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The Autobiography of a Substitute:  
Trauma, History, Howells

"The war has never fully panned out in fiction yet," observes the managing editor of a literary magazine in William Dean Howells's novel *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (1890).<sup>1</sup> The editor's judgment was Howells's own, and it has since been reiterated by generations of critics who have noted the nearly thirty-year gap between the first important novel about the Civil War, John de Forest's *Miss Ravenel's Conversion from Secession to Loyalty* (1867), and the second, Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895).<sup>2</sup> As a result of this thirty-year gap, the great postbellum texts about the war tend not to be novels, and the great postbellum novels tend not to deal with the war: the project of memorializing the war was taken up by lyrics, memoirs, and diaries, while the novel took on instead the project of national reconstruction. In my attempt to account for this generic split, I turn to Howells in part because he was among the first to note the war's absence from the novel, but, more importantly, because he tried—and failed—to fill this absence.

In his editorial work, first at the *Atlantic Monthly* and later at *Harper's*, Howells called for novels to memorialize the war, even as he published and reviewed novels that worked instead toward national reconciliation. In his own novel writing, in *A Fearful Responsibility* (1881) and *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1886), as well as in *A Hazard of New Fortunes*, he attempted in various ways to bring the war into fiction. And in the memoirs that he wrote at the end of his life, he speculated about why his editorial calls had gone unheeded and why his novelistic efforts had failed. Taken together, these texts both enact and theorize the individual traumas and cultural repressions that marked the Civil War and its aftermath. In this way, Howells at times anticipates the canonical texts of twentieth-century trauma theory, particularly in his attention to the difficulties of representing a traumatic event; more often, however, he stands apart from the trauma theorists in his conviction that these difficulties, like the traumatic events themselves, take different forms in different historical contexts.<sup>3</sup> For Howells, the trauma of the Civil War is caused less by the experience of war as such than by the particular circumstances under which this war

was fought. As a consequence, he understands trauma to be contingent, not universal, remediable, not absolute, and, in so doing, he offers a model for what a historically-specific trauma theory might be.<sup>4</sup>

Howells comes closest to the canonical texts of trauma theory in the opening chapter of *Silas Lapham*, which attends to a veteran's difficulty in describing his experience of the war. A newspaper reporter has come to interview Silas Lapham for a series of articles on successful Boston businessman, and Lapham is able to speak fluently, if conventionally, about his steady rise from humble farmer to industrial magnate. About his war experiences, by contrast, he can barely speak at all:

"So I went. I got through; and you can call me Colonel, if you want to. Feel there!" Lapham took [the reporter's] thumb and forefinger and put them on a bunch in his leg, just above the knee. "Anything hard?"

"Ball?"

Lapham nodded. "Gettysburg. That's my thermometer. If it wa'n't for that, I shouldn't know enough to come in when it rains."

[The reporter] laughed at a joke which betrayed some evidence of wear.<sup>5</sup>

"So I went. I got through." Three words mark the beginning of the war, and three words mark its end. In between, there is an absence, one of those "radical disruptions and gaps," those "void[s]" or "hole[s]," that constitute, for the theorist Cathy Caruth, the structure of traumatic experience.<sup>6</sup>

Caruth is referring to gaps in memory, but she could just as easily be referring to the gap in Lapham's narrative, for both share the same cause: the all too insistent presence of an event that is inaccessible to the transformations of either narrative or memory. The paradigmatic example of this insistent presence is the traumatic dream, which, Sigmund Freud had observed in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1919), rejects representation in favor of an intransigent literalness. Such dreams return to the scene of the shock that had given rise to the trauma, the railway accident or the exploding shell, and thereby force the dreamer to experience the shock again and again, as if for the first time. Through such dreams, the traumatic event is carried intact and untransformed in the traumatized mind, in much the same way as Lapham carries an alien bullet in his leg. Still present and thus prior to representation, the bullet can be felt, but it cannot be described. Indeed, the rest of the passage demonstrates the inadequacy of description, as Lapham half-heartedly tries to fill the gap in his narrative with phrases indifferently offered to his listener ("you can call me Colonel") and phrases borrowed from tired jokes ("knowing enough to come in when it rains").

But if Lapham is traumatized by experiencing the war, Howells himself was traumatized by missing it. It is this unexpected kind of trauma that his memoirs record, and, in doing so, they offer an ac-

count of absence that complements those offered by Freud and Caruth. The last of Howells's memoirs, *The Years of My Life* (1916), ends with the beginning of the Civil War. Howells describes the first heady weeks after Fort Sumter when young farmers and shopkeepers and lawyers and clerks all joined together and became soldiers—and when Howells himself stood apart and watched them march by. He realized with some regret, he tells us, that his own fate was not action, but rather what he calls, in an uncharacteristically Jamesian formulation, “the more subjective riddle of one who looked on, and baffled himself with the question of the event.”<sup>7</sup> To “look on” is, in this context, to be necessarily “baffled” by what one sees, and “bafflement” would remain Howells's primary response to the war. As the other young men marched off to battle, Howells departed instead for Italy, where he wrote the essays that would, upon his return to the United States at the war's end, secure him a place as editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*. His move to Italy thus inaugurated his career as a man of letters, but it also set limits on the kind of novelist he would become. Howells concludes his memoir by confessing that he has often thought of writing a novel about those first weeks when all the young men were rushing to enlist, but that he has never been able to write it. Just as this failure has shaped his life, so too it has shaped his memoir. Some of his Italian writings are appended to the memoir's end, in a gesture toward what Howells would soon achieve, but the memoir itself culminates in an evocation of the unachievable, what he calls “that forever-to-be-unwritten novel,” his novel about the Civil War.

This “unwritten novel” recalls, I want to suggest, all the novels that were not written in the postbellum era, and I take Howells's status as “one who looked on” to be similarly representative. For he was not the only young man to avoid serving in the war, and he was certainly not the only novelist. Indeed, the postbellum novel was dominated, as Bernard de Voto was the first to note, by men who had not served in the war. Generations of critics have followed de Voto in arguing that the literary historical absence of the war from the postbellum novel was caused by the biographical absence of the war from the novelists' lives, and, in doing so, they have presumed that the problem was one of experience: Henry James, Mark Twain, and Howells, among others, could not write about what they themselves did not know. Howells's memoir suggests, however, something rather more complex. It shows us a Howells who was “baffled” at the moment and subsequently unable to represent what he had seen, and it thus underscores the surprising parallels between Howells's own response to the war and the response of a veteran like Lapham. In doing so, the memoir further suggests that the postbellum novelists were quite specifically traumatized by the recognition that other men were marching—and dying—in their place. In this way, the trauma suffered by Lapham and the

trauma suffered by Howells, the trauma of experiencing the war and the trauma of missing it, turn out to be interconnected. What silences Howells, then, is the knowledge that he was able to miss the war only because others experienced it in his stead.

If Howells's memoirs and the opening chapter of *Silas Lapham* demonstrate an interdependence between the absence of the war in the traumatized mind and the trauma of having been absent from the war, *A Hazard of New Fortunes*, along with the later chapters of *Silas Lapham*, will attempt to move beyond these paired absences. In these texts, Howells will move beyond absence in order to represent the war at last, but, in doing so, he will be required to confront the specific circumstances that made it possible for some men, such as Howells himself, to miss a war that other men, such as Lapham, were forced to fight. More particularly, Howells will be required to acknowledge that provision of United States conscription law that enabled a drafted man to hire another man to fight in his place, a practice known as substitution. In the section that follows, I will look at figural instances of substitution in *Silas Lapham* and literal instances of it in *Hazard*, and I will trace Howells's growing conviction that the war could not be represented until the men who had served as substitutes were brought back into view. Doing so required him to excavate a long-repressed history of class conflict, and what he found, I will argue, is that this conflict could not be accommodated by a genre devoted to the project of national reconstruction. As a result, Howells sought, in *A Fearful Responsibility* and, more extensively, in *Hazard*, to interrupt a premature and pre-emptive reconstruction by marking, through the trope of amputation, those differences that had yet to be reconciled.

#### *Substitution and the Representation of War*

The subject of the war is raised a second time in *The Rise of Silas Lapham*, during the famous dinner party scene that serves as the ideological, as well as structural, center of the novel. The male guests are lingering over cigars and port, and the conversation turns to their memories of the Civil War. Lapham interrupts the others to tell a story not about himself, but about a corporal who had served under him. On the eve of battle, the corporal had a premonition of his own death and wept in Lapham's tent; the next day, he marched into battle and died, saving Lapham's life. Lapham's narration concludes in this way:

"I hated to look at him after it was over, not so much because he'd got a ball that was meant for me by a sharp-shooter—he saw the devil takin' aim, and he jumped up to warn me—as because he didn't look like Jim; he looked like—fun; all desperate and savage. I guess he died hard."

The story made its impression, and Lapham saw it. "Now I say," he resumed, as if

he felt that he was going to do himself justice, and say something to heighten the effect his story had produced.<sup>8</sup>

"The story made its impression," in the midst of Lapham's other failures of speech. Earlier in the scene, Lapham's unease among the Boston elites has reduced him to an embarrassed silence and later it will give rise to a drunken garrulousness, but for this one moment his words have force.

What has enabled Lapham at last to speak about the war, what has enabled the novel at last to represent it, are two interconnected acts of substitution: Lapham's speaking on behalf of another, and the other's dying in his place. The first of these acts of substitution, the speaking, is straightforward and unproblematic. It conforms to what Howells has shown us of the rhetorical codes of the Boston elite; the past valor of the dinner-party guests is signaled precisely through their readiness to praise the heroism of their companions and their reluctance to speak of their own. The second act of substitution, the dying, is rather more complex. It throws into relief the necessarily vicarious nature of both literary representation and traumatic experience: just as Howells approaches, through Lapham, the missed experience of war, so Lapham approaches, through the corporal, the missed experience of death.

In recognizing the vicarious nature of experience, Howells once again both anticipates and revises the central texts of trauma theory, which represent either the source of the trauma, or else its resolution, in terms of substitutes. Freud argues, in "Psycho-Analysis and War Neurosis" (1919), that war creates in the conscripted soldier a "parasitic double," and war neurosis emerges when the soldier is not otherwise able to reconcile his "old peaceful ego" and his "new warlike one."<sup>9</sup>

In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud argues that the origins of Greek tragedy and children's play lie in our response to traumatic events; we respond to these events by repeating them, in part so we can master them and in part so we can revenge ourselves on a "substitute."<sup>10</sup> For Freud, then, trauma is an experience that produces doubling, while for later theorists, doubling is required if trauma is to be experienced at all. Primo Levi was one of the first to observe that those who bear witness to the Holocaust are those who have failed to experience the event in its full extremity; he therefore understands himself to be an inadequate "proxy" for those who are lost.<sup>11</sup>

Laub argues that all experience depends on an imagined structure of address. The lack of external witnesses to an event such as the Holocaust made it impossible, he argues, for those within the event to bear witness even to their own experiences, and so his work with survivors seeks to create the internalized double that all witnessing requires, the "witness or listener inside himself."<sup>12</sup> More recent writings

on trauma have argued that an event can take the place of, and thereby offer access to, an otherwise missed traumatic experience: Jared Stark has looked at ways in which suicide can serve as a "surrogate" for the Holocaust, while Amy Hungerford has pondered the implications of Felman's claim that the silence of Paul de Man was a "substitute" for his suicide.<sup>13</sup> The "double," the "substitute," the "proxy," the "surrogate," the "witness within the self": all of these accounts imagine some kind of substitute to fill the absence that constitutes the structure of trauma.

For the trauma theorists, the substitute, like the absence it fills, exists in time but is not determined by the specifics of its historical context. For Howells, by contrast, the substitute emerges out of the peculiar contingencies of United States conscription law. The first conscription act of the Civil War was passed by the United States Congress in March, 1863. Unlike Confederate conscription, which exempted specific occupations, Union conscription was universal, but allowed drafted men to exempt themselves for a certain price. They could commute their service by paying three hundred dollars, or they could hire a substitute to fight in their place.<sup>14</sup> Commutation was a common practice, with nearly two thirds of drafted men paying the fee, but it was the object of vigorous working-class critique.<sup>15</sup> In part, this critique focused on the specific price set for commutation. Three hundred dollars was more than many men could afford at a time when the average worker earned four hundred dollars a year, and the price thus lent force to the common complaint that the Civil War was a "rich man's war and a poor man's fight." More generally, however, the working-class critique challenged the very idea of equating a human life with any sum of money, no matter how great or how small. The cold logic of such equations was captured by the Democrats' anti-war campaign slogan, "Three Hundred Dollars or Your Life."<sup>16</sup> So persuasive were these critiques that it was more the practice of commutation than conscription itself that sparked the draft riots that broke out in many Northern cities, most violently in New York in August 1863.<sup>17</sup> In response to these riots and to the Democrats' campaigning, the United States government first revised the commutation clause, in February 1864, and then repealed it entirely in July of that same year.

Where commutation made concrete the economic disabilities of the working class, the economic privileges of the middle and upper classes were both acknowledged and denied by the oddly polarized discourse surrounding substitution. Historians of the draft have noted that while the act of paying the commutation fee was tolerated at best, the act of hiring a substitute was actively celebrated. This celebration of those who hired substitutes was accompanied, indeed enabled, by the simultaneous denigration of the substitutes themselves.<sup>18</sup> The substitutes were said to be weak and cowardly, concerned only with the

money they would earn.<sup>19</sup> Recruiting marshals suspected them of being bounty-jumpers and withheld part of their payment to prevent them from deserting before reaching the front. To be sure, the men who served as substitutes were often older and less fit than those who volunteered, and there is reason to believe that some con artists did hire themselves out as substitutes in town after town, but the stigmatizing of the substitute cannot be accounted for merely by that. For what is most striking about these criticisms of the substitutes is how neatly they deflect the attacks that might more properly be made of the men who have hired them. Some men are unwilling to fight, and their substitutes are called cowardly; some men exercise their financial privilege, and their substitutes are accused of caring more for money than for country.

Howells himself was involved in substitutions both figurative and literal. Because of his residence abroad, he was exempt from the draft; his brothers remained subject to it, however, and his letters from Venice demonstrate persistent concern about what he evasively calls their "possible absence from home."<sup>20</sup> His concern for them was partly a concern for himself. Their father needed one son, at all times, to work in the family print shop, and Howells had been educated in the expectation that he would be that son. When Howells left for Europe, another brother, Joe, had to take on his responsibilities, and his life abroad thus depended on Joe staying at home. When conscription began, Howells reassured his family that he would send whatever money was needed to save Joe from the battlefield—and, by extension, himself from the print shop. He only reluctantly made the same offer with respect to his ne'er-do-well brother Sam, who ended up surprising them all by becoming the only Howells to volunteer.<sup>21</sup> In this way, a chain of real and potential acts of substitution (Joe taking the place of Howells, a substitute possibly taking the place of Joe) kept Howells from experiencing the battlefield in real life. Twenty years later, a similar chain (Lapham for Howells, the corporal for Lapham) would enable him to imagine the battlefield at last.

This second chain of substitutions is necessarily complicated by the first, and, in this way, trauma theory is complicated by the specifics of history. In relying on a substitute to bring the war into consciousness and into representation, Howells is relying on a figure who conjures up the class inequalities that both the postbellum era and the postbellum novel were strenuously working to deny. Howells himself participates in this denial by isolating the corporal from the realities of economic exchange. To be sure, the corporal is killed by a bullet that was "meant for" Lapham and Lapham has, we will later learn, been sending money to the corporal's family ever since. But Howells is careful to emphasize that the corporal did not enlist in Lapham's place, but rather by his side, on the same day. He is careful to transform what the

old campaign slogan would take to be an exchange (Lapham's money, the corporal's life) into two uncoordinated gifts: an impulsive leap into the sharpshooter's line of sight, and an unbidden offer of support.

Howells's denial of substitution is thematized in the ignorance of the novel's dinner-party guests. Most of them are men of Lapham's generation, and they all, except for the minister, had served in the war. The one man who was then too old to enlist had fought under Garibaldi fifteen years earlier, and his son, who was then too young, laments that his own generation is lacking in similar opportunities for valor. None of these men, it seems, commuted their conscriptions, as most men of their class were doing at the time; indeed, none of these men seems to have been conscripted, for it seems that they had all already volunteered. Nor do they seem to be aware that commutation, much less substitution, existed at all.

In *Silas Lapham*, then, Howells attempts to speak on behalf of those who fought in his place without acknowledging the economic inequalities that determined his relation to them. As a result, the novel's representation of the war is crucially limited, not only in content, but also in scope. The dinner-party guests speak of heroism, not cowardice, self-sacrifice, not self-interest, but they also focus exclusively on the discrete acts of individuals, abstracted from any political or economic context and suspended in time: the soldiers are separated from the noncombatants, and the war years are cut off from the present day. What this means is that *Silas Lapham* is only partially successful in memorializing the war. Howells has managed to represent certain battlefield events, but he has done so in ways that prevent him from exploring the war's place in the postbellum era. If the war is ever to "pan out" in fiction, the substitute, and the class conflicts this figure adumbrates, will have to be brought fully into view. Or, at least, this is the conclusion that Howells will come to nearly ten years later, in *A Hazard of New Fortunes*.

*Hazard* follows the founding of a new literary magazine, and toward the end of the novel, the magazine's staff gathers for an elaborate dinner. The staff is doubly representative, embodying the many tasks required by literary production (literary editor, art editor, publisher, business manager) as well as the many classes and regions comprised by the United States (worker, capitalist, southerner, westerner, immigrant, Bostonian). Their dinner conversation thus provides an occasion for exploring both the state of postbellum writing and the nation's responses to the Civil War. It is during this conversation that the managing editor observes that the war has yet to "pan out" in fiction, and this observation prompts a remarkable response. "You might get a series of sketches by substitutes," the art editor proposes,

"[T]he substitutes haven't been much heard from in the war literature. How would 'The Autobiography of a Substitute' do? You might follow him up to the moment



when he was killed in the other man's place and inquire whether he had any right to the feelings of a hero when he was only hired in the place of one."<sup>22</sup>

The art editor is begging two crucial questions. First of all, he presumes that there is an essential difference between substitutes and other soldiers. He claims that the substitutes haven't "been much heard from," but it is not clear how we would know if they had. The art editor suggests that substitutes might be distinguished from volunteers on the grounds of "heroism," but the suggestion is, of course, ironic. Indeed, the art editor is raising the question of heroism solely to criticize the magazine owner, who had confessed, a few lines earlier, to having hired a substitute himself. His substitute had died, the magazine owner recalled, in a skirmish that took place after the surrender of General Lee, and the art editor is shaming the owner by claiming that it is nonetheless the owner who is the true war "hero." But if heroism is not the distinguishing mark between the substitute and the volunteer, then it is hard to say what would be. The substitute marches, fights, and dies in the same way as any other soldier, and yet there is clearly some difference between the man who must gamble his life for money, and the man who has enough money to secure his life. That is to say, the phenomenon of substitution exists not in the substitute's own experiences, but rather in his structural relation to the man in whose place he was "hired" and in whose place he will die.

Substitution thus requires a mode of representation more attuned to systems than to individuals; the true "autobiography of a substitute" might not be an autobiography at all. This is the second of the art editor's presumptions: that the substitute will require a new literary form. The publisher had been speaking of serial novels, but the art editor responds by proposing "a series of sketches." The turn to the sketch suggests, on the one hand, that the substitute is not understood as a person in his own right with a continuous "autobiography" of his own, but instead as a mere function inserted into the life story of the man who hired him; in this way, the fragmentary nature of the sketch implies the alienation of the substitute's fighting and dying. But on the other hand, the sketch is understood in this novel as the appropriate response to entities too large to be encompassed in familiar forms. When the literary editor, Basil March, moves from Boston to New York at the beginning of the novel, he decides that sketches are the only genre capable of representing the immensity and variety of the metropolis. The turn to the sketch, then, not only acknowledges the possibility that the war might be too large and too complex to be represented in protagonist-driven narratives, but also suggests that the reduction of soldiers to "hired" functions might lie at the heart of this representational difficulty. And indeed, the one Howells character to have hired a substitute, the magazine owner, is an industrialist notorious for his ferocity toward union organizers and callousness to workers more generally. In

a sense, then, the absence of the war in the postbellum novel, its failure to "pan out in fiction," is merely one manifestation of the genre's more general failure to represent the realities of labor and class.

The art editor's proposal is facetious, but it is also visionary, imagining the kind of text that would succeed in fully representing the war. This text is never written, however, nor are the city sketches that March is forever planning and preparing for. *Hazard*, too, abandons its formal and political ambitions as it goes on, its most radical techniques and topics forgotten by its complacent conclusion. And so while *Hazard* argues that the postbellum novel and the postbellum era should come to terms with the class inequalities that determined the experience of war, it does not, in the end, succeed in doing so itself. The "unwritten novel" remains unwritten. What *Hazard* does succeed in doing is dramatizing the ideological forces that prevent class inequality from being acknowledged, specifically as they shape the generic expectations of the postbellum novel. It shows that the project of national reconstruction, in which many postbellum novels were engaged, is opposed to the project of memorializing the war. As a consequence, *Hazard* both enacts the project of national reconstruction and resists it. This resistance is figured as amputation.

#### *Amputation and National Reconstruction*

The expectation that the postbellum novel should work toward reconstructing the nation is as old as, and even more prevalent than, the expectation that it should memorialize the war. The first novelist to write about the war, John de Forest, was also the first to call for what he named "the great American novel." Such a novel, as he imagines it, would present an image of the nation that all citizens would be compelled to recognize as their own; it would unite the nation's regions through the "national breadth [of its] picture." In calling for the postbellum novel to take such a form, de Forest identifies himself as someone who had "fought at the front [and] aided in the work of reconstruction," and, in doing so, he implies that novels will be furthering the work of reconstruction by other means.<sup>23</sup> Recent critics of the postbellum novel have come to the same conclusion. Nina Silber has argued, for instance, that the many popular novels depicting the courtship of a southern woman by a northern man, a genre brutally parodied in Henry James's *The Bostonians* (1886), should be read as emplotting the happy subordination of the nation's sections to northern superintendence.<sup>24</sup> And the postbellum vogue for regional fiction can be seen as doing much the same thing more subtly, as Nancy Glazener has argued, for it ensured that regional identity would remain under the control of the northern literary establishment and responsive to northern readerly taste.<sup>25</sup>

Howells was largely sympathetic to the writing of national reconstruction. In his editorial work, he published such regionalist authors as Charles Chesnutt, Kate Chopin, and Sarah Orne Jewett, as well as the memoirs of Confederate generals. And in his own novels, in *Hazard* most particularly, he uses the tropes and plots of national reconstruction. The crucial trope of the great American novel is, as the critic Lawrence Buell has argued, sectional representativeness, and *Hazard* draws its characters from the western states, as well as from the north and south.<sup>26</sup> The relation among these regions are emplotted and resolved through what Silber would call a "sectional romance," for the novel concludes with the marriage of a young man from the rising middle west and the daughter of an old Virginia planter. But even as Howells participates in the writing of national reconstruction, he also recognizes that the postbellum era was all too ready to leave certain divisions unreconciled. Reconstruction required, as the historian David W. Blight has recently shown, that African-Americans be excluded from, and even ignored by, the rituals of sectional reconciliation.<sup>27</sup> It also required, Howells suggests, that class divisions be forgotten as well. Howells makes this point by, on the one hand, structuring *Hazard* around scenes and plots of national reconstruction, while also, on the other, interrupting the workings of these scenes and plots in order to draw attention to what they exclude.

It is the character Berthold Lindau, the "red-mouthed agitator" and the "one-handed Dutchman," who most frequently interrupts.<sup>28</sup> He does so, most obviously, through his speech. Lindau is not the only character to attend to the sufferings of the poor, for the son of the magazine owner volunteers at a church mission and March wanders through the slums on the weekends in search of picturesque detail. But Lindau is the only character to articulate the sufferings of the poor in the service of critique, the only character to imagine that such suffering would not exist under a different economic order. The other characters dismiss Lindau's views as either dangerously radical or quaintly wrong-headed, and the novel seems to do so as well through its rendering of his speech in a near-comic German dialect. And yet, while Lindau's speeches are thus undermined and largely ignored, he nonetheless unsettles not only the other characters, but also the writing of national reconstruction, through his very presence—or, to be more specific, through the sight of his missing hand.

Upon meeting Lindau for the first time, the other characters immediately notice that his hand is missing and immediately understand that he lost it in the war; they invariably express their sympathy for his loss and their gratitude for his sacrifice. All of this is unremarkable, but not what follows. The characters then continue, almost compulsively, to discuss the amputation among themselves, to think of it when Lindau is not there, and to refer to it in the oddest of ways. "Here's to

your empty sleeve," the magazine owner calls out in an impromptu toast, while March prides himself on crafting more graceful tributes to the stump he cannot stop thinking about.<sup>29</sup> The narration is similarly obsessed, describing the amputation almost every time Lindau appears. Our first glimpse reveals that he "had lost his right hand," but a later view returns to "his empty sleeve dangling over his wrist," and another returns once more to amplify the details, "his empty sleeve dangl[ing] in the air, over the stump of his wrist."<sup>30</sup> This obsession is not explained, except by March's wife, who often thinks what the other characters are too discreet to say. She thinks to herself that Lindau's "mutilation must not be ignored," that it should "be kept in mind as a monument to his sacrifice," and yet she experiences the sight of his stump as "a sort of oppression."<sup>31</sup>

In order to understand how Lindau's stump might be oppressive, we need to understand what amputation signifies. In a number of Civil War texts, amputation marks the boundary between civilian innocence and military experience. In *Miss Ravenel*, the protagonist, and with him the reader, is not fully introduced to war until he has seen not only the confusions of the battlefield, but also the horrors of the field hospital, where "amputated fingers, hands, arms, feet and legs" lie scattered beneath the trees.<sup>32</sup> A similar introduction is more hesitantly made in a letter written by a real-life nurse: "I must not, I ought not to tell you of the horrors of that morning," she begins, before going on to describe one of these "horrors," the sight of a hardened orderly stepping on "the amputated stump of a wretched man."<sup>33</sup> This nurse writes that she has learned to deaden herself to the sights and, worse, the sounds all around her so as better to tend to her patients, but many other nurses conceived of their primary task not as healing, but as bearing witness. In Louisa May Alcott's novel *Work* (1872), for instance, the nurse-protagonist accompanies soldiers into the operating room they are afraid to enter alone, while Walt Whitman, in his poem "The Wound-Dresser" (1865), describes a nurse-persona who not only tends "the stump of the arm, the amputated hand," but, in doing so, gazes at the very injury that the soldier himself "dares not look on."<sup>34</sup> Nor is this emphasis on bearing witness limited to literary texts. One real-life nurse describes the transformative moment when she "suddenly came to the determination to witness" the amputation of her patient's arm, while another describes her daily labors as the repetition of a single act: "The same sad ordeal witnessed, viz: amputations and deaths."<sup>35</sup>

For these soldiers and nurses, civilian innocence and military experience are connected to one another by a narrative of discovery, and amputation thus marks a threshold of knowledge, a threshold that can be crossed, if only in one direction. For Howells, by contrast, or at least in his early novel *A Fearful Responsibility* (1881), innocence and expe-

rience are separated from one another by an unbridgeable gap and amputation marks an absolute limit. A decidedly minor text, *Fearful Responsibility* is read, when it is read at all, as a thinly veiled memoir of Howells's own absence from the Civil War. The Howells character, a professor, is spending the war years in Venice, where he is visited by a young woman from his home town, who brings with her news of what the professor is missing. The young woman presents herself as the knowing witness to all that the professor has not been able to see. Impatient with his romantic notions about the war, she interrupts him to point out that "when you see arms and legs off in every direction . . . you don't feel that it's such a romantic thing any more."<sup>36</sup> In foregrounding amputation as the central experience of the war and in testifying to both its horror ("arms and legs off") and its prevalence ("in every direction"), the young woman is relying on a common realist strategy for dispelling romance.<sup>37</sup>

But it is worth pausing to specify what, precisely, the young woman has "seen." She has seen limbs "off," but not "blown off"; she has seen wounds, but not wounding. What this means is that while the young woman may be more knowing than the professor, she remains, in comparison to the soldiers convalescing around her, radically innocent. Amputation thus figures the young woman's teasing proximity to, but ultimate separation from, the war, and it is in this context that we can best understand its startling erotic charge. The young woman's protests notwithstanding, she clearly finds amputation to be "a romantic thing." She describes a soldier who has a "cork leg" as "perfectly fascinating," and she says that there is no one "so popular with the girls" as the soldier with the "empty sleeve."<sup>38</sup> For a young woman to fall in love with injured soldiers may be a sentimental commonplace, but here the "cork leg" and the "empty sleeve" do not serve as synecdoches for soldierly valor, but are instead "fascinating" in themselves. The young women and her friends have fallen in love not with soldiers, but with the soldiers' prosthetic or absent limbs; they have fallen in love, that is to say, with the traces of an experience that is inaccessible to them.

Nor are these young women alone in finding covert pleasure in their distance from the war. The professor often expresses remorse for having failed to volunteer, but the "dreamy" voice in which he does so suggests that even his remorse is a kind of indulgence.<sup>39</sup> And the young woman reports that the entire homefront is caught up in a whirl of hectic and purposeless activity, what the novel repeatedly calls "gayety."<sup>40</sup> The young woman's perverse desire, the professor's decadent regrets, and the "gayety" of the world that is removed from the battlefield—these responses acknowledge, and secretly delight in, the difference between those who experience and those who miss the war. Such responses are no longer proper, however, once the war is

done. The young woman returns to her hometown and realizes that the "popular" soldier is nothing more than "his empty sleeve," and she decides that she is "too conscientious to marry him merely for that."<sup>41</sup> She sets aside the erotics of the war years, and marries a prairie minister instead.

From the perspective of trauma theory, amputation marks abstract, transhistorical phenomena. In her study of the First World War writings of nurses and orderlies, for instance, Margaret Higonnet speculates that the limb marks the uncanny border between the living and the dead.<sup>42</sup> What I want to suggest, however, is that both injury and the meaning of injury are at least partly determined by particular historical contexts. The prevalence of amputated limbs in Civil War texts has at least something to do with the fact that amputation had only recently become a widespread surgical practice. The discovery of anesthesia in the 1840s multiplied the number of operations surgeons were willing to perform by making it much less likely that the patient would die from shock during surgery, even as the lagging development of antisepsis made it still quite likely that the patient would die of infection soon afterward. Moreover, the particular nature of battle in the Civil War ensured that most of the operations performed, or at least most of the operations survived, were amputations. The relative softness and slowness of the bullets used meant that any wound to a limb was likely to be messy and prone to infection, thus requiring amputation; at the same time, the rudimentary nature of the period's surgical practices, particularly the treatment of hemorrhaging, meant that any other kind of wound, any wound to the head or torso, was likely to be fatal. As a result, a soldier who had been wounded and survived was likely to have suffered, in the process, the loss of a limb.<sup>43</sup>

Injury, then, takes different forms in different wars, and the meaning of injury is similarly determined, *Hazard* will show, by the particularities of a given postwar context. Lindau's stump is so "oppressive" to those around him not because it marks the difference between soldiers and noncombatants, not because it blurs the difference between the living and the dead, but because he rejects the meanings that the postbellum era would have him assign to it. In the self-congratulatory rhetoric of the novel's postbellum generation, the war was fought to end slavery and Lindau thus gave his hand to free the slave. In exchange, the government now offers him a pension, which Lindau angrily refuses to take. "Do you think I knowingly gave my hand to save this oligarchy of traders and tricksters, this aristocracy of railroad wreckers and stock gamblers and mine slave drivers and mill serf owners?" Lindau asks in a German translated, for once, into a respectful conventional English, "No; I gave it to the slave; the slave—Ha! Ha! Ha!—whom I helped to unshackle to the common liberty of hunger and cold."<sup>44</sup> By refusing compensation for the limb he has lost, Lin-

dau not only disconnects his injury from the most popular postbellum narrative about the war, he also suggests that this narrative is false because it has been brought to a premature, indeed a pre-emptive, conclusion. The war is not yet over because the worker is still enslaved by capital, and Lindau's stump, deliberately left uncompensated, conjures up the war precisely because the war is not yet won.

Uniformly dismissing this account of the war, the other characters attempt to compensate for Lindau's loss in another way: they continually, again almost compulsively, fantasize about shaking his hand. No social ritual is more central to this novel than the ritual of shaking hands, which signals fellowship, reconciliation, and the absence of threat. And so the fact that it is his hand, specifically his right hand, which Lindau has lost suggests the ways in which his views about the war have separated him from the community around him. At the same time, the novel's peculiar idiom for shaking hands, the "taking" of another's hand, suggests why this ritual is insistently imagined whenever Lindau appears. He cannot shake hands, but, if he could, then he would be able to "take" the hands of his fellow citizens and so be compensated for the loss of the one he had "given" to the slave. In this way, the novel's obsession with Lindau's amputation tacitly acknowledges both the need for and the impediments to fellowship—specifically, the impediments to fellowship on a national scale.

The drive toward fellowship runs, in this novel, on two parallel tracks. Among the post-bellum generation, there is national reconstruction, as emplotted by the courtship of the young woman from Virginia and the young men from the middle west. And among the war generation, there are scenes in which the soldiers briefly memorialize the war. At the dinner party for the magazine staff, a contributing writer, once a colonel in the Confederate Army, will rise and join the toasting of Lindau, his former Union enemy, and Lindau will in turn pay tribute to the unusual valor of the Confederate troops. Later in the novel, the other characters will sever their ties to Lindau, and the Confederate colonel alone will continue to recognize him: "I should like the opportunity," he announces to the rest, "of taking Mr. Lindau's hand."<sup>45</sup> In this way, both the project of national reconstruction and the project of memorializing the war run rather smoothly in this novel.

The problem lies in the relation between the two. Soldiers can unite in memory of their shared past, and men and women of the postbellum generation can unite in marriages that project the nation into the future, but all efforts to connect these two generations fail. Significantly, these efforts are most often prompted by Lindau's expression of what the younger generation takes to be radical political views. After Lindau explains why he has refused his government pension, for instance, March replies, "I don't believe there's an American living that

could look at that arm of yours and not wish to lend you a hand for the one you gave us all."<sup>46</sup> More skeptical of Lindau, the managing editor nonetheless says much the same thing, "I don't like that dynamite talk of his, but any man that's given his hand to the country has got mine in his grip for good."<sup>47</sup> In both cases, compensation is offered as a way of bringing the war to a decisive end. March and the managing editor seek to contain the force of the Civil War by relegating it to the past, masking the class divisions of the postbellum era through a pious display of gratitude. Their efforts fail, of course, and Lindau's amputated hand remains an unsettling sign that the war, and the war's potentially revolutionary agenda, is still active in the present day.

#### *Witnessing*

*A Hazard of New Fortunes* fails to represent the United States Civil War, but it reiterates another historical event more successfully: the Haymarket Affair. In the spring of 1887, a national strike was called and its supporters organized a peaceful rally in Chicago's Haymarket Square. After nearly all of the speeches were finished, after much of the crowd had dispersed, there was a sudden explosion of dynamite. The police responded by opening fire on the crowd, and scores of people were killed. The dynamiter himself was never identified, but eight known anarchists were accused of having incited him to violence through their writings and speech. After a hasty and irregular trial, all eight were found guilty, and seven were sentenced to death: four were executed and a fifth killed himself in prison before passions cooled and the governor of Illinois pardoned the rest. Howells was aware of these events; indeed, he was haunted by them. The Haymarket trial "has not been for one hour out of my waking thoughts," he confided to a friend, "it is the last thing when I lie down, and the first thing when I rise up; it blackens my life."<sup>48</sup> He was almost alone, however, in feeling this way, and he would be the sole public figure to speak on the defendants' behalf. At some risk to his livelihood and reputation, he published two open letters in the Chicago *Tribune*: the first, written while the defendants were still alive, catalogued the many procedural errors made during their trial and petitioned the governor to commute their sentences; the second, written the day after the executions, bore witness to the grievous wrong that the nation had done.

Two years later, Howells began writing *Hazard*, which would recapitulate these events with a difference. The novel culminates in a streetcar strike. The strike is reported by the magazine, and various members of the magazine staff therefore end up visiting the picket line and watching the confrontations between striking workers and the police. Suddenly, Lindau emerges out of a crowd of workers in order to make a fatal speech. Addressing a policeman who is beating the



workers with a baton, Lindau cries out, "Ah yes! Glub the strikers—gif it to them! . . . Glub the strikers—they cot no friendts! They cot not money to pribe you, to dreat you!"<sup>49</sup> The policeman responds to this provocation by turning on Lindau and beating him instead. At this moment, the son of the magazine owner rushes between Lindau and the policeman, only to be shot down by another policeman who had been aiming for Lindau. As a recapitulation of the Haymarket Affair, this scene is remarkable for defusing any revolutionary threat. The anarchist's dynamite, mentioned compulsively elsewhere in the text, is here replaced by the policeman's baton and bullets, and the anarchist's calls for violence against the state are replaced by an ironic call for the state's own violence, a call that is taken all too literally.

Even more remarkable, however, are the ways in which this scene recapitulates the Civil War, or at least that aspect of the war that had long been central to Howells. For the son of the magazine owner is shot, as Lapham's corporal had been shot, by a bullet that was not meant for him. The scene thus repeats the structure of substitution, but it also rectifies the inequalities that substitution had adumbrated. The magazine owner had hired a substitute during the war years, and now, a generation later, his son ends up dying in an old soldier's place. This rectification, however, achieves no lasting good: Lindau, too, will soon die of the wounds he received from the police, and he will live only long enough to endure a second amputation, this time of his entire arm. A more satisfying rectification will come through the scene's witnesses, through the literary editor, Basil March, and through Howells himself. While Lindau and the owner's son were drawn to the strike out of solidarity with the workers, March has come in search of new material for a city sketch, and while Lindau speaks out and the owner's son is shot down, March stands aside and remains unharmed. In these ways, he recalls nothing so much as the young Howells on that long ago day when other men volunteered for the war and he alone "looked on and baffled himself with the question of the event." And once more like that young Howells, March never manages to write about the dangers he had evaded. But if March recalls the young Howells who did not enlist, he does not at all resemble the mature Howells who saw the state respond to political speech with violence and then wrote in protest. Through his very failures, March throws into relief what the mature Howells had become.

More specifically, March demonstrates that Howells has learned to be a good witness, rather than a bad. Howells's writings, and writings about the Civil War more generally, have been filled with witnesses of both kinds, and to set the good witnesses against the bad is to see that what matters for Howells is peril and, even more importantly, presence. The good witnesses include fellow soldiers and nurses and wound-dressers, those who are at risk of suffering the victims' own

fate or, if not themselves in peril, are nonetheless present at the moment of the suffering. The bad witnesses, by contrast, are neither imperiled nor even present, and so fail to comprehend the war. When they do speak of the war, they do so foolishly, like the newspaper reporter who transforms Lapham's battlefield experiences into patriotic clichés, or the romantic young women who eroticizes the soldiers' wounds, or the professor who secretly delights in his own cowardice. More often, like March or the young Howells, they simply remain silent.

In his first open letter on the Haymarket Affair, Howells compared the defendants to the abolitionists of an earlier generation and argued that the moral heroes of the war would be hung if they were subject to the laws of the present day. Even as this comparison explicitly claims that the days of great deeds have passed, it nonetheless identifies a sphere in which wartime heroics are possible even in the post-bellum era. And it is in this context that we can best understand why Howells would insist, in letters to his friends, that his open letters had caused many of his readers to condemn him as an anarchist.<sup>50</sup> Speaking on behalf of the Haymarket defendants both before and after their execution enabled Howells, at last, to feel that he too was present during and even imperiled by the events consuming his nation. The Haymarket Affair thus transformed Howells from a bad witness to a good one, and in doing so, it resolved the problem of substitution. For good witnesses, by remaining present for the suffering of others, do not seek to obscure or to forget the relation between themselves and those who have died in their place. Rather, they mark this relation, hold it steady in their minds, and find a way to write about it later.

#### Notes

I would like to thank Amanpal Garcha, Caroline Levine, Martin Puchner, and Rebecca L. Walkowitz for commenting on earlier drafts of this essay with equal generosity and insight.

1 William Dean Howells, *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (1890; New York: Penguin Classics, 2001), 303.

2 Bernard de Voto, *Mark Twain's America*, intro. Louis J. Budd (1932; Lincoln: Bison Books—University of Nebraska Press, 1997). Edmund Wilson, *Patriotic Gore: Studies in the Literature of the American Civil War* (1962; New York: Norton, 1994). Daniel Aaron, *The Unwritten War: American Writers and the Civil War* (1973; Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987).

3 This is not to suggest that trauma theory is uninterested in history. On the contrary, Shoshana Felman, in her recent summary of the state of the field, has argued that trauma theory takes as its first principle the claim that "trauma is an essential dimension of historical experience" (*The Juridical Unconscious: Trials and Traumas in the Twentieth Century* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002], 173n). What Felman means by this is that trauma, which is constituted by a derangement of ordinary chronology through which the past is both still present and yet in the future, challenges us to reconceive the history of both individuals and communities, to recognize the ways in which such histories are constituted by repetitions and returns. As a consequence of this first principle, trauma theory has been admirably attentive to historical similarities; it is my intention, in this essay, to begin attending to historical differences as well.

- 4 In a recent essay, Dominick La Capra has decried what he takes to be the ahistoricity with which trauma is conceived, which I take to be an emphasis on historical similarity rather than difference. He decries, that is to say, our current tendency to confuse loss, which is historical and potentially redeemable, with absence, which is metaphysical and absolute. One consequence of this confusion, he notes, is that the difficulty of coming to terms with a specific loss is often recast as a representational or psychic impossibility—the impossibility of reference, perhaps, or the impossibility of bearing witness. The result, he says, is an “impasse” or “interminable aporia” (“Trauma, Absence, Loss,” *Critical Inquiry* 25.4 [Summer 1999]: 698). La Capra calls on us to begin thinking past this “impasse,” and I take doing so to be the central aim of James Dawes’s *The Languages of War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002) as well. La Capra criticizes what he calls the “all-or-nothing tendency” of contemporary criticism, which imagines no middle ground between, on the one hand, total representational mastery and, on the other, thoroughgoing representational failure (717). Dawes outlines a similar opposition between a conception of language as opposed to violence and a conception of language as bound up with violence, and he finds the synthesis to this incomplete dialectic in various war texts themselves, identifying a new set of rhetorical strategies in the process.
- 5 William Dean Howells, *The Rise of Silas Lapham*, ed. Don L. Cook (1884–5; New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1982), 15.
- 6 Cathy Caruth, “Trauma and Experience: Introduction,” in *Trauma: Exploration in Memory*, ed. Cathy Caruth (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 4–5; 7.
- 7 William Dean Howells, *Years of My Youth and Three Essays*, intro. David J. Nordloh, *A Selected Edition of W. D. Howells* Vol. 29 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1975), 201.
- 8 Howells, *Lapham*, 180–1.
- 9 Sigmund Freud, “Psycho-Analysis and War Neurosis,” in *Character and Culture*, ed. Philip Rieff (1919; New York: Collier Books—Macmillan, 1963), 217.
- 10 Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (New York: Norton, 1975), 11.
- 11 Primo Levi, “Shame,” *The Drowned and the Saved*, trans. Raymond Rosenthal (1986; New York: Vintage, 1988), 84.
- 12 Dori Laub, “An Event Without a Witness,” in Laub and Shoshana Felman, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 85.
- 13 Jared Starks, “Suicide after Auschwitz,” *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 14.1 (2001): 105; 106. Amy Hungerford, “Memorizing Memory,” *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 14.1 (2001): 75.
- 14 The Confederate Army, by contrast, never allowed commutation and abandoned substitution because of widespread criticism in December 1863.
- 15 A statistic that needs to be parsed: There were four rounds of Union drafts over the course of the war (summer 1863, spring 1864, fall 1864, and spring 1865), but commutation was permitted only in the first two. For those first two drafts, the commutation rate was nearly two thirds. For the war as a whole, it was forty-two percent, a figure that includes the small numbers of conscientious objectors who were still allowed to commute in the final two drafts. (Eugene C. Murdock, *One Million Men: The Civil War Draft in the North* [Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1971], 198).
- 16 James W. Geary, *We Need Men: The Union Draft in the Civil War* (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 1991), 104. While the commutation clause was understood to discriminate against poorer men, it was, of course, intended to do the opposite: to ensure that they would not be priced out of the substitute market. Historians still debate whether it actually had that effect. Murdock claims that the repealing of commutation drove the price of substitutes from three hundred to a thousand dollars (203), but Geary argues that the substitute market varied from region to region, according to the availability of men, not the ability to pay (144–5).
- 17 Iver Bernstein argues that the New York Draft Riots reveal a range of tensions, of which class was only one: the Enrollment Act of 1863 was seen as pitting the wealthy against the workers, but also African-Americans against (immigrant) whites and federal against local government. Still, he suggests that it was the class injustice of the commutation clause that sparked these other smoldering tensions (*The New York City Draft Riots: Their Significance for American Society and Politics in the Age of the Civil War* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1990], 10–1).

- 18 The editorial position of the *New York Times* exemplifies these conflicting impulses. Defending the conscription laws against Democratic attacks, the *Times* nonetheless admits that drafted men might have "obligations to the country" that cannot be discharged through a simple payment of three hundred dollars ("The Exemption Money," *New York Times* [3 August 1863]: 4). But such obligations can be discharged, it seems, through the hiring of a substitute for the same amount; the men who do this are honored in articles with such titles as "The Draft: Names of Patriotic Gentlemen who Have Furnished Substitutes in Advance of the Draft" (*New York Times* [4 September 1864]: 8).
- 19 One officer discounted the ones serving under him, believing they would "desert the first chance they get," while Gen. George Meade dismissed them as "worthless material . . . no addition to this army, but only a clog" (Josiah Marshall Favill, *The Diary of a Young Officer Serving with the Armies of the United States during the War of the Rebellion* [Chicago, 1909], 256). George Gordon Meade, *The Life and Letters of George Gordon Meade, Major-General United States Army*, vol. 2 (New York: Scribners, 1913), 144.
- 20 Mildred Howells, *Life in Letters of William Dean Howells*, 2 vols., 2nd edition (New York: Russell & Russell—Atheneum, 1968), 87.
- 21 Howells to William C. Howells, 28 August, 1862, *Selected Letters of William Dean Howells* Vol 1., ed. George Arms, Richard H. Ballinger, Christoph K. Lohmann, John K. Reeves (Boston: Twayne, 1979), 123–4; Howells to William C. Howells, 12 September 1862, *Selected Letters of William Dean Howells*, 124–26.
- 22 Howells, *Hazard*, 303.
- 23 "The Great American Novel," *Nation* 6 (January 9, 1868): 27–29.
- 24 *The Romance of Reunion: Northerners and the South, 1865–1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993). For a theory of nationhood and romance more generally, see Doris Sommer, *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).
- 25 *Reading for Realism: The History of a U.S. Literary Institution, 1850–1910* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).
- 26 Lawrence Buell, "The Rise and 'Fall' of the Great American Novel," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 104.2 (October 1994).
- 27 *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).
- 28 Howells, *Hazard*, 129.
- 29 *Ibid.*, 302.
- 30 *Ibid.*, 72, 299, 383.
- 31 *Ibid.*, 264–5.
- 32 John de Forest, *Miss Ravenel's Conversion from Secession to Loyalty*, ed. Gary Scharnhorst (1867; New York: Penguin Classics—Penguin Putnam, 2000) 260. A similar scene from another battle is described by a Union nurse: "It was an immense tree under whose shady, extended branches the wounded were carried and laid down to await the stimulant, the opiate, or the amputating knife, as the case might require. The ground around the tree for several acres in extent was literally drenched with human blood" (Sarah Emma Edmonds, *Nurse and Spy in the Union Army* [Hartford, Conn., 1865] 191). So horrifying is this sight to Edmonds that she soon abandons her own efforts to describe the scene and resorts instead to quoting another witness's depiction of the so-called "hospital tree" (191–2).
- 33 Katharine Prescott Wormeley, *The Other Side of the War With the Army of the Potomac: Letters From the Headquarters of the United States Sanitary Commission During the Peninsular Campaign in Virginia in 1862* (Boston, 1862) 108.
- 34 Louisa May Alcott, *Work: A Story of Experience*, ed. Joy S. Kasson (1872; New York: Penguin Books, 1994) 298. Walt Whitman, "The Wound-Dresser," *Walt Whitman: Poetry and Prose*, ed. Justin Kaplan (New York: Library of America College Edition—Penguin Books, 1996) 444.
- 35 Amanda Akin Stearns, *The Lady Nurse of Ward E* (New York, 1909) 287. Kate Cumming, *Gleanings from Southland: Sketches of Life and Manners of the People of the South, before, During and After the War of Secession: with Extracts from the Author's Journal and Epitome of the New South* (Birmingham, AL, 1895) 57.

- 36 William Dean Howells, *A Fearful Responsibility* (1881; Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1970), 27. Walt Whitman makes a similar observation rather more lyrically. In a letter to his mother, he writes, "O the sad, sad things I see—the noble young men with arms and legs taken off" (*The Wound Dresser: a Series of Letters Written from the Hospitals in Washington During the War of the Rebellion* [New York, 1898], 81).
- 37 The army nurse Kate Cummings makes this point explicitly. After describing the blood that flows from under the shut door of the amputation room, she acknowledges that "many of my readers will doubtless shrink from these recitals and ask why they should be recorded." It is necessary that she do so, she argues, because otherwise the reality of war will be falsified by the language of romance: "When so many honors are showered upon those who have 'waded through slaughter to thrones,' it is high time that something should be said about the terrible consequences of the 'grand clash of arms,' and about the heroes of the hospital" (55).
- 38 Howells, *Responsibility*, 26.
- 39 Ibid.
- 40 Ibid., 25–29.
- 41 Ibid., 162.
- 42 "Authenticity and Art in Trauma Narratives of World War I," *Modernism/Modernity* 9.1 (2002): 99.
- 43 George Worthington Adams, *Doctors in Blue: The Medical History of the Union Army in the Civil War* (New York: Henry Schuman, 1952), 112, on anesthesia; 114, on wounds; 131–3, on amputation. The diaries of Civil War surgeons reveal the pressures of performing scores of amputations in a single day and then watching the vast majority of their patients die. "As I halted at the door of the tents containing the two hundred mangled men," one writes, "I thought of the three-fifths of the amputations which had proved fatal, after the battle of Hanover. I pictured to my mind the two-fifths who had died within five days after the battle of Antietam" (Alfred Lewis Catleman, *The Army of the Potomac, Behind the Scenes: a Diary of Unwritten History* [Milwaukee, 1863], 273).
- 44 Howells, *Hazard*, 171.
- 45 Ibid., 341.
- 46 Ibid., 171.
- 47 Ibid., 289.
- 48 The most comprehensive account of the Haymarket Affair is Paul Avrich, *The Haymarket Tragedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); 301.
- 49 Howells, *Hazard*, 368.
- 50 Avrich, 304.