writing during the modernist period, Benstock highlights the dialectical oppositions which underlie the western culture within which these women operated. H.D.'s work "not only shows the operations of the dialectic to work between oppositions (life/death; male/female/ violence/peace; nature/society) but demonstrates that each component of the oppositional pair is defined by the other, is inhabited by the other" (335). Bonnie Kime Scott proceeds to illustrate such "co-habitation" of oppositions in *The Gender of Modernism*, revealing through the work of Willa Cather, Zora Neale Hurston, Katherine Mansfield, and Sylvia Townsend Warner (as well as seventeen other women authors) the important interconnections of the women and their work with traditionally canonical male modernists, T.S. Eliot, James Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, and Hugh MacDiarmid. Each interconnection of this admittedly limited web of writers further illuminates the sketchy, oversimplified nature of our understanding of

the “modernist era,” try as we might in the intervening three quarters of a century to expand, deepen, and layer that appreciation through matters of gender, race, and class.

Like many other women authors of her time, up to now, when she was not being totally ignored, Jeanne Robert Foster has been treated as an addendum to the phenomenon labelled modernism. Foster’s biography, recently written by Richard and Janis Londrville, (Syracuse University Press, September 2001) is titled *Dear Yeats, Dear Pound, Dear Ford: Jeanne Robert Foster and Her Circle of Friends*. The title indicates the kinds of interconnections which formed the fabric of Foster’s life and work, and it contains an appendix in which Richard Londrville astutely examines a sampling of Foster’s poetry. However, although Alfred Kazin, Judith Fetterley, Annette Kolodny, and Kate Winter have mentioned Foster in their discussions of regionalism, and although she is quoted, mentioned and thanked in books on John and William Butler Yeats, John Quinn, Ford Madox Ford and Ezra Pound, this critical analysis of Foster’s texts will be the first full-length consideration of Foster as a literary artist.

In his foreword to *Adirondack Portraits: A Piece of Time*, Alfred Kazin refers to Foster’s work: “[. . .] Jeanne Robert Foster was not interested in poetry for poetry’s sake. This book is exactly what the title says it is: ‘a piece of time.’[. . .] More than anything else, the book is an attempt to picture in tones often sorrowful yet wry a world--the North Woods life at the end of the nineteenth century--that to this day remains a ‘last frontier’” (AP Foreword ii). Kazin’s response to the regional aspect of Foster’s work highlights the drama and clarity with which she treats the land and people of the Adirondacks. Their traditions and influences shaped her initial awareness of life, and

their connection to the disinterested power of nature never ceased to affect her perspective, whether she was teaching in a one room schoolhouse, modelling for *Vanity Fair*, writing for the *Review of Reviews*, or walking the Champs Elysées with Henri-Pierre Roché and dining with Ford Madox Ford. Kazin compares Foster to Robert Frost in style and power: “The slow pace of talk, the tide of memories, the prevailing theme of nature as adversary seem very familiar, and haunting, when we read in Jeanne Robert Foster of farms where there was often more stone than soil and where there were less than a hundred frost-free days a year”(xii). But although Kazin speaks warmly about Foster’s authenticity and her ability to memorialize the North Woods and its people, he restricts the impact of her work to her power to evoke “the rough surroundings and deeply isolated people that were her first and enduring background in life.” Citing her “matter-of-fact plainness” Kazin assures the reader that Foster did not write “poetry for poetry’s sake,” suggesting that perhaps her work in this genre occurred because “she simply fell into a form so appropriate to ‘country things’ because of the materials so personal to her” (xii). Although her early poetry depended on end-rhyme and iambic pentameter, Foster settled into the natural cadence of Adirondack speech and the rhythm of the psalms to interpret a modern world in free verse. While Foster’s use of the vernacular and her descriptions of the farms and homes of the Adirondacks are masterful reproductions, we are seriously limiting her texts if we reduce them, because of form and content, to what New Criticism might have called “merely regional.”

Although she admired the work of the regionalists, Foster did not link her regional writing to that of Robert Frost, Sara Orne Jewett, Mary Freeman, Edgar Lee

Masters, or Bret Harte. In the introduction to the 1963 facsimile publication of *Neighbors of Yesterday* (original date, 1916) Foster wrote about the differences between their subject matter and hers: “The psychology of the farmers and lumbermen of this particular section [. . .] was in many respects different from that of the people of the rural districts of New England, and utterly at variance with the characteristics of the sturdy settlers of the Middle West. The [New England] farmers [. . .] had more subtlety; they were invested with the dignity of noble traditions that were kept untarnished for generation after generation, while the agriculturists of the middle western states had a wider vision and a greater impulse to progress.” On the other hand, fighting both harsh climate and a difficult environment, Foster’s Adirondack farmers and lumbermen “ had little subtlety and they were not progressive. Life moved in a rut for them; they were content with what they knew and what they had, and resented the intrusion of novelty and change” (NOY Foreword, n.p.). The mind set of the Adirondack people afforded Foster an excellent persona through which to consider the tremendous upheaval American society was experiencing in the twentieth century, especially in the years following World War I.

Those years and the changes which characterized them are set out for us by Frederick Lewis Allen, writing about America in the eleven years between the Armistice of World War I (November, 1919) and the stock market crash (October, 1929). His *Prelude* chronicles vast changes in the lives of average, urban Americans, very much like Jeanne Robert Foster’s. Starting with such meteoric changes as silk stockings in ladies’s fashion, the appearance of cosmetics and bobbed hair, or advances in nutrition such as the

concept of the calorie and the vitamin, Lewis moves on through the increased cost of living, the lobbying of workers and socialists for terms of justice and parity, the transformation of the Stock Market into everyone's game, the shift in morals and ethics (blamed on young people and politicians), and the question of women's suffrage. In addition, Allen addresses technological advances such as radio broadcasting, movies, telephones, airplanes, and skyscrapers, the surge in automobile ownership and its corollary, the development of roads, articulating the general sense that after World War I, America stepped forward as the industrial, economic, political giant of western society, if not the world. In every way, America was bombarded by crises that would continue to complicate the act of living in both alarming and seductive ways, into our own time. While modernist critics such as Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarland posit the mid-nineteenth century and the work of Baudelaire as the first stirring of literary modernism, historians might mark 1901 and the death of Queen Victoria as the benchmark of encroaching modernity. On the other hand, Virginia Woolf cited 1910 as the year the world changed, but D. H. Lawrence gave that distinction to 1922, while Lewis places that moment between the two dates, citing the Armistice of 1919 as the vanguard of modern living. Obviously, these and many more "moments" mark important shifts between old and new world orders, depending on which aspects of "order" and chaos one wishes to stress.

Crisis moments mark the dissolution of boundaries, the ends and beginnings which, through the retrospective act of historicizing, we try so urgently to interpret, categorize, label, and--ultimately--control. As taboos disappear and the unthinkable

becomes everyday reality, retreat into the past offers us a location of security. The past is always filtered; our minds observe it through gauze; our hearts try to locate comfort there. Certainly, when Foster looked at the mountain through her memories, she must have found solace in that past, and in that sense Kazin is correct in identifying her project as archeological and, perhaps, anthropological as well. Truly, Jeanne Robert Foster captured particular historical moments, “the quintessential note of an ‘old time America’” that “fills a void left in our hearts by the demons of progress and the acceleration of time” (Kazin, AP xiv). Yet, if that is the sum of Foster’s work, recouping the past, setting it in amber, presenting it to her readers as a pretty artifact to consider in between moments of real living, then she offered little in the way of art to the people of her time, and nothing but the escape of nostalgia to future generations of readers. Reductive narrative memories will always tell us that the comfort found there is, at best, deceptive, and at worst, a narcotic renegotiation of reality. Thus, regional narrative such as Foster’s, steeped in the detail of locale and the beliefs of a particular people, has traditionally lent itself to dismissal by readers of “serious literature.”

If we are to move beyond pedestrian assessments of regionalism and elitist interpretations of modernism, then it is necessary to develop a lens through which the past becomes more than an escape, and the modern means more than the sum of alienation and fragmentation. By presenting the astute reader with a way in which to re-frame the early part of the twentieth century, Foster’s texts employ both the power of sentiment and the desire of nostalgia to identify the void which humanity seeks to fill by looking back with longing. These texts are, in fact, a lens for our own time, providing a perspective on the

changes in the world of 1916 that have only intensified since then. Such a hermeneutic can render a Foster text more transgressive than it might seem at first, leading the reader to interrogate not only the idyllic memory, but also the modern void that memory addresses. For example, “The Old Sitting Room,” a poem published in the 1916 *Neighbors of Yesterday*, recreates an old-fashioned parlor of Foster’s youth. The narrator recounts, among the simple furnishings, two pictures, “Mercy at the Wicket Gate” and “Contemplation,” both attesting to the goodness of God in being mindful of man. Mostly the room is filled with flowers and house plants, maternal love, care for neighbors, and the thirst for learning, shown in the stacks of books read “every night, when all the chores are done.” (40. 39-40). As it builds its images, the poem presents a fantasy to the homesick modern heart (with the term “modern” moving progressively through the decades since the poem’s inception), yearning for these “olden days” which seem so simple and so complete.

“The Old Sitting Room” escalates in nostalgic intensity, as it invites the reader to enter into the recreation of a halcyon time and place in which everyone found fulfilment in righteousness. There is little substance to the text, until Foster breaks in with a line of separating dots, followed by the penultimate verse that exclaims:

Oh, I remember how we read till evening prayers!
 The wood fire blazed within the high iron stove.
 And charred the maple slabs to ruddy coals.
 Before the fire the watch dog dreamed at peace,
 And father read beside the low oil lamp. (42. 41-45)

The perfection of the memory is intensified by the sights and sensations of the moment that we are supposed to accept as the norm, reflected by the poetic images as the light of the fire is reflected throughout the room. The verse ends with the dispersal of that light:

Those golden days are gone; the world sweeps on;
 New faces come, and the old faces go.
 And our old sitting room has gone the way
 Of all forgotten, gentle, lovely things. (42. 46-49)

The golden days and nights of the remembered scene have been replaced by the sweep of time. As transience replaces permanence, the room joins the world of ghostly recall, gentle and lovely in its recollection, but generally forgotten in the rush of life. In *The Four Quartets*, T.S.Eliot would memorialize the passage of time reflected on the landscape in transitory images: “In my beginning is my end. In succession / Houses rise and fall, crumble, are extended, / Are removed, destroyed, restored, or in their place / Is an open field, or a factory, or a by-pass” (*Four Quartets*, “East Coker” 23; I: 1-4). Everywhere, modernity sees alterity. In the verse quoted above, Foster crystallizes Yeats’s gyrating image of life and death, as faces “come and go” marked only “new” or “old.” What has been presented as a detailed vision of an unchanging past has morphed into a momentary pleasure, lost.

Or did this world exist at all as the speaker has recreated it? The sitting room, is, after all, part of “all forgotten, gentle, lovely things,” gone, as surely as Kazin has determined that the world Foster narrates is “a life long gone, gone, gone, gone” (AP xiv). Is Foster’s text, then, merely regional, and merely nostalgic? Careful reading of the final

verse of “The Sitting Room” shows us a reconceptualization of memory, time, and reality, as the parlor materializes again, the past tense shifting into present, the reader and speaker joined by a kaleidoscopic twist of perspective:

Yet somewhere, stable in unstable time,
 The painted clock tick-tocks the quiet hours,
 The gay rag carpet hides the knotty floors,
 The lamplight wanders in among the flowers,
 Toby lies dreaming of the hunt’s hot chase
 Before the fire, and hushed from revelry
 We listen to the even rise and fall
 Of father’s voice lost in a mellow tale
 Of noble wars and young blood’s chivalry.
 Over us “Mercy at the Wicket Gate”
 And “Contemplation” look out to the stars
 Beyond the mountains, and we are at peace
 With God and man in our old sitting room. (42. 50-62)

The haven of safety, simplicity, and innocence seems never to have existed, and simultaneously always to have been, and always to be realized in the promise of the American idyll. In this final verse, the text transforms the simple parlor into the locus of the characteristics which have marked the American literary project since Emerson demanded a uniquely American subjectivity: originality, freedom, self-assurance, opportunity, union with the divine through the natural world. The resulting subjectivity

exists when and where the speaker (or reader, once it is text) wishes to evoke its image. The narrative persona blurs the parameters of the beloved sitting room, sending the sensations experienced within it out into a timeless universe.

The triple personae of “The Old Sitting Room” comment on life in the world beyond the North Woods community, by recreating its fading aura from within. While the neighbor and the mother add important detail, the dominant persona is the narrator, who remembers the room from a reasoned, intellectual distance, until the poem’s break. At that moment, the speaker’s first person exclamation of recognition and loss, “Oh, I remember how we read till evening prayers! [. . .] Those golden days are gone [. . .]” refocuses the memory from place to feeling. The speaker’s anxiety over the loss of the “golden days,” signifies engagement with the memory which transcends fond recollection. The sitting room has become more than a museum piece, or a testimony to motherhood and homemaking. Remembering and entering into the spirit of the place, the now displaced persona is pierced by longing for connection to the human, evoked by the immediacy of memory.

The objective of Foster’s remembrance is the re-experience of the moment in all its ramifications, affecting the formation of the self, the interpretation of the event, and the impact of the single moment on the life of the individual--and by extension, on the universe. When we look to the past in order to explain or justify the present, we are like scientists evaluating the results of an experiment in which we have invested nothing. Thus, the horrors of war, the joy of curing polio, the incomprehensibility of the holocaust are levelled into facts, easy to categorize with intellectual distance as “ethical,”

“efficient,” “immoral.” When, on the other hand, we enter the past through an *ethos* of persons and place, and experience it as its presence demands, then we confront ourselves in the human capacity to react. In that ability to react, in *pathos*, we can locate, examine, and perhaps begin to interpret our understanding of *logos*, the controlling principles of our rational thought.

Foster’s gift to her reader, both in 1916 and now, is the exchange of the reader’s distance for the narrator’s intimacy, brought about in all the detail of the regional moment, but extended through time in the act of memory. The achievement of her art is only partially its inscription of place, person, and thing in literary history. The importance of Foster’s work is in the reconstruction of site/sight through which the reader may encounter sentiment, (either in forgotten or totally new ways), and construct/deconstruct meaning. Foster’s literary art offers the contemporary critic yet one more version of reality through which to interpret meaning in the project of the postmodern and post-postmodern reader: to re-vision texts according to their plurality of meanings, rather than according to any specific political or academic agenda. The instability of modernity, what Marshal Berman calls “the maelstrom of modern life” is always at issue as we try to make texts “mean.” Only in art does the stable home front refuse to yield to the instability of the modern world. Frozen in time beneath pictures of mercy and noble thought in Foster’s “Old Sitting Room,” the reader is merged into the narrative “we” and enters into the mellow tale of peace heard in the security of the parlor, where war is noble and man communes with the divine. By engaging both the intellect and the sensibility bifurcated by a modernist aesthetic theory of fragmentation and

alienation, Foster followed Pound's advice to write about what she knew in the mountain. Conversely, by extending her poetic vision "beyond the mountain," she transformed her traditional, regional texts into strategies for evaluating and interpreting the modern world.

The act of seeing into and seeing beyond the mountain frames the concept of modernity as change, illustrated in many of Foster's texts. In "Things That Do Not Change," (discussed fully in Chapter Five), Foster uses the first person voice of the narrator to remember and negate the force of time: "I can look down here over the valley/ And forget the fingers of Change / Working upon the cities out yonder./ I can forget everything that happened /From my birth [. . .]" (AP 140. 1-5). Oppositions come into play as the speaker considers the transience of the modern world, figured in the "cities out yonder," contrasted to the natural cycles of the valley, and "the things that happened before I came:/ The green valley; and the tall elms spreading" (140. 6-7). History is reduced to the fragmented events of individuals, easily forgotten, read out of the larger text of a shifting, changing universe. Even the symbol of permanence, the mountain, is made transient in the final lines of the text, as the speaker sits by the woodpile with a pipe, forgetting "everything":

[. . .] [N]othing has happened
 To me ever since I was born. There was
 A man like me who knew certain people
 Who lived the life of men here among men.
 Sometimes I see his life like an old road
 Leading nowhere; and I think he was a curious man

To be wanting all the pain that he had
When he might have sat all his life in the chipyard
Looking out on the things that do not change:
In a twinkling, having a slow hazy thought
Of a place so steadfast that the gray mountains
Seem to have been created by a moment. (140.30-32)

The mountains lie beyond the immediate vision, and inebriated by the sights, sounds, scents of nature, the speaker slips into a comfortable amnesia which separates him from the bustle of the cities beyond. But in this final statement, the busy-ness (business) of the world is not merely repressed; it has never happened. From the vision in the chipyard, the speaker questions the very act of living, like “an old road leading nowhere,” and even the green world, worth remembering in the opening lines, disappears in cinematic reverse, until the world is once more brand new, and the mountains are fresh from creation. The lines resonate with biblical allusions, to a Christ figure, to Genesis, to the very mind of God in the act of creation. And, simultaneously, the text suggests the nihilistic modern voice of the individual completely alone, unwilling, or unable to act, journeying on a road leading nowhere. This is a sample of the modernist voice which shades Foster’s regionalism, confronting the destabilized sense of self which humankind experiences as a result of cultural, political, and economic shock, and leading, eventually, to the despair of Prufrock. In addition, far from looking to nature as a compassionate, harmonious site for nurturing humanity, Foster’s sense of modernism sees man as part of a brutalizing natural

force, the individual prevailing against such power only through an ability to perceive self and world both in an adopted dream state.

Yet the “place so steadfast” precludes the complete alienation of the human presence in the poem’s ending. The person has a thought, and grounded in the steady presence of the place recalled and re-experienced, that person’s thinking joins (almost despite himself) in the continuous creative act of universal renewal. The sense of “otherness” which informs modernity emerges as a new awareness of alienation, of the self from society, of society from its own language, and most importantly, of the artist from a fixed and stable reality, leaving art to create its own real world both within and through a personal sense of the aesthetic. Within such a subjectively created, protean world, Foster balances the alienating qualities of both city and country life with the possibilities of humanness encountering itself in the natural world. Binary opposites are constantly challenged as Foster subverts the differences inherent in ethnic hierarchies, moral and ethical absolute, and gender distinctions. Such erasure of difference is apparent in the daily realities of mountain life chronicled in Foster’s poetry. In her texts we experience personal strength, trust and sensitivity, characteristics Foster associated with all people. Although the events she depicts are tied to mountain life, the truths they uncover have are universal. Kazin states the case for Foster clearly when he says that her life is “an almost classic American story of personal migration from the nineteenth century to the twentieth [. . .]” (AP, Foreword xi). Additionally, her texts have created a map whereby we can repeat that journey.

My own mapping project of Foster’s work considers her examination of

modernity by dividing it into five areas. Chapter One of this study presents Foster's life by chronicling the events which surrounded her many name changes. Beginning with her childhood in the mountains, I have examined Foster's movement through both time and place, up to her death in 1970. Chapter Two traces the development of the mountain image in her poetry, considering both the history of the Adirondack region and the many ways in which Foster's connection to the mountains shaped her view of the world, and her aesthetic vision. Because gender was such a major force shaping Foster's life, careers, and art, Chapter Three focuses on the stereotypes and transgressions which are present in all three areas. This chapter is especially concerned with Foster's declaration that "All genius is male." Despite that proclamation, or perhaps because of it, many of Foster's texts depict people and situations in which traditional constructions of gender are cut, pasted, and reassembled to express multiple perspectives on traditional gender assumptions. Chapters Four and Five read specific poems from both the Adirondack and non-Adirondack collections, discovering ways in which Foster expresses both regional techniques and modernist philosophy. In fact, the very concepts of regionalism and modernism are interrogated, as is the idea of sentiment, an underpinning for some of the most effective poems in the body of Foster's work.

Jeanne Robert Foster's life is intriguing. She lived in an explosive world, an era experiencing "centuries packed into a lifetime," and within that era she managed to work with and befriend brilliant, exciting personalities, men and women who reshaped civilization's conceptions of art and literature. But beyond her beauty, charm, warmth and ability to maintain relationships with the most elusive people, Jeanne Robert Foster

was a author with vision. While the quantity of her work is limited, its quality recreates for us the Adirondack world of her childhood, focusing on the people who formed that life and gave it meaning. Through that deceptively simple world she enables her readers to reevaluate our own world view. By reading sentiment back into the texts of modernism through the poetry Foster has given us, we recoup a human dimension which enriches our interpretation of the modern, enlarging our concept of modernism and how its literary product was shaped. In Foster's mountain world, epistemological reality is perceived through response to the words and actions of her people, as they interpret, in mountain dialect, a new and alien world of change known as modernity. It is a lesson in decoding that we are still trying to learn.

CHAPTER ONE:

Sense of Place; Sense of Self

Why did the Mummer, Life, leave all the masks

Where I could find them in a glittering heap?

I was so eager to forget my tasks,

I wore them all before I fell asleep.

Yet cannot understand how I should lose

Myself in *them*--one was a laughing child;

And one an empress kings would proudly choose,

And one a wood-god beautiful and wild.

(*Rock-Flower*; "The Masker" 101.1-8)

On the tenth page of *Adirondack Portraits*, the only book of Jeanne Robert Foster's work in print, there is a photo of her as the quintessential Gibson Girl. She was in fact both a Gibson Girl and one of Harrison Fisher's favorite models, having left the confines of life in the Adirondack hamlet of Chestertown in 1897 when she was just eighteen, through marriage to Matlack Foster, a family friend older than her father. In the specified photo, Jeanne wears a magnificent off-the-shoulder tulle gown, draped from back to front to feature the detailed train. Standing full front, she is shown in facial profile, head tilted down and toward the draping, hand at her breast in the tenuous fashion of upper class women of the late-nineteenth, early-twentieth century. Her hair is piled high, eyes cast down a la Coventry Patmore's angel, the effect one of ethereal beauty

sheathing earthly sensuality, and heightened by vulnerability. The “packaging” of Jeanne Robert Foster which occurred during her transition from mountain woman to modern journalist spun out an image of fragile femininity far different from her natural strength, sharp intellectuality, and firm independence. As she indicates in “The Masker” quoted above, Foster was girl, empress, goddess as she reinvented herself masterfully throughout her life. In addition, recognizing the power of the male domain in late Victorian and newly modern American culture, Foster incorporated boyhood freedoms within her personae, and continued to access the power of important men throughout her life, often modeling her own authority after theirs.

Re-invention suggests newness of form, and Foster’s life reveals a transition from the freedom of the woods to a carefully constructed feminine persona in the cosmopolis. Refusing to abandon totally the freedoms of childhood to assume the role of the lady, Jeanne Robert Foster remained grounded in the mountain spirit of independent thinking and freedom of choice in which she had grown up. The force of Jeanne’s Crane Mountain is present in a subtle way in the glamorous sketches, photos and artistic renderings which depict Foster as a fashionable model in an elite world of modern consumers. The large, strong hand in the picture to which I refer belies long days in the woods freeing logs; the eyes, when allowed to look out at us in other portraits are direct and unapologetic; there is strength in the well-shaped arms, best shown to advantage in tailored suits, close-fitting sleeves, or nothing at all, as in a magnificent nude rendering of Foster done by French photographer J.J. Henner on one of her early trips to Paris. Jeanne Robert Foster shaped herself even as she was shaped, and the end result would be an

author of protean voice, of a feminist gaze able to shift between female and male perspectives. Christened Julia Elizabeth Oliver, Jeanne would shape and reshape her name in the process which would transform a little girl born into a tiny north woods hamlet, into an author who would articulate a vision of modernity using the medium of a nostalgic past. This chapter traces that process.¹

Julia Oliver: *“One was a laughing child. . .”*

Jeanne Robert Foster’s journey as an artist began in the fields, rivers, woods and towns of the mountains. To examine her art, it is necessary to gain an overview of the extraordinarily diverse experiences which nurtured it. In small communities--Johnsburg, Pottersville, Olmstedville, Leonardsville, Chestertown– Julia Oliver grew up as Julie, and learned more than mere survival skills as she drew strength and wisdom from the natural world with which she struggled, the communities that nurtured and sustained the mountain people, and the proud ancestry of her parents. From her father, Frank Oliver, Foster received French heritage, the Oliver surname originally listed as “Ollivier,” and changed after the family came to America from Provence, “the country of the ‘olives.’”² Foster chronicles her descent through three generations of military men and ambitious farmers, none of whom had “financial sense.” By the time Frank married “Lizzy” Newell the family fortunes were gone, and Foster’s father eked out a living through logging and subsistence farming.

Yet, if they were short on material comforts, the family was rich in spirituality. Frank Oliver’s secondary work as a minister seems to have been grounded in the same

spiritual sense which Foster would later record in her poetry, in which mountain men and women, despite the intense physical hardships of their lives, maintain a sense of personal integrity through their connection to the mystical. In the daily sufferings and joys recounted in Foster's work, there exists an understanding acceptance of life which enabled the people of her childhood communities to endure. Foster connects this spirit of endurance to transcendence through a ministry both formal and informal, in poems such as "Things That Do Not Change" (AP 140). "[. . .] There was / A man like me who knew certain people / Who lived the life of men here among men" (22-24). Foster's speaker sees this character as a "curious man" because he embraces the pain of life, when he might merely survive. Perhaps Julie's father Frank inspired the vision of the man who refused to sit all his life in the lumber camp chipyard "looking out on the things that do not change" (29). It would in fact be the force of change which would inspire Foster's most effective poetry,-- the change of shifting childhood homes, and the later, larger changes of "progress" which would shape her adult experiences.

When this concept of progress as teleological movement confronts the line, "Sometimes I see his life like an old road/ Leading nowhere [. . .]" (25-26), Foster creates an image of contemporary life which questions the twentieth-century dogma that demands product as confirmation of success. Frank Oliver's hard but unproductive working and occasional sitting did not provide an ample livelihood for his family; yet, the pictures Foster paints for us of lumbermen surge with life, and the economic poverty which haunted Foster's youth is never equated by her to deprivation. She differentiates between a scarcity of things and a lack of nurture, and carefully notes that her emotional

nourishment was rich, forming the basis of her creativity and ambition. “When we came to Chestertown from Olmstedville, we were very poor. But it was this poverty that spurred me to do things, so it was a blessing in disguise” (Adirondack Museum Archives). If Frank Oliver’s life was circumscribed by straitened finances, hard days in lumber camps, and hardscrabble farming of poor, rocky plots, it was simultaneously extended by his wife’s support of her husband and children, and deepened by her great respect for learning.

Lucinda Newell was born just before the Civil War (probably in 1859) in the little town of North River, New York. Foster traces her ancestry to Lucinda’s parents, the Weller family which was large and intermarried with a Gibson family, one of whom, “Mose Gibson” was supposedly a pirate. Foster restates childhood stories when “[. . .] [he] brought red handkerchiefs of jewels and loot to the relatives in Pucker Street. He marked all his descendants--the arched black eyebrows--even at birth [. . .] (I have them yet)” (Adirondack Museum Archives, “Ancestry of Lucia N. Oliviere Mother of Jeanne R. Foster,” January 7, 1967).³ This bohemian heritage would surface in Foster’s recollection of prophecies made about her as a child: “One of the first things I remember is hearing a Great aunt say--looking at me--I don’t know how she will turn out. Her hair is nearly white but she has the ‘Gibson eyebrows” (Adirondack Museum Archives; “Ancestry of Lucia N. Oliviere” January 7, 1967).

The gypsy look was not in keeping with current fashion. Foster recalled overhearing a neighbor pitying her “homeliness” when she was a little girl. “[. . .] ‘Mrs. Oliver, it IS a pity your oldest child is so homely. There’s not much chance in the world

for a girl like that.’ My father commented, ‘Well, she can always be a *hired girl*. [. . .]’ I peered into my mother’s bedroom mirror and asked myself, ‘It’s true [. . .] what *can* I do?’ ” (AP 52). The barbs had hit their mark. Despite her later accomplishments as a beautiful, intelligent woman, Foster’s adult hand inscribed a picture of herself staring forlornly past the camera, “Julie Oliver Foster 8 yrs ‘Painfully plain.” The envelope containing the photo is marked “The Homely Child” (NYPL Archives; Foster-Murphy Collection: Box 4; File 261). But the hurt inflicted upon her by the careless remarks of adults also nourished Foster’s aesthetic reinterpretation of herself and her surroundings. In her poem “The Romany Sign,” Foster tells the story of her identification, at the age of ten, with a gypsy band, camped on the Chestertown farm (AP 54). As she did with her financial limitations, Foster derived strength from pain, forging her memories into art as she recalls the words of the gypsy queen:

I will set a sign on your forehead now
 That gives you a gypsy’s powers.
 [.]
 You will never be content away
 From the hills and the open sky.
 You will sing the songs of the open road
 That we lilt in the gypsy tongue
 And set your feet to far-off shores
 With a heart forever young.

(AP; “The Romany Sign” 53. 23-24, 27-32)

The mark of the gypsies which inscribed itself upon Julia's heart was balanced by the "Gibson eyebrows" which gave her face such a firm, sometimes fierce, determined look. The legacy of lyricism reveals itself in the very telling of the verse narrative. In 1902, on the cover of *Vanity Fair*, the adopted gypsy came full circle to reach the pinnacle of commercial beauty in Charles Dana Gibson's magnificent sketches which record the transition from the plain little girl to a beautiful fashion model.

The influence of Julie's mother, Lucy Newell, is also reflected in much of Foster's work. Foster's maternal grandmother, Lucinda, had married William Newell, whose Irishness Foster carried with her proudly in her spotted hazel eyes. "Nowhere in all Ireland at any time would the folk believe I was not Irish when they looked at my eyes. Perhaps this accounts for my gravitation to everyone Irish and all Irish history" (Adirondack Museum Archives; "Ancestry of Lucia N. Oliviere," January 7, 1967). Only twenty-five years old, William drowned working logs in the Hudson at North River: "His only marker is a white birch tree almost across from the old North River Hotel. [. . .] [H]is wife stood on the bank with her four little girls and saw him lose his hold on a rock and wave goodbye. The girls were Hattie, Elizabeth, Lucia (my mother) and Nancy" (Ibid.). Years later Frank's granddaughter would commemorate the event in her poem "William Newell": "Forgotten except by one grandchild,/ You sleep by the North River./ [. . .] [Y]ou clung to a rock/ In mid-river until you could hold no longer." The tragedy is recounted simply: " Then you waved goodbye to Lucinda/ And your four little girls watching on the bank,/ And the river swept you down into the gorge" (AP 107. 1-2, 10-13).

As the birch tree grew beside the watery grave, the fatherless Lucinda was “adopted” five times by various families who took pity on his young, penniless widow. The household which would become “Lucy’s” permanent home was that of Enos and Sybil Putnam of Johnsburg, whose “York Brown” farmhouse would later feature in her daughter Julia’s life when the Putnams took her, too, into their care for two years. Lucy, graduating from the Albany Normal School in 1877, met and married Frank Oliver, and returned to the mountains. The young bride often stayed with her foster mother, Sybil Putnam, during Frank’s long winter stays in the lumber camps. Jeanne Robert Foster was born, Julia Oliver, in that small farmhouse at the base of Crane Mountain, in Johnsburg Corners, the township of Minerva, Warren County, New York on March 10, 1879⁴. As her first home, the Putnam homestead became an integral part of Foster’s self-image, and its characters figure prominently in her poetry. In “The Old Church,” Foster uses the color of the old house to create a symbol of the strength and beauty of mountain natives, describing the essence of “York brown” paint: “All you had to do was to go up on Crane Mountain/ And get you a bucket or two of red soil,/ And when you mixed it with oil, there was York brown,/ Sort of reddish and it lasted forever” (AP; “The Old Church” 71. 10-13). Surrounded by the people and places which would color her work as a poet, Foster grew up in a place in which even the paint contained the essence of the region.

Enos Putnam was a fiery Methodist abolitionist who ran an underground railroad in the old log cabin behind his farmhouse. “That’s where/ He hid the slaves until the night/ [. . .] He had the cellar all comfortable and a stove down there/ To keep them warm if they ran away in winter” (AP “The Old Church” 71. 16-19). Through this “station,”

Putnam and his wife Sybil helped to move escaped slaves through the mountains into Canada.⁵ Foster told the Putnam story in many of her poems, stepping into a time before her birth, as she did in the poignant “The Old Church,” which expresses the meaning of sacrifice and commitment through the mountain quotidian, the power of faith, and a majestic belief in the possibility of America:

The cold January of 1863 when the preacher held a meeting

[.....]

The congregation met. The church blazed.

The preacher read the Declaration of Independence

[.....]

And as he was reading, a man opened the door

And came running up the aisle with a paper.

‘For the preacher,’ he said, and the preacher opened it.

His hands shook but he read it out to us.

‘We inform you that your son, Henry Putnam, was killed [. . .]

Ike said tears ran down the preacher’s cheeks,

But he held out his hands in benediction.

‘The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away.’

(AP 71-72. 38, 41-42, 45-52)

The simplicity of Foster’s lines, the resonance of such icons as the warming fire, the Civil War date, and the Declaration of Independence combine to form the power of the father’s unshakeable faith in his God and his country, illustrated in heartbroken acceptance of his

son's death. Such moments illustrate Foster's use of her native lore (often a captured oral tradition, portrayed in native dialect, as in this case) to capitalize on the simplicity of her mountain background, infusing it with passion and "making it new" as the Imagists urged. The simple facts of the Putnams's lives are interwoven with the image of the church they built and the people (slaves and native congregation) they nurtured, to become Foster's poetic narrative of reclamation⁶. The aesthetic of place and the knowledge of self emerge from the same mountain source.

By the time the Oliver family had grown to include Clara and Frances in the early 1880's, Lizzy and the children often accompanied Frank on lumbering sojourns. Jeanne Robert Foster's experience in the lumberjack camps was a mixture of hard work and an education in respecting nature: "[. . .] I can't forget where first I came to love/ White pine in our rough Northern lumber camps./ [. . .] Why is it/ The old life vanishing from field and hill/ Now in my memory seems so beautiful?" she would ask in her poem "The Old Lumberjack in Exile." Beyond the nostalgia of desire for that which is gone, she comments on the value of the past: "When I look back, it was a rough, wild life,/ Yet it was hardy, wholesome, sweet and clean./ That life has gone [. . .]"(NOY 90. 32-37). Through the reality of physical labor, Foster affirms the dignity of the individual. "[. . .] They were stern, grim folk-/ [. . .] and they toiled and made/ Those mountain valleys blossom like the rose" (NOY; "Conservation" 97. 44-46). She recalls household tasks such as water-hauling, cooking, sewing, minding babies, and childish past-times such as watching the older children "skidding" the logs.⁷ By the time she had turned sixteen, Foster would teach school all week, boarding at students' homes, and then drive a horse

and wagon to the campsite to work with the men on the weekends. The images of the Gibson Girl and the Harrison Fisher model were an unimaginable future for the young, hard-working, mountain girl.

As Julie Oliver grew, her mother's love of learning shaped her daughter's rudimentary education in the one-room schoolhouses of mountain towns such as that in Chestertown, to which the Oliver family moved in 1887, to live first with Frank's brother, Will, and then on a farm owned by Julie's future in-laws, the Fosters. After the limitations of her life in tiny hamlets, being part of a bustling town made an impact on the young Julie. In 1909, Foster recalled her first thrilling sight of telegraph wires twenty-two years earlier, when she had first "looked up and perceived, crossing and recrossing against the stars [. . .] a dozen or more black wires. [. . .] the mysterious things that [. . .] girdled the earth, everywhere carrying power and dominion.[. . .] the realization came for the first time that I, little unknown country maid of dolls and pinafores, was a part of the 'whole,' a part of this same 'power and dominion,' and I was ecstatically happy" (AP 43). Foster's retrospective places her childhood within the larger context of her adult world, and this nostalgia performs important work in the poet's remembrance. The reader senses that the poet's identification with the Great North Woods was a realization of her unity with the world around her, a world which extended to both the local community and the vastness of the universe. The statement about a childhood moment illuminates Foster's philosophy about life and her place in the world.

In 1924, in the prose piece "The Old Village," Foster expressed another simple, yet complete understanding of the unity of person, place, and time: "Winter [. . .] the

mornings and evenings like mountains of brilliants. The thaws driving the melted snows [. . .] over the low meadows until shallow lakes surrounded the town, and froze, and made joy for the skaters [. . .] Everyone had sleigh bells, large and small [. . .] but best of all were the bobsleds that brought the wood and the hay over the snow roads. Spring was slow with us, a delicate, faint spring” (AP 51). Everywhere the recollection of nature is linked to the simple needs of the community. The village lived within the mountain’s parameters: beauty, natural entertainment, application of resource to need, patience. The feeling of ecstasy which infused the girl who marveled at the village lights produces resilience as Foster reflects upon other childhood memories and her frequent movement from house to house from 1887 to 1889 “due to several facts: my absence meant one less mouth to feed, and we were very poor.”⁸

In 1887 Frank and Lucy (now called “Lizzy”) sent their oldest child to live with the Francis Putnams (son of Enos and Sybil, her mother’s foster parents) at the foot of Crane Mountain. Perhaps Lizzy hoped that the respect for learning which she had experienced in the Putnam household would ease her daughter’s separation from her family. Julie seems to have taken to her new home quickly. Always industrious, and quick to learn the intricacies of the land around her, she began a little excursion service up the mountain: “I received 25 cents every time a tourist party came asking for a guide. I also knew where the cave at the foot of the mountain was, and other items of interest: yellow orchids, the amethyst quartz bed, the garnet outcrop” (AP 75). During her time with the Putnams (1887 to 1889), Foster bonded with Crane Mountain as a personal source of strength. Her developing awareness of the intermingling of nature with her own

life force is one indication of the sensitivity which allowed the potential writer to nourish her spirit with the sights, sounds, feelings and experiences of the mountain community. This sense is reflected in the poem “Crane Mountain” (AP 145), discussed in Chapter Two.

Not restricted by the more formal gender divisions of urban society, Julie was enabled by her time in the North Woods to complete her growth as an individual. In addition, the Putnams developed Foster’s sense of community, as she often traveled with Francis in his itinerant part-time ministry, accompanied his son Osmond on his photographic forays into the countryside,⁹ and worked with Francis’s wife Julia and daughter Mary both on the farm and attending to neighbors in need. The aesthetic of place and the sense of self merge again in “Minister of the Gospel,” reflecting the influence of Enos Putnam (Francis’s father and Lucy Oliver’s foster father) featuring in the previously quoted “The Old Church.” The two Sunday meetings parallel each other in both their community responsiveness and the simple solemnity of deep faith, not only in a sense of divinity, but in the divinity we reflect to each other through our humanity. Si Putnam (based on Enos), as country minister, takes his responsibility to the poor parishes seriously, and so in the severest winter weather, he goes to places “where folks were too poor / To have a regular preacher” to bring some comfort to “Folks hereabout [. . .] having such a hard time this winter/ To get a living, what with taxes and all” (AP 77. 6-7, 28-29). Because the roads are drifted and the cold so deep, he doesn’t expect many people to show up for church services.

Foster does not comment on the acts of the community. She merely tells us what

central figure in “The Old Church,” a vilified “nigger preacher” abolitionist, blessed the loss of his son Henry as a confirmation of the righteousness of both his own and Lincoln’s (as emancipator) work for the justice and freedom of mankind.

Foster learned such lessons about the nature of self, community, and the manifestation of spirit from everything which shaped her world: parents, work, siblings, foster homes, books, spiritual zeal, neighbors, the mountain. During the winter of 1889, immediately after living with the Putnams, she spent time at the Jacob Davis home at North River. Lizzy Oliver’s cousin had married a peddler of yarn, pork, beef, mittens, socks, “anything” in Foster’s words. “Julie” gave way to “Julia” as Foster accompanied Jacob on his trips in and around Blue Mountain Lake, handling his horses and helping him in any way she could, while she took in the sights and sounds of other Adirondack communities. At North River, Julia taught herself to read music, playing hymns on an old melodeon. At the same time her introduction to a distant half-uncle, Duane Fuller, extended her knowledge of the world to boat builder, guide, game protector, diver. As she roamed the countryside staying with one relative and another, the young Julia continued to absorb and experiment with the many “masks” around her. Her sense of herself included taking on the privileges as well as the duties of boys, as her time in the town of Griffin testifies.

Upon leaving the Davis household, Julie stayed with the family of Erastus Griffin, where she teamed up with her twelve-year old cousin Lena to run free around the countryside, dressing up as boys to gain more access to adventures like ice pond dancing. Typically in Foster’s presentation of the mountain, person and place have the same name,

and “Griffin” is personified as Foster recreates its heyday:

Towns die the same as folks; we think we know
 The reason--change creeps on--it may be true,
 But some have roots that bring up a new growth,
 While others go and hardly leave a trace.

[.....]

[. . .]When Griffin lived it was a roaring hive
 On Saturday nights when all the jacks came down
 From lumber shanties; no town in the west
 Could cut a slice of life as wild for you.
 There was square dancing on the Sacandog.
 Men cleared the snow and rolled down the oil barrels
 From the twin tanneries to build a fire.
 The fiddlers jigged old tunes till their strings broke
 And spinning skaters circled round and round.
 [. . .] Sometimes we called at the big boarding house.
 There was a waitress lovely as a fawn
 and shy as one, who served the pork and beans.
 She looked like china when the light shines through.
 A rich man stopped for dinner there one day,
 He married her and took her far away. (AP, 117. 1-4, 16-24, 29-34)

A glimpse back at the town is also a look at the forces shaping Foster's sense of herself. She became strong, believed in her ability to accomplish whatever task she set out for herself, and in the spirit of the pioneers, disregarded the Victorian concept of restrictive femininity, accessing when possible the masculine privileges of freedom and ambition. And, bend the gender rules as she might, Julia was to learn that the destiny of the waitress was her own.

She returned to her family in Chestertown in 1892, completing her education, (supplemented by French and Latin) and earning a Teacher's Certificate on September 14, 1894. Julia taught in various schoolhouses for one more year, when the restless Frank Oliver moved the family to Glens Falls, where he went to work as a carpenter. Lizzy Newell, who now called herself "Lucia Oliviere" as a resident of "the city," hoped to further Julia's studies in French and music, but her daughter never joined the family in their new city life. In the summer of 1896 she rather abruptly married Matlack Foster, the forty-six-year-old son of the next-door neighbor (and landlord) in Chestertown, and an established insurance agent from Rochester, New York. In March Julia had turned seventeen.¹⁰ On August 25 she became Mrs. Matlack Foster, and Julia's natural education in the mountains ended. Now, her urban life would begin.

Mrs. Matlack Foster, Julie, Jean Foster, Jean Elspeth:

"And one an empress kings would proudly choose. . ."

Mat Foster was twenty-nine years older than his bride, and he recognized not only her beauty and goodness, but also her great intelligence and strength of character.¹¹ After

marrying in Philadelphia and touring the west and Mexico, the couple eventually moved to Rochester, where Julia got her first taste of a big city and Victorian opulence. In the first year of their marriage, Julia gave birth to a stillborn child, the only pregnancy of her marriage. No dates are indicated in any journals, diaries, letters, or accounts of exactly when this stillbirth occurred. Whether the pregnancy played a role in her seemingly compulsive act of marrying a man she never seemed to love is unknown, but together with the choice of Philadelphia as the wedding venue, the marriage calls attention to itself as an oddity in the life of a young woman who had, to this point, set herself on a path of independence. Janis and Richard Londrville speculate on the connection between Foster's life and the short story she published in 1913, about a young immigrant abandoned in pregnancy by a good-for-nothing lover who pays an older man to marry her. The older man is described as "an impecunious hanger-on [. . .] without a mind [. . .] simply a lump of clay" (DY 19). Foster's diary entry for 1911 describes her husband similarly: "He leaned, dragged, twined upon others. There seemed no native energy that gave a robustness of mentality necessary for attraction" (DY 19). Foster certainly separated her life from Matlack's as soon as she could, and we cannot know exactly what precipitated the marriage, which later in life she termed "an arrangement" (DY 18). What we do know is that Foster maintained at least the facade of respect for Matlack as the man who had done so much for her when she was a young girl.

Always fulfilling the roles expected of her, Foster assisted in Matlack's insurance business and cared for his aging mother, but she also found time to attend the Rochester Athenaeum and Mechanics Institute, where she studied literature and writing. Soon

however, Julia's energy and ambition exceeded her domestic responsibilities, and she began some literary ventures. In a local paper, "Jean Foster" published a short story, "Mistress Anne of Glazeal," one of two pieces of short fiction extant in the body of her work.¹² It is a somewhat overly sentimental text containing lovers and rampaging "Indians" in an early American colony, but its strong central female character, about Foster's age at the time of the writing, is fiercely independent, shaping adversity to her will through her single-mindedness. The young Julia's desire to "be someone" on her own terms informs the writing, which features Mistress Anne's courage and ingenuity in outsmarting vicious natives, her father, and even her lover to earn the freedom to choose her own life. The publication suggests Foster's quiet yearning to be more than a blushing bride.

In the early years of their marriage, Matlack and "Julie," as Foster was always known to her husband, moved back and forth from Rochester to New York maintaining Mat's thriving insurance business and assisting his older brother Gardiner with his Manhattan-based ophthalmology practice. Gradually living more and more in New York, Julia made her entrance into urban society. When Gardiner introduced the lovely young Julia to *Vanity Fair* editor David Dodge, he was much impressed by her beauty, and by December 1900, Julia met Harrison Fisher, renowned illustrator, and became a *Vanity Fair* cover girl, featured in the December 1900 issue as "unquestionably the loveliest woman ever" (Murphy 620, n. 90). In addition, Julia attended the Stanhope-Wheatcraft Dramatic School in New York City from 1900-1901, playing small roles in the American Stock Company (8th and 42nd Streets) and at the Madison Square Theatre. The time had

come for Julia to re-invent herself as an urban sophisticate, developing a persona quite separate from that of “Mrs. Foster.” Julia combined her middle name, Elizabeth and the French “Jeanne” which she adapted from her ancestry to create Jean Elspeth, model and stage actress.¹³

Grace Margaret Gould, fashion editor of the Hearst papers, arranged for Julia to stay at the Model’s Club from time to time when she was in New York without her husband. Soon, the girl’s quick intelligence and ready wit placed her with Gould as an assistant designing the fashion pages for *The New York Times*, *The New York Sunday American*, *The New York Herald*, and several magazines such as *McClure’s*, *Vanity Fair*, *Cosmopolitan*. She met the boat from Paris each week to collect new design concepts, arranged for models, and helped determine layouts. Noting the young woman’s ability to show clothes off to advantage, as well as her easy way with even the most imposing people, Gould invited Foster to model for the layouts she was helping to design. These jobs constituted permanent entry into the Model’s Club of New York, and before long Julia was doing full fashion spreads in major papers. *The Sunday Telegraph* devoted the December 9, 1900 pictorial section to the new model “Miss Elspeth,” and she appeared as well in *The New York Times* fashion pages, and as the cover girl for the equestrian magazine *Spur*. Jean Elspeth was a public beauty, as evidenced by her numerous appearances for Dodge, and her feature piece for *The New York Herald Journal*, Sunday, December 16, 1900, where she appeared in a four-page display of theater, opera, and evening dress.¹⁴

Her success as a model meant that Foster now had money of her own, and one of

her first acts was to help her father purchase the Schenectady property to which she would move in 1934. In 1901 however, when she assisted in buying the house at 1762 Albany Street, her purpose was to provide a residence for the financially troubled Frank and Lucia, who lived there until their deaths in 1927 and 1933. By 1902 fashion model, actress, layout editor “Jean” had begun working for *Cosmopolitan* magazine, appearing as their September cover girl. The following year, 1903, saw Jean Elspeth become the Harrison Fisher Girl of the year, as well as a Gibson Girl representing the fresh, vibrant American Girl of the “new age,” modern look. Foster was featured for the next seven years in magazines, newspapers and publications such as *The Harrison Fisher Book of 1907* and 1908, her frequent appearances marking her as a favorite model of the best illustrators.¹⁵

The September 1907 issue of *The Ladies' Home Journal* used four Fisher sketches of Jean featured with male models and dubbed “The Wooing of the American Girl According to Harrison Fisher” (Skinner 91). Her appeal as the quintessential American beauty helped to create the Fisher allure which spurred sales of texts from Longfellow’s *Hiawatha* to *Vogue*. Of his models, Fisher himself stated that the physical beauty of a woman merely reflected the depth of her metaphysical perfection, without which she could not attain real beauty. “It is character, innate refinement, and beauty of mind that make the difference between the flat, wooden face and the radiant one that the artist seeks”(Skinner 9).¹⁶ Jean’s charm and intelligence attracted other illustrators. She became a model for Albert Beck Wenzell, Philip Boileau and a European color-plate photographer to whom Foster’s letters refer as “PAL,” her image used to illustrate books,

serial novels, short stories, and ads. Jean Elspeth had become a social and commercial success.¹⁷ Other modeling assignments included *McClure's* magazine, pictorial layouts in *Spur*, and special work such as the "Lady Jean" piece which eventually formed an elaborate cigar box cover.¹⁸ "Julie" became the name reserved for Mat's and her family's use, and "Jean," either Elspeth or Foster became her professional choice. Always continuing her pursuits in creative writing, Foster began to consider the art of journalism as she promoted her modeling career while learning the business of newspapers and magazines on the job. It would be five more years before Jeanne Robert Foster would emerge, encompassing the various incarnations of Julia Oliver which we have traced thus far.

Foster's desire for greater and deeper intellectual fulfillment was characterized by an expansive spirit which would not be circumscribed by geography, gender or class. As she became an established part of the world of business and glamor, she also became aware of the callousness of success. During this time, Jean was friendly with Evelyn Nesbit, "the girl in the red velvet swing," whose version of Stanford White's seduction and abandonment Jean always held to be true (DY 30). Jean was aware that her beauty attracted powerful men, but she was also knowledgeable about the inherent danger of trading on looks alone. Maintaining the homespun philosophy of pragmatism and dignity with which she was raised, Julia would grow in sophistication and scholarship for the next five years, as she encountered some of the best minds of the century in Boston.

Jeanne Foster, Jean Foster, J. Foster, Jeanne Robert, Robert Foster, Jeanne Robert

Foster : “*I wore them all . . .*”

From 1905 to 1910, Julia and Matlack spent a great deal of time in Boston, at first helping to care for Foster’s sister, Francesca (who had contracted typhoid fever), but from 1906 on furthering Julia’s education. She studied at the extension schools of Boston University and Harvard, coming into contact with professors such as George Copeland, William James, George Santayana, Herbert Palmer, and Josiah Royce. Encouraged by these great thinkers and writers, Foster began developing her writing, and journalism would soon become her focus. The ability to listen to, process, and discuss new ideas developed so keenly in Foster, that John Butler Yeats and his daughter-in-law Georgie (W.B.’s wife) would refer to her in years to come as one of the few American women capable of conversation.¹⁹

Entering a student essay contest run by the city’s *Boston-American*, Foster won the first prize of fifty dollars in gold for the best letter to the editor, addressing the paper’s editorial policy. As a result, the *Boston-American* offered her work, and she began writing intermittently from 1907 to 1909, traveling back and forth to New York for modeling jobs, referring to herself in those circles as Jean Elspeth, but using Jean Foster as a byline.²⁰ Then, towards the end of 1909, Jean “Elspeth” Foster attended a party in New York, given by Harrison Ford. That evening she was introduced to Albert Shaw, and an important friendship developed, which would last until Shaw’s death in 1947.²¹ Noting both her great beauty and intelligence, and interested in her background in the Adirondacks which he too loved, Shaw asked Foster to begin working with him to

develop a section on song for his massive publication on the Civil War, edited by Trevelyan Miller and Dudley H. Miles and illustrated with the groundbreaking photography of Mathew Brady. Foster agreed.

By 1910 the Fosters had taken an apartment in New York City at 300 West 49th Street. Matlack, by now in his sixties and experiencing increasing heart disease, soon began spending most of his time at his Rochester home or in Schenectady with his in-laws. The insurance business had folded, and Mat's pension had dried up; added to financial setbacks from bad investments, Matlack was no longer able to support himself or his wife. Foster was already earning money from her modeling and writing, and gradually she became the mainstay, not only of herself and her husband, but of her extended family as well. Protected from impropriety by the title "Mrs. Foster" and the need to earn a living, Foster was free to pursue her interests and goals. The arrangement would empower her until her retreat to Schenectady in 1933. In 1910, the need for money justified Jean's traveling to the South to research her section of the Civil War book. When *The Review of Reviews* published volume nine of the ten-volume *Photographic History of the Civil War* in 1911, the section termed "Songs of the War Days" was attributed to Jeanne Robert Foster, editor. In later years, Foster would return to the Civil War theme in such poetry as "Union Blue," merging her experiences in the mountains with those of her research among southern veterans.

Foster's byline indicates the form her professional name would finally take. Shaw had refused to call her Jean Elspeth, considering it frivolous, and so Foster had returned to her ancestry, adopting the name of the first Oliver to have been born in America--Jean

Ollivier. In addition, the practical problems inherent in a fashion model's working with a tough group of male journalists on a war volume suggested that a more masculine name might add substance to Foster's persona. Robert, the name of another French ancestor, was adopted, and Foster restyled "Jean" to be "Jeanne," perhaps in a quiet but firm insistence on the femininity which served her so well. At this point Foster's credits began appearing "Jeanne Robert Foster," although there are variations: Jeanne Foster, Jean Foster, J. Foster, Jeanne Robert, and Robert Foster. Jean Elspeth, fashion model, had receded as Jeanne Robert Foster advanced, her sensual beauty and charm softening her single-minded toughness, talent, ambition, and freedom of movement, as Foster identified and aligned herself with the world of men.

Foster's first feature article for *The Review of Reviews* appeared in the December 1910 issue, "A Republic for Boy and Girls--After Twenty Years" with a byline as Jeanne Robert, the name Jean used for her *Review* credits until September, 1912 when "Foster" became a permanent part of her professional title. From 1911 through 1919 Foster wrote social and political awareness articles for the *Review* in addition to developing the "New Books" section of the journal. As artistic editor of this increasingly important feature, Foster expanded the book reviews to include editorial criticisms of texts, authors, and artistic movements and trends. Because much of her work was done as a staff writer, it is difficult to state definitely which texts are Foster's, but private scrapbooks in the collection of Dr. Richard Londrville identify many of her articles, listed in Londrville's biography of Foster (*Dear Yeats, Dear Pound, Dear Ford: Jeanne Robert Foster and Her Circle of Friends*, Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2001).²²

As her career developed, Jeanne's autonomy increased. She lived alone in Manhattan, except on Mat's rare visits, traveled for business and pleasure, and worked with high-profile men. Comfortable with her urban life, and confident in her ability to become a noteworthy American author and journalist, Foster would now turn her gaze to Europe.

Yeats, War, Hyperion, Hilarion, Black Magic, and Jeanne Robert Foster's

Introduction to the Modern: *"And one a wood-god beautiful and wild."*

In 1911, Foster was sent by Albert Shaw to research political cartoons of Abraham Lincoln collected in the National Library of France. Foster lived in a private pension, getting to know Paris not as a tourist, but as a journalist seeking an introduction to the world of art which would play such an important role in her writing. The resulting article, "The Forgotten Lincoln Cartoons," was published in the March 8, 1913 issue of *Literary Digest*. Jeanne had proven her ability to work and travel in European circles.

Returning to New York and the *Review*, the developing reporter had a chance to explore the world of the disenfranchised which she knew so well from her youth. As a regular contributor to the prestigious *Review*, she not only developed book review and fine arts sections, but also wrote articles on the social welfare of marginalized groups such as immigrants, poor and abandoned children, imprisoned and working women. Foster praised programs such as the George Junior Republic in Freeville, New York which encouraged independent thinking and self-government in young teenagers, especially troubled youth with little direction or self-esteem. In "The Care of Women in

State Prisons” she condemned the debilitating treatment of female prisoners and supported both the State Prison for Women at Auburn, N.Y. and the Reformatory Prison for Women at South Framingham, Mass. In intensive investigations of these institutions Foster found that, in 1911, the crimes of women were in the main “[. . .] the result of a lack of training in the trades, unconsidered marriages, ignorance, youth, friendlessness, the general unguided condition of girls; non-employment, low wages, overcrowding in tenements, nervous tension, and the high-pressure life of the average female factory employee” (*Review of Reviews* July 1911: 83). These were many of the problems Foster had seen in the mountains, reflected later in poems such as “Silence Davis,” “The Road,” (NOY) “Mis’ Cole,” “Old Suzanne,” and “Blue Calico: The Ingrate” (AP). Foster’s journalism continuously stressed the importance of society’s affirmation of the individual, encouraging goal-oriented lives shaped by dignity, hope, and self-awareness. In a statement which reflects the most intensive feminist thought of the day, she quotes the female prison commissioner: “Women criminals are almost entirely the victims of the parasitic season-trades that by piece work and starvation wages drain the workers of life, liberty and happiness. [. . .] Woman in industry is the least valuable of human beings, yet the burden of giant spiders of commercial industry falls upon them” (83). Jeanne was using her connections within the world of publishing to lobby for social change.

Simultaneously, Foster was developing the arts section for the *Review of Reviews*, and often served as Shaw’s hostess at receptions and dinners given through the journal. Anxious to explore the world of ideas in every way, Foster followed up on a suggestion of John Weare, whom she had met at Harvard, that she look up the father of William

Butler Yeats, reputed to be a great thinker, and the finest living master of conversation. John Butler Yeats (referred to by Yeats scholars as JBY for clarity), was a permanent resident of Petitpas, a quaint boarding house on 18th Street. Once he met the lovely Jeanne, JBY insisted that she come often and sit beside him at dinner. The two became close friends until Yeats's death in 1922, and through him Foster would meet not only the entire Yeats family, but also the man who would so deeply influence her professional and private life, John Quinn.

In 1912, Foster returned to Edinburgh and Glasgow for several weeks at Shaw's request and with JB Yeats's encouragement, interviewing George Grey Barnard of Wellesley regarding his work on the reclaimed wax models for supposed works of Michelangelo (later discovered to be fraudulent).²³ It was during this trip that she met George Russell (AE) and became interested in his work on housing projects for the poor, an interest which would bring her back to Ireland and Scotland in 1914, and which would later bring her to the housing authority in Schenectady. The squalor she witnessed made a great impact on Foster, and her research and photographs were used in W.T. Stead's March 1912 article for the *Review*, "On the Eve of the Irish Home Rule Bill" (Vol. 45). In addition, with introductions from the elder Yeats, Jeanne went to Dublin and visited the Cuala Shop of the Yeats family. Although neither W.B. nor Jack were present, she met Lily and Lollie with whom she developed an immediate friendship which lasted throughout Foster's life. This connection to the Yeats family reinforced Jeanne's great admiration for William's work, and JBY encouraged this influence on her poetry.

In the father of the Yeatses Jeanne found both a supporter and a critic. His letters

to his son --"My dear Willie"--indicate that he held her in great esteem. On one occasion in 1913, after Jeanne and John Butler had attended a poetry reading, JBY wrote his son about Foster: "[. . .] A young lady with me at the time who writes (and writes well) all the poetical criticism in *Review of Reviews*, told me that you were the only poet of any account [. . .]. She is a Mrs. Foster and extraordinarily pretty and clever [. . .]. It is so rare to find so much really strong intellect with kindness and affection. She has dignity and sense [. . .]"(May 10, 1914, in Hone 180). Foster would meet W.B.Yeats soon, when she went with JBY to hear him read at the National Arts Club. Enthralled by his presence as well as his art, Foster commemorated the occasion in "W. B. Yeats-Reading":

Poet, I had not dreamed how you would be,
 Thinking you clay as other men, or blind;
 Pondering little whence came your magic,
 But wishing as I read for Innisfree,
 And the bee-music, and the seven green woods,
 And the seven stars, and Seven wise Ones--
 Immortals, who were your long lost kindred. (WA 7. 1-7)

Moved as she was by his presence, Foster may have written to some excess, "thinking you clay as other men." But the experience of Yeats's voice, the combination of his masculinity and the ethereal quality of his art and mysticism are captured in the images she sets forth in her homage to his power as a bard: "Poet, now thou hast made for me a dream,--/ Not of thyself, but of the Mystic Rose / Thou singest, and the Vessel of the Grail" (25--27). When, in 1968, Foster wrote to Richard Londraville about that night, she

was still enraptured: “He seemed to me the most beautiful human being I had ever seen-- tall, dark haired with beautiful eyes and with so much music in his voice as he read that I could only recall a description of Tir-na-Og, where soul was ‘music glittering in the air’ ” (DY 67). It had been Yeats she turned to for a sense of grounding in her own work; through him she arrived at the mountain persona of *Neighbors of Yesterday*, taking the Adirondacks as her medium and the emergent modern world as her theme.

The friendship between Jeanne and JBY continued to flourish, as the elderly JBY came to depend upon Jeanne’s goodness and good sense. In fact, a pencil sketch of her stood on his easel at Petitpas when he died. She, in turn, took him into her confidence and shared her poetry with him, for example asking for his response to “Come Thou with Me” (WA). JBY was tactful: “As to your poem--I will be frank--always in everything you write, there is intensity, and intensity is so rare--hardly ever do I see it anywhere--in other words, there is so seldom a real human being behind the technique [. . .]” (William Murphy private collection, in DY 71). But, the poem he was responding to is, actually, terrible. Yeats focuses on the one positive quality it exhibits, intensity. Aside from that passion, the diction is trite, the images worn out:

Come thou with me to that ethereal sphere
 Where Love hath wings of fire. Bind not my sense
 Unto earth’s giddy vapors, that immense
 Roll in swart clouds darkly around my here,
 Swooning my soul with shapes of deadly fear;
 Else flesh to spirit shall make sharp offence

Beyond the dewfall of my penitence,

And Love die bleeding upon Passion's bier. (WA 26; 1-8)

Yet, JBY sensed Foster's raw power to transform passion into "music and dream, [. . .] to throb with something that is akin to the harmony of the spheres" which, in the right meter, diction, and rhyme would create moments of true feeling, expressing deep humanity.²⁴ We hear Yeats equate simplicity and artistic truth. The tortured lines of forced poetry, "Swooning my soul with shapes of deadly fear" are unworthy of the poet. Instead, JBY urges both his son and Foster to consider "[t]he Yorkshire peasant [. . .] and all his silent like [. . .] as full of poetry as the oak tree is of murmurs" (Ibid). The serenity, the great inner assurance, the intensity of poetry are natural phenomena which JBY aligns with the simplicity of a country peasant.

On the other hand, although he admired greatly Ezra Pound's imagistic technique, JBY found Pound lacking in the very connection to life which Yeats associates with poetry. "In his work is [. . .] only criticism of the observed facts. [. . .] By broken meanings and broken music and plentiful use of the ellipse he gives a portentous importance and menacing significance to all the trivialities of the surface life" (Murphy 427). But, in the very attention to form and simplicity, JBY locates a lack: "[. . .] their *effort to live this [surface] life shuts them out of the world of dream and desire*. Not for them the shaping power of imagination. They are exiles consoling themselves and others that they are superior beings, [. . .] all the time professing to love their 'method of existence' " (Murphy 427). Thus, building on his conception of the poetical in the simple peasant life which reflects both living in nature and deeply in the imagination, JBY

intimates that in Jeanne's "intensity" lay the essence of poetry. Essentially, Yeats was affirming the quality of sentiment which would become a driving force in Foster's work, once she found the way to make the lines ring true.

Rejecting the diction and tone of "Come Thou with Me," Yeats urged Foster toward the grounding which W.B. Yeats found in his Irish roots. His understanding of this poetical essence as linked to life, not method, suggested that Jeanne's greatest strength comes from her mountain experiences. A seeming response to Yeats's commentary on the lack of pathos in modernist verse, Foster's "Country Tragedy" (discussed more fully in Chapter Five) mourns the hopelessness of those individuals who "live the surface life," untouched by either great joy or tragedy, and who "pass through the game like clods of earth,/ And fall untouched, unhurt, unawakened" (NOY 86. 25-26). Meanwhile, JBY sent Jeanne back to her text to revise, warning that she might be "so impatient for a result, an achievement, that she won't wait--won't let the 'intensity' be long in her mind and heart." The quick result equals facile sentimentality, and JBY warns Foster that "the intensity must be kept far remote--it must be there, but so subtly that we feel it rather than see it" (William M. Murphy private collection, quoted in Londravage, 2001). Although intensity may be the basis of poetry in his view, JBY will not equate it to superficiality, or allow it to be a substitute for technical expertise. Jeanne revised her work and went on to find her poetic intensity in the voice of the mountains. Ironically, it would be Pound who would insist on her returning to her Adirondack origins as the source of her best work, and who would send her back to reread Yeats. Uniting her sense of sentiment to her memories of the mountain, and shaping these both with the exigencies

of modern urban life, Foster would achieve a type of sentimental modernist text which engages both the mind and the heart.

Modernism was “in the air” in 1913, when the Association of American Painters and Sculptors, spearheaded by Arthur B. Davies and Walt Kuhn, and incorporated through Quinn’s expertise, put together the Armory Show. Davies explained that “Its sole object is to put the paintings, sculptures, and so on, on exhibition so that the intelligent may judge for themselves by themselves” (Foster/Murphy Collection; NYPL: “Preface to the Armory Show Catalogue” Box 1; File 14). Journalist Frederick James Gregg supported the exhibition as “expressive of the forces which have been at work abroad of late, forces which cannot be ignored because they have had results” (Ibid). In addition, Davies stressed the importance of moving beyond the mimetic and derivative in art, to embrace what JBY had been arguing for, the intensity of life.

The gauntlet had been thrown before such institutions as the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the National Academy of Design who had steadfastly refused to recognize the worth of the contemporary art coming mainly from France. Nurtured on change and flourishing in the sense of the modern which her modeling and journalism had fed, Jeanne Robert Foster made sure that she was assigned to cover the Armory Show for the *Review*. On February 17, 1913 John Quinn opened the show at the new armory of the 69th Regiment of the New York National Guard, and it ran through March, causing both positive and negative uproar to works such as Cezanne’s *Colline des Pauvres*, Odilon Redon’s *Initiation a l’Etude*, Brancusi’s *Mlle. Pogany*, and Marcel Duchamp’s *Nude Descending a Staircase*. Theodore Roosevelt, for example, thought that the show

basically “suckered” those who praised it, although he commended the organizers for presenting the works to the American public for its own consideration.²⁵ Kenyon Cox of *Harper's Weekly* was less tolerant in his “some Reflections Inspired by the Recent International Exhibition (March 15, 1913). Reacting to the paintings and sculpture of the Post-Impressionists and Cubists, Cox wrote that the exhibit must be seen to be believed, noting that his only regret was “that the Association of American Painter and Sculptors did not see fit to include some representation of the Futurists in their exhibition, that the whole thing might be done once for all [. . .] The more thorough it is the less chance is there that it may have to be repeated” (*The Armory Anniversary Catalogue*, 1963. Foster/Murphy Collection; NYPL: Box 1; File 15, 165).

Despite such negativity on the part of prominent individuals, populist newspapers, well-respected magazines, and conservative journals, Foster wrote a perceptively supportive piece for the *Review*. “Art Revolutionists on Exhibition in America” which ran in the April 1913 issue, acknowledged the strangeness of the new art to “eyes accustomed to the restraint of a Corot or a Rembrandt” but also pointed out that not long before, highly regarded Impressionists such as Manet, Monet, Renoir and Degas had been “contending with Bouguereau and the whole Academic school for a wider individual expression in the art of painting” (441-2). The article seeks to understand the new work as much for herself as for her readers, and the text as a whole displays a characteristic which made Jeanne’s articles so effective: she writes as a thinking explorer, not as either an authority or an iconoclast. This approach holds true whether her text deals with Lady Gregory’s work in the Irish Theatre, Edward Gordon Craig’s new

productions of plays, Andrew Lang's verse, or Yeats's, Joyce's, Eliot's, or Ford's modernist approaches to poetry. The "soft sell" which Foster used in her personal encounters translated into her journalism with convincing appeal.²⁶

Following her successful expansion of the *Review* through the arts section, Jeanne was again sent by Albert Shaw to Europe in 1914, this time to gain a sense of the impending conflict with Germany. She was in London on August 5 when the British declared war on Germany.²⁷ Neither the exuberance of the crowds, nor her visits to the wonders of the Tate Gallery and Salisbury Cathedral could disguise the chaos of war. Saddened, she wrote in her diary on August 14, 1914: "It is raining, down on old Sarum, down on ancient Stonehenge, down on the British battalions encamped on Salisbury plain [. . .] Military law has been proclaimed. [. . .] One seemed before to live outside history: suddenly history is in the making everywhere"(DY 55).

During her three months's stay in England, Foster sent the *Review* copy and photographs of the war effort and of such war horrors as the shooting down of the first Zeppelin, which fell at Euston on a school for poor children, many of whom were killed. In another incident, Foster photographed young soldiers in the London Rifles, but none of them survived the first battle of Marne²⁸. Foster memorialized them in "The Retreat from Mons," written in 1914 and published in *Wild Apples* (1916): "The dead ride on; for them Valhalla's horn/ Pierces the battle-murk; the grey clouds lower/ Beneath their feet, who rise by blood-bought power / To vision on the hills the Eternal morn" (45. 5-8). Just as she would use her mountain experiences in the Adirondack poetry, Foster incorporated her personal experience of pain in her artistic representation of war. When she returned

to New York in the fall, aboard the Scottish ship the *Columbia*, which was accompanied part-way by the British battleship *Tiger*, Foster brought with her a realization of the price of the freedom of which she wrote.

The years from 1914 to Foster's first published collection of poetry were filled with journalism, her friendship with J.B. Yeats, involvement in the National Arts Club and the Poetry Society in New York (both of which brought her into contact with Amy Lowell²⁹), and searching out fresh artistic talent. In her position as editor of the arts section of the journal, Foster reviewed and supported many young authors such as John Masefield, Alfred Noyes, and Vachel Lindsay. Foster wrote about Lindsay's 1914 collection, *General Booth Enters Heaven and Other Poems*, which had been published by Mitchell Kennerley in 1913, after Harriet Monroe had featured the title poem in the fourth issue of *Poetry* magazine.³⁰ In Lindsay's work, Foster found the focus on American potential which she would define through the North Woods people in the 1916 *Neighbors of Yesterday*. "His arraignment of Americans is that we lack the imagination to conceive that which we might be" (1914. "New Volumes of Verse: Poems of Lindsay." *American Review of Reviews* 49 (February): 245. In DY 103). Foster and Lindsay became friends, often attending poetry readings and receptions at the New York Poetry Society together.³¹

In addition to her literary work, Foster had been interested in alternative religions since her childhood, finding the Calvinist Christianity in which she was raised to be somewhat restrictive and unimaginative. Encouraged by her mother's belief in transcendentalism and the cosmography of the Indian gospel Vedantists, Foster pursued the precepts of eastern religion and joined the New York Theosophical Society in 1906,

under the name Jean Elspeth Foster. She had heard Annie Besant's final lecture in America, and was impressed by her thinking and oratory skill. Although she would convert to Catholicism for John Quinn years later (as she stated, "for his peace of mind and at the end--one week--before he died"), and although she moved within social circles of Christianity throughout her life, Foster believed absolutely in the Vedit system of reincarnation, and in the binding of the physical, mental, spiritual dimensions of men and women.³²

Her interest in reincarnation and the occult, coupled with her beauty and self-deprecating air, made her a ripe victim for occultist Aleister Crowley, whom she met through Albert Shaw early in 1915. As Richard and Janis Londraville state, Foster's marriage to Matlack was problematic at best; her affair with Shaw had reached a critical point some months earlier, and Crowley's sinister good looks intrigued Jeanne (DY 91). She played the muse to his rather bizarre literary talent, although John Butler Yeats was appalled that his friend was taken in by such a scoundrel, and warned her: "I have met Crowley [. . .] I think he is a man to beware of [. . .] He has an ambiguous history--queer happenings, which probably rumour has further distorted. Learn magic by all means, but be careful of the magician. They that sup with the devil must have a long spoon" (Murphy, *Prodigal Son* 440). Nevertheless, Foster became Crowley's "Cat," "Hyperion," and "Hilarion" and ended up going to California in the summer of 1915, for surreptitious meetings with the occultist. In his autohagiography, Crowley vows that the couple consecrated themselves to each other and "to [Love's] service. But though the Cat had given herself thus simply and straightforwardly, she enjoyed the exercise of her power

over me by tormenting me with doubts of her truth. [. . .] [S]he popped in and out all the time, having decided to spice the romance and adventure by taking her husband in tow” (Murphy, *Prodigal Son* 768). While Foster’s diary places her in Santa Cruz at the time Crowley says that they were together, the entries do not specify a liaison. Evidently, both her qualms about adultery and her misgivings about Crowley’s character caused her to repudiate the affair she had entered willingly. Foster beat a hasty retreat to New York, where her refusal to see Crowley led to his threatening her with her mother’s death, as well as her own. But one diary entry, written in Victoria, Canada during the cryptic western trip, contains the following indication by Foster of what appears to have been an intensely sexual relationship:

Oh the vanity of vanities that is called love. Oh the worms
that creep in the flesh and the venom that lurks in the blood.
[. . .] It is a fever which runs its course--a disease that
renders the victim weaker after each successive attack. [. . .]
Deliver me from the snare of the flesh. Deliver me from its
sharp delights. Deliver me from its lures and its tender
secrets. If it be in God’s will that I shall find the love of
God mirrored in a human being and that he loving God
shall be God mirrored in me--then verily--holily we may
love and even fearfully. [. . .] love each other and forget
God. (DY 94-95)

Beyond the Crowley affair, Jeanne’s words attest to her many failed relationships with

men, to a growing inability to trust in the possibility of a spiritually grounded, sexual union. On the other hand, the final sentence suggests that love in all its physical, intellectual, emotional delight might take precedence over finding “the love of God mirrored in a human being.” This ambivalence would surface in such poems as “Marriage,” appearing the following year in *Neighbors of Yesterday*.

The poem opens in anger, “It was a trap, I said, and we were caught/ Netted like two unwary, fledgling birds,/ [. . .] No one had dared to whisper me the truth” (NOY 77. 1-2, 8). Even the bride’s mother is implicated in the deception about the joys of married life: “My mother wept upon my wedding day, / But she kept silence, kept the traitor pact / Had all the old conspired against the young, / [. . .] ?” (77. 9-11). The wife speaks throughout, noting the ways in which the young couple bends to conform to the shape of married life, “servants of the growing life/ That gathered round us” (78.44-45). At the poem’s conclusion, the aged widow defines her life, placidly accepting that “[. . .] marriage meant the losing of one’s self/ Within another life, and other lives.” The final lines recall Foster’s equation of Godly love with self-sacrifice, not with fulfillment: “I gave as God must give--for He is lost/ Within His children’s lives here on the earth” (NOY 77-79). In *Adirondack Portraits* Foster would revisit this theme of victimization in her “Mis’ Cole” and “Blue Calico: The Ingrate,” and peer further into the psychological hobbling of a woman in “Silence Davis” (*Neighbors of Yesterday*).³³

Despite her “vanity of vanities” entry during the 1916 trip west, Foster wrote of love and maternity in *Wild Apples* (also published in 1916), indicating a longing for a passionate, fruitful relationship to replace the marriage of convenience which had formed

with Mat Foster. Many of the poems express the pain of unrequited love, often traced to the furtive affair with Albert Shaw. But others deal with the war, with ships at sea, with the intensity of experiencing poetry, with life's paradoxes, with the frustrations of living.

In "Mysteries" the speaker questions the paths his/her life has taken: "[. . .] Where is the self that I was yesterday?/ Where are the thousand selves that fade away/ In dim procession in my memory [. . .]" (WA 36. 2-4). The poetic voice is filled with angst both for missed opportunities and for what lies ahead, "[w]here, veiled, the Future waits in distance grey-/ [. . .] Unrealised, unseen,/ Where goes this shadow-shape--*I might have been?*" (7, 13-14). The theme and tone of this poem foreshadow "The Masker" quoted at the head of this chapter. Throughout Foster's poetry, especially in the concentrations of love poetry, we find an uncertainty about the self which she equates with shape-shifting and masking. The final line of "The Masker" focuses on the same absence which "Mysteries" brings to light: "I tore the mask; there grinned--a skeleton" forms a dark development of "Unrealised, unseen,/Where goes this shadow-shape--*I might have been?*" Jeanne Robert Foster had moved through many incarnations of herself, from poverty-stricken mountain child, through wife and student, to professional reporter, poet, and seductive, worldly dabbler in the occult. At the center of these roles there seems to have been a hollowness which becomes trite in the weakest poems, but which is mightily articulated as a haunting, personal lack in the stronger verses.

In *Neighbors of Yesterday* (1916) Foster began the process of locating both lack and fulfillment in the people through whom she could best express her conception of life as meaningful. In her foreword to the volume, Foster describes the Adirondack farmers

and lumbermen as “shrewd, kindly, simple people, bound together by a characteristic clannishness that gave them the feeling that they were a race apart from the dwellers in towns.” Unlike the more complacent city-dwellers among whom she was living and learning, “[t]hey had little subtlety and they were not progressive.” With one foot in each of the two worlds, Foster knew that the ordinary sophisticate could not enter into the community of the mountain. “Not by kindness or generosity, or long residence among them, could a city man ingratiate himself into the genuine warmth of their hearts. Only those whose birthright was a low-roofed farmhouse or a log shanty could speak the language of their souls.” The sense of her Adirondack world and its integrity, indeed its clannishness, is summed up in her statement, “Once a native, always a native”(NOY , Foreword). Armed with the birthright which she felt secure in, Foster could be the city voice, assuming the authority of the male voices among which she lived, loved, and worked, to weave, through the images and tones of a bygone age, the tale of what it means to live in the modern world. Long before Ezra Pound told her that the mountain was her milieu, Foster must have sensed it.

[. . .]We were founded in hard hammered granite

From the quarry of noble traditions;

Based on character, based on worthiness.

Dig deep, you new men and you new women,

Into the past--the most useful things lie there

In the dust of oblivion. (Introductory verse. 15-20)

Neighbors of Yesterday, was well received. The *Ohio State Journal* called it “A

real favor to American Literature.” To the *Brooklyn Eagle* Foster had written poetry “Concentrated and rich [. . .] in passion and fire [to equal] Edgar Lee Masters.” And the *Cambridge Chronicle* saw *Neighbors of Yesterday* as “A book for Americans about Americans.” Interestingly, neither *Wild Apples* nor *Neighbors of Yesterday* was reviewed in the *Review of Reviews*, but Foster was not the type to seek an advantage. Richard Londraville repeatedly stresses the ways in which the author was self-deprecating. “I have told you that to me, all genius is male. I do not live in a state of egotism” (DY xxviii). Both books were lauded, but the formal reviews came from the press comments of the smaller journals and papers. Still, Jeanne Robert Foster had found her poetic voice, and her professional name.

Mrs. Foster, John Quinn, and a Life of Art: “*I was so eager to forget my tasks . . .*”

In the late fall of 1917, John Butler Yeats fell gravely ill of the flu. While the energy of his words and the sharpness of his mind had not become dull, the seventy-nine-year-old Yeats (who steadfastly refused to return to Ireland) was penniless and in debt. Exasperated by JBY’s refusal to be hospitalized for rapidly developing pneumonia, his great friend and financial supporter, John Quinn, hired a full-time nurse for his care, and phoned Mrs. Jeanne Robert Foster, whom he knew to be Yeats’s particular friend, to ask her to oversee the medical situation at Petitpas. Quinn would pay all the bills. When Yeats had somewhat recovered, Quinn invited Jeanne to dinner at his apartment. Opening the door, he exclaimed, “My God, I thought you were an old lady” (DY 136). Jeanne was thirty-nine years old (admitting to thirty-five with an altered birthdate) and

still a stunning beauty, as sketches and photos of the time reveal.³⁴

The friendship between Jeanne Robert Foster and John Quinn developed quickly. Quinn had found, as JBY had been urging for years, “a good woman to rest his head” (MFNY 313). Foster’s hasty marriage to Matlack had left her many years for repentance. In her diary entry for August 25, 1911 she had confessed: “M.F. is good, kind, wise, a genial companion--an excellent friend, yet not one word of his tongue or deed of his doing can stir within me one thrill of quickened life” (DY 153). In John Quinn, Foster had found a man of genius, who, while he was not an artist himself, was at the center of the art world at a time when literature, painting, and sculpture were redefining the aesthetic through the “maelstrom of modernism” (Berman 16). Jeanne loved being close to both the actors and scripts of modernism, and to Quinn, whom she termed “an authority on aesthetics and the foremost art collector and connoisseur of his time” (Foster/Murphy Collection; NYPL: “Preface to the collected Letters of John Quinn” Unpublished typescript). Quinn was the complete antithesis of the man to whom she was legally bound: “[Matlack] invited one to explore his mind, but once set out on the journey and you found--a great cave--a grotto fetid with Lilliputians” (diary entry September 13, 1911 in DY 153). Within her relationship with Quinn, Jeanne found a way to merge her various worlds. His was a brilliant mind in a man of cultured tastes; he enjoyed the stimulation of, and was noted in New York and the grand cities of Europe; he had a deep and abiding connection to Ireland and Irish culture and history; his devotion to art and his own role as a patron of the arts was paramount in his life; he was attached to the Adirondacks, and often sought refuge there from the strain of the law, and the stresses of

being the grand defender and patron of Europe's struggling artists.

In addition, despite his many relationships with women through the years (among them Lady Augusta Gregory and William Morris's daughter, May), and his reputation, known to Jeanne before she met him, as a "crusher of women," Quinn was always a proper gentleman. Although Jeanne's duties as Quinn's assistant, a job she took on full time soon after they had met, appear to have encompassed twenty-four hours of each day, she kept her apartment, and always referred to herself as Mrs. Foster. Although Matlack seldom came to Manhattan, and although she was completely devoted to Quinn, Jeanne nevertheless insisted that they respect the image, if not the essence of her marriage. She referred to her husband derisively, in private, as "the lobster," but she stayed with him in the 49th Street apartment when he was in town, much to Quinn's dismay. When Foster traveled with Quinn, they took separate lodgings and berths. While her diaries and some remaining letters refer to waking up in his arms, and certainly express her passion for and devotion to him, both Foster's and Quinn's public behavior was most circumspect. Even the scholars who sought Foster's help in her later years for work on Yeats, JBY, or Quinn, never speculate, in their commentary on the Foster-Quinn relationship, that there was anything more than a deep friendship and mutual, loving respect between them. Always concerned with what others might think and say, John Quinn cooperated in the duplicities which probably fooled no one but the couple themselves. His true feelings on the matter of Jeanne's married state can be inferred from his inscription in a book he sent her in 1920. JBY had published *Further Letters of John Butler Yeats* through the Cuala Press, and Quinn had sent one of the six copies he had purchased to Mrs. Foster. On the

flyleaf, Quinn wrote: “To J.J.O. These letters of an old friend of hers from a friend of both. J.Q. April 16, 1920.” The initials were for Jean Julie Oliviere, a version of Foster’s maiden name.³⁵

Over the course of their five years together, Jeanne would travel to Europe four times (in 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923), three times with Quinn (1921, 1922, 1923), always acting on his part to discover or finalize art purchases he wished to make, but for which he had either no time, or in his last year of rapidly failing health, no stamina to complete. During those years she met and formed friendships with William Butler Yeats and his wife George, Ford Madox Ford and, as Foster put it, “the current wife,” Ezra and Dorothy (Shakespeare) Pound, Constantin Brancusi, Andre Derain, Juan Gris, André de Segonzac, Gwen John, Erik Satie, Pablo Picasso, Francis Picabia, Henri Roché, H.D., Natalie Barney, T.S. Eliot, and James Joyce. In addition, Foster knew and often worked with many other people connected to the movement which would become known as “modernist,” such as Heywood Broun, Walt Kuhn, Jessie Conrad, and Georges Braque. While she was working as Quinn’s assistant, Foster continued to write for the *Review*, to work on her poetry, and to remain active in the National Arts Club and the Poetry Society. One *Review* project brought her to post-war Czechoslovakia, where she had a narrow escape from angry demobilized German soldiers who had remained armed and become members of the “Free Corps,” working against the terms of the Versailles Treaty.³⁶

Germany was in a chaotic state when Foster decided, in November 1920, to accept an invitation from Tomas Masaryk to visit Prague. Jeanne had met Masaryk in 1915 at a

Department of Labor dinner honoring Masaryk and Karel Pergler as war patriots. In addition to being charmed by her, both men were interested in Foster's position as a journalist who might forward the cause of Czechoslovakian independence. In fact, the *Review* featured three of Foster's articles about the Czechoslovakian cause, "The Czechoslovaks," in August, and "The Czecho-Slovaks in Russia," in the October 1918 issues, and "The Music of the Czechoslovaks," in the May, 1919 issue. All three were "Leading Articles of the Month." While Woodrow Wilson supported the Czech legion against attacks by Austrians and Germans, no concrete aid was given to the struggling political group. Foster, Masaryk, and Pergler found themselves in agreement that a complete socio-economic renewal, including educational and technological programs for the betterment of all the people would be the only way to unite the country and move it forward. Thus, while Jeanne was working for Quinn and for the *Review*, in Paris in 1920, the Masaryks's invitation to visit Prague for two weeks presented an opportunity to see this philosophy in action, and she could not miss it. "I left Paris on the Orient Express, November 11, 1920. A few days previously I had received [. . .] from [Tomas Masaryk then president of the Czechoslovak Republic]. . . a letter. When I started for Prague, I carried this letter with me . . ." (DY 119).³⁷

Foster's chronicle of her stay is replete with details about the struggling republic and its people. While there, she met with a former acquaintance, H.O. Eversole, Director of the American Red Cross, who told Foster about the terrible poverty, sickness, and suffering of the Czech people, and the tremendous efforts being made by the Red Cross to help them. Together with Jan Masaryk, the President's son, Jeanne toured the capital city

as well as country villages. She saw confrontations between Czech soldiers and German residents in tension over old allegiances to the Austrian Emperor, and old women harnessed into ploughs to turn furrows in a land where there were no more work cows or oxen. In contrast to such sights, Foster witnessed the joy of the newly liberated people as university students built new dormitories with their own hands, their music streaming through the streets. The crowning evening of her two-week stay was a special performance of Dvorak's opera, "Rusalka." Years later, Foster would tell a friend, "[. . .] [W]e were ushered into the booth reserved for our party. When President Masaryk entered, the entire audience rose to their feet and cheered their president. I felt like a fairy princess in my black and gold dress . . .[,] jewels glittering in my hair. [. . .] In my heart, in my mind, was locked away the most unforgettable experience in my life" (DY 129). When she returned to New York, no written record of Foster's Czechoslovakian experience was published. Jeanne had promised Masaryk's son, Jan that the visit would be "off-the-record," so that hosts and guest would be able to speak freely about any topic, without fear of how the visit would be interpreted in a piece of journalism (my interview with Janis Londraville, November 2001). Nonetheless, Foster memorialized her experience in a poem titled "The 'Winter Song'":

In Strasbourg, the Tricolor streams on the ancient square;
 In Dover, St. George's cross lies crimson upon the wind;
 Beyond the sea, there are stars above the sunrise
 Upon tall ships in Atlantic harbors.
 But I am dreaming of another flag,

In Praha, in golden Praha,
 There is a new flag of freedom upon the streets,
 As the soldiers march singing the 'Winter Song' softly.
 Softly, softly it comes to my ears--
 The 'Winter Song' in Praha rising and falling,
 Sung by the Siberian Legionaires, marching, marching.

(*Rock-Flower* 91.1-11)

Jeanne showed the text to Ezra Pound in 1922, and he liked its emotional power, the simplicity of the images, the repetition (Foster-Murphy Collection; NYPL : Box 3; File 218). She had marked it "doubtful" for inclusion in the collection, and Pound told her to put it back in, which she did. It is one of the first poems in which Foster unites the three marks of her power: region, modernity, and sentiment. Softly, it comes to our ears.

Foster's other European trips in the early twenties were less harrowing, but certainly aesthetically and intellectually important to her own growth as an artist. In 1920, Quinn sent her to seek out the reclusive Gwen John, artist sister of painter and sculptor Augustus John, whose early work Quinn had supported unequivocally.³⁸ In 1921, on their first European trip together, Foster and Quinn spent much time with Henri Roche, who was scouting art for Quinn and setting up meetings with notable artists. In Foster's diary for the summer of 1921, one page of brief entries for July 5 through 9 simply records meetings with Ezra Pound, Henri Roché, Brancusi, Raoul Dufy, André Derain, and Picasso. On the opening page, dated July 3, 1921, Jeanne identifies the "Flowers from Picasso's garden" that, in ashes today, are pressed between the pages

deposited with the New York Public Library. (Foster-Murphy Collection; NYPL: Box 4; File 273).³⁹ These trips chronicle Jeanne's absorption of European culture, as well as her connection to the artists of the day, influences which formed the reservoir of experience which would nourish her own art in later years.

Foster returned to New York in October, 1921 and continued to work for Quinn as his assistant, while publicizing through the National Arts Club and her journalistic connections those artists she had met and with whom she had been so intrigued.⁴⁰ JBY, meanwhile, had never fully recovered from his bout with pneumonia four years earlier, and continued to decline. Again, Jeanne took care of him, and Quinn paid the bills. On February 3, John Butler Yeats died in his room at Petitpas. Because the Yeats family could not afford to have the body shipped back to Ireland, Jeanne wrote to the Irish Senate begging "please send a battle ship to take John Butler Yeats to Sligo." The plea was unsuccessful, so she offered the Yeats family a grave at her husband's family plot in Chestertown, New York. The father of the great Irish poet lies in a grave inscribed "In remembrance of John Butler Yeats of Dublin, Ireland. Painter and Writer." It sits on a hill in the Adirondacks, overlooking a stand of pines.⁴¹ Jeanne wrote a tribute to her friend, printed in the *New York Times* on February 6, 1922; in *Current Opinion* 7 (April 22, 1922): 535; in William Stanley Braithwaite's *Anthology of Magazine Verse for 1922*; and in *Rock-Flower*, a volume dedicated "To the memory of my friend John Butler Yeats, R.H.A."⁴² In writing about the man who had been her best critic, Foster reached the simple intensity which JBY had been urging her toward. Foster's European friends, Pound, Ford, Roché, considered it the best thing she had written to date.

In May, 1922 Foster published “New Sculptures by Constantin Brancusi: A Note on the Man and the Formal Perfections of His Carvings” in *Vanity Fair*. Foster describes dinner at Brancusi’s studio, served on “a round white cement table--it may be freshly troweled for the occasion” (NYPL, Foster-Murphy Collection; Box 4: File 236). But besides the sense of celebrity with which she seduces the reader, Foster touches upon the allure of Brancusi’s *The Yellow Bird* or *Mlle. Pogony*: “[. . .] He gives us forms of a mathematical exactitude of proportion upon whose smooth surfaces we may shape our dreams and give them at least momentary reality. Through a certain withdrawal of the particularized, one learns how the infinite may blend with the finite to stand visible and as it were attainable” (Ibid.). When she returned to France in 1923, Jeanne renewed her ties with Brancusi, Gwen John, and other notables. One result of her friendship with Brancusi is a five-part poem titled “Constantin Brancusi: Roumanian Sculptor,” which Jeanne wrote for the *Rock-Flower* collection. Like poems she wrote about Maud Gonne, Ezra Pound, and Oscar Wilde for the same volume, the Brancusi verses employ a combination of images, anecdotes, quotes, and actions to create a sensual montage of Foster’s experience of the man. *The Yellow Bird* forms the center of the opening verse, titled “L’Ouvrier.” “Hérons of the Moon flying through velvet mist;/ The Golden Bird, Sun-bird, Bird of Paradise/ Dazzling in upper space” (59. 6-8). As she describes the artist in terms of the voluptuousness of his work and his experience of life, she describes his studio in terms of the flight of his art.⁴³ To recreate the sensation of Brancusi’s workspace for the reader, Foster focuses on the shapes and textures of his work, “Stupendous masses of rock;/ Old wood mellowed, seasoned by time,/ Hewn from sea-

forests./ Marble [. . .] Bronze [. . .] again marble [. . .]” (59. 9-14). The text is one of Foster’s few formalist modernist pieces, and is discussed along with the Pound, Donne, and Wilde texts in Chapter Five.

Jeanne Robert Foster and John Quinn were in Europe for the last time together in 1923, and despite his failing health, Quinn was involving Jeanne in new and exciting ventures. Her diary entries are excited, rushed. A remarkable picture taken on this last trip includes Jeanne playing golf with Brancusi and Henri Roché; another shows Foster with Quinn, Picasso, and his wife at Fontainebleau; a third (which Foster took) depicts Joyce, Pound, Quinn, and Ford Madox Ford in Paris.⁴⁴ As Quinn surrounded himself with the art and the artists he so loved, Foster supported him in his final efforts at collecting. At the same time, she forged bonds with the European artistic community which connected her to them even in the Schenectady years. When Quinn returned to New York On October 27, Jeanne stayed behind to complete his affairs in Paris and attend to her own work. By the time she left France in December, she had agreed to become Ford’s American editor for the *transatlantic review*, a joint venture in the production of a literary magazine undertaken by Ford, Quinn, and Ezra Pound.⁴⁵ Throughout the twenties, Foster promoted the work of both Ford Madox Ford and Ezra Pound in the states, setting up lecture tours and continuing to work with both authors for years after Quinn had died.⁴⁶

The year 1924 brought an end to Foster’s breathless existence with John Quinn. Upon his return from Europe, the great lawyer and patron of the arts declined rapidly as the cancer he had been fighting overwhelmed him. Jeanne mourned in her diary, “[. . .]

His head is a skull with yellow skin drawn over it--his face a mask of pain--his eyes faded to a light blue--but filled with light and unearthly [. . .]" (MFNY 630). She remained by his side for most of the time until his death on July 28. Among the last entries of her diary she wrote: "The curtain of my love and grief shuts out the world. I cannot see or hear the life flowing around me. I am in the middle of a great silence. Only one voice penetrates that silence, only one face. I feel I am dying" (Foster-Murphy Collection; NYPL: Diary 7/22/24). The final entry reads: "July 28--1924--July 28 1924 This is the end of the book. [. . .] 'The rest is silence' " (Ibid.). In an eerily prophetic account of the death of the beloved, Foster had written in 1922, in "The Eye of the Beholder":

Translate to me, Beloved, the mysterious message that
 leaped from your eyes while still your eyes lived in that moment
 after your heart ceased to beat! [. . .]'Beloved,' I cried [. . .]and
 with a strange transmutation of the senses, your eyes heard and
 answered. Slowly they opened--living eyes in the face of the dead--
 -their deep blue unstained by dissolution, their gaze unfaltering,
 their radiance undimmed. A moment only, then beneath my
 imploring gaze, the lids fell, the dark lashes brushing the light as
 the gossamer filaments of the wings of midnight moths the
 penumbrous moonlight. And their message--lost, unwon,
 untranslatable forever. (*Rock-Flower* 114)

In a moment of prescience or artistic macabre, Foster had created the emptiness which would fill her at the moment of Quinn's death. The silence into which she entered was

not one of unproductiveness, but rather of anonymity.

For a year after his death, Foster sorted, reviewed, and edited Quinn's vast correspondence, a testament to his patronage. She wrote an introduction to the letters which were deposited with the New York Public Library in 1925 as the John Quinn Memorial Collection, sealed to the public for fifty years. Meanwhile, together with his law secretary Thomas Curtin, and friends such as Henri Roché, Foster fought auctioneers and Quinn's family to convince them to keep his magnificent collection of modern art intact. That battle too was lost; by 1926 the Quinn estate had been dispersed, auctions in New York and Paris decimating the stunning collection of at least twenty Picassos, fifteen Matisse, numerous Derains, Braques, Brancusi, and works by Wyndham Lewis, Augustus and Gwen John, Degas, Gris, Gauguin, Rousseau, among others.⁴⁷

Quietly remaining at the center of Pound's and Ford's literary efforts, Foster conscripted support for the *transatlantic review's* replacement journal, *This Quarter*, published from 1925 to 1932. The publication included contributions from the friends and associates of Foster and Pound: Brancusi, Djuna Barnes, H.D., William Carlos Williams, Ernest Hemingway. The list indicates the breadth and depth of Foster's contacts, and gives us a sense of the variety of modern literature she was immersed in during the twenties. Foster was the American editor for the first four large issues, after which the journal became the responsibility of Edward W. Titus. In 1926, Foster sailed for Paris and old friends such as the Pounds. While in France she visited Joyce again, hoping to discuss his writing process. Rather than inspiring her literary efforts, the author shared a recipe for artichokes, currently found charmingly tucked between the leaves of

Foster's letters and manuscripts in the Foster-Murphy Collection.⁴⁸ Back in New York, Foster continued to promote Ford Madox Ford, who was pursuing the lecture circuit, and to do editorial work for various journals, including some occasional work for the *Review of Reviews*.

In the spring of 1927, Foster took her final trip to Europe, spending time in France on art business for private clients, and in England with the Yeats family. Foster indicated the influence William Yeats had on her experience of literature when she recounted what she called a "psychic experience" which occurred when they were driving in a hansom carriage on the way to join Lily for dinner. "I began to be aware of [. . .] a penetration from his mind, sensed my mind flowing [. . .] into that magnificence so far above and beyond me. I was aware of all his poetry and plays compounded [. . .] I have never lost the interpenetration of my mind and spirit that to him of course was an unconscious gift" (LC qtd. in DY 210-11). For his part, Yeats told her that he "remembered a part of the old heroic days in Ireland when he was an ancient bard" (211). Foster carried her sense of Yeats and their shared interest in the mystical into her poetry, apparent in her melding of past, present and future in *Adirondack Portraits*. "I can look down here over the valley/ And forget the fingers of Change/ Working upon the cities out yonder./ I can forget everything that happened/ From my birth. The things I do not forget/ Are the things that happened before I came [. . .]" ("Things That Do Not Change," 1-6; 140). The vision of the soaring *Yellow Bird* of Brancusi has become the poet's own. She gazes into all time at the same time, seeing stasis and change simultaneously through her art.

“Wilderness people are a special breed” Foster cautions in “The Wilderness is Strong.” “They have something that’s not hearing or seeing/ Reaching out from the mountains to touch them” (AP 141. 18-20). In “State Land” Foster sees that development of the mountain which she finds so repellent: “[. . .] Beyond my line/ I looked down on the havoc of the years,/ Dude ranches sprawling where farmhouses stood./ I have no quarrel with what you call ‘our times,’/ But my heart spoke: I must preserve this land” (AP 142. 25-29). The poetry which Foster wrote throughout the rest of her life was a testament to the preservation of spirit which she sought to enact throughout her various careers.

Jeanne Robert Foster and the Schenectady Years: “. . .before I fell asleep.”

The force of change moved across Foster’s life consistently. On June 25, 1927, her mother Lucia died. Pound’s insistence that she abandon the States and join her friends in Europe must have been hard to resist: “Damn your family [. . .] You better allow your family 75 a month, and live in yourup [sic] on the other 75. Better than the great suburb” (DY 206). Still the suburb encroached and became all. In 1927, Foster officially resigned from the *Review*, having done less and less work for the journal since 1922. By the mid-thirties the periodical would merge with the *Literary Digest* and the old *Review of Reviews* would disappear. To supplement her income, Foster worked on the New York State Constitutional Convention in Albany, researching and writing from 1928 to the late 1930’s. From 1930 to 1932, she was employed as a part time proof-reader and editor of the state police bulletin in Schenectady. Her custom of making

periodic trips to upstate New York had reversed itself. Now she was returning only occasionally to her apartment in Manhattan.

In May of 1932 Foster's brother died, and in September, 1933, Matlack died as well. Jeanne's sister Fan was now married and living in California, and Cara remained in Schenectady alone. Jeanne gave up the Manhattan apartment in 1933, sold a cottage that she and Fan had purchased on the coast of Maine years before, and assumed the care and maintenance of her sister Cara, settling resignedly into the rural life of a Schenectady matron. Gradually unable to support herself solely with editorial work and odd jobs in the depression, Foster became a tenant relations counselor with the Schenectady Municipal Housing Authority, an offshoot of Roosevelt's New Deal. In 1938, at the age of fifty-nine, Jeanne Robert Foster had begun yet another new career. She worked relentlessly for the poor and disenfranchised, until her retirement from the MHA in 1955. By now Cara had died (1947), and the widowed Fanette had returned to Schenectady to live with Jeanne.

Through all the years Jeanne Foster continued to write poetry, to lecture at local events on the artists and authors she had known so well, and to offer poetry classes. In addition, she kept up an intermittent correspondence with her old friend, Ezra Pound. In 1956, having been incarcerated for over ten years in St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, D.C. for his alliance with "enemies of the United States during World War II," Pound wrote to Jeanne of his need for freedom: "[. . .] we need noise to spring grampaw [. . .] Naturally dumb buzzards who don't know the score are innocuous, etc. J.Q. wd/have had me out of here ten years ago. etc." (DY 214). Foster wrote to J. Walter

Yeagley, acting assistant attorney general at the U.S. Department of Justice on April 3, 1958, pleading that as a great artistic resource, and a danger to no one, Pound should be released. Other writers supported the movement, and Pound was freed on April 18, 1956. Letters continued occasionally between Foster and Pound until at least 1963, the date on the last extant letter. Pound was the last of their circle to die, in 1972.

As Pound and Foster had begun resurrecting their correspondence in 1956, Aline Saarinen, writer and art curator, had started researching *The Proud Possessors*. Foster was thrilled to assist her with information, letters and manuscripts relating to John Quinn and his magnificent, lost collection. Saarinen dedicated a full chapter to Quinn, "The Noble Buyer," and Foster became her close friend.⁴⁹ Gradually, other scholars and critics became aware of Foster's personal connection to the modernists and to Quinn. William Murphy, who would later become Jeanne's literary executor, first consulted her in his work on the Yeats family, and Jeanne helped him as she had Saarinen, his research resulting in two major books on John Butler Yeats and the Yeats family, as well as shorter works on J. B. and W. B. Yeats, and Jeanne Robert Foster.⁵⁰ Richard Londraville also reaped the benefits of Foster's patronage and friendship, resulting in his work on William Yeats, Wyndham Lewis, John Quinn, Ford Madox Ford, Frank Hugh O'Donnell, and Jeanne Robert Foster, among others.⁵¹ Bernard Poli received Foster's help when he researched *the transatlantic review*, resulting in *Ford Madox Ford and the transatlantic review*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1967). Author B.L. Reid turned to Foster when he undertook the writing of *The Man From New York: John Quinn and His Friends* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), a biography which would win the Pulitzer

Prize. And Michael Holroyd, seeking information about Augustus John in 1969, asked to meet with Jeanne, later recalling the afternoon he spent with her as “one of the most romantic episodes in my life [. . .] [S]he enabled me to write a better book than would have been possible without her ” (Foster/Murphy Collection; NYPL: Box 3; File 124).⁵² Foster thought so highly of Holroyd that she left part of her Gwen John collection to him at her death. Thus, in her eighties, Jeanne Robert Foster imparted to the young scholars who sought her out, the beauty, intrigue, and humanity, as well as artifacts, of the modernist artists she had known.

Jeanne Robert Foster had planned to publish another volume of her Adirondack poetry, and her correspondence of the last twenty years of her life makes frequent mention of her struggle to find time and peace in which to work. Debilitated by arthritis, beset with ever-present financial pressures, and sought after for her memories and expertise, Foster struggled to complete the verses which she wished to collect under either *Adirondack Trail* or *The Lost Breed*. But the text was never completed for publication. In 1963, friends Tex and Ruth Riedinger produced a reprint facsimile of *Neighbors of Yesterday* (1916), the only book in publication during Foster’s later life. In 1986, after her parents’s and Foster’s deaths, Noel Riedinger-Johnson edited the manuscripts Jeanne had left with the Riedingers, and created *Adirondack Portraits*, a melange of original verse and prose, editorial commentary, and authentic maps and photos representing the people and places memorialized in the texts. Manuscripts in the Murphy and Londrville Collections remain unpublished.

In June, 1970, Foster was regaled by Union College, Schenectady, New York and

received an honorary doctorate. At the end of the ceremony, the ninety-one-year-old grand lady collapsed. She never fully recovered. On September 22, 1970, she died at home in Schenectady, and her grave at the little Chestertown cemetery sits, ironically but appropriately, between Matlack's and J.B. Yeats's. In "Letter to Ruth Riedinger," Foster had written of her beloved mountain territory, closing with this verse:

I grant you tenancy. My ownership
 Is now known only to the blowing wind:
 Old shanty days, old settlers, old log barns,
 And houses, they have vanished out of mind.
 But I have told those who will carry me
 When my eyes close, to fold me tenderly
 In some wild mountain valley where the wind
 Will sing—through pines—a requiem over me. (AP 5. 36-43)

Foster's grave is surrounded by pines. They are majestic, and the wind sings through them continuously. In the sound, one can hear the voice of her poetry.

ENDNOTES

1. Subheadings indicate periods of her life during which she used particular names, and throughout the chapter, I will use the names which apply to the current section. The term "Foster" is the generic for the professional persona of Jeanne Robert Foster as she appears to us in retrospect.

2. The archives of the Bay State Colony record that Samuel Ollivier came to the colony in 1658. "He was my father's direct ancestor. His eldest son has the first obituary printed in the records of the colony as he died fighting [. . .] in an effort to protect the settlers. His name was Jean Ollivier. I took his name as a pseudonym. 'Robert' is the name of another French ancestor" ("Ancestry of Lucia N. Oliviere, Mother of Jeanne R. Foster," Adirondack Museum Archives).

3. To add to the romance of her background, Foster notes that one of the Wellers kept a Hudson River inn frequented by Aaron Burr. This innkeeper bore Burr's illegitimate child, who in turn parented Chloe Weller, Lizzy Newell's cousin. Chloe is described by Foster as "a duplicate of her alleged ancestor, Aaron Burr [. . .] raven-haired, clever, a writer, unmoral[. . .]" She married one Silon Ormsby of Horicon, New York. When Julie was fourteen she encountered the aged Chloe whom she described as "still beautiful" and a poet, and credited her with the first refinements of Foster's art: "I rescued her poetry and writings [. . .] Under her influence, I began to write real poetry at that time, whereas I had only written jingles before" (Ancestry of Lucia N. Oliviere, Adirondack Museum Archives).

4. Although 1879 is the correct date of Foster's birth, sometime during her Manhattan residency she began altering it by five years to make herself younger. In order to justify her 1884 birth date, she altered other dates as well, such as her husband Matlack's year of birth, their wedding date, and the years in which she lived in Rochester, Boston, New York. I am using dates which have been taken from the private papers of Dr. Richard Londraville, Foster's friend in her later years and biographer. He received many legal documents and personal papers from Mrs. Foster both before and after her death.

5. In 1859 Rev. Enos Putnam built the Wesleyan Methodist Church on Mill Creek Road in Johnsburg. It is the type for "The Old Church" (AP 71-72).

6. In the introduction to her 1916 text *Neighbors of Yesterday*, Foster wrote:

The Neighbors of Yesterday of the North Woods are gone, save for a few granddams and grandsires in the remote farmhouses of the back districts. There are a few lumber-jacks and riverdrivers left, but they are not the capable, hardy, roystering men of the famous old camps. Here and there you will find a solitary lumber-jack who can sing the shanty-songs and knows the peculiar vocabulary of the lumber-gang. But for the most part this life is in truth of yesterday, and that

we may remember it, even in small measure, I have tried faithfully to set down certain things that come crowding into my mind when I remember the days of my childhood in the Great North Woods. J.R.F.

The result of her use of the mountain community as her muse delighted Ezra Pound. He found *Neighbors* to be the best of her work through the early 1920's, far superior in his estimate than the 1923 *Rock-Flower*.

7. The brief narrative "Albro Tripp's Story" explains the process of skidding:

[. . .]I would fasten one end of a long chain to a ring in the ox yoke. The ring was in the middle of the yoke between the oxen [. . .] The logs were scattered all through the woods where the choppers had chopped them down. Two men would make roads to the logs so that I could drive the oxen to them [and] [. . .]haul [them] [. . .]to the skidway, where a man would roll them up into large piles[. . .] [T]o haul two hundred logs in one day to a skidway was quite a day's work for a boy of thirteen--for a man too. (AP 125)

Although Foster was too young at this time to work at skidding, she noted in a letter to an Adirondack friend, that she assumed the job as part of school teaching at a lumber camp: "When I was sixteen, I taught school near my father's last lumber job. I drove a skidding horse on the job, often fastening my own chains" (AP 122). The experiences Foster's characters narrate, although not always hers directly, were an integral part of her early life, accounting for the immediacy of her narrative voice.

8. Foster reads into her family's financial straits the opportunity which opened her world:

[. . .] [F]or two years my father's young brother Eugene lived with us in Chestertown [. . .] until he passed on of pulmonary tuberculosis at the age of twenty-five. He used two rooms of the house kept closed against the children. [. . .] He had books; we had only three. So I sneaked into his rooms whenever I could, and while I fanned [him] he allowed me to read Southey, Moore, and Browning. (AP 75)

9. Rev. Osmond David Putnam (1861-1826) was the son of Francis and Julia Putnam with whom Julia Oliver lived from 1887-89. He attended Houghton Wesleyan Seminary, and when he returned home for vacations, often took the young Julia with him photographing people and places of the Adirondack communities. His negatives range throughout Warren and Essex County, the areas he could reach on foot or by early stage wagons. The photographs featured in *Adirondack AP: A Piece of Time* are Osmond Putnam's, and often illustrate the communities and individuals which are the basis of Foster's poetry.

10. The date of Foster's marriage has traditionally been listed as August 25, 1895, making Julia Oliver sixteen at the time of her nuptials. Dr. William Murphy, author of the John Butler Yeats biography *Prodigal Father*, is also literary executor of Jeanne Robert Foster. Their close friendship evolved in the 1950's when Dr. Murphy was researching Yeats, and Mrs. Foster put him into contact with many resources, including her own collection of letters, drawings, and papers. Upon her death, Mrs. Foster left the bulk of her collection to Dr. Murphy, who eventually sold it to the New York Public Library, where it now resides as the Foster-Murphy Collection in the Division of Rare Books and Manuscripts. Retained among his own personal collection was the original Foster marriage certificate, which Dr. Murphy shared with Richard and Janice Londraville, Foster biographers. They have, in turn, shared this information with me, establishing the date of Foster's marriage as 1896, taking place in the Clerk of Orphan's Court in Philadelphia, certificate number 95693, with Julia Oliver's age at the time being seventeen. The adjustment of this date by Foster is in keeping with previously mentioned alterations to her age and to those dates most pertinent to her early life.

11. In her introduction to *Adirondack Portraits: A Piece of Time*, editor and friend of Mrs. Foster, Noel Riedinger-Johnson, states that the marriage took place in the summer of 1896 and that Matlack was twenty-five years Julia's senior. These are the facts as Foster later presented them. As previously noted however, the marriage took place in 1897. In addition, Foster noted in an interview with Dr. Murphy that her husband's birth date was 12/25, 1850, making him 29 years older than she. This information is noted in the private papers of the Londravilles.

12. The other text, "The Reason of the Cause," appeared on June 8, 1913, in the *New York Call*, 10. Interestingly, it tells the tragic story of a young immigrant woman whose life is nearly destroyed by pregnancy and an ill-fated marriage. The short story is discussed in Chapter Three of this study.

13. Interestingly, when in 1906 Foster became an official member of the Theosophical society of Boston, the name she registered under was Jean Elspeth Foster, drawing together her current married and professional titles (Foster-Murphy Collection; NYPL: Box 4, File 268).

14. Clippings of this feature may be seen in the Foster-Murphy Collection of the New York Public Library, 42nd Street Manuscript and Rare Books Division, Box 4, Folder #279. The clippings are imprinted as the "American Magazine Supplement to the New York Journal." In Foster's script we read: "Hearst [. . .] Appeared on this page over a year: hats, dresses, & coats."

15. Foster was the model for Fisher's "Jane Cable" pictures in the 1907 and 1908 books, and was Wenzell's "Enid," a photographic persona which sold nationally for more than ten years through the Detroit Photographic Company (Interview with Janis Londraville, August 2000).

16. In a 1970 letter, Foster reminisced about her modeling: “My largest list was from the pencil of Albert Wenzell [. . .] In New York we belonged to the Model’s Club. There was no roystering. We all worked. Many times we could--in small ways--help the artists and they invariably were friendly, courteous and kind “ (AP 164, endnote 11). Foster was noted to be, not only beautiful, but also generous, a quality she retained all her life, and one which is central to the ethos of her poetry.

17. In her Introduction to *Adirondack Portraits*, Noel Riedinger-Johnson includes the following footnote to her Harrison Fisher information:

JRF to Winifred La Rose, May 28, 1970.

May I congratulate you on finding an almost perfect ‘Harrison Fisher Book.’ The *Cup of Tea* is the only “Harrison Fisher Book.” I will set down--from Fisher’s titles the ones for which I posed. Sometimes they do not resemble me--as the Jane Cable illustrations for the novel. Jane was described as being a dark brunette so Harrison had to make me a ‘dark brunette.’

The drawing that Harrison considered *my portrait* is the one at the dressing table entitled ‘Which?’ The gown was beautiful, pale lavender and cream lace. At that time I had hip length bronze gold hair.

In fact, the name of the book is *The Harrison Fisher Book of 1907* and the book contains a chapter entitled “The Cup of Tea.” Riedinger-Johnson also provides Foster’s list of the illustrations from this book and section, for which she was the model:

<i>Which</i>	<i>Taking Toll</i>
<i>Rivals--the blonde</i>	<i>Not Yet but Soon</i>
<i>A Modern Eve</i>	<i>Gathering Honey</i>
<i>The Shifting Sands</i>	<i>Jane Cable & Graydon</i>
<i>A Winter Promenade</i>	<i>Four Studies/Jane Cable</i>
<i>Nancy</i>	<i>(Nedra-portrait)</i>
<i>You Will Marry a Dark Man</i>	
<i>Jane Cable</i>	<i>The Summer Girl</i>
<i>In Clover</i>	<i>Illustrations / Scribner’s</i>

This information indicates that Foster worked continuously for Fisher during the first several years of the century, during which time she also posed for Charles Dana Gibson and several unknown American and European photographers. One such photographer, credited as “JJ Henner” created a brilliant nude of Foster reclining. Although the picture is not dated, Foster’s description of her hip-length hair as well as her apparent age would indicate that the picture was probably done during Foster’s first European tour, arranged at the suggestion and with the help of Albert Shaw, and taking place in 1911. See the

Foster-Murphy Collection, NYPL, Box 4, File #266. For reproductions of the sketches enumerated above, see Tina Skinner, *Harrison Fisher: Defining the American Beauty* (Atglen: Schiffer Publishing, 1999), *passim*.

18. See the Foster-Murphy Collection; NYPL: Box 4, File 267.

19. Although Foster did not earn a degree from these studies, she was an ardent student who deeply respected the great minds before her. In January of 1911 Foster wrote an essay on Professor Copeland entitled merely "Professor X." Her impressions of the scholar are tinged with infatuation and academic idealism, but there are moments of insight which tell us that Foster was evaluating and processing even as she was awed.

[. . .] His lecture platform was a stage, his green-shaded student lamps the footlights--his actors the characters of history that materialized, and fiddled, and danced, and shuffled to the music of his voice [. . .][H]is heart could never grow old. That was his tragedy,--to look perpetually at life with the eyes of unchanging youth and yet be forced to live with his contemporaries [. . .]

(Foster-Murphy Collection; NYPL: Box 4, File 241).

Foster's grade was "A" and Copeland wrote to her that he could not return the essay because "the obituary pieces in it are too valuable" (DY 33). While he recognized the flattery of the piece, he also recognized the basic talent which produced it, and nodded to both Jean's ability and her charm. The combination of beauty and intelligence coupled with Jean's intense determination to learn and create would attract the attention of powerful men throughout her lifetime.

20. Jeanne commented on the incident of the gold prize in 1970, in a letter to Richard Londraville: "The paper sent a special messenger over to my boarding place on Beacon Hill with the shiny gold" (DY 34). She went on to cover North Boston and Sculloy Square area, writing features on the problems of housing and employment for the poor. One of the articles published in 1909, titled "The Art of Ruth St. Denis" indicates Jeanne's early interest in the modern aspects of art in any form. Disagreeing with a critic who had stated that the artist "doesn't dance; her movements are mere posturings" Foster argued that "The art of a nation images the soul of a nation, and as a nation changes so must its dances [. . .] Every intricacy of step must and does suggest infinitely more than its surface value for the dance is a perfect lyric saturated with the shape, the color, the rhythm of its age" (Foster/Murphy Collection; NYPL: Box 4; file #254; 1). Already, she was noting the fusion of medium and message which modern art would seek to evoke, refuting the receding concepts of mimetic art dedicated to definition.

21. Jeanne Robert Foster and Albert Shaw did, in fact, have a love affair which began sometime in 1910 and which seems to have lasted, with some interruptions, right up to her deep involvement with John Quinn, beginning in 1918. They shared a great love of

art, poetry, music, and the Adirondack mountains, where Shaw often visited his favorite town, Schroon Lake, located about ten miles from Jeanne's hometown Chestertown. Shaw nurtured her editorial and journalistic talent, and gave her the opportunity to experience World War I first hand as a reporter for the *Review of Reviews*. In addition, he saw to it that Jeanne acted as hostess to his various literary gatherings, since Elizabeth Shaw, his wife, was not interested in performing such duties. For the full story of Foster's liaison with Shaw, see Richard and Janis Londrville, *Dear Yeats, Dear Pound, Dear Ford: Jeanne Robert Foster and Her Circle of Friends*, Chapter 3.

22. Through my own research and in accordance with the records of Richard and Janis Londrville, who own Foster's scrapbook collection of articles, I have verified the following titles as a definitive list of *Review* work written by Foster. Although many other articles deal with topics Foster was working on or interested in according to her travel agenda and diaries, these are the only *Review* texts directly traceable to her composition. Where applicable, I have noted bylines:

December, 1910	Volume 42	"A Republic for Boys and Girls--After Twenty Years" (705-712)
January, 1911	Volume 43	"Julia Ward Howe As Writer" by Jeanne Robert
July, 1911	Volume 44	"The Care of Women in State Prisons" (76-84) by Jeanne Robert
March, 1912	Volume 45	"The Irish Theater As An Exponent of the Irish People" (356-7) "The Art of the Theater: Ideas by Edward Gordon Craig on the Production of Plays" (379-80) <i>The New Books</i> ; "The Drama and Music: The Abbey Theater"(380)
April, 1912	Volume 45	"Women and the Wage Question" by Jeanne Robert (439-442)
September, 1912	Volume 46	"Andrew Lang and His Work" by Jeanne Robert Foster [Note that this is the first use of "Foster" in her work] (375-76)
March, 1913	Volume 47	<i>Recent English Verse</i> ; "Yeats and His Red Man" (371-2)

April, 1913	Volume 47	“Art Revolutionists on Exhibition in America” (441-47)
February, 1914	Volume 49	<i>New Volumes of Verse</i> ; “Poems of Lindsay” (245)
July, 1917	Volume 56	“The Vitalization of City Schools: The Story of a School Teacher w/Vision & of Schools that Serve the Immediate Needs of the Child” (73-7)
August, 1918	Volume 56	“The Czecho-Slovaks” (197)
October, 1918	Volume 58	From <i>Leading Articles of the Month</i> : “The Czecho-Slovaks in Russia” (421-22) “The War Organization of Christian Science” (425-6)
May, 1919	Volume 59	From <i>Leading Articles of the Month</i> : “The Music of the Czechoslovaks” (547-8)
July, 1919	Volume 60	“Will Austria Break Up?” (pages not available)

23. For a discussion of this incident see Londraville, *Dear Yeats, Dear Pound, Dear Ford: Jeanne Robert Foster and Her Circle of Friends*, p.96 and footnote.

24. In his response to Jeanne’s work, JBY’s sense of art reflects a letter to Willie dated June 8, 1912, in which the father spoke of belief as a characteristic of “involuntary poets,” a concept which “can take many definite shapes, yet itself remains apart—a serenity, a great inner assurance. It is like the harvest when it waits ripening in the heat and silence of the long summer days, and when the harvest is full the harvesters will come. When there are many believers the poets will multiply” (Murphy 397).

25. Roosevelt, agreeing that life is change, took a far different view from Gregg’s, and applied it to what he saw at the Armory, countering “It is no less true, however, that change may mean death and not life, and retrogression instead of development. Probably we err in treating most of these pictures seriously[. . .] In this recent art exhibition the lunatic fringe was fully in evidence [. . .]” (“A Layman’s Views of an Art Exhibition.” *The Outlook*. March 22, 1913, reprinted in *The Armory Anniversary Catalogue*, 1963. Foster/Murphy Collection; NYPL: Box 1; File 15, 160-1).

26. These approaches are discussed in Chapter Four on gender. Foster’s review of the Armory Show is analyzed in more detail in Chapter Five, modernism and Foster’s poetry.

27. Foster's diary entry for the day notes the festive atmosphere with which Londoners greeted the news when war was declared at 11:30 P.M. "Hearing the commotion in the streets I drove down Piccadilly in a cab to see the crowd. It was gay--one might have thought a holiday declared instead of war. Processions marched [. . .] Flags were sold [. . .] Presently the crowd tore away to Buckingham palace and after a brief wait King George and Queen Mary came out on the balcony of an upper window and bowed in answer to the cheers" (DY 34-35).

28. One of the pictures Foster took is represented in *Dear Yeats, Dear Pound, Dear Ford: Jeanne Robert Foster and Her Circle of Friends*, p.57, accompanying a full account of Foster's war experiences.

29. Foster told Richard Londrville several stories about Amy Lowell's admiration for Vachel Lindsay. Foster and Lindsay were members of the New York Poetry Society, an organization which often gave receptions for poets, prominent editors, and critics, and Lowell was often present, evidently paying a lot of attention to the handsome young Lindsay. Annoyed, Mrs. Lindsay stopped inviting Miss Lowell to such occasions (DY 104).

30. In a feature article for the *Review* Foster stated that Nicholas Vachel Lindsay's book of verse "[. . .] give[s] a new twist to familiar scenes and common points of view. Sometimes the telescope is reversed, and that which appeared as a mountain is revealed as a gnat. [. . .] He glories in full-blooded asceticism and sings its raptures and rewards in the teeth of a materialistic age that clamors for complete expression at any cost."

31. When Lindsay's verse devolved into mediocrity, Foster was disappointed in the loss of his promise. The friendship, however, continued, and a letter to Jeanne from Lindsay on March 22, 1920, written from the west, reflects his despondency and his trust in her: "The dry farms are now so thick it is really no desert at all just now. But I know on and on and on it is desert. Be good to my literary daughter Marya, and teach her (1) To walk. (2) To walk toward God" (NYPL, Foster-Murphy Collection; Box 6: File 386). No more of their correspondence survives, but the letter is a testament to the author's gratitude toward Foster for her support: "Have you noted--or perhaps I told you--that what you said in "The Review of Reviews" [sic] is not the only thing quoted on the present Booth Jacket?" (Ibid.) Lindsay's appreciation spawned his request for Marya Zaturenska, a Russian immigrant whom Jeanne had befriended seven years before her friend had even asked, when Foster had worked in New York City as a volunteer social worker, a "lady on the block" assisting families and children in need. With Foster's encouragement and mentoring, Zaturenska had begun writing and submitting her work to magazines at the age of sixteen. Her book of lyric poetry, *Cold Morning Sky* won a Pulitzer Prize in 1938.

32. Foster's belief in reincarnation focuses on the recurrence of groups of great "men." In that sense, her philosophy incorporates tenets of Nietzsche. I discuss these interstices in Chapter Five, concerning Foster's poetry and modernity.

33. These poems are discussed fully in Chapter Three.

34. For a variety of illustrations, paintings, and photos of JRF see *Adirondack Portraits; Dear Yeats, Dear Pound, Dear Ford: Jeanne Robert Foster and Her Circle of Friends; The Man From New York: John Quinn and His Friends;* and *Prodigal Father: The Life of John Butler Yeats*.

35. A reproduction of the flyleaf, complete with JBY's inscription to Foster. "I write my name with great pleasure at Mrs. Foster's request. J.B. Yeats" can be found in William Murphy's *Prodigal Father*, page 513. The page also contains JBY's signed self-sketch in ink, which Yeats added when Foster asked him to inscribe the book.

36. The incident referred to is narrated in detail, to a great extent in Foster's own words, in Richard and Janis Londraville's Foster biography. See *Dear Yeats, Dear Pound, Dear Ford: Jeanne Robert Foster and Her Circle of Friends*, Chapter Eight.

37. During the course of her trip, militant Germans officials boarded the train, ordered many of the passengers off at Karlsruhe, and confiscated all of the travelers's passports. Foster and a British major had refused to get off the train, but they were now traveling through post-war Europe without passports. Foster had adroitly hidden, in her clothes, the Masaryk letter giving her and her party "safe conduct to Prague" (DY 122). While other passengers were held in Karlsruhe for several weeks while they sought to regain passports and freedom, Foster and the major continued on to Prague, where she was met by an official car, and lodged at the Hradzin, the ancient palace serving as the President's headquarters.

38. Foster and Gwen John became good friends, exchanged personal stories, shopped and visited galleries, and although Quinn had corresponded with the painter since 1910, he was introduced to her in 1921 by Jeanne, on their first European trip together. During that trip Quinn purchased John's *Mere Marie Poussepin*, a painting he had wanted for a long time.

39. The 1921 summer diary is filled with references to great art (*The Bathers*, Dufy; *Mlle Pogony*, Brancusi; sketches and studies by Picasso, Matisse, Cezanne, Renoir) and to great artists--"Picasso laughed and chattered boyishly over the greetings"; "Matisse meets us--a short, sturdy, squarely built Frenchman, a fairish brown beard, rounded, cold blue eyes--hair slightly grey--slightly thinning--He is cordial--a little cold at first"; "[. . .] Picabia came over, spoke to J.Q. [. . .] Picabia stood behind D [Derain] talking [. . .] but D. did not turn. D. said Picabia is an artist in the theatre. He is a poseur. I do not like him" (NYPL, Foster-Murphy Collection). In the course of the trip, Foster sat for Derain many times; he would eventually complete two portraits of Jeanne, one in 1923 which Quinn thought "too sensual," and a replacement completed in 1924 titled *Girl Reading a Book of Magic*. The entry for July 14 notes a sitting for Derain and then says simply, "James Joyce at three o'clock" in Joyce's flat off the Champs Elysee.

40. Jeanne Robert Foster worked to advance the writing of great artists--W. B. Yeats, George Moore, Vachel Lindsay, Ezra Pound, Ford Madox Ford, James Joyce, and even T.S. Eliot. In 1919, at Quinn's request, Foster had tried to get a publisher for Eliot's collection of poems. After testy negotiations and rejections from Horace Liveright and John Lane, Foster advised Quinn and Eliot to accept an offer by Knopf, who wanted to publish the collection without the essays which Pound had added to the collection. The book, *Poems by T. S. Eliot*, appeared on February 18, 1920, and included "The Hippopotamus and Sweeney" as well as "Gerontion" (DY 196-7). By 1922, when Eliot's financial needs had overwhelmed his art, Pound sought Jeanne's help in conscripting support for the poet, writing to her "[. . .] After all the thirty people who want literature to exist ought to be willing to pay & cant [sic] expect boobs and blackguards to do so" (DY 197). Foster enlisted Quinn's help immediately, to the sum of three hundred dollars a year for five years. Of course, Quinn's death in 1924 ended this annuity, but Quinn's support of Eliot, both financial and psychological, involved Foster in the saga of one of the twentieth century's most important texts. She would be similarly involved in the history of wrangling, censorship, and ultimate publication of Joyce's masterwork, *Ulysses*, and in the promotion of Ford Madox Ford's *The Good Soldier*, and *Parade's End*. For a detailed explanation and insightful analysis of the *Ulysses* publication problems and court events, see B.L. Reid, *The Man From New York: John Quinn and His Circle of Friends* 435-458.

41. During the weekend of September 7-9, 2001 a conference celebrating the life and achievements of John Butler Yeats was held in Chestertown, New York, sponsored by the Historical Society of the Town of Chester, Beyond Ben Bulben (the Australian Yeats Society) and the W.B. Yeats Society of New York. An international group of scholars included Janis and Richard Londrville, authors of *Dear Yeats, Dear Pound, Dear Ford: Jeanne Robert Foster and Her Circle of Friends*, among several other publications of material on JBY, W. B. Yeats, John Quinn, and Jeanne Robert Foster; Lucy McDiarmid, author of *Saving Civilization: Yeats, Eliot & Auden Between the Wars* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1984); Nora Mc Guinness, Director of Integrated Studies at the University of California, Davis and author of *The Literary Universe of Jack B. Yeats* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University Press, 1992); William M. Murphy, author of the JBY biography *Prodigal Father: The Life of John Butler Yeats, 1839-1922* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978); Hilary Pyle, Curator of the Yeats Museum at the National Gallery of Ireland in Dublin; and Ann Saddlemyer, author and critic on Irish theater, Canadian theater, modern poetry and drama. I presented, "The Excitement of An Afternoon Call: Modernist Regionalism in Jeanne Robert Foster's Poetry." An expanded version of this paper will be published in the summer of 2002 by Locust Hill Press, in an edition celebrating the conference and the life of JBY.

42. This poem is discussed in detail in the Conclusion.

43. For photographs of Brancusi's sculptures *The Yellow Bird* and *Mlle. Pogony*, as well as representations of many of the art works discussed here, see Reid, MFNY.

44. See Reid, MFNY, inserts.

45. The journal's creators were plagued from the start by production problems involving shipping, handling, publicity, and finance. Foster's expertise in handling and reading manuscripts, answering letters, interviewing contributors, and making quick decisions was a major reason that the journal lasted for two years, yet considerations of the *transatlantic review* never mention her role. Ford himself acknowledged Jeanne's part in the venture, when evidently it had come into question: "Of course you are the Associate Editor and no one else: yr. [sic] Functions being to give a first reading to mss and forward a selection to myself and to settle any editorial questions for the decision of wh. there wo. [sic] Not be time to refer to me--such as refusing advertisements and the like. (I wd. Not for instance take the advts. Of nude photos that the *Dial* rejoices in.)" (Letter from Ford to Foster on *transatlantic review* letterhead, dated 22/1/24, in Foster-Murphy Collection; NYPL: Fox. 3; Accession Folder 91 M37). Foster was quite clearly the American representative of the *review*, the letter going on to state that she was authorized by Ford to take share subscriptions and handle other financial arrangements.

46. On Christmas Day in 1926, Ford wrote Jeanne about having gone to Mass in New York City, where she often accompanied him, more out of friendship than religious zeal. He states his concern about Jeanne: "I hope you are not being too worried by your blood kin! It is a shame and it infuriates me that you cannot have a life of yr. Own [. . .] but I suppose you never could. You immolate what you have of an outside life, as it is, on the altar of my imbecile worries" (DY 181-182). On her part, Foster relished both the time she had with these people in her life, and the memory of that time when she had moved on to a different world. In 1962 she wrote to her friend Noel Riedinger-Johnson: "No matter what happens, I am still walking on the Champs Elysee with Pound, listening to Joyce in his apartment, at dinner with Ford Madox Ford and the current wife, late breakfast at the Cafe Dome, living, breathing life as it exists in Paris" (AP xl).

47. See the 1926 catalogue of "the memorial exhibition of a portion of the collection of paintings and sculpture belonging to the late John Quinn" (Brummer and Weyhe) for a partial listing of the artwork sold in auction (NYPL; Foster/Murphy Collection: Box 8).

48. On her way home, Foster stopped in London to meet D.H. Lawrence, for whom she considered performing literary agency in the States. She found him "broodingly handsome" but decided against taking on any more work (DY 208).

49. See Aline Saarinen. *The Proud Possessors: The Lives, Times, and Tastes of Some Adventurous American Art Collectors*(New York: Random House, 1958).

50. See *Prodigal Father: The Life of John Butler Yeats, 1839-1922*; also *Family Secrets: William Butler Yeats and His Relatives* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995); also see listings in the bibliography for this study, under William M. Murphy.

51. See this study's bibliography for a full listing of Londrville's works. Also, the Londrville Collection contains letters, diaries, manuscripts, and artwork left to Richard by Foster, attesting to their friendship and her desire for him to be her biographer. Richard and Janis Londrville published the first complete Foster biography. See *Dear Yeats, Dear Pound, Dear Ford: Jeanne Robert Foster and Her Circle of Friends*.

52. The result was *Augustus John* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1974, revised 1996).

CHAPTER TWO:**The Adirondack Region: Metaphor and Mapping for a Place Between**

How can I lift my mountain before your eyes,

Tear it out of my heart, my hands, my sinews,

Lift it before you--its trees, its rocks

Its thrust heavenward;

[.....]

When darkness shall be my home,

Eternal mountain, do not leave my heart;

Remain with me in my sleep,

In my dreams, in my resurrection.

(Adirondack Portraits 145. 1-4, 16-19)

To thrive in the Adirondacks today is no easy task; to survive in these mountains before the twentieth century with its technological advances was to endure natural forces by adapting to them. For all the beauty of June through September, the reality of the mountain world is the fact of long, cold winters, of short growing seasons in poor, rocky soil, of wolves and bears protecting themselves and their young while hunting for food, of flooding rains or burning drought, hordes of black flies in late spring, and masses of mosquitoes in wet summers. The region known as the Adirondack Park is vast: set in the center of New York State and spreading over seven million acres of land and water, the protected park area extends from Lake Champlain in the north westward to Lake Ontario, and from the Canadian border south to the Mohawk River.¹ Almost 130,00 people live

year-round in the Adirondacks, and many hundreds of thousands more per year visit vacation homes there, or relax at resorts, hotels, rental properties and private and government-owned camp grounds. In this tremendous area of peaks, forests, lakes, streams, wildlife, and humans, the lessons of the Adirondacks are first of all the lessons of survival.

Jeanne Robert Foster's "Crane Mountain" personifies the mountain as a part of herself, offered in uplift to anyone who believes in nature as an extension of God's force. Foster wrote the poem in the late 1960's to environmentalist Paul Schaefer, an architect and contractor in her then home town of Schenectady. Schaefer, an ardent amateur explorer of the North Woods dedicated himself to the defense of the Forest Preserve, actually discovering an uncharted glacial lake in the east central Adirondacks in 1960, eighty years after the state had assumed its ownership as part of the preserve.² The enduring mystery which both friends recognized in the region is reflected in Foster's poem, in which the mountain thrusts heavenward, even as it is part of the poet's heart, hands, and sinews. The move to the spiritual realm originates, however, in an inventory of the earthly. Foster specifies the mountain's characteristics in the lines which follow the first four, quoted above:

The basic cliffs, the quartz of the outcrop,
The wide water in the cup of the lower summit,
The high peak lifting above the timberline
Gathering the mist of fifty lakes at sunrise;
The waterfall tumbling a thousand feet,

White with foam, white with rock-flower in summer;

The wreathing of dark spruce and hemlock,

The blood splashes of mountain ash,

The long spur to the north golden with poplars;

A porcupine drinking, bending without fear

To his image [.] (AP 145. 5-15)

As much as the mountain is associated with spiritual perfection, Foster grounds it in the reality which she lived throughout her life: on the mountain life happens, not only in artistic images of the sublime, but also in the presence of rock, water, tree, animal. The poem's initial image of uplift incorporates the detail of the mountain until the lines merge with the final image of the perfected mountain as part of Foster's personal resurrection.

Mapping the Mountain: *The Process of "Civilizing" the North Woods*

Although Foster's connection to traditional religion ended in her youth, her belief in God became rooted in theosophy whereby life, death and rebirth were transcendently connected to the natural world. In this system of belief, the image of the resurrection, a lifting up of the mortal self to perfectibility and immortality, becomes one with the mountain in its heavenward thrust. For Jeanne Robert Foster the mountain is never purely an image; it is a means for her own and mankind's rebirth into a better self, community, and world. This self-actualization, bound together with progress and exploitation, is often in conflict with nature, and through that tension Foster acknowledges and comments on the world both inside and outside the blue line of the

Adirondack Park. Thus, Foster's poetic mountain always recognizes a human presence, whether the city-dweller who comes to access physical and metaphysical mountain resources, or the native who is defined by life in the North Woods. The region constantly presents itself as liminal. The Adirondacks seem always to be "between" forces: rooted in nature, yet inspiring in its rugged beauty a spiritual renaissance; primitive in its demands for physical sacrifice from inhabitants, yet nourishing the highest aims of art and progress in its renovation of the flagging bodies and souls of the world weary.

Jeanne Robert Foster noted the particular characteristics of the Adirondack natives in her Foreword to *Neighbors of Yesterday*, her first book of Adirondack poetry. Stating that their "psychology" was different from "that of the people of the rural districts of New England," Foster went on to assert that the Adirondack farmers were "utterly at variance with the characteristics" of the settlers of the western territories. She defines the difference between the Adirondack pioneers and others: "The[y] [. . .] had more subtlety; they were invested with the dignity of noble traditions that were kept untarnished for generation after generation, while the agriculturists of the middle western states had a wider vision and a greater impulse to progress" (NOY, "Foreword"). While the West and its adventurers seem always to have been moving toward definitions of civilization which include terms like culture, prosperity, and advancement, the settlers of the Adirondack region are consistently identified with wilderness.

Certainly, Foster did not mean that the Adirondacks natives were backward, but their history is riddled with combinations of hardship, romance and manipulation which combined to keep the area somehow primitive, while the rich lands of the West are

characterized by sacrifice gradually enabling American prosperity. Originally a sparsely settled land given to skirmishes among Native American communities of Mohawk (one of the Iroquois Five Nations), Algonquin and Huron hunters and trappers, the Adirondack region became a point of interest to European colonizers in the seventeenth century, when Samuel de Champlain, the first white man known to have entered the area, combined troops of French soldiers and Algonquins to defeat a group of Mohawks in a bitter fight near Crown Point. The French and Indian Wars brought the Franco-British struggle over territorial rights to the shores of Lake Champlain, where control of the St. Lawrence waterway and the valley which extended itself to the Hudson meant control of the movement of goods to and from the populated northeast areas and Canada.³

By 1760 English victory had brought peace and the beginnings of settlement to the area, which would break out again in conflict during the Revolution. Not until 1814 did the American fleet under Thomas Macdonough establish permanent American ownership of the Champlain area and its extended Lake George valley in the naval Battle of Plattsburg. Such heroes and anti-heroes as Lord Howe, Major Rogers, Father Isaac Jogues, Montcalm, Ethan Allen and Benedict Arnold helped to create the history and the mythology of the Adirondack (originally "Adirondac") area. These geo-political battles would become romanticized in James Fenimore Cooper's *Last of the Mohicans*, the 1826 novel set in the forests and lakes of the Lake George valley during the French and Indian Wars, but encompassing in its themes and narrative a two-century struggle between Old World civilization and New World wilderness. Natty Bumppo, (Hawkeye in his Mohican name) is the rugged, generous, self-reliant Leatherstocking woodsman who would

become “the model by whom sportsmen of the nineteenth century measured their Adirondack guides” (Jamieson 7).

Both the reports of geographers and the art of novelists, poets and painters would combine to create an aura of mystery in this last northeastern wilderness. In 1784, Thomas Pownall, A British statesman, soldier and explorer described the Adirondack region for his *Topographical Description of North America* as a country “called by the Indians Couchsachrage, which signifies the Dismal Wilderness or Habitation of Winter. [It] is a triangular, high mountainous Tract, very little known to the Europeans; and although a hunting Ground of the Indians, yet either not much known to them, or, if known, very wisely by them kept from the Knowledge of the Europeans. [. . .] [A] broken unpracticable Tract: I own I could never learn any Thing about it” (Pownall in Jamaiso n 1). After nearly one hundred years of fighting over key parts of the Adirondack territory, it was still “a broken unpracticable Tract” beyond the forts and waterways of incipient commerce. But the nineteenth century would begin the penetration of this wilderness area, an encroachment which would end in an attempt to preserve the region by declaring it a national park, forever wild.

Cartographers began mapping out parts of the Adirondacks around the time of the American Revolution, and soon after the war, trappers expanded their territory to the southern and southwestern Adirondack area, where beaver, otter, and muskrat provided furs and pelts sold at southern trading settlements. By 1800, agriculture in the New England states was an established industry responding to the rise of eastern population centers; there was little unclaimed land. Many European immigrants, wishing to take

advantage of the rich lands of Ohio, Illinois, Indiana and the farther midwest ended up permanently in the Adirondack area trying to achieve some version of the American promise of a better life, stymied by lack of money, sickness, or information. They remained in this generally inhospitable region when the western migration moved on to the rich soil and open land of the prairies and the west coast. In *Contested Terrain: A New History of Nature and People in the Adirondacks*, Philip Terrie discusses the determination and endurance of the Adirondack settlers, typified by the Shaw family, Irish immigrants seeking the rich lands of Ohio who “found themselves waylaid by typhus shortly after reaching North America. After nine years of suffering and poverty, they landed in the frontier village of Long Lake, New York, trying to achieve there, far from the fertile lands of Ohio, the immigrants’s dream of success and prosperity in the new world” (Terrie 24, from the “Second Section” of the Shaw Mss.).

While many people found themselves haphazardly stranded in the mountain region, some early-nineteenth-century settlers sought the area out deliberately, coming mainly from New York State or New England, and claiming large tracts of land on which they established profitable industries. With the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825, the Great Lakes were joined to the Atlantic. This technological advance further opened the mountain regions (especially enabling the movement of lumber and ore) to the industrial centers of the east. By the mid-century, large numbers of European immigrants would follow, coming up from New York, Philadelphia, and Boston, or down from Toronto, Montreal, and Quebec, lured by the promise of work and the seduction of open space. These eager French, Irish and Germans had heard stories of rich fur, tanning, mining,

paper and lumber industries that hired strong backs to do the plentiful work of supplying America with the resources of the mountain. Usually, these newcomers established combination homesteads which practiced subsistence farming, some trapping and lumbering, and a host of cottage industries such as sewing and knitting, making maple syrup, cutting spruce shingles, and later in the century, catering to tourists. For such settlers land meant life, and while their lives were hard, they found great dignity in proprietorship.

Jeanne Robert Foster's "The Mooneys" commemorates such a family's faith in this unyielding land as life:

And every Sunday she was sitting there
 Dressed in a decent faded basque and skirt[. . .]
 And on the other side of the scant porch, [. . .]
 Bill Mooney sat with pipe between his teeth
 And chair tipped back to balance with his weight.
 Every Sunday from late spring to fall, they sat there
 Like two stones, or like two trees rooted in earth. (AP 31. 6-14)

The first voice of the poem is that of a child who is accompanying her father to Sunday services and questioning the Mooneys's refusal to go to church. The father explains that they "do not want to leave the house for fear/ It might burn down, or cattle should get out,/ Or other damage come [. . .]"(31. 20-23). And so they not only live *on* the land, but as part of it, "Like two stones, or like two trees rooted in earth" (31. 14). The final verse of the fifty-one-line poem features the husband and wife, speaking as one:

characters to this particular land area, (as Robert Frost unites his characters and New England in such narratives as “The Death of the Hired Man”) Foster extends the claiming of the land in the mountains to the native-born as well, rooting them in the land through their unconscious identification with it. Foster does this through allusions to the mountain region’s particular geography, and also through her use of regional specificity of dialect, place names, and community traditions in such poems as “A Piece of Time,” Foster’s rendering of Francis and Mary, a couple discussing the lunacy of their neighbor, who believes more in his observations of the natural world than he does in the efficiency of his degenerated farm.

The text attributes a sense of ownership to all of the inhabitants of the region. Francis narrates the “queer ideas” of his neighbor, who, although considered “crazy as a loon” for his eccentricities, is nevertheless seen as “harmless”:

‘What does he say he owns?’ ‘Well, the first thing
 He calls a “*piece of time*”; he means the years
 Since he was born; and then he raves along
 And even names your flowers out by the fence
 As his, and Mill Creek Pond [. . .] a silver maple there.
 The Johnsburg Woods. Mary, he even says
 He owns the Hudson. And every last white pine
 On our Crane Mountain. Says they came to him
 With his own “*piece of time.*” He talks about dreams.
 He talks of leaving what he never had

To his good friends. Mary, the man is daft.'

'Well, I can see how he takes comfort there

Thinking he owns the world. I'll pick some pinks

For him. He's harmless. When you go next time

To see whether he's sick or well,

I'll send him some preserves and berry pie.' (AP 3: 25-40)

The neighbor is "daft" because he has broken with social convention, present in the North Woods in the model of the thrifty farmer and supportive neighbor. Francis reasons that the man has lost his sense of reality, because he claims ownership of his environment: land, vegetation, natural phenomena, memories, in essence the whole of time which "is" while *he* is. That sense of time is intricately bound up with identification with the mountain. Ironically, Francis is incensed to think that the crazy man claims the pines on "*our* Crane Mountain" (italics mine). In the subtlety of a well-placed possessive pronoun, Foster implicates Francis and Mary in the farmer's obsession, as they nonchalantly claim Crane mountain, the creek of the Mill, the woods of Johnsbury, the river of Henry Hudson, the pinks which grow in the fields, the fruits from which jams and pies are made. Through her deft use of conversation, first person shifting between two people simply through indentation and punctuation, Foster's narrative voice never intrudes, yet it controls. The author becomes Francis, Mary, and, by default, the missing, crazy farmer, all of whom claim the mountain and its environs. Mary acquiesces in the neighbor's taking comfort from "thinking he owns the world," that world being the world of the mountain. Thus, the exploitation of the mountain region becomes a very personal

thing both in Foster's reconstruction of the mountain and for the characters who speak her poetry. Her belief in progress as defined through industry, technology, and the city is tempered by her desire to insure that the mountain retain its characteristic wilderness shrouded in mystery.

Romancing the Mountain: *Softening the Agenda of Consumption*

While the story of American frontier prosperity grew in areas west of the Mississippi, despite hostile natives, feuding cattlemen and ranchers, drought, and disease, the story of the Adirondack region developed its own mythology, one which interwove its mysterious geography, the ghosts of Indian tribes, and the romance of restorative nature with the allure of untapped wealth. In 1836, Ebenezer Emmons, a professor of Williams College and the Albany Medical College, began examining New York's geology, botany, zoology, mineralogy, and agriculture for the New York Natural History Survey, in support of the state's effort to identify (and later exploit) its natural resources. Emmons's chronicles of the land nurtured images of an Edenic America which proliferated in the Romanticism of authors such as Emerson, Thoreau, Cooper, Longfellow, and the painters of what would become the Hudson River School. Charles Cromwell Ingham's "The Great Adirondack Pass" was the result of the artist's inclusion in Emmons's expedition of 1837, which first ascended (and named) Mt. Marcy, the highest peak of the Adirondack range. The work was touted as having been "painted on the spot" and did much to enhance the romanticized definition of the area being promoted by Emmons, for which he even suggested a name. "The cluster of mountains in the neighborhood of the

Upper Hudson and Ausable rivers, I propose to call the Adirondack Group, a name by which a well-known tribe of Indians who once hunted here may be commemorated” (“Report of E. Emmons, Geologist of the 2d Geological District” 242-43, in Terrie, *Contested Terrain* 13).

As Philip Terrie notes, the sentimentalization of the Native American tribes of the area was another part of the popular American romantic movement which dominated American concepts of nature at the time (*Contested Terrain* 13). Historically, Native Americans had been relegated to reservations by the time of Emmons’s famous naming, but their romanticized ghosts lent a certain exotic quality to the agenda of domestication which was in fact the purpose of the nineteenth-century mapping project. Coupled with the knowledge of vast resources of fur, lumber and minerals which exploration revealed, the concept of the virgin wilderness as a source of sublime renewal strengthened the double thrusts of industrial capitalism and its proponents’s incipient need for recreation and rejuvenation. “I have not forgotten that my business is with geology. But [. . .] while I am occupying time and space in details of this kind, I am also making known a new field for relaxation from business--one which has peculiar advantages and many resources for restoring health and spirits [. . .]” (Emmons, 1842, in Jamieson 1). Emmons was a good advance man.

If the Adirondack area were to become a place of relaxation for city-dwellers, through its “peculiar advantages for restoring health and spirits,” revision of the wilderness which the earliest explorers had defined through hostile Indians, swamps, insects and bad weather, would be necessary. In “Third Annual Report of the Survey of

the Second Geological District” submitted to the New York Assembly in 1839, Professor Emmons had already envisioned a new shape for the region: “The axe has been laid at the foot of the tree, and ere long where naught now greets the eye but a dense, and to appearance impenetrable forest, will be seen the golden grain waving with the gentle breeze, the sleek cattle browsing on the rich pastures, and the farmer with well-stored granaries enjoying the domestic hearth” (“Third Annual Report,” 227, in Terrie 17). Emmons’s vision breaks down here, however. The Adirondack area was more impenetrable than he had anticipated, and although it was gradually settled, the dense forests did not give way completely to fields of golden grain waving. The region would never become a center of agriculture. But the insistent ruggedness of the terrain, plus its propensity for contrasting sheer height and pastoral valley, nevertheless provided a language for developing a tourist industry which would be as problematic as it would be lucrative. Emmons’s 1841 description of Raquette Lake could be a vacation brochure for the modern weary executive: “The waters are clear but generally ruffled with the breeze. It is well supplied with lake trout [. . .] The neighboring forests abound also in deer and other game. Hence it is finely suited for the temporary residence of those who are troubled with *ennui*, or who wish to escape for a time during the months of July and August from the cares of business or the heat and bustle of the city” (Emmons, “Fifth Annual Report” 120, in Terrie 11-12).

Such prosaic descriptions of the wilderness were restated by a host of adventurer-journalists. William James Stillman wrote about the 1858 adventure of a group of notable Boston-Cambridge-Concord intellectuals who, in their Adirondack camp life,

would consider themselves vis a vis nature as Thoreau had some ten years earlier: "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach [. . .] to live so sturdily [. . .] as to put to rout all that was not life" (*Walden*, *The American Literary Tradition* 1014). The ten philosophers included among them Stillman, James Russell Lowell, Louis Agassiz and Ralph Waldo Emerson. According to Stillman, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow considered going, but hearing that Emerson would be bringing along a gun, exclaimed: "Then somebody will be shot!" and stayed behind (*Adirondack Reader*, "Philosophers' Camp" 76-77). But even without Longfellow, the woods were idealized:

[There was] a deep, mysterious stream meandering through unbroken forests, walled up on either side in green shade, the trees of centuries leaning over to welcome and shelter the voyager, flowing silently in green sweeps of dark water, with, at long intervals, a lagoon setting back into the wider forest around, enameled with pond lilies and sagittaria, and the refuge of undisturbed waterfowl and browsing deer [. . .] The camp was a shelter of spruce bark [. . .] The beds were made of layers of spruce and other fir branches spread on the ground and covered with the fragrant twigs of the arbor vitae. Two huge maples overhung the camp, and at a distance of twenty feet from our lodge we entered the trackless, primeval forest. (Stillman 78)

The concept of the primeval territory looms large in the writings of those in the nineteenth century for whom the Adirondacks became the last refuge from an ever-

quicken modern pace. The longing for a place in which Emerson's "transparent eyeball" could consider the world as it was before it was tamed and soiled by social custom and trade was filled by the deep woods, clear streams, and glacial lakes of the Adirondacks. "In such a great solitude, stripped of the social conventions and seeing men as they are, mind seems open to mind as it is quite impossible for it to be in society, even the most informal" (Stillman 79). In fact, Camp Maple (as the philosophers's camp was called) was such a success that its members plus other prominent men of Boston and Cambridge formed their own society known as the Adirondack Club,⁴ and sent Stillman back to the wilderness "to purchase a tract [. . .] the less accessible the better, and there to build a permanent club-house [. . .]" (83). Their desire for the primitive evolved into the desire for comfort and stability, and it was determined that a lodge be erected, as so many lodges and "camps" would be throughout the North Woods, changing the nature of the region from virgin forest to gracious resort.⁵ Emerson memorialized his camping experience in his poem "The Adirondacks," but he had written his belief in the efficacy of the woods earlier, in "Woodnotes II" (1847): "Whoso walks in solitude / And inhabiteth the wood, / [. . .] / Clean shall he be, without, within" (*Emerson: Collected Poems* 42).

The great minds and great fortunes of the nineteenth century cleansed themselves "without, within" in the North Woods, while remaining unconcerned with the meager existence of those who, unable to pay their taxes, had forfeited the land the wealthy acquired. Nor did they consider how that land might be preserved for the future in other than private preserves. Foster, seeing the North Woods from her doubled vantage, had the perspective of both an Adirondack native and a savvy cosmopolitan visitor. This

vision enabled her to contemplate the mountain as a part of the romantic myth, but also as an endangered, exploited place. In the years following the Civil War, the Adirondack area had been settled by a diversified group of farmers, trappers, and lumberjacks, was being stripped of its timber and coal resources, and was as well being invaded by city dwellers seeking nature's antidote to the evils incumbent upon modern living. A *New York Times* editorial published on August 9, 1864 proclaimed: "Within an easy day's ride of our great city, as steam teaches us to measure distance, is a tract of country fitted to make a Central Park for the world" (Jamieson 85). After extolling the great capacity of the region "both for the imparting of pleasure and the increase of wealth" the author rejoices in the access which the railroad construction would bring:

[. . .] With its completion, The Adirondack region will become a suburb of New York. The furnaces of our capitalists will line its valleys and create new fortunes to swell the aggregate of our wealth, while the hunting- lodges of our citizens will adorn its more remote mountainsides and the wooded islands of its delightful lakes [. . .] We shall [. . .] if we choose, spend the afternoon in a solitude almost as complete as when the Deerslayer stalked his game in its fastnesses and unconsciously founded a school of romance equally true to sentiment with that of feudal ages.

(Jamieson 84-87)

By the time of Foster's birth in 1879, the editor's predictions of pleasure and wealth were coming true, bringing with them exploitation and blight. Logging had become big business as small, regional companies which provided lumber for local use gave way to

huge lumber companies employing gangs of loggers. They felled trees indiscriminately, running or “skidding” logs to mill towns like Glens Falls and Albany.⁶ As “clear cutting” and “cut-and-run” logging⁷ stripped the forests, mines stripped the land; where sportsmen hunted and fished indiscriminately, wildlife began to disappear. Since wealthy industrial barons needed places of repose, they built huge “camps” or lodges wherein every luxury of civilization was imported to improve by art what was rustic by design. Such prominent industrialists as Vanderbilt, Morgan, Durant, Whitney, Rockefeller, and Roosevelt frequented private preserves in customized red-velvet-lined rail cars, ate venison on porcelain plates, and sipped bourbon from crystal glasses, luxuriating in “wilderness mansions” whose paradoxical existence underscored the evaporation of the wilderness they were enjoying.⁸

At the same time, the prosperous middle class was frequenting sporting lodges and hotels which sprouted up around Blue Mountain Lake, Long Lake, Old Forge, Saranac, Lake George. Charles Hallock, a late-nineteenth-/ early-twentieth-century journalist for *Harper's*, and founder/editor of *Forest and Stream* noted the preciosity of the era, focusing on Paul Smith's, which together with Martin's on lower Saranac was one of the most popular bourgeois haunts. In a remembrance of “Paul Smith's in the Seventies,” Hallock characterizes a midsummer stay at the resort: “Great is the stir [. . .] --ribbons fluttering on the piazzas; [. . .] ladies in short mountain suits, fresh from an afternoon picnic; embryo sportsmen in velveteen and corduroys of approved cut, descanting learnedly of backwoods experience; pistols shooting at random; [. . .] fond lovers strolling; dowagers scheming; mosquitoes devouring; the supper-bell ringing, and

general commotion confusing mine host [. . .]” (“Paul Smith’s in the Seventies” in Jamieson 306). Thus wrote a man whose texts appeared in magazines which catered to the very class he spoofed, and who established his own flagstaff through a magazine which advised sportsmen. The influences of the city became one with those of the North Woods. Tuberculosis sanatoria emerged in the vicinity of Saranac Lake where Dr. Edward Livingston Trudeau (himself cured at Paul Smith’s Hotel, 1873) developed a world-renowned center for consumptive care and research (Terrie 65). Pathless forests gave way to trails and trails to roads, roads to railroads, and the whole to invasion. Everyone wanted a piece of virgin territory, and it was disappearing fast.

The Mountain as Metaphor: *Seeing without and within*

Meanwhile, the daily lives of the Adirondack natives remained much the same as they had been before the war: men often worked away from home in lumber and mining camps; women and children moved with them or remained behind to farm poor homesteads and supplement income through cottage industries and a little guiding. Foster, born into this Adirondack world in which the land and the native people were one entity, wrote:

[. . .] As time went on I took three counties over,
 [. . .] And sealed them in a book [. . .] there are so many ties
 With soil and mountain roads and country stores
 And with folks who lie sleeping that my heart
 Thrills even to the names: Crane Mountain, Gore,
 And “No. 11”; they became a part

Of all I was and all I hoped to be [. . .].

(AP “Letter to Ruth Riedinger” 5. 9,11,15-20)

The union of the counties, the soil, and the mountains occurs in Foster’s book of poetry, where roads and stores move people into the text. Foster then unites the people, the specific mountains (note that Crane Mountain, her favorite, occurs again) and herself in constructions of the past, present and future. “All [she] was and hoped to be” as a child in the mountains is defined in the next four lines: “The woolen factory once at Johnsbury/
Where later on they made fine calico,/ The lead mine on the mountain, the paint bed,/ The garnet outcrops, hemlocks--row on row” (5. 21-24).

The defunct woolen factory of Foster’s hometown recalls both the natural element of sheep-shearing, and the industrial presence of the factory. These economic forces shaped life in the mountains she knew, where people existed by finding work anywhere they could. Had she remained in the mountains, Foster too would probably have worked the factories in addition to teaching. In the poem, the coarser wool of the mountains turns into “fine calico” in line twenty-two, a movement toward the city, but an influence felt in native terms, calico not silk. In her old age Foster recalled: “Never during my eight trips abroad [. . .] did I slip into a lovely Paris gown or permit myself a small luxury without memories of the *calico* of the Chestertown school [. . .] (“The Oliver and Newell Families,” Adirondack Museum Archives). Although the calico did eventually turn into silk in Foster’s life, her identification with the mountain world is always grounded in the realities she learned as a native there. In fact her poem “Blue Calico: The Ingrate,” which I will discuss in Chapter Four, subverts the domestic image of the calico, making it

instead a symbol of dependency, indebtedness and despair.

In a similar use of symbol in the poem quoted above, the hollowing out of the mountain through the lead mine implies the destruction of the mountain's natural beauty in order to underscore the reality of the harsh work by which men lived. The mine gives way to the "paint bed" of York brown clay, another mountain image which appears repeatedly in Foster's work. In "The Road," a poem about the negative treatment of a single mother shunned by the community, Foster opens with a consideration of "vener":

I laugh when town-folk call the color 'red'
 We painted barns and schoolhouses years back;
 It isn't red at all, but old 'York Brown.'
 You'll find it cropping out here in the hills.
 Some ore is pure; a man can take good oil
 And grind the rotted stone up fine and have
 A better paint than he can buy 'below.' (AP "The Road" 74. 1-7)

Tracing the color back to its source in the mountain, Foster comments on its ability to improve the man-made.⁹ Using simple resources from the mountain, one can create through ingenuity an image truer and more dependable than that manufactured and sold in the commercial world "below." The marketplace is outside the mountain, beneath it both geographically and psychologically, and rooted in buying rather than being. Foster's focus on the simple facts of what constitutes York Brown parallels her insistence on the value of human honesty about oneself and one's place in the world, characteristics she locates in the mountain world both metaphorically and historically. In "Alec Hill: The

Good-for-Nothing” Foster sums up the life of a man who turns from shiftless to successful after the townspeople lend him a suit and shoes for a funeral. In a line which nicely glosses the poet’s own attitude toward society, her narrator proclaims that “Respectability’s half in its trappings” (NOY 36: 108).

Finally, Foster’s images in “Letter to Ruth Riedinger” are both natural and timeless: the garnet crystals of the mountainside exist with the trees which extend indefinitely, row on row. In the final verse Foster joins the characters of the previously considered poem “A Piece of Time,” claiming the land, yet at the same time acknowledging the impossibility of owning it absolutely: “[. . .] My ownership/ Is now known only to the blowing wind: [. . .] Old shanty days, old settlers, old log barns, / And houses, they have vanished out of mind” (5. 36-39). The natives of the mountains know what the part-time campers and dandies cannot grasp in their brief and often artificial encounters with the land. Those who live in the mountains are tenants only. Like Francis, Mary, and the daft neighbor, Foster can claim association with the land only for the short period of a lifetime, until the wind “Will sing--through pines--a requiem over me” (5. 43). In his *Four Quartets* (“Burnt Norton”), T.S. Eliot would recount that all things--houses, barns, settlers, days--vanish as time passes. Only nature, through its constant renewal in cycles, hints at immortality, and the best the poet can hope for is to become part of that natural cycle in the certainty of death. During a lifetime nature teaches us many lessons about ourselves and our world. In this sense of balance between what may be taken from, and what must be given back to the mountain, Foster expresses the plight of the mountain’s year-round residents, whose lives were radically different

from those of its visitors. The exploitation of the Adirondacks was also the exploitation of the Adirondack people, although they too sometimes took part in heedless abuse of resources.

The image of the mountain, its power, its vulnerability, and the negotiations undertaken by the North Woods people for survival in the face of both natural and man-made adversity, form a connection to the enigmatic relationship to nature which characterizes American writing (and writing about America) since Columbus's journals recorded his response to the new world paradise: "[October 19:] {T}he island [is] the most beautiful thing that I have seen. For if the others are very beautiful this one is more so. It is an island of many very green and very large trees. [. . .] I do not know where to go first; nor do my eyes grow tired of seeing such beautiful verdure and so different from ours" (*Diario*, 99-101, in Greenblatt 78). Thus, in *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World*, Stephen Greenblatt quotes Columbus's continually escalating awe at each new place he encounters.

Entry after entry in the explorer's diary of 1492 expresses the belief that each new site is more to be marveled at than the last. Greenblatt notes: "In effect, the marvelous takes the place of the miraculous [. . .] Instead of a theological claim, the term *maravilla* as Columbus uses it makes a different kind of claim, one that combines religious and erotic longings in a vision of surpassing beauty" (79). In fact "taking possession," claiming that which is desirable, is the first thing Columbus boasts of in a letter written to Luis de Santangel on his first voyage: "[. . .] I found very many islands filled with people innumerable, and of them all I have taken possession for their highnesses, by

proclamation made and with the royal standard unfurled, and no opposition was offered to me” (Greenblatt 52). The covetous tradition of claiming land, resources, and inhabitants followed by the industrial barons, entrepreneurs, and the restless middle class of the nineteenth century was thereby established four hundred years earlier in the Americas.

In addition, while the possibility of accessing an earthly paradise in the mountains had become a cultural/aesthetic symbol by the time Ingham painted “The Great Adirondack Pass” and Durant established his wilderness Eden, this concept too originated much earlier. In *The Conquest of America* Tzvetan Todorov discusses Columbus’s common Christian belief that the earthly paradise as described in Renaissance texts will be found on a mountain summit: “I have been led to hold this concerning the world, [. . .] that it is the shape of the pear which is everywhere very round except where the stalk is. [. . .] and on one part of it is placed something like a woman’s nipple, and that this part, where this protuberance is found, is the highest and nearest to the sky [. . .]” (16). While Columbus was talking about the Ocean sea beneath the equinoxial line which he believed to be the end of the Orient, the concept of the mountain peak as a divinely appointed paradise stretches back through time and Judaeo-Christian tradition.

Abraham would offer Isaac as sacrifice on the mountain; Moses ascended Mount Sinai to receive the ten commandments; Jesus revealed himself in glory to Peter, James and John on a high mountain; he ascended before his apostles assembled on the mountain, forty days after the resurrection. The irony of Columbus’s rather inept attribution of the image of a woman’s nipple to the stalk of a pear and the relation of

those images to the mountaintop paradise strangely conflate when one considers the Adirondacks. In the central area of the park, near Elk Lake and Elk Pass is a magnificent mountain over 4600 feet high, named Nipple Top, whose name is disturbingly accurate. Our concepts of paradise seem to insist on the erotic. Greenblatt asserts: “[T]he discourse of enraptured looking is shaped by a longing at once erotic and infantile, by the gaze, marveling and forever unsatisfied, of love poetry” (78). Add the Puritan concept of the New World as the New Eden, and the yearning for earthly paradise becomes figured by consummation of the land.

In *A Writer's America: Landscape in American Literature*, Alfred Kazin argues that this consummation of a land figured as female creates texts characterized by defilement and exhaustion. “On the one hand Nature was the gift of gifts, ‘fresh from the Creator’s hand.’[. . .] But on the other hand! [. . .] In a country that once thought of itself as ‘Nature’s Nation’ but now proclaims itself one vast technological hookup, no subject is more pressing to many people than ‘conservation,’ the preservation of ‘wilderness areas’” (Introduction). Kazin highlights the contradictions still inherent in the twin philosophies of limitless progress for the country and preservation of nature for the individual. In a style characterized as “matter-of-fact plainness” (AP Foreword), Foster takes on the voice of an old lumberjack expresses these themes of consumption and stewardship in a poem titled “Conservation”:

The country’s changing fast; I wonder why
 The State plans ‘conservation’ all the time,
 And yet forgets the most important thing—

To just conserve the old America

We knew. It's slipping--slipping every day,

And we won't long remember what we've been. (NOY 100. 109-114)

To know who we are as individuals and as a country, we need to know who we have been. The speaker of the poem is nostalgic for the people and places he once knew. But the fact of the Adirondacks at the turn of the century (and still today) is that without the protection of the state, the region's destruction would have been complete. At the close of the poem the old-timer states:

[. . .] I know I'm just dead wrong.

Men laugh at me and say the new folks here

Will be the same. I know it may be so,

But something's gone that never can come back.

I can't lay hands on it, no more can you;

but it's still in the woods [. . .] (101: 123-128)

Foster has turned away from nostalgia to the center of her message: that which is gone, the untouched earthly paradise of the virgin forest, and the communal sense which grew up in connection with those concepts cannot be reinstated. But the speaker, a lumberjack, had a part in the disappearance of what he once knew.

Annette Kolodny extends America's "inevitable paradox" by considering "virgin territories" being transformed into farms, villages, railways, cities, states, etc. She argues that the aggressive acquisition of the land and its resources, a response to "the promise inherent in a feminine landscape" has led us to the consequences of such a response:

“accusing one another [. . .] of raping and deflowering [her]” (*Lay of the Land* 7).

Foster’s recognition of the victimization of the land consumed by industrial and bourgeois greed embodies the struggle between man and nature which literary critics have defined. However, in the cycles of restoration and renewal which man and nature can cooperatively enact, the spirit of individualism and the sense of freedom which is the American ideal can and do remain; in “Conservation” they are in the spirit of the woods. The final lines, “[. . .] I stretch, and light my pipe,/ And watch a red squirrel chittering on a bough” (101. 134-135) contain the simple immediacy which makes Foster’s texts work. Only conservation continues to allow the red squirrel to find a bough and “chitter” in safety. Just as a part of the resurrection image in “Crane Mountain” is “A porcupine drinking, bending without fear [t]o his image,” (AP 145: 14-15) the simple presence of the squirrel, watched by the old man whose work had once endangered the animal’s continued existence, marks an awareness of the valuable existence of wilderness, as well as of the spirit of man. This insistence on mutuality is Foster’s conservationist message.

Between the day when Jeanne Robert Foster was born in Sybil Putnam’s York brown farmhouse in 1879 and the day of her death in 1970, Foster carried the spirit of the mountains within her. In her quotidian acts lies her sense of the sublime: “I would walk secretly and *lean* against the mountain, sometimes facing it and putting my hands out on either side. There seemed to be a strong force passing through me, so untamed, wild and beautiful that there are no words for it. But I know this force remained with me, helped me manage my difficult life [. . .] flowed as courage in my blood [. . .] and never left me—not *even today*” (AP 144). In citing the “mountain” as the source of her personal

power, Foster never loses sight of its native dwellers or of the difficult world beyond the Adirondack Park. As I have suggested here and will argue in Chapter Four, Foster's early life made her sensible, pragmatic, without the heavy artifice which late Victorian and early twentieth century ladies in elite social circles were urged to assume. In her re-imagining of herself as a cosmopolite, Foster acknowledged both the negative and positive aspects of mountain life, accessing the symbolic power of mountain living and the aesthetic force of mountain imagery to construct a poetic voice. As my readings of her texts thus far have shown, within the universe of her Adirondack poetry, individuals endure through physical stamina coupled with belief in the power of human will. As a metaphor of such physical and metaphysical endurance, the mountain provides both the locus and the ethos for Foster's poetic narratives.

But the mountain is additionally a place between, in that by the end of the nineteenth century it had become simultaneously a protected wilderness and a resource for the advancement of civilization's economy, and the preservation of mankind's soul. It was, in fact, a combination of economic, political, and environmentalist pressure from those living outside the Adirondack area which led New York Governor Roswell P. Flower to sign legislation in 1892 which designated the region a park, indicated on maps with the famous "blue line" of division from unprotected land. Although the forces leading up to this action reflect ambivalent interests in the region, the predominating consciousness of the last years of the nineteenth century was that if mining, logging, hunting, and sprawling construction were not regulated to save the North Woods, there would, indeed, soon be nothing left to save.¹⁰

Today, logging has been totally eliminated on State land, although the remainder of the park, privately owned, is not subject to the “forever wild clause.” The forests have renewed themselves for the most part, second growth timber being replaced by newly planted trees as it is cut. Mining is unknown. The Adirondack Park Agency, established in 1971 under Governor Nelson Rockefeller oversees the development of private land, subjecting all plans to review and approval, limiting development under the Private Land Plan, prohibiting changes to shorelines and protecting endangered species and their habitats. The tensions which existed in the nineteenth century between the private sector and state agencies continue to this day, based on individuals’s needs for sustenance and belief in legacy, versus the APA’s and environmental groups’s interests in maintaining the wilderness character of the North Woods.¹¹

Foster understood the concept of native rights as practiced in the Adirondack communities, which were in many ways provincial, circumscribed. As both native and outsider, her remembered vision of life in the mountains is always renegotiated by her high regard for the city and the modern views represented there. Having written a great deal of the poetry in the city, Foster may look to the Adirondack Park with a certain sense of longing, but the specificity of many of her poems keeps them grounded in the realities of man and nature which I have discussed. Only through the inexorable push of twentieth century progress, did the life of which Foster speaks reluctantly shift into modernity. While Foster fixes this moment of change in the Adirondack region, nevertheless her texts expand to chronicle early-twentieth-century America’s shift from the old-fashioned to the new-fangled..

Telling the Story of the Mountain: Neighbors of Yesterday

The fixed social experiences of nineteenth-century American culture were undergoing radical changes long before the traditional benchmarks of the new century, such as the 1913 Armory Art Show, or the cataclysmic changes wrought by the outbreak of war in 1914. By recording the disappearance of Adirondack people, places and customs from the Civil War on, and by including within those changes the advance of modern technology and the surge of automobiles full of tourists into the mountain world, Foster addresses important aspects of the general shift away from nineteenth-century rural America to the tumultuous flux of twentieth-century, urban, modern life. If the mountain seems immutable, the mountain culture, for all the resistance the “natives” offer, is ultimately transient. “[. . .] The log houses have left / No trace between Centerbar’s and the Putnam farm/ Lying beside the steep side of Crane Mountain./ The barn is standing, but the house is down. [. . .]” (AP “The Lost Breed” 67. 31-34). In Foster’s modernity, while the mountain remains unchanged, the people who respected it and lived in its shadow are gone. Only the symbol of production, the barn, survives in a society driven by economy.

Along with the disappearance of the old families and old ways, comes a loss of ability to go home again: “It has all gone, the district schoolhouses,/ The Georgian churches. Men no longer/ Come home in spring from logging,/ Or draw bark in winter for the tanneries” (68: ll.46-49). The old industries, predicated upon individual resource and family cooperation have ceased to produce anything of value for the modern consumer. With the disappearance of local industry comes the end of the local life of the

mind and soul, the end of the community as a supportive human agency, the collapse of the school and the church.

As a metaphor for the experience of controlling and cultivating one's life in the modern, urban world, the untamed mountain, the power and beauty of nature, and the sophisticated, modern metropolis meet as Foster becomes the aged, returning native:

I went back home last year to the North Woods--
Up where I lumbered nearly fifty years ago;
It all seemed new and strange and different.
There were the broad, new roads with white guard rails,
Slashed in the hills we lumber-jacks stripped bare [. . .]
There's miles and miles of the North Woods I knew

Blindfolded years ago; now it looks strange--
Like some new country. It's a 'Park,' they say.
The State has taken it and bought the farms,
But farmers can stay on, and campers come
If they obey the rules of forestry
The State has posted up all through the Woods, [. . .]
The store's so spick-span now
A man don't dare to sit there any more
And talk. He buys and hears the clink
Of silver in the new cash register:
Bill Johnson kept coin in a leather bag.

[. . .] If you couldn't pay

He'd 'trust'; they said he lost a lot that way.

'So much for so much' never troubled us.

[. . .] A lumber-jack spent money like a lord

While his pay lasted: 'twas the fun we craved.--

Oh, life was kind of human in those days!

(NOY "Conservation" 96. 1-5,14-20, 79-94)

In its difference, home has become increasingly strange, controlled by the rules of the marketplace, tolerant of the new, and careful (with its "white guard rails") of those tourists who wish to pass by. Home has been renewed and newly defiled at the same time: where the speaker as lumberjack once stripped the hills bare, the trees have grown back and now the State has "slashed" roads into the land. "Slash" is a lumber term which refers to the bark, branches, and rejected timber which careless loggers left behind after clear-cutting a wooded tract. The slash could, and often did, catch fire and burn thousands of acres of North Woods. Thus, the returning lumberjack equates the State's road-building to defilement of the land, a destruction in which he, too, is complicit. For Foster's speaker, human qualities have been lost in the modernization which has made things slick, new, seductive. Along the way personal ease, trust, and spontaneity have gone the way of the outdated lumberjacks. If "life was kind of human in those days," then the home the lumberjack has returned to is a sanitized park in which being human means rejecting the serendipity of individual difference. Along with the rejection of inefficiency and disorganization comes the expulsion of spontaneity, human interaction,

trust, and joy.

Neighbors of Yesterday is the first book of Foster's poetry to enter into the world of the mountain, not employing it as a poetic conceit, but as context. In her "Foreword" to the 1963 reprinting of the 1916 text, Foster articulates the clash between traditional Adirondack life with its reliance on individual ability and communal sharing, and twentieth-century progress which, although it brought many conveniences and some longed-for relief from the harshness and isolation of remote mountain life, brought with it as well a sense of intrusion and loss: "As the lumber was gradually stripped from the hills and mountains, the old life began to change and primitive customs disappeared. There were new interests and new sources of prosperity. With the introduction of the cheap automobile changes took place more rapidly [. . .] tourists rediscovered the country, and in their wake came all the sophistication of the city dwellers." Foster's Adirondack poetry both mourns and celebrates change. As an eighty-four-year-old woman, commenting forty-seven years after the book's first publication, she wrote nostalgically about the "truth of yesterday" which came "crowding into [her] mind" when she recalled her youth in the Great North Woods. But in the poetry itself, composed between the time Foster left the mountains to live in cities (1897) and the publication of *Neighbors of Yesterday* in 1916, one hears a voice employing nostalgia to question what is being remembered, seeking out the realities and fantasies of both memory and modernity, and wondering how much the inexorable push of change shapes and is shaped by the past:

It takes a long time to tell a story,

For there's so much one must feel and conjecture.

There must be a floating feeling round you
 That fills in the thin places you can't tell,
 And brings out all the truth that you don't know.

(NOY, "Silence Davis" 59: 46-49)

Discussing the creation of memoir, Vivian Gornick perceives the structure of the thing remembered, in terms of the narrative persona, created "out of the raw material of a writer's own undisguised being." The narrator's existence shapes the tale. "This narrator becomes a persona. Its tone of voice, its angle of vision, the rhythm of its sentences, what it selects to observe and what to ignore are chosen to serve the subject; [. . .] the way the narrator [. . .] sees [. . .] is, to the largest degree, the thing being seen" (Gornick 6-7). Foster's use of the narrator as the means to shape her subject, her truth, is well-illustrated in the above poem.

The narrator of "Silence Davis" will not be rushed. The very atmosphere must be "conjured" correctly, until the story tells itself from its geographic and psychological locations: the old Wesleyan church which is falling down from neglect; the battlefields of the Civil War-- Cold Harbor, Antietam, Gettysburg; the remote mountain called Mormon Hill; the church graveyard. The narrative poem is a monologue about "Silence," a woman who, too frail and ladylike to defend herself against an abusive husband and survive the life of a deep woods mountain wife, "died in her youth,/ of hunger and hardship" after giving birth. Her father was Nate Hills, the antithesis to Silence's brutal mate. " He wrote a book once and had it published,/ And he had a telescope in the garret/ And spent clear nights searching the heavens" (60.55-57). Her husband, Zoph Davis, is

“a clod--a handsome fellow/ (If you can see beauty in flesh and eyes)/ Raised on Mormon Hill, where they count women/ Less than fat cattle” (60. 65-68). After her death, Silence’s father cursed the husband and buried his daughter under her maiden name in the Hills’s grave, marked by a carved monument of Vermont marble. The husband, equal to the task of proving ownership of his dead wife, left the community to work for a year in the Garnet Mines:

[. . .] Not long after that, he drove back in here

And brought another headstone for his wife.

He set it up close by the first one.

It was Vermont marble--the same pattern—

But the inscription; that was different.

You read it:

SILENCE
THE BELOVED WIFE
OF
ZOPHER DAVIS

(62.106-115)

Foster’s story uses several effects to employ the mountain. The location of the storyteller shifts among mountain places in present, past and future. The Wesleyan church that no one takes an interest in stands “between the roads” on land given to the church “Before the War.” It is described in terms of decay, and the narrator “can look ahead and see it flat/ Some morning after a high west wind” (12-13). Thus, the future collapses into the present through the subjunctive, while additionally, the city intrudes through tourists, and the church as well as the mountain upon which it sits becomes

artifact: "City folks like to come and look at it./ They call it 'Georgian'; I don't know/
Just what they mean" (58.14-16). The narrator remembers the story of "Silence" and
places it into contextual through the changes which time and the mountain have wrought.
The reader is present in the city folks who have come to identify the church's charming
architectural style.

Simultaneously, the church is remembered as it was in "in war time,/ When we
offered prayers for the men who went/ To fight to free the slaves down in the South"
(58.18-20). The mountain boys are named, their deaths and wounds chronicled, the
blazing candles recalled as every church window shone out to commemorate the
Emancipation Proclamation "When we all kneeled down with tears on our cheeks/ And
thanked God for Abraham Lincoln" (59. 38-39). But Foster allows no falsely sentimental
misting of the moment. The reader becomes implicated in the story by being placed in its
location through direct address: "You've noticed that queer grave in the churchyard./ [. .
.] with two big monuments./ There's a story about it--a long one./ Sit down on the grass
and you shall hear it" (59. 40-44). Foster not only uses the mountain imagery and lore to
establish the tensions between the men, but also places the reader on the mountain, a
witness to the unfolding story and the narrator's attempt to "conjure truth."

Looking further, we see that mountain geography is used to evoke class levels,
identified by the crude behavior of the upper mountain, "Mormon Hill" community.
They are placed in opposition to the more refined members of education, taste, and
privilege--the "Hills," the father and daughter who live closer to the church and the center
of the formalized village, their name reflecting their distance and difference from the

“Mormon Hill” people, way off on the mountain. Even the outside world of the political enters the poem, when the narrator recounts the way the men of Mormon Hill traded their women around “for a calf and a bridle,/ Another for a colt and a halter,/ And everybody changed round once in a while, / So they said,--of course that is long ago” and only occurred “Till the government stepped in and stopped it” (60. 68-73).

Using the atmosphere of the mountain without the drama of its natural beauty, Foster capitalizes upon daily living within the mountain’s physical and social constraints. Without reifying or demonizing the circumstances of Silence’s life, for the narrator makes it clear that she chose marriage to Zoph freely, Foster leaves the reader to determine the quality of her characters’s lives, affected by the presence of the mountain as the catalyst of the life around it. While men like Zoph Davis traded women for cattle, heroes fought the Civil War, and Nate Hills wrote a book and studied the stars. Just as in any city, the myriad human characteristics--pride, love, misogyny, fear, heroism, intellect, cowardice, greed, bravado--vie for ascendancy on the mountain. The interpretation of gender influence is crucial to Foster’s construction of “Silence Davis” and will be further explored in Chapter Four. Characters and places in stories such as that of Silence Davis frequently interact with each other throughout *Neighbors of Yesterday* and recur in *Adirondack Portraits*. As Foster reveals the victories and defeats of the mountain dwellers, she introduces as well the problems of the world outside these confines.

But Foster uses the mountain as a metaphor for natural power as well, directly synthesized by those people who, like her, have absorbed its untamed, wild, beautiful force. Living in the mountain wilderness can be equal to becoming the mountain

wilderness:

Here in the wilderness folks will tell you
 To be careful about the place you live,
 For there's something in the mountains
 And the hills that is stronger than people,
 And you will grow like the place where you live.
 The hands of the mountains reach out
 With bindings that hold the heart forever.

[. . .] Wilderness people are a special breed.
 They have something that's not hearing or seeing.
 Reaching out from the mountains to touch them.

(AP "The Wilderness Is Strong" 141.1-7, 18-20)

Touched by the mountains, infused with the spirit of the wilderness which communicates through all of the senses, Foster's mountain people gain wisdom from the difficult lessons they learn adapting to the beautiful, yet harsh environment. While her poetry reifies the mountain's ability to infuse power into the person, she acknowledges as well its ability to defeat. Foster merges the facts and fantasies of the Oliver Chestertown home, in a poem which celebrates the vitality of the inanimate and the wisdom of common sense, while personifying the power of the mountain:

You take a chance up here in the mountains
 Moving into an old house. Sometimes folks
 Who lived there before don't want to leave it,

[.....]

I'm sorry you bought the old Daly place

Without asking the neighbors about it.

[.....]

Neighbors could have told you about noises—

A tap-tapping you hear in the east room.

We say the noise is Hezzie Daly dancing—

Leastwise his ghost. He was kept in that room.

You'll notice the plank floor is worn down thin.

[.....]

One Sunday after he heard a sermon

On King David dancing before the Ark

with shouting and with psalteries and harps,

Hezzie started dancing on the way home

And never stopped as long as he had life.

[.....]

He danced until his bones showed through his skin;

Sometimes he danced at night out on the road.

Finally his folks had the blacksmith come

and build a cage to keep him in the house

In the east room--the marks are on the floor.

He's been gone years and years, but those who lived

In the old Daly house heard him dance nights;
 Leastways they thought the noise was Hezzie's ghost
 Tap-tapping, still his way of praising God.
 If I were you I'd buy some lumber now
 And lay down a new floor in the east room.

(AP "The Dancing Man" 59. 1-3,7-17, 23-27, 30-40)

Like Sarah Orne Jewett's *Country of the Pointed Firs*, Foster's narrative poems often weave together local color myth, biblical stories, and community wisdom.¹⁰ Stories develop into life lessons, and the wry twists such as the last two lines which end "The Dancing Man" are a combination of practicality and enough superstition to ward off the bizarre with humor. But perhaps Foster's implication of the reader into the poem as the "you" of direct address, the "you" who has come up to the mountain and purchased a quaint old Revolutionary War house, is the clearest connection of the mountain, the past, and the modern.

Lured to the Adirondack world by the promise of beauty and renewal, weary of the pressure of modernity, the unwary outsider (played by the reader) acts precipitously. The speaker starts the poem with a warning to the reader about taking chances in the mountains by trying to "own" a part of the past. Everyone in the mountain community knows the story of Hezzie Daly. Only the outsider/reader arrives in the poem not privy to the information which might prevent him/her from trying to control such a piece of time. The narrator is amazed that the buyer did not discuss the house with its neighbors before becoming its new occupant. The buyer/outsider/reader is a poor interpreter of signs. Not

only does the reader miss the physical clues which suggest that something is strange about the house,--“the marks are on the floor,”--but also the reader/outsider fails to ask the questions which could fill in the gaps, tell the story, about the “old Daley place.” Such a big decision should involve the input of the community. The tone of the poem asks how anyone could be so spiritually myopic, and perhaps arrogant, as to buy a house haunted by its former occupant, essentially, haunted by the mountain. In the end, the narrator can offer only a simple, practical solution: buy some new lumber and lay down a new floor. Since the outsider insists on co-opting the past, he/she will have to recast it in a familiar form, one which the buyer can understand decode because it is of this moment. By making the house over, the buyer will exorcise the past. Unable or unwilling to read the signifiers of the past, the buyer/outsider/reader must opt for a new form, one which can be read and understood without connection to the community and the signs of the mountain--jouissance inscribed in the house. The buyer/outsider/reader is left with the shell of the old Daley house, and with the appearance of a Revolutionary War artifact: “The big corner timbers and hand-hewn beams/ Have kept it standing” (59. 9-10). But like the building’s original, historical meaning, the deep feelings evoked by the house as a part of human life will now be covered over: “[. . .] In the loft, folks say, / There used to be vents in the timbering, / For muskets. They’re boarded over now” (59. 10-12).

Foster achieved an expanded vision of a place by animating it with the life forces which shape and are shaped by the environment. At the turn of the century, Foster’s sense of the regional was, itself, about to be extended through the forces of urban modernization which would reshape her life. As we can infer from the vision she

employs in her Adirondack poetry, the interpretation of gender, its constructions and restrictions, was one of the modern influences which Foster would now consider.

ENDNOTES

1. These basic facts are taken from a brief but comprehensive review of both the Adirondack and Catskill Mountain regions's histories found in Norman J. VanValkenburgh's *The Forest Preserve of New York State in the Adirondack and Catskill Mountains: A Short History* (Schenectady: Purple Mountain Press, 1996). The brochure focuses on legislation passed since 1779 which gradually enabled the establishment of the park's "forever wild" status, conferred in 1894, modified by addenda in 1904, 1916, 1931, 1956, 1972 .

2. Many natives of the Adirondacks, as well as people who, through contact with the area have come to consider themselves a part of the region, refer to the area as the "North Woods." Foster often referred not only to the forest areas in that way, but also to the fields, villages, and even the people in her texts as such. Schaefer had the same habit, writing in 1960:

Even a lifetime will not suffice to thoroughly explore these North Woods. In forty-five years of such adventuring I find myself having a good understanding of this fact and little more [. . .] except a deep and abiding love for the Adirondacks, a devotion which increases as [. . .] it becomes apparent that there are many wonderful places that, for want of time, I shall never get to see. And even in this thought there is a certain richness--! ("Discovery" quoted in Jamieson, 284)

Schaefer's sentiment is echoed in Foster's "Crane Mountain"; for both speakers, death becomes an ultimate unity with the beauty and peace of being not only near the mountain, but metaphorically one with it in nature. Throughout this dissertation I use "North Woods" interchangeably with "Adirondacks."

3. The French and Indian Wars which broke out in 1689 lasted until 1763. They were actually four wars which, although fought on American soil and related to American land control issues, actually reflected tensions being fought out in Europe between the French and British. Native tribes supported French and British forces according to their alliances. The individual wars were as follow: King William's War, 1689-1697 fought in the English colonies just south of Canada and as far south as Schenectady, New York and deciding nothing regarding territorial rights; Queen Anne's War, 1702-1713, which included Spain as well as France and Britain and which centered in both the New England states and South Carolina and Florida, whereby France surrendered to Britain the Hudson Bay area among other territories; King George's War, 1744-1748, fought on Cape Breton Island and ending in a stalemate; the French and Indian War, 1754-1763, the last and

most important conflict, fought in lower Canada, the Lake Champlain region, the Lake George Valley, the Allegheny mountains, and parts of the Mississippi River area. This final war was the most important politically in that it resulted in the maintenance of French influence in North America only in Canada. In addition, this final war firmly established the British crown and British colonists in the Adirondack area, especially near such forts as Niagara, Ticonderoga, and Crown Point, as well as to the restored forts Oswego in western New York and William Henry in Lake George.

4. There were and are many Adirondack Clubs and varieties of that name: the Adirondack Club (of Boston), The Adirondack League club, The Adirondack Mountain Club, and The Adirondack Club at Old Forge which in 1897 became the Tahawus Club, to which Theodore Roosevelt belonged.

5. Stillman notes that he purchased from the state land which had been forfeited for taxes: 22,500 acres for \$600 in 1859.

6. Skidding refers to the practice of hauling logs, chained to oxen, from where they lay felled in the woods to the skidway, a man-made water chute which would move the logs to the river for travel to the mills. Foster describes the experience in her record of Albro Tripp's memories, who recalled his days as a thirteen-year old "skidder" in "Albro Tripp's Story":

[. . .] I would fasten one end of a long chain to a ring in the ox yoke. The ring was in the middle of the yoke between the oxen. Then I was ready to go after the logs to haul to the skidway. [. . .] I would haul from one hundred to two hundred logs a day to the skidway, where a man would roll them up into large piles [. . .] You would have to take a good many steps a day and say 'Haw' and 'Gee' and 'Buck' and 'Bright' a good many times a day. (AP 125)

Foster worked as a skidder for her father when she was sixteen, gaining insight into the lives of the native lumbermen about whom she would later write. Another example of her double perspective as native and outsider was her ability as an adult to bring to her poetry the thinking of both logger and conservationist.

7. Both "clear cutting" and "cut and run" logging were practices introduced in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, when expediency ruled in the production of lumber and pulp for profit. Philip Terrie points out that early loggers were selective in their cutting, choosing white pine and spruce for lumber and hemlock for tanning. Around 1890 when chemical curing made all wood valuable as pulp for paper, vast forests were totally leveled by this industry. Terrie states: "The largest spruce ever harvested in the Adirondacks, which left a stump forty-one inches across, was cut for pulp" (*Contested*

Terrain 109). “Clear cutting” refers to the denuding of entire mountain slopes, without regard for age or type of tree. In the partner to this environmental disaster, “cut and run” practices, no new trees were planted to replace what had been taken, and the slash and debris caused by the logging process (bark, branches, needles) were left behind. From 1900 to 1910 a series of devastating fires, resulting from drought, railroad sparks, and left over slash burned over 800,000 acres of forest land. The smoke from the fire of 1908 reached all the way to New York City. By 1910 concern for the welfare of the entire state caused legislators to begin instituting restrictions on logging practices and locomotives burning coal or wood were banned. The practice of replacing cut trees with saplings did not occur regularly until well into the twentieth century, after World War II.

8. William West Durant’s 1876-1895 two hundred acre Pine Knot estate on Racquette Lake was a model for many other grand camps, and helped to develop a sense of the Adirondacks as a “rich man’s playground” (Terrie 71-2). Such luxury is remembered at the Blue Mountain Lake Museum, Blue Mountain Lake in the Adirondacks, where a rail car exhibit displays the mahogany, crystal, red satin, and velvet which graced the typical 19th -century tycoon’s personal transportation.

9. See Chapter One (6) for a discussion of Foster’s explanation of the source of “York brown” paint, and its use in the poem “The Old Church” (AP 71). The poem discussed in the next paragraph, “Letter to Ruth Riedinger,” repeats, in miniature, the story of Enos Putnam and the underground railroad church. It also restates the theme of “The Old Church” in its last lines: “[. . .] and on emancipation Day they / Set candles in the windows to proclaim / That man’s triumphant spirit rules his clay” (AP 5. 33-35). This concept of the ascendancy of spirit is a basis of Foster’s use of sentiment in the most positive ways.

10. The first amendment to the New York State Constitution which set aside Adirondack land as “forever wild” under the protection of the state was adopted by the voters in November of 1894, Article VII, Section 7. Although the amendment has been challenged over the years both by industry and private suit, the article is still in force today, making the Forest Preserve one of the best protected landscapes in the world, extending to over 2.1 million acres.

11. For an excellent review of the full history of both the Adirondack region and its development, as well as detailed discussion of the “Forever Wild Clause” and the history of the APA, see Philip G. Terrie, *Contested Terrain: A New History of Nature and People in the Adirondacks*. Also see Norman J. VanValkenburgh, *The Forest Preserve of New York State in the Adirondack and Catskill Mountains: A Short History* (Schenectady: Purple Mountain Press, 1996), and Paul Jamieson, *The Adirondack Reader* (Lake George: The Adirondack Mountain Club, Inc., 1994).

12. Telling the history of the Revolutionary House, Foster shared the background of her poem in the following story: “[. . .] When we moved in to the home the vents for guns in the long loft-attic had not been closed. [. . .] the old beams were in the corners of the rooms and the inside of the front porch was lathed and plastered [. . .] We used [the room with the worn floorboards] for storage, for it was the room that had had an iron grill made by the local blacksmith to confine ‘the dancing man’ who danced himself to death [. . .] Mother would hardly enter the room.” (Letter to Sara Bowyer O’Connor, 10/6/62, Adirondack Museum Archives).

CHAPTER THREE:**Wives, Neighbors, and Poorhouse Sketches: Foster and the Parameters of Gender**

[. . .] “Why did the little old lady run away?” I asked.

The Wife of the Man Who Kept the County House
 Laughed, and said, “Oh, she’s crazy; she’s been here
 for twenty years; she has no folks at all.

[. . .] She came [. . .] hitching down the corridor [. . .]
 And picked up her broom. On her patched drilling dress,
 Threadbare with age, faded, ugly, pathetic,
 Hanging in coarse folds on her spare frame,
 A green satin bow was pinned with a safety pin.
 She curtsied to us and went on sweeping,
 A look of satisfied vanity, immeasurable content
 On her wrinkled face.

(Neighbors of Yesterday “Poorhouse Sketches: The Green Bow” 48. 8-26)

Interpreting gender constructions and restrictions became even more complicated in the urban modernization of the twentieth century. Such an interpretation is an exercise in reading contradiction. Reading Jeanne Robert Foster’s poetry about the men and women of the mountains means exploring the contradictions which shadowed her entire life. She was a poor mountain girl who spoke lovingly of her parents; yet, she spent most

of her childhood farmed out to family and friends. She displayed a fierce sense of independence in her ability to shoulder the work of a lumberjack, the burden of caring for her siblings, the privilege of skating with the boys on Raquette Lake disguised as one of them, or the responsibilities of living in mountain communities as a fifteen year-old schoolteacher; yet, she quietly ran off to Philadelphia to marry her father's friend when she was seventeen, and soon entered the male-dominated whirl of a New York fashion model's world of surface images. She loyally remained Mrs. Foster throughout her life, caring for an invalid husband three decades her senior; yet, she spent the years between 1910 and 1933 traveling the world like a bachelor, dabbling in affairs of the heart, and entering into a passionate relationship with a wealthy lawyer. She sometimes wrote poetry which wallowed in the sentimentality of lost love: "Here are my arms, my hands, / Here are my lips, my eyes: / Meeting with yours they find / All that is paradise" (*Rock-Flower* "Loneliness" 18. 9-12). Conversely, she created illustrations of women victimized by male brutality: "One man traded his wife for a calf and a bridle, / Another for a colt and a halter, / And everybody changed round once in a while" (NOY, "Silence Davis" 60. 70-73).

In what psychological twists do these contradictions ground themselves? Are they based in the cultural norm of gender essentialism, logically contextualized in a life which began in the nineteenth-century North Woods and matured in the urban, modernist arenas of the twentieth century? Can the poetry be read in light of the life without being read as the life? And how does Foster's own vision of herself as a woman color her texts both consciously and subconsciously? In Chapter One, I have suggested that much of Foster's

poetry, far from being reductively biographical, is the synthesis of her vastly different experiences in the country and the city, used to create strategies for interpreting and living in the modern world. In the psychological and emotional space between “Maid of Minerva” and Manhattan career woman, Foster found a way to define her own positive femininity: strength, nurture, beauty, common sense, self-sacrifice, ambition, and autonomy were interwoven in her self-image. In addition, her diaries and scraps of personal notes, drafts, etc. suggest that as her experience in the world deepened, she pondered gender issues which transcended both her childhood culture and her sophisticated adulthood, both with their respective boundaries.

Freedom in the Foster texts is located within the self. Often set in impoverished conditions, the Adirondack texts celebrate the independence and strength of self-actualization. Many *Rock-Flower* poems deal with themes of spiritual imprisonment and/or loss. Random thoughts, scrawled on a torn scraps of paper, suggest the poet’s synthesis of philosophies such as those of Friedrich Nietzsche and William James, ideas to which Foster was first exposed during her academic work in Boston:

Strength has need in order to excuse itself

Lo superman you will know it in a century

Or two and perhaps later

Material strength

Moral or spiritual strength,

Any strength has need of a little love in order not to frighten poor human

beings

Or a bit of love at least in order to have its power pardoned.

(Foster/Murphy Collection; NYPL: Box 4; File 279)

Since this fragment is grouped with her letters and notes to, from, and about John Quinn, dated 1922 and 1923, we can speculate that it, too, is from the early twenties. Foster categorizes strength as material or spiritual, and questions power untamed by sensitivity or love, which can “pardon” or soften the frightening aspects of pure force. Informed by the catastrophic aftermath of World War I, Foster’s words indict unchecked power, played out as brutal aggression, and ending in the physical, psychical, emotional, and moral debilitation of the world. In a letter to John Quinn dated September 1, 1916, Irish intellectual George Moore (Æ) stated: “We must rewrite psychology when this war is over” (MFNY 240). World War I left no one untouched.

In her Nietzschean “superman,” Foster seems to specify masculine power, while the warning tone of the speaker’s address--“Lo, superman you will know it in a century or two”-- suggests an interchange between female and male. Does Foster suggest a theory of gender essentialism through which anatomy is destiny? In such a mind set, only men are fit to rule, to create, embodied in a metaphysical phallic self which Toril Moi deduces from Luce Irigaray and Helene Cixous as a “humanist ideology.” In such an ideology “the self is the *sole author* of history and of the literary text [. . .] potent, phallic, and male—God in relation to his world, the author in relation to his text” (*Sexual Textual Politics* 8). Such a view of gender precludes change and exchange, freezing conceptions of masculine and feminine in fixed categories with absolute characteristics.

There are times when Foster adopts such a rhetorical stance. She insisted

throughout her lifetime that her art sprang from a “masculine vision,” deferring, at least publicly, to the talent and intelligence of the men who influenced her life and career: Shaw, the Yeatses, Quinn, Pound, and Ford, among others, and later the young scholars who came to her as a resource for their work. Richard Londrville, who first met Foster in 1965 when he was researching W.B. Yeats, comments on Foster’s “definitional” dealings with the men in her life. The gender conventions of the early twentieth century characterized independent, autonomous behavior on the part of women as unnatural or scandalous, and as her biographer, Londrville stresses Foster’s need for decorum. “Mrs. Foster wished that [her] biography not be published in her lifetime, for she deemed some of her experiences ‘too personal’ ” (DY xxvii). She had carried on an affair with Albert Shaw for years, carefully avoiding scandal; she posed nude for French photographer J.J. Henner on one of her first European trips; she brought her husband along on the west coast trip which certainly intersected the travels of paramour Aleister Crowley; she objected strenuously to anyone’s suggestion that she had been Quinn’s mistress, and in fact, insisted that their relationship had never been consummated. There are many contradictions between Foster’s acts and the societal strictures she supposedly ascribed to. As Londrville states, “When she declared that ‘all genius is male,’ she may have been sincere, or she may have been using the cunning necessary for a female artist to succeed in a man’s world.” Masking herself as a desirable object for powerful men, Foster enabled herself to “investigate ideas more powerful than romantic love.” Londrville connects this gender masking to the creation of Foster’s monologues. “When she was writing of the Adirondacks, her masculine personae allowed her to explore her

‘male genius’ ” in a way fully in keeping with the construction of femininity to which the author acquiesced” (263). Like the masquerade she enacted for skating with the boys on Raquette Lake, the male persona was one Foster put on easily, one which freed her to view her daily role as “other” from an insider’s perspective.

In fact, while Foster’s work often valorizes accepted definitions of masculine power and feminine nurture, she simultaneously excoriates the binary opposition of masculinity and femininity: “any strength has need of a little love in order not to frighten poor human beings / Or a bit of love at least in order to have its power pardoned.” In Foster’s work, the two major life forces, power and love, balance each other without opposition, refusing to devolve into a male/female conflict. Thus, especially in her Adirondack writing which fixes its gaze on the human struggle with and within the forces of nature, Foster problematizes the existence of the individual whose gender psyche is not in some ways androgynous. Like the many other masks she wore in her long life, Foster often assumed one of deference to both the presence of men and their ability. In this chapter, I will undertake the deconstruction of that coy masking.

Daphne and Apollo: *Greenwood Myths, and the Manipulation of Language*

Foster’s Adirondack poetry delineates the need for mountain women to possess strengths which the nineteenth century traditionally ascribed to masculinity. Old man Wamsley’s daughter Jane ran her father’s house for years after her brother Wullie died and her father aged into senility (AP “Wullie” 27); Mis’ Cole left her husband George and five children but not until the haying was done and the house running smoothly, so

that the older female children could step into her place (AP “Mis’ Cole” 28); Irish immigrant Mrs. Mooney logged and did whatever work was available “[. . .] and saved/ Enough to buy their farm [. . .] / They kept on working till they built a house [. . .]” (AP “The Mooneys” 31. 27-31). Esther Mead, the spinster pauper, “took care of her folks until they died” and then kept the Church running, as well as doing the members’s “[. . .] mending / And doing the starched washing and ironing, / And, come fall, the pickling and the canning: [. . .] seamed [the] pillow slips and sheets / And did plain sewing [. . .]” (AP “Blue Calico: The Ingrate” 55-56. 12-34). Foster’s strong female characters are found on every page. They are not merely fictional.¹ Illustrating the fortitude revealed by Foster’s poetry and prose, Philip Terrie cites the struggle narrated in diary and journal entries of Adirondack women of the late nineteenth century. The young Mrs. Juliet Kellogg kept a diary in the 1860’s describing the difficulty of life on a remote farm near Minerva. For long periods the childless young woman was left alone, and the days wore on slowly: “[. . .] [S]he spent cold winter days mending, washing, ironing, baking, and shearing sheep. One chilly February day, she wrote, with biting precision, ‘I am very lonely.’ Two months later, she noted, ‘Wolves killed two more sheep today’ ” (*Contested Terrain* 75-6). While Mrs. Kellogg’s was not an isolated case, her words attest to both the hardness of life in the wilderness and the part women played in shouldering the full burden of survival.

Labor was divided between household maintenance and work beyond the house itself, but women moved freely between these domains. The Conklin family of Herkimer County counted twelve children. When the father “appeared to be dying of ‘an

inflammation [sic] in his bowels' and the doctors had abandoned hope, a local woman saved his life with a poultice made from freshly dug earthworms" (Terrie 31). When their men logged, farmed, made maple sugar and syrup, or traveled the region to find itinerant work, women performed tasks which not only kept the family fed, clothed, housed, but also contributed to the meager family economy. Cottage industries combined with housekeeping: "Soap making, spinning and weaving cloth, sewing and mending clothes, gardening, food preparation, [. . .] occupied women throughout the year [. . .]." In addition, "[T]here were the unavoidable realities of the Adirondack climate and growing season combined with such horrors as fire, illness, and the psychological trauma resulting from isolation and day-to-day drudgery" (Terrie 30). Women hired out as well, serving as housekeepers, caring for and feeding lodgers, sewing and knitting garments for sale. And children, too, contributed whatever they could. Foster notes her first "job" as a mountain guide at the age of eight, taking tourists up Crane Mountain for a quarter. As Chapter One has discussed, the life of the year-round mountain residents was far different from the temporary bonding with nature which occupied the gentlemen and ladies of the tourist crush. Where the vacationers saw idyllic sublimity, the residents met the mountain wilderness with ambivalence. They both loved and feared the power of nature which shaped and destroyed their lives and livelihoods. Within this conflict, gender roles certainly existed, as such poems as "Silence Davis" (discussed in Chapter Two) attest to, but practicality determined that women be able to assume whatever duties fell to them in the struggles of the everyday.

Notwithstanding her acceptance of certain restrictions placed upon women at the

turn of the century, Foster never allowed herself to be locked within nineteenth-century gender norms. Both on and beyond the mountain, Foster's public careers were traditional: teacher, model, journalist, poet. On the other hand, her biography reveals her pushing boundaries quietly but constantly. As a girl, she ran with the boys and men, skating, logging, farming, riding the ministry circuit. She married, keeping up the appearance of being a faithful wife and daughter, always caring for her husband, his family and her own; still, she lived singly a great deal of the time, and traveled with latitude, often with John Quinn in Europe, using the respectable title "Mrs. Foster" and always securing her own lodgings to keep criticism at bay. Never wealthy, Foster was continuously engaged in productive work, supporting herself and relatives through her own efforts. Although she knew and associated with many wealthy men, there is not the least sign of her receiving money from these relationships, even to the absence of any bequest from John Quinn, despite his having appointed her executrix of his vast letters and papers. Whereas her poetry expresses dissatisfaction with the status of women in her world, and although she often aspired to the freedoms male status bestowed, Foster's writing celebrates and embraces womanhood.

Foster's poem "The Escape" confronts both the feminine and the masculine through Greek myth:

Let us bend over a pool
And slip off the familiar flesh.
Look!
I am Apollo;

There are shining curls on my forehead.

You are Daphne,

Upon your whiteness,

Curved paths for the moonlight.

To escape--

We, moving in bodies that change constantly,

Create and recreate them

As images--

Apollo . . . Daphne . . . Daphne . . . Apollo. (*Rock-Flower* 17. 1-13)

Foster appropriates Apollo's voice, but the opening line invites both the male self and the female other to "escape" divisive gender characteristics in a cooperative effort, expressed by the vocative: "[You] Let us [. . .]" Accessing male subjectivity, Foster opens the poem with implied recognition of Daphne's power. As the "you" being addressed, Daphne is given the choice to accept or reject the suggestion to "create and recreate" images of interchangeable maleness /femaleness in a magical pool. The pool accesses the story of Narcissus with his rejection of the female other and his consumptive love of the male self. The myths interweave in Narcissus's water reflection and Daphne's flight from Apollo to her father Peneus's river. Whereas Narcissus becomes a beautiful flower near the pool, Daphne transforms to a laurel tree on the riverbank. Each mythological creature rejects the advances of the other gender and becomes re-imaged (imagined) as a revered plant. Ironically, Narcissus becomes a flower which pleases the wood nymphs he rejected, while Daphne's laurel branches become the wreath of honor for Apollo's victorious men.

In a cooperative movement beyond the limitations of gender implied in both myths, Foster begins the poem with the inclusive pronoun “us,” in which neither male nor female is ascendant (and this is repeated in the “we” of line 10). Recognizing Daphne’s right to accept or reject Apollo’s suggestions, Foster twists the Greek myth whereby Daphne escapes to a neutral form, a tree, to escape Apollo’s advances. In her incorporation of the original myths, Foster empowers the female goddess as a sexual being, “Daphne [. . .] / Upon your whiteness, / Curved paths for moonlight,” next allowing her to become interchangeably male and female as one of the “bodies that change constantly” through self-willed acts of creativity. The juxtaposition of “change” and “constantly” suggests an oxymoron, that which is simultaneously fixed and plastic². Thus, Foster creates a space in which the feminine self might access the male domain (and its power) at will. In addition, Foster equalizes the supernatural powers of the “superman” Apollo to those of Daphne, as Apollo too will move in a constantly changing body, to “escape” his own narcissism (and destruction) as a god. The allusions to the mythological evergreen tree and the narcissus flower incorporate Foster’s green mountain world, echoed in the word “images,” of which one of Foster’s most potent is always the evergreen, rooted in the mountain, staunch in its resistance to natural force, yet constantly fragrant, green and freely aspiring to reach beyond its earthly restrictions, to touch the sky. Foster frequently identified herself with that image.

An unpublished poem which Foster sent to a friend in later years (probably after WWII, in light of its inclusion with other papers of that time period), characterizes the freedom of the natural world as “Another Order.” The poetic voice counsels the listener

not to remember her body, i.e. her female form, since “a mischance placed me in this flesh, / Blood in my veins instead of sap, / Arms and hands instead of branches, / Fingers that should be green needles” (5-8). The metaphor rejects the reduction of Joyce Kilmer’s “Trees,” by *appropriating* the image of the tree, not personifying it: “I am a tree living in a body / Torn from a rootage on a high mountain.” The freedom alluded to in “The Escape” is articulated clearly in “Another Order,” as Foster moves out of the limitations of gender and the body and assumes the power of the natural world represented by the mythological: “[. . .] *I belong to another order.* / Remember me as a tall pine, / A tree, free-breathing in the wilderness, / My song--muted, unsyllabled, never-ending” (Blue Mountain Lake Museum Archives; Foster Collection: noted, “To Dora/For Lansing Christman” 9-10, 17-20). Using the neutral category of the mountain specified in the tree, Foster suggests another order for life expression. The creation of the human self is indicated through violence, “torn from a rootage on a high mountain.” But the power of the speaker is asserted in the final lines, through the “free-breathing” which echoes Daphne and Apollo’s freely changing form, and through the unending silent song which, unlike the imposed silence of the violently muted Philomel becomes in “Another Order” a universal expression without limits, one which moves beyond human restriction. Employing similar images of freedom, the construction of “The Escape” with its plural personal pronouns (*us, we*) invites both the male and female personae of the poem to positions of power (and to a playful love of serendipitous change which escapes the restrictions of male/female forms) in the parity which Foster’s previously quoted fragment on material, moral and spiritual strength seeks.

In her discussion of gender and language, Monique Wittig focuses on the role personal pronouns play in characterizing subjectivity. She argues that because the third person singular (*he, she, it*) indicates maleness, femaleness, or the neuter, the use of this form instantly places the speaker into a position of social dominance (patriarchal *he*) or subjection (other as *she*). The standard masculine form once attested to what Foster's society referred to as "a man's world.." Thus, the masculine became (and still carries the echo of) the abstract form under which the feminine *she* was generally subsumed. Wittig interprets the universal *he* as "the enforcement of sex in language, working in the same way as the declaration of sex in civil status [. . .] The abstract form, the general, the universal, this is what the so-called masculine gender means, for the class of men have appropriated the universal for themselves" ("The Mark of Gender" in Miller, *The Poetics of Gender* 65-6). Thus, whereas Foster's assumption of the male voice might speak to her acceptance of male dominance, her use of both the imperative "you let" and the generalized "us/we" suggests that she is extending traditional male power structures to Daphne, whose freedom is acknowledged through choice and change.

Wittig further argues that language theoretically offers everyone the ability to become "an absolute subject through its exercise." This ability to create subjectivity is annulled by the gendered pronoun use which relegates women to a particular, gendered place as non-subjects (66). In light of this concept, Foster's manipulation of voice and agency joins with her male and female images--shining curls for Apollo, curved moonlight paths for Daphne--to articulate their sexual differences as complementary. Both Apollo and Daphne create and recreate through change; they escape gender

restriction (and the punishment for non-adherence to gender norms which the myths enforce) by becoming the forms of their desire and choice, with Foster's non-gendered evergreen tree suggesting itself through the unspoken presence of the original Daphne myth. Maleness, femaleness, and their attendant social constructions of masculinity and femininity merge, appear, and disappear in the suggested melange of recreated forms. Finally, the names form a visual: Apollo frames Daphne-- "Apollo. . .Daphne. . .Daphne . . .Apollo"-- whose female image is physically central to the final line through her name.

Daring to be Traditional: *Or --"How I Made the Patriarchy Work for Me"*

If then, Foster supported the dissolution of traditional gender restrictions, we question by her life was so traditionally patriarchal. Although she had personal relationships with many of modernism's giants, and believed in their "new" art and literature, Foster did not overtly ascribe to radical form in her own artistic expression, nor did she break with traditional proprieties in her personal life. Unlike the "Women of the Left Bank" so compellingly portrayed by Shari Benstock in *Women of the Left Bank: Paris 1900-1940*, or by Bonnie Kime Scott in *The Gender of Modernism*, Foster's work does not practice the alternative literary style of H.D. , Mina Loy, Gertrude Stein, or Djuna Barnes. Her lifestyle captures none of the flamboyant rebellion of Colette, Nancy Cunard, or Natalie Barney. While there is evidence that she knew these people, she did not join them in Europe as an expatriate. Yet, for the first three decades of the twentieth century, Foster moved in impressive circles of modern and modernist influence. When her friends's daughter, Noel Riedinger went to college, Foster counseled her to "go to

Paris, meet your contemporaries--the writers, the artists and build *your house of memories* for the future. [. . .] You will have *your heroes* to remember, *your days and nights of adventure*, your thrills to ART, your own bouquets. Don't settle with life for its small change; reach for the gold." (AP "Introduction" xl).

Although Foster advocated adventure for this young friend of her later years, the author's life during the avant-garde expatriate movement does not illustrate the thirst for freedom and scorn for American bourgeois tradition which characterizes the modernists. Perhaps the conflict arises because Foster differed from the other literary women of her day in several ways. First of all, she was not economically independent. She was intensely poor in childhood, enjoyed relative financial security from her marriage in 1896 to 1910, but then was increasingly insecure as her husband aged and his business declined. After 1910, Foster assumed more and more financial responsibility. This fact contradicts the status of many of the female expatriates who have been named central to modernism. Shari Benstock points out that, generally, the women of the expatriate community experienced greater financial freedom than the men, having inheritances or annuities with which they were able to initiate their independence from an America they found increasingly difficult to embrace. "A few of these women came from prestigious upper-class families, but most of them came from solidly middle-class circumstances. Their fathers included prosperous businessmen [. . .] and two English shipping tycoons" (Benstock *Women of the Left Bank* 9). Edith Wharton had her own fortunes, amassed through heredity and literary success; Natalie Barney, Winifred Ellerman (Bryher), and Nancy Cunard were heiresses; Gertrude Stein enjoyed the partnership of her brother and

their combined legacy. Jeanne Robert Foster worked within economic strain.

In addition, although the “left bank women” of Foster’s era achieved a certain autonomy in their reconstruction of personal life and community, their modus operandi was the rejection of social standards. Realizing that the hierarchical constraints of femininity precluded the possibilities of their achieving control of their lives, they broke with as many traditions as they encountered. Benstock notes that these women shared a desire to escape American constraints, “and to find in Europe the necessary cultural, sexual, and personal freedom to explore their creative intuitions” (10). Working from within the system was less problematic for Foster. Happy at first merely to be included in the world outside the mountain through marriage and a modeling career, she found that marketing her beauty and charm opened doors of opportunity through which she might display her talents and ability. During the first decade and a half of the century, while Gertrude Stein’s rue de Fleurus salon was flourishing in its attraction of avant-garde art and equally non-traditional guests, and as Stein experimented with language to produce *The Making of Americans* and *Three Lives* ; while Natalie Barney and Edith Wharton were adapting Old New York and posh Washington adolescence to independent lives in the sixth and seventh arrondissements of Paris; while Colette experimented with and dropped out of salon life to enter the demi-monde of Paris as an actress and songstress on the margins of society, Foster was enjoying personal and professional success in New York.

Through modeling she had met Albert Shaw and entered a career in journalism. Befriending John B. Yeats, Foster had become a welcome member of the literary and art

worlds of New York, Dublin, London, Paris. Yeats wrote to “Willie” about Foster soon after they had met in 1914: “A young lady with me [. . .] who writes (and writes well) all the poetical criticism in *Review of Reviews*, told me that you were the only poet of any account [. . .] She is [. . .] extraordinarily pretty and clever [. . .] It is so rare to find so much really strong intellect with kindness and affection [. . .] She has dignity and sense, something remains to her from the Spartan days when she had to work all day in her own poor home” (Hone, *J.B. Yeats Letters to His Son W.B. Yeats and Others: 1869-1922* 180-81). Years later he would echo Ezra Pound’s excoriations against women authors. “It is a great pity that in these days literature has fallen into the hands of women. They are only vehement and are incapable of the suspended judgment and tentative expression of real thought anxious for the truth. Mrs. Foster and Mrs. Bellinger are exceptions” (Hone 259). The chauvinism is present, but the regard for Foster’s mind is rooted in respect for her talent, and enjoyment of her charm. Yeats considered Foster to be capable, logical, and creatively astute. Whereas Matlack had helped her initially, Foster had moved beyond that stultifying marriage. Again, Yeats to WB: “[. . .] her husband educated her and she married him. Then he lost his money [. . .] and tho’ her husband is old and an invalid the most malicious tongue has nothing to say” (Hone 180).

Several important strands of Foster’s life as a woman come together in Yeats’s reference. Once aware of her possibilities, Foster had capitalized on her own strength of mind and body to reverse her dependence on Matlack and his fortunes and become not only self-reliant, but also the mainstay of his and her families. While Foster embraced the differences in men and women, she rejected enslavement based on gender. Although she

had experienced the empowerment of mountain women when they were treated as valuable partners in the project of survival, Foster had also seen them bartered and exploited. Espousing female equality from within an understanding (but not an acceptance) of the workings of patriarchal privilege, Foster's poetic voice is authoritative, often masking its gender.

Nina Baym discusses the tensions inherent in critical analysis of male and female use of language, attendant upon woman's entrance into the public arena in increasing numbers: "[W]e are not silent, and we do not (publicly) scream. Wishing to speak *to effect*, we use rational sequential discourse, and, evidently, we use it well. Have we, then, chosen to become *men*?" ("The Madwoman and Her Languages: Why I Don't do Feminist Literary Theory" in *Feminism: American Literary History* 203-4). Baym's rejection of a separate *feminine ecriture* is based on the congruence of such a language, "open, nonlinear, exploded, fragmented, polysemic [. . .] with the idea of the hopelessly irrational, disorganized, 'weaker sex' desired by the masculine Other" (204). Foster's co-option of masculine privilege expanded both her personal and professional achievements. In her daily life she became the beautiful woman who was more than decorative, because she encompassed authority and autonomy, male traits in her world. In her poetry, identity slips into gender duality, as Foster considers the marginalization of women in order to reject it from a central (male) position.

Generally, men speak of her as "not like other women." Discussing the influence of women on social and intellectual gatherings, Ezra Pound advised: "NOT too many women, and if possible no wives at assembly. If some insists on accompanying their

mariti, make sure they are bored and dont [sic] repeat offense. . ." (quoted in Benstock, 333 from Ahearn, "Ezra Pound and Louis Zukofsky: Letters, 1928-1930" 151). While Pound excoriated most of the women who sought recognition as modernists (e.g. Amy Lowell, Gertrude Stein, Margaret Anderson), or consumed them in order to shape their talents according to his taste (as he did H.D.), his treatment of Foster was far more equitable. While Pound criticized Foster's early verse as imitative of Morris, Swinburne and Browning, he found power in *Rock-Flower*. When Foster asked if she should burn the manuscript and "start afresh" he responded: "No you have a book there. Publish it and keep on working. Your work is in transition, [sic] You'll find your metier after a while" (Foster/Murphy Collection; NYPL: Box 3; File 218). Pound encouraged her to write in the Adirondack vein, praising *Neighbors of Yesterday* as authentic, felt life.

Additionally, although she already knew many of his artistic contacts, Foster's introduction to John Quinn through John B. Yeats (1918) helped to establish the relationships with many of the modernists which would reshape Foster's sense of art.³ Obviously, from 1900 when she was a *Vanity Fair* cover girl to 1913 when she reported on the new art at the Armory Show, Foster felt no need to escape from a dreary American scene. During the war, she developed her journalistic and editorial abilities, traveling three times to Europe where she experienced the conflict in England, Ireland, Scotland Wales, and France.⁴ By the time World War I had ended, Foster was thirty-nine. She had already traveled widely as a journalist, an editor, and an art critic. When she met John Quinn in 1917, her eye for publishable text and her connections to Boni and Liveright as well as to the New York papers and Shaw's *Review* helped Foster become an important

American editorial advisor and publicist for Pound and Ford, as well as for Vachel Lindsay, Yeats, Eliot and Joyce.

Exploring the “Male Vision”: *Seeing for Oneself*

On intimate terms with many of the formulators of the modernist movement, Foster enjoyed her position of respect and prestige and did not need escape from her life in America. Besides being acknowledged as a professional woman in her own right, Foster was thrilled to be a central part of Quinn’s world. Her love for him was both emotional and intellectual. She saw both great intelligence in his recognition of artistic genius, and great goodness in his patronage, which enabled great talents of the literary and art world not only to survive, but also to develop and present their work to a quizzical world. In an undated fragment of a letter grouped with other letters of 1920, Foster wrote to Quinn:

John, you are to me the sun, the blue sky, the sea, the blue March-flowers, the wind in the firs, the tall firs themselves, and all lovely natural things. Love me or love me not, it makes no difference. To have found you is enough for me. You are, that suffices. The face, the eyes, the tall body, the gestures, the embodiment of dreams: the remembered voice, the mind, the spirit gentle beyond gentleness.

I may offend you with words like these. You have had many of them in your life I know, and I daresay you are tired of words. You have known beautiful women and brilliant women and they have loved you and

given you all that can be given. But still let me write them once for my own sake. There is no net in them; they will blow away like thistle-down. They are the tips of my fingers touching your closed eyes lightly. [. . .] I love you. (Foster/Murphy Collection; NYPL: Box 3; File 151)

Allusions in her diaries and correspondence to marriage plans that may have gone awry because of both Foster's and Quinn's previous commitments, his Catholic upbringing, and their combined sense of duty are all that indicate the depth of their relationship. During their trip to Paris in 1921, Quinn wrote in Foster's diary: "This is the happiest day of my life for the last 18 years. Its story cannot be written yet. She is beauty and perfection. I adore her" (Foster/Murphy Collection; NYPL: Box 4; File 273; 3 July 1921). Foster notes that the crumbling flowers pressed in the small, black notebook were taken from Picasso's garden. The memories pressed with them signify a time of her life rich with artistic style, grace, and the authority Quinn's presence increased, a time marked not only in her private writing, but also in the poem "Portrait," one of the first pieces in the 1923 *Rock-Flower*:

There was a willow tree at St. Germain
 And pointed yellow leaves upon the ground,
 Cool avenues of dusk and flames of flowers.
 The day we walked there, suddenly I walked
 With Death, not you, and could not find you there. (7. 27-31)

The impressionistic beauty of the memory is clouded with the presence of Quinn's illness, and Foster's realization that she would soon be alone. Besides her struggle with

the natural fear of loneliness which Quinn's cancer necessitated, Foster's persona grapples with the place of art in her life, both the plastic arts to which she had dedicated herself through Quinn's collection and the artistic creation which she wrestled with in her own work. The influences of John Quinn, of modern art, and of the mountain merge in an earlier verse of "Portrait":

The thought of you ensnares my mind; the thing
 I search for still escapes. I know there are
 Currents that flow in Being that elude
 The song, the marble. (If Art satisfies
 More than the moment, why, the sense is dulled
 That listens; music vanishes and leaves no trace.)
 I look to find your impress on the world,
 Your color in the sun, your voice in winds,
 Your warmth within the earth. You are not there,
 But cling like the rock-flower upon my mind
 Where all besides is frost and barrenness. (7. 11-21)

The rock-flower, a small but hardy white, lichen-like plant that springs up in mountain crevices is an important Foster image, signifying the creative struggle to endure in a moment frozen with grief, uncertainty, confusion or stagnation. The other signs of self-knowledge and personal relationship in the piece-- a memory, a sculpture, music, physical traits of the beloved, his voice, his touch-- vanish as the speaker perceives them. Only the rock-flower, embedded in the harsh world of the winter mountain, endures to indicate the

triumph of nature and, by extension, of the human spirit.

Foster credited Quinn with some of the most positive experiences of her life, but acknowledged her own intellectual powers as well, through which she might reconstruct life through poetry, especially through her Adirondack verse stories. Her conflicted sense of how art might help her define her own and Quinn's presence in the world, both during their time together and after his death, remains unresolved in this text which ends, "Let there be no more words. I find a dawn in you/ Whereof no man may speak [. . .] let that suffice" (8. 42-3). While Foster credited Quinn's powerful influence in her life with the presence of art which he enabled, she left room as well for her own creative authority which would continue to grow after Quinn's death.⁵ Whatever their public life had denied, their intimacy had become a sustaining force in Foster's life. Her final diary entry for 1924 reads:

July 28, 1924 Seven o'clock

John died at six-thirty. He did not recover consciousness. I lay awake until four o'clock then I fell asleep and dreamed. I dreamed they called me up there [. . .] would I carry him? I said I would and went to his bed--He was a baby naked and white instead of a man--I picked him up and wrapped him in something and walked the floor. He slept and waking lay on my breast and clung to it with small clinging fingers--His soul was the child--it had come to my arms. July 28--1924--July 28 1924

This is the end of the book. This is the end. "The rest is silence."

(Foster/Murphy Collection; NYPL: Box 4; File 275; Diary)

The creative force which Foster understood as male vision had already been defining itself in her poetry. The suckling child whom Quinn became for her in his death had appeared in her poem "Reincarnation," one year earlier:

Beloved, if there stir within my womb
 New life of yours and you should come to die,
 Usurp that dwelling place and softly lie
 Secure beneath my heart in the warm gloom.
 [. . .] Be quiet in my narrow darkened house.
 Quick-breathing, dream new dreams and take sweet rest.
 And when your lips shall suck from my full breast,
 In that last giving memory--shall arouse,
 Recovering your songs through melody
 That is the blood, the flesh, the soul of me. (*Rock-Flower* 106. 1-4, 9-14)

The similarity of the 1923 poem to the 1924 personal diary is striking. In addition, Foster's verse allusion to maternity recurs in a personal correspondence to her from Henri Roché, written February 28, 1922. In a letter which closes with the startling news of the abortion of Roché's lover's (perhaps his wife Helaine's) two-month pregnancy, he writes in great distress about Foster and Quinn:

[. . .] I am most sad about what you say about yourself. I had so strongly hoped for the contrary. I almost cannot imagine it [. . .] It seems to me so cruel and inexplicable. I had such hopes for both of you the day he left Paris.--It could not have been so if you both had lived over here. New

York destroys, prevents, postpones, which is the same. You are the only judge: an outsider cannot imagine you not becoming a mother--and him a father. For me you complete each other.-- There ought to be nothing against that, even if one has to look for freedom in another continent.

Perhaps he cannot change.

It may be good that some have to trans-substantiate in that way-- but I do not wish you were one of them.

(Foster/Murphy Collection; NYPL: Box 9; Personal Miscellaneous)

Although she saw herself as a capable, modern, independent woman, and although her poetry challenges gender inequities, Foster's conception of gender roles remained rigidly traditional, with maternity a powerful presence in her life, albeit through its absence. There is no purpose in speculating about whether or not Foster was pregnant with Quinn's child, but the presence of this topic in Roche's letter and the structure of the poem which is echoed in Foster's dream narration indicate the power of this relationship as it affected Foster's self-awareness and her art.

Certainly the loss of Quinn changed Foster's life forever. In the letters and papers available to me, extending from his death in 1924 until hers in 1971, there is no mention of another romantic involvement, or of even a casual relationship with a man after Matlack's death in 1933. When Aline Saarinen approached Foster in 1956 with a request for assistance in the writing of John Quinn's part in the advancement of art and literature⁶, the author and critic hesitated to intrude upon Foster's private world of memories. Foster responded exuberantly:

[. . .] No, Aline, you did not intrude on my privacy. I felt almost immediately after meeting you that I could share with you what I have shared with no one except John Quinn and I felt that--wherever he is--he had waited for you--even as I had waited--to break the silence that so long has shrouded his genius and his great achievements. As Peer Gynt said to Ase: 'Where was I as the whole man?' and we will answer much as she did--'in our hearts in our love'. I have reread my diary of the events of his last days and of the end when I went quietly mad. Only the most excruciating circumstances, the most unsolvable family situation prevented the dedication of the remainder of my life--all my time--to his life work. (Foster/Murphy Collection; NYPL: Box 3; File 163; 8/11/56)

Reading Foster's private diaries and letters, we are schooled in the ways in which she allowed her choices to advance and hinder her art. In the New York years, Foster luxuriated in her professional success and her personal relationships, always maintaining a veneer of reserve which left her relationship with Quinn out of gossip's reach. Although their friends and acquaintances seem to have been aware of their intimacy, Foster used her status as a married woman to maintain strict standards of propriety. Yet her marriage did not bind her to domesticity and the roles of wife and mother; essentially, while assuming a male role of breadwinner and protector for her family, Foster remained free to pursue her career and relationships as a single woman shielded by the marital state. At any rate, whatever limitations Foster's lifestyle placed on her daily actions, she worked within the patriarchal structure to access the power she saw and desired.

Serious Writing and the Dance of Dependency: *Passing Among Male Writers*

When Shari Benstock suggests that for the modernist woman choosing to be a “serious” writer meant not only writing for men, but also must “pass[ing] among male writers,” she, like Monique Wittig, locates authority in written discourse which was both heterosexual and male. “Choosing otherwise would put the woman writer at risk: her audience would be other women. . . and her reading public would be limited [. . .] She would not be viewed in important journals. To write as a heterosexual male had economic and political as well as aesthetic and psychological effects” (Benstock *Women of the Left Bank* 333). As Benstock demonstrates through the lives and works of her subjects, while the “women of the left bank” and their counterparts in America might choose alternative lifestyles in lesbianism, bisexuality, non-traditional heterosexuality, and singleness, their acknowledgment of the patriarchal structure of literary product continued. Foster’s devotion to a “male principle” of genius, and her withdrawal from an artistic life after Quinn’s death did indeed limit her impact as an artist; however, during the two decades in which she published most of her poetry, her writing was supported by critics and publishers, even as it criticized and transcended the gender boundaries Foster took pains to live within. Within her exploration of the male vision through her poetic personae, Jeanne Robert Foster found ways to express her antipathy for the patriarchal logos.

For example, in “The Road” Foster champions the lot of Annie, the young outcast of the Adirondack village, shunned as a harlot for her illegitimate little girl. The poem’s narrator is a child who asks, “ ‘Mother, what is a bad woman?’ ” (NOY 74. 23). The

mother responds by describing Annie's "badness" in terms of her "sin": "[. . .] [Y]ou are old enough/ To know this woman has a little girl/ And never had a husband: women who do that/ Are very wicked [. . .]" (NOY 74-6. 26-29). The Puritan code of the scarlet letter is embedded in the definition of the "good woman." The curious child approaches the house expecting to find a "shriveled hag struck with a witch's blight" only to discover a beautiful young woman with "June roses twisted in her hair" who offers raisin cookies and asks gently after the child's mother. The reader is stunned by the final lines:

I looked at her; some tender, early bloom
 Of manhood touched me, *and I lied to her*
 To see her smile, and asked her to come down
 And see my new white calf; it seemed just fair
 That I should make up to her for the rest. (76. 58-62)

Anticipating a little girl's comment on her mother's indictment of the ostracized woman whom the child finds "younger than anything I've ever seen," the reader discovers that the child speaker is, in fact, a boy. Foster's assumption of the male perspective, and her rejection through that perspective of the village's hostility, infuses the boy's innocent assumption of male guilt with the sensitive quality Foster had often grieved for. In the narrator's "early bloom of manhood" he is not yet the young woman's judge. He recognizes instinctively that the punishment inflicted on her and her child are a result of male sexual privilege, simultaneously condemned and reinforced by women like his own mother, whose chastity rejects female sexuality as promiscuousness. The "rest" for whom he will atone are simultaneously all other men, and all the village inhabitants who

have abandoned such female victims. Through his own innocence, symbolized by his granting access to the white calf, the young boy will attempt to be “fair” to the woman, and through his lies (his sin) he will make her smile. The allusions of the poem are replete with social dicta and transgressions of those rules, beautifully twisted together like the thorny June roses in the young woman’s hair.

Coupling sexual codes with those of courtship and marriage, Foster follows “The Road” with “Marriage,” a poem which begins with a young girl’s fears of entrapment, answered by the comforting words of her lover to accept the harshness of life in order to reap the sweetness of their love. In contrast to the fate of the unwed mother, the propriety of marriage, toil, and bliss are asserted in the poem’s first two-thirds, summarized by the wife’s “Oh, it is curious how I came at last/ To love the ministry of daily needs!/ [. . .] we two servants of the growing life/ That gathered round us.” (77. 35-6, 44-5). At the conclusion of the poem the widowed wife considers her marriage in retrospect:

Now at the end, when all the work is done
 And he has gone, I somehow plainly see
 That marriage meant the losing of one’s self
 Within another life, and other lives.
 I was a wife and I was mother too:
 That left no idle hours to fret and mourn.
 I gave as God must give--for He is lost
 within His children’s lives here on the earth. (NOY 79. 51-58)

We might read the final verse as the pious resolution of a woman’s lot in life: God has

willed that I serve my husband and children and my gracious acceptance of His will extends His kingdom on earth. Such a traditional interpretation reflects the Judaeo-Christian ideology behind the established gender roles of men and women in which Foster was schooled.

But another look at the final lines suggests the irony in such an acceptance. The widow “gave as God must give,” yet her understanding of the result of such self-sacrifice is not presence within the other, but absence: “for He is lost.” Although the goodness of humankind may reflect the goodness of God, human selfishness and evil more often mean the loss of divinity on earth. Within God’s total sacrifice of Himself to the free will of His creatures, Foster locates the loss of the woman’s self in the product of her life, marriage. Thus the first lines, “It was a trap, I said and we were caught / Netted like two unwary, fledgling birds” (1-2) express rebellion on the part of the young bride. This sentiment is shared by Foster’s savvy contemporary, Dorothy Parker, in her prose monologue “The Waltz,” in which the distraught speaker is “trapped like a trap in a trap” by an oafish male who steps all over her (*The Portable Dorothy Parker* 47). By the final lines of “Marriage,” the angry outburst has developed into the widow’s quiet realization of her self-erasure. The conclusion is the more terrible for its cloak of placid acceptance. Unlike the acerbic Parker, Foster may have nodded politely to gender traditions, but her texts subtly questioned and often bitterly rejected them.

Julia Kristeva’s three-tiered conception of the possible subject positions an individual might assume in the formulation of a feminist view is useful in suggesting a mind set of feminism for Foster. In *Sexual/Textual Politics*, Toril Moi notes the three

levels of awareness:

1. Women demand equal access to the symbolic order. Liberal feminism.

Equality.

2. Women reject the male symbolic order in the name of difference.

Radical feminism. Femininity extolled.

3. (This is Kristeva's own position.) Women reject the dichotomy between masculine and feminine as metaphysical. (12)

A reading of the feminist ideology of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries suggests that contemporaries of Foster fall within the first two categories. In the American feminist movement which stirred with the 1848 Seneca Falls "Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions," and peaked with the 1920 passage of the twentieth amendment, the prevailing desire in the fight for rights was the achievement of equality. Besides demanding the right to vote, the right for equal treatment under the law, and the right to agency within marriage, the Seneca Falls Declaration, using as its model the Declaration of Independence, resolved finally, in a presentation by Lucretia Mott, "[. . .] That the speedy success of our cause depends upon the zealous and untiring efforts of both men and women, for the overthrow of the monopoly of the pulpit, and for the securing to woman an equal participation with men in the various trades, professions, and commerce" (*Feminism: The Essential Historical Writings* 82). The expansion of a woman's world to include the masculine arenas of enfranchisement, trade, finance, politics, law, education, and travel constitutes the basis of feminist lobbying for women's rights in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This appeal for inclusion in the world of

power constructed by and for men, and/or of recreating power structures to embrace and extol the lives of women, reflects the world in which Foster actually lived.

Although Foster was not one of the seventeen women asked to write for the liberal magazine *The Nation* in the mid-twenties, the special installments entitled “These Modern Women” which began on December 1, 1926 suggest that her ideas about negotiating power were shared by acknowledged feminists of her day. In “The Making of a Militant,” Inez Haynes Irwin states that marriage seems “the cruelest of traps,” escaping that entrapment herself by never sewing, embroidering, crocheting, knitting, cooking or cleaning, but rather working and hiring others to do such tasks (*These Modern Women* 39). Journalist Mary Alden Hopkins explains: “My own suffering [. . .] opened my eyes to the suffering all about me [. . .] I discovered that I was not the only woman uncomfortable in the world [. . .] [but] I do not know what woman’s job in life is, any more than I know what man’s job is [. . .]” (44-5). Sue Shelton White, editor of the Woman’s Party journal the *Suffragist*, and supporter of Eleanor Roosevelt’s work, admits: “Marriage is too much of a compromise; it lops off a woman’s life as an individual. Yet the renunciation too is a lopping off. We choose between the frying-pan and the fire--both very uncomfortable” (52). Specifically addressing the problems of a woman author, Alice Mary Kimball, teacher, journalist and poet confesses to having sought out intellectual men as a young newspaper reporter. “I gave tactful publicity to learned professors [. . .] to handsome violinists, to a shrewd corporation lawyer [. . .], to a railroad vice-president [. . .] Long after it was clear to me that I was only bored by the organization of labor groups I kept on in order to enjoy the conversation and the approval

of a certain liberal leader who reminded me of father” (57). The reasons for pandering to men might vary, but the force of their presence rings out clearly in every case. These are the words of women who lived feminism within a country willing to pay lip service to the concept of equal rights, but unwilling to make the many changes in daily life needed to bring about equality. And so the first issues they (and Foster) confronted concerned the accession of male-dominated power structures by women, and the elevation of the very concept of femininity as a power structure of its own.

While Kristeva’s own position, a rejection of the definitions masculine and feminine as socially constructed and metaphysical, is in fact the most logical feminist position, it is also the most difficult to implement while functioning within a society which is, in fact, a patriarchy. Therefore, while expatriate modernist women such as Stein, Barnes, Woolf, and H.D. might reconfigure gender by reshaping and redefining social norms as well as language and style in their avant-garde texts, more traditional authors--Edna St. Vincent Millay, Edith Wharton, Katherine Mansfield, Willa Cather, Dorothy Parker, for example--create women who subvert masculine privilege through characters and authorial voices which seem to be in compliance with social dicta.

Edith Wharton’s feminist ideology is useful in shedding light on Foster’s. As a product of New York’s elite class that schooled girls specifically for the marriage market, Wharton’s texts argued against the limiting of women’s intellectual and artistic capabilities, the result as she saw it of American restrictions of women to the society of other women. Wharton insists that to gain breadth and depth, women must be in the company of men. “ The woman whose mind is attuned to men’s minds has a much larger

view of the world, and attaches much less importance to trifles, because men, being usually brought by circumstances into closer contact with reality, insensibly communicate their breadth of view to women” (Benstock, *Women of the Left Bank* 67; from Wharton, *French Ways and Their Meanings*. [New York: Appleton, 1919] 119). It would be many years before this attitude would be addressed as a complicit form of misogyny itself. At the time, it must have seemed a reasonable critique of the restrictions placed on women and their opportunities for intellectual development. In her merciless examinations of the New York upper crust, Wharton repeatedly articulated the problem of the lady fashioned for society, for appraisal by men, and for the competitive gaze of other women. Her description of Lily Bart illustrates the problem masterfully:

[. . .] He had a confused sense that she must have cost a great deal to make
 [. . .] He was aware that the qualities distinguishing her from the herd of her sex were chiefly external: as though a fine glaze of beauty and fastidiousness had been applied to vulgar clay. Yet the analogy left him unsatisfied, for a coarse texture will not take a high finish; and was it not possible that the material was fine, but that circumstance had fashioned it into a futile shape? (*The House of Mirth* 27; ch.1)

Although Foster’s early work in modeling and fashion journalism could certainly have led her to Lily Bart’s futility, the author did not see herself as a lovely, perhaps fine, but ultimately useless object, nor did her admirers. Today we read ambivalence in her scrupulous adherence to the trappings of gender; nevertheless, Foster thrived in the most cosmopolitan cities of her day, aligning herself with men and women of intellectual,

social, and economic power, remaining financially independent while reshaping herself as an urban sophisticate. She operated within a world of powerful men in a way which parallels Wharton's privileging of the male intellect, and which confirms Benstock's speculation about the power of men to affirm intelligence (or talent) in women. In a diary entry for Sunday, July 18, 1920, Foster shares her thoughts about the basis of her creativity:

[. . .] Bought The Outlook for Arthur Symons' review of Iris Tree's poems. She is 'made' by that one review. I wept--not for envy but over the years of ignorance, over the slow plodding toward the light that ended in vision; when I no longer care to see, art alone remains to me with moments of conscious delusion--and art cannot spring from me save through the masculine vision--

(NYPL; Foster/Murphy Collection: Box 4; File 270)

In this diary entry, Foster acknowledges her own desire for literary recognition through her tears, shed both for her own failures and for the depth of her ambition, not necessarily for celebrity, but for viable artistic expression. Art is the vision necessary for life. But the vision is characterized as masculine. Like Edith Wharton, whose memoirs acknowledge Walter Berry, Henry James, Robert Norton, John Hugh Smith and other strong male figures as the catalysts of her creative energy, Jeanne Robert Foster emerged from the strictures of nineteenth-century Victorian culture; for both women the political and aesthetic senses flourished through alliances with men. The "masculine vision" can be defined literally as the perceptions of men, but also, in light of Foster's previously

quoted text (see 139-140), as the strength united to love through which power can be pardoned.

Foster's conception of "masculinity" repeatedly reveals itself to be her name for attributes of psychological and emotional strength and wisdom coupled to a keenly developed aesthetic sense. Another text fragment from the Foster/Murphy Collection, dated about 1922-1923, suggests ways in which the feminine and masculine vision unite. "It is a question simply of knowing ourselves a little which [. . .] requires great wisdom--and then of seeking an inner discipline, of espousing it with love and also of knowing resources and means--and of not wishing to go too far beyond them but progressively until death--" (Foster/Murphy Collection; NYPL : Box 4; File 279). The contradictions of Foster's life take on meaning when read as the progressive and insistent development of her own and society's resources, tempered by inner discipline and human charity. Every opportunity becomes a lesson in autonomy as the self inexorably grows. Echoing the cycles of nature learned on the mountain, Foster's growth is quiet but constant, a movement toward unity and harmony within one's natural and social environment.

Foster expresses this self-actualizing in terms of gender imbalance in a text fragment copied in her hand from the writings of Irish author James Stephens,⁷ whom Quinn greatly admired and with whose philosophy on modern art Foster, with full access to Quinn's papers, would have been well acquainted. It is long, but important to an understanding of Foster's concept of gender:

Fantastic as it may seem, I think that something of the masculinity of man
has been submerged and that this 'something' has rendered us all less

sensitive and more touchy. I am inclined to call it feminism for want of a better definition. It began with Nietzsche, a female voice squealing for strength and calling its squeal philosophy; simultaneously Rodin began his female contortions and he, too, and all his critics called it strength. They all try to make up by violence the power which the Greeks got by repose. In Italy with the cubists, vorticists and dadaists the exact same strain is at work--and in America, in the countries of Europe, although the disease is radically social, it has been expressed publicly in the arts. In England the expression has been political, and the feminist movement there differs in nothing but the retracing of Expression from that which is tormenting the rest of the world. In poetry--the male sensitive quality is dead.

(Foster /Murphy Collection; NYPL: Box 3; File 222)

Stephens's use of the term *feminism* is problematic. In his call for *masculinity*, and his mourning for the death of "the male sensitive quality," Stephens frames gender-determined definitions of artistic response. The text indicates that masculinity is aligned with valuable human response to the quotidian, while a whining dissatisfaction with the social structures of Foster's day is characterized as feminism, "squealing for strength and calling its squeal philosophy." In addition, dis-ease, dissatisfaction and restlessness are attributed to a type of feminine weakness.

Foster's notation of this text, written in her hand and placed with her personal papers suggests that she found merit in its concepts. In a series of letters written to a friend (Dora) in 1969, she reiterated what she had intimated often in her commentaries on

art and life. Friends had been campaigning to gather her manuscripts, letters, diaries, books and artwork into a Jeanne Robert Foster Memorial to be housed in an old one-room schoolhouse in Warren County, New York. The thought “sen[t] cold chills” down her spine. She argues in the letter: “I have no desire for fame and I have a horror of being accused of egoity. I have had a most eventful life and tried to serve the great men who came into my life but all I did is rewarded by the John Quinn Biography and the biography of John Butler Yeats [. . .] I hope it cannot happen. All genius is male anyway [. . .] not female” (Blue Mountain Lake Adirondack Museum Archives, Jeanne Robert Foster Manuscript Collection). Was the final disclaimer sincere humility? Or was Foster’s comment to an old friend a somewhat ironical aside about the lack of recognition of female talent? At first I read Foster’s statement as an unattractive privileging of the male intellect, but closer analysis suggests otherwise.

Acknowledging slippage between Foster’s terms *male* and *female* as implied in Stephens’s quote and in Foster’s poetry, we can read an overlapping of the traditional male and female gender characteristics. If nineteenth-century bourgeois culture attributed power, force, aggression, stoicism, independence, and marketplace wealth to the masculine, and passivity, nurturing, emotionality, sensitivity, and dependence to the feminine, Foster’s twentieth-century usage tweaks the terms.⁸ Basically, Stephens’s philosophy defines the masculine as classically Greek, the Platonic ideal of male inner strength, repose, wisdom, creativity, artistic sensitivity--the ability to withstand social upheaval and recognize within chaos the seeds of social growth. In Plato’s *Symposium* Pausanias defines the Heavenly Aphrodite (as opposed to the Common Aphrodite) as

springing forth from the god Uranus (hacked to pieces by Chronus his son, and thrown into the sea) with no female genealogy. Her image governs the most ideal form of love, free from wantonness, stronger and more intelligent. ("Speech of Pausanias" 45-53). Just as Pausanias argues that Heavenly Aphrodite, wiser in her conception of love, inspires the most perfect form of it based on intellect and between men, Stephens aligns his sense of the ideal social and aesthetic sense with the masculine. But Stephens's sense of ideal masculinity, like Pausanias's, includes positive feminine qualities--patience, endurance, moral depth, creative response, sensitivity to the human condition--those qualities which express the best aspects of the women Foster knew in the mountain and modernist communities. The beginning of the paragraph from which Foster copied Stephens's statement on the arts stresses the absence of feeling in the modern male artists Stephens witnessed. He argues that despite all their technical expertise and originality, "they seldom bring anything off which one wants to remember." Stephens further proclaims that the modernists suffer from a lack of sensibility. "That is, they are not sensitive, and, whether in poetry or painting, this lack nullifies every other good quality they have. They see everything but they don't feel anything, and consequently [. . .] they mostly know there is something wrong which they try to remedy by tricks [. . .]"(Reid 431-2).

This vision of modern writing compelled James Stephens to say of *The Portrait of the Artist As a Young Man*, "I don't like Joyce's work, but he can write," and of Pound's *Noh*, that he had read it with "a kind of complicated pleasure" (Reid 309, 319). Whereas he found their techniques inspiring in their ingenuity and stylistic perfection, he found their works "soulless." James Stephens's conception of true artistic sensibility

embodies attributes of gender which his day variously identified as masculine or feminine, but which he subsumed under the ancient Greek term “the male sensitive quality.” In her ability to tell the stories of the mountain in great detail and with absolute realism, Foster became proficient at evoking the kind of true sentiment which Stephens finds lacking in the more abstract forms of modernism. When Foster wished to express the lack of human emotion in her characters, she applied her technique to both male and female characters, thus creating men and women whose lack of sensitivity renders them as gender stereotypes.

In contrast to a balanced vision of the complementary natures of masculine and feminine, the political and social unrest of the fledgling twentieth century and the upheaval of the Western world during and after World War I is termed “feminine” in Stephens’s statement. The “feminism” alluded to is not the positive assertion of women’s rights represented by contemporary feminists such as Emma Goldman, Emmeline Pankhurst, or Margaret Sanger, whose work in the struggle for equality represents qualities Foster associates with positive masculinity. Rather, Stephens’s pejorative “feminine” is Edith Wharton’s “futile fashioning,” the social marketing of women in which many women themselves are complicit.⁹

In fact, according to Mary Loeffelholz’s review of feminist history, the term “feminism” did not occur regularly until 1913, and was not common in America until the 1920’s when it signified a new movement in the fight for women’s rights (Cott, *Experimental Lives* 5). With suffrage no longer a central binding issue for the women’s movement, the new feminists (including some men) sought a more broadly-based

equality, grounded in the fundamental humanness of women (I am not referring to the philosophy of humanism which privileges men), not just in their political right to vote. Their focus sheds light on Foster's conception of "feminism" and the "masculine vision" since the new feminists proffered a conception of "woman" which moved beyond previous gender definitions in its merging of masculine and feminine "spheres." Reconceptualizing femininity included indicting the term as the Victorians had known it, with its associations of passive, cloying weakness. This re-visioning is articulated by Loeffelholz as recognition of a type of early-twentieth-century "glass ceiling" which caused early feminists to question their own abilities: "Since the woman's struggle had presumably been won, [. . .] many of them hesitated to blame discrimination for their difficulties; they blamed themselves instead, as individuals, for not sufficiently internalizing the standards of the male professional world" (Cott *Experimental Lives* 5). Reflecting a move past blame into re-creation of gender roles and assumption of social power, Foster's "feminine" is united to "masculine" in a metaphor which is both mythic and sexual: "Art cannot spring from me save through the masculine vision." Thus, either single gender represents a lack, and Foster, like Wharton and the early feminists, locates women's equality in their direct accession of the male world.

The power of this union and the devastation of its absence, both in life and in art is articulated again and again in the Adirondack texts. For example, in "Creeping Charley," the central male character is very like the women made invisible by crushing marriages: "I don't know anything he ever did/ That one could speak of [. . .] / [. . .] I don't know what he thought of as he sat/ Always a-listening, always creeping round" (AP

34.34-8). Charley is named for the plant that aimlessly spreads everywhere and grows without regard to place. The villagers discount Charley because he makes no social, political, or economic mark on the land, on his homestead, on the village. “[. . .] All his life we thought / That we should never miss him when he went. / How can you miss a thing you’ve never known?” (35. 45-7). Yet somewhere in his sixty years of life, Charley who was “too scared ever to look a woman in the eyes” or be looked at by one, nevertheless made a mark on the community. “Now that he’s gone it’s queer that some of us / find that we miss him more than other folks / Who made some stir [. . .].” Like the woman whose presence is taken for granted and whose work is ignored, Charley’s presence is unmarked until he is dead. And even then, his gentle ways make Charley an enigma: “Why some folks / Pass through this world, I never could make out. [. . .] but I suppose / They have their uses [. . .]” (35.59-68). Unlike the powerful men who defy nature in the lumberjack poems, or the gruff men of the Ben Enoch poems and “John Centerbar,” who sacrifice the people around them to the success of their farms, Charley is a timid and sensitive soul. Still, his quiet ways leave a strangely forceful presence among his neighbors, and his legacy to the church of land and cash for the needy shames those who called him Creeping Charley.

Creeping Charley’s counterpart is Mary Gould, whose art of ferreting out the best wild berries is described in “Mary Gould, Professional Berry Picker.” To most of the neighbors, Mary was just a woman who “went out working--sometimes for pay, / But mostly just to help folks in trouble” (AP 57: 22-3). No one pays attention to the special secrets Mary shares only with the narrator, who remembers herself as a child of fourteen.

Because she reads the signs of the land, the timothy indicating strawberries, the places where the richest soil lay under the meadows, the time of early dew best for picking, the proper color of ripeness, how to layer blackberry leaves to keep the berries whole and fresh, and because she patiently waits for the right harvest moment, Mary profits from the earth's yield as no one else can. "When we strike the main road folks will be looking / to see what we've got and where we picked them. / Not many will walk five miles--ten up here and back[. . .]" (58: 82-4). Quotidian power, like Charley's, leaves a faint but lasting impression. The final lines of the poem are Mary's: "We'll give the sick / some of all we pick any time of year, and jelly. / I'll teach you how to make raspberry jelly, / And the best raspberry pie you ever ate." (58: 86-89). They are not words of worldly power, but they indicate the strong, centered daily actions which make life bearable and sometimes joyful in the living and the remembering.

Such remembrance is the strength of Ben Hewitt of "Union Blue," whose son died in the Civil War before his father's eyes. Faithful to the natural ways, Ben boasted that he "cured a cancer once / With nothing more than plain green plantain leaves" and believed in "hemlock sweats / For fever and for all your shaking chills" (NOY 67: 41-48). When a bunch of ruffians attacked Hewitt demanding his money, the old man let them burn his feet over his own stove, but still he would not give over the Union Blue coat of his son.

It's sonny's coat; he died at Fredericksburg.

And all these years I've kept my money there

In his coat pocket--out of lonesomeness;

For every time I went to get a coin,
 I'd think of him when first he crept to me
 and, catching at my boots, pulled himself up
 And called out 'Dada.' [. . .] His laugh was like the song
 The creek makes underneath that jutting rock.
 I built the house up here because I heard
 The sound one day when I bent there to drink.
 [. . .] I couldn't let those robbers lay their hands
 On Sonny's coat. I'll have it laid at last
 Inside my coffin, when I come to die. (69-70.74-84, 100-103)

Ben's quiet courage might be deemed foolishness by the worldly, but Foster's underscoring of the peace in his "queer ideas of common things" insists that the reader admire his defense of Sonny's memory through the icon of his uniform. Again in simple acts of conviction we see a blending of the sensitivity and strength which mark humanity without regard to gender.

For Foster then, as for Annette Kolodny and Judith Fetterley today, artistic strength lies not in stereotypical preconceptions about masculine power and feminine sensitivity, but rather in the human qualities that naturally inhere within each individual who is "gender balanced." In *The Lay of the Land*, Kolodny addresses the personification of the land as woman, a strategy that has allowed both male and female writers to incorporate the strength and power of the mother's persona. She refers to American writers's creation of "the possibility that the ideally beautiful and bountiful terrain might

be lifted forever out of the canon of pastoral convention and invested with the reality of daily experience” (5-6). Foster’s poetry, determined to recreate the everyday life of the Adirondacks, and at the same time to universalize its message about the end result of “mastering the land,” confronts Kolodny’s “inevitable paradox” of responding to a metaphorically feminized landscape, and consuming it in the act of progress (Kolodny 7). This aspect of Foster’s poetry has been discussed in Chapter Two in conjunction with the development of the Adirondack Park and the creation of “forever wild” territories.

If Annette Kolodny locates the weakness in the American relationship to the land, indeed in America itself, within the very pose of empty force which devalues sensitivity, subordinating it to strength, Judith Fetterley articulates a corollary of this opposition of strength and sensitivity. Referring to the marginalization of women’s writing in the nineteenth century, she argues that a male theory of literature excludes feminine qualities as outside of the American “man’s story.” Fetterley’s argument incorporates Nina Baym’s as presented in “Melodramas of Beset Manhood.” Baym concludes that theories of American fiction have traditionally excluded women authors because they equate Americanness with male qualities. “[I]n the study of American literature there exists an equation between ‘masculinity’ and ‘Americanness’ parallel to the fusion [of] ‘male’ and ‘American writer’ ” (*Provisions* 22-3). This tension between the land as female and the storyteller as male is present in Foster’s comment on the male sensitive quality and the gender inequities which she observed in modern society. From her privileged position within the male domain, Foster coopts the “male sensitive quality” in the multiple voices of her mountain poetry.

The Richness of the *Poorhouse Sketches*: Hoes and Bows

Much of Foster's approach to the function of gender is revealed in *Poorhouse Sketches* from which this chapter's epigraph is taken. There are only two poems in this set; whether Foster had intended to expand the text to incorporate other mountain "types" is unknown. The two mini-tales are about an old, lame man, "Peleg Skinner," and an anonymous old woman in "The Green Bow." They are residents in the county poorhouse, and their stories are told by a disinterested narrator, part of an undetermined "we" who drive "up the hill" in the opening line. Peleg is met on the road; he is "hobbling down to the corn field with his hoe," and although he has been in the county House for years the narrator notes an animal freedom in his eyes. The second resident is specified only as "A little old woman who was sweeping." "The Green Bow" relegates its subject to silence, to a pantomime of work and reactions to her observers. Her moves are interpreted for the narrator and the reader by "The Wife of the Man Who Kept the County House," herself nameless, relegated to a subcategory in the patriarchal hierarchy of the rural establishment, the enforcer of the system in which she is both victimizer and victim. Both the male and female inmates are characterized as peculiar, pathetic paupers; yet, the tonal difference in Foster's telling of their simple tales is crucial.

Peleg's biblical name is itself noteworthy, occurring first in Genesis 10:25 where we read that this first son of Eber was a direct line descendant of Shem, one of the three sons of Noah: Shem, Ham and Japheth. Shem and Japheth were blessed because, unlike Ham who looked upon Noah's drunken nakedness and left him, they respected their father by covering him in his dishonor. As a reward, Noah blessed Shem and Japheth,

making Ham's son Canaan their slave, and praying that Japheth's land would grow to include Shem's (Genesis 10: 18-28). Thus, Shem and his descendants are placed "between": they are blessed for their sense of honor and rewarded with dignity, but they are eventually to be subsumed under the leadership of another tribe. Peleg's name is noted in every biblical version as having been chosen "because it was during his time that tribes divided up the earth" (*Scriptures for Faith Sharing: Holy Bible* 10). Subsequent references to Peleg, in Genesis and Chronicles always refer to Peleg's genealogy and the sons he begat, culminating in the primary Old Testament patriarch, Abraham (Chronicles, 1: 24-27).

Foster's choice of Peleg as the pauper's name suggests multiple allusions: he is an honorable man in a strong patriarchal line; additionally, he is the dividing point of the human race, victor and vanquished, male lineage and female submission; finally, he is humbled and respected by his station in life, subservient to his biblical ancestors (and in this text, to the state) but still a crucial link in the patriarchal lineage. Not only, then, is the male pauper named while the female pauper is not, but also the name chosen for the male pauper is infused with Judaeo-Christian authority. Because the *Poorhouse Sketches* so clearly illustrate Foster's style and subtle manipulations of meaning, they are worth quoting fully:

Peleg Skinner

We drove up the hill to the County House;

On the way we met Peleg Skinner

Hobbling down to the corn field with his hoe.

He had been in the county House for years,
But the look of the free wild animal
Hunting for itself had never died out of his eyes.

‘How do they use you up here now, Peleg?’

I asked; ‘do they give you any butter?’

‘No,’ he snorted, ‘there’s never any butter

Except on Sundays; we get molasses,

But I never did like black molasses.

Oh, it’s good enough, good enough for paupers;

Maybe if my rheumatism gets better

I can leave this fall and go to farming

And look out for myself. But I’m afraid,

Because I talk with the other paupers

And they’re afraid. So we keep on staying.

It’s a disease that’s catching; I hoe corn

To get the fear I can’t make a living

Out of mind. When I first came up here

I was sure I could get away in the Spring,

But when Spring came I put off going out

Till Fall, and somehow kept just staying on.

It’s all right if they’d give us china cups

Instead of tin ones to drink our tea out of,
 And good butter instead of molasses.' (NOY 47-48: 1-26)

Peleg's poem determines certain things about its subject: Peleg is met on the road, moving away from the poorhouse which takes on, in his telling of his story, the aspect of an open residence from which he may choose to leave as well as to stay. Additionally, he is going to do his work, his hoeing of corn. Peleg is characterized as "free," "wild," an animal hunting at will, and his eyes are alive with this natural freedom. His staying at the County House, in fact, becomes a choice determined by "disease"-- fear caught from "the other paupers," an illness like the rheumatism which conspires to keep him in this place when really, he might go off on his own "And look out for myself." Although the phrase "other paupers" (line 15) indicates that Peleg sees himself as a part of the group, he separates himself from them by explaining that he always had and still has a plan for leaving, for making a living on his own. He maintains some connection to a livelihood. farming: "I hoe corn/ To get the fear I can't make a living/ Out of mind" (19-20). For Peleg, the County House becomes a sort of residence hotel, albeit a badly managed one in his eyes. Note that the narrator asks Peleg immediately upon seeing him how he is "used" in the place. The question resonates on two levels. First, the narrator's question indicates a level of respect for the old man, called by name, seen as important enough to be engaged in conversation, consulted about his treatment. Second, the choice of words, "How do they *use* you up here now, Peleg?" (italics mine) although functioning as an idiomatic verb phrase, meaning "How are things? Do they *abuse* you?" also directs the

reader's attention to the term "use" as a noun. Here, Foster subtly implies that the man is still "of use"-- to the poorhouse administrators, to its inhabitants, to the narrator, to society in general, and most importantly, to himself. The question is followed by inquiries about Peleg's comfort, resulting in a focus on the man's birthright: a hard-working, useful man is to be treated with respect and his domestic comforts are to be provided. "[. . .] [D]o they give you butter?" the narrator asks. The answer is a "snort"-- "No [. . .] we get molasses,/ but I never did like black molasses." Peleg may be a pauper in the County House, but he still expresses indignation at his deprivation. The narrator does not comment positively or negatively; in fact there is no response noted. But the final word of the poem is Peleg's, who as subject and agent is empowered by articulation of his opinion: "It's all right if." We infer that the old man would be able to reconcile his being in this place, *if*. If he were given good butter instead of cheap molasses, and china cups instead of tin ones, then he would consider the arrangement of his hoeing and the County House's provision a fair exchange.

Foster's disregard of the implied subjunctive in "It's all right if" additionally sublimates her meaning. Since Peleg is referring to the realm of possibility-- if the poorhouse management "were" to recognize his proper rights-- the phrase should be "It'd be all right if." By employing the indicative, Foster accomplishes two things: she colors Peleg's speech with local idiom as she did with the placement of "use" in the first question. This choice is, of course, part of the aptness of Adirondack dialect, placing the reader within the mountain community via its language. But, in addition, Foster allows Peleg to express acceptance of his existence: *it is* all right that he is in the County House,

even with bad molasses and tin cups, because he still asserts his masculine privilege. By maintaining his right to work, and through that right his ability to move freely to and from the house, Peleg maintains the first order of patriarchy. He is the gatherer-hunter who is respected (albeit minimally) in the outside world.

From 1848 on, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels had established the primacy of the physical, that which can be acted upon, in their political agenda of dialectical materialism whereby all reality is reduced to matter, the material taking precedence over the intellectual or spiritual. Although their philosophy led to the socialist antithesis of capitalism, the ascendancy of material goods is of course a central assumption in American capitalist theory, grounded in American patriarchal tradition. In *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir characterizes male and female interaction with the environment in terms of the subject's desire and ability to interact with the environment in order to transform it. She defines male behavior as transcendent in its generation of progress, and in its desire to move the present into the future, manipulating that movement through his personal actions. As man stabilizes and objectifies woman, her ego is overwhelmed and transcended by a sovereign social conscience which replaces subjectivity. "The drama of woman lies in this conflict between the fundamental aspirations of every subject (*ego*)-- who always regards the self as the essential--and the compulsions of a situation in which she is the inessential" (De Beauvoir xxxv).

Thus, male authority becomes more firmly entrenched in and acknowledged by society with every successful project which produces some change (perceived as positive, as progress) in the environment. In addition, male confidence increases through the

individual's ability to effect such changes and to be recognized for their resulting product. On the other hand, women, characterized in patriarchal societies as concerned with the maintenance and preservation of life, inhabit rather than expand their environments in their assigned roles as preservers and reproducers of the world. De Beauvoir summarizes: "[. . .] the male principle creates to maintain, the female principle maintains to create [. . .]" (35). As the "other" in an essentialist interpretation of biology as destiny, woman becomes chained to the domestic, to child-bearing and rearing, to nurture as a result of nature interpreted by a male dominant society. In this sense, Peleg's tale can be read as one of ascendancy, because his ability to work in the world toward the production of a useful product, the result of transforming efforts (farming) places him within (although perhaps in the margins of) the patriarchal circle of De Beauvoir's transcendent beings.

Peleg's status is further enhanced by the second part of *Poorhouse Sketches*, "The Green Bow," which elevates the old man by juxtaposing his sketch with that of the nameless old woman. The second poem in fact, begins with the departure of Peleg, free in the phrase, "He went on." In contrast, the old woman is powerless:

"The Green Bow"

He went on and we drove up the long windy hill
 And stopped the horse in front of the main building.
 A little old woman who was sweeping
 The low porch dropped her broom and ran.
 The Wife of the Man Who Kept the County House
 Stepped gingerly along the entryway,

And took grudging account of our errands.

“Why did the little old lady run away?” I asked.

The Wife of the Man Who Kept the County House

Laughed, and said, “Oh, she’s crazy; she’s been here

For twenty years; she has no folks at all.

No one ever comes up here to see her,

But someway--I don’t know how she got it--

She found a green bow, a small satin thing

Such as you’d wear at your neck,--it’s her knick-knack;

And when anyone drives up here she runs out

And pins that bow on her drilling dress.

She’ll be here in a minute if you’ll wait.”

She came soon--hitching down the corridor--

And picked up her broom. On her patched drilling dress,

Threadbare with age, faded, ugly, pathetic,

Hanging in coarse folds on her spare frame, A green satin bow was

Pinned with a safety pin.

She curtsied to us and went on sweeping,

A look of satisfied vanity, immeasurable content

On her wrinkled face.

“She worships that bow,”

Said the Wife of the Man Who Kept the County House;

“I humor her and let her have it; she’s a worker.

I wouldn’t wonder, if she ever lost it

Or the thing wore out, but it might kill her.” (NOY 48-49. 1-31)

The first four lines are filled with movement, expressing both control and powerlessness. As Peleg moves on, so do the visitors, cloaked in the gender anonymous, first person “we.” Although the long hill resists them with its incline and its wind, the drivers are forceful and persist, arriving at the main building (not an outbuilding), where they stop the horse in front. They are in control of the situation, of the horse, of the time and place of rest. Immediately Foster moves to the image of the woman-- little, old, sweeping a “low” porch, but even this diminutive position and task seem to be overwhelming when strangers arrive, for she drops the broom and runs. Unlike Peleg who enters immediately into conversation with the empowered “we,” expressing his opinions and placing himself into relationships with the rest of society, the little old woman flees. The entrance of the only other character-- a female-- is immediate; she is marked by connotation, set into the hierarchy in one of the traditional patriarchal relationships allotted to women: The Wife of the Man Who Kept the County House. Dickinsonian in title, Dickensian in demeanor, she is never described. Yet we understand her slippery agency by her “ginger” stepping and “grudging” acknowledgment of the visitors. Acting on her own, she has no authority; acting as her husband’s agent, she is bold and subtly cruel. Her response to the visitors’s question about the old woman’s disappearance is a

mirthless laugh, as she impugns the little old woman's past, present and future with "Oh, she's crazy; she's been here / For twenty years; she has no folks at all./No one ever comes up here to see her [. . .]" (10-12). The old woman, like the wife in "Marriage," is erased. She has no connection to the world of men, either through friends, relatives or history of transcendent behavior. She is relegated to the lower case and anonymity. The Wife's explanation of the old woman's action--the fetching of the green bow with which she adorns herself--is offered in bitterness, capped by her ironic largesse in letting the old woman have the pathetic decoration. The Wife's words, "I humor her and let her have it; she's a worker" (29), contain none of the acknowledgment of position which Peleg's hoeing implies. The old woman is tied to the County House; her work is of the most menial nature, not producing food as does Peleg's, nor allowing her to move away from the brutal gaze of the Man Who Kept the County House, nor his Wife's, both tools of the larger society, marked by their capitalized position titles.

The old woman is allowed the bow because without it she might lose her fragile connection to the realm of usefulness, to De Beauvoir's paralyzing feminine world of maintenance and preservation of life. Here, Foster's implied "use" of the old woman is one of exploitation, intimidation, slavery. Actually, the bow enables not only the use of the old woman, but her abuse. Whereas the Wife of the Man Who Kept the County House aspires to become a part of the self-conscious world of action, a macabre female attempt to become De Beauvoir's male immanent being, the little old woman seeks recognition in one of the only female avenues of recognition open to her, adornment, the name of which, "bow," looks to the reader like the act of subservience itself, "bowing,"

which is in fact her life.

Assuming a socially constructed notion of beauty for the little old woman further clarifies the significance of her green bow¹⁰. For the little old woman, strangers at the County House do not represent the excitement of the outside world as they do for Peleg. They are, in contrast, the intrusion (both frightening and seductive) of the outside world into the static, non-threatening predictability of the domestic realm. Within this realm, the little old woman understands her simple place: she is tolerated because she provides a menial service; she has no intrinsic value of her own. Because she has no personal power with which to establish a relationship with outsiders, the old woman must establish a different relationship with them, one through which they will be enticed to reach out to her because of her accessed worth, represented by the green satin bow in its (erroneously perceived) beauty. Since the bow was once beautiful, and remains beautiful to the old woman, she misreads it as still objectively beautiful and believes that by wearing it, she too is beautiful. For the little old woman, “beauty is seen to be timeless, and essentially opposed to the ‘diverse and changing world of the living’ [. . .] As Nancy Chapkis points out, ‘approximating beauty can be essential to a woman’s chances for power, respect, and attention.’[. . .] [T]he ideal is a matter of intellectual, rather than physical, conformity [. . .]” (in Burke, *Philosophy Today*, “The Politics of Contradiction: Feminism and the Self.” 44: 1; 44-50). Although these concepts refer to the world of beauty as it is marketed and perceived today, they do apply to the world Foster recreates in the poems. With Peleg turned outward toward the vibrant world of work, and the old woman turned inward on herself and the world of the poorhouse, Foster constructs icons which signify the

important cultural phenomena of production and adornment: hoe, corn, green bow.

Once armed with the “threadbare [. . .] faded, ugly, pathetic [. . .] coarse” adornment, the old woman (imaginatively) transforms herself into a figure of feminine domesticity and charm. With the “safety” (note the safety pin with which the bow is fastened) of the green satin bow, she curtsseys (bows), sweeps, and attains a feeling of self-worth, “A look of satisfied vanity, immeasurable content/ On her wrinkled face.” The juxtaposition of “satisfied vanity,” “immeasurable content,” and “wrinkled face” creates a visual disjuncture for the reader which attains both pathos and irony in the next line, “She worships that bow.” Just as we are about to pity or indulge the misplaced values which order the old woman’s life, we are struck by the cruelty of the Wife’s selfish tolerance. Set against the old woman, the Wife, like Peleg, ascends in the hierarchy; the old woman is the unwitting foil against whom the forces of dominance show their power. In addition, “She worships that bow,” and tells us in that worship that she is totally complicit in her own devaluing and exploitation.

For Foster, a woman who had learned how to maintain advantage in a patriarchal society, the manipulations of power and person present in the *Poorhouse Sketches* reflect aspects of the social systems of both the mountain and the city. Simply staged as the stories of two paupers left to endure in a coldly calculating environment, the poems reveal the inner workings of early twentieth-century gender roles, such as we have seen in “Silence Davis” (Chapter Two). In her early careers of acting, modeling, and journalism, Foster had learned to work the system so that it worked for her. *Poorhouse Sketches* was written before 1923, when Foster could consider the situation of the woman as victim and

as co-operator from a comfortable place within the male world overseen by Quinn. Years later, Simone De Beauvoir would characterize the complicity of women in their patriarchal manipulation:

When man makes of woman the *Other*, he may, then, expect her to manifest deep-seated tendencies toward complicity. Thus, woman may fail to lay claim to the status of subject because she lacks definite resources, because she feels the necessary bond that ties her to man regardless of reciprocity, and because she is often very well pleased with her role as the *Other*. (*The Second Sex* xxvii)

This concept would be repeated by Betty Friedan in 1963, when she wrote: “Perhaps women who have made it as ‘exceptional’ women don’t really identify with other women. For them, there are three classes of people: men, other women, and themselves; their very status as exceptional women depends on keeping other women quiet, and not rocking the boat” (*The Feminine Mystique* 382). The Wife of the Man Who Kept the County House sees herself as exceptional and proudly reveals her elitist sense through her cruelty to the little old lady. She does not rock the patriarchal boat, nor did Foster overtly. She did, however, explore the victimization of women in many other poems like this one.

Often, as in *Poorhouse Sketches*, everyday symbols of life in the mountains expand to signify aspects of gender which permeate the culture. Just as the green bow signifies the indoctrination of the little old lady into the sphere of the “lady” of the nineteenth century, calico, silk, a leather hair thong, and a blue hair ribbon represent

various levels of restriction and freedom in Foster texts. Calico, for example, represents the quotidian of the mountain. It appears in various texts and evokes the hardness of the life of a woman who knows only work and weariness. It is a stigma of the lower classes. In addition it is the icon for humility, simplicity, and often for bondage.

In poems such as “Letter to Ruth Riedinger” (see Chapter Two), the country factory that makes woolens, later moves on to make “fine calico” (AP 5). But the fineness of the calico is relative to the speaker’s perception as a child and a young girl whose world was bounded by the mountains, “Crane Mountain, Gore,/And ‘No.11’; they became a part/ Of all I was and all I hoped to be [. . .]” (AP 5: 18-20). The narrative voice moves on to a world far beyond the remembered calico, turning in later poems to silk or cashmere, signs of the cultural expansiveness of life beyond the Adirondack Park.¹¹ While Foster never considered her early life to have been one of deprivation, the Oliver family was financially restricted. Calico implies monetary lack in Foster poems and prose, but more importantly, it is the symbol of intellectual, psychological, and often emotional poverty.

In the *Adirondack Portraits* poem “Blue Calico: The Ingrate” calico signifies the attitude of humility and gratitude with which servile women were expected to respond to false charity and domination. It begins:

Esther Mead always wore blue calico,
 The dark-blue cheap kind printed with white sprigs
 Of running white vines scattered over it.
 Folks liked it to piece into bed quilts

For it didn't fade and made nice dark blocks. (55. 1-5)

Certain constants are established: Esther wears the same cloth all the time, that which is cheap, worthwhile only in its usefulness, and with the scattered print of "running vines" which are unfocused, mass-produced, non-aesthetic. The preferred use for the cloth is bedding, since the material is durable, unchanging, soothing in its lack of imagination. The calico and Esther are equated by the time the reader discovers that the woman is a "frail old maid" who is supported, or "kept" by the church members. In exchange for keeping her out of the County House, whose cold institutional nature is noted by its capitalized generic identity, the good church people "took turns boarding her" and had her do their washing and ironing, pickling and canning, seaming, sewing, mending, the menial chores which generally go unnoticed by those for whom they are done. Submerged in the menial, Esther "took care of her folks until they died" (12) and sinks deeper into exploitive dependency throughout the third person narrative. The agitated woman who arrives to tell the narrator about Esther Mead's ingratitude is incensed because Esther's recent behavior rejects the arrangements which keep her body alive but her soul in despair. The indictment against Esther is that she is "ungrateful" and the neighbor launches into a tirade about the various forms of ingratitude being shown. The dark-blue, cheap calico of the first verse becomes "good blue calico" in the woman's mouth, and then "fine blue calico" when Cyrus Brown, the storekeeper marvels at Esther's rejection of his charity, putting: "ten yards of fine blue calico/ On the Christmas tree for her every year./ I'm glad I could see my way to afford it" (56. 60-63). The smugness of the "good" church members is told in a running diatribe of gossip, a textual

illustration of the running white vines on the good blue calico. Finally, the calico is contrasted to a gift Esther describes from the current year's Christmas tree:

'I've always got blue calico on the Christmas tree--
 Never anything else [. . .] but this year.
 There was a box tied up with ribbon bows,
 With a bottle of real perfume. I heard
 The new schoolteacher hung it on the tree [. . .]
 Sweet like musk roses. Then I remembered
 The musk roses growing in our dooryard
 When I was small, and a dress I had then,
 Real silk and shiny and the color
 Of the roses [. . .] Take the calico back
 To the storekeeper [. . .] I don't want it.' (55-56. 41-51)

Evocation of a childhood memory jogs Esther's dormant sense of self. The acceptance of her calico life, an endless round of starching, ironing, and fetching wood for the cold church before meeting parallels that of the little old lady in the *Poorhouse Sketches*. While the pauper is lost in the fantasy of her worn-out green bow and its imagined signification, Esther Mead, a woman Foster creates with a full identity, cannot return to a life without joy once she has remembered the beauty of a childhood moment, evoked by "a box tied up with ribbon bows." The dress she recalls is silk, shiny and the color of roses, echoing Foster's remembrance of the Paris gowns and the old Chestertown calico. However, whereas Foster's calico holds the warmth of family love

and caring, Esther's calico implies deprivation because it is offered in the spirit of hypocritical charity which elevates the giver and disallows joy in the receiver. Once Esther has experienced real charity through the gift of perfume, she can no longer labor under the burden of the begrudged calico. The narrator retreats from the neighbor's amazed gossip which closes the poem:

‘Would you believe it, just now when I left her,
 Instead of getting at the starched ironing,
 She's sitting by the sink doing nothing,--
 Crying with the tears rolling down her cheeks--
 And smelling of that bottle of perfume.’ (56. 63-67)

Foster herself traveled the trajectory of class levels represented by fashion.¹² As a child she was, of course, dressed in humble calico, but by the time she was a published poet, cashmere and silk were a standard part of her wardrobe. Foster's use of these materials in her powerful poem “Mis’ Cole” features the ubiquitous blue calico, a leather hair thong, and a blue hair ribbon.

Redressing the Poverty of George Cole's Wife: *The Act of Owning Oneself*

It is remarkable that in the late-nineteenth, and early-twentieth centuries a woman from the mountains would pick herself up one day and walk away from her husband, her children, and the land which had come to define her world and her value. It is notable as well that the story would become a poem in which the woman's act is neither impugned nor valorized. The central communication of Foster's “Mis’ Cole” is the verification of

the young woman's choice as valid. Told in the first person, the only gender hints identifying the narrative voice as female are the offer of tea, the packing of "a paper sack of victuals" for the traveler, and the gift of the teller's blue hair ribbon with which Mis' Cole gratefully replaces the leather thong of her servitude. Nevertheless, we know that the narrator is a woman, because, coupled with the statement "You know you've got a man and five healthy children," the acts are markedly domestic responses to the physical and emotional needs of another person, and the setting of the poem is the feminine sphere of the domestic. Foster constructs the poem so that the reader experiences as immediate what the narrator carefully remembers.

We see the young woman laboring uphill. The fatigue of her life is matched by the difficulty of her choice to defy her assigned place in society, and re-enter the world alone, albeit the little world of an Adirondack town, on her own terms:

She came walking up the road one morning
 In late summer, slowly, taking her time.
 She had on a blue calico wrapper,
 Which was all the clothes I knew her to have.
 Her face was still young, and her hair was tied back
 With a leather thong cut from a tanned hide.
 I called her in and made a cup of tea.
 Then I asked her if anyone was sick. (AP 28. 1-8)

The signs of oppression are clear. The escapee is physically wrapped in the only thing

she is allowed to wear, blue calico, which for Foster's women represents not only the practicality of a sturdy, nondescript work uniform, but also an imprisoning poverty of body, mind and soul. The leather thong, "cut from a tanned hide," contains all the earmarks of branding; the young woman belongs to the marriage pact she has made just as the farm animals belong to her husband.

The first indication the reader has of the woman's freedom is the stress on "slowly," set off by commas in line two, reinforced by the participial phrase "taking her time." The phrase represents the first thing the woman has "taken"--her time--for although her answer to the question about anyone's being sick is "No [. . .] they're well," she herself is sick with lack, and her slow walk away from George and the five children gives her access for the first time in her life to her own direction and her own pace. Yet, even in her break with her assigned role Mis' Cole is responsible. She has waited until the harvest is over and the seasons have moved toward a natural respite in farm work. "They can't say I left when the work was heavy" (11). The act of leaving is deliberate, well thought out, unemotional.

As she walks away from her old life, the woman has no delusions about her future. She is keeping the general rules of patriarchal tradition as she assures that her place will be filled by her daughters, and she moves on to a life of serving others somewhere else. The difference will be in her act of choosing, in the acknowledgment of her servility which a paycheck (although meager) will verify. She has sold her own daughters into the slavery of the domestic, yet the act of putting them into her place is an act of informing them as well. Can two adolescent girls grow up with romantic illusions

once they have been the “mothers” of a household? In “Marriage” Foster commented on the mother-daughter relationship as problematic:

No one had dared to whisper me the truth.
 My mother wept upon my wedding day,
 But she kept silence, kept the traitor pact.
 Had all the old conspired against the young,
 Wisdom set lures to snare young ignorance,
 And knowledge played the dunce to lead us on? (NOY 77. 8-13)

Marriage and motherhood as acts of entrapment formed a common theme at the turn of the century and well beyond.¹³ But Mis’ Cole will no longer be a part of what Kate Chopin defines as Nature’s or mankind’s conspiracy “to secure mothers for the race” (*The Awakening* 132-133; ch. 38). And unlike the bride’s mother in “Marriage,” Mis’ Cole will not weep silently as her daughters are bartered to men.

Mis’ Cole’s rejection of her role as wife and mother reveals the realities of a loveless marriage. She leaves behind a hard lesson for two little girls, and we dislike her for it. But Mis’ Cole is brutally frank:

I’m only hands and feet for George,
 Someone to put the food on the table,
 Someone to have more children for him,
 And mend and hand-sew their dresses on them
 Until they wear out in rags.
 [. . .] They won’t miss me, with the farm work,

And all the stock, and the trout brook,

And the beaver meadows, and the mountain. (AP 28.21-5, 40-3)

What trauma she has caused for her children, she cannot reckon. As an orphan herself, she cannot project the difference she might make in their lives, and she no longer feels responsible for them. They will survive, but she will not, unless she becomes midwife to herself: “ [. . .] I never had no one or nobody, not even myself. / I have to find someone or something’ ”(29: 43-44). Despite our disapproval of her children’s abandonment, we are drawn to the power of this woman’s refusal to be erased.

When the narrator gives the young woman a blue hair ribbon, Mis’ Cole quietly replaces the leather thong. She has received her second gift: “‘It’s the first one I’ve ever had,’/ She said. ‘I’m beholden to you.’” (28: 34-5). With the ability to own her life, the young woman becomes an empowered version of the little old lady in the *Poorhouse Sketches*. Armed with a fresh and vibrant version of the green bow, Mis’ Cole has the freedom and youth to reinvent herself with some agency: “ ‘Don’t forget, you’ll get hungry,’ I said./ ‘I’d hardly feel it, now I’m free, but I thank you. / If you ever find me, keep my secret.’ ” (28. 37-39). But Pottersville, where we are told she is headed, is a very small place, and even today the towns of the Adirondacks are hard to disappear into. The conclusion of the poem provokes thought:

She went out, and I watched while she walked

Up the long Wilson Hill.

I heard where she was

Down below, but I said nothing.

George and the children got on all right.

It's long ago, but I think of her

And the leather strip in her yellow hair. (29. 46-51)

If the narrator “heard where she was” we can assume that George and the children did too. Her secret new life was common knowledge, and although we are not told so in the poem, it is a commonplace life as well. The woman first appears “walking up the road,” and we see her last still trudging “up the long hill.” There is no indication that her hollowness will be replaced by fulfillment. All we can know is that she seeks to own her self, and that as far as it is possible to predict, she has begun the process of free choice. What that choice ultimately yields, Foster does not comment upon, but a diary entry from August 15, 1914 suggests her philosophy on choice and belief in the self: “How brave of men to have any faith at all in the face of events. Have they really any faith or is it a figure of speech? Always when I have penetrated to the depths of men’s minds I have not found anything save a noble doubt in great men, and in little men, the devil” (Londraville Private Collection). If “men” is universal for human, then Mis’ Cole’s chances of self-actualization rest with the development of her own greatness or smallness. If Foster is actually speaking about males, then Mis’ Cole’s move away from the restriction of George’s attitude is a move against evil toward nobility. In either case, the text opens up the possibility of positive change, contingent upon the choices of the escaping woman.

The date of this poem’s composition is not given in the manuscripts accessible. Perhaps in private collections Foster has indicated whether the “Mis’” of Mis’ Cole is merely patterned after local idiom, or is additionally a play on the feminist title “Ms.”

which became popular in the last years of Foster's life. Either way, the title of this poem that rejects traditionally acceptable servitude, captures a philosophy to which Jeanne Robert Foster's life gave testament. The feminist "Ms." with its refusal to identify the marital state of a woman is the aural equivalent of "Mis'" which is, in fact, an idiomatic shortening of "Mrs." Consequently, within the signifying title of the married lady may lie the linguistic symbol of the autonomous woman. Jeanne Robert Foster knew that all along.

ENDNOTES

1. Besides their being “types” of Adirondack people, Foster’s characters often are representations of real-life individuals. For instance, in a two-page listing titled “Data on Poems in *Neighbors of Yesterday*,” Foster indicates for thirty-four poems in the collection, the real persons corresponding to the fictitious characters in the text’s poetry. Foster carefully notes the page in the book on which each is found, as well as the town or community in which each individual lived. The pages are inscribed in Foster’s hand, “To Mark & Caroline Fish. The names of the persons who were commemorated in *Neighbors of Yesterday*. Jeanne R. Foster” (Chestertown Historical Society papers; Foster Collection).

2. Note the suggestion of fluency which recalls Duchamp’s “Nude Descending A Staircase” discussed in Chapter Five. Foster’s relationship to this painting extended beyond her awareness of it as a centerpiece of the Armory Show. In his movement toward the French modernists, John Quinn favored Raymond Duchamp’s work among the three brothers, actually refusing Walter Pach’s offer, in 1919, to sell Quinn the “Nude.” Quinn thought it overpriced at the time (at the remarkable sum of \$1,000) and was pursuing works by Matisse, Derain, Vlaminck, Segonzac, Rouault, Pissarro, and Gauguin (Reid, 391-2). Nevertheless, Quinn greatly valued Marcel Duchamp’s work, sneering at Frederick C. Torrey’s desire to sell it to offset “the high price of gasoline [sic]” and commented on Torrey’s and American values generally:

He is evidently willing to place Henry Ford’s product ahead of Duchamp’s work. In that, of course, he has the support of the vast majority of his fellow countrymen, nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand of whom would inevitably prefer a motor to a work of art. (Reid, 392)

Foster was with Quinn when, in 1921, he visited Marcel Duchamp outside Paris to discuss details of the book on Duchamp-Villon which Quinn had promised to subsidize (Reid, 503). Undoubtedly, Foster’s interest in the work continued to grow as she shared in the relationship with the artist which Quinn developed and nurtured. Such modernist concepts as arrested and fluid time appear in much of her poetry, both in *Rock-Flower* and the Adirondack work.

3. In a whimsical recounting of her youthful “glory days,” an eighty-nine year old Mrs. Foster recalled the Brevoort Hotel in New York City, scene of many breakfasts and lunches referred to in the Foster/Murphy Collection notes, letters and diaries. In 1968 she wrote to her friend Dora:

It was the “old Brevoort,”
where many a breakfast you have had;
It was the custom then

To meet for conference breakfast
 About the hour of ten.
 It was the place you New-Yeared
 With Harrison, who showed

You as his favorite model,
 Until your young blood flowed
 Like prancing horses in your veins
 Gibson was there and Flagg.
 You walked upon the rainbow
 Nor dreamed that life could lag.

And later on Brancusi
 Was your charge there a while;
 A sculptor lost in beauty
 With heaven in his smile.
 Yet with all this behind you
I could defeat your thought
 And show up as a cipher
 Where nothingness was caught . . .

(Letter to Dora; 1/5/68; Blue Mountain Lake Museum Archives: 4-24)

Foster was aware of how much she was forgetting as she approached her ninth decade; yet her memories of youthful days at the Brevoort were clear enough to enable this verse which expresses the passion with which those events were infused. Although the cipher of memory was often adding up to naught at the time, Foster could well remember moments when she “walked upon the rainbow” and life never lagged.

4. In her introduction to *Adirondack Portraits: A Piece of Time*, Noel Riedinger-Johnson states:

[. . .] Jeanne’s career with *The American Review of Reviews* lasted about eleven years. Journalism was challenging and exciting; it placed her on the forefront of contemporary thought and action. Moreover, it permitted her to combine her unique ability to recognize significant ideas and events with her impressive writing style. She worked closely with Shaw and certainly influenced the cultural direction of the magazine. In addition to eight to twelve pages of book reviews and poetry criticism every issue, she wrote about the avant-garde in art and literature, about woman’s issues, about education, about the theater [. . .] In addition, she traveled to Europe three times for extended stays on magazine business: to survey public housing in the British Isles; to secure the Lincoln cartoons from the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris; and as a World War I correspondent in England, sending stories and pictures back to Shaw. Ireland, England, Scotland, Wales, and France became her ‘beat.’

Johnson's endnotes indicate that this information is derived from private letters Jeanne had written to Ruth Riedinger (Johnson's mother) and from personal interviews, neither of which have been accessible to me.

5. Foster nursed Quinn through his cancer-ridden days and nights. On the night before he died, she wrote in her diary:

July 27, 1924

Sister St. Paul came at four o'clock and stayed until six- thirty--I tried to arouse him but could not. I put my hands on his body my arms around him --His eyes looked at me-- he tried to speak but he had gone too far. I carried pink roses and put them in his room. I kissed him: his hands were cold-- I cannot suffer more.

(NYPL; Foster/Murphy Collection: Box 4; File 275; Diary
1/10/22-7/28/24, 84)

6. Saarinen's book is *The Proud Possessors* .

7. Although Quinn never met James Stephens, they enjoyed a rich correspondence about art and literature which began in 1913 when AE (George Russell) had introduced Quinn to Stephens's manuscripts and begged his patronage for the young author. Quinn acquiesced, buying Stephens's manuscripts. In 1916, Stephens wrote Quinn to praise his elegy for Roger Casement, the Irish patriot charged by Britain as a German spy. Quinn had represented Casement, claiming that his technical guilt was exculpatory since he was working "for Ireland, not Germany." Upon Casement's execution, Quinn wrote a *New York Times* article praising Casement as a martyr for the Irish cause. Stephens wrote of it:

It is a most eloquent, brave, and moving piece of writing [. . .] Indeed, I think it is the best piece of writing and feeling which this lamentable war has brought forth, and our poor friend is justified anyhow in some part of the earth. (Reid 239)

Such homage would not have been lost on the articulate Quinn. When Quinn decided to concentrate his collection on the plastic arts, "he told Yeats he was resolved to buy no more manuscripts except those of a few living men whom he cared about personally, such as Conrad, Symons, James Stephens, and Yeats himself" (Reid 197). The trans-Atlantic friendship flourished, eventually including Jeanne Robert Foster, whose discussions about art with the Quinn coterie informed many of her own theories. About Stephens's work, the retelling of the whole of the Red Branch cycle of primitive Irish tales, Æ was most enthusiastic. He wrote to Quinn on the subject in March of 1920:

[. . .] As a human being, a companion, he is the best I have met in Ireland

since I was a boy. I rate him as an enchanting talker higher than Yeats, Moore or any other I have known [. . .] He has abundance of that rare thing humanity, feeling, sympathy, kindness, humour, imagination all abundant and never failing. (Reid 431)

Quinn had placed Stephens on his list of friends to whom he sent new publications, such as Joyce's *Portrait*, Pound's *Noh*, Eliot's Knopf volume of poems, the work of Conrad. Stephens wrote his philosophy on the modern arts, especially poetry, to Quinn on May 12, 1920. This is the letter from which Foster copied the statement on the "male sensitive quality."

8. In her great work *Toward a Recognition of Androgyny*, Carolyn Heilbrun discusses the many ways in which ancient and modern civilizations have differentiated between the concepts *masculine* and *feminine*. She argues against Kate Millett, that few critics before our own age have interpreted the defeat of the female principle (embodied for example in Athena's vote for Orestes's acquittal in the *Eumenides* of Aeschylus) as a celebration of the right of male violence and the deprivation of the female forces of strength and power (6-7). Regarding the complicity of women against women, Heilbrun reminds us "that the fact of being a woman does not guarantee the possession of 'feminine' powers" (8). By such powers Heilbrun refers to the matriarchal characteristics of ancient civilizations such as that of Sappho or the mystic Diotima referenced by Socrates in his discussion of love. Great matriarchal traditions are empowered by wisdom, justice, mysticism, love of learning, intuition, and an understanding of the sexual. "The identification of sexuality and maleness is one of the many distortions which became acute in the nineteenth century" (12). The value of the "feminine" as well as the "masculine" vision is epitomized in Aristophanes's story of the eggs in the *Symposium*. Heilbrun points out that in explaining the eternal force which sends the halves in search of each other, "It is Aristophanes [. . .] who regrets that the word 'androgynous' is now only a term of reproach" within the Greek concept of love (15).

9. In my work on Dorothy Parker, I have examined the ways in which her texts confront the irascibility of women laboring under the dominance of men and attempting to access power in Parker's social scene. In particular, Parker's monologue "The Waltz" and the short stories "Dusk Before Fireworks," "The Lovely Leave," and "The Big Blonde" illustrate the anger of women assigned subservient positions. Because such anger can never be acknowledged as an honest response to restriction and exploitation, it erupts into nagging, whining, and manipulation, thus justifying the male response of disgust and abandonment. The power women access in a marketplace in which they are bartered as ornamental and sexual objects can only be derivative, and as Parker and Wharton (dealing with similar themes in an upper-class setting) show, such mediated power is self-destructive. Foster's adaptation of the term "feminism" suggests her response to such indirect and exploitive paths to self-realization.

10. Victoria Burke discusses the phenomenon of beauty as part of the episteme of American twentieth-century social order, in her essay on feminism and self-image. Although her discussion of beauty focuses on its involvement in the feminist's construction of self, several points apply to Foster's characterization of the little old bowing woman with the bow. The discussion is grounded in Plato's definition of beauty in the *Symposium* as "an everlasting loveliness which neither comes nor goes, which neither flowers nor fades, the same then as now. For such beauty is the same on every hand, the same then as now, here as there, this way as that way the same to every worshiper as it is to every other" (as quoted in Burke 5).

11. Looking back on her life Foster wrote: "Never during my eight trips abroad [. . .] did I slip into a lovely Paris gown or permit myself a small luxury without memories of the *calico* of the Chestertown school; never did I send my mother a gift without thanking God I could, remembering the days when I could not" (Adirondack Museum Archives; "The Oliver and Newell Families").

12. The distance between the harshness of the church members's calico and the schoolteacher's be-ribboned gift of perfume parallel the social space which characterizes Foster's description of fashion at Sunday church meetings:

Practically everybody went to church. The best families, who made annual pilgrimages 'down below,' came in cashmere, the girls in thin white, with slippers and tiny parasols. The second-best families came in wool or muslin as the season varied; the third-best in ancient raiment well preserved, a wedding dress or some festival attire of long ago; the outcast remainder ventured into the sacred edifices in humble calico.

(*Portraits*, "The Old Village" 48)

13. Kate Chopin had revealed similar sentiments in *The Awakening*. Faced with Edna Pontellier's distraught reaction to the childbirth she has just witnessed, Dr. Mandelet regrets that Edna was at the birthing:

'You shouldn't have been there, Mrs. Pontellier [. . .] I felt that it was cruel, cruel [. . .] The trouble is [. . .] that youth is given up to illusions. It seems to be a provision of Nature; a decoy to secure mothers for the race. And Nature takes no account of moral consequences, of arbitrary conditions which we create, and which we feel obliged to maintain at any cost." (132, ch.38)

Foster and Chopin seem to be arguing similarly against the forced career of motherhood, one more "arbitrary condition" which society has determined as a characteristic of the feminine.

CHAPTER FOUR:**The Excitement of An Afternoon Call:
A Regional Move Toward the Modern Voice in Jeanne Robert Foster's Poetry**

'Come in Mis' Pasco. It's a hard long climb

To get up here [. . .]

I'll put your things in the best room and make

A cup of tea; this April air is chill.'

'[. . .] I know you want to hear just what I sold

To that young man who drove up here last week

Hunting for old things on these country roads.'

[.....]

'He wanted all my haircloth parlor set

And that stand with the marble top I used

To hold the lamp beside my spare-room bed.

The stereoscope and my old pewter mugs.

Why land, Mis' Pasco, I'd be living here

In a bare old house if I had let him take

The things he craved.'

[.....]

‘I told him money wouldn’t buy my things
 That I had lived with all my life and used.
 They’re friends. We’ll get along some way.
 The taxes aren’t too much here on this hill.’

‘You say you didn’t let him have a thing?’
 ‘That’s fine, Mis’ Pasco. Come in the best room.
 I’ve lighted kindling in the stove; it’s warm.
 We’ll have our tea in there and take a look
 At my new pictures for the stereoscope.’

(Adirondack Portraits, “Antiques” 37-8)

The memory of Mis’ Cole became the text through which Jeanne Robert Foster could explore and express what she had learned about gender in her life on the mountain, and in the city. At her most powerful, Foster reminisces nostalgically about quirky characters and comforting home fires, sets us up for sentimental recapture of an idyllic past and then catapults us into the tensions of modern life by erasing all the certainty that we have anticipated, replacing it with a multiplicity of questions about humanity’s place and purpose in the past, present, and future.

In 1916 Foster explained that her purpose in writing the Adirondack verse of *Neighbors of Yesterday* was to chronicle a way of life “in truth of yesterday.” “[T]hat we may remember it, even in a small measure,” she wrote, “I have tried faithfully to set down certain things that come crowding into my mind when I remember the days of my

childhood in the Great North Woods” (NOY “Foreword”). The ways of life she describes are indisputably of the past, specified by dialect, customs, locations and the homely perspectives on life which she reproduced. Whether the stories and moments represented by her Adirondack verses are faithfully executed versions of life as it existed on the frontier mountain is another question altogether.

In her assertions about the youthful memories which flood her mind, Foster reaffirms the subjectivity of her biographical task. Memory is, of course, the slipperiest function of the intellect: what we remember is re-formed as much by what we have experienced since an event as it is informed by past fact. In addition, as writers from Augustine through Derrida have argued, interpretation is influenced by the ambiguity of the linguistic act as it is perceived differently by both the speaker and the hearer, the poet and the reader, all informed by a variety of logocentrisms: Western, Eastern, secular, and religious among them. Thus, when Foster tells us, regarding these Adirondack farmers and lumbermen, that “Their stories are true stories; their portraits are not embellished, nor has their curt idiom been perceptibly softened or altered,” we must interpret such assurances through the lens of her creative authorship. The landscapes we perceive are filtered through Foster’s gaze; the symbolic moments of simple Adirondack life are fashioned by a woman who was also a proficient actress, model, journalist, and cosmopolitan person. Foster’s acts of memory embedded in narration are the amalgam of all that she had experienced as an Adirondack native, as well as all that she came into contact with through her various adult agendas.

Like the stereoscope in “Antiques,” a poem which presents us with a

narrative/monologue about the cash nexus versus the human value of common things, Foster's texts present her readers with intensified images of memory created from varied perspectives, the resulting portrayals seeming so deceptively realistic in their construction that we can easily accept them as regional history. But in examining Foster's authorial voice, we need to mark symbolic images which concretize her expression of what is real and important throughout her poetry. Through these images--calico, a green bow, a leather thong, yellow ribbon, a Union Blue coat, roosters, a telescope, a stereoscope-- we gain insight into Foster's experiences in the world beyond the mountain, of her encounters with the modern world, all of which fuse and color her memories to form the "unembellished chronicles" of an Adirondack way of life.

The stereoscope in "Antiques," for example, can be read as an important regional touch which is also a modernist symbol. Stereoscopes date back to 1850's England, and by the late nineteenth century they had become a staple of American Victorian parlors. For an Adirondack mountain farmhouse, isolated from the rush of modernity, such a novelty represented a certain worldliness, a connection of the mountain to the larger, more sophisticated world beyond, reinforced by the pictures which accompanied the device, e.g., dramatizations of biblical events, depictions of Greek and Roman ruins, wonders such as the pyramids and Sphinx, photographs of American and/or European urban centers--New York, Washington, London, Paris, Rome. Prefiguring television, stereoscopes allowed people to see the world in the privacy of their parlors, without having to directly encounter differences in language, custom, beliefs. The simple viewing machines and accompanying pictures were sold by traveling salesmen, (the reverse of the

young man who came to buy the woman's "antiques"), who played upon the natives's desire to be modern and worldly, while remaining secure in the familiar mountain culture and its routine. When Foster had been a popular model at the turn of the century, she may have seen the stereoscope as a venue for presenting drama, beauty, the image of a woman, since many stereoscopic pictures centered on female subjects. Perhaps she had even posed for pictures which ended up in stereoscopes. We might see her as the city sophisticate returning to the country through technology.

In Foster's poem, the woman's pride in the stereoscope represents her awareness of a society far beyond that of her little community. From the security of her parlor, removed from the difficulties of the quotidian, she can observe that outside world without becoming a part of it. The modern takes on a definite shape in the stereoscopically manipulated pictures, while it remains magical, fantastic in its dramatic precision and actual distance from the mountain. On another level, the act of writing the poem allows Foster to reverse the stereoscopic event by viewing the everyday life of the mountain, softened by time and memory but precise in the details of her sketching from a secure position in the modern, urban world of New York.¹ Allowing language to allude to traditional meanings while simultaneously inferring new ones, Foster, subverts positivism, introduces linguistic free play, and achieves what Richard Londraville has termed "escape velocity," the ability of the poet to startle and often delight the reader by moving beyond the denotation of the word to the connotations of multiple meanings and seductive implications.² Whereas an initial reading of "Antiques" presents a regional narrative, a closer examination reveals layers of modernity not immediately apparent.

Stereoscopic Vision and Doubleness: *Reading Redemption through "Antiques"*

In "Antiques" a woman on a failing hilltop farm welcomes her neighbor, Mis' Pasco for a visit. The woman tells Mis' Pasco (and incidentally, the reader) about the young antiques dealer "who drove up here [. . .] hunting for old things on these country roads." Although she is poor and needs cash, she recoils from selling the household items, as each one evokes a memory. Ultimately, she sells nothing at all because, "I told him money wouldn't buy my things/ That I had lived with all my life and used/ They're friends. We'll get along some way." (38. 44-46). The modern equation of money with power breaks down in the woman's monologue, as each material possession becomes the equivalent of a moment of her life, and her "we'll get along" seems inclusive of the household objects as much as of the family.

The woman has welcomed two visitors to her home, the young man and Mis' Pasco. Each brings a sense of the appropriateness of the woman's exchange of material object for cash. We can imagine the buyer's dismay as the woman softly explains how life adheres to each item he wants to buy. In addition, we may sense surprise and subtle disapproval in Mis' Pasco who has journeyed far up the hill from her own space (somewhat in the capacity of neighborhood snoop) to assess the level of debilitation the woman's home has undergone. Each visitor as well as the reader, who is the unseen visitor included in Foster's direct address, is gently rebuffed by the speaker, who will not be moved from her integrated sense of how a home and a person express each other. The woman's last words comfort Mis' Pasco and reassure the sympathetic reader, as the perspectives of her listeners merge with that of the woman in the stereoscopic act of

multiple vision. Old and new, personal connection and social alienation, human value and cash nexus merge as do the various lenses of the stereoscope in Foster's skillful manipulation of subjectivity.

The stereoscope is central to the poem because it is a worldly possession, an instrument of vision, which depends on perspective. Consisting of a series of lenses and prisms through which two photographs of one scene or object are viewed simultaneously, a stereoscope depends for its clarity upon focus and a sort of double vision. Each photograph is taken at a slightly different angle; therefore, when the two photos are seen through the lenses and prisms, their differences complement each other until the final image gains an exaggerated three-dimensionality which enables the viewer to become a part of the scene. Accepting Foster's first-person narrative as a simple story about a woman's inability to part with her old things, we realize that the text is complicated in ways that are not immediately obvious. The narrative structure of the poem mimics the visual structure of the old stereoscope.

There are two ways to read the opening lines of the last stanza: "You say you didn't let him have a thing?"/ "That's fine, Mis' Pasco." If the question is Mis' Pasco's only line, spoken in disbelief as she considers her neighbor's financial plight, then it focuses on the help the woman might derive from selling her "things." In this reading, the woman's response, "That's fine, Mis' Pasco" would be a reassurance to her troubled neighbor, a variation of "don't worry about me; it will all work out." While the rest of the world seems concerned about the woman's financial insecurity, she is intent upon keeping her understanding of life and her place in the world intact. She is not hiding

from her problems; she has allowed the young man to enter her home and peruse its contents, and she has considered his opinion of their worth. But her connection to her things cannot be severed for money. She will forego new or more things to maintain the integrity of her home as an expression of her life. Asserting herself and expressing that identity through the agency of her role as homemaker, she dismisses the young buyer sending him back to the city. Once sold, her things would have no material value to her; they would enter the realm of memory. Identifying her things as a part of her present as well as her past, she cannot reduce them to a matter of finances. Therefore, while she can still offer tea and a warm fire to a neighbor, the woman is a success, her capital is intact, and her life is whole.

Seen through a different lens, however, both lines revert to the woman who owns the troubled old farm. They are spoken *to* Mis' Pasco, who *also* didn't sell anything to the young man who "drove up here last week," a fact hypothetically shared by Mis' Pasco in a statement to which the reader is not privy. Allowing the urban outsider to buy their possessions would be tantamount to becoming alienated from reality as *both* women understand it. In this case, the verbalized question asked of Mis' Pasco is a validation of the woman's sending the young man away empty-handed, and her realization that Mis' Pasco has done the same. The second line, "That's fine [. . .]" is a celebration of both women's solemn rejection of a modern, capitalistic value system which seeks to reduce them to a marginalized position "here on this hill" outside the parameters of the modern, urban, technological world. The women may be financially poor in the eyes of the world beyond the mountain, but they are united in their perspective on "how" things matter. In

the city, their household items are labeled “antiques,” quaint reminders of an era past, their value determined by their rarity and the market created for them by people whose lives are totally removed from the value system they represent. On the mountain, the things are items of “everyday use,” valuable as representations of Ezra Pound’s “felt life.” Considering the young man’s desire for the old cord bed “With posts that Grandpa carved of maple wood,” the woman exclaims:

Why land, Mis’ Pasco, I told him--that bed
 We sleep on now--I couldn’t part with that.
 Besides, it has a history; my children came
 On that old bed, and others before mine.
 Besides, there’s nothing half so comfortable
 For sleep and rest as a fine old cord bed. (37. 14-21)

Whereas the intruder sees only an American artifact, the woman defines the bed in terms of both its history and its use. “Why land, Mis’ Pasco, I’d be living here/ In a bare old house if I had let him take/ The things he craved” says the woman (37.26-8). While the antique dealer merely “craves” possession of the unique, the woman expresses connection, not merely with the spinning wheel, carpet loom, steelyards, tin skimmer, cord bed, but more importantly with the people and moments they recall, with a life rich in human experience.³

In either case, the opening lines of the last stanza underscore the consideration of “things,” the central theme of the poem, and the suggested double reading advances Foster’s stereoscopic act which both focuses a subject and gives it depth. Furthermore,

the poem closes with the woman's bringing Mis' Pasco into the "best room" to have tea, enjoy the warmth of the fire, and examine the new pictures for the stereoscope. The ending of the poem encourages an act of recursive reading through which we realize that the women have in fact been united throughout the poem. We return to the first stanza in which the woman welcomes her visitor:

'Come in, Mis' Pasco. It's a hard long climb
 To get up here; I used to ask Pa why
 With all the farms down toward Athol way
 He bought this one up where they say "two stones
 Grow to one dirt." It's hard to work a farm
 When your plow turns up more stones than soil.
 I'll put your things in the best room and make
 A cup of tea; this April air is chill. (37. 1-8)

Both women are familiar with the harshness of life on the mountain; however, this life is marked as having been deliberately chosen by their parents and husbands and it is reaffirmed by their own acts of survival and endurance. While the choice to change their lives would be a disruptive one, it does seem to be present throughout the poem. As she does in poems such as "Silence Davis," "The Mooneys," and "Mis' Cole," Foster clearly suggests that her characters choose their lives, remaining in, altering, or breaking free from the daily struggles which shape their humanity. The difficulty of farming rocky, unyielding soil, and of being "a hard long climb" away from community life has taught the women in "Antiques" to look for meaning in the simplest aspects of living and the

blessing of daily routine.

In fact, the poem's tone suggests that the speaker derives not only identity from her hard life, but, perhaps, also a sense of superiority to "city folk," whose lives of modern convenience seem to lack substance when assessed from the mountain. Foster had equated moral strength and tough action in "The Coward," a poem about Dave Murdock, a country farmer whose inability to control the proliferation of cats on his land led him to flee from them, "like a dang soft coward." In the lexicon of Foster's mountain, a good neighbor is a strong one:

It is all right for a man to be kind,
 But there's such a thing as being too soft
 To get on well with your work and neighbors.
 [.]
 There's something wrong in life as I see it:
 You've got to fight for everything you have,
 And Nature's not kindly 'bout ways and means.
 She's a flighty, unreasonable person
 And she don't respect a coward at all.
 The only man who ever tames her in harness
 Is the man who don't fear her devilments. (NOY 56;1-3, 8-14)

The line between kind and soft is hard to define, but visible when crossed. Dave Murdock's neighbor is clear about the man who couldn't assert himself against Nature: "[. . .] he was a 'softy,'/ (We don't like that kind here in the country)" (57. 34-5). Yet,

Foster's articulation of the toughness in the good country citizen is not one-dimensional. The mountain doesn't validate a bully, nor does it value the person who cannot feel that life, although very hard, is worthwhile. Murdock's neighbor did, in fact, help the man by ridding his farm of the forty cats which plagued him, even though he was disgusted by the farmer's inability to do so himself. But in "Country Tragedy," another poem in the *Neighbors of Yesterday* collection, Foster focuses on a different aspect of rural hardship, and the ability to endure the tragic:

There are great tragedies in the country,
That torture the simple, kindly souls
And leave them broken, like gaunt forest trees
Felled by a tempest. (86. 1-4)

While the strong fight against Nature's wiles, they sometimes lose. Not every old woman can hold out against the need that presses her to sell her things. Not every farm prospers. Sons die in war. Women die in childbirth. Foster characterizes the survivors:

They live on, dreaming
On Sundays of the 'Sweet Fields of Eden,'
When their aching hearts find brief solace
In honest Christian doctrine that's certain
Of the 'Last Day' and the Resurrection. (86. 4-8)

The speaker understands the power of religion through which the distraught "are comforted of gaping wounds" (12), even though she questions its efficacy for herself: "And after all's said what more can there be/ For men here or in the hereafter?" (86.10-

11). But the conclusion of “Country Tragedy” seems to encompass those beyond the country, and Foster’s experiences in the great, anonymous whirl of city life lurk behind the poem’s ultimate condemnation of those who are too slick to be immersed in life:

[. . .] The hopelessness is in the tragedy
 Of those who are not fine enough to sorrow;
 Who cannot feel repentance or regret;
 Plastic only to the deep-grained instinct
 Of survival. There are many of these
 Who are not wise enough to be sinners,
 And the elemental forces of life
 Pluck them up out of sport and play toss-ball,
 And they pass through the game like clods of earth,
 And fall untouched, unhurt, unawakened. (86. 17-26)

The simple connections to daily life and to each other take precedence in Foster’s writing, not because she is hiding in the nostalgia of the good old days, but because she locates victory in lives of immersion and endurance, not merely survival. Recognizing the power of the everyday, and of the people who embrace both sorrow and joy, Foster’s poetry exults in the commonplace.

This recognition of homely ritual is found as well in T. S. Eliot’s modernist poetic symbols. He initiates a vision of human alienation and the disintegration of western civilization by asserting that “April is the cruellest month, breeding/ Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing/ Memory and desire, stirring/ Dull roots with spring rain” (1-4). *The*

Waste Land not only presents us with the inevitability of winter, but also suggests the finality and pervasiveness of wintry paralysis. Eliot's first speaker interprets the promise of new life as a cruel hoax perpetrated yearly on a winter-weary world which can never transcend its essential futility. *The Waste Land's* first six lines transform finite verbs into verbals, adjectives which describe rather than enact: breeding, mixing, stirring, covering, feeding. There is no human agency here. April itself, the transitional month of death/life controls the poetry as it controls the natural cycle, "being" through the central copulative verb "is". Winter controls the only other verb in the opening voice, "kept." Thus, as April tries to enact change upon the land by modifying it, Winter "keeps" its hold. Memory and desire feed on each other: vibrancy is lost, as is spring's inherent promise. The female voice which takes over on line seven is the uprooted Marie's, displaced royalty, shapeless and shiftless in the mix of her own memory and desire, without agency, without potential, escaping life through texts and travel.

While Foster's "this April air is chill" also plays on the contradictory promise of renewal veiling the reality of death, her speaker responds to the inherent chill with a practical determination to recognize and enhance the potential for life--"I'll put your things in the best room and make/ A cup of tea. . ." The lines are both literal and metaphoric. Mis' Pasco's very name embodies the Judeo-Christian symbol of renewal and resurrection: the paschal lamb. Although the spring lamb is the sign of rebirth, it is also the willing victim for redemptive sacrifice. Imbued with the same sense of sacrifice and resurrection, the women hold no illusions about the seasons: for every lovely natural moment there are weeks and months to pay in ice and desolation, black flies, mosquitoes,

rained-out mud roads, loneliness, and drought. Yet for the mountain woman, April is no more cruel than any other month; they are all tricksters, as is life in general, as is the craving young man who comes to make “antiques” of her goods. Just as women Romantics such as Charlotte Smith, Annie Barbauld, Felicia Hemans, and Joanna Baillie dealt with the reality of nature through such subjects as childbirth, illness, travel hazards, battle wounds, death, and the general quotidian facts of winter or summer days, Foster creates her poetic moment from within the experience and endurance of life as it faces both the beauty and harshness of the mountain. The constant here is faith in human agency, in one’s own response to tragedy, a possibility which Eliot doubts in a modern world of apostasy.

Faced with the chill air of modernity, the woman in “Antiques” opens her best room, containing the precious “things” only she can truly value, and ushers in her neighbor. Together they will share a small human comfort. By the end of the poem, their things, their values, and their lives intact, the women will be warm in the refuge of friendship and a heritage of usefulness even in the midst of acknowledged want, taking comfort from the continuous narrative of a vibrant household and a community of generations. This response is no simplistic rush to a sentimental ending. Foster goes on to present the mountain philosophy on worldly issues, in this case money and lifestyle, by grounding them in the immediacy of simple routine. Foster’s woman finds friendship and solace in shared commonplaces: “Here’s sugar,” the woman says serving tea to Mis’ Pasco, “but I think you take it plain/ Just as I do. When you are warm we’ll talk” (9-10). Because life on the mountain requires response to nature’s seductions and assaults, and

perhaps because the quotidian acts of mountain women are steeped in such practicality, Foster's speaker moves back and forth from symbolic to actual meaning of such expressions as "April chill." The life of restraint, denial and hard work exemplifies the Protestant Ethic in a way that religious platitudes and theory cannot. The result is a poem which merges the regional sense of community with the modernist struggle against alienation.

Foster's poetic images recall the detail of Adirondack life set in a time when the intrusions of modern technology, philosophy, science had not yet affected the interactions of person and nature, person and person. But the poetry cannot block out modernity and its persistent change. In fact, Foster builds change into the nostalgia of her backward glance, and like the modernist artists of her day, sketches the old in terms of the new. "I can tell you some tales" says Foster, "--tall tales; I've written them/ For my new book [. . .]" (AP, "Letter to Ruth Riedinger" 5. 14-15). The true, unembellished portraits of people and places which Foster tells us she has written have metamorphosed into regional tall tales. And somewhere between historical fact and literary fiction lies the central concern of Foster's work: through the detail and verisimilitude of the regional, the poet expresses the uncertainty and change of the modern, new wine mellowed in oaken casks rich with the suggestion of other harvests.

Regionalism: *A Gesture Toward the Modern*

The term "regional" has traditionally suggested a diminutive art of entertainment, irony and satire linked to local color--idiosyncratic characters moving toward a "punch

line” which amuses or delivers a moral lesson. In fact, regionalism and local color are that are at times used interchangeably, especially when referring to the explosion of literature written by women authors in the mid to late nineteenth century. Local color writing was gradually opposed and overwhelmed by the move away from realism toward naturalism, epitomized by Frank Norris’s quip that “Realism is minute, it is the drama of a broken teacup, the tragedy of a walk down the block, the excitement of an afternoon call, the adventure of an invitation to dinner. [. . .] Realism bows upon the doormat and goes away and says to me, [. . .] ‘That is life.’ And I say it is not” (in *Resisting Regionalism: Gender and Naturalism in American Fiction, 1885-1915* 4). Both Theodore Dreiser and Sinclair Lewis reinforced the notion of “tea-table tragedy” steeped in bourgeois gentility, Dreiser dismissing the life depicted by local color as “a little teacup to be seasoned by old maids” and Lewis, in his 1930 Nobel Prize speech, stating of William Dean Howells’s realism that he was “one of the gentlest, sweetest, and most honest of men, but he had the code of a pious old maid whose greatest delight was to have tea at the vicarage” (*Resisting Regionalism* 4-5). Thus, local color writing, especially after the Civil War, is often associated negatively with the majority of women who produced it. It concentrates on simple people in particular regions of America, especially New England and the South, working through lives threatened with physical, social, emotional, and cultural upheaval, and responding to their environments in the particular ways which each geographical area implies. The genre focuses on character development as opposed to action, and intensifies the reader’s experience of person, place and time by presenting detailed dialect, dress, and daily custom. Through such

verisimilitude, local color authors lead readers to identify with their regional portrayals, often steeped in sentimental nostalgia.

In contrast to the aspects of local color literature with which regionalism is often associated, “modernist” literature has traditionally connoted intellectual distance from the quotidian, presenting daily life, if at all, through its mundane redundancy. Modernist texts are read as presenting such profound issues as subjectivity opposed by an objectified and objectifying society, personal agency versus stultifying alienation and paralysis, the impact of war, science, and technology on a shrinking world, and the possibility of articulating a sense of one’s purpose in a universe from which absolutes have receded. While in regionalist criticism, we speak of specific authors--Mark Twain, Bret Harte, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Sarah Orne Jewett, Charles Chesnutt, Mary Wilkins Freeman, for instance-- in modernist critique we refer to a received canon--Joyce, Woolf, Stein, Eliot, Pound, H.D., Stevens, etc.--even as we challenge its existence. I wish to reconsider such regionalist and modernist concepts, and actually to blur them, since somewhere between Foster’s “cup of tea” and “April chill” lies her position as interlocutor, using regional techniques and iconography to express the human response to modernity which characterizes the modernist text.

This study separates regionalism from local color literature. As it applies to Foster’s work, and as I have shown in my reading of “Antiques,” I will be considering regionalism’s impact on twentieth-century literature as a genre marked by specificity of place, one which examines both individual response to locale, and the broad implications of such particularized response to universal problems. Shaping itself with the

characteristics of a community, the regional text draws on geography's impact on human life as it presents a particularly region-based world view. The citizens of Kate Chopin's French and Creole bayou world regard masculine and feminine roles as predetermined, rigid. The villagers of Mark Twain's Mississippi River or Bret Harte's dusty western towns, the island dwellers of Sara Orne Jewett's Dunnett Landing, and the New England female protagonists of Rose Terry Cooke, Mary Wilkins Freeman, or Elizabeth Stuart Phelps shape their views on gender, class, race, religion, education, and the rights (or non-rights) of individuals according to general Western logocentrism, intensified, not diminished by the author's constructed privileging of uniquely regional people, beliefs, and actions. So too, Foster locates her confrontation of past and present in a region in which regional characters reflect an awareness of life associated with Teilhard de Chardin's planetary consciousness. Late in 1969, in a letter to environmentalist Paul Schaeffer, Foster wrote of de Chardin's work, finding his poetry and mysticism in two of the artists she knew well:

Of all the brilliant minds I have been permitted to know, only two shared what I now call 'our consciousness,' the poet and mystic William Butler Yeats and the practical builder of the Irish Co-Operative Movement, [. . .] Æ. George Russell, poet and painter [. . .] Although I could not get books by de Chardin until recently, I knew some of his beliefs [. . .] his new order, those who communicate with and know planetary consciousness and find--as I found in the wilderness and my mountain--a communication far more uplifting and eternal than the creeds of men [. . .] I hope this

knowledge can be reflected in my new manuscript. Unless it is, I would prefer to destroy it. (AP xxxix)

While Foster's subject matter, like that of other regionalists, is often limited to the everyday, to those acts which impact the family, the church, school, work, or village community, recent criticism has shown the importance of such quotidian, private acts in their universal application to all human experience.

In her introduction to *Regionalism and the Female Imagination*, Emily Toth insists that "our most universal--most human--experiences happen at home" (9). Regionalists present universal problems through individual characters, establishing bases for reader identification and empathy through detailed depictions of people's lives in particular places. Consider, for example, Foster's depiction of a woman's insanity based on her place as second, barren wife to a mountain farmer, whose devotion to his dead wife is represented by her portrait with their young sons. The picture is a framed icon, which the second wife has locked up in the spare room because "*She walks out of her picture frame at night;/ I hear her stepping light around the house/ And laughing in the dark*" (NOY 71; 10-12). The first person explanation of the "sane" woman's actions, revealed to a doctor on a home visit predicated by the concern of neighbors, takes place in her home, beside the locked room. The scene is a poignant reminder to the modern reader of the intimacy of human relations in the mountain world. The doctor's presence underscores the woman's true source of instability: her inability to have a child, the center point of a married woman's role.

[. . .] [W]hen I married him.
 [. . .] I said, 'Very soon I shall not care
 About the picture hanging on the wall;
 [. . .] ' and in wild make-believe
 I'd snatch a pillow tight up in my arms.
 The years went by [. . .] you see I have grown old,
 And he is old too; all day by the fire
 He sits and stares at the big picture there
 Of his first wife and her five little boys. (71-72. 23-31)

As she does with the women of "Mis' Cole," "Nance Hills," "Silence Davis," "Wullie,"
 "Blue Calico: The Ingrate," and others, Foster inscribes upon the "The Sane Woman" the
 intense desire which has become obsession, by focusing on her lack. Echoing the words
 of Mis' Cole leaving her family for a life of her own, the Sane Woman states:

I'll 'never want for anything,' you say--
 I never *had anything*, you mean to say.
 Men don't count women in their worldly lives,--
 they count their children, and their farms and stock!
 They're like a river flowing--all these men--
 And if you haven't children you're no more
 Than driftwood floating on the river's breast,
 Flung in an eddy when the tide is full.

But I am strong; there's something fierce in me
 That fights back, hungers, searches all the time [. . .]
 [.....]

How could you think me jealous of the dead
 Or crazy? [.]

I lock the door just to shut out the noise.

Here is the door key-- Sh-h-h-h-h! I hear her now;

Go in there, Doctor, and you'll understand. (72. 34-43, 49-54)

Along with the doctor, the reader is implored to enter into the essence of the woman's madness, the poem progressing in intimacy through a movement into the heart, and certainly the mind, of Foster's character. In Foster's Adirondack work, there is little action to move the tale. The story *is* the characterization, framing and framed by other characters whose personal and universal consciousness marks the modern mind in its interrogation of human relationships and the synergy of life within them. Just as Eudora Welty builds her characterization of the South on the particulars of the Mississippi Delta and its individuals, so too does Foster reconstruct her world of mountain memories through the thoughts and acts of its idiosyncratic residents. Welty's newly married Robbie in *Delta Wedding* considers her predicament of love and lovelessness in a manner similar to the Sane Woman's remembrance of youthful hope and aged despair.⁴

The focus on character as opposed to action enables regional texts to present the rupture between the "private spheres" of men and women which nineteenth-century

industrialism and positivism had fostered. In so doing, regionalism questions such absolutes as the male capitalist marketplace and the female domestic realm, all the while reaffirming the strength and vigor of women's culture, often diminished by a late nineteenth-century capitalist culture. Similarly, the determination of what is privileged and what is marginalised is directly treated through the basic needs and desires of the people in a region responding to the social, political, and cultural pressures of a certain time. For example, Hamlin Garland's stories of the Middle Border (Wisconsin, Iowa, the Dakota Territory) at the end of the nineteenth century focus on the plight of the poor farmer eking out a living in a physically beautiful but pragmatically unyielding land. His concentration on the economic, political and emotional hardships of the small, independent farmer of the 1890's grows from his own sense of region, while his depiction of the suppressed and beaten farm women of the time is based on his own mother's exploitation shaped by the experience of place. The world view depicted in *Main-Travelled Roads* considers individuals who have escaped the repression of farm life, but that view is relentlessly tied to the farms and families left behind. Garland's introductory statement is rooted in the West he knew in 1894, and his final sentence, while abandoning the geography of the region, remains tied to the regionalism which informs his individuality: "Like the main-travelled road of life, [the West] is traversed by many classes of people, but the poor and the weary predominate" (*Main-Travelled Roads*, Introductory Statement).

Foster too concerns herself with the "poor and weary" whose presence in her mountain poetry marks not only the realism of the region, but also her inducement to

readers to see beyond the limits of subsistence to the simple beauty and worth of those over whom the modern world glances. "Poverty Grass" is a piece about a silver white vegetation which grows where "there is no soil/ to feed the roots of grain; / the cattle shun the silver slopes; / They know their search is vain" (AP 104; 29-32). The natural icon works to encompass Foster's depiction of endurance in suppression. The grass grows silver white on the barren hillsides of spring, "dies in the heat of summer," only to continue "Silver color in the sun,/ The slender spears stand like pale shades/ Foreboding frost to come" (14-16). They stand radiant throughout the winter, gathering "Snow crystals as they pass" (24) and illuminating the mountain, "Each spear is bent , a bugle/ Of ice with heart of gold" (27-8). And the cycle begins again, not in spring's lushness, but "with April's tricklings" (9). The regional is both bounded by time and moved into the realm of timelessness in the plant's cycle and value in remembrance:

Yet a forlorn wild beauty
 Compensates those who see
 These upland slopes when roaming
 Old paths of memory. (33-36)

Like the people who live beside it, the poverty grass has an intrinsic value; it is a worth measured in intangibles and endurance. What Garland accomplishes in his farm prose, Foster creates through the people and icons of the mountain mixed in verse.

On the other hand, for Bret Harte the West of 1868 was characterized by the tensions inherent in a man's need to prove his strength and courage in the face of fellow settlers and the land itself. Geographical place in Harte's stories is a wild character, often

lawless and violent, waiting to be tamed by the likes of Poker Flat's John Oakhurst, the story's heroic anti-hero. The same region, however, is viewed very differently by Kathleen Norris in her 1993 introspective *Dakota: A Spiritual Journey*. Again, based on the experience of struggling, western farmers and small town residents to remain on the land of their inheritance (ironically that which Garland's men and women first earned for them), Norris's volume reveals a physically depleted land, hospitable only to the individual poised to accept its particularly stark aesthetic.

As I have explored in Chapter Two, Foster's texts locate redemption and art in both man's struggle with the mountain and his joy in its exuberance. In "Simples," a poem cataloguing the many varieties of vegetation which North Woods natives knew as restoratives, the poet reinterprets the starkness of the land in two particular icons, the herbs and flowers, and their interpreter. Mediating Harte's and Norris's positions, Foster transforms the primitive through the "reader," both the interpreter of the natural world, and by extension, the decoder of the text:

If you are unskilled in the healing art,
 Weeds are just weeds--untoward, ugly things
 That choke smooth garden lands, and frowsily
 Bedeck the lanes, and pierce the tender flesh
 With burrs and daggers, --malice aforethought
 Of Nature's brain flung out in wantonness
 To ease the bubbling ichors of her blood.

But if you know the *Simpler's* kindly skill
 Weeds are the 'leaves for healing' given to man
 In a lost Eden. Once out in the West
 I knew an Indian medicine-man,
 Who taught me how to heal with prairie weeds;
 He told me that there grew upon the earth
 A weed to heal each pain of mortal flesh. (NOY 83. 1-14)

In the opposition of untoward, choking weeds and leaves of healing, Foster locates mankind's shift from an Edenic to a lapsed world. The ability to "read" nature rests in the art of the "Simpler," the humble interlocutor who reinterprets the wilderness to confront an imperfect world. Both Harte's wild land and Norris's transforming aesthetic are present in Foster's Adirondack individuals. As is often the case in regional work, the power to transform rests in the individual who "sees through," and is enabled by the quotidian to harness the brute force of the natural world. Foster writes:

And every herb and weed bears its own sign:
 A *Simpler* reads them like an open page.
 Dig up each root, pull out the stalks; somewhere
 The sign is hiding--planispheres writ small.

(NOY, "Simples" 84. 41-43)

As the healing power of the "Simples" becomes the art of the "simpler," the physical and metaphysical worlds merge, emphasizing once again the power of the land and the power of the individual.

This very individuality of the land and its people stressed by one author becomes the point of departure and difference for another author, who recreates the region in order to redefine the self, for example in terms of gender. Moving into the New England literary tradition of women's regional writing, Josephine Donovan argues that while the works of Annie Fields, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Rose Terry Cooke, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, Sarah Orne Jewett, and Mary Wilkins Freeman "seem to reflect and to express a transition away from a reverence for female activities, values and traditions toward one that favored and promoted androcentric cultural institutions," nevertheless the genre of realism which their texts form articulates an awareness and concern for the general situation of American women in the nineteenth century (*New England Local Color Literature: A Woman's Tradition* 5, 7). However, this vision of gender inequity would extend into issues of class and race in the twentieth century in the works of Edith Wharton, Zora Neale Hurston and others. Donna Campbell's study of realism and naturalism in *Resisting Regionalism: Gender and Naturalism in American Fiction: 1885-1915* reveals the ways in which the subversion and banishment of local color fiction enabled twentieth-century authors to coopt the settings, characters, iconography and symbol of that genre to restate such issues as gendered response.

Authors such as Wharton moved on to disrupt and transform established forms of character, plot, theme and setting that were linked to patriarchal privilege and gender, first in emergent naturalism, and later in American modernism (Campbell 13. 148-151). Wharton's companion texts, *Summer* and *Ethan Frome* (originally titled *Winter*) follow the paradigm of local color fiction by focusing on characters who respond to their

physical, social, economic, and psychological environments rather than to plot action first and foremost. Her characters, the place, and the story are specified through dialect, dress, mannerisms, cultural and social customs. However, just as the characters of both novels defy the expectations of their New England upbringing, the land itself is characterized by Wharton as defiantly seductive in its place within the human condition.

For example, in the opening scene of Chapter Five in *Summer*, Wharton presents early summertime as a counterpart to Charity Royall's intense boredom and stirring young sexuality. In a melding of the sexual self and a fertile world, Charity "reads" her own subjectivity in Wharton's particularized natural world of New England, laying in a meadow, communing with nature in such a way that the moment becomes a sexual awakening: "All this bubbling of sap and slipping of sheaths and bursting of calyxes was carried to her on mingled currents of fragrance. [. . .] and all were merged in a moist earth-smell that was like the breath of some huge sun-warmed animal" (38; ch.4). In Charity's meadow, Wharton transcends the nineteenth-century limits of the socially circumscribed village, through a young girl's burgeoning awareness of herself as sexual, passionate being. Through positive aspects of nineteenth-century sentimental fiction, Wharton constructs a text in which the metaphorical unfolding of Charity's sexuality discloses naturalist and modernist currents framed in human emotion.

Such a literary move would be repeated by other authors, none more artistically than Zora Neale Hurston in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937). In her journey to personal integrity, Hurston creates Janie's sexual awakening in words exquisitely reminiscent of Wharton's: "She saw a dust-bearing bee sink into the sanctum of a bloom;

the thousand sister-calyxes arch to meet the love embrace and the ecstatic shiver of the tree from root to tiniest branch creaming in every blossom and frothing with delight. So this was a marriage! She had been summoned to behold a revelation [. . .] (10-11; ch.II). Janie's multiply-framed narration seasons and layers Janie's self-actualization with gender, race and class issues, played out differently in different locales. The resolutions of these issues reflect the larger social questions not only of Janie's world, but also of the country's continued paradoxical representation of what "American" is. The journey brings Janie back to her own doorstep where the regionality of the novel contracts to become Janie herself: "[. . .] The kiss of his memory made pictures of love and light against the wall. Here was peace. She pulled in her horizon like a great fish-net. [. . .] and draped it over her shoulder. So much of life in its meshes! She called in her soul to come and see" (183-4; ch.xx).

Both Wharton and Hurston enact my conception of Foster's expansive regionalist paradigm in their explicit use of locale and character, individuating a young girl, and a mature woman through their relationships to the natural environment. In her poem "Shadders," Foster locates the union with nature in an old crone:

Granny climbed up old Crane Mountain

Neighbors told her not to go.

'Shadders pick on moonlight evenings;

Shadders watch the berries grow.

'Folks have seen 'em in fog-white moonlight,

Eyes as bright as a bat a-wing;

Hooty-owl's calling, moles a-crawling;

We wouldn't go there for anything. (AP 85. 1-8)

Heedless of her careful neighbors's warnings, the old woman "set[s] her pipe a-sparking"
in a male gesture of defiance, and declares:

'[. . .] I aim to do my picking

Where they're sweetest, on old Crane.

'Berries sweet as maple sapping,

Berries big as a green wild hop

Grow on the sides of old Crane Mountain;

I aim to climb to the top--tip-top.' (85. 11-16)

The images of sap flowing, berries growing large, ripe, and sweet, and vegetation greening in fertility are at odds with the images of the Adirondack peaks-- stony, cold, and bare. Foster will create the merging of physical and metaphysical worlds through these male and female images, and through the old woman's self-assured perseverance. Seeming to know that the union with the mountain means life extended, Granny takes her risks, and--

[. . .] Rounded a boulder and she was gone.

Didn't come back when night was sifting;

Didn't come back sun-up next day.

Neighbors said--who goes blueberrying

On old Crane has gone to stay.

Folks have seen her climbing with the shadders,
 Filling her bucket in fog-white light;
 Hooty-owls calling, moles a-crawling;
 Picking blueberries on a moonlight night. (85. 20-28)

Thus the old woman becomes a part of the mountain's mystery in a cycle which recalls the beginning of the poem. Sexual images--climbing, filling, fog-white lightness, hooting and crawling, picking the yield of the earth, abundance of moonlight--reinforce the nature of her relationship with the mountain's phallic power. While in some of Foster's poems the old life of the mountain vanishes before the signs of progress (NOY "The Old Lumberjack in Exile"; AP "Neighbors," "The Lost Breed," "Shanty Days"), in "Shadders" the old woman vanishes into and reappears as a part of the life of the mountain in a union both mystical and sensual. The concept is repeated in "The Wilderness Is Strong":

Here in the wilderness folks will tell you
 To be careful about the place you live,
 For there's something in the mountains
 And the hills that is stronger than people,
 And you will grow like the place where you live.
 [.....]
 Wilderness people are a special breed.
 They have something that's not hearing or seeing
 Reaching out from the mountains to touch them. (AP 141.1-5, 18-20)

Welty's, Wharton's, Hurston's, and Foster's characters are not products of the events of their lives, but rather subjects of place, their selves forming and developing in and because of the forces surrounding them.

Rooted in the details of place, time, language, and characterization, regional texts of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries suggest that despite the intrusion of the capitalist marketplace and its attendant alienation, both the power of individuality and the importance of local community are essential for human beings. Marjorie Pryse and Judith Fetterley advance the connection of place and self in their introduction to the anthology, *American Women Regionalists*: "Since the regionalist character tends to develop within her community of origin, her relationship to place--to the regional landscape--is central to her discovery of self. Indeed [. . .] the regional landscape literally serves to mirror the narrator, providing her with a [. . .] point of reference essential to the establishment of her identity" (xvi-xvii). Subjectivity grows from within and without. But while women regionalists mined the genre with great yield, such subjectivity applies to either gender. Preoccupation with place and the details of locality inform the technique and method of American naturalism with its masculine expression of determinism dependent upon psychological, emotional and environmental factors. Naturalism's "careful concern for the uniquely 'local' and its emphasis on preserving regional identity were enthusiastically co-opted by Hamlin Garland and Frank Norris into a jingoistic literary nationalism" (Campbell *Resisting Regionalism* 48). By interconnecting person and place in complementary formations of identity and region as national identity, the regionalist genre expresses universal concepts in uniquely American ways.

David Jordan evaluates the regional as an art form which reflects the unique identity called American, when he refers to regionalism's dynamic interplay of political, cultural, and psychological forces. To Jordan, citing William Dean Howells's call for democracy in the arts, regional texts (especially of the late-nineteenth-century) present the unique details of American character and community, and by so doing, regionalist authors "forg[e] a distinctly American art" (*Regionalism Reconsidered* ix). Working from a similar perspective, Elizabeth Ammons and Valerie Rohy see this artistic forging as synecdochical, since American regionalist literature offers a part of the United States as token of the national whole. Such a relationship implies both the recognition and the incorporation of the other in "the celebration of regional difference [. . .] [and] the promotion of a nationalist fantasy" (*American Local Color Writing: 1880-1920* xxvi). The political aspect of regional texts articulates an America which by its very nature as conglomerate is bound to be a hyphenate, and which continues to evolve in the twenty-first century, changing the very definition of American, of self, and of other which postmodern theory examines. Thus, the customs of fashion, food, entertainment, and language, the ways in which human activity is prioritized, the rituals of birth, education, marriage, family, death, religious traditions-- all these things and more emanating from a community's interaction with place offer an individualized response to the challenges of desire and endurance so central to the texts of modernism. In this locational aspect, the regional overlaps the modernist: both express the self in terms of place and desire within a geographical (sometimes presented as a psychological) setting, and more importantly in a subjectivity articulated through the interactions of the human psyche and the region.

This is not to suggest that mere local color, thrown into a text in order to identify it with a place for commercial or facilely sentimental purposes, has the same effect as literature built upon a foundation of place, any more than exploitative black face would be considered authentic African artistic expression. While regionalism contains proportional amounts of local color, local color literature sometimes represents geography, dialect, and dress which entertain but do not evoke more than sentiment from the reader. For instance, Philander Deming, an Adirondack writer of short stories published between 1880 and 1907, created many stories which are authentic in their description of place and the customs of individuals and communities. Most of them center on a tragedy, such as a child's death in the harsh nature of the mountains, or the destruction of a man's or a woman's happiness because of communal suspicions of wrongdoing or unfair accusations. They are interesting and recreate the end of the nineteenth century in the Adirondack world, but aside from general commentary on the sadness of loss, the implications of loneliness, the unchanged continuity of life in the mountain communities, Deming's texts raise few questions about or problems of life in the larger, modern world, either then or now. They are "slice of life" stories, apt in their realism, reflective of the naturalism which shaped much literature of Deming's time, but without broader application to universal human experience. Deming's detailed, dramatic local color stories about the people of a particular place and time, are limited in their regional scope by virtue of their narrow perspective. Similarly, Joel Chandler Harris's views of the Old South through the stories of Uncle Remus and the trickster figure Brer Rabbit are fully colored with their locale, but in Harris's case the regional may be

interpreted as validation of the privilege of southern white self-rule, as well as reinforcement of white impressions of the simple childishness of African-American culture. On the other hand, his stories may move beyond stereotype, reinforcing (even if pejoratively) black resistance to white authority in ways similar to the poetry of Paul Laurence Dunbar.

The intimate relationship to environment and local culture which marks the regional text does not limit it in my interpretation, but rather explores the sense of difference which marks individuality. Hamlin Garland examines the regional aspect of fiction as far back as Homer and cites it in Chaucer's "suggestiveness and humanity." In "Local Color in Art," Garland states, "It is the differences which interest us; the similarities do not please, do not forever stimulate and feed as do the differences [. . .] Historically, the local color of a poet or dramatist is of the greatest value" (*Crumbling Idols* 49). Garland's discussion of the regional locates the modern by looking to European authors "rooted in the soil" who "concern themselves with modern and very present words and themes" in "the literature of lovers and doers; of men who love the modern and who have not been educated to despise common things" (50). And while Garland's argument somewhat provincially centers on the elevation of the American western author to the level of prestige and influence of the eastern publishing centers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, he aptly locates the art of Dostoevski, Flaubert, Turgenev, and Ibsen in the power of their regional sense. Far beyond picturesque quaintness, Garland cites local color as having "[. . .] such quality of texture and back-ground that it could not have been written in any other place or by any one else

than a native” (53-4). For me, the regional significance of a text exists in its shaping of human intellect and emotion which alone can make a fiction live. A text’s importance lies not in its layers of local detail, but rather in its universality which, present through the text’s regionality, speaks to the profoundly common experiences of all humankind. In the American regional text, that universality is most clearly articulated through ethnicity.

Ethnicity and its place in American Literary Texts: *The Melting Pot Upended*

Hugh Kenner opens *The Pound Era* with Henry James’s and Dorothy Shakespear Pound’s mutual gaze. She sees him with “a painter’s eye” as “a fairly portly figure,” whereas James in what Kenner calls his “fierce need to ‘place’ and categorize” asks Pound “ ‘And is she a com-pat-riot?’: the syllables spaced, the accented vowel short” (3-5). Kenner’s landmark text about the phenomenon of modernism with Pound as its central icon begins with an insider/outsider gaze in which representatives of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries evaluate each other in terms of alien and native “place.”

Coincidentally, William Boelhower opens his book on ethnic semiosis with Henry James’s presentation in *The American Scene* of his experience of the American/ethnic gaze, one which Boelhower insists is essentially circular, the American and the immigrant paradoxically separate and reflecting each other through the existence of the journey to the “new world” (whether recent or in previous generations). Relating a moment in which he stopped to watch some Italian laborers, James characterizes the rupture in human exchange which occurred when his gaze and that of the laborers met: “What

lapsed, on the spot, was the element of communication with the workers [. . .] some impalpable exchange [. . .]. It was as if contact were out of the question and the sterility of the passage between us recorded, with due dryness, in our staring silence” (in *Through a Glass Darkly: Ethnic Semiosis in American Literature* 20-1). Both James and the Italians (as well as many of Foster’s narrators) are caught in what sociologist Robert Merton has labeled “insider and outsider knowledge,” the discomfiting position of being in a confrontation of two conflicting socio-cultural groups, each of which defines the self as “insider” and the other as “outsider” (“Insiders and Outsiders: A Chapter in the Sociology of Knowledge,” 1972 in *Theories of Ethnicity: A Classical Reader*, Werner Sollors, ed. 325).

In a parody of James’s confrontation with the workers, his and Dorothy Pound’s mutual appraisals are further examples of the self/other or insider/outsider gaze, this one contingent upon time period and artistic sense as well as (perhaps more than) national affinity. James’s “compatriotism” encompasses a totalizing identity, which devolves from both cultural and political loyalties. In both cases, Boelhower’s conclusion applies: “[. . .] this ethnic *topos* is a conjunctural context [. . .] both parties are decentered onlookers, both on the margins. At the center of the ethnic event is not an entity or a content of a definable subject, but a dynamic relation, a qualifying energy, in short an ethnic *kinesis* [. . .] two different codifications of the same reality [. . .]” (23). Like the union of Foster’s presence and absence of region in poems such as “The Mooneys,” (AP, discussed in Chapter Two) this ethnic *kinesis* is in effect an empty space, a space between self and other in which the very constructs of native and ethnic occur. There is neither an

American nor an ethnic identity without the tension of each concept in opposition to the other. The ethnicity which an Anglo-ideology of Americanness tries to negate focuses not on the history of the self, but on its relationship to culture. As Boelhower states the problem: “[. . .] there is no American scene outside an interpretation of it, and in the light of an ethnic semiotics, [. . .] a co-structuring of interpretations” (23). Therefore, as I have discussed in Chapter Two (considering the concept of the Adirondack mountains and their Native American as well as multi-national history of settlement) the idea of an assimilationist American identity can exist only in the fiction of a map upon which the United States can be portrayed and labeled as the sum of its parts.⁵ In fact, regionalism belies the American melting-pot, the identities of each sector of its population revealed in the texts which articulate the differences creating our national whole. The James/Dorothy Pound and James/Italian worker gazes shed light on Foster’s use of both regional American identity and insider/outsider interpretation of narrated events. As Foster turns from the cosmopolitan mix of the city to the specificity of her Adirondack background, her texts confront the empty center of a nation struggling to identify itself in twentieth-century terms.

In 1916, the year when Foster’s first books of poetry were published, Europe was riven by a war which, in addition to its origins in economic and political desire and mistrust, savagely exposed the powerful forces inherent in ethnicity. Nationalism, that oxymoronic source of unity and division built on loyalty to a perceived common culture, economy and political future, had by 1914 forged new political identities such as Italy and Germany, while it had left others such as Serbia, Bosnia, Hercegovina, Romania, and

Bulgaria lusting for independence, the right to which European recognition of their nation-status would confirm. In an article written for the *Atlantic Monthly* in July of that year, pacifist journalist Randolph Bourne connected ethnicity and American nationalism in a stirring opening to “Trans-National America”:

No reverberatory effect of the great war has caused American public opinion more solicitude than the failure of the ‘melting-pot.’ [. . .] We have had to listen to publicists who express themselves as stunned by the evidence of vigorous nationalistic and cultural movements in this country among Germans, Scandinavians, Bohemians, and Poles, while in the same breath they insist that the alien shall be forcibly assimilated to that Anglo-Saxon tradition which they unquestioningly label ‘American.’

(Theories of Ethnicity 93)

At a time when Foster chooses to write about American life through the eyes of Adirondack villagers and their identification with place, the national debate over assimilation versus ethnic nationalism heats up, as more and more Americans refuse to be subsumed in the metaphorical melting pot of heterogeneity. With World War I as a foil, the drama of how to define Americanism moved far beyond national origin, as the socio-political power brokers whom Bourne dubs “Brahmin” articulated their desire to be the defining factor in the amalgam of ethnicity which theoretically would be reshaped as “American” by the melting pot mix. Race, gender, class, and religion became the quintessential ingredients identifying the upper-class American, and WASP became the national trademark of the most powerful, the type to which all civic-minded, status-

oriented Americans were (ideally) to aspire⁶. Thus, both the Anglo-conformed version of American identity ($A + B + C = A$), and the melting-pot version ($A + B + C = D$) reduce the plural mix of the American populace to a single entity. As both a native and a non-native of the mountain community, Foster's use of the Adirondack subject as a liminal space from which she can question the nineteenth and twentieth centuries frees her to assume the interpretive strategies of both American identity and ethnicity. Boelhower characterizes this move: "No matter where the American author finally chooses to strike through the pasteboard mask of American identity, his questing always brings him into contact with an ethnic subject, his other self" (78).⁷ Ultimately, the shift from decentered to recentered self through questing is a prime characteristic of the urge to modernism, one which Foster employs in reconstructing, in a modern world, the characters of an Adirondack/American world which has disappeared.

Foster's use of multiple perspectives, read in the stereoscopic images of "Antiques" and the transfer of identity to land in "The Mooneys," incorporates the symbolic ethnicity which Herbert Gans identifies as a double move by immigrant offspring to acculturate into the "American scene" as well as to retain a sense of the homeland, translated from a sacred and secular ancestral heritage of segregation and ethnic daily life. This central ethnic identity evolves into a "leisure-time activity" of ethnic affiliation which involves symbols rather than myths (Sollors 436-7). As such, symbolic ethnicity allows successive generation members of ethnic groups to maintain a love for and a pride in their traditions without having those traditions incorporated (intruding) into every aspect of daily life. Such concepts as adherence to religion,

enjoyment of traditional foods, dance, holidays, obedience of children to particular parental dictums, identification with particular political forces enable one to be American “with a twist,” an identification which makes it possible to move from self to other and back again. Thus, the ethnic-American can feel and express the proper allegiance to whichever movement, philosophy, or ideology is status-appropriate at a given time. Such symbolic ethnicity encourages a nostalgic look backward “to [. . .] imagined pasts, which are conveniently cleansed of the complexities that accompanied them in the real past, [and] while [immigrant descendants] may soon realize that they cannot go back, they may not surrender the wish [to do so]” (Sollors 436). Foster’s recreation of the Adirondack community just before the encroachment of twentieth-century modernity employs a form of symbolic ethnicity which transforms the “old country” of a mythically innocent America into a canvas upon which she can render modern changes through symbols of the past. Additionally, under the screen of nostalgic reminiscence, Foster seduces readers into questioning past, present and future through their immersion into those communities.

The poem “The Mooneys” illustrates this merger of place, ethnicity, and subjectivity as part of the transition from a deterministic nineteenth-century world to a subjective twentieth-century one. Reading it, we can move out of local color through Foster’s voice as both insider and outsider, reflecting old and new world political orders in an act of modern personal agency characterized as American.

“The Mooneys”: *The Old World Meets the New*

I saw them every Sunday when we drove to church,
Beyond the schoolhouse, up the slanting hill
Beside the creek, and then a level space
Before you saw the house set to the right
Back from the road in the lush meadow grass.
And every Sunday she was sitting there
Dressed in a decent faded basque and skirt
With her hands folded in her ample lap.
And on the other side of the scant porch,
In checkered shirt thrown open at the throat,
Bill Mooney sat with pipe between his teeth
And chair tipped back to balance with his weight.
Every Sunday from late spring to fall, they sat there
Like two stones, or like two trees rooted in earth.

‘Father,’ I said, ‘do they not go to church?’
‘They’re Catholics,’ father said beneath his breath.
‘But don’t they drive to Mass with their own kind?’
‘No,’ father said. ‘The priest comes here to see them [. . .]
They do not want to leave the house for fear
It might burn down, or cattle should get out,

Or other damage come.[. . .]

'I've asked the Mooneys if they wouldn't come

And visit us out on our farm someday.

They said, "I know you'll think we are queer folks.

We feel sometimes that we are deep in sin;

We're happy to stay home, sit on the stoop,

And look out on our fields of oats and rye

And watch the cows [. . .]

And sheep and the young lambs up on the hill.

It's strange to you who never wanted land

To call your own that we are filled with fear

That some old spell might sweep it all away.

Sometimes I take a sod the plow has turned

And hold it in my hands and think of years

When not a cackling hen or bit of turf

Could be our very own.

"We know it's wrong--

To never leave our land and cows and sheep

To kneel in church--but still we say our prayers

And ask God to forgive us for our fault.

We feel that surely He will understand.” ’ (AP 31-32)

In the first line the reader is presented with three pronouns, “I,” “them,” and “we,” and by line four, two lines before we begin to get a detailed image of the woman, “you” enters the text. Foster’s textual gaze is that of the observer seeing the other as a part of the landscape. The parameters of the scene establish both physical and psychological distance, as the speaker sets “them,” anonymous parts of the hillside, among three central social institutions: the church, the school, and the house. Essentially then, the parts of an ethnic encounter are present immediately: *I*, *you*, and *we* are staring at *them* placed within *our* social institutions. What is more important for this study, the encounter takes place within an American region, the Adirondack hillside, which defines itself through the single adjective “lush.”

Foster’s opening verse perceives the vitality of the land, setting it in direct opposition to stones, and to the deprivation, repression and starvation indicated by the later lines which tell us the origin of the couple. “French Louis,” himself an ethnic figure, tells the father that “they came from Ireland years ago/ When there was famine [. . .]” (31. 26-7). We learn this as the culmination of other facts: both by their religion and by their actions, or withdrawal from social interaction, the man and woman have defined themselves as outsiders; they are devout, “the priest comes here to see them,” and yet their faith practice is not privileged above their devotion to the land. Perhaps most important, they have become a part of the land. We share the narrator’s gaze halfway through the first verse when we are introduced to the woman, simply designated “she,” sitting on a “scant porch” dressed up in her best blouse and skirt (described with the

French “basque”), totally quiet, “hands folded in her ample lap,” her person an offshoot of the “lush meadow grass” which surrounds her. She is unnamed until her husband is referenced, Bill Mooney with his pipe between his teeth. He is a nineteenth-century country image, the quintessential American farmer, with his open checkered shirt, pipe, and chair tipped back on his front porch. But Foster shifts the couple’s placement in the memory. Within “the lush meadow grass” the aliens are fixed, first as two stones, inanimate, not a part of but resting on the land, *or*--Foster’s carefully chosen contrast indicator--they are “like two trees rooted in earth.” In the second thought, the final image of the introductory verse, the life forms alien to the speaker’s (native’s) gaze are not alien to the land; they are merely transplanted from another natural setting, moved from one place to another, and now an integral part of their new regional home. They are not merely immigrants living a life separate from their community because of language and culture differences. The Mooneys, we learn, have chosen not only to live in their region, but inside their land, rooted to it.

The Irish love of land sung in lyrics and portrayed so powerfully in both Margaret Mitchell’s *Gone With the Wind* and Eugene O’Neill’s *Long Day’s Journey Into Night* is represented by the Mooneys’s choral response, triply framed for us. Foster’s narrator is the first-person voice of an adult remembering her own childhood experience. This memory, “I saw them every Sunday,” is the reader’s first encounter with the text. But the actual knowledge of the Mooneys comes from the father’s response, a narrative discourse filtered through time, as he in turn reaches back to his remembered conversation with the Mooneys, related to us through the adult child’s recreation of the moment. The Mooneys

speak as a choral unit, “they,” when explaining their solitude: their sin of neglect comes from their fear of loss, learned in the old country where owning land was impossible for most of the population. The voice shifts from “they” to “I” as a single individual (patriarchal privilege suggests that this is Bill Mooney) clarifies that he does not say that he holds the sod and thinks of when they *didn't* own anything. He remembers when “not a cackling hen or bit of turf *could* be our very own.” The image of non-ownership of the land encompasses the Irish experience of servitude. Not only were they poor and starving in famine-ridden Ireland, but also they were without basic human rights. Their inability to grasp the reality of their farm--“we are filled with fear/ That some old spell might sweep it all away”--traces the political realities of their old world experience as well as the particularly Irish belief in the magical forces of the land itself.

Foster encompasses the many-layered experience of American ethnicity and in turn, the modernist interrogation of subjectivity by placing the narrative within multiple time concepts, present, remembered as past, encompassing future possibility (*sometimes, take, has turned, hold, think, could be*). In addition, she facilitates the telling through multiple voices: the adult child, the child, the father, and the ethnic couple. In the last verse, the Mooneys’s direct acknowledgment of the sin of choosing the land over Mass (a potentially “mortal” sin for Catholics) is neutralized by their own subjective stance: “We know it’s wrong--/To never leave our land and cows and sheep/ To kneel in church--but we still say our prayers/ And ask God to forgive us for our fault./ We feel that surely He will understand.” This is a new world attitude clearly framed by American independence, yet one which Foster’s friend W.B. Yeats expresses in “Tom the Lunatic” from

Words for Music Perhaps (1932):

‘Whatever stands in field or flood,
 Bird, beast, fish or man,
 Mare or stallion, cock or hen,
 Stands in God’s unchanging eye
 In all the vigour of its blood;
 In that faith I live or die.’

(William Butler Yeats: Selected Poems and Three Plays 154.13-18)

In an act just short of defiance, akin to Yeats’s, the Mooneys stand in their field together with bird, beast, mare, stallion, cock and hen redefining their faithful observance before God’s unchanging eye, according to their direct participation in the vigour of the land which has become an extension of themselves. The supremacy of the Church and church doctrine so immobilizing in Ireland recedes in the face of the individual’s sense of personal agency, in the same way that the concept of political control and the nobility of land ownership takes on new meanings in the light of democratic freedoms.

“The Mooneys” is a text in which we experience both the presence of region, through the insider’s account of the mountain, and the absence of region, through the outsider’s narration of repression and his justification of break with tradition. Here presence and absence combine to articulate a sense of place apprehended through two lenses, and this stereoscopic move elides the empty center from which Foster’s meaning emerges. In addition, the native-insider voice defers to the explanations of the father, French Louis, and the Mooneys. In that extension of narrative authority, insider and

outsider merge in a representation of assimilation and pluralism. The presence of ethnicity in Foster's texts is yet another harmony of her regionalist and modernist voices.

During Foster's thirty-three-year sojourn which brought her to New York, London, Dublin, Paris and Prague, she had ample opportunity to gaze back at the mountain, seeing it through the lens of the outside observer. Still, returning regularly to the Adirondacks, Foster witnessed the positive and negative changes occurring in her native world, and reacted to them as an insider. As she moved within a world of art and publishing which focused on new conceptions of the self and its formation, of the sense of time, of once absolute definitions of beauty, truth, God, and the powers of science and technology, Foster stood between the mountain and city worlds, the high peaks on one side, the dramatic canyons of skyscrapers, and the classic majesty of European architecture and art on the other, using poetry to tell the story of the gone-by in order to reveal what society has both lost and found in the modern. Employing a double perspective, Foster is the engaged translator of a passing era, while simultaneously she is the concerned observer of an emergent one.

ENDNOTES

1. Foster's poem, "Mary Tamahaw," in *Neighbors of Yesterday* (119-120), dramatizes this removal from North Woods to urban setting by telling the story of an Indian girl of mixed ancestry, whose beauty, "like a lily pale and fair/ Like a golden lily, [. . .] / Never reddened with the Indian stain./ Never coarsened with the wind and rain" brings her to the attention of wealthy New Yorkers. They bring her to the city, give her every material advantage, "[. . .] play-houses and costly things./ Shetland ponies and some bright gold rings./ Ribbons that she wanted [. . .]" But, happy for a while in the rarefied environment of the city, Mary began to fade when "[. . .] something made her sad./ She was lonely for the old North River/ for the sunset flames that leap and quiver/ In the sky when dusk of night is falling./ Did she hear the grey mist-spirits calling?/ No one ever knew [. . .]"

The final stanza tells us something about Foster's own desires:

In a palace on fifth Avenue,
Where the walls were painted every hue,
Where the rain could never drip and seep
Down the gilded walls, she fell asleep,
Broken, like a springtime lily golden,
Plucked from out the forest gray and olden.--
Little Mary Tamahaw,
Seventh daughter of Old Charlie Tamahaw
And his squaw.

Foster contextualized her need to remain connected to the mountain in a statement to Paul Schaeffer: "[T]here seemed to be a strong force passing through me, so untamed, wild and beautiful that there are no words for it. But I know this force remained with me [. . .] flowed as courage in my blood [. . .] and never left me--not *even today*" (AP 144). In Foster's world, the interchange of mountain force and urban sophistication was central to the personal and artistic spirit which nurtured her accomplishments and gave her the strength to solve both personal and professional problems. Her ability to move between the two worlds is a crucial element informing the voice of her Adirondack poetry. Perhaps this is the key to her ability to remain poised between the wilderness and the city, writing of each place from the other through a multiply focused, but clarified (stereoscopic) vision. Rooted in the North Woods, but inspired and intellectually challenged in some of the major cities of the modern world (New York, London, Paris, Prague), she did not become an expatriate because, in a sense, she had the ability to move back and forth between these two worlds at home.

2. Personal interview with Dr. Londrville, State University of New York at Potsdam, July 1999.

3. As Peter Nicholls suggests in his discussion of Pound's early modernist concern with themes of memory, exile and loss in such elegiac verses as "Histrion," the romantic aesthetic of the arrested moment allows the past to return, albeit at the expense of the poet's sensibility, a fragile creativity which may succumb to the act of imitation in recapturing the moment. So too does Foster's poetry risk becoming either sentimental or reductive (both of which problems we will see in the reading of "Jim Kenyon's Horse"). Foster's power, however, is found in her translation of past to present and back again, expressed by Nicholls as the conception of "the tensional relation between past and present--thus extending the function of anachronism from content to *form*" which relation enables a type of re-inscription of past and present upon each other, as exemplified in Pound's translations and work with Noh drama. For a discussion of Pound's art as it employs past and present, see Nicholls, *Modernisms: A Literary Guide*, Chapter 8. "Modernity and the 'Men of 1914', 165-179.

4. Robbie's thought about married love evoke her memory of place, in this instance, New Orleans: "[. . .] The streetcars made an extraordinary clangor at such close quarters, as they did in the quiet of night, and some of them had 'Desire' across the top. Could that have been the name of a street? She had not asked then; she did not much wonder now (323; ch.7, ii). Here, as in Foster, the regional is transformed into the personal and intimate, as place shapes thought and response, and as fulfillment of cultural and traditional roles defines the self. In 1947, two years after Welty's novel, Tennessee Williams would further shape the inherent sensuality and violence of Welty's genteel Southern image in the riveting characterizations in his *A Streetcar Named Desire*. At the same time, Foster was quietly exploring this art in her Adirondack verse tales.

5. As I have discussed in Section Two: *The Mountain as Metaphor*, as late as 1784, Thomas Pownall wrote about the Adirondack area as a "broken unpracticable Tract" about which he could learn nothing, even from the Native Americans who had lived "within" the land for centuries (see Section Two, 3). Pownall considers the "Indians" wise to keep what knowledge they have from the Europeans, suggesting that the great American project of creating an identity was subtly acknowledged, even then, as erasure of the Native American identification with the land as part of the self. William Boelhower articulates the tension between the European settler and the Indian, as he lays the groundwork for his consideration of mapping:

When the white man met the Indian, there was not so much a communicative exchange between them as there was a juxtaposition of two opposing world views, of two ways of perceiving space, and, consequently, of defining the subject's culture of *habitare*.

(*Through a Glass Darkly* 48)

Since the map itself represented the type of power which European culture applied to the ownership of space, the very land, in the American project which began in the colonial and ended in the national, was reshaped and reapportioned by the mapping process. Whereas the natives might regard the land as a local space of interaction between man and nature, the European concept of ownership through colonization saw the uniform global space of the map as a cultural gesture which negated the local spaces of the Indian. Therefore, as Boelhower argues, the ethnic relation between European and native, (later extended to the immigrant and assimilationism) was “a strategy of the map against brute nature” in which Boelhower asserts: “If the Indian protested saying, “I am where my body is,” the colonist answered, “I am where my boundaries are” (56). Thus, the perfecting of the map, of surveying, measuring, deeding, and granting statehood to parcels of land, can be read as the geographical definition of American identity in which the local becomes subsumed into the shape of the final parameters. For a full treatment of these concepts of space, mapping and American identity, see William Boelhower, *Through a Glass Darkly: Ethnic Semiosis in American Literature*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), Chapter Two.

For an extension of the concept of mapping and control of ethnicity, see Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air*. (New York: Penguin Books, 1988) 290-312. Here, Berman discusses the restructuring, and de-structuring of urban space according to the construction of highways, visible re-mappings of post-WWII city constructs. Berman argues, convincingly, that the power which Robert Moses wielded to create space in and out of New York City according to access afforded by automobile, effectively destroyed areas of the metropolis such as the South Bronx, while creating restricted pastoral utopias in suburban sectors such as Jones Beach. Discussing the interweaving of the pastoral and the modern, Berman asserts that “Moses great construction in and around New York in the 1920s and 30s served as a rehearsal for the infinitely greater reconstruction of the whole fabric of America after World War Two” (307). One important result of Moses’s construction was the remapping of urban and suburban space into ethnic ghettos and areas of elite privilege. In essence, Berman recounts the history of European colonization, and the redefinition of Indian land into the concept of America, recasting the story in terms of modernity.

6. Aspiring to the hegemony by socially inferior members of an economic upper class is addressed directly in the character of Sim Rosedale by Edith Wharton in *The House of Mirth*. As long as Lily Bart is a symbol of the New York aristocracy, the Jewish financier Rosedale is captivated by both her aesthetic and social value. Wharton’s introduction of Lily, through the eyes of Lawrence Selden captures the effect of this double worth:

He had a confused sense that she must have cost a great deal to make, that a great many dull and ugly people must, in some mysterious way, have been sacrificed to produce her [. . .] as though a fine glaze of beauty and fastidiousness had been applied to vulgar clay (7, ch.1).

In his desire to acquire that same “fine glaze” and thus mitigate his ethnicity, Rosedale seeks to marry Lily, much the way the “Ned Gormers” or “Welly Brys” seek legitimacy and acceptance in the elite New York circles by buying art and holding salons. In his proposition to make Lily his wife, Rosedale specifies her allure: “[. . .] if I want a thing I’m willing to pay: I don’t go up to the counter, and then wonder if the article’s worth the price [. . .] I would n’t be satisfied to entertain like the Welly Brys; I’d want something that would look more easy and natural [. . .] And it takes just two things to do that, Miss Bart: money, and the right woman to spend it. . . what I want is the woman--and I mean to have her too: (174). Once Lily’s market value as a social commodity has plummeted however, Rosedale can no longer afford the luxury of an alliance with her, even if he still desires her as a woman. As she miscalculates both her marketplace worth and her power to use it, Lily misreads her control over Rosedale’s intentions.:

[. . .] [W]hy should I mind saying I want to get into society? [. . .] I want to have the run of the best houses; and I’m getting it too, little by little. But I know the quickest way to queer yourself with the right people is to be seen with the wrong ones; and that’s the reason I want to avoid mistakes [. . .] I’m more in love with you than ever, but if I married you now I’d queer myself for good and all, and everything I’ve worked for all these years would be wasted (242).

Ultimately, Lily’s loss of power in the social arena equals her loss of value in the marital marketplace. For a full discussion of the ways in which Wharton and later Dorothy Parker discuss female power in their texts, see my essay, “The Price of Power in Women’s Literature: Edith Wharton and Dorothy Parker,” in *Gender in Popular Culture: Images of Men and Women in Literature, Visual Media, and Material Culture*, ed. Peter C. and Susan W. Rollins. (Cleveland: Ridgmont Press, 1995).

7. Foster’s many names, discussed in Chapter One, point to her multiple accessions of power and identity through the many gendered and ethnic recreations which she employed as she made her way from mountain girl through wife, to actress, model, professional journalist and eventually author. Extending his discussion of the naming of geographic place to the naming of persons, William Boelhower applies concepts of ancestry and ethnicity to strategies for identification: “By discovering the self implicit in the surname, one produces an ethnic seeing and understands himself as a social, an ethnic, subject. Implicit in one’s family name is a story of origins, a particular system of relations” (*Through A Glass Darkly* 81). Interestingly, Boelhower refers to Pound’s Canto XCIX to trace sonship and origins in the history of the family name “To trace out and bound *together* / From sonship this goes to clan” (*The Cantos of Ezra Pound* 715), reinforcing the many connections with Pound’s thought and form which constantly emerge from and affect Foster’s writing and her sense of authorship. Ethnicity,

Americanization, gender, identity, professionalism, and a sense of self move through the regional, to bring about an identity which negotiates both the American sense of place and the ethnic/immigrant sense of other inherent in the concept of “American.”

CHAPTER FIVE:

The Maelstrom of Modernism: In the Vortex of Yesterday and Tomorrow

Do not say of me: She was

Beautiful or kind or good.

Say: There was an April song

Once--she heard and understood. (*Rock-Flower* "What You Shall Say" 65)

In 1922, when Jeanne Robert Foster published her third book of poetry, *Rock-Flower*, not only did she indulge her great love affair with John Quinn, but also, she expressed the influences of the modernist authors and artists through whom she was apprehending the power of art. Although *Rock-Flower* is sometimes indulgent in its sentimentality, there are occasional poems, like the pieces suggestive of haiku, *Verses for Japanese Prints*, a special favorite of W.B. Yeats, or the serial *Constantin Brancusi* which incorporate the sharp imagery and spare emotion of Pound's "In the Metro" or Eliot's *Preludes*. Even the flawed prose poem, "Three Colors of the Moon" which concludes Foster's 1922 volume, indicates her comprehension of twentieth-century artistic perceptions in which realistic, linear portrayals of the human experience were being replaced by avant-garde, evocative forms, encompassed later by the New Critical term "modernism."

Encountering the Modernists: *The Armory Exhibit*

Three years before *Rock-Flower*'s release, Foster covered the 1913 International

Exhibition of Modern Art featuring the European Moderns, proffered by the Association of American Painters and Sculptors. In the Preface to the catalogue of artists and works in the so-called Armory Exhibit, Frederick Gregg¹ wrote a summary of the Association's artistic philosophy, a variation on Jeanne Robert Foster's conception of artistic perspective: "Art is a sign of life. There can be no life without change, as there can be no development without change. To be afraid of what is different or unfamiliar, is to be afraid of life. [. . .] to be afraid of truth, and to be a champion of superstition. This exhibition is an indication that the Association [. . .] is against cowardice even when it takes the form of amiable self satisfaction" (Foster/Murphy Collection; NYPL: Box 1; File 14). Foster's work as a journalist for *The Review of Reviews* gave her the opportunity to cover the Armory Exhibit for the newly added "Arts and Literature" section of the journal, a section of whose importance Foster herself had convinced editor Albert Shaw. Since she had first made his acquaintance in 1911, John Butler Yeats had nourished Jeanne's natural interest in art, literature, philosophy, and mysticism. Sensing the importance of the exhibit to all of these disciplines, and to the development of American as well as European art, Foster begged Shaw to allow her to cover the exhibit.² The result was "Art Revolutionists on Exhibition in America," Jeanne's seven-page pictorial essay that appeared in the April 1913 issue of *The Review*, one month after the exhibition had closed.

The article opens with a broad consideration of the goals of the exhibit, articulating Foster's impression of the exhibition's new artistic forms, and the ways in which these new approaches to art interact with and reflect changing world views.

Foster's first point was that whether or not people might admire the art presented, these works "[. . .] bring to attention certain Revolutionaries whose work is expressive of forces which have grown to such proportions that they can no longer be ignored" (*The Review of Reviews*; Vol. 47; April 1913, 441). These forces, Foster goes on to say, follow those of the Impressionists of nineteenth-century France, whose desire to portray the "fleeting moods and aspects of nature" and nature's colors, rebelled against the "dull sombreness" of the Academy, and whose impressionistic philosophy had established them--by 1913, the time of this article--as newly revered masters of the art world (442). " 'Science has disowned the past--so must art, to fulfill our intellectual needs' " Foster quips as the slogan of the new schools (441). There is an organic quality to Foster's treatment of this "new" art, with its emergence of new expressions, new forms, which, breaking away from the old, simultaneously draw sustenance from the artistic past. In addition, Foster acknowledges the multilateral nature of the new art, and, like Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane in their 1976 compendium of various views of Modernism, insists on both its international and metaphysical qualities:

The 'Modernist' artist springs from the continent--from Italy, France, Austria, Germany, Belgium, Russia, and the Scandinavian countries. From the continent the revolt has spread to England and into certain studios and schools on this side of the water. The participants fall naturally into groups, which differ as to method, but agree as to the end to be gained by the so-called Modernist art, which is the opening of avenues leading to regions where there is more actual reality than can be found in

the objective, visible world. They seek the inner meaning behind the bodily form--the divine essence in nature.

(The Review of Reviews; Vol. 47; April 1913 442)

The gist of Gregg's prefatory remarks is captured in Foster's articulation of the "new" art: a reflection of the essential nature of life, of humanity, the world, divinity, and as such the result of change, of revolution against forces of exploitation and the subjugation of man and nature. Such language echoes Richard Wagner's 1849 proclamation that "Only the great *Revolution of Mankind*, [. . .] can win for us this Art-work" ("Art and Revolution" in *Modernism: An Anthology of Sources and Documents* 8). For Wagner, such a revolution was grounded in the re-establishment of the intrinsic worth of all humankind. Setting into opposition the forces of "Culture and Civilisation [sic]" and those of Nature (including Human Nature), he locates the force of revolution in the re-placement of Nature within the concepts of Culture and Civilisation, personifying Nature with the words: " 'So far as I am contained in you, shall ye live and flourish; so far as I am not in you, shall ye rot and die!' " (9). The organic metaphor continues.

Like Wagner, the artists represented at the Armory envisioned the establishment of the rights of all mankind at the center of civilization, and like him, they saw such a change occurring through the revolutionary force of Art. Echoing the Romantics of the era into which Wagner was born, the artists of the period that would become known as "modernist" rejected the bourgeois ideology of the Industrial Revolution, as well as the materialist, mechanistic foci of the Victorian era, both of which reified measurable, teleological progress in science and technology, to the benefit of select people and

nations, at the expense of the mass of humanity. Matei Calinescu suggests that in the first half of the nineteenth century the concept of modernity split into forces representing Western civilization with its economic and social changes based in capitalism, and other, hostile forces representing a modern aesthetic. “With regard to the first, bourgeois idea of modernity, we may say that it has by and large continued the outstanding traditions of earlier periods in the history of the modern idea. [. . .] within the framework of an abstract humanism, [. . .] [oriented] toward pragmatism and the cult of action and success [. . .]” (*Five Faces of Modernity* 41). On the other hand, the modernity concerned with anti-bourgeois rebellion through art had little to define it other than its rejection of all that had come to be known and valued by the middle class as modern civilization, including, as T.E. Hulme expressed it, ego-centered Romanticism.³ In “Romanticism and Classicism” (1911) Hulme insists that the modern artist can find a place between classical conformity to standard, fixed forms, and romantic allegiance to the imagination and the infinite. Hulme seeks “to prove that beauty may be in small, dry things” (in *Modernism: An Anthology of Sources and Documents* 183), that is, in the quotidian re-vised by the constant force of change which is life. The common philosophy of aesthetic modernity lay, as Calinescu argues, in its rejection of bourgeois humanism and romanticism, reduced to sentimental self-serving. Such rejection creates a unifying, negative modern aesthetic, expressed “through the most diverse means, ranging from rebellion, anarchy, and apocalypticism to aristocratic self-exile” (Calinescu 42). Foster’s focus on the revolutionary aspects of the art upon which she was reporting may well have been more than metaphoric. Revolution was, in fact, in the air, not only in art, but also in the

political, social, and economic arenas.

Foster's use of the term "Modernist" in her references to both the artists and the art of the Armory is startling. While the *Oxford English Dictionary* traces the word back to J. Harvey in 1588, "sundry other neoterically mathematicians and modernists," his use refers to individuals who are familiar and comfortable with current ideas and practices.⁴ Concerning use of the word as either a noun or adjective referring to individuals, ideas, or objects associated with the aesthetics of the early nineteenth-century movement, modernism, the OED cites F. J. Mather, 1927 as the first to use it so in his text, *A History of Modern Painting*: "Modernist pictures are becoming discreet, almost cautiously monotonous in colour."⁵ Edmund Wilson defined a paradigmatic shift in literature in his 1931 *Axel's Castle*, but the term he used for the modernist concept was "symbolism," not "modernism" (Eysteinnsson 2).⁶ Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane sketch the concepts of modernism back to bohemian Paris of the 1830's (*Modernism: A Guide to European Literature, 1890-1930* 30), and Peter Nicholls's location of the first stirring of his various literary modernisms is located in the work of Charles Baudelaire, particularly in "To a Red-haired Beggar Girl," 1845/6 (*Modernisms: A Literary Guide* 1-2). Still, none of these critics indicate the use of the terms "modernist" or "modernism" as referencing an artistic movement, until the 1930's. Foster's journalistic "Modernist" may be an earlier use than any other revealed to date in artistic criticism. The presence of quotation marks and the modifier "so-called" suggest that the term was one she had heard used, perhaps conversationally, to characterize the work she was critiquing. Nevertheless, hers may be one of the earliest documentations of the word, one which

categorizes the artistic philosophies and aesthetic forms represented at the Armory. This modernist aesthetic would grow to include the literature of the period known as modernism, stretching at least to 1933, interestingly, the year in which Foster left New York City for Schenectady. The ideas that Foster introduces in the above excerpt raise several points which intersect with the concepts of modernity which I wish to present. Her terminology is that of revolution, of aggressive European forces which have spread to America. These metaphors of struggle are reflective of a Western intellectualism that had been pressing since the American and French Revolutions for the cultural changes discussed above, and of a global environment of war, defined by individual and national greed that would infuse twentieth-century Western civilization. In 1913, Foster was already witnessing a disquiet that would critically shape American artistic response to twentieth-century existence, and which would become more and more a real presence in her life. "They all try to make up by violence the power which the Greeks got by repose," James Stephens wrote to Quinn, and Foster would copy the passage into notes, and leave them among her manuscripts (May 12, 1920; Foster/Murphy Collection; NYPL: Box 3, File 220). Like Foster, Stephens links the aggression of the modern world to the aggression he sees emerging in its art, and looks back to the repose of the classics as a counterpoint to modern truculence. In 1915, Irish intellectual and author George Russell, whose work Foster knew and respected, would write to John Quinn in an eery prophecy of the cycle of world war: "The German upheaval will multiply images and shadows in men's minds of the power of the organized state, and we are in for a hundred years of militarism and bureaucracy and everything abhorrent to the free spirit" (MFNY 218-19).

Likewise, in her correspondence with Quinn, Florence Farr Emery⁷ wrote of the war: “We are having the experience of centuries packed into our lifetimes, aren’t we?” while William Morris’s daughter May expressed her horrified dismay at the loss of life after the sinking of the *Lusitania* (May 7, 1915): “Human life has always seemed to me so sacred, and now humans are of no more account than swarms of flies” (*On Poetry, Painting, and Politics* 165). As a war correspondent for the *Review*, Foster would experience the ravaging of Europe both firsthand and through letters such as these. As I discussed in Chapter One, Foster would capture the ache of war and the promise of a world beyond it in “The Winter Song,” a poem about Czechoslovakia as she experienced it in its precarious post-World War II emergence as a republic⁸. In the simple repetition of words and phrases, in the name “Praha” resonating with the sound of the language, the music, and the very breath of the exhausted, singing men, Foster unites the devastation of years of fighting to the resolution of the proud Czechs. Her words are the embodiment of Frederick Gregg’s proclamation of the Armory Exhibit’s philosophy on change, faced with fearlessness, as life. Fearlessness in the face of brute force appears in her Adirondack work in different forms: an old man defending the honor of his son’s Union Jacket; a woman leaving a husband for whom she is “hands and feet” and a baby-maker; loggers and skidders pitting themselves against the cruelty of winter. Foster’s recognition, as far back as 1913, of the power of aggression to evoke creative force within the modern art she observed at the Armory is a foreshadowing of the ways in which such aggression would reshape the world in her lifetime, and indeed throughout the next century and into our own.

“Art Revolutionists on Exhibition in America” also notes the ways in which the various artistic movements recognize the transition from old world to new in the realms of scientific and philosophic thinking. The Futurists, Fauvists, Vorticists, Dadaists and Cubists were some of the schools of art represented at the Armory, movements that rejected positivism, and reductive determinism. Their expansive thinking was reinforced by a break with academic, derivative ideologies. Yet, Foster’s consideration of this disowned past reflects the importance she puts on memory and ancestry. Rejecting the repetition of yesterday, Foster finds usefulness in the past’s movement through the present:

[. . .] In order fully to understand the work displayed at the exhibition, which is utterly new and strange to eyes accustomed to the restraint of a Corot or a Rembrandt, it is necessary for one to go back a little while in the history of art, back to [. . .] Manet, Monet, Renoir, and Degas [. . .] contending with Bouguereau and the whole Academic school for a wider individual expression [. . .] rather than the dull sombreness of the studio-formula of the Academicians. [. . .] Yet so rapidly does time pass and so easily are our minds adjusted to the new comprehension of beauty, that to-day the once despised Impressionists are revered as masters; [. . .] and beyond them, flowering from the great human plant whose blossoms are the minds of men, comes a still newer expression of art--an expression that is (as was the old art when fresh to our vision) singular, laughable, revolutionary, and audacious. (441-2)

The words call to mind Henri Bergson's nonmechanistic theory of time as duration, a constant flow of the past into the future. "[. . .] [W]e are creating ourselves continually," Bergson stated in 1907, adding that the sheer act of existence is creative since "[. . .] to exist is to change, to change is to mature, to mature is to go on creating oneself endlessly" (*Creative Evolution in Modernism: An Anthology of Sources and Documents* 70-71).

Thus, the present contains the elements of the past, most of which we have forgotten within the minutiae of the quotidian, but which is nonetheless reshaping each progressive moment simply by virtue of its having happened. Bergson applies his theory not only to the individual personality, but also to the mind revealed in the artistic act: "[. . .] [J]ust as the talent of the painter is [. . .] modified--under the very influence of the works he produces, so each of our states, at the moment of its issue, modifies our personality, being indeed the new form that we are just assuming" (Ibid. 71). In 1919, T.S. Eliot would use a similar construct to examine the importance of each single literary text to the entirety of literature. In "Tradition and the Individual Talent," Eliot argues that regarding any body of art, that body exists in an order "which is modified by the introduction of [. . .] (the really new) work of art among them." While the existing order is complete in itself before the new work is added, once it arrives "the *whole* existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted [. . .]" (*Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot* 38). In this constant shifting and balancing of one art work to another, Eliot restates Bergson's *duree*: "that the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past" (39). In her consideration of the place of modernist art in the corpus of the European and

American art worlds, Foster applies this concept of shifting center to the Armory art that is her subject. In a few years, she would apply this interaction of past, present, and future to the creation of her best poetry.

Building on the language of revolutionary change, and employing images that evoke both progress and the backward glance, Foster additionally characterizes the “Modernist art” as “the opening of avenues leading to regions where there is more actual reality than can be found in the objective, visible world.” The statement is informed by both a sense of time’s duration and Foster’s recognition of the process through which political charting and naming imply ownership. Such an extension of Bergson’s *duree* encompasses the American Native understanding of inhabiting the land as a subjective act, as “habitare,” formulating and extending the self. It was this primitive sense of union with the land which was forced to give way to the Western colonial notion of a political entity, the ethnocentric logos. While this phenomenon occurred throughout North America, Foster experienced it specifically as the tension between the Adirondacks as forever wild, and conversely, as a circumscribed entity designated as a park. Throughout America, and throughout western history, the reality of the map as product has connected a multiplicity of seemingly unrelated spaces reconstructed as a unified cultural discourse (Boelhower 43-44). Foster’s language of exploration evokes multiple images: we are reminded of the politicizing of space (whether geographic, personal, or metaphysical) which precedes and infects all regional text, and we are drawn to a comparison of the ways in which both modernist art and modernist literature “seek the inner meaning behind the bodily form--the divine essence in nature” which is the antonym to the object, to the

map.

In the verse introduction to *Rock-Flower*'s final text, the author proclaims the foundation of her artistic concept in "The Eye of the Beholder":

Everything exists in the Eye of the Beholder!

Nothing happens that the Eye does not awaken.

Life and Death, and death and life forever,

Poise their instant in the Eye of the Beholder. (*Rock-Flower* 113)

Here, the questioning of inner meaning behind objective form expresses the poet's interest in the intellectual framework of modernism. "Andre Derain asserts that he does not attempt to paint the beautiful, but what he thinks about the beautiful [. . .] Paul Picasso [. . .] has the audacity of a gamin combined with great mastery of technique" Foster writes in her *Review* article (446). As the eye sees, it interprets not only what it sees, but what those forms imply, not only the beauty of the artist's technique, but more importantly the evocation of beauty as the artist expresses it. Interestingly, Foster's article on the Armory Exhibit discusses these aspects of the Cubists at length. She locates tremendous power in their perception of ideas through color masses, finding in their vision "a living reality."

Foster admits that the Cubist geometrical forms, and juxtaposed colors and shapes may appear to be a jumble at first. But she applies a modern appreciation of technology to an open-ended apprehension of form in her experience of Marcel Duchamps's *Nu Descendant un Escalier*: "Motion multiplies images [. . .] With the assistance of a moving picture machine to telescope the sections together a single figure could be

resolved from the geometric forms [. . .]” (444, 445). The static image is repeated in juxtaposition until the eye perceives movement in its stasis. This oxymoronic vision is repeated by the “arrested fluidity” of Francis Picabia’s “La Danse a la Source.” Here, Foster argues that an initially “meaningless jumble of pink and red geometrical forms” shifts under the hard gaze, until “it suddenly resolves into two dancing figures audaciously composed of blocks of color, but reproducing with fidelity the planes of light reflected upon dancing bodies” (445). In the multiplication and overlay of images in these works, Foster identifies the continuous progression of time, while subjectivity is simultaneously riveted to each fixed moment. The initial assault upon realism, the first shock to the eye renegotiates “reason” so that momentum and stasis combine to create subjective sense and objective awareness simultaneously, a cinematic version of stereoscopic vision through which we apprehend key elements in Foster’s poetry.

Returning to “The Eye of the Beholder,” we can read the text as a personal interpretation of art, indeed of reality, encoded, in flux, and reflecting the modernist aesthetic vision in which mimetic representation is replaced by the sum of a moment’s parts, arranged by the artist and decoded by the viewer. The verse also acknowledges the modernist stress on essential form as opposed to realistic representations. Conjuring a version of Emerson’s transparent eyeball, Foster expands the experience and context of the personal to interact with the world of the other, in this case, the artist. In the synergy of that interaction, encompassing artist and viewer (reader), the artistic product itself is recreated differently in every single encounter according to the influences of the moment. Bergson’s time in duration seems to be compounded by Wagner’s revolutionary artistic

spirit. In this conception, Foster was already in sync with Pound's doctrine of the image: "The image is not an idea. It is a radiant node or cluster; it is what I can, and must perforce, call a VORTEX, from which, and through which and into which ideas are constantly rushing" (Bradbury and McFarlane 237). Thus, Foster's "The Eye of the Beholder" suggests Hulme's overthrow of both ego-centered Romanticism and the humanistic traditions of Victorian poetry. Interestingly, the earlier poems of *Rock-Flower* are often derivative and sentimental. Ezra Pound was quick to point that out.

Rock-Flower: From Swinburne into the Vortex

Foster herself tells us that when she first showed Ezra Pound the manuscript of *Rock-Flower*, he read it slowly and thoughtfully, and in his inimical need to control the writer by editing the piece told her: "I can't do anything for you as long as you keep on imitating Browning and Tennyson, Morris and Swinburne. Here's a poem that is a frank imitation of Morris."⁹ Somewhat taken back by his remarks, Foster replied: "Well, Mr. Pound, I may be imitating Browning and Swinburne, but as a matter of fact, I have never read a poem of William Morris'. Do you mean that you feel that my verse is frankly imitative?" Pound replied: "No, I only mean that you use the old forms. There's nowhere any direct imitation, only echoes of the Victorians. I can't do anything with that kind of verse" (Foster/Murphy Collection; NYPL: Box 3: file 218).

It would seem that Mrs. Foster did not actually want Mr. Pound to "do anything" with her verse more than tell her what worked and what didn't. Her narrative of the discussion includes Pound's remarks about what he especially liked, his positive opinion

of certain pieces she had marked as doubtful, where to attend to an awkward or misplaced word or phrase, etc. In the end, she kept much of what Pound had criticized as Victorian, and incorporated some of his suggested changes as well as those poems she had been skeptical of, but which he had lauded.¹⁰ Her overall reaction to Pound's response would be echoed in 1918, by William Carlos Williams's Prologue to *Kora in Hell*. Responding to H.D.'s criticism of a derivative sense in his poetry, Williams writes: "There is nothing in literature but change and change is mockery. I'll write whatever I damn please, whenever I damn please and as I damn please and it'll be good if the authentic spirit of change is on it" (*Modernism: An Anthology of Sources and Documents* 345). The shift from Victorian formality to modernist imagism in *Rock-Flower* suggests that Foster was, indeed, experimenting with change. The book is of inconsistent quality, but it reveals Foster's strength in verse narrative. More than her first book, *Wild Apples*, had, *Rock-Flower* often employs the simple, vivid image which deepens and multiplies Foster's meaning as it travels through a verse, adhering to and deferring the meanings of other words, phrases, lines, and concepts.

For example, in "What You Shall Say" quoted in the epigram above, the April song evokes not merely suggestions of spring with its attendant hints of romance and emergent life, but also the residue of winter, a chill which would later appear in "Antiques," the *Adirondack Portraits* poem discussed in Chapter Four.¹¹ The economy of "What You Shall Say" is enabled by the balance of two sets of two lines, the first set negating a facile definition of a merely romantic poetic voice--"beautiful, kind, good"--and the second set complicating that definition by injecting the poet's interpretive power.

Because an April song suggests the natural world, April being the pivotal month moving the earth from barrenness to greening, the “she” identified as understanding that song is automatically linked to that green world, is immersed in its cycles. In addition, the ability not only to hear, but also to understand the “song” of natural death and renewal, implies a depth of human reasoning and sensibility which, in fact, surpasses the reader’s, since we cannot be sure what the poet heard and understood. And of course, there is not an April song “once,” as the poem suggests, but in every spring cycle, extending the poet’s interpretive abilities to an infinity of springs: having “heard and understood” the song once, the subject seems to contain it within her very self, and in turn, to develop with it. Therefore, the image of the April song negates simply temporal beauty, kindness, and goodness, replacing those subjective virtues with the poet’s interpretation of nature through art. The reader, desiring what the poet has achieved, also longs to hear and understand this song of life. The title is a command: “What You Shall Say of Me,” a proclamation too formal to pass as a casual comment. Directly addressed, we are instructed to transform the poem into a eulogy.¹² In this small verse, Foster reaches an economy of image and emotion, reaching beyond time and space, a unity which would have appealed to Pound.

In the final text of *Rock-Flower*, the prose poem sequence titled “Three Colors of the Moon” which is introduced by “The Eye of the Beholder,” Foster tries her own massing of ideas by color and form. We can assume that Pound did not like it; it is wordy and tends to devolve into the verbal cleverness which J.B. Yeats had warned Foster against. In the first full text, “Blue” the speaker calls us to think about the last moment of

life, the leave-taking of the beloved. The poem is heavy and sentimental, but the opening is fresh; it recalls the techniques Foster had noted in the Cubists, and the Fauvism of Matisse :

It is the Eye that lives first; it is the Eye that is the last to perish. In the darkness of the womb, the continual vision of the eye moving through curtains of flesh, creates the enfolding vestment of the returning spirit. And when the spirit murmurs a farewell to the flesh,--in its first temple, in the delicate luminosity of the eye, it pauses for an instant upon the brink of the abyss. (114)

The placement of the physical eye, characterized blue by the title, within the darkness of the womb, culminates in the suggested vision which is in fact, perception. The play on eye/I extends Foster's introductory remarks in which life begins and ends in the eye/I with its/their ability to accept or reject stimuli. The series of images-- the dark womb, the curtains of flesh, the final dark abyss-- both stimulates and disturbs us, as the imagination perceives both incipient life and impending death. The paradox of life and death residing together in the "temple" of the eye requires the unreasoned reasoning of "arrested fluidity" of modernist art, present as well in Pound's electrified vortex of thoughts and images. We cannot create a realistic picture of vision "moving through curtains of flesh" to create the spirit's vestment, but the subjective sense of metaphysical boundlessness is imparted. The transcendentalist eyeball has been born and aged. We are within the womb experiencing the first blink of life, and almost simultaneously, we are at a deathbed experiencing life's dissolution; with the movement toward death, the connection to

reasoned living disappears. The voice recalls Emily Dickinson's "I Heard a Fly Buzz": it is clear, precise, disinterested in the business of living, inviting us to peer into the moment of death.

In the second piece, "Crimson," Foster concentrates on the death of the lover. The quality is again erratic, often contrived. But there are moments when the experience of loss, described in terms of a "Great Flower paling" paints vivid word pictures:

Suddenly I saw the Great Flower paling. Through the tenuous mist, I watched it whiten and grow opaque like an alabaster shrine when the light is withdrawn. Now there was only a trace of color; it had dripped from the outer petals; they had become like wax. A faint flush still suffused the heart of the blossom. Now that was fading. Like moving blood, the warm stain ebbed away; the Flower was marmoreal, pallid, a cave-lily, a moon-blossom, a thing ghostly and nocturnal [. . .] And I knew [. . .] that the dye that stained its petals was my moving blood now sinking to everlasting quiet in my veins. (116-7)

John Quinn had been Jeanne Robert Foster's great love, always to remain unacknowledged because of their sense of propriety and responsibility. Quinn's death on July 28, 1923 the year of *Rock-Flower*'s publication, followed a prolonged period of debilitating illness. This series, a monument to Foster's grief, although often self-indulgent, occasionally rises beyond sentimentality into moments of unmediated subjectivity which are suggestively modernist. The concentration on the flower slowly fading focuses on the moment just before death, "marmoreal, pallid, a cave-lily, a moon-

blossom, a thing ghostly and nocturnal.” At that moment the narrator is the Great Flower, the flower’s color transforming to the speaker’s lifeblood, quietly “sinking to everlasting quiet.” The shift from lover, to flower, to self is a move toward Sherwood Anderson’s modernist sense of the grotesque, the inward gaze of the self able to see only the ebbing away of a carefully nurtured truth.

Foster’s final piece in the book is the poem “Black.” In some ways it is the most imitative of the Victorian poets, the most reductive in its biblical, apocalyptic form. But I use it here to illustrate Foster’s movement away from restrictive masking into the artistic freedom of her mountain voices.

The Black Vulture, Melancholy, sat on my breast and I was suffocated with the filth of his black pinions. All day he sat there and I breathed his poisonous breath. Then from the rim of the setting sun there flew to me the Angel Despair, whose eyes are of dull green jade. He banished the Black Vulture, Melancholy, and froze my blood to a turgid ichor in my veins. Two nights he sat at my side and on the third he touched my eyelids. I saw that in one hand he held the world and in the other a sealed crystal vial. He said, “Choose!” and I chose the vial, for on the world I could see the panoply of princes, the pageants of state and the glittering jewels of kings and queens. Then the Angel, Despair, broke the seal of the vial and poured a burning liquid between my lips. And the flesh and bones of me were dissipated to thin air.

When I awoke my roots went down into the ground, my body

stood upright in the sun. I was a tree growing on a high mountain and those who came near to me were only the sun and the moon, the stars and the wind and the rain. (118)

Here, Foster rejects material certainty, life as the world defines it, “the panoply of princes, the pageants of state and the glittering jewels of kings and queens” and by extension she turns away from all the absolutes of bourgeois modernity: science, religion, politics, education, power and wealth. Instead, by choosing the unknown, the speaker confronts Despair and enters into community with the essence of life, the natural world: “When I awoke my roots went down into the ground, my body stood upright in the sun. I was a tree growing on a high mountain and those who came near to me were only the sun and the moon, the stars and the wind and the rain.” The poetic persona has chosen endurance over immediate gratification. As Derain painted not the beautiful but his conception of beauty, Foster was beginning her articulation of art which would find its fullest expression in her Adirondack regionalism.

The flawed “Three Colors of the Moon” is in many ways Foster’s *La Danse a la Source* and *Nude Descending*. Desiring to move reality beyond mimesis, Foster attempted to recreate her desperate personal loss in her art. That she was only partly successful is beside the point. Within ten years she would turn back to the mountains she had so willingly left as a girl, finding in them and in her old friends and neighbors the avenues of subjectivity which would allow her to multiply the shapes of the woman she had become. In fact, Foster had already achieved much of the intellectual clarity and verbal economy her critics sought in her second book of verse, *Neighbors of Yesterday*, which had been

published in 1916. The poet's transcription of her conversation with Pound concludes with her recognition of this achievement. At his urging her to "find your best chance following the lead of the simple verses," she responds: ¹³

'I am sorry Mr. Pound that I have not a copy of my Adirondack verse with me. In that volume you would find ballads written to shanty tunes and the simplicity you like in these lyrics.'

Pound: 'I would go on with that work. You have a kind of background there [. . .] and you must work for the *mot juste*. You should know how Dante manages technique and Arnault Daniel.'

'Would you burn all this and start afresh?'

Pound: 'No. You have a book there. Publish it and keep on working. Your work is in transition. [. . .] By the way, there are some in the section marked "doubtful" that I suggest putting back. This one [. . .] "The Winter Song," and these lyrics.

'I know. I understand. Those moods or moments are the only ones that do produce poetry.' (Foster/Murphy Collection; NYPL: Box 3: File 218)

From Pound's advice and from the world of art in which she moved, Foster learned that the central passion of the subject needs to be expressed as directly as possible. Although she never identified herself with the Imagists, and while she did not

allow Pound to remake her “in his image,” à la H.D., his criticism of her surface emotion and derivative versification (often painful characteristics of *Wild Apples* and some of the *Rock-Flower* poems) hit home. Her tribute to this mentor, “Ezra Pound” (published in *Rock-Flower*) gets to the core of what Pound and J.B. Yeats had taught her about direct expression and economy.

You,—who have given me strange music,
 Leave me dumb because of the voices
 Crying beyond you.

I perish of silence—
 Die in the depths of a terrible stillness,
 Hearing no more, lovers in springtime
 Singing songs of love in the valleys,
 Singing of hands and lips meeting together. (94)

Essentially, once she realized that in the tautness of Pound’s verses, simplicity of line and image create the power of the moment, she felt compelled to move away from the love songs of her earlier work. The question of sentimentality enters into this consideration.

In her critical text *Sentimental Modernism: Women Writers and the Revolution of the Word* (1991), Suzanne Clark argues for the recovery of the sentimental as a part of modernism excised by the rejection of Romanticism advocated by Hulme. Since modernism aligned itself with a world view in which modernity equals fragmentation,

alienation, and isolation, the concept of pathos expressed in sentiment (and connected since the eighteenth century with women and women's writing) was rejected by a literary vision which privileged reason, equating it to intellectuality. As the rational approach of Pound and Eliot constructed a sense of modernism which excluded the sentimental, the parameters of their modern aesthetics excluded the writers of the sentimental as well. Consider the fates of Amy Lowell, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Sara Teasdale, and even Willa Cather whose texts did not fit into what Clark terms Pound's "new mode of writing, cleansed of all vague appeal to emotion; of the abstract vocabulary of sentiment—closer to the object-centered scientific procedures of observation exemplified by the story of Louis Agassiz in Pound's *ABC of Reading*" (*Sentimental Modernism* 33). Such authors enjoyed tremendous popularity, but in the world of literary criticism which began in the twenties to narrow the field of "serious" literature to the work of Eliot, Pound, Joyce, Wallace Stevens, and perhaps William Carlos Williams, the writing of popular women was relegated to the realm of minor authorship. As John Crowe Ransom would critique the "woman author" in 1930: "Less pliant, safer [than man], as a biological organism, she remains fixed in her famous attitudes, and is indifferent to intellectuality. I mean, of course, comparatively indifferent; more so than a man" (*Ibid.* 9). Specifically regarding Millay, Ransom concluded: "Miss Millay is rarely and barely very intellectual, and I think everybody knows it." In contrast, F.R. Leavis, writing in 1932 about the poetry of T.S. Eliot would say: "It is mainly due to him that no serious poet or critic today can fail to realize that English poetry in the future must develop (if at all) along some other line than that running from the Romantics through Tennyson,

Swinburne, *A Shropshire Lad*. and Rupert Brooke” (“A Study of the Contemporary Situation” in *Modernism* 504). Of course, the economy of image, exactness of expression, allusion to mythology, avoidance of surface sentimentality, and experimentation with form did create a new kind of literature that, in its very distance from emotion expressed the core of mankind’s struggle with modernity. Eliot’s Prufrock may evoke in the reader the deepest sense of sentiment by his very inability to feel. Foster’s poem to Pound expresses her desire to hear and see as he did, but also articulates her fear of doing so.

The text opens in direct address. The “You” is almost accusatory, separated from the line by both a comma and a dash. The “strange music” he has given her has not given rise to a creative urge. Instead, the lines compound the speaker’s inability to speak. Foster’s characterization of Pound is formed by the seduction of sound. Enticed by the music beyond him, to which he has gestured, Foster’s poetic persona can no longer be satisfied with the immanent noise of the banal. The “voices crying beyond” the poet suggest the Sirens, and Foster’s persona will risk all to hear them. But while the speaker waits, she “perishes in silence.” Terrified that blocking out the sentimental may lead to an eternity of “terrible stillness,” Foster speaks the poem in desperation. Wanting to believe in what Pound has taught her about the unsuitability of sentiment, the speaker seems to have no choice but to wait in silence for the inspiration which motivates Pound and which Foster anticipates as greatness. The poem offers no resolution: the final lines seem to grieve for the lost sounds of lovers and for their songs of love.

Yet, Foster did eventually hear the music that Pound was gesturing to.

Incorporating his advice and his example into her art, Foster ensured that the “April song” which she came to hear and understand would be transformed into the thoughts and voices of the people she brought to life in parts of *Rock-Flower*, but most definitely in the Adirondack work. While we respond to much of her verse as emotional, the finest pieces harness that emotion into an expression of modern life in which sentiment joins with intellect to create order in the maelstrom.

The Maelstrom of Modernism: *A Paradoxical Unity of Disunity*

In the past decade, literary criticism, especially in feminist and more recently in gender studies, has explored the presence of regionalism in twentieth-century literature, extending the critical definition of modernism. A traditional canon of modernism, fashioned by such critics as Edmund Wilson, F. R. Leavis, Cleanth Brooks, I. A. Richards, and Eliot himself, bequeathed a list of major players headed by Eliot, Joyce, and Pound which, while admitting certain new members from time to time (consider Woolf, Stein, Stevens, Williams), remained intact until canonical literature became an academic slur in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

The reversal of canonical exclusion in favor of diversity and plurality has redefined modernism less as an anti-social, self-conscious art form which rejects the absurdity of the modern by reflecting it through a fractured, avant-garde, patriarchal structure, than as what Marshall Berman has termed “a paradoxical unity [. . .] of disunity [which] pours us all into a maelstrom of perpetual disintegration and renewal, of struggle and contradiction, of ambiguity and anguish [. . .] in which, as Marx said, ‘all that is solid

melts into air' "(Berman 15). Astradur Eysteinnsson paraphrases this vision of chaotic interaction with immersion into, as opposed to withdrawal from the social phenomena of modern life in his expression "the dialectics of modernization and modernism" (*The Concept of Modernism* 20). Eysteinnsson considers the paradoxical modernist poetics of the impersonal and the subjective extremes to be the expression of a challenge to cultural order and socio-cultural discourse in "a revolt against the traditional relation of the subject to the outside world" (28). His suggestion that there are constituents of modernity to which modernism is responding points to Marshall Berman's defining image of the forces of modernization which shape modernist literature and with which modernism enters into Eysteinnsson's dialectic. The passage is long but worth quoting in its appropriateness and clarity:

The maelstrom of modern life has been fed from many sources: great discoveries in the physical sciences, changing our images of the universe and our place in it; the industrialization of production, which transforms scientific knowledge into technology, creates new human environments and destroys old ones, speeds up the whole tempo of life, generates new forms of corporate power and class struggle; immense demographic upheavals, severing millions of people from their ancestral habitats, hurtling them halfway across the world into new lives; rapid and often cataclysmic urban growth; systems of mass communication, dynamic in their development, enveloping and binding together the most diverse people and societies; increasingly powerful national states,

bureaucratically structured and operated, constantly striving to expand their powers; mass social movements of people, and peoples, challenging their political and economic rulers, striving to gain some control over their lives; finally, bearing and driving all these people and institutions along, an ever-expanding, drastically fluctuating capitalist world market. In the twentieth century, the social processes that bring this maelstrom into being, and keep it in a state of perpetual becoming, have come to be called 'modernization.' (*All That Is Solid Melts Into Air* 16)

At the center of this discourse lies the sense of what constitutes the modern, modernity, and modernization. The critical term "modern" is applied to any contemporary age starting in the fifteenth century, as that pertaining to current trends and schools of thought, and to the language used to articulate such concepts. Thus, the Renaissance, the Restoration, the Age of Enlightenment, the Romantic period, the Victorian Age, and the twentieth century all, in the language of the critic, may be termed "modern" in their relationship to the literary history which precedes them. Specifying the movement to industrialization, the scientific abandonment of determinism, a reconstituting of the concept of a deity, the rapid growth of urban life, and a renegotiation of the individual's consciousness of reality as constant change, Berman employs "modernity" as the experience of modern life. Finally, "modernization" functions as the energized noun through which the modern individual is assimilated into the shifting chaos which is the current "modern," that is, Berman's twentieth century, our twenty-first. Essentially, such a consideration of the various perspectives of the concept

“modern” aligns itself with Calinescu’s division of modernity into two forces, one secular in its application to the quotidian life of the moment, regulated by the ebb and flow of money and power and their determination of the social, political, and economic; the other, aesthetic, with its expression of the moment shaped by a complete rejection of all that the secular concept of modernity insists upon. Modernist aesthetic thought, then, can be said to respond to the forces of modernization in a dialogue within which the self is antipathetic to the world outside the self. The old ways of thinking about the self and/or the other, the old forms of expressing one’s relationship to the world become ineffectual within the modernist paradigm. Even the language used to express one’s ideas is threadbare. Thus, image, form, language shift within modernist thought.

Through modernism, artistic recreation of the world and its reality enters an extreme relationship with the object, whether that object is the self or the thing the self apprehends. This recreation is certainly not a new concept. The Romantics, for example, restructured the world in terms of their relationship to nature; objectivity, subjectivity, the revolutionary and the gothic are predicated upon the individual’s positioning of the self and society within the natural world. In such a conception of subjectivity, the monster in *Frankenstein* is not an aberration; it is his creator who is horrific. For the modernist, the concept of an intact natural world has been disrupted by the very modernity to which modernism responds. Thus, the Romantic solution (as Hulme argued) is not an option for a twentieth-century sense of the self and the other. As Bradbury and McFarlane summarize this concept, “The world, reality, is discontinuous till art comes along, which may be a modern crisis for the world; but within art all becomes vital, discontinuous. yes,

but within an aesthetic system of positioning” (*Modernism* 25). From the endless perspectives of such an aesthetic vision, represented so startlingly by the artistic and literary movements of the era, the modernist intellect fashions a sense of self based on the apprehension of fluidity--a momentary, multidimensional, continuously altering reality.

In attempting to understand the nature and parameters of the period labeled “modernist” in American art and literature, we find a useful tool in Raymond Williams’s structures of feeling. Within Williams’s Marxist literary theory, dominant, residual, and emergent aspects of social consciousness continually recreate themselves and each other to produce “all that is present and moving, all that escapes or seems to escape from the fixed and the explicit and the known, [. . .] [that which] is grasped and defined as the personal: this, here, now, alive, active, ‘subjective’ ” (*Marxism and Literature* 128). Extending these concepts of social consciousness and modernity, Bonnie Kime Scott (*The Gender of Modernism and Refiguring Modernism*), Shari Benstock (*The Women of the Left Bank: Paris, 1900-1940*), Gilbert and Gubar (*No Man’s Land*), Margaret Dickie & Thomas Travisano (*Gendered Modernisms*), Elizabeth Harrison and Shirley Peterson (*Unmanning Modernism*) are modernist critics who have shown that a crucial part of the subjectivity is the inflection of gender. The rereading and dismantling of canonical notions of masculine privilege, semantic and structural opacity, elitist exclusion, and hegemonic discourse in modernist studies has made it possible, in Jane Marcus’s critique, for the literary critic (particularly for socialist feminist criticism) to “reinterpret the ‘classics’ from the perspective of ordinary people and women [. . .] to make the canon of great books elastic enough to include those who have been excluded or labeled minor

[. . .] [and to see] literary labor in its social context” (*Art and Anger* xvii). Such criticism, and that of Suzanne Clark and Cheryl Walker, as well as Jane Tompkins, Sandra Gilbert, and Susan Gubar has carved out an area of modernist studies in which authors labeled minor, excluded from canonical modernist notions of “serious,” have become central in a strand of modernism aligned with popularity and sentimentality. In discussing authors such as Edna St. Vincent Millay, Jo Ellen Green Kaiser points to the re-imagining of the battle between men and women, modernism and sentiment as an alternative re-mapping of the ideological terrain being explored by both men and women of the modernist period. She sees American sentimental poetry as an attempt to stir the reader through absence or loss, characterized by Clark as the poet’s attempt to persuade readers to sympathize with his/her moral attitudes and arguments (“Displaced Modernism: Millay and the Triumph of Sentimentality” in *Millay at 100: A Critical Reappraisal* 28-32). Thus, while the “high modernist” dismissal of sentimentality led to a patriarchal creation of subjectivity based on distance, alienation, and abstraction, those authors (women especially) relegated to the vanguard of literary production were, in fact, creating a modernist subjectivity through sentiment. “An important though unspoken corollary to such sentimental poems is the view that acts of individual will create the possibility of a meaningful world” (Kaiser 32).

This study has been concerned with the creation of just such a broad subjectivity, a creation which Jeanne Robert Foster achieved through the medium of the regional at a time when her connection to modernism could most have influenced her poetic voice. Here, the term “modernism” refers to common elements of literary texts of the time

period specified by James Bradbury and Malcolm McFarlane in their study of European Modernism, 1890-1930, a period which coincides with Foster's work in New York and Europe (1899-1933). A useful definition of a modernist text implies concern with the destabilized sense of self experienced by people as a result of cultural, political, and economic upheaval, beginning in the second half of the nineteenth century, but intensifying in the first quarter of the twentieth. Especially after 1910, the year Virginia Woolf cited as the turning point of old and new ways of thinking, the sense of otherness which I have discussed in my considerations of ethnicity and the self (Chapter Four) emerges as a deepened alienation of the individual from society, of society from language, and most importantly, of the artist from an objective reality.¹⁴

The traditional aspects of Foster's work do not preclude reading her texts as modernist. Eysteinnsson's discussion of Nietzsche's and Paul de Man's dialectical conception of past and present leads to the clever, but logical conclusion that "memory is called upon in the critical service of 'forgetting' " (*The Concept of Modernism* 55). Again we reach Bergson's process of duration, an interaction with time that requires the individual to reconsider the past in an attempt to place himself in the present. Because all literature, all life in fact emerges from history and tradition, negotiations with the past, even when they shatter and dissolve that past, are a prime function of the modern. Thus, Terry Eagleton can contend that "we are all, simultaneously and inextricably, modernists and traditionalists, [. . .] terms which for de Man designate [. . .] the very structure of that duplicitous phenomenon, always in and out of time simultaneously, named literature, where this common dilemma figures itself with rhetorical self-consciousness"

(Eysteinnsson 57). Perhaps Duchamps's *Nu Descendu* spurred Foster to use multiple visions of the past, verbal snapshots remembered in multiple perspectives, in order to gain depth of vision in the present.

The Meeting of Then and Now: Defining Foster's Use of the Modern

Jeanne Robert Foster's regionalist/modernist connection is identifiable in her authorial voice, her use of regionalism, and her sense of the ethnic nature of Americanism. The fact that her texts seem completely traditional is deceptive. Her youth in the mountains had taught Jeanne Robert Foster the art of survival; her contact with the cosmopolis had revealed to her keen mind the importance of flexibility and perspective. Foster's apprehension of the plasticity of life began its cosmopolitan phase as the new century was born, and this reshaping would be crucial to the birth of her Adirondack characters, whose life vision is expressed through beliefs and quirks marking them as individuals, but uniting them as well within the communities which are the hallmark of Foster's poetry. Such communities are regional, but they are also metaphysical, defined by both religious belief and existential awareness. Foster's characters do not use their experiences to withdraw from the world. Instead, through their interpretations of truth they enter into a universal life force unbounded by time or place. In the poem "Neighbors of Yesterday," Foster's archetypal woman of simplicity and strength illustrates this point:

The woman who sits here knitting--knitting
Is never lonely, she tells me, for *neighbors*

Of yesterday come and keep her company.

It does not trouble her delight in them

That to me they are but shifting shadows,

Projected into the world of reality

By her love for them.

[-----.]

There is passion in their mute returning

To this eddy of cast-off mortality;

There is passion in the woman who calls them—

In her wilful insistence that nothing

Can escape the self-centered mind moving

Backward steadfastly, as it is pushed forward

By the onrushing force of time and change,

Until it joins the opposite arc of the circle

And is immortal in its own fulfillment. (NOY, 50-51. 23-29,37-45)

The mind which is centered on its self, on its continuous development through change does not lose the past but does not hide in the past. Facing history and tradition squarely and accepting within them the gains and losses of all humanity, the mind which seeks to expand itself accomplishes awareness and knowledge through openness to and communion with others. This accepting self does not wage a futile battle against the inevitability of “the onrushing force of time and change, ” nor does it allow itself to be swept away by such force. Rather, joining “the opposite arc of the circle” as the present

which unites past and future, the “self-centered mind moving/ Backward steadfastly, as it is pushed forward/ By the onrushing force of time and change” becomes the final arc of cyclical life and immortality in a timeless world. Like the act of knitting, itself, which gains strength and style from the repetition of seemingly meaningless stitches brought around to join themselves in the arc of the needles and yarn, the symbolic circle of life is both strong and eternal in its unbroken, repeated cycles. Foster’s use of the knitting woman as the crucial link in that circle reflects her ability to join a regional aesthetic of place to a concept of the quotidian as meaningful, as well as to a modernist vision of an unstable world.

Whereas enlightenment through the rational, and romanticism through the subjective had reified teleology in a pursuit of human perfection before 1900, the young artists of the twentieth century rejected established ideas of religion, government, education, and most especially art in a quest for ever-expanding revelations of the self, in an uncertain and often hostile world. In a prefatory poem to *Neighbors of Yesterday*, Foster asks the reader to question the postwar rush to the future, and in a move that echoes the modernist love of the classical, she writes:

Dig deep, you new men and you new women,

Into the past--the most useful things lie there

In the dust of oblivion.

Dig them out--find the America that was,

Or lose in the World-Game. (Epigraph to NOY, 18-22)

To find new meanings in the dust of oblivion becomes the central theme in Foster’s work,

just as a historiographical revelation of meaning centers Joyce's *Ulysses*, Eliot's *Waste Land*, Pound's *Cantos*. Rejecting the social and moral imperatives of narcissism in a hegemonic culture, Foster demands that the modern American re-evaluate his priorities, digging through the past to find strategies for dealing with the modern world, that is for playing the modern "World-Game" of power politics.

In *American Salons: Encounters with European Modernism 1885-1917*, Robert Crunden supports the belief that the European modernism from which the American version evolved was grounded in an evolutionary paradigm based on the random selection grounding Darwinian biology. Attacking linearity as a false order distorting the experience of life, modernist philosophy rejected fixed truths and boundaries, while paradoxically embracing the alternate sense of the grotesque which had identified--for such models as Poe and Mallarmé--with alienation, the gothic, and the bizarre. Modernism's focus on disruption, destabilizing, and discontinuity affected its perspective on time, space, and language, as reflected in Nietzsche's term, "the prison house of language." The further away from bourgeois acceptability that the modernist artists could move, the more empowered they were to shape their world and their artistic subjects through "new forms, new sexual values, new freedoms, new feelings unhindered by old rules." Again we hear the sounds of revolution associated with modernization: "Seeing bourgeois life as a dreary monolith, they elevated individual values and satisfactions over social ones. [. . .] Drawing some of their inspiration from realism in both literature and painting, modernists concluded that consciousness and the dream logic that went with it could be the most real of all" (Crunden xii). Crunden locates revolutionary modern

change and the modernist subject within the daily lives of men and women, expressed through conscious and dream realities. Such realities inform the regional concepts from which Foster created her version of modern art.

Taking a slightly different perspective on the underpinnings of modernism, Leon Surette argues that the modern notion of “progress” is antithetical to Darwinian evolutionary shifts and the subtle changes which result from gradual cultural evolution. Recognizing Darwin’s influence on the latter part of the nineteenth century, Surette goes on to examine Nietzsche’s theory of cultural change, so crucial to the twentieth century, as particularly important to the principles of modernism reflected in the work of such proponents as Wagner, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, and Pound. He rejects any claims that Marx or Nietzsche could have based their arguments on the Darwinian principle of random selection: “Dialectical materialism and the Superman [. . .] are both teleological theories that are incompatible with Darwinian environmentally driven random selection. [. . .] No dialectic--whether material or spiritual-- is involved. We have just the accident of an extraordinary individual or group of individuals dominating historical progress” (Surette 44-45). Such cataclysmic ideas supported Pound’s elitist-modernist (anti-semitic, fascist) concept of a “conspiracy of intelligence,” a clandestine movement which Surette terms a “sedition theory of history and culture” through which Pound believed “in the power of poetry to communicate revelations of ultimate reality.” In such an articulation, artistic ideology mixes with politics, social change, mysticism and the occult, making room within the modernist aesthetic for “adherents across the whole political spectrum, from conservative authoritarians to revolutionary anarchists” (Surette 45).

Certainly, Jeanne Robert Foster believed in communities of superior beings who were incarnated at particular moments in history, and to a certain extent, she believed that she was one of them. In a letter to Aline Saarinan (c. February 1962), upon the death of Saarinan's husband, Foster wrote of her beliefs, explaining that while she appeared to be Christian orthodox, she held, in fact, an eastern philosophy on life and death. The quote is long, but points to important influences upon Foster's poetry, and clarifies her attitude toward the expression of life and self in her work:

I escaped set religious belief at 14. My father was one of the trustees of a prominent church and a deacon, but my mother had at first followed the transcendentalists and later became immersed in the cosmogony [sic] of the Vedantists. [. . .]

Knowing that great men seem to appear in civilizations in groups, from time to time, [. . .] I came to accept reincarnation as truth and--as life went on and the mountain girl met--seemingly through special dispensation--great men and women, and when life gave me opportunities I could not have earned in this life, I felt that I had returned with a group.

The Vedit system postulates planes, the physical, the subtle or Astral next to the physical, the mental, the spiritual. It teaches that a great genius is built up by many incarnations, that his mind is never lost any more than the Atma, the soul, and that--as love binds--one may hope to return with that mind, somewhere sometime--and on the heights of our human powers--even make some kind of contact with that mind wherever

it may be, while here.

John believed in the recurrence of groups of great men. We never talked about religion, not once in the six years [. . .] It has seemed to me that at times the guidance of John's mind has been with me over the long-long years. I believe that he will reincarnate when he is needed and I pray that since I came back with his group, I will come again with him.

[. . .] The law of Karma, cause and effect, and the belief in reincarnation color [. . .] all that I think and feel but I do not talk about these things [. . .] I believe that your Eero's mind is not lost. It will return and you will surely be with that mind again--at least so I believe.

(Foster/Murphy Collection; NYPL: Box 3; File 176)

Foster's belief in recurrence and reincarnation, tempered by the "logos Christos" to which she admits paying allegiance, explain much about her poetry and the ways in which she was in sync with the modernist attitude argued by Surette. While she always negated genius in herself, she does state in this letter that "when life gave me opportunities I could not have earned [. . .] I felt that I had returned with a group." Since the group she identifies with includes the key modernist figures, one can conclude that Foster considered herself a kindred soul. Her description of the "neighbors of yesterday," quoted earlier, seems to reflect both the Darwinian and the Nietzschean concepts of what moves us into modernity: "shifting shadows,/ Projected into the world of reality" by the desire of the knitting woman of "Neighbors of Yesterday."

The poem (quoted above) begins, "When I go to see her, I look about the room/

Where she sits placidly knitting--knitting." We move from a simple, country visit to "the curious musty odor/ Of our grandmother's parlors" (line 4) through a careful catalogue of the old-fashioned furnishings of the home, to the family portraits:

Large tintypes that look out from oval frames,
 Daguerreotypes in velvet cases,
 Edged with their faded crinkling gold. (20-23)

There is a progression here. From the contemporary eye/I of the narrator, the reader moves into the yesterday of the knitting woman's environment, from the now through nostalgia ("the kaleidoscope/ On the 'What-not,' the wax flowers under glass" ll. 6-7), into a past that somehow revolutionizes itself into timelessness through the eyes of the dead.¹⁵ The framed family spirits materialize, evolving beyond their own mortality and through the woman's human passion:

They are called to her
 By that longing for perpetuation
 That lived once timidly in their bodies,
 And now, shorn of the fleshly vehicles,
 Gathers in cloistral dwellings, in old things,
 Loving stone most of all, and gripping close fingers
 Upon wood well seasoned with usage. (30-36)

Transformed beyond the limits of Darwin's evolutionary systems, the spirits have become in-dwellers of beloved "things," called by the longing for *duree* which Foster terms "perpetuation" and which is located in the knitting woman.¹⁶ Like the articles which

cannot be sold in “Antiques,” the “cloistral dwellings,” the “old things,” have all become sacred receptacles for the spirits which both take joy from and impart holiness to simple objects. Subtly, the mountain is also present, for the ancestors gather “in old things,/ Loving stone most of all, and gripping close fingers/ Upon wood well seasoned with usage.” The concept of a humanity perfecting itself in its slowly changing world shifts in the final verse which bears repeating:

There is passion in their mute returning
 To this eddy of cast-off mortality;
 There is passion in the woman who calls them—
 In her wilful insistence that nothing
 Can escape the self-centered mind moving
 Backward steadfastly, as it is pushed forward
 By the onrushing force of time and change,
 Until it joins the opposite arc of the circle
 And is immortal in its own fulfillment.

The knitting woman, tranquilly accepting a world of aging and aged memories, becomes a form of blessed *Übermensch* who transforms herself and her environment. Passion virtually erupts in the final stanza; the woman calls the immortal spirits insistently, wilfully, as she consciously enters into the whirlpool of change, the vortex which Foster characterizes as eternal perfection.

In her poetic treatment of some of the people she knew in the circle of artists and intellectuals of her day, Foster creates some of her most formal modernistic texts.

Whereas the Adirondack poetry articulates modern philosophies and crises in traditional forms, the poems celebrating Constantin Brancusi, Maud Gonne, and Oscar Wilde, (like the one dealing with Ezra Pound), are modern in form as well, and all of them were published in *Rock-Flower*. Brancusi was one of Foster's favorite artists. Their letters reveal a friendship shaded by mutual respect and playful intimacy (NYPL; Foster/Murphy Collection: Box 4). Foster wrote an article for *Vanity Fair* (May 18, 1922) in which she characterizes Brancusi as an artist who is modest about his work, but who has "attained serene confidence in its significance and beauty. Like Cezanne, he wishes to give the world his own images, his own vision. [. . .] He sees his subjects with the eyes of a seer" (Foster/Murphy Collection; NYPL: Box 4; file 236 4). The verse form of this characterization is "Constantin Brancusi: Roumanian Sculptor," and it is divided into five parts: L'Ouvrier (The Worker); L'Homme (The Man); L'Arbre (The Tree); Le Portrait (The Portrait); and Diner Avec Brancusi (Dinner With Brancusi). A key to Foster's methodology in creating this portrait is found in the section "Le Portrait," quoted here in full:

Papier ivoire, blank, a satin glaze,

'Á Madame, Votre ami

Constantin Brancusi.

I am sending you my portrait,

Papier ivoire, blank, a satin glaze;

I could not please you

With lies of the sun or of pencil.

All that I am to you is here for you;
 You will see me as I would have you see me.
 I shall not ask you how you will precipitate my likeness;
 I trust you.' ("Le Portrait" 60-61. 1-11)

Like the artists she admired at the Armory Show (Brancusi foremost among them), Foster formulates her image subjectively; she does not claim to present the facts of Brancusi, but rather her interpretation of the Brancusi whom she has known. She will "precipitate" his likeness, a studied effect of chemical interaction and sudden haste. The result is not to be a mimetic likeness, but rather an instantaneous response to the "suggestion" of Brancusi, to "all that I am to you [. . .] here for you."

Thus, "L'Ouvrier" is presented as a collage of the artist's studio, "An Olympian cave" of "Stupendous masses of rock" which are formed into "The Golden Bird, Sun-bird, bird of Paradise" or "two lovers, the *Embracers*." Yet again, it is a bronze head "accented by a single eyebrow" (59. 1, 9, 7, 12, 13). This opening section of the poem closes with Brancusi's declaration: "*With this form I could move the universe*" (59; l.15). Indeed, for Foster, the essence of Brancusi is form. Of his work at the Armory, Foster had said: "His portrait of Mlle. Pogany, a dancer, reduces the movement of the conventional ballet to its simplest geometrical form, an ascending spiral; [. . .]" (*Review* 446). The image suggests continuous movement through infinity. Foster's verse extends the metaphor of the Olympian cave, as section two, "L'Homme" describes the artist as "Pan thewed with sinews of ilex trees; / A faun's head, black curls, / (One suspects onyx horns) / A beard touched with white; / [. . .] Quick hands, [. . .] Flinging aside knowledge,"

Reaching for perfection/ As a child reaches for a flower;/ Dissolving wisdom/ Tragically for the wise” (59-60. 1-4, 7, 9-11). The essence of the personality is unfolded, the words *thewed*, *sinews*, and *ilex* suggesting a form *hewn* from one of Brancusi’s raw substances, here, the wood which is repeated in “L’Arbre.”¹⁷ With a certain playfulness, the sensuality of the man--“(One suspects onyx horns)--is juxtaposed to his innocence--“As a child reaches for a flower”--and lack of artifice. “L’Arbre” is a tribute to both Foster’s own identification with the mountain, and Brancusi’s use of massive blocks of wood for sculpture. The artist declares: “With only a little change in my substance,/ I could take root in the ground,/ Grow motifs instead of cutting them in marble” (60. 3-5). Foster’s organic metaphor, present in so much of her poetry, is attributed to Brancusi’s art.

The final section, “Diner Avec Brancusi” is an impressionistic presentation of Foster’s actual experience of dining at the artist’s studio. In the *Vanity Fair* article she had presented Brancusi as a man who feels “the absolute beauty in things, the external harmony and the internal harmony” (Foster/Murphy Collection; NYPL: Box 4; File 236). Having discussed his art, his philosophy on life, and his exquisite sense of uniting his work and his feeling for play in the dinner parties he gave, Foster closes the article with words which illuminate the spirit of her poem: “Accepting the present age, a daring innovator, a rebel, an image breaker in a sense, there is still only a short arc of the art circle to be spanned--in mind--before one returns with his work to the classic art of Greece, an art that conforms to what is permanent, beautiful and an overt criticism of the creative idealism of the human spirit” (5). In the poem, the linear narrative of the dinner is interwoven with the metaphor of Greek mythology used earlier:

A glow in the Olympian cave.
 Faggots are blazing
 (Brancusi built the fireplace),
 Fat cocks are roasting.
 Brancusi whips the salad delicately against a wooden bowl.
 We salute the table . . . an Asteroid
 Caught snowy from frozen spaces of the sky.
 (Plaster freshly trowled by Brancusi,
 Damp to the touch.)
 Upon its whiteness,
 Color of flame and twilight–
Capuchins, petals of scarlet
 Sinking in twilight. (61. 14-24)

Every image evokes sensation: sight, sound, touch. In the verse which follows, Foster deals with food as “the wine bubbles,” “Fruits shine on fig leaves,” “Fragrance sifts through the fumes of wine and fruit,” “Brancusi is grinding coffee/ In a cylinder of Turkish brass” (61. 16,17,19-21). A quintessential sensory experience is presented in scents, textures, colors, hints of sound. Foster immerses us within her memory of the event, and by the final verse, intoxicated by the beauty and the wine, the reader joins the narrator as: “Following Pan, turning a coffee grinder of Turkish brass,/ Speaking the tongue of dreams,/ Of the lion and the lizard,/ We arrive/ On Olympus” (62.31-35). It is only a poem about a Roumanian sculptor; yet, the experience of reading translates into a

moment of being.

In her treatments of Maud Gonne and Oscar Wilde, Foster proceeds differently. For Yeats's great love, Foster uses a filter, the full title of the poem being "To Maud Gonne Living in William Butler Yeats' Memoirs" (93). The poem is short and addresses Gonne directly: "There is a little mist before my eyes to see you pass; / The breath catches and the blood suddenly is still;/ And I am out of body and caught to a flame/ That burns before your beauty" (1-4). We are not experiencing this woman directly, as we did Brancusi. Here, we are moving within Yeats's idealization. The central line, "He has made a tower" is the only one of the nine-line poem to be indented, and it is followed by Foster's meta-text in which we glimpse Yeats as a high priest, paying homage to a goddess:

He has made a tower
 And set you in a ring of subtle images,
 Made you more splendid than our Holy Ones;
 Made you what the blood leaps at--foreknowing
 All that the sleeper dreams. (93. 5-9)

Whatever Maud Gonne is in reality is beside the point of the poem, yet Foster's use of direct address in lines that surround the reifying tower line infer that the speaker's experience of the lady is the same as the lover's. The dreamlike state of the final line pervades the poem, and the speaker, overwhelmed by the power of the images Yeats (named only in the title) has created, presents this image of perfection-- "more splendid than our Holy Ones"-- as truth. The romance of Keats's Grecian Urn has been applied to

a modern scene, with its own “ring of subtle images” frozen in Yeats epideictic description of his lady. The line between the dream world and the objective world is blurred, the image of the woman’s beauty “foreknown” even before imagined in sleep. In contrast to the evocation in her poem on Brancusi, Foster seems to be whimsically replaying the core of Romanticism, “Beauty is truth, truth beauty,” which the modernists scorned, yet tried to embody. Even the names of the poets involved parody each other.

In her poem dedicated to Oscar Wilde, Foster focuses on the poet’s tomb, dividing the man from the monument. The first three lines proclaim: “A tomb for a poet! / A tomb for a sinner! / A tomb for an Irish gentleman!” (*Rock-Flower*, “Oscar Wilde’s Tomb in Pere Lachaise,” 95; ll. 1-3). But the articles *a* and *an* suggest that any poet, sinner, gentleman could be lain here. The text rejects the “incubus of marble” as a “blurred symbol” of Wilde’s greatness. Next, it mourns the “cadences of remembered speech, gay wit, abundance” which were the mark of the man. In the final lines, one symbol of life, albeit passing life, is noted: “Upon the tomb a wreath of painted porcelain, / A scarlet geranium flower tied with a thread--” (8-9). The tenuousness of life informs the lines recursively when we reach the word *thread*. The first image here is one of a wreath of stone, the green world fossilized and made into artifact. Only the scarlet geranium testifies to the vivid life Wilde once lived, and Foster invests that image with reinforced meaning through the use of the dash that allows the reader to extend life beyond the page, and beyond death. The poem closes with another act of rereading, the last four lines addressing Wilde directly: “These are all that is here of you. / Poet, / Sinner, / Irish gentleman” (10-13). The generic articles of the opening lines are gone; the life of the

man in his various incarnations is noted, the universal epithet of mankind, “sinner,” couched between the great calling of “poet,” and the ethnic charm of “Irish gentleman.” In this short reflection on a grave site, Foster manages to incorporate both the finality of death and the impact of a momentous life. As she did in her poem “Neighbors of Yesterday,” Foster focuses on the “passion of life” which, ultimately, is life. As was the knitting woman’s, Foster’s insistence on the mind’s moving backward and forward, pushed “by the onrushing force of time and change” creates a unity of life and spirituality which eventually becomes its own fulfillment in immortality.

Far from being overwhelmed by the vastness, pace, and disinterest of urban life, Foster brought to her new experiences her powerful sense of herself as part of a greater existence, her own version of “the knitting woman.” Her time in the mountains had not been characterized by dissatisfaction and restlessness, as she had learned from and identified with both the natural world and the variety of communities in which she grew. Thus, her movement into the modern environment of the early twentieth century merged two worlds, each remaking the other simultaneously in a dream logic of reality and a cataclysmic transformation of the past into the present.

Jim Kenyon’s Horse: *The Perception of Modernity*

Foster’s association with Ezra Pound would develop into one of the most important professional and personal relationships in her life, but she set limits on his influence.¹⁸ Encouraged by his suggestions, she moved on to the double perspective in which she considered her present, modern age in the light of an Adirondack world swiftly

passing away. While this nuanced voice often produced richly textured narratives, such doubleness is not without its pitfalls. In her narrative poem “Jim Kenyon’s Horse,” Foster creates a puzzling ending in which the elements of memory and nostalgia may decline into a sentimental imbalance of escapism. On the other hand, Foster may be creating a clever *trompe d’oeil* through which she presents the modern, urban rationalization of a country tragedy. Before denoting the ways in which the term “modernism” can explicate Foster’s meanings, I will offer a close reading “Jim Kenyon’s Horse” as an illustration of Foster’s contextualization of both the regional and the modern, but also as an example of what happens when a regional/modernist poem embraces sentimentality.

Sometimes animals mean more than humans.

I remember Jim Kenyon’s old white horse

More than I remember him. The old horse

Used to stand up on his hind feet in Jim’s orchard

Of wild apple trees he never grafted

And knock down apples with his front feet

And bite what he could off the lowest branches.

He was lean and spavined, and speckled-white

As if his hide had been doused with black pepper.

And his only idea seemed to be

To find something to stick between his ribs. (AP 109. 1-11)

The poem tells the story of the old white horse in terms of its prolonged

starvation. The bulk of the text expresses the oppressive suffering of what Marxist doctrine (emergent in the era of the poem's setting) might call the proletariat versus the capitalist.¹⁹ The Kenyon children "[. . .] went to school in zero weather/ In thin little cotton coats and pants--/No underwear; they were lucky to have bread,/ Let alone butter [. . .]." In addition the text relates the torture of Kenyon's means of production, the workhorse. "In the summer he cropped grass along the road--/ Jim didn't have land for grass--but in winter/ He starved. If Jim had been kind he'd have shot him/ And put him out of his misery [. . .]" (18-21).

The farmer, a victim of poverty, has little in the way of material goods himself, and in a version of exploitative patriarchy directly opposed to the philosophy articulated by the women in "Antiques," Jim Kenyon extends his deprivation to his "possessions": his children and his horse. Foster powerfully asserts the tragedy of human loss in a marketplace society when she opens the poem: "Sometimes animals mean more than humans." A cog in the wheel of Kenyon's subsistence, the horse meant little enough to him, but its deprivation looms large in the memory of the narrator. Defined by its lack, the animal gains ascendancy in recall: "I remember Jim Kenyon's old white horse/ More than I remember him." Even the children become incidental since they retain the potential for escape: "Jim's children thrived and grew up somehow; / They're scattered around the world. I don't think of them." Foster immediately follows the comment on the children's erasure with a piercing commentary on the animal's mirroring of the total Kenyon tragedy: "But now and then I remember that old white horse/ And the look in his eyes that life didn't mean much." While the children have faded out of the picture the

animal remains fixed in time, pawing at frozen, sour apples “in zero weather,” communicating in his muteness the terrible cost when humans cease caring for themselves, each other, and the world at their disposal. We have come full circle from the chill-turned-to-warmth of “Antiques.”

At this point, Foster has attained the “escape velocity” through which the reader accesses reclaimed time, applying the lesson of Kenyon’s indifference to the cold cruelty of a modern society based on production and profit. But Foster closes the text with an expression of sentimental, perhaps “bourgeois” ideology which seems to turn the poem from pithy to facile:

I see him as he used to stand on his hind feet
 Trying to get those frosty apples between his teeth,
 And I wish again what I used to wish when I saw him:
 That if there’s a horse-heaven with still waters
 And green meadows and oats ripe for eating,
 I hope Jim Kenyon’s old horse finds them. (28-35)

On the one hand, the horse’s earthly suffering becomes banal as the animal metamorphoses into an angelic equine neighing happily to the sound of harps, and surrounded by heavenly images of oats and babbling brooks. What starts out as an incisive commentary on the conditions of the ubiquitous working poor seems to become a vacuous promise of happily-ever-after which smacks of the religious pap of the exploited. Up to the last six lines of the poem, we are struck by the narrator’s simple telling of a human tragedy in which the old white horse is a metonym for the faceless children, the

unnamed wife, and Jim Kenyon himself. Choosing to express human degradation in terms of a mute animal, Foster has evaded the problem of expressing the inexpressible: in the Kenyon family, life is horrific. In the poem, as in life it seems, none of them articulate their desperation, creating a suffering more fully imagined in the mind of the reader through the incidental ways in which they are “provided for.” The narrator tells us only what she saw: thin, cold, pathetic children, a surly father, and a horse always struggling for food.

Like the modern city dweller who passes the homeless each day, Foster’s narrator doesn’t think of what she cannot, and possibly did not try to change. This is not an accounting of Wordsworth’s “Old Cumberland Beggar” whose existence is framed by dignity and the exhilarated heart of those who, offering the blessing of charity, receive it again tenfold. Foster’s text implies the completed rupture of mankind from the self and each other which the Romantics avoided through escape into nature, and which Victorian society critiqued and endured. The text is marked by a tone of tragic indifference which is its first message: “Sometimes animals mean more than humans./ I remember Jim Kenyon’s old white horse/ More than I remember him.” By leaving the human characters silent, Foster implicates the narrator in the fate of the Kenyon brood, for it would only have been through the narrator’s intervention that the personal suffering of the Kenyons could have been expressed and/or assuaged. By framing the opening line as a fact, Foster also implicates the reader in the implied assent. As we read, we articulate the suggestion that “sometimes animals mean more than humans.” Finally, by stating that the children got by and “grew up somehow” and are now “scattered around the world,”

the flotsam and jetsam of a society in which material wealth equals personal importance, Foster indicts the narrator's and the entire community's complicity in the belief that "life didn't mean much."

In this little poem about a harsh man who is an economic and paternal failure, we read the twentieth-century expression of alienation, loneliness, and the breakdown of family and community in a world which observes and records but does not intervene. Yet the poem is part of a larger *weltanschauung* of American life in which Foster's reader is sometimes urged to take refuge. In her poem "The Old Sitting Room" (NOY) Foster's narrator rhapsodizes:

Oh, I remember how we read till evening prayers!

The wood fire blazed within the high iron stove

And charred the maple slabs to ruddy coals.

Before the fire the watch dog dreamed at peace,

And father read beside the low oil lamp.

Those golden days are gone; the world sweeps on;

New faces come, and the old faces go.

And our old sitting room has gone the way

Of all forgotten, gentle, lovely things. (NOY 41-42. 41-49)

Surrounded by the reconstructed comforts of such a carefully edited memory, the reader is easily lulled into believing that Foster wishes us to turn the clock back to a "simpler" time, when all was gentle and lovely. However, the perspective of "Jim Kenyon's

Horse,” suggests that outside the door of the snug mountain cabin where religion warmed the soul while the well-choked fire warmed the body, there was a harsh world in which the strongest prospered while the weak ones faded away. In the dialectic of past and present, memory serves as an important buffer, allowing the reconstruction of those parts of yesterday which will best communicate with the author’s sense of now. Foster seduces the reader into reading the present moment through the lens of a lovely, gentle past, then reverses that act with the narration of an event which suggests that in the past “life didn’t mean much.” This perception opposes the balance achieved in “Antiques,” in which Foster illustrates individual and community strength as part of the life which endures against both the harshness of the mountain, and the harshness of living in the modern world.

As Marshall Berman suggests, the power of the modern authorial voice lies in the fact that, “This voice resonates at once with self-discovery and self-mockery, with self-delight and self-doubt. It is a voice that knows pain and dread, but believes in its power to come through” (Berman 23). Berman discusses the paradoxical qualities of modern thought which hopes “that the modernities of tomorrow and the day after tomorrow will heal the wounds that wreck the modern men and women of today” (23). Foster’s use of the past as a lens (or lenses) suggests that she views her modern world through her yesterdays as well, so that in an intellectual move which echoes the ethnic sense, both past and present might heal each other. T.S. Eliot’s fourth “Prelude” suggests Foster’s approach: “I am moved by fancies that are curled/ Around these images, and cling:/ The notion of some infinitely gentle/ Infinitely suffering thing” (*The Waste Land and Other*

Poems IV; 10-13). Through the evocation of both the pleasure and the pain of the past, Foster comments on the presence and absence of human fulfillment in a modern, chaotic world. Only in an idealized memory, in a form of “once upon a time” storytelling, can the poet hide from reality, a provincial, self-serving technique at best.

Therefore, when the final six lines of “Jim Kenyon’s Horse” worry the reader into a horse after-life, Foster’s apparent privileging of the memory of the animal over that of the man and his children may revoke the powerful metonymic effect of the horse’s suffering vis a vis the modern world, and become an embarrassment instead. The reader is now asked to forego the text’s implied critique of capitalism and Social Darwinism, and to embrace instead heartfelt sorrow for a long-suffering horse. On one hand, the effect is devastating to the poem, and in its collapse “Jim Kenyon’s Horse” provides an illustration in counterpoint of the intersection of regionalism and modernism which I am asserting. Had Foster stopped with her personal interpretation of the look in the animal’s eyes, we would question not only the worth of a horse, but also and of course more importantly, the worth of human life. As the poem now stands, we wonder whether Foster has betrayed the strong authorial voice she articulates throughout the poem, the innovative style which Linda Wagner (Martin) defines in *American Modern* as “each writer’s individual and single verbal reality; the word arrangement that best, and truly, reflects his or her world view; i.e., *voice*” (98). The sophisticated reality which lies behind that voice up to the last six lines reflects Foster’s amalgamation of the old and new, country and city, Romantic, Victorian, frontier, and modern urban experiences. The shifted persona we hear last seems false and is irritating, because it turns its back on the

modern problems so clearly depicted, finding a childish haven in Sunday-school neatness.

The strong authorial voice becomes a whine.

In a second interpretation however, we need to reconsider the last ten lines of the poem as a unit:

Jim's children thrived and grew up somehow;
 They're scattered around the world. I don't think of them.
 But now and then I remember that old white horse
 And the look in his eyes that life didn't mean much.
 I see him as he used to stand on his hind feet
 Trying to get those frost apples between his teeth,
 And I wish again what I used to wish when I saw him:
 That if there's a horse-heaven with still waters
 And green meadows and oats ripe for eating,
 I hope Jim Kenyon's old horse finds them. (24-33)

The tragedy of the tale lies in the impersonal displacement of the children who, like the horse, had to fend for themselves. Their resolution comes into the text in a biblical allusion: they are "scattered around the world" like the twelve tribes of Israel, some to prosper, some to subsist, some to decline. The narrator cannot change the destiny of the children, and in a modern response to the overwhelming forces of twentieth-century life with its fast pace, anonymity and depersonalization, states simply and chillingly: "I don't think of them." Speaking from outside the mountain community, like Foster herself, the narrative persona seems to have moved on to a place from which to look back at this rural

life, filtered through memory. Employing that recursive filter, the narrator's reconstructed vision focuses on the old, starving horse, perhaps displacing her own memories of hunger, starvation, and loneliness onto the animal. Jane Marcus suggests that while a recreation of the starving children would have been mawkish, "the fantasy of horse heaven comes from someone who knows what it's like to be close to starvation" and who replaces the modern reality of depersonalization with the doubtful "if" of a mythical horse-heaven.²⁰ The conclusion constitutes a clearly defined escape fantasy, but merged with the world view expressed in the earlier parts of the poem, the escape adds to rather than detracts from the verbal reality of Foster's authorial voice.

In fact, Foster had directly addressed the construct of escape in a poem titled "Country Tragedy" (NOY) already discussed in Chapter Four. The poem opens with the recognition of the life-crushing events which often visit the people of the mountain. It closes with a condemnation of those people (possible city people) whose lives are so insulated that they never feel either the depths of sorrow or joy, "And they pass through the game like clods of earth,/ And fall untouched, unhurt, unawakened" (86; 25-6). But the center section of the poem focuses on the balm of faith as it heals, or at least numbs the pain of, those whom life has broken:

[. . .] They live on, dreaming
 On Sundays of the 'Sweet Fields of Eden,'
 When their aching hearts find brief solace
 In honest Christian doctrine that's certain
 Of the 'Last Day' and the Resurrection.

Through their faith they come close to a 'Friend,'

And after all's said what more can there be

For men here or in the hereafter? (4-11)

In "Jim Kenyon's Horse," the "Sweet Fields of Eden," promised to the faithful as their reward for long-suffering, are transformed into "a horse-heaven with still waters/ And green meadows and oats ripe for eating." The reality that this "horse-heaven" is fantastic is underscored by the conditional "if" with which the speaker qualifies her wish for the starving horse. That fantasy becomes a grim suggestion when the two poems are considered together. For "Country Tragedy" wonders what more there can be as human consolation besides friendship embraced through trust. The quotation marks around "Sweet Fields of Eden," "Last Day," and "Friend" in "Country Tragedy" would suggest that these comforts are only recommended, not prescribed for those who have faith in the perfection of this life in a hereafter. The horse then, happily eating oats in heaven is overlain by and overlays the broken-hearted faithful who have entered their own sweet fields of solace. We are left with whichever perspective on these heavens we prefer: neither one exists, or both of them exist, at least in the visions of the faithful. At any rate, Foster has offered her reader the comfort of possibility, and the interpretation rests in the eye/I of the beholder. Seen stereoscopically, the poem's sentimentality works both for and against it, creating a perspective which intensifies the power of the remembered moment so basic to Foster's poetry. The epistemological reality of Foster's mountain world rests on the words and actions of her characters and her narrators as they interpret in homely mountain dialect, an alien world of change and chaos.

ENDNOTES

1. Frederick James Gregg was a New York journalist who wrote for *The Evening Sun*, *Vanity Fair*, *The New York Times*, and the *Independent*, and who was a close friend of John Quinn. Quinn often recommended actors, artists, and playwrights to Gregg's attention, for example in the cases of John Millington Synge, Lady Gregory, Florence Farr Emery, and Jacob Epstein. Probably because of his close friendship with Quinn, Gregg agreed to serve as unpaid publicist for the Association when the concept of the Armory Exhibit was born. It was Gregg who, after Quinn's death, wrote of that patron's abilities as a collector, saying in the July 29, 1923 issue of the *Sun*: "John Quinn. . . was probably the most courageous patron of the arts of his time. [. . .] he bought the pictures, sculpture and manuscripts of men whose names [. . .] were known to but few but whose eminence is now undisputed [. . .] His collection ought to find a home somewhere in its integrity. [. . .]" (MFNY 637-8).

2. John Quinn had been one of the major sponsors and arrangers of the exhibit, although he and Foster would not meet until five years later, in 1918, on the occasion of JBY's illness. Foster recalled noticing Quinn however, when she unobtrusively trailed his entourage (including Theodore Roosevelt) at the Armory, as Quinn led the group through the exhibit, lecturing them on the merits of the art. Despite the very positive impression he made on her, Foster deliberately avoided making Quinn's acquaintance, for he was reported to be a notorious womanizer. For a full account of Quinn's involvement in the Armory Exhibit see Ben L. Reid, *John Quinn: The Man From New York*, Chapters "1912" and "1913."

3. Hulme's opposition of the romantic and the classical in his 1911 essay "Romanticism and Classicism" argues that romanticism views man "as a well, a reservoir full of possibilities," totally suppressed by society, while classicism sees him "as a very finite and fixed creature," only capable of attaining anything positive through tradition and organization (in *Modernism: An Anthology of Sources and Documents* 179-80). Hulme characterizes the bourgeoisie as Romantic in its belief, traced to Rousseau, that if one can "rearrange society by the destruction of oppressive order then these possibilities will have a chance and you will get Progress," (179) which, of course, is good for business. In his rejection of the romantic, and his elevation of the classic, Hulme supports Foster's assertion that the Armory Show is both a revolution against the forms of the previous one hundred years, and a incorporation of the experience of those forms into a new kind of classic art in which man is not infinitely capable but which puts mankind at the center of an evolutionary, ordered universe of "small, dry things" infinitely explorable.

4. Taken from the internet source, *Oxford English Dictionary*. 1989. Research Collection, Hofstra University. 17 Feb. 2002 <http://rdas.hofstra.edu/bin/rdas.dll/RDAS_SVR=dictionary.oed.com/cgi/findword?query_type=word&queryword=modernist&find.x=24&find.y=10>.

5. Ibid. <http://rdas.hofstra.edu/bin/rdas.dll/RDAS_SVR=dictionary.oed.com/cgi/crossref?xrefed=OED&xrefword=modernism>.

6. Likewise, Joseph Frank, in his essay “Spatial Form in Modern Literature,” published in 1945, refers to the use of “spatial form” as a historical and aesthetic shift termed “modern literature,” but he does not use the word modernism (Eysteinsson 2).

7. Florence Farr Emery was an Irish actress who had developed the art of “chanting passages of prose or verse to the accompaniment of an instrument designed for her by Arnold Dolmetsch” (Reid 45). Recommended by J.B. Yeats, Emery found herself successfully touring New York, Boston, Buffalo, Chicago, and Toronto in 1906 following the initiative and scheduling of John Quinn. In a letter to Quinn during this tour, she states: “You were quite right about the Colliers and they were quite charming. He and I sat at one end of a long table & she & Mark Twain at the other & all the women were beautiful. Mrs. Cushing the artist’s wife with red hair & black dress and white Gibson Girl face. Mrs. J.J. Astor & two other tall wonderful things in gold and black” (MFNY 45-46). The two became good friends, and corresponded throughout her life, although Miss Emery never returned to America, choosing rather to pursue a career as a drama critic in London.

8. In 1920, as a guest of Tomáš Masaryk, the leader of the Czechoslovakian independence movement and Czechoslovakia’s first president, Foster took a harrowing journey on the Orient Express to see the fledgling nation for herself. She articulated her experience of the Czech desire for autonomy in the stirring poem “The Winter Song” (*Rock-Flower* 91). I have discussed both her trip and the poem in Chapter One of this study. For a full narrative of Foster’s involvement with the Czechoslovakian freedom movement see Richard and Janis Londraville’s account in *Dear Yeats, Dear Pound, Dear Ford: Jeanne Robert Foster and Her Circle of Friends*, Chapter 8, 115-133.

9. It was Jeanne Robert Foster’s habit to take notes during conversations that she considered to be very important. She carried around small, leather-bound notepads into which she jotted the basic ideas of an interview or a discussion. Although this occurred most usually when she was witnessing one of John Quinn’s extraordinary meetings with authors and/or artists--e.g. W.B. Yeats, Joyce, Picasso--she also transcribed the “minutes”

of her meetings with people whom she considered important to her own work. Thus, in the Foster/Murphy Collection of the NYPL, and in the Londraville and Murphy private collections, there are both original notebooks and typed transcripts of conversations such as this one with Pound.

10. Unfortunately, none of the documents which I have researched specify exactly which poems were involved in alteration or reclamation. Foster's notes and diary entries refer to the poetry generally.

11. See Chapter Four, "Regionalism, Modernism, and the Voice Between" for a full reading of this poem and Foster's use of "April" as a prompt.

12. Interestingly enough, Mrs. Foster actually left a directive in verse about where she wished to be buried. In the Chestertown Historical Society papers, there is a typed page, signed "Faithfully" by the author, stating:

[. . .] I have a rhymed direction, I will send you when I am better that begins:

Bury me in the mountains
Not upon the plain;
I would sleep in the high country
I may not walk again

The page is similar to many sent to Chestertown historian Caroline Fish, and although it is undated, it is probably from the 1966-1970 period during which Foster routinely corresponded with Fish about her Adirondack memories, her work, their mutual acquaintances, and plans for the Historical Society. There is no follow-up page of longer directive verse.

13. See note 6, this chapter.

14. In her entertaining and provocative essay, "Definitional Excursions: the Meanings of *Modern/Modernity/Modernism*," Susan Stanford Friedman assumes the role of devil's advocate, questioning the multiplicity of applications that literary criticism has extruded from the term *modernist*. From avante-garde to oppressively establishment, from disruptive to particularly comprehensive, from exclusionary to inclusive, from patriarchal to feminist, Friedman's ironic examination of the uses to which "modernism" is put illuminates the contradictory nature not only of the terms involved, but also of the plethora of concepts being signified by multiple ideologies all claiming the capital "M"

Modernism as representative of a particular hobbyhorse. Refusing to assign any single ideology to the term, Friedman argues for a dual approach to a definition of modernist studies, one grammatical and philosophical, and the second political and cultural. Essentially, she argues for the “BangClash” of perspectives on modernism, enabling the multiple “modernist camps” to experience the contradictory dialogic running through the history of the term(s), an opposition which in itself helps to define and illustrate the decentered nature of those phenomena which modernism seeks to express:

Order and disruption are symbiotically necessary to each other for each to have its distinctive meaning. The center comes into being as it dissipates. Modernity’s grand narratives institute their own radical dismantling. The lifeblood of modernity’s chaos is its order. The impulse to order is the product of chaos. Modernism requires tradition to ‘make it new.’ Tradition comes into being only as it is rebelled against. Definitional excursions into the meanings of *modern*, *modernity*, and *modernism* begin and end in reading the specificities of these contradictions (Friedman 510).

Friedman’s concluding statement underscores Foster’s relationship to the traditional in her expression of the modern.

15. Note the echoes of Foster’s text “Neighbors of Yesterday” (NOY, 1916) in the text of “Three Colors of the Moon” (*Rock-Flower*, 1923). The Great Flower of the “Crimson” section, whose petals “become like wax,” parallel the wax flowers on the “what-not”; the “curtains of flesh” of “Blue” recall the ancestors’s “longing for perpetuation” who have now been “shorn of the fleshly vehicles”; the spirit in “Blue” which “murmurs a farewell to the flesh--in its first temple” is reworked in the image of old things becoming “cloistral dwellings” for the spirits of the dead. Most notably, the “self-centered mind moving/Backward steadfastly, as it is pushed forward” joins itself through its progression to “the opposite arc of the circle” where we might say life began. This concept is restated in the final line of “Blue” which is “And when the spirit murmurs a farewell to the flesh,-in its first temple, [. . .] it pauses for an instant upon the brink of the abyss.” The image of the arc and joined circle are also restated in the culmination of “Black,” the final section of “Three Colors of the Moon”: “[. . .] And the flesh and bones of me were dissipated to thin air. [. . .] When I awoke my roots went down into the ground, my body stood upright in the sun. I was a tree growing on a high mountain [. . .]” The significant echoes of the two texts exemplify the ways in which Foster was rethinking and reworking images, experimenting with both regional and modernist forms.

16. Knitting, in itself, is an image here of perpetuation, duration. In the frugal world of the mountains, knitting might involve the recycling of wool taken from a previous source. The yarn, whether new or old, would be fashioned into individual configurations, repeated in whatever cyclical pattern is chosen, and moved through a progression of

counted stitches and lines to become a new entity—socks, mittens, sweater, hat, afghan, etc. The final product is the result of moving constantly backward and forward through a cycle of creation, taking the old (the yarn, the stitch) and developing it to become the new. The products, like the quilts of Alice Walker's short story "Everyday Use" become more valuable as they evoke the lives of their makers. Like Walker, Foster refuses to invest things with more value than the people they represent.

17. The use of the participle *thewed* here is archaic; in fact, it appears in a verb form only in the OED, where, for Foster's use, the second OED meaning adheres, "having thews or muscles." The first documented use is noted as Webster's (1864), "A well-thewed limb." The second use, important for Foster, is attributed to Swinburne (1865) in *Chastelard* I. ii. 34, "Do you know that lord With sharp-set eyes? and him with huge thewed throat?" *Ibid.* IV. i. 116 "you have a heart thewed harder than my heart." ([Http://rdas.hofstra.edu/bin/rdas.dll/RDAS_SVR=dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/00251019](http://rdas.hofstra.edu/bin/rdas.dll/RDAS_SVR=dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/00251019)).

In the current *Webster's Dictionary*, *thew* is a noun, or an adjective with the forms *thewy*, *thewier*, *thewiest*. As a noun, the word means good physical qualities, strength, muscular power, muscles, sinews. As an adjective, it refers to the qualities of physical strength and strong appearance and/or custom (*Webster's New World Dictionary*, 3rd College Ed., Victoria Neufeldt and David B. Guralnik, [New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1988], 1389). Foster's admiration of Swinburne and her wish to cast Brancusi as a classic form would have contributed to the formation of such a line as "Pan thewed with sinews of ilex trees." An *ilex* tree is a holly tree. Foster was clearly trying to reinforce the mythical connection to the green world, while at the same time recreating, through assonance, allusions to the sculptor which would both denote and connote the power of Brancusi's sculpted forms.

18. Foster recounted a startling episode which occurred when, on a trip to Europe with John Quinn in the summer of 1921, she first met Pound. When Quinn returned to New York, Foster remained in Paris, overseeing purchases of art which he had begun. In their biography of Foster, Janis and Richard Londraville recount an episode in which Foster visited Georgette Christ's apartment, was passionately attacked by her, rebuffed Christ's advances, and, fleeing to another room, found Ezra Pound, "stark naked, looking like a Greek god, lithe, muscular, handsome" (Londraville, DY 191). Surmising that she was to have been one of an adventuresome "triple play," Foster told Pound to get dressed, left Christ's apartment, and holding her torn gown together, took a taxi home. Foster would later add, in telling the story to William Murphy, "with my Pagan soul, I'm glad I saw him that way. I've always loved beautiful things" (191).

Evidently, Foster was sophisticated enough to put the incident behind them both, since a diary entry a few weeks later recounts a dinner she attended with both Ezra and Dorothy

Pound at the Café Voltaire, beginning, “We had a merry dinner. Talked about the attack on modern art and about various persons we knew.” A few days later, Foster shared her *Rock-Flower* manuscript with Pound. Their friendship lasted until his death. For a full account of the Foster/Pound exchanges, see Londrville, *Dear Yeats, Dear Pound, Dear Ford*, Chapter 12.

19. Taken from Marcus’s personal commentary on Foster’s poetry, private conversation August, 2001.

CONCLUSION

“À la recherche des sentiments perdus”

Jeanne Robert Foster’s poetry lures us into its aura. Whether we are reading her poems of love or her poems about men, women, and children living out life in the communities of the mountain, in her best work we identify with the feelings of the speaker, with the memories of the narrative persona. Foster identified many of the people in her texts as individuals she had known in her youth, but we have little need for such identifications. We meet her characters through the idiosyncracies which marked them among the people with whom they lived, and they become real to us in their acts of living. Beyond such humanizing of the text, this poetry expresses a simple wisdom to the reader: step into the mess that is life, and engage the chaos with hope.

Hopeful optimism was not the message of the modernists. In the Nausikaa section of *Ulysses*, Leopold Bloom is refreshed, not by the poignancy of Gerty’s lameness or beauty, but by his temporary respite in masturbation: “O Lord, that little limping devil. Begins to feel cold and clammy. After effect not pleasant. Still you have to get rid of it someway” (363). Gerty’s crippled leg and Bloom’s crippled sense of sexuality merge as he watches her leave, and literally/metaphorically feels himself grow small. The tragedy of Eliot’s Prufrock is that for all his lingering by the sea-girls, he does not believe that their song can ever be his; therefore, bereft of inspiration, when human voices disturb his Bloomian reverie, he wakes, and like Peter doubting Christ in the storm at sea, he drowns.¹ By 1922, the year in which seminal (and later, canonical) modernist texts were published—*The Waste Land*, *Ulysses*, *Babbitt*, *The Hairy Ape*—the response which marks the texts that New Criticism would later term “serious literature,” and “high modernism” is stoic endurance.

Eliot’s notes on the last words of his masterpiece indicate that the triple *shantih* are equivalent to “The peace which passeth understanding,” not that which we can work toward as individuals (*The Waste Land and Other Poems* 54). If Molly Bloom’s final

utterance is an extended yes, it is a yes whispered in the dark, a return to Leopold more reminiscent of bygone possibilities than predictive of a hopeful, self-actualizing future. Sinclair Lewis's middle-aged George Babbitt, worn-out, tubby, balding, stands by his son in Ted's bid for independence. But Babbitt is supporting his son in a plea for a twenty-dollar-a-week factory job, an outlook that holds no promise of self-actualization. Babbitt's confession is chilling: "I've never done a single thing I've wanted to in my whole life! I don't know's I've accomplished anything except just get along" (319). O'Neill's tragic drama about the destruction of a man who has been reduced by technology to base violence and irrationality, is not only a commentary on the effects of modernity on human life, but also on man's acceptance of such a degraded, worthless self. Of course, as Michael North has pointed out, other texts from great authors were published in 1922, albeit not to the kudos of the self-appointed avant-garde or the critics who advanced their thinking. Willa Cather's novel *One of Ours* (which won the 1922 Pulitzer Prize) was considered obsolete by reviewers such as Edmund Wilson who agreed with critic Gilbert Seldes that *Ulysses* and *The Waste Land* constituted "a complete expression of the spirit which [would] be 'modern' for the next generation" (in North, *Reading 1922* 3). Virginia Woolf's *Jacob's Room*, Claude McKay's *Harlem Shadows*, James Weldon Johnson's *Book of American Negro Poetry*, and even F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Beautiful and Damned* were also published in 1922, yet it would take some fifty years for literary criticism to begin the revaluation of the modernist concept which would find a space for such texts (even in their perspectives of hopelessness) within its parameters.² The message emanating from the pens of the proclaimed modernist masters of 1922 (essentially Pound, Eliot, Joyce, and perhaps Williams, Stevens, occasionally Marianne Moore) was a far cry from the poem which opened Foster's *Rock-Flower* collection one year later.

"John Butler Yeats" was Foster's memorial elegy for her friend, first published in *The New York Times*, interestingly, in 1922. Ezra Pound declared it to be "the best thing of her[s] I have seen"(Quinn Collection; NYPL: Ezra Pound to John Quinn, February 21, 1922). It begins with an epigraph of desire for the mountains, "*Alas, for the wonderful*

yew forest!” This is followed by a line of simple recall, “We shall remember him” which extends into the metaphor of line two, “As a man who had a little in him of the men of all time.” Immediately, the reader is placed into a select group that opens out to the community of all mankind. “We shall remember him” repeats throughout the poem, as Foster reinforces the reader’s involvement in memorializing the man. Through the image of his humanness, lean shoulders, Irish wit, conversational skill intoned in a “high-pitched Irish voice,/ That lilted to a delicate string” Foster characterizes the essence of JBY’s personality (3.6-8). The voice lilted to a point “Beyond our hearing” constitutes a textual move which unites the here and hereafter in lyrical communication. In addition, the line echoes that which Foster used to characterize Pound’s affect on her, “ [. . .] the voices/ Crying beyond you” (*Rock-Flower* 94. 2-3). Both men had insisted that Foster move away from derivative sentimental verse.

The second stanza further characterizes Yeats, not as an intellectual elitist, but rather as a part of a greater world community:

‘Shakespeare was a kindly man,’ he often said.

John Yeats was a kindly man

Who gave lavishly of himself

As if life had no end.

Around him gathered

The tangible aroma of life

Full-flavored with intense living. (3. 9-15)

Foster’s voice is clear and simple, focussing on the realistic image of a strong, sweaty Irishman who communicates an intense connection not only to the people around him, but also to the traditions of art and intellect which formed his cultural community. This is no Prufrock, anaesthetized against the pleasures and pains of living. Yeats is remembered through his statements about heaven, about Shakespeare, about Montaigne, and in his memories of other “wits and poets and artists” (4. 23). A vibrant community of which Yeats forms an integral part has been established, and next follows Foster’s intensification of sentiment.

Allowing Yeats to speak for himself, Foster tells us that he equates Ireland and heaven. “‘If Heaven were a perfect place it would bore me’ ” Yeats tells us; “‘I like to think of Heaven as a place with discords;/ As a beautiful orchestration with Love as master of the music ’ ”(3. 20-21). As she would in “Jim Kenyon’s Horse,” Foster allows the moment of romance to disrupt the gritty connection to reality which she has carefully established. Here, as in the later poem, the heavenly image presents both possibilities of escapism and a connection to cultural notions of paradise with which a popular readership would easily identify. Through allusion, Foster creates Yeats’s (and by default, the reader’s) heaven on earth. The concept is reinforced throughout the long final verse. Images of intimacy are presented: the artist’s room, his pipes, drawings, easel, his face and manner, “Keen-eyed, young, eager to live a thousand years, / Unwearied by life,/ Sheltered beneath the green tree of his own thoughts” (4. 32-34). We are presented with what Foster terms the “Brilliant debris of irrecoverable personality,” with “irrecoverable” suggesting as much “irrepressible” as lost.

There, in the “brilliant debris of irrecoverable personality” we hear echoes of Marcel Proust and imagine the struggle of Virginia Woolf. Questing to regain time and experience as they are embodied in language, we realize that we have seen only glimpses of the “irrecoverable personality” of the dead man. His own words become the basis of a modernist twist, and Foster exploits Yeats’ voice to characterize such an artist:

‘The artist is the only happy man,’ he told us.

‘Art springs from a mood of divine unreason.

Unreason is when a man cannot be at peace with external
conditions. (3. 26-28)

Happiness, then, must issue not from heavenly metaphors, but from the act of unreasoning; the break with the conventions of tradition, in the struggle Foster defines between the inner man and his physical, emotional, cultural, political environment. This disjunction between the irrecoverable personality and the artist’s attempt to attain happiness is located grammatically in the construction: “unreason is when.” A poet flouts grammar in order to stretch the capability of language. If we read the phrase as

unreason's ability to exist only when a man rejects the external and seeks to rearrange the environment, then Foster has implied a full stop after "is" (read as *occurs*), and we must interpret "when" as "at the time when." In this reading, unreason—a sense of chaos—exists when a man is at odds with his world, with the "external conditions" of his life. In this case, Yeats is telling us that the disquiet of the artist is the seed of creativity that forces him to seek new ways of seeing the world and himself in it. Modernity, the chaos in which W.B. Yeats "center will not hold" is the wellspring of the artist's creative urge.

Another possible reading suggests that if "reason" is the process of arguing within the accepted social norm, then "un-reason" is the dismantling of this process, freeing the mind to explore the other possibilities not contained within social constraints. Once freed from constructions of "proper" and "normal," the artist is unhampered in seeking his own and/or mankind's relationship to time, memory, culture. Thus, "unreason" becomes, is, or equals "when," the standard adverbial construct for time. In this sense, state of mind equals time, and the poet's voice has crossed between the self and the other, the inner and outer worlds, real and imagined time.

Both readings are viable. Foster's characterization of Yeats suggests that his peaceful co-existence with his fellow man may be far more complicated than it appears. Toward the end of the poem, Foster again invokes "We shall remember him," this time "Ripening like an apple in quiet sunshine./ Responsive to human affection" (4. 36-37). Such passivity, while it seems apt for the elegy of an old man, appears incongruous against the "tangible aroma of life/ Full-flavored with intense living" with which Yeats is first described. The final lines of the text address the ambivalence we encounter:

And—patient of our human limitations—
 Writing under his own portrait
 (Painted from his reflection in a mirror),
 "Myself seen through a glass darkly." (4. 38-41)

While the poem has been a tribute to the loving, insightful, intelligent man that John Butler Yeats was, Foster acknowledges in her conclusion, the most important thing she has learned from him. Whatever we perceive, whether in things, nature, or human beings,

we are essentially deluded. The establishment of community is central to our humanity, and our interactions with both people and the world around us are the source of all creativity. The artist feeds the capacity to create by living a full life in the company of everyone and everything he encounters. Still, whatever greatness we achieve, whether in our relationships or our achievements, we are but a shadow of that which we can be. The promise of a heavenly afterlife is as much a humbling force as it is a source of desire, since it is grounded in the reality of the imperfection of this life. Seeing himself through St. Paul's smoky mirror, recreating himself in a sketched image, Yeats embodies the dilemma of every human being. We see ourselves, and every other individual, no matter how truthful or intimate our relationship, "through a glass darkly." Progress, while it may occur, is never a teleological journey, for the essence of life is its very unfolding through redoubling.

In this poem, Foster uses many of the techniques which would help her to find a voice in her regional texts. The tribute to John Butler Yeats is both sentimental and modernist in its characterization and its philosophy. Using the charming persona of JBY, and reaping the dramatic effects of monologue and direct address, Foster expresses her own view of life and art as community-based, with an emphasis on the contribution of the individual. To a great extent, the letters, diaries, and essays about her friendship with the elder Yeats tell us that he informed her aesthetic view. He spoke to her about a passion for living, about being straightforward in her verse, and about seeking perfection (in Yeats's case a vice, since his refusal to stop working on a piece often resulted in its ruin). The many hours which Foster spent at the Petitpas boarding house table taught her the ways in which a community of creative thinkers could nurture each other and spur creativity. Yet, her exposure to the larger, international modernist community revealed the sense of distance, alienation, and disjuncture present in the final line of the text, one which JBY, a nineteenth-century intellect with a twentieth-century grasp of modernity, actually inscribed on his self-portrait.

The fact that Pound praised this poem might be surprising. As my discussion of the text has argued, "John Butler Yeats" contains many moments of sentiment. In

addition, it is not especially tight, and although there are not gratuitous lines of cloying reminiscence, the verses are rather lush with memory, with a touch of nostalgia. The piece “takes its time” circling the figure of Yeats and recreating, as it suggests that art always recreates, the man through his interaction with the world and the people in it. Perhaps an early poem of Pound’s suggests the core of Foster’s text which so appealed to him:

I know that what Nietzsche said is true,
And yet—
I saw the face of a little child in the street,
And it was beautiful.

(“Reflection” *Smart Set*, 1916 in *Collected Early Poems of Ezra Pound* 286)

Although the project of the modernists was to repudiate mass culture and the artistic traditions of the nineteenth century, and while Pound rejected all rhetorical and poetic conventions which recalled the eminent Victorians (and superficially, the Romantics), this short verse aligns itself with the message which Foster would encode in the Yeats elegy: sentiment evokes beauty.

A further clue to Pound’s acceptance of Foster’s poem lies in his 1920 work, “Hugh Selwyn Mauberley.” Severing all connections to the empty traditions and culture which he personified as “an old bitch gone in the teeth/ [. . .] a botched civilization” the poet-critic-speaker rejects images of beauty and emotion which have no substance. Thus, he excoriates the pre-Raphaelite movement which reified Elizabeth Siddal in what Pound terms “[. . .] that faun’s head of hers/ [Which] Became a pastime for/ Painters and adulterers” with eyes “Thin like brook-water, / With a vacant gaze” (*The Heath Anthology of American Literature*, 3rd edit., 1225; V; 101-103, 109-110). Superficiality maddened Pound, and indeed, the writings of modernist authors and critics condemn the “ladylike” conventions of many women authors. Whenever Foster had written doggerel-- lovesick verses which choke the senses with overblown, indulgent emotion, Pound (and J. B. Yeats) had identified it. Imagine Pound’s response to “[. . .] Bind not my sense/ Unto earth’s giddy vapors, that immense / Roll in swart clouds dearly around me here./

Swooning my soul with shapes of deadly fear; / [. . .] / Come to that stilly heaven far remote, / Where we shall win the ardors of the Sun” (“Come Thou With Me,” WA 26. 2-5, 9-10). When JBY read that poem among others of mixed worth in *Wild Apples*, he wrote Jeanne a kind, but firm response: “[. . .]—[Y]ou don’t think hard enough— [. . .] in you I find more of the materials of art and poetry than in any one else, a sort of tumultuous richness and music also—broken music, but still music. Only there is disorder and worst of all monotony in thought—the love motive overworked” (JBY to JRF 26 February 1921; William Murphy, private collection). Although there is no evidence of a response to this work from Pound, we can imagine his agreement with JBY’s judgment on these verses: “Your nerves [are] getting the better of your imagination [. . .] T.S. Eliot says Blake had an extraordinary gift of language—so have you. [. . .] If only you would think hard what jewels [. . .] you would fetch for us—out of the vasty deep of a sound logical sequence” (Ibid.) Sentiment alone would not create art, but in “John Butler Yeats” Pound may have been praising the power to evoke emotion through context which Foster would put to work in the regional detail and subtle images of the Adirondack texts.

We have long read sentiment out of what literary criticism categorizes as “serious” writing. From the turn of the century forward through high modernism and into the post-modern angst and violence of Thomas Pynchon and Joyce Carol Oates, American literature has embraced a recurring dialectic in which male and female, reason and passion, public and private, commercial and domestic, sensual and sentimental oppositions have determined the difference between serious and popular literature. Suzanne Clark and Jane Tompkins have written definitively on the exclusion of sentimentality (and by extension, the exclusion of women who write sentiment) as a way in which male authors have traditionally separated themselves from a literary history dominated by women. Their discussions of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century English novels reminds us of the power associated with the sentimental appeal to emotions, especially pity, as a means of persuasion. From Anne Bradstreet to Mary Wollstonecraft, Ann Radcliffe, Fanny Burney, and Catharine Sedgwick, among many other seventeenth- and eighteenth-century women authors, the patriarchal traditions of Samuel Richardson,

Richard Sterne, and Oliver Goldsmith were, to a large extent, shaped by the influences of what women were writing. As male authorship developed political power, woman was re-figured from the subjective inscriber to the object of desire, and the appeal to sympathy through sentiment became a matter of literary convention for the Brontes to Harriet Beecher Stowe, Rose Terry Cooke, and Louisa May Alcott among nineteenth-century literary women, relegated more and more to the realm of popular, minor authorship. With western culture increasingly excluding men from the interior, domestic space, the concept of the romantic became acceptable in male writing only as it aligned pathos with philosophy and transcendentalism, expressed in the diction of high culture (*Sentimental Modernism* 21-18).³

Clark drives the point home when she quips: “In the twentieth century, the horror of the ‘sentimental’ helps define the good male poet much as the prostitute once defined the good woman.” Thus, sentiment became something to write against, in direct proportion to the seriousness of the author’s literary effort. “When a female literary history arises out of the generations of women writers, it appears as a reviled past: [. . .] If the strong male poet may be said to rewrite his literary fathers [. . .] He [. . .] rejects the female literary ancestors altogether [. . .]” (“The Unwarranted Discourse” 249). Still, reject whichever ancestors they might, modernists (both male and female) may have excised sentiment from their literary art, but they could not obliterate it.

We have seen that as Jeanne Robert Foster searched for her metier, she turned to the mountains of her childhood for the context of her poetry. In *The Situation and the Story*, Vivian Gornick discusses the difference in every literary text between its situation and its story. If the situation can be explained as the context, circumstance, or plot of the piece, the story is “the emotional experience that preoccupies the writer; the insight, the wisdom, the thing one has to say” (Gornick 13). Thus, every literary event from Genesis to the fiction in this week’s *New Yorker* is a shaped text in which context enables the communication of sentiment for the purpose of expressing an author’s view of a particular moment. As a journalist and literary editor, and as a personal friend to many of the modernist authors and critics, painters, and sculptors, Foster knew that the sentiment

expressed in the love poetry of *Wild Apples* did not identify her as an author with an important story to tell. On the other hand, *Neighbors of Yesterday*, appearing in the same year (1916), captured the imagination of its readers. Through the situations and settings of the people of the mountain, Foster found that she could tell verse stories which communicate hard truths about the present, placed into familiar context by situations of the past, and illuminated by the healing power of sentiment. In a way, Foster's Adirondack work is memoir, since she narrates both her own experiences and her life lessons through the voices and actions of characters shaped by her communities. Gornick tells us that memoir is not transcription, and she focuses on the author's transformation of people, places, and events to communicate what a particular memory means in a larger, universal sense. "A memoir is a work of sustained narrative prose" Gornick states, "controlled by an idea of the self under obligation to lift from the raw material of life a tale that will shape experience, transform even, deliver wisdom" (91). While Foster did not write prose, her free verse narratives and vignettes fit Gornick's paradigm, one which includes an apt use of sentiment, in every other way.

The work in *Neighbors of Yesterday*, and even more, the longer texts of *Adirondack Portraits* illustrate the intersection of Foster's regionalism with her modern aesthetic sense. If we allow sentiment to be read into her work, in its purely emotional as well as its ironic forms, we begin to understand that the point of this intersection is, in fact, pathos. If, as Suzanne Clark contends, "the modernist innovation was to challenge the representability of the sensible, to try to stop the dialectic [of rationality and sentimentality] and end history," then the ways in which we have read modernism over the past seventy years have contributed to the fractured view of modernity which has been attributed to the high modernists (*Sentimental Modernism* 29). Foster imagined the result of silencing sentiment in an early poem, "The Flight" (*Wild Apples*). Building on the trope of flight, the first-person speaker begins:

Past men,
 Past their desires,
 Past all the murmur of their hurrying feet,

The clangor of the street,
 And their hearth fires;
 Beyond all hopes and dreams;
 Yea, beyond all adventuring at last;
 Farther away than Past,
 Farther than Future seems—
 I fled. (12.1-10)

Sensibility is left behind by the fleeing persona, and in subsequent stanzas the subject runs past vales, past lust, past babes, past God, and finally past love itself. The form of each verse is free, but the rhythm is regular, each one comprised of ten lines, with two to ten feet per line, the first and tenth lines always restricted to two feet, the second stressed. In addition, every verse repeats exactly the rhythmical pattern of feet per line, creating a regularity that constrains the total poem, working against the context of fleeing. As each cultural symbol of sentiment is left behind, the flight intensifies as if toward a specific endpoint. The journey's end, however, offers no closure:

Past love,
 The unquenched fire,
 Unto a still cold realm so far remote
 That not one singing note
 Of love's desire
 Its peace could violate,
 Where nought is, or is not,—the last outpost
 Gained by man's frantic ghost,—
 To worlds yet inchoate
 I fled. (14. 51-60)

Each verse incorporates a particular aspect of mass culture which the modernists separated themselves from: power (politics, economics), romanticism, motherhood, religion, and ultimately, emotion itself. The result is unsatisfactory for Foster; in the "still cold realm" beyond sentiment, there is a frantic emptiness suggestive of the silence in

which the speaker of “Ezra Pound” perishes. Like many of the women writing during the emergence and height of modernism, Foster did not choose to reside in this last ghostly outpost, “where nought is, or is not.” Wanting her work to be valuable, Foster found, in the Adirondack poetry, a place to join power and emotion. In this aspect of her aesthetic, she was not unlike Edna St. Vincent Millay.

In the reformulation of the literary battle between male modernists and the women they excluded, critics identify Millay as a modern poet who “first attempted to negotiate a modernist as well as a sentimental aesthetic” (Jo Ellen Green Kaiser, “Displaced Modernism: Millay and the Triumph of Sentimentality” in *Millay at 100* 29).⁴ “Spring” is a free verse poem which first appeared in Harold Monro’s *The Chapbook: A Monthly Miscellany* (1920), a publication which also featured work by T.S. Eliot, Ford Madox Ford, Richard Aldington, D.H. Lawrence, Robert Frost, William Carlos Williams, Wallace Stevens and Marianne Moore among other new poets. Jo Ellen Green Kaiser cites “Spring” as a poem which, employing modernist conventions such as verbal economy and direct image, nevertheless refuses to accept an “aestheticized, transcendental spring.” Kaiser argues that Millay “knows that art, itself a signifier, is also a sign; that is, art itself is always a representation of the life that it simultaneously seeks to transcend. Art can never completely transcend nature, which is its ground [. . .]” (31). Foster’s Adirondack poetry, rooted in the mountain and articulated through the tropes of the natural world, expresses the same refusal to move through, and past nature.

Ultimately, Millay’s popularity, as well as her determination to use poetry as a means of effecting political change through the persuasion of sentiment would relegate her to the rearguard of poetic achievement. Foster continued to write in the Adirondack style, but the exigencies of supporting herself and her family, coupled with her move to upstate New York, completed her removal from the literary community. The poetry of her last collection (*Adirondack Portraits*) is the accumulation of pieces written over a period of almost fifty years. Her very absence from the world of publication has conspired against Foster’s work to assign her to the realm of the unknown. But the intersection of Millay’s work and Foster’s, especially in the years between 1915 and

1922, when both women were living in New York and abroad, and making a living through their writing, further illuminates the aspects of sentiment which Foster used in creating her regional/modernist texts, texts that argue for her importance as a supplement to our conception of both regionalism and modernism.⁵ One such intersection is Millay's poem "Renascence," prefigured by a poem of Foster's, "The Secret," published the year before (*Wild Apples* 1916).

Foster's poem is much shorter than Millay's, and its situation opens with the speaker's acknowledgment of her (perhaps ill-advised) refusal to accept "a single life." And so, she narrates the act of drawing "another life to me/ That fed my soul with ecstasy;/ A secret life I could not share/ With common earth and common air" (WA 118. 5-8). The focus is love, and informed by Foster's biography and the date of the poem's publication, we can infer that she is writing about her unhappy affair with the married Albert Shaw, editor of *The Review of Reviews*. Still, while the poem is at times a paean to the breaking heart, it illustrates uses of sentiment which reach beyond the banal. The first verse closes with an exclamation against the inexorable need to love: "[. . .] – (Oh, best and worst/ Of being,—that *insatiable thirst*)" (118.15-16). Desire is palpable in the love response expressed as the best and worst of existence, heaven and hell simultaneously. Foster moves through caresses to shame and betrayal, and in the aftermath of betrayal the speaker moves into the next phase of the poem:

[. . .] I sank below
 A weight profound that, pressing slow,
 Crushed out my life-blood drop by drop;
 The blinding torture did not stop
 Until cool clods of earth did rest
 Upon the warmth of my still breast.
 For Shame had killed my spirit's pride,
 And at the last my body died. (118-119. 25-32)

The metaphor of death in love transforms to fact; the speaker lies in the ground pondering her existence and the tranquility of death, which metamorphoses into the lover: "I

welcomed death's benignant kiss./ Long, long I lay in silence there,/ Shut from the sweet and blowing air,/ Shut from the roses and the rain,/ Whose touch I might not know again" (119. 36-40). There is a sense of yearning for the natural world that continues above the grave, until death is overcome by the music of the living and "There was such singing near my wall,/ I could not hear the grave-worms crawl" (119. 43-44). The speaker is drawn back to life, "to feel the sunshine and the rain" (50) and to begin comprehending life's mystery, expressed as the final stanza:

*Who'er dies most lives greatly, since
All death but serves in life's defense;
Fear not to die, for death will give
The Soul at last the right to live. (120. 53-56)*

The conclusion of the poem restates the core message of all sentiment: if we would live, then we must risk and embrace the pain of loss, of death, to be resurrected with a new sense of life. Foster repeated the message in many of her poems, most clearly in "Country Tragedy," wherein the speaker bemoans those who "are not wise enough to be sinners," and who "pass through the game like clods of earth, / And fall untouched, unhurt, unawakened" (NOY 86. 22, 25-26). High modernist texts will not articulate sentiment. In its absence, the haunting silence of the sentimental becomes central to the twentieth-century message of rupture and alienation. Millay's "Renascence," like Foster's "The Secret," faces the same despair in the face of modernity, but these two authors focus on a different resolution.

"Renascence" is written in the same free verse style as "The Secret," and while it opens with a more abstract (and powerful) conception of self-actualization than does Foster's immersion into an ecstasy of love, nonetheless, Millay's speaker breaks through "the things that bounded [her]" by entering into the vastness of the universe with an orgasmic scream brought on by the sense of touch: "I screamed, and—lo!—Infinity / Came down and settled over me; / Forced back my scream into my chest;/ Bent back my arm upon my breast; / [. . .] Until it seemed I must behold/ Immensity made manifold" (*Selected Poems* 4. 29-32, 37-38). The power of the universe is personified as the

speaker moves through verse upon verse of increasing awareness: “I saw and heard, and knew at last / The How and Why of all things, past, / And present, and forevermore” (4. 45-47). Replicating the moment of the Edenic fall, the speaker is overwhelmed with a sense of remorse: “All sin was of my sinning, all / Atoning mine, and mine the gall / Of all regret” (5. 57-59). The next movement of the poem buries the despairing speaker, and, like Foster, Millay describes the crushing weight of the earth on the dying soul. Also like Foster, Millay transforms death into a desire for renewed life, which takes the form in this poem of the speaker’s blessing on the rain that falls beyond the tomb. Like the Ancient Mariner, Millay’s speaker affirms life through an apprehension of the beauty of nature—the rain, dripping apple-trees, the sun, the wet vegetation, the colors of the seasons. And like Coleridge’s death-in-life persona, both Foster’s and Millay’s speakers hear music and are empowered to spring up from the earth, reborn. The final lines of Millay’s poem tell the truth of Foster’s conclusion with more subtlety:

The world stands out on either side
 No wider than the heart is wide;
 Above the world is stretched the sky,--
 No higher than the soul is high.
 The heart can push the sea and land
 Farther away on either hand;
 The soul can split the sky in two.
 And let the face of God shine through.
 But East and West will pinch the heart
 That can not keep them pushed apart;
 And he whose soul is flat—the sky
 Will cave in on him by and by. (9-10. 203-214)

The lesson learned is, like Foster’s, that life gains meaning in direct proportion to the individual’s awareness of its transience. But in addition, Millay stresses central icons of sentiment: the heart, the soul, the face of God. Millay’s poem is stronger in its affect than Foster’s, primarily because the images of pathos are more extant, and more persuasive.

The final stanza, besides affirming the value of felt life, confirms the importance of living in the moment and in the world community. All the rationality of man cannot equal the transformative power of the individual centered in both nature and humanity. Millay's message moves beyond Foster's in its articulation of the power of sentiment. But the situations and stories in the two poems reflect their authors's need to locate a source of strength for the struggle of the individual against the vortex of modernity where "the center cannot hold." Far from being an escape for modern authors, mainly women, who wrote in the sentimental vein, such poetry engages the reader in some of the most powerful human interaction possible.

There is an anti-intellectual element to sentiment, associated as it is with the domestic and the feminine. Jeanne Robert Foster made clear choices about the context within which she would employ the power of emotion. Enlarging her situation to the world of the Adirondacks, where both men and women lived in the quotidian, Foster was able to centralize those aspects of life which modernism marginalized—nature, God, the power of community, the force of personal relationships, the individual's "insatiate thirst" for love, the need for fulfillment. Yet, in the context of the mountain, she was also able to minimize the triviality of sentiment, a problem she could not always overcome in her traditional poetry. Writing sentiment through the filter of detailed, regional memory, exploiting nostalgia, and recouping the power of the domestic, Jeanne Robert Foster was able to remain outside the restrictions of sentimentality in the intellectualized role of the narrative persona. Just as her lifestyle enabled her to enact both masculine and feminine roles, while inhabiting both the city and the country, the world of Foster's mountain bridged the modernist gap between intellect and heart, allowing her to reside, through art, in both places at once.

ENDNOTES

1. Of course, for Peter there is a Christ who saves. Eliot's narrative is based on the absence of any human or divinely ordained salvation.

2. Michael North's discussion of modernism in *Reading 1922* presents a new way of thinking about the authors of the era. Questioning the received notions about modernism—that it is masculine; that it represents a break with popular culture and the middle class; that, in this cultural rupture, it is elitist, anti-semitic, misogynist, and racist; that it is concerned with one particular, experimental aesthetic form; that it deals with the chaos of modernity by withdrawing from interaction with the community; and that it represents the ruptured self by withdrawing into the self, expressing subjectivity as introversion—North argues that most discussions of modernism refute such perspectives by accepting them as a priori, when, in fact, they have been created by critical views, after the fact. “The result has been the preservation of something called ‘modernism’ in intellectual amber, something whose purported insulation from the cultural world into which it was introduced is now retrospectively accomplished by critical consensus” (11).

By examining one particular year, 1922, North manages to broaden the view of modernist writings as they emerged in a full cultural context. His broad-based discussion shows the ways in which many strands of literature, responding to Marxist-defined recessive, emergent, and dominant cultural forces of the time, combined to create a far more varied “modernist aesthetic philosophy” than critics have heretofore acknowledged. Essentially, North's argument focuses on the dialectic which, rather than struggling against a narrowly conceived definition of modernism as it appears in Hugh Kenner's *The Pound Era*, has, instead, been defining modernism from its center all along.

3. For a complete discussion of the development of sentimental writing as a feminine act, see Suzanne Clark, *Sentimental Modernism*, especially Chapter One (1-41), as well as Clark, “The Unwarranted Discourse: Sentimental Community, Modernist Women, and the Case of Millay,” in *Critical Essays on Edna St. Vincent Millay*, ed. William B. Thesing (248-263). Also, see Cheryl Walker, “The Mythical Nineteenth Century and Its Heritage,” in *The Nightingale's Burden: Women Poets and American Culture before 1900* (138-153). The topic is also treated, especially as it applies to particular authors such as Harriet Beecher Stowe and Susan Warner, by Jane Tompkins, *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790-1860*, Chapter V, “Sentimental Power: *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and the Politics of Literary History” (122-146); Chapter VI, “The Other American Renaissance” (147-185); Chapter VII, “‘But Is It Any Good?': The Institutionalization of Literary Value,” (186-201). In *Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville*, David S. Reynolds discusses the proliferation of women's writing in the second half of the nineteenth

century; see Chapter 14, “The American Women’s Renaissance and Emily Dickinson,” (387-437).

4. In her early work, 1915-1920, Millay wrote for both popular culture magazines such as *Ainslee’s*, *Vanity Fair*, and *Literary Digest*, and for avant-garde publications such as *Poetry*, and the *Dial*. For the popular audience, she wrote ballads and stanzas which followed the nineteenth-century traditions of rhyme and meter. Her experimental poetry in the more literary journals employed free verse and sometimes took an international stance.

5. There are several biographical similarities between the authors. Both women were born into late nineteenth century rural communities, and moved to New York City where they matured into twentieth century careers in writing. Both began their new lives with brief acting careers. Both were extraordinarily beautiful, but while Foster certainly had her share of affairs, she was discreet, remaining carefully married throughout her wanderings. Millay was a notorious practitioner of the “free love” which characterized the bohemian community of New York’s Greenwich Village, until her marriage in 1923 to Eugen Boissevain, an older man who gave her the security she needed for writing. And while both women were interested in politics and in championing the plight of the powerless, Foster lobbied for change through established channels such as *The Review of Reviews*, or her tours abroad which brought her to war, Irish poverty, the Czech fight for independence, as well as positions as a social worker, both in New York City as a “lady of the block” and in Schenectady, working for the housing authority.

Millay, on the other hand, tried to use her voice as a poet to effect social/political change, for example in the case of Sacco and Vanzetti, or to urge the U.S. entrance into World War II. She was roundly condemned for her political activism and her emotional poetry by John Ciardi, John Crowe Ransom, and M.L. Rosenthal. Millay stated that her devotion to public causes took its toll on her poetry. In a similar vein, Foster’s devotion to her family’s needs, and her thirty-seven years as a Schenectady matron severely limited her literary production.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY TEXTS

- Aldington, Richard; H.D.; John Gould Fletcher; F. S. Flint; D. H. Lawrence; Amy Lowell. Some Imagist Poets: An Anthology. 1915. New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1969.
- Anderson, Lorraine, ed. Sisters of the Earth: Women's Prose and Poetry About Nature. New York: Vintage Books, 1991.
- Anderson, Sherwood. Winesburg, Ohio. New York: Viking Press, 1960.
- Antin, Mary. The Promised Land. New York: Penguin, 1997.
- Austin, Mary. Stories from the Country of Lost Borders. Ed. and with an introduction by Marjorie Pryse. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1995.
- Barthes, Roland. A Lover's Discourse: Fragments. Trans. Richard Howard. New York: Hill and Wang, 1978.
- . The Pleasure of the Text. Trans. Richard Miller. New York: Hill and Wang, 1975.
- Cather, Willa. My Antonia. New York: Penguin, 1994.
- . Collected Stories. New York: Vintage, 1992.
- . A Lost Lady. New York: Vintage, 1971.
- . O Pioneers. New York: Vintage, 1992.
- . The Professor's House. New York: Vintage, 1973.
- Chopin, Kate. The Awakening. New York: Bedford Books, 1993.
- . The Awakening and Other Short Stories. New York: Prometheus Books, 1996.
- Clemens, Samuel. Huckleberry Finn. New York: W.W.Norton & Co., 1980.

- - -. Life on the Mississippi. New York: Penguin, 1989.
- - -. Tom Sawyer. New York: Signet, 1997.
- - -. Selected Shorter Writings of Mark Twain. Ed. Walter Blair. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1962.
- Conrad, Joseph. Heart of Darkness. Ed. Robert Kimbrough. New York: W.W.Norton & Co., 1963.
- Cowley, Malcolm. Exile's Return. Ed. Donald W. Faulkner. New York: Penguin, 1994.
- Crane, Stephen. Maggie: A Girl of the Streets and Selected Stories. New York: NAL/Dutton, 1991.
- - -. The Red Badge of Courage. New York: Bantam, 1983.
- Crosman, Coral. "Schenectady's Mrs. Foster Spurs Pulitzer Winner." Schenectady Gazette. 29 May 1969, 4C.
- - -. "Who Is John Quinn?" Scenectady Union-Star. 7 November 1968, 24.
- Crowley, Laurence Paul. "Woman Poet of world Wide Fame Finds Inspiration for Literary Successes Along Coast of Maine." Portland Sunday Telegram and Sun. 11 May 1930, 20.
- Davis, Rebecca Harding . Life in the Iron Mills and Other Stories. Ed. Tillie Olsen. New York: Feminist Press, 1985.
- Deming, Philander. The Best Adirondack Stories of Philander Deming. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1997.
- Dickinson, Emily. Final Harvest: Emily Dickinson's Poems. Ed. Thomas H. Johnson. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1962.

- Doolittle, Hilda. H.D.:Collected Poems, 1912-1944. Ed. Louis L. Martz. New York: New Directions, 1983.
- Dreiser, Theodore. An American Tragedy. New York: Signet, 1964.
- . Sister Carrie. New York: Signet, 1980.
- Eliot, T.S. Four Quartets. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1988.
- . Selected Poems. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1988.
- . Selected Prose of T.S.Eliot. Ed. Frank Kermode. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1988.
- . The Waste Land and Other Poems. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1988.
- Ford, Ford Madox. The Ford Madox Ford Reader. Ed. Sondra Stang. New York: Ecco Press, 1986.
- . The Good Soldier. New York: Vintage, 1989.
- . It Was the Nightingale. London: J.P. Lippincott, 1933.
- . Parade's End. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992.
- Foster, Jeanne Robert. Adirondack Portraits: A Piece of Time. Ed. Noel Reidinger Johnson. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1986.
- . "Alice Masaryk." Unpublished typescript, ca. 1921. Foster/Murphy Collection, New York Public Library Manuscript Division.
- . American Review of Reviews. [articles listed here by year]
1910. "A Republic for Boys and Girls—After Twenty Years." 42 (December): 705-12.
- 1911a. "The Care of Women in State Prisons." 44 (July): 76-84.

- 1911b. "Ideas About Women." 43 (April): 490-91.
- 1911c. "Julia Ward Howe as Writer." 43 (February): 252-53.
- 1912a. "The Abbey Theatre." 45 (March): 379-80.
- 1912b. "Andrew Lang and His Work." 46 (September): 373-76.
- 1912c. "The Art of the Theatre." 45 (March): 379-80.
- 1912d. "The Drama and the Music." 45 (March): 379-80.
- 1912e. "Woman and the Wage Question." 45 (April): 439-42.
- 1913a. "Art Revolutionists on Exhibition in America." 47 (April): 441-48.
- 1913b. "Romain Rolland's Life of Michael Angelo." 47 (February): 232-34.
1914. "New Volumes of Verse: Poems of Lindsay." 49 (February): 245.
1917. "The Vitalization of Schools." 56 (July): 73-77.
- 1918a. "The Czecho-Slovaks." 58 (August): 197.
- 1918b. "The Czecho-Slovaks in Russia." 58 (October): 421-22.
- 1918c. "The War Organization of Christian Science." 58 (October): 425-26.
- 1919a. "The Music of the Czechoslovaks." 59 (May): 547-48.
- 1919b. "Poets' Tributes to Theodore Roosevelt." Edited and Introduction by
 Jeanne Robert Foster. 60 (July): 79-81.
- - -. Awakening Grace. North Myrtle Beach: Sherlar Press, 1977.
- - -. Black Frost. An unpublished one act play. The Foster/Murphy Collection, New
 York Public Library Manuscript Division.
- - -. "Character sketch of Charles Copeland." Unpublished typescript, 1906.
 Foster/Murphy Collection, New York Public Library Manuscript Division.

- - -. "Forgotten Lincoln Caricatures." Literary Digest. 46 (8 March): 514-15.
- - -. Foster/Murphy Collection. William M. Murphy, donor/seller, 1983. New York Public Library, Rare Books and Manuscripts Division. 226 Stack C-4/5; 15 boxes. 1900-1969.
- - -. "It's Clever, But Is it Art?" New York Herald Tribune. 21 February, 1926, 4.
- - -. "Last Interview with James Joyce." Unpublished typescript. Foster/Murphy Collection, New York Public Library Manuscript Division.
- - -. Marthe. In Fifty More Contemporary One Act Play. Ed. Frank Shay 9-18. New York: D. Appleton. Reprinted in Adirondack Portraits. Ed. Noel Riedinger-Johnson 147-62. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1986.
- - -. "Mistress Anne of Glazeal." Rochester Democrat and Chronicle. January 5, 1902, n.p.available.
- - -. Neighbors of Yesterday. Boston: Sherman, French & Co., 1916.
- - -. "New Sculptures by Constantin Brancusi: A Note on the Man and the Formal Perfection of His Carvings." Vanity Fair 18 (May): 68, 124.
- - -. "Notes on John Butler Yeats." Unpublished typescript, not dated. Foster/Murphy Collection, New York Public Library Manuscript Division.
- - -. "Preface to the Collected Letters of John Quinn." Unpublished typescript, ca. 1925. Foster/Murphy Collection, New York Public Library Manuscript Division.
- - -. "The Reason of the Cause." New York Call. (8 June): 10.
- - -. Rock- Flower. New York: Boni & Liveright, 1923.
- - -. "Songs of the War Days," in The Photographic History of the Civil War. Ed.

- Francis Trevelyan Miller. New York: Castle Books, 1911.
- . Wild Apples. Boston: Sherman, French & Co., 1916.
- Frank, Stephen. "Jeanne Foster's Quiet Life of Literary Riches." Albany Times Union.
16 September, 1984, H-1.
- Freeman, Mary E. Wilkins. A New England Nun and Other Stories. Ridgewood: Gregg
Press, 1967.
- Frost, Robert. The Poetry of Robert Frost. Ed. Edward Connery Lathem. New York:
Henry Holt & Co., 1975.
- Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. Herland. New York: Pantheon, 1979.
- . The Yellow Wallpaper and Other Writings. New York: Bantam, 1989.
- Gonne, Maud, and John Quinn. Too Long a Sacrifice: The Letters of Maud Gonne and
John Quinn. Janis Londrville and Richard Londrville, Eds. Selinsgrove, Penn.:
Susquehanna University Press, 1999.
- Graybar, Lloyd. Albert Shaw of the Review of Reviews: An Intellectual Biography.
Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1974.
- Harte, Bret. The Outcasts of Poker Flat, The Luck of Roaring Camp: And Other
Sketches. Chicago: Amereon, Ltd., 1976.
- Holroyd, Michael. Augustus John. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1974, 1996
Revised Edition.
- Hone, Joseph. W.B. Yeats: 1865-1939. London: Macmillan, 1965.
- Jamieson, Paul, ed. The Adirondack Reader. Lake George: Adirondack Mountain Club,
1982.

Jewett, Sarah Orne. The Country of the Pointed Firs and Other Stories. Ed. Mary Ellen Chase. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1981.

Joyce, James. The Portable James Joyce. Ed. Harry Levin. New York: Penguin, 1976.

---. A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. New York: Viking Press, 1968.

---. Ulysses. New York: Vintage, 1961.

Kilcup, Karen L., ed. Nineteenth-Century American Women Writers. Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, Inc., 1997.

Lawrence, D. H. The Portable D. H. Lawrence. Ed. Diana Trilling. New York: Penguin, 1983.

---. Sons and Lovers. New York: Random House, 1962.

---. Studies in Classic American Literature. New York: Penguin, 1971.

---. Women in Love. New York: Penguin, 1995.

Lewis, Sinclair. Babbitt. New York: Signet, 1980.

---. Main Street. New York: Bantam, 1996.

Lewis, Wyndham. The Apes of God. Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow, 1992.

---. Blast I, the Review of the Great English Vortex. Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow, 1982.

---. "Two Men at War with Time: The Unpublished Correspondence of Wyndham Lewis and John Quinn" (Part I). Ed. Janis Londrville and Richard Londrville. English 39, no. 164 (summer): 97-145.

---. "Two Men at War with Time: The Unpublished Correspondence of Wyndham Lewis and John Quinn" (Part II). Ed. Janis Londrville and Richard Londrville. English 39, no. 165 (autumn): 229-51.

- Loy, Mina. The Lost Lunar Baedeker. Ed. Roger L. Conover. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, Inc., 1997.
- Lowell, Amy. Tendencies in Modern American Poetry. New York: Macmillan, 1917.
- Mansfield, Katherine. The Garden Party and Other Short Stories. London:
- Masters, Edgar Lee. The Spoon River Anthology. New York: Signet, 1992.
- McDowell, Edwin. New York Times. 3 September 1954.
- Moore, Marianne. Complete Poems. New York: Penguin, 1991.
- Morris, May and John Quinn. On Poetry, Painting, and Politics: the Letters of May Morris and John Quinn. Ed. Janis Londravage. Selinsgrove, Penn.: Susquehanna University Press, 1997.
- Newman, Frances. The Hard-Boiled Virgin. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1993.
- Norris, Frank. McTeague. New York: Signet, 1981.
- Norris, Kathleen. Dakota: A Spiritual Geography. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1993.
- O'Connor, Flannery. Collected Works. New York: Library of America, 1988.
- Parker, Dorothy. Laments for the Living. New York: Quality Paperback Book Club, 1995.
- - -. The Portable Dorothy Parker. New York: Penguin, 1973.
- Phelps, Elizabeth Stuart. The Story of Avis. Camden: Rutgers University Press, 1985.
- Plato. The Symposium. Trans. Walter Hamilton. 1951. New York: Penguin.
- Potter, Joan, ed. Growing Up Strong: Four North Country Women Recall Their Lives. Elizabethtown: Pinto Press, 1995.
- Pound, Ezra. The Cantos of Ezra Pound. New York: New Directions, 1993.

- - -. The Classic Noh Theatre of Japan. Designed by W.B. Yeats and Ernest Fenollosa. New York: New Directions Publishing Corp., 1994.
- - -. The Collected Early Poems of Ezra Pound. New York: New Directions Publishing Corp., 1982.
- - -. The Literary Essays of Ezra Pound. Ed. T.S.Eliot. New York: New Directions Publishing Corp., 1972.
- Powell, John Wesley. The Exploration of the Colorado River and Its Canyons. 1875. Introduction by Wallace Stegner, 1987. New York: Penguin Books, 1997.
- Proust, Marcel. Remembrance of Things Past: Vol.I: Swann's Way; Within a Budding Grove. Trans. C.K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin. 1981. New York: Vintage, 1982.
- Pynchon, Thomas. The Crying of Lot 49. 1965. New York: Perennial Library, 1990.
- Riis, Jacob A. How the Other Half Lives. 1890. Ed. with an introduction by David Leviatin. New York; Bedford Books, 1996.
- Robinson, Edward Arlington. The Essential Robinson, Vol. 19. Ed. Donald Hall. New York: Ecco Press, 1993.
- Scriptures for Faith Sharing: The Holy Bible with Deuterocanonicals/ Apocrypha. Contemporary English Version. American Bible Society, 1999.
- Stein, Gertrude. Selected Writings of Gertrude Stein. New York: Vintage, 1990.
- - -. Three Lives. New York: Penguin, 1990.
- Stevens, Wallace. The Collected Poems. New York: Vintage, 1982.

- - -. The Letters of Wallace Stevens. Ed. Holly Stevens. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.
- Synge, John. The Playboy of the Western World. In Modern Irish Drama. Ed. John P. Harrington. New York: W. W. Norton, 1991.
- - -. Riders to the Sea. In Modern Irish Drama. Ed. John P. Harrington. New York: W. W. Norton, 1991.
- “Yeats Sketch of Adirondack Figure.” Glens Falls Times. 24 February 1964.
Adirondack Museum Library; Blue Mountain Lake, New York.
- Yeats, John Butler. Letters to His Son W.B. Yeats and Others. Ed. Joseph Hone. London: Faber & Faber, Ltd., 1954.
- Yeats, William Butler. Selected Poems and Three Plays. 3rd ed. Ed. M.L. Rosenthal. New York: Macmillan, 1986.
- Warner, Sylvia Townsend. Collected Poems. Ed. Claire Harman. New York: Viking Press, 1982.
- Wharton, Edith. The Age of Innocence. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1986.
- - -. A Backward Glance: An Autobiography. New York: Touchstone, 1998.
- - -. The Custom of the Country. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1987.
- - -. Ethan Frome and Other Short Fiction. New York: Bantam, 1987.
- - -. The House of Mirth. Ed. Shari Benstock. New York: Bedford Books, 1994.
- - -. The Letters of Edith Wharton. Ed. R.W.B. Lewis and Nancy Lewis. New York: Macmillan, 1988.
- - -. Old New York: Four Novellas. New York: Scribner Paperback Fiction, 1995.

- . The Stories of Edith Wharton, Vol. 2. Ed. Anita Brookner. New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, Inc., 1988.
- . Summer. New York: Bantam, 1993.
- Wilde, Oscar. The Picture of Dorian Gray. New York: Signet, 1962.
- . Salome. Illustrated by Aubrey Beardsley. New York: Branden Pub. Co., 1989.
- Williams, William Carlos. The Collected Poems of William Carlos Williams: Vol. I, 1909-1939. Ed. A. Walton Litz & Christopher MacGowan. New York: New Directions Publishing Corp., 1986.
- Woolf, Virginia. The Captain's Death Bed & Other Essays. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1978.
- . The Complete Shorter Fiction of Virginia Woolf. New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1989.
- . Moments of Being. New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1985.
- . Mrs. Dalloway. New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1981.
- . A Room of One's Own. New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1981.
- . To the Lighthouse. New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1981.
- . The Waves. New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1959.

SECONDARY TEXTS

- Ahearn, Barry. William Carlos Williams and Alterity: The Early Poetry. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Allen, Frederick Lewis Allen. Only Yesterday: An Informal History of the 1920's. 1931. New York: Harper and Row / Perennial Library, 1964.
- Altieri, Charles. Painterly Abstraction in Modernist American Poetry: The Contemporaneity of Modernism. 1989.
- Baym, Nina. Feminism and American Literary History. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1994.
- Benstock, Shari, ed. Feminist Issues in Literary Scholarship. Bloomington: University of Illinois Press, 1987.
- - -. Women of the Left Bank: Paris, 1900-1940. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986.
- Benstock, Shari, ed. The Private Self: Theory and Practice of Women's Autobiographical Writings. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1988.
- Benvenuto, Richard. Amy Lowell. Boston: Twayne, 1985.
- Berman, Marchall. All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity. New York: Penguin, 1988.
- Boelhower, William. Through a Glass Darkly: Ethnic Semiosis in American Literature. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- Bradbury, Malcolm, and James McFarlane, ed. Modernism: A Guide to European Literature 1890-1916. New York: Penguin, 1994.

- Brenner, Rica. Ten Modern Poets. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1930.
- Buell, Lawrence. The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995.
- Campbell, Donna M. Resisting Regionalism: Gender and Naturalism in American Fiction, 1885-1915. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1997.
- Cixous, Helene. Writing the Feminine. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984.
- Clark, Suzanne. Sentimental Modernism: Women Writers and the Revolution of the Word. Indiana University Press, 1991.
- . "Uncanny Millay." In Millay at 100: A Critical Reappraisal. Diane P. Freedman, ed. Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1995, 3-26.
- . "The Unwarranted Discourse: Sentimental Community, Modernist Women and the Case of Millay." In Critical Essays on Edna St. Vincent Millay. William B. Thesing, ed. New York: G.K.Hall & Co., 1993, 248-265.
- Cooney, Seamus, ed. Blast 3: A Compendium in Honor of Wyndham Lewis. Santa Barbara: Black Sparrow Press, 1984.
- Davis, Fred. Yearning for Yesterday: A Sociology of Nostalgia. New York: The Free Press, 1979.
- Dickie, Margaret and Thomas Travisano, ed. Gendered Modernisms: American Women Poets and Their Readers. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996.
- Dolan, Marc. Modern Lives: A Cultural Re-reading of 'The Lost Generation.' West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 1996.

- Donovan, Josephine. New England Local Color Literature: A Women's Tradition. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1983.
- Douglas, Ann. The Feminization of American Culture. New York: Anchor Books, 1988.
- . Terrible Honesty: Mongrel Manhattan in the 1920's. New York: The Noonday Press, 1995.
- Eysteinsson, Astradur. The Concept of Modernism. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990.
- Ferraro, Thomas J. Ethnic Passages: Literary Immigrants in Twentieth-Century America. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993.
- Fetterley, Judith, and Marjorie Pryse. American Women Regionalists. New York: W.W.Norton, 1992.
- . Provisions: A Reader from 19th-Century American Women. Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1985.
- . The Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Fiction. 1978.
- Fish, Caroline. "Jeanne Robert Foster Dies; Author, Poet, Editor, Model."
Warrensburg-Lake George News. 24 September 1970, 8B.
- . "Rediscovered in Chestertown." Adirondack Life. 1, no. 4 (fall 1970): 30-32, 42-43.
- Fraser, Kennedy. Ornament and Silence. New York: Vintage, 1998.
- Friedman, Susan Stanford. "Definitional Excursions: The Meanings of *Modern/Modernity/ Modernism*." Modernism/ Modernity. 8, no. 3 (September 2001): 493-513.

- Gelpi, Albert. A Coherent Splendor: The American Poetic Renaissance, 1910-1950. 1987.
- Gilbert, Sandra M. and Susan Gubar. The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984.
- . No Man's Land. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988.
- Gilborn, Alice. "Jeanne Robert Foster: The Poetry of Place." Blueline. 6, no. 1 (1984): 1-7.
- . "Jeanne Foster: A Woman of Parts." Blueline. 5, no. 2 (1984): 1-5.
- Gornick, Vivian. The Situation and the Story: The Art of Personal Narrative. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2001.
- Gould, Jean. Amy: The World of Amy Lowell and the Imagist Movement. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1975.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. Marvelous Possessions: the Wonder of the New World. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.
- Greenblatt, Stephen and Giles Gunn, ed. Redrawing the Boundaries: The Transformation of English and American Literary Studies. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1992.
- Hanley, Lynne. Writing War: Fiction, Gender and Memory. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1991.
- Hanscombe, Gillian and Virginia L. Smyers. Writing for Their Lives: The Modernist Women, 1910-1940. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1987.

- Heilbrun, Carolyn G. Reinventing Womanhood. New York: W.W.Norton, 1979.
- . Toward a Recognition of Androgyny. 1964. New York: W.W. Norton, 1982
- . Writing A Woman's Life. New York: Ballantine Books, 1988.
- Heller, Adele and Lois Rudnick. 1915, The Cultural Moment: The New Politics, the New Woman, the New Psychology, the New Art and the New Theatre in America.
New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1991.
- Hilfer, Anthony Channell. The Revolt from the Village: 1915-1930. Chapel Hill:
University of North Carolina Press, 1969.
- Hoffman, Michael J. and Patrick D. Murphy, ed. Critical Essays on American Modernism. 1992.
- Huysen, Andreas. After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism.
Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986.
- Inness, Sherrie A., and Diana Royer. Breaking Boundaries: New Perspectives on Women's Regional Writing. 1997.
- James, William. The Essential Writings, ed. Bruce W. Wilshire. Albany: State
University of New York Press, 1984.
- . The Varieties of Religious Experience. New York: Collier Books, 1961.
- . The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy. New York: Dover
Publications, 1956.
- Jameson, Fredric. The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern, 1983-1998.
New York: Verso, 1998.
- Jamieson, Paul, ed. The Adirondack Reader. Lake George: Adir. Mtn. Club, Inc., 1983.

“Jeanne Robert Foster.” The John Thurman Historical Society Quarterly. 4, no. 1

(March 1967): 1-3. Chestertown Historical Society Archives; Chestertown, N Y.

“John Butler Yeats, Father of Irish Poet, Lies in Chestertown Grave.” Warrensburg-Lake George News. 16 February 1962, 10.

Jordan, David, ed. Regionalism Reconsidered: New Approaches to the Field. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1994.

Kaiser, Jo Ellen Green. “Displaced Modernism: Millay and the Triumph of Sentimentality.” In Millay at 100: A Critical Reappraisal. Ed. Diane P. Freedman. Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1995, 27-40.

Kazin, Alfred. An American Procession: Major American Writers, 1830-1930. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984.

---. On Native Grounds: An Interpretation of Modern American Prose Literature. New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1995.

---. A Writer’s America: Landscape in Literature. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988.

Kenner, Hugh. A Homemade World: The American Modernist Writers. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975.

---. The Pound Era. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971.

Kolocotroni, Vassiliki, Jane Goldman, and Olga Taxidou, ed. Modernism: An Anthology of Sources and Documents. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.

Kolodny, Annette. The Lay of the Land: Metaphor as Experience and History in American Life and Letters. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1975.

- Lakritz, Andrew M. Modernism and the Other in Stevens, Frost, and Moore.
Gainesville, Fla.: University Press of Florida, 1996.
- Lentricchia, Frank. Modernist Quartet. New York: The Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994.
- Loeffelholz, Mary. Experimental Lives: Women and Literature, 1900-1945. New York:
Twayne Publishers, 1992.
- Loiseaux, Elizabeth. Yeats and the Visual Arts. New Brunswick: Rutgers University
Press, 1986.
- Londrville, Janis and Richard, eds. "A Portrait of Ford Madox Ford: Unpublished
Letters from the Ford-Foster Friendship." English Literature in Translation
(February): 181-207.
- Londrville, Janis and Richard. Dear Yeats, Dear Pound, Dear Ford: Jeanne Robert
Foster and Her Circle of Friends. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2001.
- Londrville, Richard. "The Dramatic Function of Yeats's Dreaming Back." Yeats: An
Annual of Critical and Textual Studies. 7 (1989).
- - -. "Fenollosa and the Legacy of Stone Cottage." Paideuma. 5, no. 3 (winter 1993).
- - -. "Jeanne Robert Foster." Eire Ireland 5, no. 1 (spring 1970): 38-44.
- - -. "The Many Careers of Jeanne Robert Foster." Biblion. (winter 1968): 84-92.
- Marcus, Jane. Art and Anger: Reading Like a Woman. Columbus: Ohio State University
Press, 1988.
- Marx, Leo. The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America.
New York: Oxford University Press, 1964.
- Masteller, Richard N. "Using Brancusi: three Writers, Three Magazines, Three Vesions

- of Modernism." American Art. 2, no.1 (spring 1997): 46-67.
- Menand, Louis. T.S. Eliot and His Context. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- Middleton, JoAnn. Willa Cather's Modernism: Style and Technique. Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1990.
- Miller, Francis Trevelyan, and Dudley H. Miles, ed. with editorial contributions by Jeanne Robert Foster. Poetry and Eloquence from the Blue and the Gray. Vol. 9 of The Photographic History of the Civil War. New York: Review of Reviews, 1912. Reprint. New York: Thomas Yoseloff, Castle Books, 1957.
- Miller, Jane. Seductions: Studies in Reading and Culture. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991.
- Miller, Nancy, ed. The Poetics of Gender. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986.
- Moi, Toril. Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory. New York: Routledge, 1985.
- Morris, Rev. Bernard N. "Local Writer Presents Sketches of Neighbors." Schenectady Union-Star. 15 February 1964, 16.
- Motz, Marilyn Ferris and Pat Browne, eds.. Making the American Home: Middle-Class Women & Domestic Material Culture 1840-1940. Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1988.
- Murphy, William M. Family Secrets: William Butler Yeats and His Relatives. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995.
- - -. "Jeanne Robert Foster." The Idol: The Literary Journal of Union College. (Winter 1971): 3-10.

---. "John Butler Yeats." In The Craft of Literary Biography, Jeffrey Meyers, ed. New York: Schocken, 1985, 33-54.

---. "Prodigal Father: The Life of John Butler Yeats, 1839-1922." Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1978.

Nalbantian, Suzanne. Aesthetic Autobiography: From Life to Art in Marcel Proust, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf and Anais Nin. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994.

Naumann, Francis M., and Beth Venn, ed. Making Mischief: Dada Invades New York. New York: The Whitney Museum of American Art, 1996.

Nicholls, Peter. Modernism(s): A Literary Guide. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

Nicolson, Marjorie Hope. Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory: The Development of the Aesthetics of the Infinite. 1959. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997.

North, Michael. The Dialect of Modernism: Race, Language and Twentieth-Century Literature. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

---. Reading 1922: A Return to the Scene of the Modern. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Oxford English Dictionary. 2nd ed. 1989. 2 Feb. 2002 <http://rdas.hofstra.edu/bin/rdas.dll/RDAS_SVR.www.oed.com>.

Pearlman, Mickey, ed. American Women Writing Fiction: Memory, Identity, Family, Space. 1989.

Perrett, Geoffrey. America in the Twenties. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1982.

- Pizer, Donald. Realism and Naturalism in Nineteenth Century American Literature. Rev. ed. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984.
- Poli, Bernard J. Ford Madox Ford and the Transatlantic Review. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1967.
- Reid, B.L. The Man from New York: John Quinn and His Friends. New York: Oxford University Press, 1969.
- - -. William Butler Yeats: The Lyric of Tragedy. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961.
- Riedinger, Ruth. "Local Author Friend of Famed Literary, Art Figures." Schenectady Union-Star. 29 February 1964, 20.
- Reising, Russell. The Unusable Past: Theory and the Study of American Literature. New York: Methuen, 1986.
- Reynolds, David S. Walt Whitman's America. New York: Vintage, 1996.
- Richardson, Joan. Wallace Stevens: Vol. I The Early Years. New York: Beech Tree Books, 1986.
- Rosenberg, Carroll Smith. Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985.
- Ruland, Richard, and Malcolm Bradbury, ed. From Puritanism to Postmodernism. New York: Penguin, 1991.
- Ruthley, Glenn Richard. The Thorn of a Rose: Amy Lowell Reconsidered. Hamden, Ct.: Archon Books, 1975.

- Saarinen, Aline B. The Proud Possessors: The Lives, Times and Tastes of Some Adventurous American Art Collectors. New York: Vintage, 1968.
- Salvato, Richard. "Dante Must Have Looked That Way: A Visit to James Joyce in the 1921 Paris Diary of Jeanne Robert Foster." Bibliion 4: 58-72.
- Scott, Bonnie Kime, ed. The Gender of Modernism: A Critical Anthology. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990.
- . Refiguring Modernism: The Women of 1928. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995.
- Seasons of a Poet: The Jeanne Robert Foster Story. Writer, Dir., Prod. Joanne Taylor. Mountain Lake Public Television. 1994.
- Showalter, Elaine, ed. Daughters of Decadence: Women Writers of the Fin-de-Siecle. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1993.
- , ed. Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature, and Theory. New York: Pantheon Books, 1985.
- . Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin-de-Siècle. New York: Viking, 1990.
- . These Modern Women: Autobiographical Essays from the Twenties. New York: The Feminist Press, 1989.
- Sollors, Werner. Theories of Ethnicity: A Classical Reader. New York: New York University Press, 1996.
- Stanbrough, Jane. "Edna St. Vincent Millay and the Language of Vulnerability." In Critical Essays on Edna St. Vincent Millay. William B. Thesing, Ed. New York: G.K.Hall & Co., 1993, 213-228.

- Symons, Julian. Makers of the New: The Revolution in Literature, 1912-1939. New York: Random House, 1987.
- Tanner, Tony. Reign of Wonder: Naivety and Reality in American Literature. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965.
- Taylor, Richard. The Drama of W.B. Yeats: Irish Myth and the Japanese Noh. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976.
- Terrie, Philip G. Contested Terrain: A New History of Nature and People in the Adirondacks. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press and the Adirondack Museum, 1997.
- Tompkins, Jane P. Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction: 1790-1860. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.
- Turner, Frederick. Spirit of Place: The Making of an American Literary Landscape. Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1989.
- VanValkenburgh, Norman J. The Forest Preserve of N Y State/ Adirondack and Catskill Mountains: A Short History. Fleischmanns, N.Y.: Purple Mountain Press, 1996.
- Wadsworth, Bruce, et al. With Wilderness at Heart: A Short History of the Adirondack Mountain Club. Lake George, N.Y.: Adirondack Mountain Club, Inc., 1996.
- Wagner, Linda W. American Modern: Essays in Fiction and Poetry. Port Washington: Kennikat Press, 1980.
- Wagner-Martin, Linda. The Age of Innocence: A Novel of Ironic Nostalgia. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1996.

- Walker, Cheryl. The Nightingale's Burden: Women Poets and American Culture Before 1900. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982.
- Warren, Joyce W., ed. The (Other) American Traditions: Nineteenth-Century Women Writers. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1993.
- Warren, Karen J., ed. Ecofeminism: Women, Culture, Nature. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997.
- Watson, Steven. Strange Bedfellows: The First American Avant-Garde. New York: Abbeville Press Publications, 1991.
- Weber, Sandra. The Lure of Esther Mountain: Matriarch of the Adirondack High Peaks. Fleischmanns, N.Y.: Purple Mountain Press, 1995.
- Williams, Raymond. Marxism and Literature. New York: Oxford University Press, 1977.
- . The Politics of Modernism. New York: Verso, 1989.
- Wilson, Edmund. Axel's Castle: A Study in the Imaginative Literature /1870-1930, 1931.
- Winter, Kate. The Woman in the Mountain: Reconstructions of Self and Land by Adirondack Women Writers. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989.
- Zilczer, Judith. The Noble Buyer: John Quinn, Patron of the Avant-Garde. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1978.
- Zinsser, William. Inventing the Truth: The Art and Craft of Memoir. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, Co., 1987.
- - -. "The Dispersal of the John Quinn Collection." American Art Journal 19, no. 3: 15-21.

- - -. "John Quinn and Modern Art Collectors in America, 1913-1924." American Art Journal 14, no. 1: 56-71.
- - -. "Alfred Steiglitz and John Quinn: Allies in the American Avant-Garde." American Art Journal 17, no. 3: 18-33.