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Love Slaves and Wonder Women: Radical Feminism and Social Reform in the Psychology of William Moulton Marston[1]

Matthew J. Brown

Abstract

In contemporary histories of psychology, William Moulton Marston is remembered for helping develop the lie detector test. He is better remembered in the history of popular culture for creating the comic book superhero Wonder Woman. In his time, however, he contributed to psychological research in deception, basic emotions, abnormal psychology, sexuality, and consciousness. He was also a radical feminist with connections to women's rights movements. Marston's work is an instructive case for philosophers of science on the relation between science and values. Although Marston's case provides further evidence of the role that feminist values can play in scientific work, it also poses challenges to philosophical accounts of value-laden science. Marston's work exemplifies standard views about feminist value-laden research in that his feminist values help him both to criticize the research of others and create novel psychological concepts and research techniques. His scientific work includes an account of the nature of psycho-emotional health that leads to normative conclusions for individual values and conduct and for society and culture, a direction of influence that is relatively under-theorized in the literature. To understand and evaluate Marston's work requires an approach that treats science and values as mutually influencing; it also requires that we understand the relationship between science advising and political advocacy in value-laden science.

Keywords: feminist science, science and values, William Moulton Marston, Wonder Woman, popular culture

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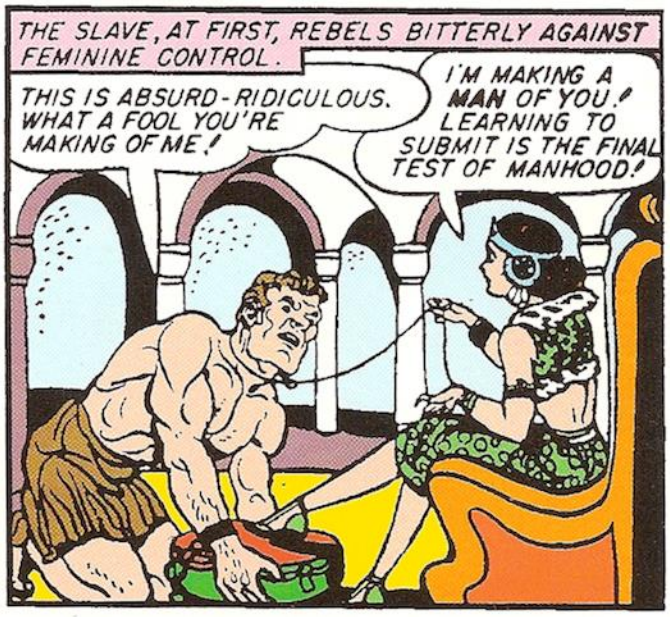

Figure 1. Panel from "The Rubber Barons," *Wonder Woman* #4 (Apr./May 1943)

1. Introduction

In a story from *Wonder Woman* #4 (Apr./May 1943) entitled[2] "The Rubber Barons" (Marston and Peter 1943a; cited in Walowit 1974, 130–31), Wonder Woman confronts the spy Elva Dove with evidence about her love interest Ivar Torgson, one of the eponymous Rubber Barons who uses Elva's love for him to convince her to spy on the Army. Wonder Woman shows Elva what the narrator calls "an X-ray photograph of Torgson's subconscious," revealing that brutish Ivar imagines himself a wealthy king and Elva his chained slave. Wonder Woman promises that she can "cure" Ivar with Elva's help. Using Wonder Woman's magic lasso, which has the power to make the person it binds submit to and obey the user, Elva begins a three-day role-reversal game, where Elva is the queen and Ivar the bound slave. When Ivar complains, though he kneels at her feet, Elva tells him, "I'm making a man of you! Learning to submit is the final test of manhood!" (See Figure

[2]Marston's Wonder Woman comics appear in several series: *All Star Comics* (only #8 was written by Marston), *Sensation Comics*, *Comics Cavalcade*, and *Wonder Woman*. I will use italics to distinguish between the comic book *Wonder Woman* and the character Wonder Woman. The early Wonder Woman stories were originally published without titles, but have been given titles in various anthologies and databases. Marston's original scripts also provide titles. *Wonder Woman* #4 is collected in *Wonder Woman Archives* vol. 2, from which I take the title.

1.) And much to his surprise, Ivar not only quickly learns to submit, he enjoys it! So much so that after one day, Elva need no longer use the magic lasso. Unfortunately, when Elva gives up the game and tells Ivar, "I just want to be your adoring wife," Ivar's "domination" and "male conceit" return, and Ivar goes on to trouble Wonder Woman once again, before she eventually subdues him.

I will show that far from being just a kinky story from old comic books, this story is a puzzle piece in an important but under-appreciated episode in the history of feminist science, an episode that serves as a particularly rich case study for philosophers of science interested in the relationship between science and values, or the public and political role of science and scientists. To understand that link, we need to know about Wonder Woman's creator and author. The early Wonder Woman comics were credited to "Charles Moulton," but, as with many early comic books, this was a pseudonym. Wonder Woman was drawn by Harry Peter, who decades earlier had drawn pro-suffrage cartoons, and edited by Sheldon Mayer, but most importantly for our story, her adventures were written by a man named William Moulton Marston.[3]

Who was William Moulton Marston? A thorough answer to this question is the necessary beginning to understanding the seemingly strange content of the Wonder Woman comics, and what they have to do with psychology, radical feminism, and social reform. Marston was a Harvard-trained psychologist and lawyer, the student of Hugo Münsterberg and thus an intellectual heir of Wilhelm Wundt and William James, the founders of scientific psychology. Marston was the inventor of a lie detector test based on changes in systolic blood pressure; his research was foundational for the developers of the polygraph. He published articles and monographs in the leading journals and book series in psychology and criminology. He also wrote a number of articles and books popularizing his psychological ideas, and was interviewed for magazine articles. At one point, Marston styled himself "the world's first consulting psychologist," and consulted for the film and comic book industries. In his student days, he wrote scripts for silent films; in his later years, he wrote a novel and self-help books, and created and wrote the comic book character Wonder Woman. He was a media theorist who wrote books and articles on the nature of "sound pictures" (movies with sound) and comics. He was an ardent and radical feminist, as well as a nonconformist and polyamorist.

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[3]The publisher of All-American Publications, a precursor to DC Comics, was named Maxwell Charles Gaines. Gaines hired Marston first as a consultant, then to create and write Wonder Woman. "Charles Moulton" is a combination of Gaines' and Marston's middle names.

In this paper, I will focus on Marston's psychological research in the 1910s and 1920s, as well as the way that his research connects with his later, popular work. First, I will argue that Marston exemplifies many aspects of feminist research, in that his feminist values play important roles in his scientific work, roles that cannot be dismissed under the rubric of mere bias, but instead contribute to the work's epistemic quality and ethical responsibility. I will focus this part of my analysis on his research on the emotions and his account of psycho-emotional health. Second, I will argue that Marston's work challenges the main accounts from feminist philosophy of science and the literature on values in science, because of the way that his scientific work seeks to inform and transform our values and our social institutions through proposed educational and social reforms, popularization efforts, and even popular media. Here I will focus on his popularizations, his consulting work, and his creation of Wonder Woman.

2. Feminist Philosophy of Science and the Interplay of Science and Values

Today, some form of the thesis variously known as the value-ladenness of science, fact-value entanglement, or fact-value holism is becoming widely accepted in philosophy of science, at least, by most of those who have carefully considered the matter. Though the view has been prominently defended by logical positivists, pragmatists, pluralists, and others, it is a central feature of many feminist philosophies of science, and it is the work of feminist philosophers of science that is probably most responsible for the recent growth in its acceptance. For the most part, the discussion has focused on the role values actually have in science, as well as the roles they can and should have.

2.1 The Role of Values in Science

The history of feminist philosophy of science, feminist science criticism, and feminist science is complex, but is often told starting with the growing numbers of women joining academic science in the mid-twentieth century or with the relationship between women scientists and the women's liberation movement of the 1960s and 1970s. I will follow Anderson (2012, 5) in briefly describing a common pattern in feminist interventions in science, before describing a few of the key approaches to the role of values in science.

Feminist science criticism often begins among practicing scientists, and takes the form of identifying sexist, androcentric biases and identifying them as a cause of error or limitation of the existing scientific methods, theories, and evidence. Feminist science critics operating in this mode are engaged with what Kourany (2010) calls the "methodological approach," which points to the ways in which androcentric, sexist science is bad science on its own criteria. Though feminist values or women's standpoints may not strictly be necessary conditions for recognizing

such problems, they certainly enable this kind of criticism, which had been absent. Feminist science criticism might focus on exclusion of women from science, applications of science that are harmful to women, accepted theories that ignore gender or women, the role of masculine and feminine cognitive styles and the cognitive loss associated with using only the former, and the role of gender bias in framing questions for research and conceptual schemes for articulating theories. As historians and philosophers of science become involved, and feminist science critics from within the field become more sophisticated, we tend to see a move from regarding bias as error, to seeing certain biases (namely, nonsexist and feminist bias) as a resource for better science. We also see feminist scientists moving from criticism of existing science towards the development of new projects that are based on or incorporate feminist values. As a result, philosophy of science moves from considering feminist critiques of science as sexist and biased to accounts of the potentially beneficial role of values in science.

The most basic move available for philosophers of science is to see values like sexism and feminism not as bias or error, but as perspectives that may generate different approaches to science. The move then is to encourage pluralism, and to manage the social incorporation of different value-perspectives in a productive way (Longino 1990, 2002). Another approach would be a sort of broad holism, according to which empirical claims, theoretical claims, and values all form a web of belief that is modified in the face of new experience to remain coherent (White 1981; Nelson 1990). A third approach is to manage the inductive risk faced by scientists with value judgments, i.e., to focus on the consequences of error and demand very strict standards when the (social) cost of false positive errors is high, and accept relatively looser standards when the cost of false negative errors is high (Rudner 1953; Douglas 2009). Alternatively, we may regard the ethical and epistemic goals of science to be jointly necessary—scientific progress requires better justification and more beneficent social consequences (Kourany 2010). These are, of course, only some of the many views that feminist and other philosophers of science have articulated about the role of values in science. What they share is the view that values have a beneficial role to play in science, guaranteeing its ethical and social responsibility, improving the epistemic quality of scientific knowledge, or both.

In sections 4–6, I will show different ways in which Marston's is a feminist science project that exemplifies the beneficial role of values in science. As is often the case in feminist history and philosophy of science, this is an interpretive venture—Marston does not foreground the influence of values on his scientific work. This is no surprise; many scientists are reticent to do so, given the prevailing image of objective science as value-free.

2.2 The Role of Science in Values

The literature on values in science is well developed, thanks to several decades of work on the topic. The question of the role of science in values has received relatively little attention by comparison. While there have been a few scientistic moral naturalists who insist that moral facts can be derived from scientific facts, it is a rare view. What's more, there has been relatively little interaction between philosophers of science and ethicists on the question. Ethicists worry about the relation of ethics to "nature," without much attention to the knowledge that science gives us about it, while philosophers of science haven't much to say about how the scientific process might alter ethics, values, and culture. Philosophers of science have recently been very interested in the impact of science on policymaking, but this interest is primarily focused on how scientists *inform* policy; the engines of social and political change, though, are politics and the public.

One view that explicitly considers the role that scientific theory and evidence might play in altering our values is the holist view that takes theory, evidence, and value to be mutual parts of a web of belief, which is altered in the face of new experience. Morton White (1981), for example, is concerned about mixed inferences of the following sort:

1. One ought not to break a promise.
2. Bob promised me yesterday that he would come to the party.
3. Bob did not come to the party.
4. Therefore, Bob did something he ought not to have done.

According to White, due to the Duhem-Quine thesis (underdetermination of falsification), if one feels strongly inclined to reject the conclusion (4), then we may reject either the ethical premises (1), the factual premises (2–3), or the logical connections that license the inference. On the other hand, if we feel strongly about (1–3) and the form of the inference, we are obligated to accept the conclusion (4). And so moral reasons can lead us to reject factual (or scientific) claims, and new factual (or scientific) knowledge can lead us to make ethical or moral claims (when we learn (3), we can judge (4) to be the case). This is a cartoonishly simple example, but it demonstrates that the scientific and the ethical are bound up for this sort of holist in such a way that permits the results of science to have an impact on our values and social practices. This sort of view has been developed in a more sophisticated and explicitly feminist direction by Lynn Hankinson Nelson (1990) and Sharyn Clough (2011).

Elizabeth Anderson (2004) provides another account of what she calls "the bidirectional influence of facts and values" (11). In considering the question of whether values in science might lead to wishful thinking, or "operate to drive inquiry

to a predetermined conclusion" (11), she argues that we need to ensure that value judgments are made on the basis of evidence produced by inquiry, rather than being fixed dogmatically in advance. Only by accounting for what it takes for there to be evidence *for* value judgments can we ensure a legitimate role for values in science, according to Anderson, including evidence that comes from our emotional reactions to the results of courses of actions spurred by science. In her case study on feminist research on divorce, she argues that social scientists can contribute to answering such value-laden questions as, "Are children better off if parents who want a divorce stay together?" (18). Answering such questions involves entangled considerations of evidence and value judgments.

In sections 7–9, I will discuss work by Marston that pushes us to think about the roles that science plays in values, society, politics, and culture, especially when that science is itself clearly value-laden. Our current discussion of science and values doesn't focus enough on this direction of influence. Marston asks value-laden questions like, "What sort of society would best promote emotional normalcy [psycho-emotional health]?" His answer is a radical feminist program of reform that he attempts to enact through education, consulting work, and pop culture. It is an open question whether, ultimately, work of the sort Marston pursues is legitimate, scientifically and politically. His approach pushes us to further develop our accounts of the role of science in values.

3. William Moulton Marston's Scientific and Feminist Credentials

In order to understand the relationship of Marston's psychological research to his feminist values and politics, it is helpful to know a few things about his life, the nature of his work, and his standing in the field at the time. This information is necessary to answering two challenges: (1) Was Marston a serious scientist, rather than a marginal figure or a charlatan? (2) Was Marston really a feminist? While Marston does not figure prominently in contemporary histories of psychology, thanks to an interest in his role in the Wonder Woman comics, there are a few rich sources for learning about Marston's life (See, e.g., Bunn 1997; Daniels 2000; Sandifer 2013; Lepore 2014).[4] From these sources, we can piece together a picture of Marston's life and work, and start to answer these challenges.

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[4]Jill Lepore's recent book, *The Secret History of Wonder Woman* (2014), is a particularly rich source, an extremely thorough and well-written biography of Marston and his family, from which I draw several of the details in this section. However, note that Lepore's book paints a coherent narrative over evidence of inconsistent quality, some of which is based on careful archival research, other parts of which are based on interviews with people who knew the details only second- or

Some call into question Marston's status as a scientist, but a full look at his academic career makes it clear that he is worth taking seriously. The wide variety of Marston's pursuits, his inability to hold down an academic position, his tendency towards self-promotion, and his later involvement in lowbrow literature and comic books have all led some to dismiss him as a huckster and charlatan (Sandifer 2013, 40; Lepore 2014, 141, 168). Nonetheless, he was trained by a protege of the two most important founding figures of psychology, he was well regarded by many of his peers, and he published in many of the best venues.

Marston received his bachelor's degree in psychology from Harvard in 1915. He went on to pursue his law degree, finished in 1918, and his PhD in psychology, completed in 1921, with a thesis entitled "Systolic blood pressure symptoms of deception and constituent mental states." This work, begun as an undergraduate, laid the foundations for the lie detector test. At Harvard, Marston worked in the psychology program set up by William James, where he was a pupil of Hugo Münsterberg, a student of Wilhelm Wundt who James brought in to run the Harvard Psychology Laboratory (Daniels 2000, 12; Rhodes 2000, 98; Benjamin 2006, 103n8). Münsterberg was also interested in lie detection through physiological indicators, as well as in popularizing psychology (Bunn 1997, 93).

Marston was hired by American University in 1921, where he taught legal psychology, became a tenured full professor after his first year, and was named chair of the Psychology Department (Lepore 2014, 61, 71, 111). There he continued his psychological research and continued to apply his work in lie detection. He attempted to intervene in the case of *Frye v. United States* using the lie detector, which helped set the test for admissibility of scientific evidence in federal and most state courts for seven decades. Marston's contribution was essentially negative, as Frye lost and Marston's work was ruled inadmissible. Frye's lawyers were students of Marston's at American (Lepore 2014, 67).

Marston's next position was as an *assistant* professor at Tufts (a distinct step down the ladder), starting in fall 1925. For the rest of his academic career, he would continue to take positions at impressive universities (from Tufts to Columbia to NYU), but he would continue to move down rather than up the ranks (from full to assistant professor, to eventually part-time lecturer) (Daniels 2000, 17; Cattell and Cattell 1927).

William Moulton Marston's life (1893–1947) is also full of important connections with the history of feminism in America. As an undergraduate at Harvard, he was a student of philosophy professor George Herbert Palmer, a feminist, suffragist, and faculty sponsor of the Harvard Men's League for Woman

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third-hand, though Lepore is very clear about this in the endnotes. I have thus tried to be selective in relying on her account.

Suffrage. Emblematic of the times, that League brought suffragette Emmeline Pankhurst to campus to speak. Marston was likely in attendance (Lepore 2014, chap. 1).

A major influence on Marston's feminism was his wife, Elizabeth Holloway, by all accounts smart, ambitious, fiercely independent, and ardently feminist. Marston had met Holloway in grammar school and married her between graduating college and starting Harvard Law School (Lepore 2014, 16, 44). While William Marston attended Harvard Law, Elizabeth Holloway Marston pursued her law degree at Boston University. While he sought his PhD, she received an MA at Radcliffe, also in psychology (Lamb 2001; Daniels 2000, 12). Holloway had done her undergraduate degree at Mount Holyoke, where Mary Wooley created an intellectual atmosphere with women's suffrage and feminism at the center.

At Tufts, Marston taught a student named Olive Byrne, daughter of Ethyl Byrne and niece of Margaret Sanger, both famous feminist activists and birth control advocates. He took her on as a student research assistant, then later as a friend, a collaborator, and then a second lover. She graduated from Tufts in 1926 and moved in with Marston and Holloway; Marston left Tufts as well, possibly because of his relationship with Byrne (Daniels 2000, 13, 27–31; Saunders 2011, 42–43; Lepore 2014, 115–17).

Marston's work and his personal relationships were deeply intertwined. Elizabeth Holloway held steady work most of her life, including a long editorial stint at *Encyclopedia Britannica*, supporting Marston when he was having trouble finding (and keeping) work. Both Elizabeth Holloway and Olive Byrne held advanced degrees in psychology, and they frequently collaborated with Marston, sometimes explicitly acknowledged, sometimes as silent contributors. Thus, when examining the work of "William Moulton Marston," it is crucial to keep in mind that said work is likely a collaborative production of (at least) Marston with Holloway or Byrne, if not both. It is tempting, then, to refer to "Marston, Holloway, and Byrne" or "Marston et al." or "the Marstons" when describing "Marston's" psychological contributions.

Marston (et al.) produced a variety of articles in academic journals such as *American Journal of Psychology*, *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, *Psychological Review*, and *Journal of Criminal Law & Criminology*. His (their) two book-length volumes, *The Emotions of Normal People* and *Integrative Psychology*, were published in the prestigious *International Library of Psychology, Philosophy, and Scientific Method* edited by C. K. Ogden (the same series that published major works by Adler, Jung, Freud, Ogden and Richards, Piaget, G. E. Moore, Wittgenstein, Carnap, and Max Black). Thanks to Holloway, Marston even contributed to the 14th edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* an article on the "Analysis of Emotions" (Marston 1929). His main interests were lie detection and the physiological markers of deception, the emotions, especially the basic emotions and their neurological and

physiological basis, abnormal psychology, psychological health, and the science of consciousness. *Emotions of Normal People* was the culmination of his work on the emotions, while *Integrative Psychology* aimed to be a textbook applying Marston's general approach to all areas of psychology.

Later in life, Marston's work turned to popular culture. Not only did he write books, articles, and letters promoting the use of the lie detector in criminal investigations and legal trials, but he also wrote two popular psychology texts, *Try Living* (1937) and *March On!* (1941), and a voluminous quantity of articles for magazines like *Cosmopolitan*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Reader's Digest*, and *The Rotarian* (see frontmatter of Marston 1937). With Walter Pitkin, he wrote a text on creating "healthy and appealing screenplays," called *The Art of Sound Pictures* (1930; cited in Rhodes 2000, 99), and he did consulting work for Universal Pictures and for All American / Detective Comics. His last prose book was a biography, *F.F. Proctor, Vaudeville Pioneer* (1943). Marston also turned from cultural analyst to creator, penning a novel called *Venus with Us: A Tale of the Caesar* (1932; retitled *The Private Life of Julius Caesar* in a later printing) and creating the iconic comic book superheroine, Wonder Woman. Marston wrote and had almost complete creative control over Wonder Woman from the character's inception in 1941 until his death in 1947 (the final Marston stories appeared in early 1948).

What does Marston's life tell us about his feminism? The family's close connection to Margaret Sanger is one key source of Marston's feminism. When Joye Hummel started writing Wonder Woman scripts for Marston, Olive Byrne reportedly gave her a copy of Sanger's *Woman and the New Race* as background reading (Lepore 2014, 103, 247). The theme of the book is the importance of birth control to feminism and "the revolt of woman against sex servitude," the moral superiority of the feminine spirit, and the idea that "love is the greatest force of the universe" (Sanger 1920, 1, 10–11, 181–82; Lepore 2014, 100–103). Marston and Holloway read Sanger in graduate school, before Byrne joined their lives (Lepore 2014, 102). Marston also drew heavily on writings from the women's movement that emphasized the moral superiority of women, a major theme of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century feminists like Carrie Chapman Catt, as well as gynocentric utopians like Inez Haynes Gillmore and Charlotte Perkins Gilman (whose writings from the 1910s were published during Marston's and Holloway's college years). Though most twentieth-century feminists focused on arguments based on equality rather than difference, Marston and Sanger both continued to emphasize women's superiority (Lepore 2014, 86–87, 170–72). Marston held a recognizable, if radical, form of feminism for his day, a kind of *difference feminism*. Difference feminism has, through the twentieth century, been a less popular approach than feminisms that emphasize *equality.* Nonetheless, it is an important strain throughout the history of feminism that would return again, in different forms, in the work of theorists like

Nancy Hartsock (1983) and Carol Gilligan (1982). I will argue that this feminism influenced Marston's work for the better. But first, I need to explain some of the basic ideas from Marston's psychology to provide a background for understanding those feminist influences.

4. Marston's Psychology against the Status Quo

In the opening chapter of *Emotions of Normal People*, Marston makes a striking pronouncement: "I submit that the backbone of literature has been transplanted intact into psychology, where it has proved pitifully inadequate" (1928, 3–4). What he means is that scientific psychology has adopted wholesale our commonsense, folk concepts and categories for the mind, particularly for the emotions, while improving not at all on the clarity of psychological understanding found in nineteenth-century Romantic literature. The ordinary names we use for describing emotions—fear, rage, joy, aversion, panic, wonder, etc.—are scientifically misleading or even meaningless, according to Marston. What psychology needed to do was break away from concepts tied to literary tropes, commonsense stereotypes, and the social status quo, and develop its own scientifically meaningful set of categories, a move that, as we shall see, is surprisingly influenced by Marston's feminist perspective. The elimination of folk categories in favor of scientific ones will also remind contemporary philosophers of mind of the eliminative materialism of Feyerabend (1963), Rorty (1965), and the Churchlands (P. M. Churchland 1981; P. S. Churchland 1986).

This alternative, scientific set of psychological and emotional categories, Marston implies, is not as likely to reproduce the same problematic stereotypes and social relations that exist in today's society, which Marston explicitly regards as unhealthy or "abnormal," and which we can infer is problematic in part because it is patriarchal. As we shall see, Marston hopes to provide an alternative, neuro-biologically grounded psychology, including an account of psycho-emotional health, which in turn helps specify the social preconditions of psychologically healthy people. Furthermore, we shall see that it is central to his theory that emotions like "rage" and "fear," conflict and unpleasantness, are abnormal and unhealthy. One of the major ways that Marston demonstrates the power of his alternative perspective is in his thoroughgoing critique of the status-quo-biased, sexist psychologists in the psychoanalytic and behaviorist traditions.

4.1 Marston's Critiques of Sexist Psychologists

Marston's critique of previous psychological theorists springs from his line about "the backbone of literature" being transplanted into psychology. This leading idea clearly follows from his thoroughgoing opposition to a kind of naturalization of the status quo—Marston everywhere opposes the idea that because something is a

certain way in our society, that it is natural, normal, healthy, or necessary that it be so. He thus goes out of his way to critique theories that accept a large part of the status quo. One clear way in which Marston fits into the feminist science tradition comes in his critique of, and attempt to provide an alternative to, the mainstream traditions of Freudian psychoanalysis and Watsonian behaviorism. While Marston's radical feminism may not be a necessary condition of such criticism, his values are clearly an enabling factor—from a feminist evaluation of the status quo, to mistrust of and antagonism towards psychologies that naturalize and reproduce it.

That Freud and Freudian psychoanalysis have a sexist strain is a well-known problem, and there are many classic feminist critiques of Freud, from Beauvoir to Butler (though many feminists have reworked psychoanalytic ideas into a basis for feminist thought). The basic outlines of the Freudian account of the psychology of women, from penis envy to the various natural inferiorities of women, is openly sexist. Furthermore, Freudians have tended to be obsessed with sexist and heteronormative defenses of traditional gender roles and sexuality, as against the so-called "perversion" of "homosexuality." In his screed against comic books, the Freudian psychiatrist Fredric Wertham focuses on what he finds problematic in the way that comics like *Wonder Woman* depict women:

> They do not work. They are not homemakers. They do not bring up a family. Mother-love is entirely absent. Even when Wonder Woman adopts a girl there are Lesbian overtones. . . . In no other literature for children has the image of womanhood been so degraded. (Wertham 1954, 234; see quotes in Lepore 269)

Stories containing lesbian overtones and failed homemakers and mothers are psychologically detrimental themes, claims Wertham, because they teach the opposite of normal, healthy womanhood. Wertham's sexism and traditionalism are entirely representative of the Freudian tradition; his "conservative moralizing" is founded in psychoanalytic theory (Rhodes 1997, 63).[5]

Marston's critique of Freudian psychoanalysis emphasized Freud's focus on *conflict* as a driving factor of human psychology:

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[5]Marston died before Wertham made his criticisms, before Wertham started the controversy that led the comics industry to create the Comics Code Authority, which censored comics for decades. One can't help but wonder, what would have happened to the comics industry and to Wonder Woman if Marston had not died young and had been able to answer Wertham.

> On the whole, we may characterize psycho-analysis as a system of thought which assumes a continuous state of bodily conflict between the vitalistic-type causes, having their origin in the libido or in consciousness itself, and the mechanistic-type causes springing from environmental stimuli. (1928, 22)

It is fundamental to Marston's view that the fundamental forces of psychology are those that govern a *healthy* mind, and furthermore, as we shall see, a state of *conflict* is a temporary episode of necessary engagement with a hostile environment, whereas permanent conflict is a sign of dysfunction. Healthy people work toward a state of pleasant harmony with their environment; Freud assumes an unhealthy, abnormal mind as the default state. As Marston et al. gloss the view in *Integrative Psychology*, "They call the life energy the Libido. The Libido is continually fighting an antagonistic environment for self-expression" (Marston, King, and Marston 1931, 40). Marston is also concerned with the failure of the psychoanalysts to make serious contact with "body mechanisms" (40). Again, they fail to meet a basic standard for psychological theorizing adopted by Marston, that of providing neurological foundations for psychological categories.

The sexism in behaviorism is less prominent or well known. But here is founder John B. Watson writing in the *Nation*:

> When a woman is a militant suffragist the chances are, shall we say, a hundred to one that her sex life is not well adjusted? . . . Most of the terrible women one must meet, women with the blatant views and voices, women who have to be noticed, who shoulder one about, who can't take life quietly, belong to this large percentage of women who have never made a sex adjustment. (Watson 1927, 10; cf. Lepore 2014, 110)[6]

Watson attacks suffragists and women who have their own opinions, implies that their problem is that they aren't well-adjusted sexually (a common sexist trope going back a long time), and implies that they should be quiet, speak when spoken to, and take the life that is given to them. Similarly, B.F. Skinner has come in for feminist criticism, especially in the implicit sexism found in his behaviorist utopia, *Walden Two* (1948).[7]

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[6]Though Watson's sentiment and language here are grossly sexist, the overall message of Watson's piece seems to be that equal rights for women is a worthwhile and possible goal, and one best executed by appropriate education (or rather, conditioning) from infancy.

[7]Skinner's work mainly comes after Marston, but he is nonetheless an interesting point of reference, because he is often regarded as the most sophisticated and last

Marston objects to behaviorism on two main grounds. First, in limiting the scope of science to human stimulus-response behavior and excluding consciousness, the behaviorists give up on the proper subject matter of psychology. Marston is contemptuous of this move: "If Watson should succeed in this bob-tailing of psychology, he would have talked himself out of a job" (1928, 19). Furthermore, this attempt to bracket consciousness is a cheat, Marston argues, because it just amounts to skipping from the first cause ("environmental stimulus") in a long causal chain to the last ("bodily behaviour"), leaving "unbridgable gaps" in the explanation (1928, 66). Again, Marston mocks the move: "What a world of psychological trouble they think they are saving themselves!" (66). Lastly, Watson wants to have his cake and eat it, too. According to Marston, Watson defends a full environmental determinism about behavior. And yet, "Almost in the next paragraph . . . Watson attempts to show how the human race can throw off its thraldom [*sic*] to religious and social convention and other environmentally determined influences" (1928, 20–21). But the behaviorist view lacks the resources such intentional change would require; such change would have to come from human thought and consciousness, which Watson rules out. If Watson's view were right, "such dreams for human self-regulation would be sheer madness" (1928, 21). Not even the behaviorist can really accept behaviorism, in the end.

Note that Marston doesn't just call out these approaches for having sexist overtones or implications. His approach is to show that these theories are scientifically inadequate on a broad basis. He brings to bear criticism based on what Longino calls "public standards" or "shared standards" (Longino 1990, 77). It is also worth noting that much of the criticism of the sexist psychologists comes from work originally done by Olive Byrne in her Columbia master's thesis, which was incorporated into *Emotions of Normal People* without explicit acknowledgment (Lepore 2014, 127–28). It is possible that not only do Marston's feminist values allow him to see flaws in psychoanalysis and behaviorism, but that Byrne's standpoint plays an important part as well.

Not only can we regard Marston (et al.) here as a sort of feminist science critic, but we can see him as an example of the idea that doing feminist science amounts to uncovering and overcoming androcentric and sexist bias, or of Longino's argument that adopting new perspectives, ones that explicitly reject the status quo, may generate fruitful alternative methods and theories. Marston himself did not theorize the role of values or politics in science, but he comes close insofar as he suggests that he is more objective because he is better able to distance himself from the status quo than his predecessors and contemporaries. Given how little regard

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great behaviorist, and because he explicitly represents the society of *Walden Two* as egalitarian.

we now hold for psychoanalytic and behaviorist approaches, as well as the striking similarities between Marston and some contemporary approaches, it seems like psychology at the time could have benefitted significantly as a field from taking Marston more seriously.

5. Marston's Evidence and Research Methods

So far, we have focused primarily on Marston's negative arguments about the psychological approaches and theories of emotions of his day. What about Marston's positive approach to psychological research and the justification of alternative psychological categories? Marston's criteria for scientifically respectable psychological categories were complex. First, they needed to have a biological basis, to make a connection with neuroscience. Second, they had to be based in a description of "normal people," i.e., the fundamental categories needed to describe a healthy, functioning person. Marston argued that emotions we call "rage" and "fear" are abnormal, unhealthy emotions, and as such, that they were not part of the basic machinery of the mind but had to be explained in terms of states of dysfunction—a move that turns out to have an interesting gender valence.[8] Third, the categories had to be developed on the basis of and to illuminate his complex experimental work, which involved physiological measurements (such as blood pressure), "behavioristic observation, of the Watsonian variety" (Marston 1927, 344), and introspective reports (none of these on its own, especially introspection, was regarded a sufficient basis of evidence).

Marston took the first criterion, of connecting psychology to biology or neurology, very seriously, and used it to forcefully criticize other psychological theories. Below, we shall see how important this tactic is for the way his feminist values influence his scientific work. Marston et al. devote nearly a fifth (102 of 543 pages) of *Integrative Psychology* to "the hidden machinery," which consists mainly of laborious descriptions of neurological mechanisms that might underlie psychological phenomena. Marston nevertheless insisted on the *autonomy* of psychology. While neurology provided the necessary "structural and functional aspects" to understand psychological phenomena, psychology would focus on the "conscious aspect" (Marston, King, and Marston 1931, 11). The neurological and psychological level came together in what Marston called the "psychon," the basic unit of psychology. Marston uses the term "psychon" to describe "integrative activity" within a synapse, where, he says, "Two separate nervous impulses arriving at the same synapse may there conflict with each other or facilitate and reinforce each other during their synaptic passage" (97). The psychon is a basic unit of

[8]See Sarah Richardson (2013) on the distinction between "gender valence" and "gender bias."

psychology, while the neuron is the basic unit of neurology, the organs of physiology, the organism of biology, the atom and molecule of chemistry, and the proton and electron of physics. Psychons are building blocks of the conscious mind in the same way that neurons are building blocks of a functioning brain. Marston calls this "the psychonic theory of consciousness" (1926; 1928, 26–52) and uses it to base the connections between neurological and psychological research in crafting his theories.

When it comes to his own empirical research, Marston's approach is highly idiosyncratic. His primary sources of evidence are physiological measurements (such as measurements of systolic blood pressure fluctuations) associated with emotional states, behavioral experiments, and comparisons of behavioral and physiological measures with introspective reports of the subjects, psychological tests (such as intelligence tests), and other background information (such as case histories). He worked with a variety of populations in his experiments, including soldiers, schoolchildren, and prisoners, and with Byrne's help, he even conducted a psychological study of a sorority hazing ritual (Marston 1928, 299ff.). According to Marston, research on emotions in particular requires the utmost sophistication and subtlety of experimental technique because of the nature of emotional reactions themselves. First, unlike sensations, which show a high degree of similarity across subjects given the same stimulus, one and the same environmental stimulus evokes radically different emotional reactions from different subjects. Second, emotions by their nature tend to be a particularly sensitive matter for research subjects, and so are susceptible to "emotional shocks," antagonism, or self-protective reticence, all of which interferes with the validity of the laboratory results (Marston 1927, 339–41).

Marston thus recommends three techniques to the experimenter: (1) The experimenter should make use of case history, background information, or interviews to gather as much background information as possible on each subject prior to the experiment. Here, Marston praises the psychoanalytic school for going the furthest in terms of "preliminary analysis" of the individual subject. (2) The experimenter must devise "individual stimulus situations, to a considerable extent, to each subject" (Marston 1927, 341). That is, whatever emotions the experimenter wishes to evoke, they must use their background knowledge of the subject to find the right stimulus to evoke it. (3) The experimenter must be able to develop a sense of rapport with the subject, a sense of trust or identification with the experimenter, which will prevent reticence or hostility of the subject, even when the emotions evoked are unpleasant (Marston 1927, 341–42). Marston pursues a kind of (informal and hastily described) factor analysis on this data to determine the core basic types of emotional response. Finally, Marston describes applying these categories to clinical and consulting work with individual patients/subjects, using this to test and

refine the categories thus developed (Marston 1928, 115). As a result of his reliance on individualized and clinical studies, though Marston occasionally presents statistical or tabulated evidence, most of his evidence is presented in the form of narrative case reports.

Marston was something of a methodological opportunist when it came to providing evidence for his views. In addition to the reliance on information from neurology and reports of his own physiological and experimental research, Marston cites a variety of additional sources of support. He presents many of his ideas first as dialectical developments out of the ideas of the psychologists he criticizes, a way of acknowledging the positive if partial contributions of those who came before. Though concerned not to continue to rely on the "backbone of literature" in crafting scientific concepts, Marston is happy to rely on literary allusions and quotations insofar as they clarify (for instance, in clarifying a relatively technical aspect of his view, Marston quotes Sappho, in whose words the phenomenon is "aptly described" [Marston 1928, 99]). Marston also explores extended analogies as ways of developing his ideas, as when he compares the emotion of *dominance* to the "Behaviour of Forces of Nature" (1928, 116–17).

Each of these sources of evidence seems to contribute further to recognizing the complexity of the phenomenon under question, rather than the simplifying effect of more narrow and technical approaches to evidence.[9] What's more, Marston displays more of a care-based approach to his research and clinical subjects than many experimental psychologists.[10] While Marston does not make explicit the feminist associations or inspirations for his methodological choices, we can see clear affinities. More important, however, are the feminist affinities in the psychological and emotional theories these methods produce.

6. Marston's Feminist Theory of Emotions

In this section, I will argue that Marston's psychological theory of the emotions is a feminist science project in the same sense as the projects analyzed in feminist science studies since the 1970s. That is, Marston's theory of emotions is suffused with or informed by feminist values and, through his collaborations, women's standpoints, in a productive fashion. We must remember the caveat that Marston's feminist values are *not* the familiar egalitarian feminist values that informed late twentieth-century work, nor are they akin to postmodern or third wave feminism. Marston's values stem from the difference feminism of Catt,

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[9]On the ways that different values, standards, methodological approaches, sources of evidence, etc. reveal different aspects of complex phenomena like human psychology and behavior, see Longino (2013).

[10]See Noddings (1984) on feminist care ethics.

Gilman, and especially Sanger. Nonetheless, this was a significant form of feminism in Marston's time, with more contemporary representatives like Hartsock and Gilligan. My concern is not so much with what is right or wrong about Marston et al.'s feminist values, but the influence of those values on his scientific theory.

First, I will provide a somewhat detailed explanation of the basics of Marston's theory of emotions. Initially, the role of values will seem rather remote from the technical details of the view. I ask you to bear with me through this discussion, as it is necessary for an accurate understanding of those particular aspects of Marston's work where the feminist affiliations are clear. Other scholars who have commented on Marston's work have tended to badly misinterpret his views, for lack of attention to the details of his theories, so it is worthwhile to devote some time to working through it carefully. Finally, the significant originality and unusual nature of Marston's views make them a fascinating object of study in themselves. I will present the views as a theoretical structure, without attempting to reproduce Marston's argument in their favor. I have given the general character of Marston's arguments in the previous section, which will make it clear how complex the presentation is. Furthermore, and unsurprisingly, Marston does not make explicit the guiding role of his feminist values in creating the theory, but we can show clear affiliations between those values and the theory itself.

6.1 The Basics of Marston's Theory of Emotions

As shown above, Marston et al. use the concept of the *psychon*, the synaptic integration of neural signals into a conscious mind, as the basis for theoretical psychology. Just as there are different neural systems—sensory, cerebral, and motor—there are different types of consciousness—perception, conscious thought, and "motor consciousness" (Marston 1928, 65–66). Repurposing William James's arguments for associating emotions with actions while rejecting the James-Lange theory of emotions as sensory awareness of the body, Marston argued that "emotion *IS* the awareness of these bodily changes AS THEY OCCUR" (1928, 55; emphasis in original). That is, the psychonic "motor consciousness" just is emotion. More specifically, emotions are a product of two types of neural signals that are integrated in motor psychons, the interaction between a "motor stimulus" and "motor self." Signals from the motor self are "psychonic impulses of tonic motor origin," i.e., spontaneous, baseline signals primarily associated with reflex, balance, muscle tone, etc. The motor stimuli are phasic or transitory impulses in motor pathways, though not necessarily identified with a sensory or environmental stimulus (1928, 111). The integration of motor self and motor stimulus produces motor behavior and an associated conscious emotion (Marston 1928, 93–94; Marston, King, and Marston 1931, 142ff.).

The interaction between motor stimulus and motor self has two axes of variation:

1. Alliance/facilitation vs. antagonism/opposition
2. Relative strength of self vs. stimulus

With respect to the first axis of variation, interactions where the self and stimulus impulses are allied are inherently pleasant feelings. Antagonistic interactions have an unpleasant character. The four extremes along these axes of interaction define four basic emotions:

1. *Compliance* — Antagonistic stimulus stronger than motor self.
2. *Domination* — Antagonistic stimulus weaker than motor self.
3. *Inducement* — Allied stimulus weaker than motor self.
4. *Submission* — Allied stimulus stronger than motor self.

These basic synapse-level descriptions of the emotions provide the underlying machinery for personal-level behavioral and phenomenological characterizations of these emotions:

1. *Compliance* — Adjusting oneself to an antagonistic stimulus because of the latter's superior strength, e.g., a scolded child falls in line, an overwhelming aesthetic experience causes one to adjust one's posture to better appreciate the artwork. Initially unpleasant, due to antagonism, but as the self yields to the stimulus it becomes indifferent and then pleasant.
2. *Domination* — The self exerts energy in order to overcome the antagonistic stimulus, e.g., a baby grasps a held rod more tightly as an experimenter tries to pull it away, competitive behavior among athletes. Unpleasant, but success produces pleasantness.
3. *Inducement* — The self exerts energy in order to attract an allied stimulus, e.g., an infant holds out its arms to induce its mother to nurse it, an adult attempts to seduce one he or she loves. Always increasingly pleasant.
4. *Submission* — The self adjusts itself to an allied stimulus, giving itself over to the latter, e.g., an infant ceases crying when soothed, a student follows instructions of a trusted teacher. Always increasingly pleasant.

Here we see Marston's basic categories of emotions, which truly do differ radically from the folk or "literary" emotional categories.[11] Marston's account of basic emotions provides an underlying neurological mechanism, as well as associated behavioral profiles and affects. It is also worth mentioning, in terms of Marston's criteria for valid psychological concepts, that according to Marston each of the basic emotions contributes to the flourishing of the organism in the right circumstances, and each produces a feeling of pleasantness, inherently or when successful. There is some subtle gendering, as we can see, in Marston's account of these basic emotions, but it is not yet clear how this connects with a feminist agenda. This becomes clearer when it comes to complex emotions.

Marston describes two ways that the complex emotions are created out of the basic emotions: temporal successions and simultaneous compounds. For instance, a "normal" (i.e., healthy) temporal succession exists when compliance, as it successfully deals with the antagonistic stimulus, leads naturally to dominance. Marston represents temporal successions with a "+" sign, so this succession would be represented as "C+D." Simultaneous compound, which receive much more detailed attention in *Emotions of Normal People*, involve the combination of an active emotion and a passive emotion. For instance, active dominance requires the increase of exertion or energy to overcome a stimulus, whereas passive dominance is a resistance to compliance, because of the greater strength of the self than the stimulus, but the motor self does not exert further energy. What's more, in normal circumstances, the emotions involving antagonistic or allied impulses go together as the appetite or love emotions, respectively.

Marston identifies four normal compound emotions:

1. *Desire* — Passive compliance and active dominance (pCaD), a.k.a. active appetite. A restless seeking, dissatisfaction with present circumstances, along with a need to satisfy some "inner requirement."
2. *Satisfaction* — Active compliance and passive dominance (aCpD), a.k.a. passive appetite. A pleasant feeling associated with acquisitiveness and relief or triumph in accomplishing some task.
3. *Captivation* — Active inducement and passive submission (aIpS), a.k.a. active love. The pleasure associated with charming or enticing a loved one, and seeing pleasure in the latter.

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[11]These categories survive today (in modified form), not in the mainstream psychology of emotions, but rather in the DISC personality assessment system still commonly used in management training. See https://www.discprofile.com/what-is-disc/overview/.

4. *Passion* — Passive inducement and active submission (pIaS), a.k.a. passive love. The pleasure of following the lead of a trusted, loved one.

Compound emotions themselves figure in higher-order complexes, e.g., appetite simpliciter involves the normal succession of desire and satisfaction, pCaD+aCpD, and love, aIpS+pIaS. Compounds of the complex emotions form the higher-order emotions called "creation," e.g., active creation consists of passive appetite (satisfaction) compounded with active love (captivation). Creation emotions are always temporal sequences that lead to active or passive love emotions.

Another aspect that must be acknowledged is the apparent connotations of BDSM that come with Marston's emotional terms. Tossing around terms like "dominance" and "submission" as if they were innocent scientific terminology raises a red flag. It is impossible to distance Marston's terminology from these connotations, nor, as we shall see, should we try to do so. But a few important caveats are worth noting. First, as we have seen, dominance and submission do not form a natural pairing for Marston—dominance requires compliance, not submission; inducement, not dominance, leads to submission. Second, submission, unlike compliance or dominance, is an entirely and inherently pleasant emotion, free from antagonism or strife. Marston's use of the terminology certainly seems to diverge from the common parlance associated with BDSM. How to draw connections between the former and the latter will at least be a complicated matter.

Finally, there are abnormal (unhealthy) emotions, which generally involve violations of the normal temporal sequences of emotions. For instance, recall that compliance is supposed to lead to dominance (C+D), allowing the organism to reassert itself in order to thrive. Sometimes, Marston puts this in terms of compliance being "adapted to" dominance. For example, you parry the strike of a strong opponent in order to find an opening for a winning strike, or you stop in your tracks when approaching a rushing stream and then dominate it by pushing over a leaning tree that will allow you to cross. This can go wrong in one of two ways: a hasty and ineffective dominance reaction that fails to conquer the stimulus (over-dominance reversal, or rage) or an extreme magnification of compliance that makes dominance impossible (over-compliance reversal, or fear). This general schema gives rise to the following complex abnormal emotions:

1. *Rage* — Over-dominance reversal.
2. *Fear* — Over-compliance reversal.
3. *Jealousy* — Over-submission reversal.
4. *Hate* — Over-inducement reversal.

Note that these terms appear on many standard accounts as categories of "basic" or "primary" emotions, but for Marston, these are complex and abnormal. There are further abnormal sequences that involve higher-order emotions as well.

6.2 Love over Appetite

Marston describes the normal relationship between appetite and love as follows:

> The normal relationship consists of complete adaptation of appetite to love. Any life which is both successful and happy must adapt its successes to its happiness. Certain types of individuals who habitually attempt to adapt happiness to success ultimately fail in both. (1928, 381)

This is because "love is a giving, and not a taking; a feeding, and not an eating; an altruistic alliance with the loved one, and not a selfish conflict with a 'sex object'" (1928, 382). While love is altruistic, it is by no means self-sacrificing; submission to the loved one increases, rather than decreases, the flourishing of the person:

> But a human being or animal in order to submit to and serve the need of the loved one must become more healthily alive than before. Any deterioration or dimunition [*sic*] of the active creatress [one engaged in active creation, e.g., a mother during pregnancy] injures or diminishes her creation by a corresponding amount. Thus it is that complete adaptation of appetite to love is maximally efficacious, even from the point of view of enlargement of the lover. Adaptation of appetite to love cannot become self sacrificial so long as love is actually in control. Only when the reversed relationship of adaptation of love to appetite creeps in, does any emotional conflict appear between love purposes and appetitive needs. (1928, 382)

To some extent, the relationship between love and appetite is like the relationship between compliance and domination or inducement and submission. The normal movement is from appetite to love, and appetite must be "adapted to" love, i.e., the functioning of appetite-emotion needs to be controlled by and instrumental to the operation of love-emotion. Love adapted to appetite is a particularly harmful abnormal emotion; it is also one that Marston finds disturbingly widespread.

Love in its controlling relationship to appetite, especially in its role in creation-emotions, is thus the normal emotion of primary importance. This is reflected in its sublime pleasantness:

> The conscious characteristic of this successive blending between passive and active love is unmistakable to anyone who has once experienced it, and seems to be identical in men and women. It is exquisitely pleasant, subtle, and delicate, yet, at its height, love is ecstatically intense and pervasive, completely blotting out all other emotions from consciousness for the time being (1928, 340).

For Marston, as for Sanger, love is the greatest force in our emotional universe. Love's primacy is also reflected in its unequivocal health-promoting effects. Thus, normal love emotions are the most important to psycho-emotional health. They must be given highest value by individuals, and, as we shall see below, they must be promoted by society.

How does the primacy of love connect with feminist values? Throughout his work (both scientific and popular), Marston frequently connects the love emotions with women and with femininity. While both men and women require love emotions, and enjoy and need them equally, love is connected with traditionally and stereotypically feminine traits, while appetite, domination, and force are connected with masculinity. In making love primary to appetite, Marston thus makes the feminine primary to the masculine, as traditionally understood. And while both men and women need and experience love, Marston says that women have a more important role to play with respect to love: "[Women] have much more of what it takes to love . . . women are the primary carriers of this great force" (1942). Love is necessary not only to make us healthy, but to save the world from patriarchal society's violence and selfishness.[12]

6.3 Women and Love Leadership

As we've seen, a normal or healthy emotional life is dependent on love, on love's primacy over appetite in particular. And love is an emotional complex that involves inducement and submission; active love (captivation) requires an actively submitting (passive love / passionate) partner: "Active love requires that the person captured must be a willing, wholly submissive captive" (1928, 293). This means that love emotions require an inducing and a submitting party. The partner in a love

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[12]We should not forget, however, the idiosyncrasies of Marston's theory of love. Love is an emotional state whose stimulus is a certain type of a relationship, and moreover an asymmetric one. As we have seen, love involves inducement and *submission*, while submission is only submission if it is wholly pleasant and directed to a stimulus aligned with the self (so "submission" to antagonistic "dominance" is abnormal). Nonetheless, the idiosyncrasies and potential problems from a feminist perspective should be noted.

relationship whose role emphasizes active love, Marston terms a "love leader." Thus, emotional normalcy requires being in a relationship with a love leader who has "organic mechanisms" for "active love," i.e., who is capable of inducement-driven captivation-love. A healthy emotional life requires passion towards, and thus submission to, a love leader.

As mentioned above, love is more closely associated with women and femininity. Women are the "primary carriers" of love. This is, in part, because they are more capable, physiologically, of active love, and thus of love leadership. This is a repeated theme in later sections of *Emotions of Normal People* as well as much of Marston's popular writing: "Women, as a sex, are many times better equipped to assume emotional leadership than are males" (1928, 258–59), because of their superior development in inducement and love. On the other hand, "male love leadership is virtually impossible . . . a man's body is not designed for active love, and does not, therefore, keep him sufficiently love stimulated to control his overly developed appetite" (1928, 393–94). While it is true that Marston remains, to some degree, a biological essentialist about gendered traits, his account of those traits is only loosely tied to traditional stereotypes, while his valuation of those traits turns the stereotypes on their heads.

Thus, Marston argues for a complete reversal of our attitudes about the strength and status of women:

> Women have been regarded conventionally, for thousands of years, as the weaker sex. This almost universally recognized concept of woman's weakness has included not only physical inferiority, but also a weakness in emotional power in relationships with males. No concept of women's emotional status could be more completely erroneous. (1928, 258)

Women, not men, are the more capable leaders, the emotionally stronger sex, because of their capability for inducement and active love. The love in question obtains not exclusively in romantic or intimate relationships, but should obtain in all human relationships, and love (rather than appetite) should be the guiding force in social relations and political institutions more generally.

6.4 Emotional Normalcy and Women's Rights

Marston's conception of emotional normalcy via female love leadership is in many ways problematic, from a contemporary feminist point of view. It is essentialist, focuses on difference rather than equality, involves asymmetric relationships of submission and captivation, is gynocentric and matriarchal. Nonetheless, his view reflects recognizable forms of difference feminism from Marston's day: the rhetoric of the moral superiority of the "feminine spirit" that

arose in nineteenth century suffrage movements and was carried on by Carrie Chapman Catt, Margaret Sanger, and the matriarchal utopias of Inez Haynes Gillmore and Charlotte Perkins Gilman. Furthermore, while Marston's approach is problematic in its ultimate aims, its practical and political recommendations look less problematic.

According to Marston, there are four criteria for suitable love leaders. First, the already mentioned capacity for active love. Second, "sufficient appetitive power for self-support"—love leaders must be self-sufficient and not dependent on those that would submit to them. Third, they must be knowledgeable about emotions and psychology. Fourth, they must have "sufficient practical knowledge of existing social and economic institutions to be able to adapt the necessary measures of social reorganization"—they must have the knowledge and ability to participate in political processes and effect social change. Marston's evaluation of the current situation is pessimistic: "These four requirements probably cannot be met by anyone in the world to-day [*sic*]." But with suitable social and educational change, love leaders could become possible, though, as discussed above, "the only possible candidates for love leader training . . . are women" (1928, 394). The necessary changes, the preconditions of love leadership and thus healthy people and healthy society, are increased self-sufficiency, education, and political power for women, a program that feminists of any stripe could get behind.

So far, I have argued that Marston's psychological work proceeded in dialogue with his feminist values in a way that was epistemically and ethically beneficial and which exemplifies accounts from philosophers of science of feminist science and values in science. In the next section, I will discuss aspects of Marston's views that are less easily accommodated by current approaches to science and values.

7. From Psychology to Social Reform: The Program of Emotional Re-education

Marston went beyond incorporating values into his scientific work; he also used his value-laden science to advise the public and try to bring about social reform and cultural change. The basic idea is already present in his final chapter of *The Emotions of Normal People,* entitled "Emotional Re-education," where he lays out a broad program of social reform centered on training love leaders and teaching others to submit to them. He pursued this project in popular writings, consulting work, and later through popular fiction, film, and comics.

Marston's idea of training for love leadership, originally developed in the context of a theory of emotions and psycho-emotional health, became for him an ambitious program of social reform and emotional re-education, aimed at the psycho-emotional health of society as a whole. I have indicated the basic outlines of the program above: healthy lives require love at the center, and loving relationships

require a love leader with a highly developed capacity for active love. Only (a subset of) women have that capacity, and they are (or were, in Marston's time) generally incapable of serving as love leaders because in the current social conditions they lacked the knowledge and the social and material conditions of independence that are prerequisite for love leadership. Thus, Marston reckons his own society highly unhealthy, conducive to psychological abnormality. He proposes, at the conclusion of *Emotions of Normal People*, a radical program of "Emotional Re-Education" that requires not only developing political, material, and intellectual rights and independence for women, but also educating everyone to become or to follow love leaders.

Marston was conscious of the radical nature of his proposal. He thus prefaces the chapter with a discussion of the difference between social convention and psychological normalcy. He chides his fellow psychologists and social scientists for failing to provide an account of what he calls the "normal human being" apart from a statistical account:

> A bold psychiatrist, not so long ago, frankly stated that if a young girl attended a school where a majority of other girls smoked and drank, she would be eligible for psychiatric examination if she refused also to smoke and drink. I take it that the eminent doctor did not mean to suggest smoking and drinking as a test of social submission to girl friends, but rather as an emphatic laying down of the rule that *average behavior* of a given group constitutes a *proper standard* by which the normalcy of any member of the group may be scientifically measured. No principle for study and improvement of the individual could be more *pernicious* than this. (1928, 389; emphasis mine)

Perhaps it is because of this common confusion between average and proper behavior that what Marston calls "normalcy," we tend to think of in terms of "health." Without adopting these terms Marston decisively rejects this conflation. For him, psycho-emotional normalcy involves organic stability, efficiency of function, and pleasantness, whereas abnormality involves instability, breakdown of function, and unpleasantness. There is no necessary connection to what most people do or expect:

> The only practical emotional re-education consists in teaching people that there is a norm of psycho-neural behavior, not dependent in any way upon what their neighbors are doing, or upon what they think their neighbors want them to do. People must be taught that the love parts of themselves, which they have come to regard as abnormal, are completely normal. More

> than this, people must be taught ultimately, that love (*real* love, not "sex appetite"), constitutes, in the human organism, the ultimate end of all activity, and that to gain this end appetite emotion must, first, last, and always be adapted to love. (1928, 391)

This "norm of psycho-neural behavior" derives not from statistical averages, social expectations, or traditional teachings, but from neurobiology, experimental studies of psychology and behavior, and empirically supported psychological theorizing. In other words, Marston proposes radically revisionary social norms on the basis of his scientific research. And though Marston did not theorize the role of values in science, we should add that such social norms should be based on science that is guided by values, such as feminist values, that encourage scientists to question the status quo and attain a greater degree of objectivity.

8. From Academic Psychologist to Popularizer

Marston was tragically forced out of academia. First and foremost, this was probably a result of his nonconformist lifestyle (Lepore 2014, 130–31). His failure to gain recognition for the lie detector test in the courts and the accusations of fraud in his business dealings (later dismissed) surely didn't help (Lepore 2014, 74–76). Even while an academic, Marston was seriously interested in popular work and the public role of psychology. After giving up on his academic career, her pursued popular writing and consulting full-time. In every case, he was trying to find new avenues to begin the project of emotional reeducation.

Marston's popular writings can be seen as a psychologist's contributions to the increasingly popular genre of self-help books in the 1930s—compare the publication dates of Marston's *You Can Be Popular* (1936), *Try Living* (1937), and *March On!* (1941) with Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People* (1936) and Hill's *Think and Grow Rich* (1937). In the aforementioned books, as well as in a series of magazine articles for publications like *Reader's Digest* and *Cosmopolitan*, and in interviews written by Olive Byrne for *Family Circle* magazine (under her pseudonym "Olive Richard"), Marston applied his psychological and emotional theories, and above all his program of emotional reeducation, to the problems that concerned the popular consciousness.

Try Living is full of banal bromides about laughing off adversity, living in the present, seizing opportunity, the power of positive thinking, and so on, but it also applies many of the distinctive ideas of Marston's psychology as advice for living happily. Even the very goal of living harkens back to Marston's opposition to appetite as a governing principle: "the result to seek is happiness, not success" (10). The most distinctive applications of his psychological views come in the discussions

of love (especially in chapter 6, "When You Love, You Live") and of social convention and conformity (especially in chapters 9 and 10, "Walking Backward is Precarious" and "They Say—Let Them Say!").

Love for Marston is opposed to appetite; it is built on a fundamental alliance of self and stimulus. As he puts it in *Try Living*, "*Loving* is giving yourself to someone else" (12), an altruistic act incompatible with expectations of reward, of quid pro quo. And it falls apart when appetite interferes:

> The explanation of all these love failures is quite obvious. The people concerned discarded love the moment it interfered with self-gratification. Love is a giving, not a taking. We love those to whom we give; not those who give to us. . . . And when one's own attitude changes from giving to grabbing one's feeling changes correspondingly from love to selfish antagonism. (Marston 1937, 99)

Marston describes the case of "Elise" and "Horton F." (111–13), who had lived together before marriage happily in a "perpetual honeymoon," when both of them were working. After marriage, Elise became a homemaker, and their relationship started to fall apart. Marston's advice to Elise was to start working again at her old job. It worked! Love was much easier to attain when Elise did not depend on Horton for her subsistence: "Dominant demand is the antagonist of the love attitude of giving" (111). And it is just such dominance and demand that serves to perpetuate an unhealthy (because patriarchal) society, according to his earlier work.

Love is essential to the goal of living a happy, healthy life: "Love is practical because it brings harmony and happiness. . . . Love is essential to health, mental and physical" (95). And it turns out, according to Marston's estimates based on cases, most of us don't really know how to love, so we are unhealthy and unhappy: we are not emotionally normal people. It is, he says, "far and away the most serious psychological problem in the world" (96). It is this problem that Marston is attempting to address in his various post-academic pursuits, from popularizing, to consulting, to creating pop culture, in order to enact the program of emotional reeducation.

Likewise, Marston describes the dangers of bowing to social convention and custom in one's thinking and behavior; rejecting custom and public opinion is of course a necessary condition of achieving emotional reeducation. Marston appeals to science explicitly in this connection: "There is little justification, in short, for many of the ancient, outworn, scientifically disproved rules of behavior which millions of modern men and women unthinkingly bow down to" (180). And science not only shows us that tradition is wrong, but its effect in opposing convention should be wholly beneficial:

> Social conventions are admittedly of the past—a situation which is rationalized by the argument that it is not safe to change them too rapidly. The facts of psychology and sociology do not support this argument. Researches all show that intelligent adaptation of social and moral standards to increased knowledge of human nature results always in betterment of humanity. . . . The principle of accepting any rule of behavior simply because your ancestors behaved that way is definitely wrong. (180)

Along the way, Marston points to many absurd conventions of the past, to shake our confidence in our current customs. And of course, in his day and today, patriarchy remains a deep custom in need of shaking.

9. Wonder Woman as Psychological Propaganda

In the midst of an uproar over superhero comics in 1940, Olive Byrne penned one of her *Family Circle* articles, interviewing Marston on the psychological effect of comics on children. At the time, unlike today, Batman was a gun-toting maniac who had just been heavily revised to be anti-gun, and Superman himself casually killed criminals and appeared to be something of a fascist (Lepore 2014, 183–84). Marston defended comics, especially Superman, as healthy exercises in wish fulfillment, and distinguished carefully between "sadism" and "exciting adventure" in their stories. Maxwell Charles Gaines, co-publisher of All-American Comics (sister publisher of National Allied Publications, which published Superman[13]), read Olive Byrne's article. He hired Marston to consult for All-American. And while Marston offered Gaines plenty of advice based on his psychological theories, his most significant recommendation was that Gaines needed to publish a woman superhero.

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[13]The publishing history here is complicated. For instance, Lepore incorrectly claims that Gaines was "*Superman*'s publisher" (185). Gaines was co-publisher of All-American with Jack Liebowitz, who was co-owner of Detective Comics, Inc. (later National Comics) along with Harry Donenfeld. To confuse the matter further, Donenfeld helped bankroll All-American, and National (not All-American) published Superman comics, though National and All-American cross-marketed and used each other's characters frequently. Superman did not appear in a comic entitled *Superman* until 1942, but rather in National's *Action Comics.* Both All-American and Detective / National published under the logo "Superman-DC" or "DC-Superman." In the early '40s, Gaines and Liebowitz seem to have had a falling out, and the two companies stopped using each other's characters, until Detective / National bought Gaines out in 1944.

And so we finally come to Marston's lasting legacy: the creation of Wonder Woman, as well as seven years of writing Wonder Woman comics. Marston once described Wonder Woman as "psychological propaganda for the new type of woman who should, I believe, rule the world."[14] It would be take another paper to explore in depth the different ways in which Wonder Woman exemplifies Marston's psycho-emotional theories. There has been some discussion of this connection in the various histories of Wonder Woman and analyses of the early comics, by comics scholars, literary and cultural studies scholars, historians, and popular writers. Unfortunately, all to date have misunderstood the relationship in one way or another, mainly due to a superficial reading of Marston's scientific work. I hope this paper will go some way to correct the latter so as to improve future analyses of the former. Briefly, then, I will discuss a few of the key connections between Marston's scientific work and his Wonder Woman comics.

There are four connecting themes between Marston's psychology and his Wonder Woman comics: (1) the prevalence of bondage imagery in the comics, (2) related statements about "the pleasure of submission," (3) consistent themes of the evils of male domination, and (4) an emphasis unique for superhero comics of its time on reforming criminals over retribution for their crimes. Each of these themes draws in different ways on Marston's account of the four basic emotions, on his particular views about the nature of healthy, loving relationships, on his views about the capabilities of the sexes, and on his views of the origins of "abnormal" behavior (including criminality).

The amount of bondage imagery in the 1940s Wonder Woman comics has been much remarked upon. Wonder Woman, her allies, and her enemies were often tied, chained, or otherwise bound. Tim Hanley shows that 27% (!) of panels from the first ten issues of *Wonder Woman* were bondage scenes (Hanley 2014, 46). Lepore points out how common the theme of women in bondage was in the feminist literature of the 1910s and 1920s, including publications by Margaret Sanger, and makes much of Harry Peter's role in feminist illustration and Marston's connection to Sanger as partial explanation of the prevalence of such imagery. Noah Berlatsky (2015) takes bondage as one of the major themes in his book on the Marston/Peter comics; he catalogs comics theorists and historians like Douglas Wolk (2007), Bradford Wright (2001), and Richard Reynolds (1992) dismissing Marston's claims to feminism on the basis of the prevalence of bondage in his comics. Berlatsky, following earlier work by Ben Saunders (2011), argues that "there is no necessary contradiction between bondage and feminism" (Berlatsky 2015, 18). Unfortunately, neither Berlatsky nor Saunders arrives at this conclusion by careful and accurate

[14]A letter to early comics historian Colton Waugh, quoted in Walowit (1974, 42).

analysis of Marston's own fundamental scientific and social views on the relation between the two.

Prior commentators have largely missed the fact that bondage scenes in the early Wonder Woman comics fall into two types: (1) examples of domination by a master or an evil mistress and (2) examples of playful submission to a loving mistress. In the former case, Wonder Woman often escapes from bondage or helps her compatriots to do so, in order to escape and overcome the evil dominator. Wonder Woman even plays bondage games with her Amazon sisters and her Holiday College proteges in order to help them all learn to better escape. In the vignette from "The Rubber Barons" at the beginning of this essay, Ivar Torgson is taught proper submission. Submission in this sense is not a state of conflict, but part of love, involving trust in and obedience to a mistress, and at a fundamental level, alliance between self and stimulus.

An important related theme seen in the comics is that submission is pleasurable. Recall that Torgson enjoyed his lessons in submission. Because it involves allied self and stimulus, on Marston's account submission is *necessarily* pleasurable: "Under no possible conditions can true submission be unpleasant" (243). Submission is not to be confused with compliance, which does have an unpleasant component due to its essentially antagonistic nature. Compliance is paired with dominance, and submission is paired with inducement. It is striking how almost all prior scholars who talk about the relationship between Marston's psychology and the Wonder Woman comics read standard BDSM ideas into Marston's thought, understanding the major principles as domination and submission, reducing Marston's four-fold account to this familiar binary. They miss the fact that domination doesn't produce submission, according to Marston, it produces compliance, and submission isn't associated with antagonism or sadomasochism at all. Submission is a wholly pleasant emotion, induced by a love-leader with one's own interests at heart.[15] And in the Wonder Woman comics, those who submit appropriately tend to *really* enjoy it.

Another key theme is the evils of male domination. Again and again, calamity results from the desires of men to dominate or the misguided attempt by others to submit to domineering men. Marston's view is that men are unsuited to be love-leaders, because they generally lack the capacity for active love that the female body provides. Instead, they lead by domination. Figure 2, a panel from *Wonder Woman* #5 (June/July 1943), shows a woman bemoaning her fate: "Submitting to a cruel husband's domination has ruined my life" (*Marston and Peter* 1943b, 16A).

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[15]See above for Marston's idiosyncratic definition of "submission" and its supposed role in human relationships.

Wonder Woman counsels her to become strong and independent, so she needn't feel pressure to be ruled by domination.

Figure 2. ". . . A Cruel Husband's Domination . . ." from *Wonder Woman* #5 (June/July 1943)

Lastly, Marston's comics have a very different approach to dealing with criminals, as an alternative to what is common in the superhero genre. At the best of times, in most superhero comics, the hero delivers the criminals to the police with the idea that they will be put in jail, never to bother society again. At the worst of times, the hero wreaks vengeance on the criminal, doing violence to them or even callously killing them. Wonder Woman's approach is different. For Marston, criminality, like all abnormal behavior, is a result of emotional maladjustment. Perhaps their appetite has run wild, their desire to dominate out of all proportion with the emotions that should control it. But emotional normalcy can be taught, and Wonder Woman seeks to teach it. Wonder Woman helps Elva with Torgson not just out of concern for Elva but also because she hopes it will help bring an end to his criminality. The Amazons of Paradise Island also run Reform Island, where the most obstinate criminals, through the help of the magical Venus Girdle (which works much the same as the Magic Lasso), are taught submission. Rather than leave the criminals she fights in the hands of the justice system in Man's World, Wonder Woman often brings them to Reform Island herself. Some of the villains so reformed, such as the Baroness Paula von Gunther, actually become Wonder Woman's allies.

Through Wonder Woman, Marston found a way to apply his psychological theories toward the emotional reeducation of society. The medium was at the height of its popularity, and Wonder Woman was one of the most successful

characters of her time. Her stories appeared in at least three separate titles. In issue after issue, story after story, Wonder Woman taught strength and independence for women, the evils of male domination, the pleasure of submission, and the ideals of female love-leadership. In this way, Marston attempted to popularize the values he thought were grounded in his psychological results.

10. Conclusion

I have argued that Marston presents a rich case for feminist history and philosophy of science and for the bidirectional influences of science and values. Not only does Marston's scientific and popular work exemplify the legitimate roles that values may play in scientific research, but it also challenges us to think about the roles that science does and should play in values, ethics, culture, and social life. Marston's use of science in society goes beyond science advising and even advocacy to the application of value-laden science to ameliorate social ills. Accounting for whether, when, and why such applications are acceptable and desirable is a pressing task for philosophers of science.

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