Cross-Dressing in Sarah Grand’s

_The Tenor and the Boy_ and E.D.E.N

Southworth’s _The Hidden Hand_:

Gender, Class, and Power

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis concerns female cross-dressing in nineteenth-century literature and the ways in which these images challenge gender and class hierarchies. Cross-dressing abounds in nineteenth-century literature, forming a thematic that crosses national boundaries.

Therefore, this thesis considers works from both the British and American traditions. The primary texts explored are *The Tenor and the Boy* (1893) by Sarah Grand and *The Hidden Hand, or Capitola the Madcap* (1888) by E. D. E. N. Southworth. When published, both of these texts were commercial successes and can therefore be considered representative of popular literature of the time.

The use of transvestite characters allows these authors to demonstrate the arbitrary nature of gender and class roles. When cross-dressed, female characters cross both gender and class lines and participate in usually taboo arenas. For the most part, they are depicted as successful; at times, they might even be considered role models.
The thesis contains four chapters: the introductory chapter which sets up definitions, briefly discusses cross-dressing’s literary tradition in the west, and establishes the atmosphere in which these books were written and received; the next two chapters each examine a primary text--- *The Tenor and the Boy*, followed by *The Hidden Hand*; and the final chapter summarizes and concludes the work.
God will turn away from this entirely self-made creature, an amalgam of both sexes, who owes his origin to no force in heaven or earth. There is a kind of reckless defiance of all natural laws at the center of [...] transvestism; it is one which evokes images of chaos and instability. (Ackroyd 147)

As the above quotation indicates, transvestism is interpreted in terms of chaos and instability. This is evident throughout the nineteenth-century novels that contain transvestite characters. Much of this chaos and instability arises from the challenge cross-dressing presents to a dichotomous culture’s gender and class hierarchies. Carol Smith-Rosenberg sees late nineteenth-century “social Darwinism, eugenics, [and] sexology all as parts of a metaphoric discourse in which the physical body symbolized the social body, and physical and sexual disorder stood for social discord and danger” (40). By disrupting the stability of the gender hierarchy, transvestism indicates the potential disruption to the stability of the social hierarchy. The authors of nineteenth-century texts that contain transvestite characters understood the potential of this disruption and used transvestism in their texts as a form of social protest.

Before turning to the specific texts analyzed in this thesis, three key themes must be examined. They are gender, the role of clothing, and the social
atmosphere and class structure of the nineteenth-century. A general understanding of these themes and how they relate to the societies in which these works were produced is essential.

**Gender**

Gender is of course essential to any discussion involving transvestism. Judith Lorber points out that:

> It is the social importance of gender statuses and their external markers—clothing, mannerisms, and spatial segregation—that makes gender bending or gender crossing possible—or even necessary. The social viability of differentiated gender statuses produces the need or desire to shift statuses. Without gender differentiation, transvestism [...] would be meaningless. (27)

There are several aspects of gender that are important to this thesis. These aspects are: (1) gender’s definition and stereotypes; (2) its relationship to identity; (3) the power struggles involved within its dichotomies; (4) the concept of androgyny; and (5) literature’s role as a filter that helps society come to terms with the threat implicit in challenges to gender.

Although gender and sex have frequently been conflated, it is important for a study of transvestism to keep them distinct. Theorists now contend that because, “the body is itself always seen through social interpretation, then ‘sex’ is not separate from ‘gender,’ but is that which is subsumable under it” (Nicholson 53). This subsumation of sex under gender still implies a distinction between them and for our purposes here, Rudolph Dekker’s statement: “one’s sex is determined by physical characteristics; one’s gender is determined by clothing,
behavior, speech, and all the other external characteristics” (48) will be applied. This statement is useful for our purposes because it focuses on gender as a constructed state. It is the constructed aspect of gender that threatens a sexually dichotomized society because if gender is determined to be something other than innately biological, it becomes dynamic. When gender ceases to be a primary, essential characteristic and becomes “what we make of sex on a daily basis, how we deploy our embodiedness and our multivalent sexualities in order to construct ourselves” (Epstein, Julia 3), it threatens a sexually hierarchical society that claims the superiority of the higher placed sex as innate and unchangeable.

If stereotypes are one of the means by which a sexually dichotomous society affirms hierarchies, then individuals who do not conform to the gender stereotypes for their sex are problematic. For example, if a society holds in common the belief that all women are, by virtue of their sex, physically weak, and that all men are physically strong and that stronger is better, then it follows that women must be lower than men in a hierarchical ranking. Women raised under this assumption are trained from childhood to believe they are less than men. The few women who refuse to conform to this stereotyped conditioning are labeled (at the least) unnatural. They are often looked upon as outcasts and oddities. Such a society also incorporates stereotypes to establish, at a glance, the social categories to which an individual belongs. It therefore follows that in order to rise above one’s “lesser” rank (of either class or gender) in this externally classified hierarchy, one must appear to be what one is not. For example, if an individual wants to appear to belong to the upper class of a society, he or she would dress in
expensive clothing. And if an individual wants to appear to belong to the “higher”
sexual class of a society, he or she would dress in that sex’s costume.

Lorber notes that transvestites incorporate the use of established
stereotypes to assume their cross-dressed identity. Characters who want to cross
gender lines do so, not by challenging but by adhering to the established gender
codes. An example of this is seen in the character La Zambinella in Balzac’s
Sarrasine. She is weak, modest, easily frightened, and dresses in lace and finery.
In other words, she is all that a woman of the period tried to be; she is a hyperbole
of womanhood. In Sarrasine Balzac writes, “This was woman herself, with her
sudden fears, her instinctive worries, her impetuous boldness, her fussing, and her
delicious sensibility” (248). Transvestites employ gender stereotypes to “objectify
human nature, making it easy to understand at a glance and to pass judgment”
(Mosse 5). Because transvestites want to be seen as belonging to a particular
gender, they must adopt that gender’s stereotypes. Thus their cross-dressing
paradoxically affirms gender rules and violates them at the same time.

Sexual dichotomy is deeply ingrained in our collective social identity.
This fact is noted by Cynthia Epstein who asserts that “No aspect of social life
[…] is free from the dichotomous thinking that casts the world into categories of
‘male’ and ‘female’ ” (232). And Dekker claims that “liminality denotes the
boundaries and categories people make to create order in their world view” (41).
Sexual dichotomy reinforces the sexual hierarchy. As we will see later, during the
nineteenth century there existed an insistence on both male superiority and an
innate difference between the sexes.
The increased level of social discomfort associated with male cross-dressing, as opposed to female cross-dressing, illustrates its threat to social hierarchies. Michel Foucault, for example, finds in nineteenth-century texts a “definite aversion to anything that might denote a deliberate renunciation of the signs and privileges of the masculine role” (19). And Dekker claims that “transvestism of men was considered much more objectionable than that of women. The man was demeaned, while the woman strove for something higher” (55). This idea that women cross-dressers are elevating themselves can be seen as far back as the Alexandrian philosopher Philo.iii While the female cross-dresser is understandable—she is naturally aiming to better herself—the fact that male transvestites willingly surrender their elevated status is threatening and confusing to those who embrace the established sexual and social hierarchies. In other words, the female cross-dresser’s desire to be male supports the male claim of superiority, while the male cross-dresser’s desire to be female challenges it.

Another challenge to the gender hierarchy is the notion of the Androgyne. The idea of the Androgyne, as originally described in Plato’s Symposium, became a form of social protest in the nineteenth century. Janice G. Raymond discusses this evolution:

In the nineteenth century, androgyny becomes a theme of social reform […] a way of talking about an ideal society […] Androgyny comes to symbolize human progress, universal unity, and the removal of social oppression, especially that of female and class oppression […] But a primary common element in all of the various usages of androgyny is the notion of integration as completion. (159)
Raymond’s statement indicates that writers in the nineteenth century saw the potential of androgyny to challenge the sexual hierarchy. Detecting this potential challenge to the established hierarchy, many late Victorians came to view the figure of the Androgyne as threatening. George Mosse claims, “If before 1850 the Androgyne had been a symbol of fraternity and solidarity, by the end of the century, it had been transformed into a symbol of vice and sexual perversity” (92). This attitude indicates how threatened Victorian-era masculinity was by any hint of sexual ambiguity or variation. Smith-Rosenberg claims: “heterosexuality [was made] both essential to and symbolic of social order … all other forms of sexuality […] became symbols of social disorder” (40). Social order came to be defined by assimilation to the norm; adoption of similar patterns of behavior indicated agreement on the structure of society. Alternative behavior must therefore be read as a challenge to this structure. The emergence of the figure of the “New Woman” was one such challenge.

Teresa Mangum describes the British New Woman and society’s reaction to her works:

The New Woman—as a character, a set of demands, and a model for female readers—expanded the nineteenth-century by introducing what we would now call feminist issues and feminist characters into the realm of popular fiction. […] The New Woman narratives challenged society’s most fundamental and sacrosanct vision of Woman. (1)

New Woman literature gave nineteenth-century women a place to communicate their greater potential. The female transvestite characters in New Woman literature became heralds of social change and sources of encouragement to their women readers. In discussing nineteenth-century fiction and politics, Barbara
Bardes and Suzanne Gossett assert, “novels were, in their own time, clearly understood to participate in the socialization of the population” (5). The transvestite characters explored in this thesis challenged the established hierarchies of gender and class and encouraged their audience to find their own strategies for doing the same. They were able to do so by becoming “masculine”. However, by donning ‘male’ clothing and assuming ‘male’ characteristics they also reinforced the gender dichotomy—i.e. this is ‘male’ behavior and I am a ‘female’ assuming a ‘male’ role.

In the following chapters we will examine how the adoption of the other sex’s gender alters the behavior of the transvestite in the two novels. The changes in the protagonists’ behaviors indicate that what is deemed innate female inferiority is learned and can be unlearned. Although this idea challenges real (i.e. non-fictional) masculine authority, the challenge is softened by its placement in a fictional work.

However, this is not to say that this fiction was entirely seen as non-threatening. Many New Woman authors were strongly criticized for the views expressed in their fiction. For example, “critical reactions to New Woman novelists were [...] condemnatory. In Woman (May 2, 1894) they were declared ‘petticoat anarchists who put a blazing torch to the shrine of self-respect and feminine shame’ “ (Beckson 141). And Linda Dowling points out that “the loosening of sexual controls apparently encouraged by [...] New Woman fiction was almost universally believed by late-Victorians to threaten the vital bonds of state and culture” (50). The criticism of New Woman fiction relied on traditional
sexual stereotypes to maintain strict sexual dichotomies and discourage the adoption of New Woman attitudes.

The Victorians’ wish to cling to their sexual/social status quo is not unusual. A brief history of transvestism in literature shows an association between transvestite characters and social and gender power. There are incidents of cross-dressing in Greek and Roman mythology. Two very masculine heroes—Achilles and Heracles—experience cross-dressing episodes. Achilles’ mother Thetis, knowing her son was doomed to die an early though heroic death if he went to Troy, sends him to King Lycomedes of Scyros dressed as a girl. He has an affair with Deidameia, King Lykomedes’ daughter, who bears him a son, Neoptolemus. Odysseus and Diomedes come to Scyros looking for Achilles and entice him to reveal his identity by displaying pretty weapons among the items for sale to the women of court. Achilles’ cross-dressing does not diminish his manliness in any way; rather it is depicted as a clever way of avoiding battle. Upon his discovery by Odysseus, Achilles marries Deidameia and joins Odysseus’ battle party. Heracles’ cross-dressing occurs when Zeus sentences him to be sold into slavery to Queen Omphale of Lydia. “The days of his enslavement were spent in ease and indolence. Omphale took to wearing the hero’s lionskin […] Heracles, by contrast, wore a long Lydian robe and spun linen thread at the queen’s feet” (Grimal 328). When his time of servitude is over, he leaves Omphale and continues his adventures. Heracles is able to maintain his strong grip on masculinity even though he temporarily loses both his social/class status and his gendered status. In Heracles and Achilles’ ability to remain “masculine” while
cross-dressed, we might conclude that there existed a social privilege for these two heroes. In other words, their social standing, as heroes and demi-gods set them above the average citizen and allowed them to cross-dress and retain their masculinity.

There is no such privilege evident in the Bible. Both the Old and the New Testament specifically discourage cross-dressing on all social levels. In Deuteronomy we find the following prohibition: “A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman’s garment, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord, your God” (Deut. 22:5). In the New Testament, Cor 11:3-15, also sets up a sexual hierarchy/dichotomy and uses clothing (specifically head coverings and hair) to mark and reinforce it. These biblical references indicate the importance of separate male and female spheres. Sexual dichotomies and hierarchies were being formed and enforced and dress was a large part of this enforcement. These sexual dichotomies eventually became part of the accepted social hierarchy in Christian societies.

Although there are many literary references to cross-dressing from biblical times to the nineteenth century, the plays of William Shakespeare in the English Renaissance are the most interesting. The fact that during this time there were no female actors added an interesting comic dimension to transvestite roles. For example, in a play such as As You Like It, a boy actor would play a female who cross dresses as a boy. The cross-dressing here and in other Shakespearean comedies like Twelfth Night results in comic chaos, but in the end true love triumphs; the characters return to their ‘real’ gender and the confusion is resolved.
Despite their happy endings, these comedies suggest that leaving proper gender roles will result in chaos. The triumph of heterosexual love and happiness that accompanies the return to proper gender roles serves to reinforce the sexual dichotomy of the day. Just because Shakespeare made light of the chaos that cross-dressing produced doesn’t mean that he lightly accepted cross-dressing. Valerie Traub’s article, “The (In)significance of Lesbian Desire” suggests that these comedies were deliberately situated in the past because of the uneasiness they might produce if set in the present. By setting *As You Like It* in the distant past as well as in a pastoral setting (i.e. outside of ‘society’), Shakespeare diminishes any threat that there might actually be cross-dressed women passing as men. In this manner, he explores the cross-dressing plot potential in a non-threatening format. This avoidance of placing his characters in current and recognizable scenes differentiates Shakespeare from the writers explored in this thesis whose texts are set in their own time period and in recognizable settings.

Social and gender hierarchies are contingent upon a tacit agreement between the various levels. This agreement—the acceptance of the superiority of those in the levels above by those in the levels below—stabilizes the hierarchy. It is both reinforced and examined through many social and cultural agencies—literature, religion, art, and fashion to name a few. The authors that we consider in this thesis set their gender-challenging texts in the present. And by having their characters cross gender and class lines, they deliberately and specifically challenged the belief that sex and class equal identity. The fact that these characters challenge the existing hierarchies simply by assuming the costume of
the opposite sex illustrates the fragile basis for gender stereotypes and the
signifying power of clothing.

**Clothing**

“Clothing, paradoxically, often hides the sex but displays the
gender” (Lorber 22)

“What we actually see and react to are, not the bodies, but the clothes
of those about us. It is from their clothes that we form a first impression
of our fellow creatures as we meet them” (Flugel 15)

The above statements indicate the importance of clothing to a society that
is socially and sexually dichotomized. Gender-specific clothes, especially prior to
the mid-twentieth century, were seen as “necessary to maintain an extreme
distinction between […] the sexes in order to safeguard ‘natural’ gender relations
and to keep society in a state of moral equilibrium” (Luck 141). Clothing defined
the wearer. Clothes were a status marker; cumbersome, finely made clothes, for
example, signified that their wearer was wealthy enough not to require the ability
to move about—she was waited upon, never had to walk any distance, and was
purely ornamental.

Gender-distinctive dress was deemed as absolutely natural and necessary.
This is illustrated by the sensation caused by the introduction of the bloomer
costume vi in 1851. Amelia Bloomer’s costume was seen as part of the “desire to
disrupt patriarchal order and usurp male privilege” (Luck 142). The threat posed
by the Bloomer costume is illustrated by its quick demise as a fashion: “by 1853,
the majority of women who had worn the dress […] had abandoned it or were
wearing it only in the privacy of their homes […]” (Luck 149). The pressure
asserted by the constraints and insistence of social conformity made it virtually impossible for a woman to wear a bloomer costume and retain her social respectability.

However, the commotion caused by the bloomer costume was slight in comparison to the stir raised when a woman was discovered to be masquerading as a man. Cross-dressing by women was seen as threatening because it afforded working class women a way to cross, not only gender, but class lines as well. Many working-class women cross-dressed in order to obtain better employment opportunities. This cross-dressing solution is seen in Southworth’s novel *The Hidden Hand*. Cross-dressing also allowed women to infiltrate the male arena as Grand’s ‘Boy’ does in *The Tenor and the Boy*. If the adoption of male clothing allowed working-class women to move up the social hierarchy, it also allowed upper-class women the freedom to move in other directions as well.

As illustrated in the Grand chapters, the adoption of masculine dress allowed upper class women to associate with men of lower economic classes. By disregarding class restrictions these characters potentially threaten the gene stock of their class. Furthermore, cross-dressing allowed women to ignore other social constraints normally placed upon them. A female transvestite suddenly finds that as a male, s/he has access to better employment, is allowed out alone at night, and is freed from unwanted male attention. At the same time s/he becomes an unsupervised woman; s/he enters restricted male domains, she denies her role as a woman. In short, s/he becomes a threat to traditionally dichotomized society.
The male transvestite who willingly surrenders his superior status along with his trousers also becomes a threat to society. S/he threatens the masculinity of other males: “Male prettiness involves connotations of sexual transgression: precisely, of the potential for submission to being sodomized” (Woods 141). This potential for transgression occurs in Balzac’s Sarrasine. Upon finding out that Zambinella is a man, “Sarrasine sat down […] two huge tears welled from his dry eyes, rolled down his manly cheeks, and fell to the ground: two tears of rage, two bitter and burning tears” (252). Any hint of homosexuality threatened the ideals of masculinity and challenged heterocentric society. The violent reaction of masculine characters to the cross-dressed man is seen in Rachilde’s Monsieur Venus and indicates both anger at being deceived and a fear of the corruption that the cross-dressed man represents to society.viii

One way in which society deals with perceived threats is through humor. We can see the discomfort caused by women adopting ‘male’ attire depicted in the humor of the British satirical periodical Punch. “Punch’s cartoons appealed to its middle class readership and reflected many of their ideas, attitudes, and prejudices as well as their every day way of life” (Wohl 1). Linda Dowling states that “Punch devoted a good deal of space to the eugenic dangers raised by contemporary male effeminacy and female mannishness …” (55).ix The fear that the adoption of the other sex’s clothing would lead to the dissolution of their society was very real to Victorians. “The woman who would be a man, the man who assumed the female role […] symbolized social chaos and decay” (Smith-Rosenberg 287).
The threat of transvestism seems to be compounded in societies insecure about cultural changes. According to Mosse, “in times of insecurity strong lines of demarcation between genders were considered essential; blurring the division between them seemed to conjure up the spectre of anarchy” (66-7). This insecurity can be connected to the Freudian belief that the ability to correctly identify another’s sex is core to our humanness. In his essay “Femininity” Sigmund Freud claimed that “when you meet a human being, the first distinction you make is ‘male or female’ and you are accustomed to make the distinction with unhesitating certainty” (113). In other words, Freud believed that sex is fundamental to all human sense of humanness; infants are marked by and are self-aware of their sexual identity. When individuals feel unsure it is natural to cling to the known. The nineteenth-century was a period of extraordinary changes, as discussed below. These changes created insecurities that were reflected by strict sexual and social dichotomies, which were challenged by the hero/heroines of our two novels.

*Nineteenth-Century Atmosphere and Class Structure*

“All change is traumatic, even change for the better…Hence all nineteenth-century progress was pursued by anxiety at times repressed and only reluctantly recognized…”. (Gay 11)

The nineteenth-century was a time of shifting certainties. It saw both challenges to the gender dichotomy and a reactionary increase of regimented gender roles. “The Victorian age witnessed a remarkable transition from a
traditional society controlled by a patriarchal landed gentry to a modern
democratic, industrial state” (Beckson 133). Oftentimes the new ‘scientific’
discoveries and theories of the era challenged traditionally held beliefs. However,
just as often they were used to support the Victorian moral codes. The Victorians
strove simultaneously to embrace progress and to maintain their traditional
dichotomies. In short, nineteenth-century ‘scientific’ theories were based on the
presumption that ‘European’ and ‘male’ were synonymous with superior; what
was neither European nor male was therefore inferior.

Amidst these shifting certainties arose the fear that the world was
becoming feminized and overly civilized. The middle class began to associate
decadence with the aristocratic class and developed a masculine ideal in response
to the challenges it perceived. Mosse claims, “the masculine ideal was considered
a bulwark against decadence, representing in words, pictures, and stone an image
of chaste manhood that had sunk deeply into modern consciousness” (101). The
excessive aristocratic dandy failed to fit into this new masculine ideal, as did the
New Woman. Mosse claims that a woman in fin-de-siecle society who “left the
place assigned to her in the division between the sexes, […] became an outsider
[…] and presented one of the most serious and difficult challenges to modern
masculinity” (102). The men and women who refused or were unable to fit into
the Victorian gender ideals were assigned ‘outsider’ status. Their inability to
conform to the standards set by their society was interpreted as a challenge to that
society.
Women who did conform to social standards often found themselves in a paradoxical situation where they were viewed simultaneously as physically and intellectually inferior to man, but emotionally and spiritually superior to them. This paradox manifested itself in two trends among upper-class women. The notion of female spiritual superiority resulted in the development of ‘The Cult of True Womanhood’\textsuperscript{xi} and the idea of female physical weakness resulted in the development of ‘The Cult of Female Frailty’.\textsuperscript{xii} The New Woman refuted these paradoxical gender roles assigned to women and the limitations society placed on them. This will be especially evident when we discuss Southworth’s heroine, Capitola Black, who races around the countryside in a most impertinent and robust manner.

Now that we have briefly examined gender, clothing, transvestism, and the atmosphere and class structure of the nineteenth-century, we can begin to connect these issues as they relate to our two primary texts. These texts are: “The Tenor and the Boy” in \textit{The Heavenly Twins (1893)} by Sarah Grand (a British writer) and \textit{The Hidden Hand, or Capitola the Madcap (1888)} by E. D. E. N. Southworth (an American writer). These texts were selected as representative of the nineteenth-century attitudes of two separate countries in order to determine if there is any indication of a marked cultural difference in attitudes towards the cross-dressed character. The characters depicted in the texts are female transvestites (though Southworth’s bandit Black Donald, as a master of disguise, suggests a link to transvestism). Texts featuring cross-dressed males were not as numerous as those featuring cross-dressed females, but they did exist. For example, George Sand’s
Gabriel (1839) deals with a hermaphrodite whose dominant personality is male—technically a hermaphrodite is incapable of cross-dressing. Balzac’s Sarrasine (1830) deals with a cross-dressing castrato, but here the castration of the male has rendered him almost androgynous or sexless and therefore an irrelevant subject for this thesis. Finally, Wood’s Pantaletta (1882) and Cridge’s Man’s Rights (1870) both deal with entire cross-dressed communities. In this thesis I am concerned with the individual cross-dresser and the challenge she poses to social norms. The primary texts that I explore both use their transvestite characters to disrupt the stability of the nineteenth-century gender and social hierarchies.
What I long for is the freedom of going about alone, of coming and going [...] of walking about old streets at night; that’s what I long for; and that’s the freedom without which one cannot become a real artist.

--Marie Bashkirtseff
Diary, 2 January 1879.

The Tenor and the Boy by Sarah Grand, a short novel subsequently integrated into the larger novel The Heavenly Twins, concerns itself primarily with the motivations of the cross-dressed woman and the class and gender hierarchy. The heroine’s cross-dressing is essential to the exploration of the various aspects of these hierarchies. It directly challenges the reader to consider relationships between the genders in terms other than sexual/romantic. It also raises related issues such as what constitutes cross-dressing; the interdependence of gender with class hierarchies; androgyny and the dual personality of the cross-dresser; and the effect that cross-dressing and the adoption of other gender roles has on the cross-dressed character and society’s expectations of gender roles.

In the novel, a Tenor of mysterious origins meets an unnamed boy while strolling about one evening. The two become friends, with the Tenor taking on the role of mentor. The Tenor is led to believe that the Boy is the twin brother of his love interest—the beautiful and pious Angelica. Much of the interaction between the Tenor and the Boy consists of conversations about love. On a night out rowing, their boat capsizes and the
Tenor must rescue the Boy. While tending the unconscious Boy, the Tenor discovers that the Boy is in reality, Angelica. After a confrontation scene in which the Tenor proposes marriage only to discover that Angelica is already married, their friendship ends and they part. This novel is integrated into the larger novel *The Heavenly Twins* as an adventurous episode in the life of the disillusioned Angelica.

Angelica, in the larger novel, is one of three women whose marriages face either tragedy or unconventionality. The first woman marries a man infected with a venereal disease. She gives birth to a syphilitic child, goes insane and dies. Angelica witnesses these tragic events and, as a result, becomes disillusioned about a woman’s role in her society. The second woman is described as self-educated. She falls for a handsome young man and marries him. On her wedding day she learns of his dissolute past and attempts to leave him; she is persuaded to remain with him (to avoid scandal) but refuses to consummate her marriage. Angelica proposes to and marries an older friend (whom she calls “Daddy”) with the condition that she retain her autonomy. In the larger novel, after the *Tenor and the Boy* chapter, the Tenor dies of pneumonia (as a result of their dunking). His death causes a contrite Angelica to try to become a better wife.

Angelica’s determination to become a better wife might be read as a reaction by one cross-dresser to another cross-dresser’s unresolved issues at the time of his death. The Tenor’s own quasi-disguise raises the question of what constitutes cross-dressing. The Tenor, like Angelica, is a character in disguise. As John Kuchich points out, by “carefully concealing his origins and his connections […] the Tenor constructs an openly fictive persona for himself that the entire community treats with grave respect” (201). By trying to ‘pass’ as a simple lay-clerk, the Tenor is, in effect, cross-dressing (crossing
class, but not gender lines). At his death, the Tenor becomes that which he had pretended to be—a simple lay-clerk. Angelica’s decision to become a better wife could be interpreted as a reflection of her dread of dying outside of what she really is—a woman and a wife.

The Tenor’s crossing of class lines is less threatening to society than Angelica’s crossing of gender lines. Presumably, this is because (as I will discuss later) although he is living as a lay clerk, no one really believes that he is one, whereas Angelica is convincing in her role (even the reader is unaware of her true sex until the Tenor’s discovery). Furthermore, Angelica is presumed to be ascending the gender hierarchy ladder and entering taboo (male) areas, thus transgressing the boundaries of both class and gender hierarchies. In contrast, the Tenor’s class crossing is moving down the hierarchal ladder.

Class and gender are discussed several ways in the novel: the difference in the way that the Tenor receives Angelica and the way he receives the Boy; the Tenor’s suggested innate nobility; and Angelica’s upper class status, which puts her above the law.

Although the Boy and Angelica are both “from the same family,” they are treated very differently by the Tenor. The Boy, being younger, is the Tenor’s inferior. This is indicated by the Tenor’s ‘mentoring’ attitude towards the Boy: “he led him, by example principally, but also by suggestion” (403). Angelica, however, is viewed by the Tenor as his superior. The Tenor’s “high mindedness shrank from approaching a girl whose social position was so far above his own—in the matter of money that is” (405). This perceived
difference between Angelica’s and the Boy’s social status is made more interesting when the true identity of Angelica/The Boy is revealed.

However when considering the Tenor’s social status, Grand seems to deny that class is constructed; she very carefully sets the Tenor above his fellows. His innate superiority is physically obvious: “Sitting with the lay clerks behind the choristers, he looked like the representative of another and higher race” (359). The Tenor’s demeanor also speaks of his nobility. The Boy notes to the Tenor, “You would never give yourself such airs if you hadn’t something to go upon […] you command respect naturally, as well-bred people do” (408). If the reader has any doubt, Grand has the Tenor relate a history that suggests his noble status. The Tenor describes his patron: “He was always sure that I was gentle by birth […] and all my tutors said I must have come of an educated race” (426). As a foundling, the Tenor’s clothes “were such as a gentleman’s child would have worn” (427). According to the Tenor, his foster-father “said [I] was not one of them; [my] build was different, and [I] was quite unfit for such rough labour [sic]” (427). By insisting upon the Tenor’s innate nobility, Grand seems to insist that social status is not constructed, but rather that nobility is innate to the upper social strata no matter the environment in which they find themselves. In contrast, Angelica’s social status as indicated by the Tenor’s (and the Tenor here might be seen to speak for the rest of their community) perception of her as the ideal lady—pious, virtuous, etc.—is called into question by her cross-dressing escapades. By presenting two contrasting views, Grand is able to challenge the certainty of the innate superiority of social rank.

Angelica’s ability to cross-dress is directly related to her social rank. Her wealth and status allows her the luxury of having her own room, far from the servants; this
allows her to come and go as she pleases. Furthermore, her social position protects her.

Angelica is well aware of this fact, as indicated by the following statement:

I knew I was breaking the law of the land […] that added excitement to the pleasure—the charm of danger […] What would be an unpardonable offense if committed by another woman less highly placed […] is merely an amusing eccentricity in me, so […] conveniently snobbish is society”. (452-54)

Angelica’s knowledge that she faces no real punishment if caught is further strengthened by her belief that she “should be mistaken for my brother.” Our own parents do not know us apart when we are dressed alike” (452). Angelica is privileged by both her social class and by the existence of her other gender double.

The belief that other gender twins can stand in for one another is an old one that recalls aspects of Plato’s concept of the androgyne. This is seen in Carolyn Heilbrun’s description of twins: “the two seem to encompass between complete human possibility […] the two are always seen as an original unit which has split” (34). It is clear that Grand intends for the character of Angelica/the Boy to call up gender neutral ideals. To wit, the Boy rejects the labels ‘boy’ and ‘man’ and instead declares himself “a bright particular spirit” (393). This idea indicates a being without a definite sexual identity and therefore, beyond the restraints of gender codes. The Tenor, citing Percy Shelley’s long poem, compares the Boy to the creature in the Witch of Atlas: “A sexless thing it was, and in its growth/it seemed to have developed no defect/of either sex, yet all the grace of both ”(Stanza XXXVI, lines 329-31, cited in Grand 403). The Boy retorts with his own version of genius that sounds like ideally genderless: “I believe it is the attributes of both minds, masculine and feminine, perfectly united in one person of either sex” (403). The Boy thus asserts his belief that genius is a sublimated fusion of the male and the female
and is available to both sexes. This ideal is echoed in the duality of the Angelica/Boy character.

Although he treats them quite differently, the Tenor seems equally smitten with both the Boy and Angelica: “his thoughts being pretty equally divided between him and the lady whose brilliant glance had had such a magical effect upon him” (380). This equal division of the Tenor’s affection indicates that Angelica and the Boy are two halves of a whole. When the Tenor realizes that the Boy is “exactly like her”, the Boy explains it is because they are twins. The explanation elates the Tenor: he sees “in the girl an ideal, and [he] had found soul enough in the laughter-loving Boy to make him eager to befriend him” (385). The Tenor believes that in possessing one of the two—either Angelica in marriage or the Boy in friendship—he will have, if not possession of, then at least access to them both.

The Tenor believes that Angelica and the Boy can create happiness for him, but only so long as they remain two separate beings. When Angelica is found out, the Tenor is unable to see the two personalities as a complete whole. He is stuck in a binary either/or logic: “It was very hard […] to drop either of the two individuals which had hitherto been so distinct and different, and to realize that one of them at least had never existed” (448). The Tenor is unable to accept that both individuals did exist--in the body of Angelica. He therefore accepts the reality of Angelica, the woman, and dismisses the existence of the Boy.

Unlike the Tenor, Grand refuses to opt for one over the other and holds to the existence of both. This is seen in the effects that cross-dressing has on Angelica. At the start of her cross-dressing, Angelica is anxious and timid. When the Tenor examines the
Boy too closely, the Boy “seemed to take fright, and finally bolted” (380). These initial anxieties quickly disappear. Angelica becomes more assured in her ability to ‘pass’ as the Boy. Soon she begins to display “boyish” behavior with abandon: “There seemed no limit to his capacity for asking […] he emphasized his remarks by throwing a stray cushion or two […] he jumped over the chairs instead of walking round them” (388-89). As the Boy, Angelica never tires: “He seemed to rejoice in his own strength, to delight in his own suppleness” (437). At one point the exasperated Tenor asks the Boy if he is an ‘American’ (398) indicating the Boy’s adventuresome and annoying nature.

Angelica has no problem assuming the physical role of the Boy, although we must note that, dictated by her small physique, she is a boy rather than a man—in other words, she is still inferior physically to a man. It is important to note, how she revels in her new freedom of movement. When she is unmasked, she describes the release of cross-dressing to the Tenor: “the freedom from restraint, I mean the restraint of our tight uncomfortable clothing, was delicious. I tell you I was a genuine boy. I moved like a boy; I felt like a boy” (456). This expression indicates that for Angelica, the Boy persona had become real and separate from her Angelica persona. At times in the novel, the Boy persona seems the more real of the two; Angelica is too much of an ideal through most of the novel to be ‘real’.

Once she is ‘unmasked’ however, Angelica deflates; she loses both her idealized status and her ‘boyish’ behavior. She is unable to maintain her strength and her bravado under the Tenor’s disapproving gaze and becomes hysterical. And when the Tenor pardons her saying: “‘I do forgive you. […] Poor misguided girl […] may God in heaven forgive you […] and make you good and true and pure’—[she falls at his feet] and bursts
into a paroxysm of tears” (462). The Tenor’s disapproval causes Angelica to realize that what she has really desired was the platonic friendship of a man. She knows that in her female attire/role, this sort of open friendship is not possible.

This is indicated by the change in the Tenor’s manner towards Angelica once she is unmasked. For example, he dismisses her words as feminine nonsense: “he [the Tenor] mistook the remarks she had just been making for a natural girlish evasion of the subject” (458). Although he had reveled in the Boy’s banter, once he discovers Angelica’s female sex, the Tenor starts to disregard her remarks on the basis of that sex. In this way and others, the Tenor indicates that he is a man for whom gender roles/expectations are very real things. Once Angelica is treated as a “mere” woman, she erodes into one. In this way, Grand exposes how the expectations of others shape women’s behavior.

These expectations are depicted by the Tenor’s belief in—or rather, his insistence on—Angelica’s purity and his love for her. Falling in love with her at first sight, the Tenor conflates Angelica’s beauty and her purity: “the pale proud purity of her face, with the unvarying calm of her demeanour [sic] were assurances enough for him. His dear lady. His delicate-minded girl” (401). Significantly, in his conversations with the Boy, the latter constantly remarks on Angelica’s less than ideal side: “She is very fascinating, I allow, but always, in her conversation, ‘the serpent hisses where the sweet bird sings’” (415). At the same time, however, the Boy also promotes the Tenor’s romance with Angelica: “I should like to see Angelica safely settled with you. […] There are obstacles, of course; but they can be got over—if you will trust me” (396). The Boy’s words give the Tenor hope. This indicates that Angelica wants to be desired by the Tenor outside of the idealized image that he holds of her; she wants to climb down from the pedestal and
still be worthy of love. However, it is not necessarily romantic love that she desires, but the love that exists between men. The fact that she wants this sort of love to exist between men and women represents her attachment to the androgynous ideal where gender has no bearing on relationships.

This desire is evident in the discussions about romance between the Tenor and the Boy. The Boy’s expression of “the calm human fellowship, the brotherly love undisturbed by a single violent emotion [...] I say the scene is hallowed, and I’ll have no sex in my paradise” (423) is ideally non-gendered. Grand indicates that the ideal of love expressed by Angelica/the Boy is superior to the Tenor’s love of Angelica’s physical appearance. An unmasked Angelica expresses her shock at what could be seen as the Tenor’s shallowness: “it did not occur to me that you could care seriously for a girl to whom you had never spoken” (461). By questioning the source of the Tenor’s love for Angelica, Grand introduces the notion that men too can wed for the wrong reasons—such as a conflation of physical beauty and inner goodness.

Grand also (ironically) depicts the Tenor’s shocked disbelief at the revelation that the Boy and Angelica are one and the same when he has been well aware of and taken pains to comment on the Boy’s excessive femininity. The Tenor thinks the Boy’s voice is “hardly rough enough for a boy of his age” (392). He says in reply to the Boy’s questioning of his past, “Your curiosity is quite womanish, Boy” (408). When the Boy imitates the Tenor, he says, “Boy, will you never be more manly?” (419). There is a sexual overtone in all of the Tenor’s associations of the Boy with the feminine. Miller goes so far as to suggest that: “the mothering Tenor treats the Boy in a fashion recognized by every pedophile. He permits him to define the parameters of their relation, indulges
him in everything […] and yet hopes to teach him a higher and more moral life” (205).

This sexual tone is explicitly seen when the Tenor lays his hands on the Boy’s hair.

When the Boy objects, the Tenor replies, “But why on earth do you come so close? You put that remarkable head of yours under my hand and then growl at me for touching it. And really it is a temptation” (408). The sexual aspect of the Tenor and the Boy’s relationship culminates in the Tenor’s resurrection of the Boy after their dunk in the river:

He […] stripped the light flannel clothing from the Boy […] he clasped the lad in his arms and pressed his cheek to his […] it seemed as if in that close embrace, his whole being had expressed itself in love and prayer […] he felt the Boy’s limbs quiver […] and then he heard him sigh. (445)

The allusion to sexual relations is clearly depicted by the language that Grand uses in this passage. This sexual resurrection is immediately followed by the Tenor’s discovery that his Boy and his Angelica are one and the same.

Angelica’s unmasking can be read as a fall—both literally from the boat and figuratively in the Tenor’s esteem. She goes from being “the Tenor’s own lady, his ideal of purity, his goddess of truth, his angel of pity [to being] his idol […] shattered, the dream and hope of his life […] over […] all that remained of them, [was] herself as she really was” (446-7). Once his ideal, this fallen Angelica is not good enough for the Tenor. In a comically melodramatic stance, the Tenor unhappily steels himself to take the high moral ground. “‘I must marry her now I suppose,’ and he could not help […] wondering a little at the possibility of such a sudden change of feeling as that which had […] transformed the dearest wish of his life into a distasteful, if not altogether repugnant, duty” (447). This change in the Tenor’s love for Angelica seems to be a warning to men who would love a ‘goddess’ of virtue at a distance. Obviously, the Tenor’s lofty images
of Angelica were destined to be crushed; no woman could truly live up to such standards. And Angelica does not try to live up to these standards, instead she chooses to rebel against them (albeit under disguise).

Angelica’s explanation to the Tenor for her behavior reads like a women’s rights pamphlet. She attacks society’s insistence that all women are the same and want the same things from life. She claims:

There was no latitude allowed for my individuality. I was a girl and therefore I was not supposed to have any bent. I found a big groove waiting for me when I grew up, and in that I was expected to live whether it suited me or not […] It was deep and narrow, and gave me no room to move. (450)

Her complaint implies that to be a woman is to be under continual restraint—is it any wonder that she yearns to be an unrestrained and irresponsible boy? She further complains that her family and friends insisted that she comply with societal restraints. Her intimates are depicted as practically shoving Angelica into a role for which she does not believe that she is suited. She longs for freedom: “I wanted to go out there and then. I wanted to be free to go and come as I would. I felt a galling sense of restraint all at once, and I determined to break the law that imposed it” (451). The implication here is that if society insists upon limiting women to roles for which they are not suited, there are bound to be consequences such as Angelica’s rebellion.

Angelica further argues that her cross-dressing was a way in which to be taken seriously by men: “as a woman, I could not expect to be treated by men with as much respect as they show to each other” (452). The Tenor’s differential treatment of Angelica and the Boy proves her expectations true. Although the Tenor does not treat the Boy as he would a grown man, he treats the Boy as more of an equal than he does Angelica. For
example, when she praises him for raising her opinion of men as moral creatures, his response is, “Do you love me then?” (457). This remark indicates that between the two sexes there can be (in the Tenor’s mind) no friendship—only (or at best) love. She replies to his question of love by explaining how cross-dressing had helped her reach a sort of genderless ideal. She tells the Tenor that, as the Boy, she has:

enjoyed the benefit of free intercourse with your masculine mind undiluted by your masculine prejudices and proclivities with regard to my sex. Your manner to me has been quite different from that of any other man […] with you alone of all men […] I almost think I have been on an equal footing. (458)

Angelica complains about the society in which she “should have been held to have done my duty if I had spent the rest of my life in dressing well, and saying the proper thing” (453). Angelica’s complaints address both the uselessness of the upper-class woman’s life and the refusal of men to recognize women as their equals. By having Angelica live as the Boy, Grand establishes the difference between the sexes as a constructed one.

All the while that Angelica is stating her arguments, instead of listening to her, the Tenor is thinking how much like the Boy Angelica is and strangely this thought makes her attractive to him once again. The Tenor’s inability to hear Angelica’s case is representative of the dismissal of women’s voices by Victorian society. The Tenor, in fact, fails to hear anything Angelica says until she reveals her final secret—she is married. When he learns this, the Tenor sulks by the fire. In a fit of temper, Angelica lets her Dante know that this Beatrice does not appreciate his superficial love:

You go and fall in love with a girl you have never spoken to in your life, you endow her gratuitously with all the virtues you admire without asking if she cares to possess them; and when you find she is not the peerless perfection you require her to be, you blame her! Oh! Isn’t that like a man? (259)
Angelica’s accusation can be read as a critique against a society that groups all of its women into one of two categories—Angel or Whore. Angelica’s definition of her marriage as a duty—“It was taken for granted that I should be content to marry, and only to marry” (460)—represents her own involvement in society’s grouping. She must marry or be branded as a nonconformist. She marries to gain security (indicated by the fact that she calls her husband ‘Daddy’). Once she is safely married, she is left alone by society—she is deemed ‘normal’, she has conformed.

Before she falls into ‘womanly’ hysterics, Angelica informs the Tenor, “all the benefit of your acquaintance […] has consisted in the fact that you were unaware of my sex. I knew that directly you became aware of it another element would be introduced into our friendship which would entirely spoil it so far as I am concerned” (459). It seems that with this final condemnation of the Tenor’s treatment of her, Angelica has expended all of the Boy’s remaining bravado and must now go out and (in the Tenor’s words) “do some good in the world […] be a good woman” (462). When the Tenor goes to escort her home (now that she is a woman, she mustn’t come and go unescorted), she finds her nerves so shaken that she is unable to plait her hair: “her hands trembled so, and he was obliged to help her” (462). The change in Angelica is marked by both her reactions and the Tenor’s change in attitude towards her.

We are left to conclude that in society’s view, to be a ‘good woman’ is to be a conforming woman. Her articulate defense of women notwithstanding, Angelica bows to convention. Society is safe from her rebellion … for a time. However, there are suggestions in Angelica’s argument that unless society’s attitude towards women alters,
another unhappy woman will repeat Angelica’s experiment. In fact, her argument calls for just such an occurrence.
A Most Brilliant Madness:  
Capitola’s Genius in Southworth’s  
The Hidden Hand

“Oppression’s ultimate resource [is] the cooperation of the oppressed”  
--Seamus Deanne  
Introduction to Joyce’s Portrait of the Artist

“America is a land of masking jokers. We wear the mask for purposes of  
aggression as well as for defense…”  
--Ralph Ellison  
“Change the Joke and Slip the Yoke”

In her comic melodrama, The Hidden Hand or Capitola the Madcap (1889),  
E.D.E.N. Southworth depicts the limitations of Victorian ideals of femininity and  
explores male and female gender roles. Because her novel is humorous, she does so in an  
apparently non-threatening, lighthearted manner. This lighthearted manner sets The  
Hidden Hand apart from many other texts of the period. Southworth achieves her comic  
effect by characterizing Capitola as a trickster, a hoyden, and a madcap. Drawing on the  
African American folk tales that she heard in her youth, Southworth joyfully creates a  
trickster character reminiscent of Brer Rabbit. Habegger claims “Capitola Black is in fact none other than the long lost twin sister of Huckleberry Finn” (441). Smith-Rosenberg, in her study of tricksters, asserts that the trickster character “exists to break taboos, violate categories, and defy structure […] Disorder defines the trickster, but so does power”
(290-1). Capitola in her role as trickster challenges and defies the restrictions placed on the Victorian woman, but does so in a way that is at once pointed and non-threatening. “Southworth’s comic stance allows her much liberty to make important statements about the potential equality—indeed superiority—of women, as well as about their current oppression” (Dobson 232-3). So while *The Hidden Hand* raised little controversy, its social critique is far reaching. This is due largely to the likeability of its heroine, Capitola LeNoir, and her lack of regrets.

Given the twists and turns of Capitola’s adventures, a plot summary is necessary. The title character, Capitola (Cap) Black’s adventures begin on the day of her birth. The infant Cap is saved from the murderous intentions of her Uncle (Gabriel LeNoir) by the freed slave and mid-wife Granny Grewel. They are both sold into slavery by LeNoir’s henchman, the bandit Black Donald, but escape when the ship that they are on is wrecked, and all aboard are lost except Granny, Cap, and the sailor boy Herbert Greyson. Granny raises Cap in the slums of New York City until she can save enough money to return to Virginia and establish Cap’s claim to the LeNoir fortune. Leaving Cap with some cash and in the trust of friends, Granny heads to Virginia only to develop a lengthy illness and die. Before her death she tells a local plantation owner, Major Ira (Old Hurricane) Warfield, the story of Cap. Old Hurricane, the confirmed enemy of LeNoir, goes to New York to seek Cap so that he might reestablish her as the rightful heir to the LeNoir estate. In New York he meets an impudent newsboy to whom he takes a liking. While at the police station seeking assistance in his search for Cap, Hurricane is surprised to see his newsboy under arrest. The charge is impersonation of a boy; the newsboy is in
actuality Cap. Old Hurricane promptly rescues her by making her his ward. Cap resumes female garb, but insists on maintaining her autonomy and adventuresome spirit.

Through Cap, Hurricane meets Herbert, who he discovers is his long-lost nephew. Expressing remorse at his shabby treatment of Herbert’s mother (Hurricane had condemned her to a life of poverty because he disapproved of her choice of husband) and joy at finding his nephew, Hurricane promises Herbert position and wealth. He extends this generosity to Herbert’s foster-mother and brother. Unfortunately, we soon learn that this foster-mother and brother are Hurricane’s own abandoned wife and son, Marah and Traverse Rocke, whom Hurricane had abandoned in a fit of jealousy. However, the two find a home when Dr. Day and his beautiful daughter, Clare, take them in. Traverse becomes the doctor’s apprentice and is soon engaged to Clare. Their happiness is cut short when the doctor dies suddenly, leaving his daughter in the care of a distant relative, the evil Gabriel LeNoir. LeNoir and his lecherous son, Craven, separate Clare from the Rockes and try to force her to marry Craven in an effort to gain control of her estate. Cap rescues Clare from this fate by exchanging clothes with her, allowing Clare time to seek protection with her father’s colleagues. This is the second time Cap foils Craven’s plans. Previously, Craven had attempted to waylay her when she was riding her horse alone in the woods. Cap’s self-sufficiency is further demonstrated when she twice saves herself from the clutches of the bandit, Black Donald—first when he sends three of his best men to abduct her and then when he goes for her himself. Unfortunately, Cap’s mother, also named Capitola LeNoir, is not so capable. She is unable to escape the clutches of her brother-in-law (LeNoir) and his son. The two men hold her captive in their home for seventeen years. When she becomes troublesome, they have her locked away in an insane
asylum. Following the classical melodramatic formula, all ends well. Cap’s mother is freed, Clare and Traverse are reunited and married, Marah Rocke is proven innocent and reunited with Hurricane, Black Donald is reformed, and Cap and Herbert are married.

Throughout the novel, Cap’s ability to defend herself and to defy male authority separates her from the other women of the novel. Presumably, she acquired this plucky autonomy during her stint as a newsboy. When she exhibits this defiant attitude it is usually combined with an element of the comic—she becomes a trickster character. Furthermore, this behavior is often associated with boyish hijinks.

Depictions of Cap as a boyish trickster character are evident throughout the novel. For example, the Rev. Mr. Goodwin is sent by Hurricane to talk to Cap about her wild behavior. Cap senses his intentions “which immediately provoked all the mischievous propensities of her elfish spirit” (182). She soon has the Reverend convinced that there is a man secreted in her closet, when in reality it is merely the neighbor’s poodle. The exasperated Reverend leaves the house recommending that Hurricane “thrash that girl as if she were a bad boy “ (185). The Reverend’s suggestion indicates his belief that Cap’s boyish behavior should receive a boy’s punishment. Further, Cap’s irreverence indicates her rejection of the Church’s patriarchal authority. JoanneDobson identifies the pulpit as one of the institutions whose “severe and reiterated censure […] kept most women silent” (223). In her playful defiance of the Church’s representative Cap rejects its censure; she will not be silenced.

Cap’s trickster function is also seen in her escape from the lecherous intentions of Craven LeNoir. While riding alone, Cap encounters Craven; his mocking innuendo and cruel face convince her that she is in danger. By feigning feminine innocence towards his
invitation to “‘sit down here by the roadside and have a friendly conversation’ “ (115) Cap is able to stall and outwit her would-be assailant. Southworth seems to take great delight in relating Cap’s escape, which leaves the villain gnashing his teeth and shaking his fist in rage. The narrator tells us that “as she wheeled out of sight, Capitola—I’m sorry to say—put her thumb to the side of her nose, and whirled her fingers into a semicircle, in a gesture more expressive than elegant” (118). Through this scene Southworth illustrates that although Cap is vulnerable to the real dangers faced by other women, her willingness to use her resources (wit, feminine charm, and the impersonation of the innocent female) allows her to escape these dangers. Cap’s boyish bravado (the inelegant gesture made to Craven) replaces traditional feminine sentimentality.

This passage also indicates that Cap is Southworth’s response to the nineteenth-century ‘Cult of True Womanhood’, which “prescribed a female role bounded by kitchen and nursery, overlaid with piety and purity, and crowned with subservience” (Smith-Rosenberg 13). Landay also discusses the nineteenth-century feminine ideal, which stressed “submission to the patriarchal authority of God and men and [as well as the belief that] female power comes only from influence through prayer, sweet entreaty, and emotional and psychic manipulation” (35-6). Cap is markedly (and happily) unlike these pictures of femininity.

Cap’s defiance of patriarchal authority (personified in Old Hurricane) and her insistence on her autonomy contest Victorian ideals of feminine behavior. Interestingly, this defiance is viewed throughout the text in a positive light. For example, as an adolescent girl, Cap is unable to find employment. She decides to disguise herself as a boy. The decision seems logical and Cap has only one regret for doing so: “the only
thing that made me feel sorry was to see what a fool I had been, not to turn to a boy before […] and from that day forth I was happy and prosperous!” (47). Of course the circumstances that provoke this behavior are extreme and Cap is left with little choice. However, the benefits Cap receives and the humor in which she operates do much to recommend her course of action. And though Southworth presents Cap’s cross-dressing humorously, she is making a serious point about the position in which working-class women and girls of the period found themselves.

Although Cap resumes her female dress when she comes under the paternal protection of Old Hurricane, she does not bow down to absolute patriarchal authority. Cap’s ‘masculine’ (i.e. stubborn, assertive, and impertinent) characteristics remain despite her change in dress. This indicates that her change is profound and not superficial. As Habegger writes, “It’s clear that the key to Capitola’s initial success in life is her readiness to undergo masculinization, a process that shapes her personality as well as her attire” (442). Cap relishes her freedom and independence. She tells Old Hurricane, “Freedom and peace are even sweeter than wealth and honors” (124). She alone among his household stands up to the old bully’s blustering and fits reducing him to the big wind that his name implies he is xvii.

It is notable that Cap defends her autonomy in a manner that comically illustrates the double standard of the times. In this manner, Southworth uses comedy to make a serious and valid point easier to accept. For example, a few days after Hurricane has railed at her for riding out alone and not returning until after dark, Cap waits for him to return from his nightly outing. Much to his astonishment and amusement, she rails at her guardian, echoing his phrases and expressions: “ didn’t you know the jeopardy in which
you placed yourself by riding out alone at this hour? Suppose three or four great runaway
Negresses had sprung out of the bushes—and—and” (128). While Cap’s admonition is
humorous, there is the underlying knowledge that real danger waits for women who ride
out in the countryside unattended. This is further evidenced in Cap’s encounter with
Craven and her (reluctant) concession to be accompanied by Hurricane’s manservant,
Wool (so long as he remains out of her sight). Cap realizes that she must accept some of
the patriarchal restrictions placed upon women, but unlike the novel’s other female
characters, she does not accept them all.

To further indicate Cap’s difference from the expected ‘feminine norm’,
Southworth sets her among three female characters who are ideally obedient, innocent,
self-sacrificing, helpless, and not at all comic. Clare Day, Marah Rocke, and Cap’s
mother, are victims of their own femininity and stand in direct contrast to Cap’s ability to
playfully elude danger and patriarchal constraint. By the term ‘victims of their own
femininity’ I mean simply, as indicated below, that these three women have refused to
demand their own rights because of the codes of behavior that society has placed upon
them. The polarity between Cap and the other three women, combined with their inability
to extricate themselves from unwelcome and dangerous situations, clearly indicates that
Cap’s rejection of patriarchal authority and constraints is correct.

The first of these conforming women is Clare Day. She is close to Cap in age but
there the similarity ends. The fact that ‘Clare’ means bright and clear, while ‘Black’
(Cap’s last name) means absence of light further illustrates their polarity. Clare is
described in terms of physical attributes. She has “fairy hair,” “natural politeness,” “a
voice sweeter than the notes of the crushat dove,” “a fair roseate face, soft and bright with
feelings and intelligence,” and she wafts “the fragrance of violets as she moved” (129-30).

Clare is her father’s sole child and is raised in safety. However, at his death she finds herself powerless and in the clutches of her new guardian, the evil Gabriel LeNoir. As noted above, LeNoir tries to force Clare to marry his lecherous son, Craven, in an effort to gain control of her wealth. When she resists, he threatens Clare with a fate worse “than death […] a life of dishonor” (302). Due to her insulated upbringing, Clare is ill equipped to protect herself. She does what her feminine upbringing has taught her to do; she weeps and contemplates suicide. Clare needs to be rescued. Cap is the knight who rushes to her defense.

Southworth consciously sets up Cap to take on this traditionally male role of knight-errant. As Cap rides to visit her new neighbor, Clare, she muses that,“one would think this were the enchanted forest containing the castle of the sleeping beauty, and I was the knight destined to deliver her” (270). To rescue Clare, Cap devises a plan in which Clare escapes by assuming both Cap’s clothes and attitude. Cap instructs Clare to “draw up your figure, throw back your head; walk with a little springy sway and swagger, as if you didn’t care a damson for anybody “ (307). Cap’s awareness of her difference from other females is depicted in these instructions. She knows she is different—in attitude and demeanor—and she enjoys that she is so. Cap’s clothing shields Clare and allows her to successfully escape her captors. Cap’s behavior during the rescue of Clare is fascinating. Playing her masculine and heroic role to the hilt, she becomes a boastful, aggressive gallant, telling Clare, “if I were only a young man, I would deliver you by the strength of my own arm, without subjecting you to inconvenience or danger “ (Southworth 308). Cap delights in her ability to outwit the evil LeNoirs. Once Clare is
safely away, she reveals her true identity to them. She answers their confusion by declaring: “it means that you have been outwitted by a girl; it means that your proposed victim has fled. […] It means that you two, precious father and son would be a pair of knaves if you had sense enough; but, failing in that, you are only a pair of fools” (316). This rescue illustrates Cap’s superiority over the ideal Victorian lady (personified by Clare). It also illustrates her superiority over “masculine” evil (personified by the LeNoirs).

Cap’s superiority is also seen when we compare her with Marah Rocke, the eternal victim. “Marah’s truly ‘womanly’ life is characterized by physical deprivation and emotional desperation […]. The contrast with Capitola […] is marked and intentional” (Dobson 235). Marah is Hurricane’s deserted wife. She was deserted when Hurricane found Gabriel LeNoir in their cottage about to rape Marah. Seeing the half-dressed LeNoir by the bed, Hurricane suspects adultery. He stabs LeNoir and storms from the cottage. Marah remains seventeen years in passive poverty waiting to be redeemed in Hurricane’s eyes. She refuses to defend herself to him: “If my wifehood and motherhood, my affection and my helplessness, were not advocates strong enough to win my cause, I could not have borne to employ others” (98). Her refusal to defend her situation and her patient trust in God to set things right confines both her and her son to a life of poverty and hardship.

This is in direct conflict with how Cap handles an attack upon her reputation. After his loss of Clare, Craven sets his sights upon Cap. When she declines his proposal, Craven spreads rumors of Cap’s easy virtue in an attempt to make her undesirable to other suitors so that she must accept his proposal or go unwed. Cap avenges her honor by
challenging Craven to a duel in which she shoots him in the face with split peas. This leads him to confess his bad behavior at what he thinks is his ‘death-bed’ confession. When Old Hurricane demands to know why she took matters in her own hands instead of referring the matter to him, Cap replies, “Because you are on the invalid list and I am in sound condition and capable of taking my own part” (376). Cap’s successful defense of both Clare and her own honor makes Marah Rocke’s passive acceptance of Hurricane’s accusations seems unnecessary and less than admirable.

The third female character to become a victim of her own femininity is Cap’s own mother, Capitola LeNoir. As a young foreign widow she believes the lies her brother-in-law, Gabriel LeNoir, feeds her: “Alas, I was a child, a widow, and a foreigner, all in one. I did not know your land, or your laws, or your people. I was not hopeful or confident [...] I was overwhelmed by his abuse […] I obeyed him like a slave, grateful even for the shelter of his roof” (352). Capitola LeNoir’s gender and age leave her vulnerable, allowing the villainous LeNoir to keep her captive for seventeen years. After seeing and recognizing Cap as her daughter, however, Capitola LeNoir begins to assert herself and fight back. Unfortunately she lacks Cap’s know-how and her efforts are not as successful; LeNoir easily places her in a lunatic asylum. The doctor there “received the story of [her] reported insanity […] and he never gave himself the unprofitable trouble to investigate the circumstances [of her commitment]” (446). Through Capitola LeNoir’s story we see how easily a troublesome woman might be gotten rid of in the nineteenth-century. Because of her gender, Capitola LeNoir is not given the chance to defend herself against the charge of insanity.
The ease with which troublesome (or independent) women are dismissed as hysterical is further illustrated when the LeNoirs try to silence the triumphant Cap at the chapel. In their attempts to quiet Cap’s tongue the LeNoirs cover Cap’s mouth with their hands and tell the occupants of the chapel, “Don’t listen to her! She is a maniac!” (316). This is one occasion when Cap finds herself in need of a rescue (luckily her fiancé, Herbert Greyson, just happens to be lost in the right place at the right time). While here she is saved by her love, in general it is Cap’s survival skills and her great luck that prevent her from experiencing a fate similar to her mother’s.

The comparison between Cap and the other three female characters of the novel indicates that the gender-defying Cap is the best woman. Able to protect herself and others, she is a new model of feminine virtue. Cap’s wits prevent her from finding herself in the sort of situations endured by other women. Her trickster status allows her to extract herself from danger in a manner that is both amusing and admirable. She is too self-reliant to allow herself to be in a situation like Clare’s in which she must decide between rape, suicide, or marriage to Craven. She certainly wouldn’t stand still for the treatment received by Marah Rocke and Capitola LeNoir. Cap’s ‘masculization’—her ‘New Woman’ take on feminine virtue—prevents her from sharing their fate.

But if Southworth is advocating a hearty dose of masculinization for women through her depiction of Cap, is it reasonable to assume that she is advocating a hearty dose of feminization for men through her depiction of Marah and Hurricane’s son, Traverse Rocke? Southworth was concerned about the unchecked powers of the male. Traverse represents an alternative. “Traverse […] in many ways is an adaptation of the best qualities of true womanhood to the masculine character” (Dobson in Southworth xxxv).
Traverse is depicted as resembling his mother in that “he was sensitive and excitable—easily depressed and easily exhilarated” (106). When embarrassed, he gets “an almost girlish smile and blush” (428). He is able to perform his own domestic tasks such as cooking, cleaning, and “oh! Miracle of independence, he mended his own gloves and sewed on his own shirt buttons” (433). Above all, he is sensitive to the needs and rights of women. While working in the mental asylum he is “shocked at [the] necessary…exposure of their sanctuary […] he scrupulously avoided looking in through the gratings upon those helpless women who had no means of secluding themselves” (440). We may infer that Traverse is Southworth’s ideal man. He is infused with sensitivity and a deep understanding of women.

In Traverse, as well as in Cap, we see Southworth’s blurring of gender lines. This is evident in Habegger’s assessment of Traverse: “Traverse is obviously a sissy […] his great and sufficient virtue is that he understands women and other victims” (444). The fact that Habegger designates Traverse a “sissy” because of his caring and emotional nature indicates the tenacity of the stereotypes against which Southworth fought, and the enduring value of works like *The Hidden Hand* that challenge them.

Although Traverse represents an idealized masculinity in the novel, Southworth also expresses her admiration for a very different model of masculinity in the character of the bandit, Black Donald. Black Donald is aligned most closely with the heroine Cap. The similarities between the two characters are numerous: both use disguises; she has a birthmark that resembles a red hand, while his “hands are red with murder” (111); and even their names connect them together—he is Black Donald while she is Capitola Black. Southworth also sets up a definite mutual attraction between her two tricksters:
“Throughout the novel, there has been a mutual fascination between Capitola Black and Black Donald based on their admiration for each other’s rebellious trickery; the important difference […] is that […] Capitola remains within the boundaries of lawful society” (Landay 39) while Black Donald is an outlaw.

Black Donald’s outlaw status appeals to Cap as much as her transgression of gender roles appeals to him. When Black Donald first reveals himself to Cap she attempts to physically capture him. “The instinct of the huntress possessed her […] she ran out and overtook the outlaw […] with the agile leap of a little terrier she sprang up behind him, seized the thick collar of his pea-jacket with both hands, and drawing up her feet, hung there with all her weight” (157). This physical display of force by Cap inspires a passion for her in Black Donald. He sends three of his men to capture Cap. Spying them under her bed, the quick-thinking Cap locks them in her room, gets help, and they are arrested. Her ability to outsmart his men increases Black Donald’s desire for Cap. When Black Donald himself comes to abduct her, she puts him off his guard by flirting with him. She then sends him falling down the (convenient) trap door in her room. Even in flirtation, Cap remains the active trickster.

Cap’s flirtatious manner as she lures Black Donald to the trap door might be passed off as mere play-acting but for her behavior afterwards at Black Donald’s trial. When he is condemned to death, she first burst into tears and then “jumped over two or three intervening seats and climbed up to the side of the dock, and reached up her hand to the prisoner” (466). Such an emotional display from the plucky Cap indicates the depth of her affection for the outlaw. Afterwards, she vows to save him from the gallows. Hurricane comments on her determination: “Whe-ew! You’ll deliver him by the strength
of your arm, my little Donna Quixota” (467). Cap being Cap, hers aren’t mere boasts—she does manage Black Donald’s escape from jail and sets his feet on the trail from villainy and evil to (believe it or not) an aspiring career in politics. His successful reform is indicated by Black Donald’s last communication to Cap and her family, which read, “Three hundred dollars, to pay for [the horse] Fleetfoot. Black Donald, Reformed Robber” (484). Landay claims that “Capitola’s ability to outwit and capture the bandit and her willingness to free him align her more with Black Donald than with her fiancé Herbert Greyson” (40). However, Black Donald, unlike his paler rival Greyson, is a danger that a woman like Cap would have to avoid. While Cap and Donald share their devilish ‘blackness’, Cap’s excess must be modified by a union with her lifelong friend, Herbert Greyson.

At the novel’s conclusion, Cap weds her sailor, but lest we think she is thereby tamed and controlled, Southworth insists that “our Cap sometimes gives her ‘dear, darling, sweet Herbert the benefit of the sharp edge of her tongue, which of course he deserves. But notwithstanding all this, I am happy to say that they all enjoy a fair amount of human felicity” (485). Clearly then, despite her cross-dressing, Cap is not to be confused with the “the New Woman/Mannish Lesbian” discussed by Smith-Rosenberg. This New Woman/Mannish Lesbian “embodied her demand to exercise male rights and powers—to act, that is, as if she were a man! To male physicians, politicians, even modernist writers, [she] symbolized disorder in a world gone mad” (Smith-Rosenberg 40). As a woman writer dependent on public opinion, Southworth couldn’t risk letting an unconventional heroine such as Cap remain unrestrained. Instead, she opts to tell us that though Cap is wed, she is not completely under Herbert’s rule. In this way, Southworth
both bows to and thumbs her nose at the literary convention of ending novels with marriage.

I found Cap to be the most enjoyable of all the cross-dressed characters I encountered in my survey of nineteenth-century literature. She was also immensely popular with her contemporary readers. Frank Mott tells us that

_The Hidden Hand_ […] was translated into the leading European languages, and was especially popular in England. […] London shops featured Capitola hats and Capitola suits for girls, and three of the city’s theatres [sic] produced dramatic versions of her story at once. In one of these plays, John Wilkes Booth was taking the role of Black Donald. (141)

And Helen Papashvily claims that “the book joined Dicken’s _A Tale of Two Cities_, George Eliot’s _Adam Bede_, and Thackeray’s _The Virginians_, on the best-seller list for 1859” (129). Because Cap’s character is appealing and did enjoy a great deal of popularity, it is not unreasonable to assume that her actions were presented for emulation as Dobson suggests:

By mining the popular mood and presenting an attractive and previously unarticulated alternative for the contemporary representation of women, Southworth inevitably influenced imaginative possibilities for gender definition […] She was therefore influential in changing the possibilities of reality for women”. (In Southworth xl)

I would expect no less from Cap.

Safely located in a fictional melodrama, the self-sufficient, plucky Capitola indicated what women could be if freed from the social conventions and the restraints of patriarchy. Southworth’s use of Victorian feminine ideals—the deserted long-suffering wife, the pure ideal lady, and the madwoman in the attic—helps to make the more fantastic character of Cap seem the most appealing and real. Cap must gain her spirit
from her hardships and cross-dressing. Her three foils—Clare, Marah, and her mother—all represent women who, because of their social positions, are carefully contained and restrained. Because Cap is forced by a gender biased job market to cross-dress, she is made aware of masculine privilege. This lowly beginning forms Cap’s spirit and proves to be most beneficial, especially when seen next to the other three female characters. Cap starts her life as a poor orphan. Unrestrained by neither guardian nor social demands, she is free to create and follow her own path and she does so exceedingly well.
Reflections and Conclusions

The roots of education are bitter, but
The fruit is sweet.
---Aristotle

When considering my thesis topic, I decided to work with nineteenth-century material because I felt that the nineteenth-century was an exciting time of change and chance, especially for women. Gary Kates asserts that:

When Victorians rather suddenly made sex and sexual difference a new cultural paradigm, it had the effect of polarizing the sexes, establishing rigid boundaries between them and significantly narrowing gender roles for both men and women. (xviii)

The transvestite characters in both of the novels explored by this thesis suggest that there were women who challenged this polarization and the existing hierarchies of class and gender. Furthermore, the popularity with which the novels were received indicates an audience receptive to their message.

As previously mentioned, the texts represent two countries—America and England. There are several noteworthy national differences visible between the novels. For example, Southworth’s Capitola is very stereotypically American—she is brash, loud, and adventuresome. Although the character Angelica also possess these traits, she exhibits them only when dressed in her masculine attire. Capitola flaunts these characteristics regardless of her dress; they are an important aspect of her persona. Furthermore, the Southworth novel depicts a power hierarchy that is based on economics
rather than class, indicating the fluidity of the American class structure. This is very different from the European hierarchies. In the British novel, we see hard class lines drawn. These class lines are especially evident in Angelica’s return to her “proper” place as a representative of the upper-class.

Despite their separate national identities, both novels point to a definite relationship between gender, class, and power. Grand’s novel was the most blatantly critical of the male-dominated nineteenth-century hierarchy. Her character Angelica voices many New Woman complaints against society’s treatment of women. Southworth’s novel makes many of the same complaints, but the criticism is softened with comedy. Although both texts critique the sexual and social inequities of the period, they do so in different manners.

We see the same sort of similarity and difference in the characters themselves. In many ways the transvestite characters explored by this thesis are very similar; Grand’s Angelica, and Southworth’s Capitola share intelligence, daring, a love of autonomy, and financial security. However they also possess very distinct personalities; there is no stereotype indicated by them. Mentally, Southworth’s Capitola also remains in the masculine state. This is indicated by the many references to her as a ‘boy’ by angry paternal characters such as Old Hurricane and the Reverend Goodwin. Capitola also recognizes that dress, in and of itself, is inconsequential. She is who she is regardless of what envelops her body. Her self-assuredness and her comic rejection of patriarchal authority make her delightful. In many ways, she stands in sharp contrast to Grand’s Angelica who ends as a more tragic character. While dressed as the Boy she is self-assured, physically energetic, and extremely witty. As Angelica, under the disapproving
gaze of the Tenor, she defends her decision to cross-dress admirably, listing every women’s rights grievance as she does so. However, the Tenor’s masculine disapproval combined with the realization that as a woman she is not being heard, seem to break her. She reverts back into the stereotypical woman of the time, becoming helpless and slightly hysterical. While Angelica’s deflation is tragic, her cross-dressed actions are not. They indicate the superficial nature of gender and woman’s unrealized potential. Angelica offers hope for the future, if not for herself. Both of the cross-dressed characters explored in this thesis hold out hope and lessons for a future of gender and social equality.

Both novels explored in this thesis unite to dispel the myth of innate male superiority and by doing so, they indicate that other hierarchies based upon innate superiority are also constructed and, therefore, capable of being destroyed.

The Final Word

Suddenly this thesis, which began as a huge undertaking, seems small. There are pertinent and related issues that I want to explore and which could have been included in this thesis. For example, the issue of racial cross-dressing (‘passing’) as seen in texts such as Griffin’s Black Like Me (1962), Larsen’s Passing (1929), and Demijohn’s Black Alice (1968). The relationship between class/economic status and race evident in these texts is fascinating. What I find especially interesting about this issue is society’s need to conflate an individual’s physical appearance (race and gender most notably) with their social/economic merit.

Another related issue is the fact that while it is tactically accepted in our current society for women to wear men’s clothing, it is still unacceptable for men to
wear women’s clothing. Furthermore there is a definite discomfort present when women participate in traditionally masculine activities such as boxing and weightlifting, or appear to be too aggressive (i.e. bitchy), or are more financially successful than their male counterparts. Another issue is the recent trend in movies to make the cross-dresser seem ridiculous (Tootsie, Mrs. Doubtfire, and Thanks for Everything, Julie Newmar) or an outsider/freak beyond inclusion into ‘normal’ society (Boys Don’t Cry and Psycho). Obviously there still exists a definite level of discomfort associated with challenges such as these, which can be read as threatening to the male dominated hierarchy of our culture.

As I said, for me this thesis opened up more questions than it answered and I have come to realize that this is perhaps its purpose—to fill the student with a curiosity that is never-ending, but leads from one search into another and another without end.
Thesis Bibliography

Primary Texts


Critical/Background Texts


Yeazell, Ruth Bernard, ed. *Sex, Politics, and Science in the 19th Century Novel*. Baltimore:
Appendices
A POSER FOR A BLOOMER

Old Gentleman: “Before I can entertain your proposal, and give my consent to your marrying my son, I must ask you, whether you are in a position—a—to—a—keep him in the style to which—a—I may say—he has always been accustomed? Ahem!”

(1853)

(Williams 29)
THE LAST NEW FAD. A REACTION FROM ESTHETICS.

_The Professor_: “NOW, LADIES. STRAIGHT FROM THE SHOULDER, PLEASE!—AND DON’T TRY TO SCRATCH—TAIN’T NO GOOD WITH THE GLOVES ON!”

_M. le Professeur_: “ALLONS, MADEMOISELLE,—VIF LA! ROMPEZ—PARADE ET RIPOSTE EN QUARTE. BON! ENCORE UNE FOIS LA PEINTE DE SECONDE. HARDI! UNE, DEUSSE, TROISSE! FENDEZ-VOUS BIEN,—PARFAIT!”

(1856)

(Williams 29)
The Bloomer Costume #1

<http://www.probertencyclopaedia.com/j/BloomerCostume.jpg>
Currier and Ives idea of the Bloomer Costume.” Originally printed in 1851.

<http://www.thetailorofpeterboro.com/currierbloomer.jpg>
Mary E. W. in Bloomer Costume

<http://www.humanities.ualberta.ca/agora/images/201images/two.jpg>
Appendix A (Continued)

The Bloomer Costume #2

<http://www.unr.edu/sb204/theatre/bloom2.html>
Endnotes

i Contemporary discussions of transvestism, such as are found in Woodhouse and Dekker, often make a distinction between the literal meaning of transvestism and sexual practices.

ii In Paradoxes of Gender (18).

iii “Philo taught that progress for the female meant giving up the female gender…” (Bullough 77).

iv Linda Dowling convincingly links the New Woman and Decadent writer in her article, The Decadent and the New Woman in the 1890’s.

v Dr. John Moore, professor of Classics at New College of Florida claims that “the ancient sources for the story are fairly late--the fullest is Apollodorus, Bibliotheca iii.13.8” 12/2001.

vi In an attempt at dress reform, this costume was created by Elizabeth Smith Miller in 1851. It consisted of loose trousers gathered at the ankles worn beneath a short dress or skirt and vest. See Appendix for illustrations.

vii D’Emilio and Freedman discuss this phenomenon in Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America, p.124-25.

viii See Chapter 5 of Mosse’s The Image of Man for an in-depth discussion of the association of homosexuality with social corruption.

ix See Nancy Tuana’s The Less Noble Sex for a complete discussion of the use of nineteenth-century science and philosophy to maintain sexual dichotomies.

x “The Cult of True Womanhood’, as Barbara Welter named it in her influential essay of the same title, privileged the attributes of piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity. Among the media promulgating True Womanhood as the feminine ideal were sentimental novels, conduct books, advice manuals, sermons, and women's magazines” (Davidson 887).

xi “Nineteenth-century medical theories classified all women as predisposed to illness, that is, as invalids; this representation of female illness pervades women's fiction in the nineteenth-century” (Davidson 423).

xii In the larger novel, the reader is introduced to Diavolo, Angelica's twin brother. Grand uses him to illustrate the different way which society treats people on the basis of gender and nothing more.

xiii Though Angelica does indeed have a twin (Diavolo), this twin is not the Tenor’s Boy and cannot be.

xiv Merriam-Webster, (10th ed., 1999) offers the following definitions: Trickster: "c: a deceptive character appearing in various forms in the folklore of many cultures"; Hoyden: a girl or woman of saucy, boisterous, or carefree behavior”; and Madcap: "marked by capriciousness, recklessness, or foolishness".

xv Southworth describes her childhood spent "with the old Negroes in the kitchen, listening with open ears and mind to the ghost stories, old legends and tales (Papashvily 111).

xvi Southworth’s humorous labeling of her characters enables the reader to instantly establish that character’s nature.

xvii This theme is also seen in works such as Bronte’s Wuthering Heights and Gilman’s “The Yellow Wallpaper.”

xviii A version of The Hidden Hand was originally serialized in 1859, and later edited and re-released as a book in 1889.