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Empiricism and Reason in Harriet Martineau's Sociology

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Hill, Michael R. 1989. "Empiricism and Reason in Harriet Martineau's Sociology." Pp. xv-lx in *How to Observe Morals and Manners*, by Harriet Martineau. Sesquicentennial edition of the first social science methods text, with new appendices, index, and an introductory essay by Michael R. Hill. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

Introduction to the Transaction Edition

Empiricism and Reason in Harriet Martineau's Sociology

It is an old error of man to forget to put
quotation marks where he borrows from a
woman's brain!

—Anna Garlin Spencer

The architecture and evolution of Harriet Martineau's sociological epistemology epitomize an essential tension between abstract theory and concrete empiricism. The body of Martineau's intellectual work demonstrates a major conceptual shift, from early religious convictions to subsequent rejection of all metaphysical systems. *How to Observe Morals and Manners* lies midway in this journey. The epistemological and biographical route to Martineau's adamant repudiation of metaphysics was long, personally tumultuous, and grounded fundamentally in empirical studies of social conditions. I focus here on the give-and-take between metaphysics, empiricism, and rationality in Harriet Martineau's sociological work. Part one of this essay highlights the major epistemological points advanced by Martineau in *How to Observe Morals and Manners*. The second, longer part outlines Martineau's epistemological

development as a social theorist and locates *How to Observe Morals and Manners* within her intellectual biography as a whole.

I. Method and Moral Purpose in Observation

Martineau sets forth the principles for systematic collection and interpretation of social facts in *How to Observe Morals and Manners*. Facts about things, carefully recorded in journals and notebooks, form an inventory of the *manners* or patterned social relationships in a society. The discovery of manners, however, is never the primary objective of responsible observers. She wrote:

A traveller who should report of them [manners] exclusively is not only no philosopher, but does not merit the name of an observer.¹

Manners are merely *surface*, nothing more than manifestations of the deeper morals of a society.

Martineau directs us to identify the condition and scope of the *moral* underpinnings of the societies we study. This requires considerable moral preparation of our own. Only then can we properly interpret the results of our observations:

To him, and to him only, who has studied the principles of morals, and thus possessed himself of a key to the mysteries of all social weal and wo, will manners be an index answering as faithfully to the internal movements, harmonious or discordant, of society, as the human countenance to the workings of the human heart.²

Here, Martineau sets out her version of the "correspondence problem"³ that plagues empirical research that purports to amplify our understanding of unobservable, theoretical entities. For Martineau, morals—the inner workings of the human heart—are her unobservable, theoretical entities. Manners—the empirical traces of institutional activity—are her observables, surface indices to interior morals.

Martineau advises researchers to concentrate on *things*, by which she means physical artifacts, official records, and other traces of institutionalized behavior and social organization. "The grand secret of wise inquiry into Morals and Manners," she writes, "is to begin with the study of *things*, using the *discourse of persons* as a commentary upon them."⁴ Interviews, conversations, and informants have secondary importance at best: "To arrive at the facts of the condition of a people through the discourse of individuals, is a hopeless enterprise."⁵

Her emphasis on the importance of "things" is expressed clearly in this key passage:

Though the facts sought by travellers relate to Persons, they may most readily be learned from Things. The eloquence of Institutions and Records, in which the action of the nation is embodied and perpetuated, is more comprehensive and more faithful than that of any variety of individual voices. The voice of a whole people goes up in the silent workings of an institution; the condition of the masses is reflected from the surface of a record. The Institutions of a nation—political, religious or social—put evidence into the

observer's hands as to its capabilities and wants, which the study of individuals could not yield in the course of a lifetime. The records of any society, be they what they may, whether architectural remains, epitaphs, civic registers, national music, or any other of the thousand manifestations of the common mind which may be found among every people, afford more information on Morals in a day than converse with individuals in a year.⁶

Conversations with the inhabitants of a society under investigation, she advises, are primarily useful for corroborating and explicating observed facts about things.

To assess the moral state of a society, each observer must attend carefully to empirical instances of manners. When observable, representative facts have been systematically collected, only then is it appropriate to make *generalizations* about morals. Martineau astutely perceived that this is no simple, mechanical process. To responsibly interpret the facts, the observer must, among other things: (1) understand the universal principles of morals (i.e., must possess a comprehensive axiological epistemology), (2) be of a sufficiently liberal mind not to be unsympathetic to societies whose superficial manners differ from one's own, and (3) be a person who seeks a moral life. How, she asks, can a scoundrel or a degenerate ever recognize the higher moral qualities potentially present in any society?

Human happiness is, for Martineau, a universal moral good which can be achieved in a variety of ways in various societies. She posits that it is everywhere considered desirable to give and increase happiness. Metaphysically, Martineau is no teleologist at this point, but she does view

the Creator as everywhere *intending* human happiness. The fundamental principle is a universal (happiness), but the means for achieving it must be judged relative to each society. All manners are to be interpreted *in context* in light of the universal moral principle. She warns novice observers that the same act may be moral in one society while totally reprehensible elsewhere. One cannot use the accepted manners of one's own society as a key to the moral basis of manners in another. Ethnocentrism (a term Martineau would have used had it been coined in her day) is a dangerous peril to those who observe and would thereby understand other cultures firsthand. The observer—she reminds us—must guard continually against making hasty and unsympathetic generalizations.

Because Martineau set herself the task of assessing the moral state of societies as wholes, and because this assessment depends crucially on empirically-derived facts (albeit interpreted in the light of universal principles), the quality of the observational data becomes extraordinarily important if one hopes to avoid errors of judgment. Martineau emphasizes this point repeatedly. Observations must be representative. Bias must be avoided. All institutionalized patterns must be observed in all quarters, in all classes, in all regions. Observers must not be swayed by vested interests and yet—at the same time—they must remain open to the opinions and insights of the very best minds in each society, a tricky task even for seasoned investigators.

How to Observe Morals and Manners distills Martineau's maxims, insights, and guidelines for juggling the reciprocal interrelationships between theoretical presuppositions, empirical data collection, and the process of making generalizations about unobservable social

phenomena. Here are the careful instructions needed by the band of social observers that Rousseau wanted to send to all corners of the globe. Had such travellers who did write about their travels (and there were many) heeded Martineau's advice, perhaps Anthony Giddens would not today find so many of their reports untrustworthy.⁷

Martineau addressed her remarks to would-be travellers to foreign lands, but the preface to de la Beche's volume in the "How to Observe" series states clearly that the works are intended for students and scientists as well. Martineau's use of the "stranger in a strange land" is the first of many resorts to this imagery by sociologists, including the classic essays by Georg Simmel and Alfred Schutz. More recent theorists also adopt the "stranger's" perspective, including J.B. Jackson and Dean MacCannell.⁸ Martineau's methodological recommendations are those of a sophisticated social theoretician who well understood two crucial principles: (1) that all observers—no matter how careful—can make mistakes, be hoodwinked, and fall prey to their own presuppositions, and (2) that as humans we are always choosing, rearranging, and giving new possibilities to the social worlds we inhabit.

The possibility of social change lies at the heart of Martineau's concept of "progress." She exhorts us to scientifically evaluate the potential of each society for moral advancement. Each observer, she writes, should attend to:

... whether the country he studies is advancing in wisdom and happiness, or whether it is stationary, or whether it is going back. The probabilities of its progress are wholly dependent on this.⁹

Martineau reviews environmental factors which might influence moral progress, but the greatest force for progress is deeply social:

The need of mutual aid, the habit of co-operation caused by interest in social objects, has a good effect upon men's feelings and manners toward each other; and out of this grows the mutual regard which naturally strengthens into the fraternal spirit.¹⁰

According to this view, the members of moral and progressive societies carefully tend their mutual interests, forming nations which likewise cooperate together.

Martineau posits no necessary teleological basis for social and international cooperation, yet she anticipates that true fraternity may one day be realized throughout the world. She is unquestionably an optimist, confident that human societies will fulfill the Creator's intentions. Progress is possible, desirable, even lawful, but not teleologically necessary. The potential for progress—as well as regression—lies within each society. Whether progress blooms or not depends in large measure on the moral character of the social institutions that its members devise and nurture.

The scientific observer examines the moral state of society, assesses its potential for moral progress, and—where possible—encourages those practices and values conducive to the social recognition of mutual interest. Clear thinking, reliable research, and universal education are fundamental to this process. Here, Martineau's purpose as an observer—and in teaching us how to observe—reveals itself. As writer, observer, and sociologist, Martineau

pursued a life of scholarship, social action, and the diffusion of knowledge to persons in all social classes and every economic condition. By teaching us "how to observe," Martineau expands our abilities to recognize our mutual potential for cooperation and moral progress.

II. Martineau's Intellectual Journey as a Social Theorist

Martineau (1802-1876) turned to professional writing—one of the few intellectual occupations open to women of her time—as her primary source of income. Without the structural benefits of college training (women were barred from institutions of higher learning) and handicapped by severe hearing loss (she required an ear trumpet to hear clearly), Martineau undertook pioneering studies—substantive, theoretical, and methodological studies—in what is now called sociology.¹¹ The fact of her early sociological contribution is obscured in part by the multifaceted character of her many activities during an era when "sociology" was yet to become a recognized word, let alone a discipline.

She was a prolific writer and vigorous activist who undertook multitudes of wide-ranging and extraordinary projects.¹² She was an ardent Unitarian, abolitionist, critic, feminist, social scientist, and—eventually—atheist. From middle class origins fallen on hard economic circumstances, she was eventually lionized by English society for her popular writings on political economy. Her writing topics included, among others, biography, disability, education, history, husbandry, legislation, manufacturing, mesmerism, occupational health, philosophy, political economy, religion, research techniques, slavery, sociology, and travel. These works

appeared as monographs, novels, children's books, tracts, journal articles, and poetry. As a journalist, she wrote more than a thousand newspaper articles. Her travels and research took her to America, Ireland, and the Middle East on long treks for months of inquiry. With each trip, she authored detailed reports on her observations. Martineau's sociological insights are found throughout her massive bibliography. It is a large task to detail the precise contours of Martineau's social scientific work and thought. Much work remains in this regard for future students of the history, theory, and development of sociology. What follows is a tentative outline of the epistemological structure of Martineau's sociology.¹³

Theological Certainty

Martineau was born in England in 1802. Her early life and writings reflect deep loyalty to Unitarian cosmology and Christian theology. Her first essays and monographs, such as *The Essential Faith of the Universal Church: Deduced from the Sacred Records* (1833), give evidence to her firmly held theological positions. She steadfastly concluded, for example, in *Providence as Manifested through Israel* (1833) that:

The designs of the Supreme respecting the spiritual education of the human race have now been inferred from a survey of the history of the race, and a comparison of his Providence towards your nation in particular, with that experienced by mankind in general. The truth having been established that a revelation was given, the extent of that revelation was next ascertained; it having

been proved that Christianity is the appointed continuation and consummation of Judaism.¹⁴

Beyond the teleological metaphysic in the above quotation, consider carefully the key words in the passage: "design," "infer," "survey," "comparison" of the "particular" with the "general," "truth," "ascertain," and, "prove." Here is today's rhetoric of rational inquiry and logical exposition! She argued her religious positions with conviction and, more importantly, with system. Her insistence on reason, clarity, and logic surfaced early and influenced the preponderance of her work, especially her sociological analyses of social institutions and political practice.

Martineau's work is hallmarked by her expectation that her readers are to be convinced by reason, explication, and logical example rather than emotion. After presenting her conclusions in *Providence*, she advised her readers:

We have done what we can, in placing before you the grounds of our own convictions; and here we stop short—not because we have nothing more to tell, but because a participation in our feelings can only be arrived at through an adoption of our convictions. If you were to believe as we believe, you would feel as we feel; and then would be the time to declare the multitude of benefits, of hourly blessings, which we know the enlightened and pure reception of the Gospel to bestow on its disciples. While you do not believe as we believe, such declarations cannot be welcome to you, or serviceable to the cause you oppose. Permit us, however, to advert to a principle which you acknowledge—that it is an insult to the rational

nature of man, and therefore to Him who constituted that nature, to be carelessly ignorant of any truth which He has not concealed, or wilfully blind to any light which He has appointed to be universally diffused.¹⁵

A dialectical obligation between writer and reader was thus early assumed by Martineau.

Writers, in Martineau's view, must present arguments cogently, carefully, systematically. Readers, in turn, are obligated to inspect, analyze, and critique each writer's efforts from a platform of reason rather than party or sectarian interest. If logic demonstrates a truth, one dare not wilfully darken or refuse the light of reason and revealed verity. Paradoxically, given the depth and zeal of her early religious period, Martineau's unwavering commitment to empirical evidence and rational inquiry led her to abandon Unitarianism in later life. When she could not escape the inexorable consequences of her own logical deductions, she took hold of her religious convictions and threw them over.¹⁶ Her paradigm shift from Christian theology to positivist social science was not so much a clash between two mutually exclusive systems as it was the outcome of her even more fundamental and unalterable affirmation of human reason.

Rational Fictions

As a young woman, Martineau was intensely interested in the science of political economy and she proposed, unsuccessfully at first, to publish a series of works explaining the principles of political economy to her fellow citizens. The result was her massive, twenty-five part

Illustrations of Political Economy. The *Illustrations* enjoyed immense popularity and were produced regularly and relentlessly starting in 1832 in monthly installments as fictional "tales" over a period of two years. Each part was a short novel, a complete work of literature. All told, she wrote 3,479 pages; each volume averaged 139 pages in length. Each tale, except the last, illustrated a subset of theoretical principles in political economy. The last installment, *The Moral of Many Fables*, extending to 144 pages, is a nonfiction, systematic explication of the central concepts in the science of political economy. This monograph demonstrates her early command of an integrated theory of social organization.

In the *Illustrations*, Martineau refined a social science technique that she employed again many times: the use of fiction to illustrate theoretical principles.¹⁷ Nearly a hundred years later, Bonser argued that Martineau's technique was also an early example of *case method*:

Her method was not unlike the modern case study, except that it was fictitious. To illustrate each principle she wrote a tale in which the actual operation of the principle was made evident in real life, and then, at the end, lest the reader have missed a point, the political economy which had previously been illustrated was briefly summarized.¹⁸

Martineau also used fiction to explicate factual conditions as well as theoretical principles. In the preface to *Forest and Game-Law Tales* (1845), she wrote:

I am deeply indebted to many, both friends and strangers, who have supplied me with the materials necessary to my object, from the oldest lore obtainable to the Evidence of the Parliamentary Committee of last session. This aid has enabled me to prosecute and present my work with the courage justified by the fact that my tales are all, though bearing the form of fiction, essentially true. What invention there is is merely in order to the more life-like and faithful exposition of facts. I trust there will be found in the whole no important representation of any effect of the system which may not be substantiated from the history of the past or present time.¹⁹

The types of materials used by Martineau to establish points of fact included government data and interviews with knowledgeable officials. In the preface to *Poor Laws and Paupers* (1833), she noted:

As any utility which may be contemplated from the following tale must be impaired by the supposition that the woes and vices it displays are the offspring of an uncontrolled imagination, I beg to state that all that is most melancholy in my story is strictly true. I have unquestionable authority in the Reports of the Poor-Law Commissioners, and the testimony of others who are occupied in the administration of parish affairs, for every parochial abuse and every pauper encroachment here exhibited; and I have taken no

pains to select the worst instances of either that have come within my knowledge.²⁰

Whatever specifically literary merit others may see (or not see) therein, the *Illustrations of Political Economy* and many of Martineau's other fiction works are fundamentally works of theoretical and empirical social science. In addition, Martineau did write fiction for the sake of fiction. This mode characterizes her first novel, *Deerbrook* (1839), a set of four tales for children collectively titled *The Playfellow* (1844), and several other works. Nonetheless, it was the *Illustrations*, her first major social scientific work, that catapulted Martineau to international fame as a writer and authority on political economy.

From Metaphysics to Empiricism

Martineau was greatly tired by the task and pace of writing the many parts of the *Illustrations*. She sought respite, and the proposed solution was "travel for the sake of recreation and repose."²¹ She planned a carefree trip to the New World. She was persuaded, however, to combine business with pleasure at the suggestion of Lord Henley and she thus:

. . . turned her face in the direction of the United States, in order to examine some points of social policy and morals, honourable to the Americans and worthy of our emulation, but generally overlooked by European travellers who go to amuse themselves and return to quiz.²²

Her systematic account of these travels resulted in the highly regarded, three-volume sociological analysis, *Society in America*, published in 1837. A one-volume abridgment was prepared and introduced to modern readers by the American sociologist, Seymour Martin Lipset.²³

Martineau, aged 32, departed from Liverpool for New York on August 9, 1834, on the *United States*, a wooden-masted sailing vessel known as a packet-ship.²⁴ The first steam-powered voyage to the United States would not occur until 1838. Sometimes becalmed, and once buffeted by hurricane winds, this particular Atlantic crossing eventually took 42 days. Martineau welcomed this extended month of seafaring.²⁵ Never idle and apt to take on many projects even when she desired rest, she filled much of her time at sea working on the substance of what would become the first methodological treatise in sociology, *How to Observe Morals and Manners*.

In her *Autobiography*, Martineau wrote:

I have enjoyed few things more in life than the certainty of being out of the way of the post, of news, and of passing strangers for a whole month: and this seems to show how overwrought I must have been at the close of my long work. My felicity would have been complete if I could have looked forward to a month of absolute idleness: but my constitutional weakness—my difficulty in saying "No," was in my way, and a good deal spoiled my holiday. A friend, whom indeed I was bound to oblige, requested me to write for him a long chapter for a book he contemplated, to be called "How to Observe." The subject he gave me was Morals and Manners. Before my return, his

proposed volume was given up; and Mr. Knight was arranging about a series of volumes, under that title. The Chapter I wrote on board ship served as the basis for my own volume for that series; and thus, the reluctant toil was not thrown away. But thoroughly reluctant it was. The task weighed upon me more than the writing of a quarto volume would have done at another time: and circumstances of time and place were indeed most unfavorable to work of the kind. My long confinement within stringent bounds of punctuality had produced bad effects—narrowing my mind, and making my conscience tender about work. So, when that chapter was done, at last, I wrote no more till I was settled at home again, in the autumn of 1836—with two small exceptions.²⁶

Thus, during a needed respite from her intense effort on the *Illustrations*, and anticipating approximately two years of travel, study, and observation in the United States, Martineau undertook a commission to write a systematic account of observational techniques.

The "friend" whom Martineau "was bound to oblige" by writing a chapter on "How to Observe Morals and Manners" is not directly identified in Martineau's published work. It is probable, however, that he was Charles Henry Bellenden Ker (c. 1785-1871), an English legal reformer. The following evidence argues in his behalf. First, Ker was a friend of Charles Knight who published the "How to Observe" series in which Martineau's book was the second (and final) volume. Knight and Ker were both active in the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge. Knight wrote that Ker:

... was the most fertile in projects of any member of the committee. Apart from the Society, he had ever some new scheme to suggest to me as a publishing enterprise. His plans were not always practicable; but they always indicated the fertility of his mind, and the refinement of his taste.²⁷

When the original plan for a book of essays collapsed, it was replaced by a new scheme to publish a series of separate books on scientific investigation. The first volume was *How to Observe Geology*, written by Henry Thomas de la Beche and published by Charles Knight.²⁸ It contains a preface that recounts the origins of the idea for the "How to Observe" series. (This preface is reprinted in full in Appendix II.) The author of the preface signed with the initials "H.B.K." This could only be Henry Bellenden Ker, the colleague of Charles Knight. Finally, Ker and his wife were intimate friends of Harriet Martineau during the years 1832-1834. Martineau visited often and wrote appreciatively of these escapes from the crush of London society in her *Autobiography*:

There were country houses where I went every week or two, to meet pleasant little dinner parties, and to sleep, for the enjoyment of country air and quiet. Such as these were the H. Bellenden Kers', whose Swiss Cottage at Cheshunt was a sort of home to me.²⁹

Martineau frequented the Kers' cottage during the two years just prior to her voyage abroad. H.B. Ker was the fertile proposer of publishing schemes, the author of the

preface to de la Beche's volume, and a friend to whom Martineau—having accepted his hospitality on numerous occasions—would feel a debt of obligation. Thus, in all probability, it was H. Bellenden Ker who first obligated his frequent house guest to draft "How to Observe Morals and Manners" and, when his original publishing plan became unworkable, encouraged publication of a series of separate books, pressuring Martineau to expand her initial chapter into a full-fledged volume.³⁰

The actual writing of the first draft of "How to Observe" was subject to shipboard annoyances. Martineau described the conditions under which she wrote "a long article," a reference which with little doubt indicates the initial draft of "How to Observe." Martineau wrote:

I had a task to do, which is a thing that should be avoided on board ship. I had a long article to write; and nothing else would I do, on fine mornings, till it was finished. It is disagreeable writing in the cabin, with people flitting all about one. It is unwholesome writing in one's stateroom in the month of August. The deck is the only place. The first care, after breakfast, of my clerical friend the New-Englander, was to find me a corner where the wind would not blow my paper about, where the sun would not dazzle me, and where I might be quiet; and then he took his seat behind the roundhouse, with a row of children from the steerage before him to do their lessons . . . For some time I was daily baffled in my purpose of writing by the observation of persons who seemed not only entirely ignorant of the process of composition, but very anxious to learn

it. Not only did the children from the steerage spy from behind chests and casks, and peep over my shoulder, but the inquirer about the whale was wont to place himself directly in front of me, with his arms akimbo, and his eyes fixed on the point of my pen. Somebody gave him a hint at last, and I was left in peace. By two o'clock, when the deck began to fill again after luncheon, my head and eyes had had enough of writing, and I joyfully mounted the rail.³¹

Martineau's diligence came to fruition shortly after September 1, 1834. She wrote:

For my own part, I was finishing my writing, and finding my first leisure for books; and I found myself forgetting New York, and losing sight of all I expected to see beyond it, in the pleasures of the sea. We were now scarcely half way.³²

Her draft complete, Martineau turned to full relaxation and deep enjoyment of the natural beauty of the sea in its many moods. She arrived in New York considerably restored and prepared with an armory of principles and techniques on which to base her sociological investigation of the United States. Her travels during the next two years provided her with ample opportunity to apply her ideas about observation and served to field test the soundness of her methodological recommendations.

Martineau's "chapter" on observational technique was written in 1834 originally as a contribution to a multiple-author book on "observation" in a variety of scientific fields. This book project collapsed. Martineau eventually

returned to her manuscript, however, following her return to England and the publication of two reports based on her observations: *Society in America* and *Retrospect of Western Travel*. From a potentially minor chapter in a nineteenth-century compendium, *How to Observe Morals and Manners* now became a full-blown book in its own right as part of a planned series of volumes on observation. She wrote:

In the interval between her return from America and her leaving London—somewhat less than three years—she wrote "How to Observe Morals and Manners," a volume of a series published by Mr. Knight, of which Sir Henry Delabêche's "How to Observe Geology" was the opening volume.³³

How to Observe Morals and Manners was published in 1838 by Charles Knight and Company of London. The fascimile edition now in hand was also published that same year by Lea & Blanchard of Philadelphia.

No doubt the two years and thousands of miles spent in difficult, sometimes dangerous, and always careful empirical observation in America affected Martineau in profound ways. Shortly after she published *Society in America*, she brought out a second work, *Retrospect of Western Travel*, which she felt corrected several flaws in her first analysis of social institutions in the New World. Here, a definite shift toward empiricism and a growing suspicion of abstract, metaphysical systems can be documented.

She wrote in her *Autobiography* that *Society in America* was intended by her to have been called: *Theory and Practice of Society in America*. Her original title,

scuttled by her publishers, more closely reveals her methodology. Martineau argued in *Society in America* that she should not judge Americans by English standards (an early sensitivity to ethnocentrism). Rather, she would compare American behavior to the social principles that Americans themselves advocated, principles such as democracy, freedom, and equality. Thus, she spent considerable effort to detail these principles (i.e., theory) rather than allocate more space to her direct observations of actual behavior (i.e., practice). She later saw this as a major flaw.

While she became increasingly dissatisfied with *Society in America*, the reasons for her growing discomfort were not immediately apparent to her. Later, however, she articulated the problems in her *Autobiography*:

The fundamental fault of the book did not become apparent to me for some time after; – its metaphysical framework, and the abstract treatment of what must necessarily be a concrete subject.³⁴

She was pleased that her intellectual friends praised her second effort, her more concrete—and less abstract—treatment of empirical data in *Retrospect of Western Travel*. Martineau observed that careful critics:

. . . wisely desire us to see what we can, and tell what we see, without spinning out of ourselves systems and final causes, and all manner of notions which, as self-derived, are no part of our business or proper material in giving an account of an existing nation.³⁵

Acutely aware that metaphysics could cloud factual discovery, Martineau finished writing *Retrospect* in December, 1837, and turned her attention to several projects, including the book-length version of *How to Observe Morals and Manners*. She wrote:

In April and May [1838] I cleared my mind and hands of a long-standing engagement. The chapter which I mentioned having written at sea, on "How to Observe Morals and Manners," was, by the desire of the proposer and of Mr. Knight, to be expanded into a volume; and this piece of tough work, which required a good deal of reading and thinking, I accomplished this spring.³⁶

The intellectual context of *How to Observe* can now be outlined more fully. First, it was written only after Martineau had explicated a systematic, carefully articulated theory of political economy. Her principles of observation were then set down in draft in "a long article" prior to her first major observational investigation, a two-year, nationwide study tour of the United States completed largely by stagecoach and riverboat. Following this investigation and her analysis, published as *Society in America*, Martineau became dissatisfied with the abstractness and metaphysical flaws of the report. Thus, she wrote a second account, appropriately called a "retrospect," referring, perhaps, not so much to her trip to America as to her flawed analysis. Having in her mind cleared away the distractions of metaphysics, she turned significantly to her next project, the completion and publication of *How to Observe Morals and Manners* as a

free standing volume in a series of monographs on observation.

Active interplay between theory, observation, and explication highlighted Martineau's sociological development. This iterative growth is seen clearly in her own assessment of her major empirical analyses. She eventually saw her first empirical effort, *Society in America*, with less and less satisfaction, while becoming increasingly pleased with what she had done in her second book on her American investigations, *Retrospect of Western Travel*. It seems reasonable to assume that the re-thinking attendant on *Retrospect* also had a direct and clarifying effect on her empiricist ideas in *How to Observe*.

Thus, *How to Observe* became what Seymour Martin Lipset suggests is probably the earliest methodological text on sociological observation and empirical investigations:

This volume is, perhaps, the first book on the methodology of social research in the then still unborn disciplines of sociology and anthropology. Martineau realized that the study of social systems was a separate scientific discipline, and called it the "science of morals and manners."³⁷

This book likely had the longest gestation period of any of Martineau's sociological works. The early draft of "How to Observe" is analogous to a "research proposal" in modern parlance. The eventual expansion and refinement of *How to Observe Morals and Manners* benefited from direct application of the techniques in the field for a period of two years.

Field testing probably accounts for much of the acumen and insight in *How to Observe*, but this is not the

whole story. As we know from her autobiographical reports, Martineau wrote the expanded version of *How to Observe* at a time when she actively confronted the philosophical and methodological intersection of metaphysics and empiricism. She wrote in her *Autobiography* that *How to Observe* was a "piece of tough work, which required a good deal of reading and thinking." (Those who would trace the sources of her reading will find that the footnotes in *How to Observe Morals and Manners* are frustratingly fragmentary. More complete citations—with annotations—are thus provided in Appendix I.) What began on shipboard to America as a short chapter by an inexperienced investigator, ended as a rigorous, full-length exposition of empirical sociological techniques by a seasoned and reflexive researcher.

From Empiricism to Atheism

A major turning point in Martineau's epistemology resulted directly from empirical investigation. Venturing once more to foreign lands, she undertook an eight-month journey (via France, which she visited for the first time) to the Middle East in 1846. There, she experienced a radical disjuncture between her theoretical preconceptions and her empirical observations. The force of empirical reality was so wrenching that Martineau reflexively and anthropologically saw religion as a human rather than divine construction. The once devout Unitarian became an atheist who banished all talk of divine causes from her worldview while elevating the value of scientific, objective empirical observation to new heights.

Martineau's account of her epistemological transformation is significant and is here quoted at length.

As during the period when she first penned the insights forming the core of *How to Observe Morals and Manners*, Martineau was again travelling, her contemplations uninterrupted by publishers and the pressures of cosmopolitan society:

During the ten weeks that we were on the Nile, I could sit on deck and think for hours of every morning; and while we were in the desert, or traversing the varied scenery of Palestine, or winding about in the passes of the Lebanon, I rode alone—in advance or in the rear of the caravan, or of our own group, without a word spoken, when it was once understood that it was troublesome and difficult to me to listen from the ridge of my camel, or even from my horse. I cannot attempt to give an idea what I learned during those quiet seasons. All the historical hints I had gained from my school days onward now rose up amidst a wholly new light. It is impossible for even erudite home-stayers to conceive what is gained by seeing for one's self the scenes of history, after any considerable preparation of philosophical thought Step by step as we proceeded, evidence arose of the true character of the faiths which ruled the world; and my observations issued in a view of their genealogy and its results which I certainly did not carry out with me, or invent by the way side.³⁸

Due to Martineau's well-developed observational skills and reflexive intellect, her preconceptions of the Middle East were snatched from her by the evidence of her

own eyes. The phenomenal world ran roughshod over previously unquestioned metaphysical certainties.³⁹ For Martineau, her observations resulted in a radical interpretation of religion in society. This moment in the desert marked her entry into a new cosmology:

It was not till we had long left the Nile, and were leaving the desert, that the plan of my book occurred to me It happened amidst the dreariest part of the desert, between Petra and Hebron—not far from the boundary of Judea. I was ill, and in pain that day, from the face-ache which troubled me in the driest weather, amidst the hottest part of the desert; and one of our party rode beside me, to amuse me with conversation. I told him that I had just been inspired with the main idea of my book about the East. "That is," said he, "you think it the best scheme till you prefer another." "No," I replied; "there can be but one perfect one; and this completely answers to my view. My book will illustrate the genealogy, as it appears to me, of the old faiths—the Egyptian, the Hebrew, the Christian and the Mohammedan." After my life-long study of the Hebrew and Christian, our travels in Palestine brought a rich accession of material for thought; and the Syrian part of the journey was the more profitable for what had gone before. The result of the whole, when reconsidered in the quiet of my study, was that I obtained clearness as to the historical nature and moral value of all theology whatever, and attained that view of it which has been set forth in some of my subsequent works. It was evident to

me, in a way which it could never have been if I had not wandered amidst the old monuments and scenes of the various faiths, that a passage through these latter faiths is as natural to me, and was as

progress, as fetishism is to the infant nations and individuals, without the notion being more true in the one case than in the other. Every child, and every childish tribe of people, transfers its own consciousness, by a supposition so necessary as to be an instinct, to all external objects, so as to conclude them all to be alive like itself; and passes through this stage of belief to a more reasonable view: and, in like manner, more advanced nations and individuals suppose a whole pantheon of Gods first—and then a trinity—and then a single deity—all the devine beings being exaggerated men, regarding the universe from the human point of view, and under the influences of human notions and affections. In proportion as this stage is passed through, the conceptions of deity and devine government become abstract and indefinite, till the indistinguishable line is reached which is supposed, and not seen, to separate the highest order of Christian philosopher from the philosophical atheist.⁴⁰

Martineau thus discarded traditional theology, but did not emphasize this theme in her new book. *Eastern Life, Present and Past*, published in 1848, was based on her eight-month journey to the Middle East. She reflected on this work, again in the third person:

She had passed from the Nile to Sinai; and thence to Jerusalem, Damascus, and Lebanon. The work in which she gave out her views on her return ranks, on the whole, as the best of her writings; and her reputation assumed a new, a graver, and a broader character of appearance.⁴¹

Martineau wrestled mightily over her ultimate decision not to include the details of her personal epistemological transformation in *Eastern Life*. She exchanged a series of letters with Henry Atkinson (a mesmerist and close friend who saw her through a serious illness) in which she discussed her new views and asked his opinion on how to approach them in her book. With her decision to exclude philosophical debate from *Eastern Life*, these letters became the basis of a subsequent book jointly authored in 1851 by Atkinson and Martineau with the title: *Letters on the Laws of Man's Nature*. Here, she openly declared her atheism and belief in objective science.⁴² This publication created an intellectual and social firestorm in Martineau's life, although this outcome was not unexpected. Once the dust of social opprobrium re-settled in new patterns, however, she noted in her *Autobiography* that she had met so many new and like-minded friends that the difficulties occasioned by the book's publication more than balanced her initial ostracism. She was also pleased by the substantial income generated by sales of the controversial book—and she paid off the mortgage on her house.

With the hindsight of advances in the philosophy of science, Martineau could be criticized today as having simply recognized a flawed metascientific system only to unwittingly replace it with another. This is the proper

criticism to level at subsequent logical empiricists to the present day who labor under the misconception that they have successfully banished metaphysical presuppositions from their work. Here, however, this critique is too facile. Martineau's great achievement was to recognize, unlike today's systematic empiricists, that the tradition in which she came of age was flawed by metaphysical presuppositions. Her public break with theism was an act of personal and scientific courage.

Positive Philosophy

At this point in her intellectual career, Martineau discovered the work of the French positivist, Auguste Comte:

After hearing Comte's name for many years, and having a vague notion of the relation of his philosophy to the intellectual and social needs of the time, I obtained something like a clear preparatory view, at second-hand, from a friend, at whose house in Yorkshire I was staying . . . in 1850. What I learned then and there impelled me to study the great book for myself. . . . I had meantime looked at Lewes's chapter on Comte in Mr. Knight's Weekly Volume, and at Littré's epitome; and I could thus, in a manner, see the end from the beginning of the complete and extended work. This must be my excuse for the early date at which I conceived the scheme of translating the *Philosophie Positive*.⁴³

Martineau reports that several persons tried to dissuade her from her translation project, but others encouraged her. Finally, a benefactor in America sent Martineau 500 pounds to complete the work. Her translated condensation was published in 1853.

Translation from French to English was only a small part of the project. In the introduction to her abridgment, she began:

It may appear strange that, in these days, when the French language is almost as familiar to English readers as their own, I should have spent many months in rendering into English a work which presents no difficulties of language, and which is undoubtedly known to all philosophical students.⁴⁴

Martineau's larger aim was to condense Comte's ideas so that those intimidated by the six full volumes of the *Cours de philosophie positive* might be cajoled to read an abbreviated version. In appreciation, Comte withdrew his own six-volume work from the bibliography of the "Positivist Library" and replaced it with Martineau's abridgment.⁴⁵ Martineau's version was so important and authoritative that it was eventually translated *back into French*.⁴⁶ Martineau's English translation/condensation also brought Comte's work to a new audience in English-speaking America.

The clergy were none too happy with either Comte's or Martineau's ideas on religion, and this was especially true in America where Martineau had earlier penned some very unflattering words about the ministers of the New World. Thus, religious men in the northern states who had

at least admired her advocacy of abolition now denounced her full throttle for disseminating an atheist philosophy. Hawkins summarized the situation:

Fortunately, and at the same time unfortunately, for Auguste Comte, Harriet Martineau became interested in his philosophic theories during the very period when it seemed that American acquaintance with positivism was to be restricted to a small group of theological and metaphysical specialists. I say "fortunately," because Miss Martineau performed the arduous task of translating and condensing the *Cours* as perhaps no other living person could have done it, and "unfortunately," because the author of *Society in America* had, on account of her scathing criticisms of American life, and especially on account of her reputation as a free thinker, become anathema to the pastor-ridden United States.⁴⁷

Adding insult to injury, Martineau included the following salvo in the preface to her translation, a tweak of the nose that her well-known brother, a prominent Unitarian minister, must have found especially sharp:⁴⁸

My hope is that this book may achieve, besides the purposes entertained by its author, the one more that he did not intend, of conveying a sufficient rebuke to those who, in theological selfishness or metaphysical pride, speak evil of a philosophy which is too lofty and too simple, too humble and too generous, for the habit of their minds.⁴⁹

Martineau hoped that her comparatively brief version of Comte's work would result in informed, widespread popular acceptance of his ideas. She also declared war on intolerant, recalcitrant theologians.

The considerable intellectual achievement represented by Martineau's two-volume abridgment of Comte's six-volume work deserves emphasis. C. Wright Mills argued more recently that scholars must work hard if they are to understand grand theorists such as Talcott Parsons. He advocated "translating" complex theoretical works into shorter statements that contain "all that is intelligible" in them.⁵⁰ He then followed his own advice, employing this technique to explicate his understanding of Talcott Parsons's sociological ideas.⁵¹ Martineau accomplished nothing less in condensing and—inherently—interpreting Comte. This is precisely the kind of recognized scholarly work more recently carried forward by Stanislaw Andreski in his even more abbreviated version of the *Philosophie positive*.⁵²

Comte so greatly admired Martineau's translation/condensation that he felt she must share equally in the achievements attributed to positive philosophy. Comte wrote at least three admiring letters to Martineau and wrote to other correspondents about his glowing admiration for her work.⁵³ Maria Chapman, Martineau's friend and authorized biographer, relates that:

On first receiving her work, M. Comte had written at great length expressing to Harriet Martineau his gratitude and admiration, affirming that in sharing his labours she had become a sharer of his fame.⁵⁴

Excerpts from the text of Comte's communication to Martineau give the details that Chapman summarized. Comte wrote:

I have already read the noble preface and the excellent table of contents, as well as some decisive chapters. And I am convinced that you have displayed clearness of thought, truth, and sagacity in your long and difficult task. The important undertaking that you so happily conceived and have so worthily accomplished will give my 'Positive Philosophy' a competent audience greater than I could have hoped to find in my own lifetime. It is due to you, that the arduous study of my fundamental treatise is now indispensable only for the small number of those who purpose to become systematic students of philosophy. But the majority of readers, with whom theoretic training is only intended to provide them with practical good sense, may now prefer, and even ought to prefer for ordinary use, your admirable condensation. It realizes a wish of mine that I formed ten years ago. And looking at it from the point of view of future generations, I feel sure that your name will be linked with mine, for you have executed the only one of those works that will survive amongst all those which my fundamental treatise has called forth.⁵⁵

Several commentators, for reasons beyond the scope of this essay, have been considerably less generous to Martineau's translation than was Comte himself.⁵⁶ In any event, Martineau, never a slavish disciple of any creed, failed to

approve fully of Comte's later work. Whatever the verdict of her critics—or her subsequent critique of Comte—Martineau's edition of the *Philosophie positive* remains a major, foundational achievement in sociology.

Critical Epistemologist

During her lifetime, Martineau was lionized by English literary, political, and scientific circles. As a result, she became personally acquainted with many—and friends to some—of the great thinkers and writers of the nineteenth century, including Charles Babbage, Thomas Carlyle, George Eliot, Florence Nightingale, Charles Dickens, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Thomas Malthus, William Wordsworth, Charlotte Brontë, Charles Lyell, and Charles Darwin. Her comments on Darwin reveal the epistemological stance of Martineau at her zenith.

Martineau was a longstanding friend of the Darwin family and corresponded frequently with Charles Darwin's less famous brother, Erasmus Darwin. In 1860, she wrote thanking Erasmus for sending her a copy of *Origin of Species*:

Well, but, what I write is to thank you again for sending me your brother's book. As for thanking *him* for the book itself, one might say "thank you" all one's life without giving any idea of one's sense of obligation. It has been an immense pleasure to Maria and me; and, I need not add, much more than a pleasure. I am not pretending to speak about the science, though I fancy I follow his argument as a learner. If we could follow no further, the unconscious disclosure of the spirit

and habits of the true scientific mind would be a most profitable and charming lesson to us. I believed, and have often described, the quality and conduct of your brother's mind; but it is an unspeakable satisfaction to see here the full manifestation of its earnestness and simplicity, its sagacity, its industry, and the patient power by which it has collected such a mass of facts, to transmute them by such sagacious treatment into such portentous knowledge. I should much like to know how large a proportion of our scientific men believe that he has found a sound road to the upper ranges of the history of organised existence. It does not very much matter; for it is the next generation that effectively profits by such works; but it would be pleasant to know that a good many remain openminded.⁵⁷

This letter illustrates Martineau's tendency toward unwarranted self-effacement, a characteristic some later critics interpret as insightful self-estimation rather than humility. More importantly, the letter also documents her full, vigorous appreciation and encouragement of logic, clarity, and meticulous empirical investigation in scientific work.

Furthermore, she was ever vigilant, guarding against the dangers of unwarranted metaphysics. She was, for example, uncomfortable with the "religious" direction taken by Comte in his later work. Darwin, for whom she had such great admiration, was fair game if he too crossed the line. Hot on the heels of her praise for *Origin of Species*, she wrote to her friend Fanny Wedgwood a month later:

It seemed to me, after I had written to him [Erasmus Darwin], that I ought to have said one thing more about C.D.'s [Charles Darwin's] book, for honesty's sake: and the notices I have seen have reminded me of this since, more than once. I rather regret that C.D. went out of his way two or three times (I think not more) to speak of "the Creator" in the popular sense of the First Cause; and also *once* of the "final cause" of certain cuckoo [bird species] affairs. This latter is sure to be misunderstood, in the full face of all the rest of the book; and the other gives occasion for people to ride off from the argument in a way which need not have been granted to them. . . . It seems to me that having carried us up to the earliest group of forms, or to the single primitive one, he and we have nothing to do with how those few forms, or that one, came there. His subject is the "Origin of Species," and not the origin of Organisation; and it seems a needless mischief to have opened the latter speculation at all.⁵⁸

Martineau here demonstrates a zeal for metaphysical housekeeping largely unmatched in sociology until the Austrian sociologist Otto Neurath joined in 1929 with Hans Hahn and Rudolf Carnap to write the official manifesto of logical positivism for the Vienna Circle.⁵⁹ Martineau was, at the height of her faculties, an ardent critic and thinker who cut an independent swath through the puzzles of scientific discovery and human reason. To the end, on the basis that such income would bias and compromise her

writings and critiques, she rebuffed attempts by others to secure for her a government pension.⁶⁰

Sociological Legacies

Martineau's death in 1876 brought closure to the remarkable career of a writer, activist, and intellectual. Commentators approaching her work primarily as history, literature, feminism, or philosophy legitimately discern different patterns, issues, and legacies in her extensive published corpus than does the sociologist. At the least, as Alice Rossi puts it, Martineau was the first woman sociologist,⁶¹ and therein lies an important legacy and role model for today's students. She was, moreover, a sociological pioneer of great stature.

Martineau's importance as a major sociologist is grounded firmly in several accomplishments, any one of which is sufficient to garner recognition and respect. These include: *Society in America*, *How to Observe Morals and Manners*, and *The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte*. Despite these accomplishments, we still await a comprehensive, detailed analysis of Martineau's work and intellectual roots *as a sociologist*.

The sesquicentennial edition of *How to Observe Morals and Manners* celebrates an achievement of the first order where sociology is concerned. *How to Observe Morals and Manners* is a mature work written midway in Martineau's epistemological journey. It is the first known systematic and substantive treatise on the methodology of sociological research. Carefully, and at times brilliantly, Martineau charted a comprehensive guide to sociological observation. She explored problems of bias, hasty generalization, samples, reactivity, interviews,

corroboration, and data recording techniques. She outlined explorations of the major social institutions, including: religion, education, family, popular culture, markets and economy, prisons, police, government, fine arts, and philanthropy.

Intended as a treatise on methodology, *How to Observe Morals and Manners* is also an insightful work of theory. Before Karl Marx, and decades before Emile Durkheim and Max Weber, Martineau sociologically examined social class, forms of religion, types of suicide, national character, domestic relations and the status of women, delinquency and criminology, repression and the intricate interrelationships between social institutions and the individual. Martineau took full, firm grasp of her topics with provocative results. Sociological readers of *How to Observe Morals and Manners* and Martineau's other analyses of sociological issues cannot fail to be impressed by her energy, resourcefulness, perspicacity, and dogged pursuit of reason. These are legacies to remember, revere, and replicate.

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Notes

1. Martineau, 1838b: 222.
2. *Ibid.*
3. On the problems associated with "correspondence rules" and the structure of scientific theories, see Harvey, 1969: 87-99; and Suppe, 1977.
4. Martineau, 1838b: 73.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*, 74-75.
7. Giddens, 1987: 20-21.
8. Simmel, 1908; Schutz, 1944; Jackson, 1957; MacCannell, 1975. See also Hill, 1981b; Hill and Deegan, 1982. Martineau extols the virtues of pedestrian travel when exploring new lands as a stranger, a point I failed to note in my review of more recent research on walking and pedestrianism (Hill, 1984b).
9. Martineau, 1838b: 211-12.
10. *Ibid.*, 221.
11. As a youngster, Martineau attended an integrated grammar school where she received a good foundation in the classics. Barred from university, however, her subsequent education was self-taught. She steeped herself in statistical reports and the current literary and philosophical debates. Barred from university teaching, she taught and lectured, purposefully, to tradesmen, farmers, and domestics. Despite her "outsider status" as regards university life, her intellectual outpouring was impressive. The standard bibliography of her published books is Rivlin, 1947. Several of Martineau's early articles are found in her *Miscellanies*, 1836. A compilation of later articles, many of sociological interest, is her *Health, Husbandry and Handicraft*, 1861. By way of note, Martineau's *England and Her Soldiers*, 1859, is a *tour de force* as a study of occupational health. Yates, 1985, provides a useful collection of Martineau's writings on women.
12. Her biographers and commentators are numerous. Chapman, 1877; Webb, 1960; and Pichanick, 1980, are major sources. Little has been written about her *sociological* work other than Abbott, 1906;

- Bonser, 1929; Lipset, 1968; Rossi, 1973; Terry, 1983; and Hill, forthcoming.
13. A concise, polemic introduction to epistemology and its relation to axiology and ideology in sociology today is found in Hill, 1984a.
 14. Martineau, 1833b: 201.
 15. *Ibid.*, 202-03.
 16. Modern students may, perhaps, need to recognize that Martineau's sociological roots were by no means uniquely linked to religion. Connections between theology and the founding of sociology are significant. Specifically, Albion Small, Charles Henderson, and Charles Zeublin, the founders of the Chicago School of sociology in the United States, were all ministers. Anna Garland Spencer, an American sociologist contemporary to Small, Henderson, and Zeublin, was herself a Unitarian minister (Deegan, 1988). Many scholars experience little difficulty reconciling their religious convictions with their scientific beliefs. Such was not the case for Martineau as she matured in her studies. In any event, the intricacies of early theological exposition and argument no doubt sharpened her intellectual insight and conceptual skills.
 17. Extensions of this technique to more modern sociology survive in works by novelists, such as Mari Sandoz, the Nebraska sociological novelist who fused fictional narrative with historical events to produce theoretically-grounded thought experiments (Hill, 1987). Willard Waller and George Howard, two sociologists of national stature who taught at the University of Nebraska also approved the use of fiction to explore sociological insights. Waller's views are easily located (Waller, 1932:2), but Howard's take some digging to find. His comments are found in an article titled "The Novel as a Fine Art and Moral Science" which he clipped and saved without recording the citation (Howard Papers, scrapbooks, University of Nebraska Archives, Love Library, University of Nebraska-Lincoln). Howard became an institution at Nebraska whereas Waller's stay in Lincoln was brief.
 18. Bonser, 1929: 244.
 19. Martineau, 1845a, I: iv-v.
 20. Martineau, 1833c, preface, unpaginated.
 21. Martineau, 1878a: 566. The passages quoted from Martineau's "Autobiographical Memoir" were written in the third person because she intended the piece to be published anonymously after her death. The memoir is conveniently reprinted in Yates, 1985: 35-49.
 22. Martineau, 1878a: 566.

23. The Lipset edition of *Society in America*, first published in 1962, is now available in the Social Science Classics Series published by Transaction Books.
24. Travel by packet ship was not without risk. "The fate of three ocean packets, the *Crisis*, the *United States*, and the *England*, are among the tragic mysteries of the sea" (Albion, 1938: 212). The *United States* was launched in 1833 (the year before Martineau's crossing on this vessel) and "went missing" on the run from Liverpool to New York in December 1844 (Albion, 1938: 278-79). A photograph of a reconstructed scale model of the *United States* is found in Albion (1938) facing page 238.
25. Martineau sat for her portrait in 1833, the year before she sailed to the United States. At that time, she appeared young, alert, attractive. Her hand is cupped to her ear, a pose that appears coquettish until her hearing loss is called to mind. The portrait is the frontispiece in the third edition of her *Autobiography* (1878b). Nearing completion of her two-year field study in the United States, she posed again before returning to England. The finished portrait (Laski, 1976: 62) shows a more resolute image of Martineau, the seasoned, well-travelled social observer.
26. Martineau, 1878b, I: 332-33.
27. Knight, 1864, II: 121.
28. de la Beche, 1836.
29. Martineau, 1878b, I: 283.
30. In subsequent years, Mrs. Ker was a confidante during the writing of Martineau's first novel, *Deerbook*. H.B. Ker also wrote, his works include: *A Vindication of the Enquiry into Charitable Abuses* (1819), *Sir Christopher Wren* (1833), and *On the Reform of the Law of Real Property* (1853).
31. Martineau, 1838a, I: 18-19.
32. *Ibid.*, 27.
33. Martineau, 1878a: 568. *How to Observe Morals and Manners* did not garner wide public acclaim when published. Unlike the *Illustrations of Political Economy*, which could be read for their entertainment value alone, her "how to" manual asked readers to become active, rigorous, moral observers. This prospect of hard work may have dampened its reception. The sole contemporary review appeared, unsigned, in the *Quarterly Review*, Vol. 63, 1839: 61-72. It was vehemently unfavorable. This diatribe was directed collectively at Martineau, Charles Babbage, Henry de la Beche, Charles Knight, and the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge. The *Quarterly Review* earlier slammed Martineau's

highly successful *Illustrations of Political Economy* and thus cannot be taken as representative of public and critical reaction to Martineau's work.

34. Martineau, 1878b, I: 405.
35. *Ibid.*, I: 407.
36. *Ibid.*, I: 416.
37. Lipset, 1968: 7.
38. Martineau, 1878b, I: 537.
39. It is an interesting note that, years later, travels to the Middle East would also profoundly affect American sociologist Jane Addams' understanding of the historical dimension of women's work (Addams, 1916: 141-68) and that, more recently, Shulamit Reinharz' mature formulation of experiential sociology is deeply embedded in a Middle Eastern research setting (Reinharz, 1984).
40. Martineau, 1878b, I: 537-38.
41. Martineau, 1878a: 571.
42. See also *Letters on Mesmerism* (Martineau, 1845b).
43. Martineau, 1878b, II: 57.
44. Martineau, 1858: 3.
45. Bridges, 1915: 210.
46. Avezac-Lavigne, 1871-1872.
47. Hawkins, 1938: 18.
48. Brother and sister became estranged following her publication with Atkinson of the *Letters on the Laws of Man's Nature and Development* in 1851. James Martineau wrote a "trenchant and searching" review of his sister's book. According to Jackson, James' sympathetic biographer, Harriet "was deeply offended and to the end of her life repelled all offers of reconciliation" (Jackson, 1901: 86-87).
49. Martineau, 1858: 11.
50. Mills, 1959: 27.
51. *Ibid.*, 25-49.
52. Andreski, 1974.
53. Hawkins, 1938: 21-22.
54. Chapman, 1877: 424.
55. Harrison, 1913: xvii-xviii.
56. Representative of subsequent commentators is J.H. Bridges who observed that "mistakes are not numerous in Miss Martineau's version, but they are not entirely absent" (Bridges, 1915: 212). He provides a line by line comparison of Martineau with an unabridged translation of *three* paragraphs from Comte to make the point that

she sometimes "pushed condensation so far as to give an erroneous conception of Comte's meaning on a very important subject" (*Ibid.*, 214). R.K. Webb is more pungent: "The haste with which the work was done helps to account for the awkwardness and the fuzziness which occasionally mar a mechanical translation" (Webb, 1960: 305). Comte's praise for Martineau's work is given little credit by such critics.

57. Letter from Martineau to E. Darwin, February 2, 1860, in Arbuckle, 1983: 185-86.
58. Letter from Martineau to F. Wedgwood, March 13, 1860, in Arbuckle, 1983: 189.
59. Neurath, 1973: 229-318; Joergensen, 1951; Hill 1981a.
60. Martineau, 1878b, I: 460-65, 587-94.
61. Rossi, 1973.

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