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“A More Masculine Courage”

Women’s Voice and the Nineteenth-Century Publication of Sarah Kemble Knight’s *Journal*

The Journal of Madam Knight has been remembered with much interest, since we read the original edition, given to the world by our honored friend . . . Theodore Dwight, of New York. [We] hav[e] been for years desirous of reprinting it, as a unique specimen of the voyages and travels, life and manners of that early time. . . . The whole work, of seventy pages in the original, is contained in this number.

—The Living Age (26 June 1858)

THE 1825 PUBLICATION of Sarah Kemble Knight’s early-eighteenth-century travel journal places it on the scene of a developing cultural discourse concerning gender and representation. I begin *Uncommon Women* with Knight’s *Journal* in order to overtly put pressure on that ambivalent moment. As this chapter demonstrates, a reading and analysis of Knight’s work provides a context for that discourse and inflects the nineteenth-century U.S. women’s texts subsequently discussed here.

My locating Knight’s text with other texts written by women and published in the nineteenth-century United States emerges from the initial publishing and subsequent republications of and various print references to Knight’s *Journal*.¹ Knight’s *Journal* was first published in 1825, nearly a full century after Knight’s death. Thus its original public issuing locates it in nineteenth-century U.S. culture. This context for Knight’s *Journal* has been almost entirely overlooked in the critical record, as have the text’s republications later in the nineteenth century.² Regardless of that neglect, Knight’s *Journal* shares its public beginnings with nineteenth-century U.S. women’s writing.

In this chapter, I perform a fresh reading of Knight’s *Journal* by locating it explicitly in the nineteenth-century U.S. context in which

it was published and in which it achieved public literary recognition. In order to do so, I conduct the most in-depth consideration to date of Theodore Dwight's 1825 edition of Knight's *Journal*, the first public edition of Knight's text.³ I closely examine Dwight's introduction to the text, as well as his reasons and motives for recovering and publishing it. I also look at the mixed nineteenth-century print reception of Dwight's edition of Knight's journal, and I break new ground by charting nineteenth-century reissuings as well as print references to the text and to Knight in nineteenth-century U.S. books and periodicals.⁴ My critical examinations include a reading of the earliest published reference to Knight in Hannah Mather Crocker's *Observations on the Real Rights of Women, with Their Appropriate Duties, Agreeable to Scripture, Reason, and Common Sense* (1818), as well as a review of Knight's *Journal* by William Dean Howells which I bring to the attention of Knight scholars for the first time. My recovery of nineteenth-century print references to Knight's *Journal* makes evident this eighteenth-century text's place and significance in nineteenth-century U.S. literary discourse.

Some information used in this chapter regarding publication and reception of Knight's *Journal* appeared in critical articles published across the twentieth century. For instance, Alan Margolies's 1964 foundational essay on the publication history of Knight's text provides essential data. The writing of Sargent Bush, Jr. offers crucial scope and detail. And Mary McAleer Balkun supplies important discussion of the 1825 publication of the journal. However, this chapter is the first text to gather all information regarding nineteenth-century U.S. publication and reception of, as well as print references to, Knight's *Journal*. I have taken pains to establish this context in order to provide material for a reading of the nineteenth-century publication of the *Journal* as provocative commentary on an emerging cultural permission that also allowed publication of women's texts that, unlike Knight's, were both written and published in the nineteenth century.

To commence plainly, Sarah Kemble Knight's *Journal* is an autobiographical text written by a thirty-eight-year-old white woman in early-eighteenth-century New England. In it, Knight chronicles her 1704–5 trip to New Haven and New York to help settle a relative's estate. Written in the early eighteenth century, the journal was published for the first time in the nineteenth century. As Bush writes, Knight “participated in two key moments in American cultural history—that in which she wrote and that in which her writing received a wider audience through publication” (Introduction 80). This chapter discusses Knight's *Journal* in six parts: first, Knight's biographical contexts and particulars of the

1825 publication and reception of her text; second, a detailing and discussion of subsequent nineteenth-century reissues and print references to her journal; third, an examination of generic conventions of the travel narrative and Knight's adaptations of that form; fourth, a consideration of Knight's dis/alignments with early American women; fifth, a reading of the intersection of orality, literacy, and female status in the text; and finally, a concluding section regarding Knight and the (im)possibilities of an eighteenth-century American female community.

I.

Sarah Kemble was born in Boston on April 19, 1666, to Captain Thomas Kemble, a merchant and landowner, and Elizabeth Trerice Kemble. In 1688 or 1689, she married Richard Knight, possibly a shipmaster, who was probably much older than she. Sarah Kemble may have been his second wife. Their only child, Elizabeth, was born in Boston on May 8, 1689. Knight acquired business and legal skills, perhaps from running the family business after her father's death in 1689. She used her expertise to help settle estates, and she kept a shop and a house on Moon Street in Boston. She also ran a school in which she taught handwriting to children (putatively attended by a young Ben Franklin). Even before Richard Knight died (probably in 1706), his wife may have assumed his business responsibilities. From then on, she was known as Widow Knight or Madam Knight, which was, as Bush explains, in keeping with "the early eighteenth-century manner of address for a middle-aged matron" (Introduction 69).⁵

When Knight learned about the estate settlement of a New Haven cousin, Caleb Trowbridge (whose young widow may have been her sister), she departed on an unchaperoned journey from Boston to New York and New Haven on October 2, 1704. She left behind her fifteen-year-old daughter and elderly mother; her husband was on business abroad. She returned from this five-month business trip in March, having kept a detailed travel journal. After her daughter married John Livingston of New London, Connecticut, in 1714, Knight, now widowed, moved to live near her. She continued to work successfully as a shopkeeper and property owner. When she died in 1727, she left a substantial £1800 estate.

Knight's journal remained unpublished in her lifetime. Michaelsen speculates that the *Journal* "was not published in its day because it was

too secular a work . . . to come off the Massachusetts presses" (44n21). Bush maintains that it was not intended for publication and instead circulated privately (Introduction 74). He writes that Knight "surely wrote for an audience other than herself," arguing that her

treatment of self [in the journal] would have appealed to an intimate circle of friends who already knew the bumptious good humor and superior physical stamina as well as mental readiness for the unforeseen which Madam Knight clearly possessed. It seems very likely that her anticipation of such an appreciative audience of listeners or readers prompted her to write her lively narrative. (Introduction 74, 75)

David S. Shields states that Knight "composed [her journal] for and read [it] to her circle in Boston" ("Eighteenth-Century" 460).⁶ Susan Clair Imbarrato, noting that "circulation figures for early America are . . . difficult to determine," posits that "a general comparison to the letter suggests that twenty to thirty people, or the size of an extended family, may have either read a traveler's journal or heard about its contents" (27). Though the text was probably read by/to Knight's family and friends, it was not prepared for commercial publication, published or read widely in her lifetime. After Knight's death, it remained in manuscript for almost a full century.

In 1825, Knight's journal was anonymously edited and published by Theodore Dwight, Jr. (1796–1866), teacher and author of biographies, histories, and travel narratives. Dwight's short introduction regarding Knight and her text was published with his edition. His introduction presents Knight's text to the nineteenth-century U.S. reading public and foregrounds his interest in the American past. He assures readers that the journal is historically authentic, "not a work of fiction, as the scarcity of old American manuscripts may induce some to imagine; but it is a faithful copy from a diary in the author's own handwriting, compiled soon after her return home, as it appears, from notes recorded daily, while on the road" (85). He declares that he preserved the text's antiquarian value by not updating Knight's language "for fear of introducing any unwarrantable modernism" (85). Dwight's motives in publishing the journal emerge from his promotion of the value of documenting the American past:

The object proposed in printing this little work is not only to please those who have particularly studied the progressive history of our country, but to direct the attention of others to subjects of that description,

unfashionable as they still are; and also to remind the public that documents, even as unpretending as the following, may possess a real value, if they contain facts which will be hereafter sought for to illustrate interesting periods in our history. (78, 79)⁷

Dwight's classification of Knight's text as an "unpretending document" makes clear that he claims no intellectual value for it. Indeed, his assumption—perhaps suggested most plainly by his use of a phrase within which to classify Knight's text—is that readers will similarly view the text as an "unpretending document." Instead, what Dwight does argue for is the *Journal's* historical value. However, even that value is somewhat incidental to the narrative of the text. That is, it is the details which Knight uses when relating her experiences—particulars of travel, landscape, lodging—that are "facts which will be hereafter sought to illustrate interesting periods in our history" (85).

Returning to what he perceives as neglect of the American past, Dwight chastises readers for being "so ready to open our minds to the most minute details of foreign governments, and the modes and men of distant countries, with which we can have only a collateral connection" instead of focusing on "subjects so closely connected with ourselves [that they] ought to excite a degree of curiosity and interest" (85). Dwight encourages readers to appreciate what he sees as advances of the nineteenth-century United States by reading Knight's text: "The reader will find frequent occasion to compare the state of things in the time of our author with that of the present period, particularly with regard to the number of inhabitants, and the facilities and accommodations prepared for the travelers" (86). Dwight also recognizes the hardships of Knight's eighteenth-century journey when contrasted with similar nineteenth-century travel:

Over that tract of country where she traveled about a fortnight, on horseback, under the direction of a hired guide, with frequent risks of life and limb, and sometimes without food or shelter for many miles, we proceed at our ease, without exposure and almost without fatigue, in a day and a half, through a well peopled land, supplied with good stage-coaches and public houses, or the still greater luxuries of the elegant steam boats which daily traverse our waters. (86)

In comparison to what he views as primitive eighteenth-century New England, Dwight identifies nineteenth-century New England as populated, modern, and equipped for easy and expedient travel.⁸ With

publication of Knight's *Journal*, Dwight seeks to develop a nationalistic strategy to discover and publish earlier American works, parts of which—parts seemingly as slight as a clause or even a single word—can then be used to document a rapidly disappearing and too infrequently recorded American past. It is in this potential for textual extraction that Dwight locates the primary worth of Knight's *Journal*.

Though Dwight's interest is primarily antiquarian, this interest does not lead him to dismiss Knight herself. Rather, he praises her as “a lady of uncommon literary attainments, as well as of great taste and strength of mind” (85). He recognizes and appreciates Knight's lively wit:

It is to be regretted that the brevity of the work should have allowed the author so little room for the display of the cultivated mind and the brilliant fancy which frequently betray themselves in the course of the narrative; and no one can rise from the perusal without wishing some happy chance might yet discover more full delineations of life and character from the same practiced hand. (85)

His striking praise reveals his high opinion of Knight's writing skill—“uncommon literary attainments,” “great taste and strength of mind,” “cultivated mind,” “brilliant fancy.” His assertion that readers will finish the *Journal* hoping for more writing by Knight, along with his characterizing of her “practiced hand,” indicates respect for her literary talent.

Dwight's selection of Knight's *Journal*—given its female authorship, unconventional tone, and “unpretending” nature—for publication in 1825 marks a receptivity to female representation, especially in texts written by and about women. This is not to suggest, however, that his choice to publish the journal be read as profeminist. I do not imagine Dwight as a man ahead of his time, envisioning and promoting women's writing. Rather, Dwight, an author and educator interested in documenting New England history, wanted to make public Knight's detailed description of her eighteenth-century progress through that region. However, a close reading of his introduction makes clear he has sufficient intellectual resources to appreciate Knight's unconventional women's writing. Indeed, Dwight published his edition at a moment when readers were becoming receptive to historical and fictive accounts of “women's experiences in the wilderness” (Balkun 22).⁹ As Balkun writes, “A number of [such] popular texts . . . were published within a year or two of Knight's: [Lydia Maria] Child's *Hobomok*

(1824), [James E.] Seaver's *Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison* (1826), and [Catharine Maria] Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie* (1827)" (22). Further, as Michael Davitt Bell observes, "many of the new American novels published in the 1820s were . . . works of historical fiction" (38). For instance, Lydia Maria Child "published three historical novels in the 1820s and 1830s" (38). Child's *Hobomok* (1824) is set in seventeenth-century Massachusetts, while *The Rebels* (1825) takes place in pre-Revolutionary era Boston. Sarah Josepha Hale's *Northwood* (1827) is "a New England local-color novel" (Bell 39). Catharine Maria Sedgwick, "one of the most influential American fiction writers of her generation," "turned to historical fiction in 1827 with *Hope Leslie*, set in seventeenth-century Massachusetts" (Bell 42). *Hope Leslie*'s popularity "made its author the most celebrated American woman writer before Harriet Beecher Stowe" (Bell 42). Works such as these by nineteenth-century U.S. writers concerning women in early American history, and American history in general, provided readers with context for reading Knight's account of her travel a century earlier through the New England wild. Further, the publication, reviews, and sometimes popularity of such texts suggest market forces which Dwight may or may not have been fully aware of at the time. Whatever Dwight's degree of awareness, a potential receptivity to such works was in the air when he chose to edit and publish Knight's journal.

Dwight's postpublication recognition of both market forces and their vagaries is later seen in an 1846 letter he wrote in response to a query about Knight's authorship. As Margolies notes, this letter and the introduction to Knight's text "are Dwight's only published accounts of his editing of the journal" (25). In the letter, Dwight laments the tepid response two decades earlier to publication of the journal: "The indifference with which that little book was regarded discouraged me from bringing out any more, though I had two or three old manuscripts which I should have liked to bring out at some future time" ("December Meeting" 387). He adds that he has "been earnestly solicited of late to prepare and publish another edition, with notes, embracing the above and other particulars, and have taken some steps; but apprehending a second failure, I have not pursued the plan" (387). In this 1846 letter, Dwight assigns a primacy to market forces—and book sales deriving from them—that determines his resistance to publishing a second edition of Knight's journal. By implication, his inaccurate assessment of market forces in 1825 ("the indifference with which that little book was regarded") resulted in his editing the journal for publication at that time.

Though sales of Knight's *Journal* disappointed Dwight, in 1825 he would have had moderate evidence to assume that it might successfully attract readers. In addition to the writing and publication of works regarding historical or fictive treatment of women, publication of Knight's journal occurred at a time of "increasing interest in travel literature in a variety of forms" (Balkun 21).¹⁰ As Imbarrato has detailed, written accounts of travel in journals, letters, and narratives circulated through publication as well as through private exchange. Additionally, travel guidebooks written for tourists attracted readers (33).¹¹ Dwight himself had written and published a travel narrative, *A Journal of a Tour in Italy*, in 1824, a year before his edition of Knight's *Journal*. After publication of Knight's journal, he wrote three more travel books, all concerning travels within the United States.

Imbarrato notes that there are "approximately fifty extant women's travel narratives . . . published and in manuscript" from the period 1700 to 1830 (2), enough to contribute to Dwight's sense that readers would welcome an edition of Knight's journal.¹² Further, like Knight's *Journal*, other women's accounts of travel were published and reprinted throughout the nineteenth century. Elizabeth Ashbridge's *Some Account of the Fore Part of the Life of Elizabeth Ashbridge*, a conversion narrative "framed by travel" (Imbarrato 148), was first published in 1774 and again in 1807, 1831, and 1886. Anne Grant MacVicar's *Memoirs of an American Lady*, published in 1808, was reprinted in 1809, 1836, 1846, and 1876. Annette Kolodny cites two popular texts—James Seaver's *Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison* (1826) and Timothy Flint's *Biographical Memoir of Daniel Boone* (1833)—as together providing U.S. readers "published access to two real-life white women [Mary Jemison and Rebecca Boone, wife of Daniel] who had learned to survive in the wilderness" (89). As Balkun writes:

[Knight's] *Journal* has much in common with other travel books of the period: detailed descriptions that enabled the reader to experience vicariously the journey, an underlying no-place-like-home sentiment which measured all things—to their detriment—against the point of origin of the traveler, and an affirmation of American accomplishment and exceptionalism. (22)

I agree with Balkun that "with its factual and cultural information, the *Journal* satisfied the nineteenth-century desire for texts that documented American social history and provided a base for the emergent

American culture" (21). Despite this alignment, Dwight's edition failed to achieve the popularity he seems to have imagined for it. Though sales disappointed Dwight, he had nonetheless been correct in his opinion that central features of Knight's text, such as its narrative of travel, were of interest to readers of the time.

Such literary contexts valuably add to our understandings of the nineteenth-century publication and readership of Knight's journal. I do not claim that publication of Knight's *Journal* in 1825 indicates a transformation in the ways in which women are represented by themselves and others or that only by an alchemy of social and cultural arrangements the journal could only be published for the first time in 1825. However, Knight's *Journal* was published at a point in the early republic when, as Mary Kelley has argued, "newly independent Americans began to consider the subject of female intellect, a topic that had elicited little concern earlier" ("Vindicating" 6). Nearly four hundred "private academies and seminaries . . . were founded exclusively for women between 1790 and 1830." Additionally, public schools began to enroll girls as well as boys in rural and urban locales (1). As Balkun writes, "the publication of [Knight's] *Journal* coincided with the start of the American women's movement, offering readers an intelligent, independent, and capable 'mother of the republic'" (22).

In Mary Suzanne Schriber's observation, the nineteenth-century United States had reached a "historical moment when the meaning and boundaries of woman's sphere were contested and increasingly indefinite; and when the definition of the domestic sphere was being stretched to encompass ever more public terrain, to the expressed consternation of many Victorians" (50). The reception of the 1825 edition of Knight's *Journal* signals the mixed nature of this consideration of female intellect. Margolies details public reaction to Knight's text in the two decades following publication.¹³ These responses consist of male-authored articles that in various ways disputed authenticity of Knight's text. For example, Joseph Barlow Felt (1789–1869), well-known pastor, historian, and author, wrote in 1839, "Though the female traveler, Madam Knight, is a fictitious author, yet the representation, quoted from the book, bearing such a name appears to be true" (250).¹⁴ A Boston newspaper labeled the *Journal* a "spurious production" ("December Meeting" 387). William R. Deane (1809–71), historian and genealogist who would later write an introduction to the text, initially classified the *Journal* as fiction written by a man (963n). And the notes of an 1877 meeting of the Massachusetts Historical Society record a discussion

of Dwight's 1846 letter concerning the authenticity of Knight's text, stating that "it was confidently believed by many that Madam Knight's Journal proceeded from the fertile fancy of the late Samuel L. Knapp, who had the reputation of writing some clever fictions of a like character" ("December Meeting" 388).¹⁵

These responses contested authenticity of Knight's text and Knight herself. I read such reactions as indicating that while the cultural moment permitted publication of the journal, it also, at least initially, mandated a degree of resistance to the text's and the author's legitimacy. Indeed, when Dwight wrote to Charles Deane on December 26, 1846 (as noted earlier, the letter and Dwight's introduction to the 1825 edition are his only extant remarks concerning his editing of Knight's text), it was to affirm authenticity of Knight's authorship:¹⁶

My dear Sir,—The work to which you refer is well known to me. It is genuine and authentic. I had heard of the manuscript for several years . . . and succeeded in procuring it for publication. I copied it with my own hand, retaining the orthography, and omitting only a few words and phrases which were not very appropriate to a book. A Boston paper, on the appearance of the work, pronounced it a spurious production. ("December Meeting" 386–87)

Having established the text's authenticity, Dwight reiterates views expressed in his introduction twenty-one years earlier: "It gratifies me to find that you and your friends in Boston feel any interest in the Journal of your townswoman, Madam Knight, as I think it highly creditable to her character and education, and valuable for the picture it gives of the state of the country and people at that early period" (387). Thus, though Knight's voice had initially emerged publicly through publication in the nineteenth-century United States, that voice continued to be circumscribed and diminished in subsequent public commentaries over the decades.

II.

Knight's *Journal* soon became part of nineteenth-century U.S. literary discourse. It was recurrently published, as well as mentioned and quoted in print, with the assumption that readers would recognize the reference. I detail below the trajectory of this progression from eighteenth-century white woman's privately circulated text to nineteenth-

century white woman's public text, outlining various publications, references, and dates. As stated earlier, I move into new critical ground regarding Knight's text through my detailing and consideration of these references.

Knight's *Journal*, first published in 1825, was reprinted in its entirety in 1847, 1858, and 1865.¹⁷ An excerpt from it was published in 1826. Further, a range of books and articles published in the nineteenth-century United States contained passing references to and quotations from Knight's *Journal*. Though Theodore Dwight was first to print Knight's *Journal* in its entirety, the earliest published reference to Knight herself appeared in Hannah Mather Crocker's (1752–1829) *Observations on the Real Rights of Women, with Their Appropriate Duties, Agreeable to Scripture, Reason, and Common Sense* (1818). Crocker, a married mother of ten who began writing after her children had grown, was the great-great-granddaughter of Richard Mather, great-granddaughter of Increase Mather, and granddaughter of Cotton Mather. She was the daughter of Samuel Mather, Cotton Mather's only surviving son, and Hannah Hutchinson Mather, sister to Massachusetts governor Thomas Hutchinson (Post 85; Westbrook and Westbrook 62).¹⁸ As Constance Post writes in her important work recovering Crocker, *Observations on the Real Rights of Women* was "one of the first books on women's rights written by an American to be published in America" (86). In her *Observations*, Crocker argues that "the wise Author of nature has endowed the female with equal powers and faculties . . . as he gave to the male sex" (5).

Though she did not refer to Knight's *Journal* in her text and may or may not have known of its existence at this point, Crocker had reason to be familiar with Knight. Crocker grew up in the same house in which Knight had grown up and in which Knight's daughter, Elizabeth, had been married by Increase Mather, Crocker's great-grandfather (Titus 101–2; 106). In *Observations*, Crocker employs references to a diverse range of women, including American, biblical, British, classical, French, and modern women. Among them, Crocker identifies Knight as "famous in her day for teaching to write"; as the author of "letters on business, and notes of hand, and letters on friendship"; and as "a smart, witty, sensible woman . . . [who] had considerable influence at that period" (66). Crocker foregrounds Knight's professional status as a paid teacher and writer. Her description of Knight as "smart, witty, [and] sensible" evokes the voice of Knight's journal, suggesting that Crocker may have known of it or perhaps had had it described to her. Had Crocker read Knight's journal or had it read to

her at this point, or had she been certain of its existence, she likely would have mentioned it given its correspondence with her argument.¹⁹

Crocker's assembly of praiseworthy American women such as Martha Dandridge Washington (in her role as wife of George Washington), Revolutionary War-era writer Mercy Otis Warren, and Rachel Donelson Jackson (in her role as wife of Andrew Jackson) establishes a female context within patriarchy. It also indicates a degree of receptivity to representations of American women. Eighteenth-century Knight's initial public appearance in Crocker's early-nineteenth-century book—again, one of the first American books on women's rights written by an American woman—suggests cultural readiness for Dwight's publication of the journal seven years later. The year after Dwight's publication, excerpts were published under the title "Travelling in America" in Eliakim Littell's monthly magazine, *The Museum of Foreign Literature and Science* (Margolies 29).²⁰ Littell would go on to edit *The Living Age*, which thirty-two years later, as detailed below, would publish Knight's journal in its entirety.

The entire *Journal* was next republished in 1847 in Boston's weekly *Protestant Telegraph* by the Reverend Mortimer Blake (1813–84). Here it appeared serially. In 1858 the literary weekly *The Living Age*, an offshoot of the *Atlantic Monthly*, reprinted Knight's entire journal in a June issue. William R. Deane, who had initially maintained that the journal was written by a man, wrote the introduction to this issue. Deane's introduction describes the *Journal*, provides a biography of Knight (including lengthy descriptions of the lives of her father and her husband), and lists the two previous printings of the text. Deane notes earlier questions of the journal's authorship but takes pains to confirm Knight's existence and authorship.

Deane recognized the unique nature of Knight's travels, writing that "Madam Knight was probably almost the only woman who, at so early a date, made such a journey" (963). He devotes a significant amount of his introduction to Knight's real-estate transactions. His discussion of Knight as a businesswoman suggests prevailing acceptance or tolerance of women's property dealings. Also, as Dwight did thirty-three years earlier, Deane focuses on Knight's descriptions of eighteenth-century New England, marveling at what he views as progress achieved in intervening decades. In doing so, Deane partakes of the white Northern middle-class narrative of improvements accomplished by industrial capitalism.

In 1865 Northern lawyer and judge William Law Learned (1821–1904) prepared an edition of the *Journal* for publication (Margolies 28). Learned reprinted Dwight's 1825 edition, adding a preface and explanatory footnotes. His preface, which draws heavily on Deane's 1858 introduction, provides details of Knight's life, family, and business activities, as well as a brief description of her journey. Learned describes Knight as "energetic and observing," with "some imagination and a good perception of the ludicrous" (xi). He comments that her more irreverent jokes "only a few years earlier, might have convicted her of witchcraft, if they had come to the ears of Cotton Mather" (xi). Learned implicitly classifies female energy, observation, imagination, and humor as positive qualities. He assumes that readers will, as he did, view penalties for such women (e.g., for practicing witchcraft) as part of a remote American past.

The publication of Learned's 1865 edition of Knight's journal coincided with the end of the Civil War. Two suggestive notes written by Learned reflect this historical moment. Both are unusual: the majority of notes in Learned's edition are quotations from other texts/authors, factual explanations, and translations of vernacular or archaic usages.²¹ However, the two notes overtly inflected by the war are both Learned's cultural commentary. First, Learned cites Knight's relation of a dispute between a slave and a master which results in the master's admitting fault.²² Responding to this scene, Learned writes, "From this little incident it may be seen that, even at this early time, slavery, in Connecticut, was a very different thing from the system which has existed in the southern part of our country" (54n1). Learned reads Knight's story through a lens of nineteenth-century Northern views of the Southern slavocracy. His implicitly judgmental language emphasizes the perception of a closed system of white dominance ("a very different thing") in his own time. Within that system, whites were always already in the right. For Learned, in the nineteenth-century United States, the white master would never admit fault, even when or perhaps especially when wrong.

Next, following an observation of Knight's regarding quick marital divorce, Learned, in his longest note, comments, "This facility for obtaining divorce may have arisen from the degradation of marriage to a mere civil contract entered into before a magistrate. . . . Unfortunately the same facility has continued to the present time" (55n1). Learned's extensive commentary is provoked by the ease with which a marital union could be dissolved. I suggest that in his response we

also read larger national issues of unions and civil contracts. Learned's dismay at the ease of disuniting two previously joined parties evokes his cultural moment. His note reveals a vital recognition of the fearsome simplicity of disbanding a marriage or disbanding a country.

In addition to these complete and partial reprints of Knight's *Journal*, references to it appeared regularly and in diverse contexts. For instance, in the July 1854 essay "Holidays" in the *United States Democratic Review*, the anonymous author, discussing New England celebrations, writes, "The preceding remarks are much strengthened by some observations made by Madame Knight in her *Journal of a Tour from Boston to New-York*, in the year 1704, then a most serious and arduous undertaking" (59). This reference is followed by a quotation from the journal, establishing that the writer is aware of Knight's text and also owns or has access to a copy of it. Four years later a brief note in the July 1858 issue of *The Living Age* reports, "A correspondent informs us that Madame Knight taught little Benjamin Franklin to write" (242).²³ Then in October 1858 a letter printed in *Notes & Queries* requests information about a passage in Knight's journal (310). In a November 1860 *Atlantic Monthly* review of Frederick Law Olmsted's *A Journey in the Back-Country*, Knight's name appears in a list of authors who wrote about early New England (636). And in the 1864 book *Huguenots of Westchester and Parish of Fordham*, the author, William Watson Waldron, writes of "Madame Knight, who published a journal of her trip from New-York to Boston, a hundred and sixty years ago, A.D. 1704" (72). Waldron quotes directly from Knight's text, indicating that he too owns or has access to a copy of it.

In July 1871, the *North American Review*, then edited by James Russell Lowell and Charles Eliot Norton, reviewed the book *History of Rye, West Chester County New York 1660-1870* (1871) by Charles W. Baird. Discussing "public-houses" of the time, the reviewer writes that "even the best [public-houses] were not very neat or well-provided. At least Strang's was not, where Madam Knight passed her wretched night in 1704" (226). This notably informed reference both indicates familiarity with the narrative of Knight's trip and accurately cites the year she began her travel; as with earlier references, familiarity with Knight's text is assumed. Further, Moses Coit Tyler, known for his "pioneering work in the scholarly study of colonial and revolutionary literature," included Knight in his "great and enduring stud[y]," *A History of American Literature, 1607-1765*, published in 1878 (Saar 243, 246).²⁴ Tyler's choice of Knight corresponds with what Saar describes as his view of "literature as a source of social information: he open[ed] the canon

to include journals, diaries, and travel literature as proper objects of literary study. . . . [F]or Tyler, and for the Victorians, the literature of New England exemplified the literature of the nascent nation" (247). Knight's New England focus and detailed observations appealed to Tyler. He was aware of but less fettered by insistent notions of literary aesthetics and so did not automatically exclude Knight because of her position as a woman who had written in what was perceived by many to be a lesser genre.²⁵

In 1888 in the *Harper's* feature "Editor's Study," William Dean Howells reviewed the book series *Library of American Literature* edited by Edmund Clarence Stedman (1833–1908) and Ellen Mackay Hutchinson (?–1933).^{26,27} Discussing American Puritan writing, Howells writes, "Even with the masters of it, English prose was still in the hippopotamic; the newspaper humorist had not yet arisen to give it the gazelle-like movement in which it now disports itself" (479). Howells admiringly singled out Knight's journal:

The editors quote from the journals of Madam Sarah Kemble Knight the account of her journey from Boston to New York in 1704, which is both lively and good. It shows touch; and that such easy, vigorous writing should be in a private diary suggests at least a growing literary temperament among the Bostonians of the time. (479)

Howells's 1888 praise—"lively," "good," "easy," "vigorous"—of Knight's 1704–5 writing indicates a change over time in reception of unconventional women's writing. That Knight's text "shows touch" is a marker for Howells "of a growing literary temperament among Bostonians of the time"; that is, by 1888 such women's writing is viewed (at least by Howells and other cultural agents like him) as engaging and acceptable, unlike the more mixed reception Knight's writing had received by some reviewers and readers in earlier decades.

In his 1896 biography *The Life of Thomas Hutchinson*, James Kendall Hosmer (1824–1927) cites "Madame Knight, who made a journey through New England early in the eighteenth century, of which an account remains, sometimes graphic and racy, describes the trading of the time" (18). Hosmer quotes at length from Knight's *Journal*, indicating that he owns or has access to a copy of it. Hosmer's classification of the text as "sometimes graphic and racy" is admiring rather than pejorative, inviting readers to share his response.

Finally, an 1897 essay, "Travel in Early New England," by Amelia Leavitt Hill (?–1962) in *The New England Magazine*, begins with a

lengthy section on Knight and her travels. Hill, clearly familiar with Knight's *Journal*, assumes that readers will be, too. Hill's admiration for Knight and her journal are evident throughout the section. Knight's text is a "most interesting journal," and Knight herself is "regarded as little short of a heroine," with qualities of "courage," "quick insight," and a "keen sense of humor and a gift of description" (82). Hill quotes directly from the journal several times, establishing that she, too, owns or has access to a copy of it.

To summarize the trajectory sketched here of nineteenth-century U.S. print appearances of Knight and her journal, the first extant reference to Knight herself is, appropriately, in Hannah Mather Crocker's 1718 treatise on women's rights. Knight's *Journal* was then first published in 1825 and subsequently republished in its entirety three times (1847, 1858, and 1865). An excerpt from the journal was published in 1826, and a variety of references to Knight and her text appeared in print throughout the nineteenth-century United States, particularly in the latter half of the century.²⁸

These multiple reprintings of and references to Knight's *Journal* across the nineteenth century stand in contrast to its private, local circulation in the eighteenth century. Further, the various ways in which the text was edited (in single volumes, in periodicals, with commentary by male editors) and received (negatively, positively, as fiction) indicate the shifting cultural status of Knight's text in particular and women's writing in general. Taken together, laudatory references to Knight's journal in the last decades of the nineteenth century by Tyler, Howells, Hosmer, and Hill make plain that by that time, the journal was valued more positively than it had been in earlier decades.

My claim is not that Knight's *Journal* was necessarily read by nineteenth-century U.S. women writers subsequently discussed in this study. That may or may not have been the case. However, in outlining nineteenth-century appearances of the journal, I seek to position Knight's text in a developing cultural discourse regarding gender and representation, one in which women's texts examined in this study are situated.

III.

While Knight's generic choice of the journal or travel narrative corresponds with early American women's writing, her adaptations of form and her unconventional writing are unlike those of other early

American women writers. Rather, Knight's text anticipates and projects generic choices and constructions of female behavior that nineteenth-century U.S. women writers later adopted and developed, consciously or unconsciously.

Similar to narratives by early American women, Knight's text participates in the "amateur" choice of the journal or travel narrative. As mentioned earlier, as far as is known, Knight did not anticipate or prepare her text for publication. Indeed, in adopting the amateur form of the journal, Knight simultaneously adopted the status of an amateur writer. Such status suggests an expectation of later sharing the private journal with a private (not public or commercial) audience of family and friends. The genre of the journal is, as Schriber notes, typically seen as "one of those 'lesser forms' in the autobiographical tradition" (59). Generic conventions of the travel narrative allow for a range of content, including the journey itself, the traveler's observations, and details of the writer's life and experiences. Generic conventions also prompt a prearranged structure of the text that adheres to the journey's itinerary and route. As Schriber observes, "the warrant in the travel genre for culturally authorized and conventionally female forms such as the letter, the diary, and the journal" invites participation of women writers "because these are forms in which women are historically practiced and believe themselves to be competent" (58). The journal requires an experience (travel) to some degree allowable within conventional female scripts. Though women's travel was much more constrained than men's travel, some limited situations allowed women both to travel and to remain viewed as genteel. As Shari Benstock classically writes, the mix of lower-status accessibility and travel experience enables women's self-writing, "serv[ing] as . . . a way by which to find a 'voice'—whether private or public—through which to express that which cannot be expressed in other forms" ("Authorizing the Autobiographical" 5–6).

At the same time, women's travel writing invokes gender issues of authority and autonomy, marking complexity of female positioning and the woman writer's potential disruption of dominant gender constructions. For instance, New England examples of excoriated Puritans Anne Hutchinson and Mary Dyer, as well as the 1692 witchcraft delusion, spanned the seventeenth century, providing cautionary tales for white women who acted with autonomy and spoke in less constrained voices.^{29,30} As Schriber writes, travel narrative conventions and travel itself are complicated for women by "prohibitions against female travel for travel's sake [that] have been linked historically to ideas of the

feminine, connected in turn with women's sexual vulnerability" (23). Such concerns would have contributed to a convergence of gender and class for the white middle-class woman on a solitary journey and for those who encountered her. Because "women of the genteel classes are assumed to be virtuous women," women who traveled alone would be viewed as lower class—that is, "sexual, dangerous, and barely women at all" (Schriber 87). Schriber concludes that "the public took the measure of women's travel, its value and its meaning, as it took the measure of women, their value and their meaning" (45). Indeed, Knight consistently notes behaviors of women encountered on her journey. Her observations, discussed below, function to reinforce her own class status. The women whom Knight observes serve as "a useful polarity to the woman traveler," crucially enabling her to identify herself as genteel (Schriber 89).

Knight deploys travel narrative conventions by using her journey's structure as the text's structure. Her text follows her trip from Boston to New Haven and New York and back, signaling its principal agenda of recording the journey. However, Knight defies travel narrative conventions with a mix of independence, capitalistic motivation, and witty observations. These disruptions of generic conventions separate Knight and her journal from other early American female travel writers and their texts. Early American women narrators such as Hannah Dustan, Mary Rowlandson, and Hannah Swarton traveled, but were forced to do so as captives; they were commodities, not buyers or sellers, in economic exchange. Their postcaptivity narratives, primarily chronicling physical and spiritual redemption, were promoted as documents of orthodox Puritan piety.

Other early American women travelers such as Elizabeth Ashbridge and Elizabeth House Trist, did, like Knight, journey independently. However, Ashbridge's narrative records her search for spiritual, not monetary, gain. Trist details her conventional reasons for travel (to reunite with her husband and children) within prevailing gender assumptions.³¹ Knight's distinctive tone, observations, and motive may help explain why her text remained unpublished in the eighteenth century. In salient ways such as these, I read Knight's text as less typical of eighteenth-century American women's writing and see it corresponding more closely with nineteenth-century U.S. women's writing.

Knight's journey mirrors cultural ambivalence toward female autonomy located in the women's travel narrative. The independence of her unconventional travels alone or with a guide is confined to her reliance on eighteenth-century New England white women's domain.

She is lodged, served, and entertained by women at inns, taverns, and eating places. She turns not to a patriarchal god but to the female moon for guidance on rough roads. And when she completes her return trip, she is greeted not by men but by women—her mother and daughter. These interactions on her travels adhere to gendered cultural contours. Her text privileges observation of women encountered on her journey. As Shields observes, Knight's text is "alert[ing] us to the development of a women's domain in the public sphere" (*Civil* 105). Her text also chronicles her critical scrutiny of women's voices and her perception of their disruptions of conventional gender scripts.

Knight's unusual autonomous travels determine that she will be situated in female locations. Ironically, her travel autonomy limits her writing domain. In fundamental ways, her journal is more gender-specific in its observations than other early American women's travel narratives because the places she travels through on her solitary journey—regardless of her destination—must always be in women's domain. Knight's gendered adaptation of the travel narrative partakes of, yet subordinates, generic conventions of texts "by early explorers, by Puritan historians, and by diarists and travelers" that, as Lawrence Buell has observed, map "the New England landscape and ethos" (283). Within these conventions Knight's *Journal* maps previously uncharted regions of her gendered travels. Her territory is a female, oral New England landscape and ethos of white American eighteenth-century women and women's domain.

Knight's adoption of a nonfictional, almost realist form within which to narrate her journey prefigures autobiographic choices in texts of nineteenth-century U.S. women discussed later in this study. As I demonstrate in subsequent chapters, though Fanny Fern, Louisa May Alcott, S. Emma E. Edmonds, Mary Livermore, Annie Turner Wittenmyer, and Harriet Jacobs sometimes employ degrees of the fictive in their writing, they primarily use the autobiographical in order to "speak" publicly. I argue that Knight's adaptations of a genre perceived as acceptable for women incorporates strategies that nineteenth-century U.S. women writers, with varying degrees of awareness, later take up and expand.

IV.

Knight traveled fairly autonomously—she was mobile, literate, and largely uninfluenced by religious motives. Though she did, when

reunited with her mother and daughter, “desire sincerely to adore [her] Great Benefactor for thus graciously carying forth and returning in safety his unworthy handmaid” (116), few religious references appear, and even this last one is wryly phrased. Knight is separated from women she encounters on her travels by their social and spatial confinement as well as by questions of their literacy.³² As Julia Stern observes, in the journal only Knight “is represented in the act of writing” (“To Relish” 3).³³ Voices of other women may have been limited by illiteracy to the spoken word. Whether or not they were limited thusly, Knight restricts their voices to the spoken word in her journal.³⁴ Variance between Knight and other white eighteenth-century New England women reveals nuanced gender issues of access and authority in the women’s domain situated within the larger patriarchy.³⁵ Throughout her text, Knight has greater access and authority than the eighteenth-century women she writes of encountering.

However, the degrees of cultural distance separating Knight from other white early American women need not be overstated. Differences among women, no matter how significant, are subsumed by larger forms of social insistence regarding gender. Knight and other white early American women were vulnerable to dangers and gendered anxieties directed toward women whose actions, beliefs, or status resulted in heightened cultural notice. Early American history provided salient representations of risks that accompanied female visibility. For Knight, the most recent and notorious gendered cultural disruption would have been the 1692 Boston/Salem witchcraft delusion, when she was twenty-six years old: four years after her marriage, one year after the birth of her child, and twelve years before her journey. By the time Knight embarked on her early-eighteenth-century trip, the state no longer executed New England women on witchcraft charges. The perception of women’s power, autonomy, and visibility as a threatening cultural disruption and the need to control them had become concealed in more “rational” and systemic ways. Despite these (dis)appearances, such formal rules of law served as bloodless, more culturally acceptable forms of containing women’s autonomy and power than the hanging of women.

Knight’s occupations as scrivener and estate settler invite speculation concerning her access to and considerations of such legal information. Anson Titus detailed Knight’s extensive copyist work: “She appears as a witness to a hundred or more deeds of the leading firms and families of Boston” (105). Copying a variety of public documents would have allowed Knight regularly to acquire legal particulars. Official

documents involved in settling estates would have also furnished her with such information. In these and other ways, Knight would have been familiar with property laws and legal changes. Such information may have led her to recognize alterations in women's legal status and larger implications of such changes. That awareness, if it existed, had the potential to increase her understandings of codified penalties that often awaited disruptive women.

Up to a point, Knight's activities might seem to depend on, rather than to challenge, Laurel Thatcher Ulrich's classic concept of the "deputy husband," the woman who without cultural disruption serves as her husband's agent in business and other responsibilities. But it would be inaccurate to claim that in Knight's business activities she functioned as her husband's surrogate. Rather, her work seems to have been largely separate from her husband's. Still, any conclusions Knight may have drawn as a result of her autonomous work as scrivener and estate settler would have mixed with views she held as a rational, eighteenth-century, middle-class white merchant. The latter subject position suggests that she may not have necessarily recognized or fully accepted the systemic gendered oppression of such changes. She could have dismissed Hutchinson and Dyer as female religious fanatics who had deliberately courted controversy, and women accused of witchcraft as crazy or hapless victims of an overzealous past. Knight's employment as a copyist, in addition to income it provided, may have served only as a means by which to glean useful knowledge that would help her capitalize further on her business skills. Similarly, knowledge that enabled Knight to help settle estates may have remained conventionally understood by her within immediate limits and applications of the law. Her increasing familiarity with the legal system may not have led her to understand the law in any larger representational sense. Knight's behavior, controlled by bloodless cultural constraints, may have prevented her from more complete recognition of her place on a continuum with these penalized women. Yet her knowledge of such women may have allowed her to intuitively and unconsciously sense gender boundaries.

However Knight and other eighteenth-century New England white women viewed their cultural location and its systemic controls, when Knight began her travels and journal, dangers and social fears of female autonomy and voice remained culturally entrenched. I agree with Julia Stern that Knight's gendered constructions in her journal of herself as conventional and other women as disruptive show her "refocus[ing] the anxiety she feels for having transgressed eighteenth-

century gender codes by projecting hostility back onto the female bodies of unknown others" ("To Relish" 6). Her choice of the journal—with its marginal status—to record her voice and the journal's commercial publication over a century after her death implicitly recognizes gendered perils for independent women. At no point does Knight allow herself to feel sympathetic alignment with her historical antecedents or with women she encounters on her journey.

These punitive commonalities help determine that female mutual acceptance and protection could not fully emerge from and be enacted in eighteenth-century white women's domain. Rather, such gendered hazards resulted in Knight's investment in criticizing women she encountered on her travels as speaking and acting inappropriately, yet insisting—despite her unusual, autonomous journey—on her own conventionality. Taken as a whole, Knight's gendered criticisms and class building point to a Federalist America as yet unready for a democratic union of females. Women's texts subsequently discussed in this study (texts both written and published in the nineteenth century) will at times at least partially construct unified female communities. For instance, as later chapters show, Alcott's community of female nurses in the Civil War hospital as seen in *Hospital Sketches*, as well as Edmonds's constructions of cross-dressing women soldiers in *Nurse and Spy in the Union Army*, represents women linked by shared concerns and interests, a grouping only marginally viable in Knight's time and perception.

V.

Near the beginning of her journal, we hear Knight's indignant voice in her transaction to hire a guide, marking that, as Julia Stern aptly phrases it, "things oral . . . constitute the central narrative matter of the *Journal*" ("To Relish" 1). A portion of the manuscript is missing; we enter the bargaining when Knight records this dialogue:

Peices of eight, I told her no, I would not be assary to such extortion. Then John shan't go, sais shee. No, indeed, shan't hee; And held forth at that rate a long time, that I began to fear I was got among the Quaking tribe, beleeving not a Limbertong'd sister among them could out do Madm. Hostes. (87)

Knight wishes to hire a male guide but must negotiate with his mother, his female agent, who sets his price and speaks for him so exten-

sively that she invokes for Knight religious oratory and a community of articulate women—the image of professional speaking. When indentured servant Elizabeth Ashbridge (later a Quaker preacher herself) first hears a Quaker woman preaching in the early 1730s she writes, "I looked on her with Pity for her Ignorance (as I thought) & Contempt of her Practise, saying to my self, 'I am sure you are a fool, for if ever I should turn Quaker, which will never be, I would not be a preacher'" (155). Ashbridge's precritical contempt differs from Knight's experienced, ironic response to "Madm. Hostes." Knight views the woman's tirade as performance, using "Quaking tribe" to recall disparagement of Quakers and their commonly mocked fervor, "quaking" in enthusiastic prayer. Though Knight ironizes the lengthy discourse, she also recasts it as woman's professional discourse. Knight locates her disparagement in the woman's prolonged articulation—her voice—not in the occasion for her discourse. For Knight, a woman who speaks at such length—professionally or not—conducts herself inappropriately. Her critical, extended discourse on the extended discourse of another woman leaves unexamined, as Julia Stern observes, "the ways in which her own narrative implicates her in the role of outspoken female" ("To Relish" 2). Knight's presentation of herself as always speaking appropriately even when she is not marks a contradictory self-representation within prevailing gender assumptions that will be consistent throughout the journal.

Judgment of female voice is further promoted when, at the end of the tirade, Knight writes:

Upon this, to my no small surprise, son John arose, and gravely demanded what I would give him to go with me? Give you, sais I, are you John? Yes, says he, for want of a Better; And behold! This John look't as old as my Host, and perhaps had bin a man in the last Century. (87)

That a woman spoke on behalf of an adult male extends Knight's reading of the woman's voice as disruptive. Not only did a woman speak at length; she also spoke on behalf of another, a male, and a grown male at that.

When John concludes the bargain for "half a pss. of eight and a dram," "my hostess catechis'd John for going so cheep, saying his poor wife would break her heart" (87). According to Knight, John's bargaining for himself is appropriate culturally and (for her) economically. Yet John's silent presence while his mother bargained suggests his implicit acquiescence to her appropriation of his voice. Only when

her bargaining is ineffective does he speak and bargain for himself. The scene centers on articulation and inarticulation, eliding issues of money, family, and travel. The mother speaks at length for the adult son; the son speaks briefly for himself; and then his mother speaks for his wife. Knight's disapproval of the woman is twofold: the length at which the woman preaches and her son's allowing her to speak for him. For Knight—in unexamined contradiction of her own speech as she records it and of her journal entries—any woman who exceeds brief speech on her own behalf violates gender and class codes.

Intersections of class and gender identity appear regularly in the journal. Knight's observations regarding women encountered as she travels emerge from her attention to class difference as well as to gender conventions. Throughout her text, she is preoccupied with classification and criticism of women. As Michaelsen has observed, Knight's investment in rendering distinctions of class suggests "the manner in which women's empowerment is linked in Knight's text to the domination of others" (35). Knight's class status is, for instance, imbricated in her frequent observations of inadequacies of her lodging accommodations. As "a member of an emerging merchant class in Massachusetts" (Michaelsen 41), she partakes of what Lang has described as "a complex of economic circumstances and cultural convictions delimited enough to produce among its members a self-awareness sufficient to reinforce class boundaries, not erase them" (10).

Knight's next recorded female encounter again suggests her conflicted disruption and defense of customary female scripts as well as her attention to class status, as she arrives at an inn unconventionally late for a woman traveling alone:

[I] had not gone many steps into the Room, ere I was Interogated by a young Lady I understood afterwards was the Eldest daughter of the family, with these, or words to this purpose, (*viz.*) Law for mee—what in the world brings You here at this time a night?—I never see a woman on the Rode so Dreadfull late, in all the days of my versall life. Who are You? Where are You going? I'me scar'd out of my witts—with much now of the same Kind. (91)

Knight, the woman most overtly violating gender conventions, immediately condemns the woman's startled reaction as inappropriate, telling her "shee treated me very Rudely, and I did not think it my duty to answer her unmannerly Questions" (91).³⁶ As in her observation of the guide's mother, Knight records the uninterrupted length and

breathless nature of the woman's speech. In both cases, despite her "projecting [her] female presence in public places," as Shields aptly phrased it (*Civil* 118), her conspicuous and unusual female autonomy, and the potential for negative cultural responses to her, Knight represents herself as the conventional woman in the room, assaulted and offended by inappropriate female speech. When a woman speaks, according to Knight, rigid, unspoken rules apply. She should not speak for others, or speak at length, or ask questions. Knight represents women's speech as violating a gendered social code, though it is less clear whether the women lack awareness of that code or deliberately break it. Women's speech and Knight's reaction to it reveal voice as a strategy of gendered social classification.³⁷ In listening to women as she does, Knight, according to Shields, displays her "acute ear for conversations . . . [showing that] talk was a social marker, revealing one's true standing on the index of gentility" (*Civil* 117). Knight's censoring responses to woman's voice correspond with what she perceives as woman's lower status. At the same time, her responses promote Knight herself as a woman who behaves appropriately, suggesting her own higher status. Knight criticizes women's speech (and so determines their lower status) for qualities she herself uses to condemn that speech and, paradoxically, to imply her own higher status in comparison. Her regular attention to women who, in her view, speak excessively offers possibilities of such women as diminished versions of Knight herself. Further, to depict herself as superior to other women in class status, Knight must necessarily portray such women. In doing so, she unconsciously provides glimpses of elements of a prenascent female democratic union.

At the next stage, a woman silently serves Knight a meal inflected with nonverbal suggestions of articulation:

The woman bro't in a Twisted thing like a cable, but something whiter;
and laying it on the bord, tugg'd for life to bring it into a capacity to
spread; wch having with great pains accomplished, shee serv'd in a dish
of Pork and Cabbage . . . and every thing on the Table service Agreeable
to these. I, being hungry, gott a little down; but my stomach was soon
cloy'd, and what cabbage I swallowed serv'd me for a Cudd the whole
day after. (91-92)

Direct and implied components of speaking occupy this scene. The table service "agrees" with the meal. Knight's stomach is soon cloyed, sickened with excess as from too much sweet speech. The cabbage

serves as a cud, regurgitated to be repeatedly chewed again. And the meal mutely served is unpalatable. It can barely be swallowed. Though the woman is silent, the meal she serves suggests gender-specific expression located in food and domestic service, both of which are characteristically associated with women and women's work. The meal is described in terms of generic elements of speech (agreement, sweet words, chewing, mouth), not this particular woman's speech or substitute for her voice. These images, with the silent woman in attendance, are inscribed as disapprovingly as the speech of voluble women. Indeed, in the play between orality and literacy in which Knight engages throughout her text (i.e., she writes while women she encounters talk), Knight's written literacy is superior, and the dialogue of other women inferior. For Knight, excessive talking marks lower class status. Both too much speaking and vulgar eating provoke similar censure from Knight. However, though she is repelled by the food in the scene just discussed, the meal she eats does alleviate her hunger. Similarly, Knight's interactions with women in her text, however dissociating, do gesture toward latent possibilities of a women's community.

The *Journal* repeatedly features images of gendered articulation when no one is speaking. The next day when traveling in a canoe she fears will capsize, Knight is "very circumspect, sitting with my hands fast on each side, my eyes stedy, not daring so much as to lodg my tongue a hair's breadth more on one side of my mouth then tother, nor so much as think on Lott's wife, for a wry thought would have oversett our wherey" (92). Knight recalls another woman's perilous (indeed, tragic) journey to inform her own experiences. She again invokes speech images—tongue, mouth—in a scene where no actual speech occurs. It is revealing of Knight's sensibility—her quick turn to the "wry thought"—that she invokes Lot's wife, hardly a figure of fun, with humor. As Breitwieser correctly observes, Lot's wife "does not speak," "nor are her thoughts and feelings recorded," and she "is explicitly condemned in Genesis" (96, 95).³⁸ But Knight's concern here and elsewhere in the constructions of gender and articulation that recur in her text is not with particulars of specific women she mentions but with incorporation of voice (spoken or unspoken, hers or other women's) into female scripts.

Left behind by her guide in "the dolesome woods" (93), Knight does not rely on piety in times of difficulty, as typically seen in early American women's captivity narratives. Instead, she first genders her fears ("Now Returned my distressed apprehensions of the place where I

was . . . encompassed with Terrifying darkness enough to startle a more Masculine courage" [93]) in order to articulate and understand them (she is frightened, but even a brave man would fear this "Terrifying darkness"). She next locates gendered images of reassurance:

But being got to the Top, was there amply recompenced with the friendly Appearance of the Kind Conductress of the night. . . . The Raptures which the Sight of that fair Planett produced in mee, caus'd mee, for the Moment, to forgett my present weariyness and past toils; and Inspir'd me for most of the remaining way with very divirting tho'ts, some of which, with the other Occurances of the day, I reserved to note down when I should come to my Stage. My tho'ts on the sight of the moon were to this purpose:

Fair Cynthia, all the Homage that I may
 Unto a Creature, unto thee I pay;
 In Lonesome woods to meet so kind a guide,
 To Mee's more worth than all the world
 beside . . . (93)³⁹

In circumstances requiring "a more Masculine courage" (generally unavailable to women, but by implication rarely required in the civilized world—that is, Boston—outside the woods), Knight invokes a gendered source, the female moon, for guidance ("Kind Conductress"), encouragement ("Inspir'd me for most of the remaining way"), and motivation to record her voice, her own "very divirting tho'ts." Even in dangerous circumstances, she cannot resist ironic construction of her situation. In the absence of her male human guide, she relies not on a male god but on a female moon, not on reflection on her sins but on "divirting tho'ts," and not on the voice of prayer but on the voice of poetry. Her moon-inspired courage displaces images of piety, submission, and containment seen in early American women's narratives. On a path "very narrow, and on each side [where] the Trees and bushes gave us very unpleasent welcomes with their Branches and bow's" (93), Knight travels uphill and her spirits rise as the moon rises. She progresses from "distressed apprehensions" to gender-specific inspiration to female articulation, all without conventional submission to masculine religion.

When Knight fears that she may drown during a river crossing, her fictive stories of selfhood include "sometimes seing my self drowning, otherwhiles drowned, and at the best like a holy Sister Just come out

of a Spiritual Bath in dripping Garments" (92).⁴⁰ As in the reference to her guide's mother as a female Quaker preacher, she ironizes comparisons between a woman in secular life (here, Knight herself) and a devout woman ("a holy Sister") practicing religious duties. Indeed, her repeated use of representations of religious women—a female Quaker preacher, Lot's wife, a holy sister—critiques gendered conventions of organized religions. Religious women invoked by Knight in her text are disruptively visible: They speak to men with authority (a female Quaker preacher); they break rules and then transform into a pillar of salt; they enter and exit bodies of water, fully clothed and dripping; and they all participate in sharply constrained roles allowed to some women in some organized religions. At the same time, Knight elides religious doctrine and scriptural implications to provide herself with female points of comparison, while also marking her studied attention to women's public representation. These largely ironic gendered references signal her perception of distances between herself and other women (white American eighteenth-century women she meets on her travels, religious women, and historical women). Whether women speak or remain silent in the journal, they risk behaving inappropriately, particularly "working women" with whom, as Julia Stern observes, Knight is "unwilling to identify" ("To Relish" 1). I agree with Stern's reading, though I argue that as Knight insists on her distance from other women, she also—in preliminary and not fully recognized ways—outlines a potential community of vigorous women in a nascent republic.

At one point Knight meets two silent daughters, "look[ing] as old as the Divel himselfe, and quite as ugly," noting, "We desired entertainm't, but could hardly get a word out of 'um" (98). At the next eating place, "our Hostes, being a pretty full-mouth'd old creature, entertain'd our fellow travailer, the french Doctor, with Inumirable complaints of her bodily infirmities; and whispard to him so lou'd, that all the House had as full a hearing as hee" (98). Finally, on her return journey, Knight is "invited to Lodg at Mrs. —, a very kind and civill Gentlewoman, by whom I was handsomely and kindly entertained" (112). Working women talk too little ("could hardly get a word out of 'um"), too much ("full-mouth'd old creature"), or too loudly. Only a "Gentlewoman's" speech is kind, civil, and handsome.

In Knight's journal, white American eighteenth-century woman's voice confirms her class status. Knight uses perceived distances between herself and other women to imply a conventional self-representation: a woman speaking and behaving according to female cultural scripts

traveling among women who do not. Yet her disapproval of women she perceives as speaking or behaving inappropriately is subordinated to the independent voice of her journal and the autonomous nature of and occasion for her journey. Knight successfully resists recognition of her own speech and behavior as violating rigid gender codes which she establishes for other women. Though she uses examples of women's disruptive voices to portray herself as conventional, her standards for female behavior result in few women speaking or acting conventionally in the *Journal*, least of all Knight herself.

VI.

In scenes where Knight criticizes outspoken women, she represents herself adhering to culturally sanctioned female codes. In other scenes—for instance, when she travels at night, a woman unaccompanied except by a male guide—her behavior violates those codes. The “private writing of the diary and journal” helps account for what Felicity A. Nussbaum has described as the “contradictions that both produce and reflect historicized concepts of self and gender while sometimes threatening to disrupt or transform them” (149). In her journal Knight records women's voices that similarly satisfy and violate cultural concepts of appropriate gender behavior. She also reacts critically to women she perceives as speaking or behaving inappropriately—that is, threatening to disrupt or transform cultural conceptions of appropriate female behavior. Her observations occur in women's domain, where women speak publicly (e.g., the rude young woman questions Knight at Billings's Inn at Old Dorchester, a public place) yet privately (e.g., the young woman lives at the inn and is alone with Knight when she questions her). The privacy of a gendered sphere—inns and boardinghouses run by women, for example—enables women to speak more freely, just as the privacy of Knight's journal allows her to voice, if not to recognize, her own contradictions.

Through readings of women's voice, Knight discovers, though she does not examine, her own voice in the wider gender-specific sphere to which her culture restricts her. Whatever the distances between Knight and other women she meets on her travels, she responds to their voices with as much personal and cultural investment as her counterparts responded to the New World wilderness and spiritual redemption. By her journal's end, she has invoked biblical women, contemporary women, historical women, professional women, religious

women, imaginary, loud, mythical, old, silent, talkative, ugly, young women.

In her disapproval of ways women express themselves, Knight aligns herself with men and women of authority who support gendered social codes restricting women's speech. In her study of early American women's travel narratives, Imbarrato argues that "contrary to gender stereotypes, in their writing women often perpetuate hegemonic sensibilities rather than express a more inclusive attitude" (90). Knight's disapproval of women's voices legitimizes her own ready articulation, as though her criticism of other women's voices renders her own voice more acceptable. Ironically, in her desire to illustrate women's inappropriate speech, she permanently records female voices she wishes to edit or suppress. As she speaks against women who speak too much, too little, or too loudly, Knight unintentionally speaks *for* them. Invoking and criticizing other women's voices in her journal, Knight's own voice ultimately represents a range of female voices.

Knight's multiple female narrations populate her text with women. These women would have been invisible or merely footnotes in the historical record were it not for her invocation of them. It is ironic that the nineteenth-century publication of Knight's journal provokes issues of female authenticity. Knight's voice in the text, containing as it does voices of multiple women, was in the nineteenth century sometimes assumed to be fictive and sometimes assumed to be a fictive voice scripted by a man. Over a century after her critical readings of women's voices, Knight's own voice was criticized and subjected to suppression and revision, labeled, among other things, as a "spurious production" ("December Meeting" 387).

The independence of and motivation for Knight's journey—not forced, not religious or domestic in its purposes—distances her narrative from other female narratives of the period. Woman's voice, whether modified or not by religious or domestic rhetoric, was far too infrequently the voice of the literate, and so other voices that may have resembled Knight's no doubt went unrecorded. Contradictions in Knight's *Journal* and in Knight herself mark the vexed roles of women in the conventional ordering system; their fears of being perceived as defying such arrangements; and, despite these highly restrictive constraints, their desire nonetheless to attempt an articulation of self and voice. It is little surprise, then, that Knight's *Journal* was published long after she wrote it. Theodore Dwight's publication of it in 1825 occurred 121 years after Knight set forth on and recorded her travels. The *Journal's* public appearance at this point in the United States coin-

cided with an emergent cultural discourse concerning women, writing, and representation. The 1825 publication of Knight's journal was followed by further publications of the text in the form of reissuings, excerpts, and multiple print references throughout the nineteenth century. These public print appearances mark this eighteenth-century text's membership in shifting social and cultural arrangements that informed nineteenth-century U.S. women writers and their texts.

In the next chapter, I turn to the work of one such author, Sara Payson Willis Eldredge Parton. Writing as "Fanny Fern," she crafted frank, appealing periodical pieces that focused on subjects ranging from the sentimental to the controversial. Like Knight, Willis brought an uncommon and compelling mix of independence, wit, and lived experience to her writing. From the start of what would become an immensely successful literary career, Willis's work participated in and expanded accepted representations of women. Willis's popular and influential writings provided diverse models for women readers to negotiate and adopt in order to loosen restrictive cultural norms.