

## **Domestic Novels of the 1920s: Regulation and Efficiency in *The Home-Maker, Twilight Sleep,* and *Too Much Efficiency***

**Diane Lichtenstein**

“When you consider for a moment the number of times you as a housekeeper go back and forth on the same line of travel, you will begin to appreciate that many household duties have never been carefully planned or ‘routed.’” So observed Alice M. Bradley in the first sentence of her article “‘Watch Your Step!’” which appeared in the April 1922 issue of *Woman’s Home Companion*. A sentence printed in bold under the title reads, “No travel in a backward direction is allowable in intelligent housekeeping.” Bradley, the “Principal of Miss Farmer’s School of Cookery,” urged her readers to use a pad, pencil, and watch to “work out the best method for doing each separate daily task.” As a preface to the actual routing, Farmer directed, “Try writing out your most common breakfast menus, and then putting down on paper the best and quickest method of getting the breakfast served. Pin this paper up on the kitchen wall where you can study it and work with it and change it from day to day. Try to save steps, motions, and minutes until the preparation of your breakfast is standardized. Then make it a habit” (47). In addition to “The Breakfast Route,” Bradley supplied step-by-step directions for “Clearing Away,” “Dish-Washing,” “Daily Cleaning,” and “Plain Cake.” The goal for all this planning was a reduction in the number of the housekeeper’s motions and condensing the space through which the housekeeper had to travel to complete her tasks—in other words, greater efficiency.

Bradley was one of many disciples of scientific management who attempted to adapt for a domestic setting the models and rhetoric of industrial efficiency

popular in the Progressive Era. Particularly in the first two decades of the twentieth century, scientific management “spread throughout the American business community and fueled a growing efficiency craze that upheld science and technology as the solutions for all sorts of physical, psychological, and social problems” (Graham 638). By the 1910s, “efficiency” was being “applied everywhere from Sunday schools to baseball” and “appeared in advertisements for dishwashers and touring cars” (Tichi 81). In Cecilia Tichi’s analysis, certain “moral terms . . . clustered around ‘efficiency,’” including “character, competence, energy, hard work, and success.” These “machine-based utilitarian values” were “greeted with optimism” in “Progressive politics” because, their advocates claimed, they would inform “social policy . . . formulated according to facts gathered systematically by experts” (Tichi 81). That policy would transform and improve American institutions such as schools, religious organizations, and the home.

Just nine months after the publication of “‘Watch Your Step!’” in January 1923, *Woman’s Home Companion* printed a didactic short story, “The Efficient Wife,” by Anne Lombard Byard, which openly challenged the “progressive” advice about the home. The Efficient Wife (Julia Farraday), who “‘wants to manage everything,’” seems to her young newlywed neighbor, Flossie Smith, to fulfill ideal expectations for the perfect wife (92). Early in the story, Julia explains to Flossie, “‘Now, cooking is really a very exact science. A housekeeper ought to regard her kitchen as a laboratory, and her cooking as a series of chemical experiments’” (30). Flossie worries that she is not “‘like Julia, always doing things right,’” although her husband prefers “‘clear blue eyes’” and a “‘deliciously puckered little mouth’” to “‘the most efficient graduate of a domestic science school who ever planned a menu’” (30). As the narrative develops, readers learn that Julia has become an “efficient” and hardened domestic shop-manager who has “‘come to assume that she could control absolutely the circumstances of her life; all things were settled and assigned their proper places in the orderly routine of her existence’” (32). But in the crisis of her husband’s “speculating” and losing ten thousand dollars, she has difficulty finding her compassion. The story conveys unambiguous and what were likely to have been reassuring lessons: cooking and other household tasks do not have to be executed as if they were a production line, and the best housewife is not necessarily efficient.

*Woman’s Home Companion’s* inclusion of both “‘Watch Your Step!’” and “‘The Efficient Wife’” affirms that by the early 1920s both the exaltation of and ambivalence about domestic efficiency had become part of popular discourse and “domestic fiction.” That fiction had evolved from nineteenth-century idealized representations of homemakers as naturally adept at running a household without an efficiency “route” pinned to the wall. Much of that nineteenth-century domestic fiction, defined by Blythe Forcey as “didactic and exemplary fiction centered in the ‘woman’s sphere’ and focusing on the concerns of women’s lives” (253), positioned domestic space as distinct from and in competition with the marketplace and cast the relationship between home and market as adversarial, with the virtuous housekeeper being capable of taming the market.<sup>1</sup> By 1920,

the market and the home were less explicitly antagonistic and more apparently interdependent, as both “Watch Your Step!” and “The Efficient Wife” convey in their assumption that homemakers were managers of domestic workplaces.

In this essay, I will explore some of the ways in which the domestic novel reflected and critiqued that interdependence of the business and the domestic in the first decades of the twentieth century. Specifically, I will focus on the pervasive ideals that theories and strategies of business management *could* be applied to the home in order to produce more efficient homemaking, that *science* could reform both industry and the home, and that such reform was modern, forward-looking, and progressive. Home Economics discourse of the 1910s and 1920s makes these ideals apparent. However, some domestic fiction provided a counter narrative and challenged the seeming unproblematic adaptation of business theories and practices of efficiency to domestic space. More critically than “The Efficient Wife,” Dorothy Canfield Fisher’s *The Home-Maker* (1924), Edith Wharton’s *Twilight Sleep* (1927), and E. J. Rath’s *Too Much Efficiency* (1917) challenge both the adaptation of industrial marketplace management techniques to the home and the new perfect type of the professional home manager. In the next section of this essay, I present the popular narrative about domestic efficiency which Fisher, Wharton, and Rath resisted. I then trace the ways in which *The Home-Maker*, *Twilight Sleep*, and *Too Much Efficiency* make explicit the consequences of attempting to run a household as if it were a business and using “scientific management” to save members’ time and motions. Each exposes different problems that were usually heralded as solutions in those popular narratives, but read together, the novels as well as Byard’s story expose the limitations of adapting industrial management methods to the home.

### Domestic Management

Frederick Winslow Taylor was not the first to develop theories about the management of industrialized work places. Nevertheless, in the United States, Taylor’s name became synonymous with efficiency and popular notions of scientific management.<sup>2</sup> Initially presented to the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, *The Principles of Scientific Management* (1911) argued that “the most important object of both the workmen and the management should be the training and development of each individual in the establishment, so that he can do (at his fastest pace and with the maximum of efficiency) the highest class of work for which his natural abilities fit him” (12). To achieve maximum efficiency, the worker and manager must cooperate and find the “one method and one implement which is quicker and better than any of the rest. And this one best method and best implement can only be discovered or developed through a scientific study and analysis of all of the methods and implements in use, together with accurate, minute, motion and time study” (25). Not surprisingly, the ideal of manager and worker cooperating was rarely actualized; the narrative that became more common specified that “[b]y subdividing labor into elementary processes,

transferring control over work from labor to management, and enforcing standard rates for accomplishing tasks,” efficient methods would eliminate the “waste” of time and of workers’ energy (Graham 638). These three principles—breaking tasks into ever smaller movements, managing work through scientific methods, and standardizing the ways in which any task was completed—came to define Taylorism.

At exactly the same time Taylor and others were promoting industrial management as a science, home economics was evolving into a field with what proponents also identified as scientific methods. Ellen Richards, the “founding mother” of home economics who served as the first president of the American Home Economics Association, wrote in 1908, in “Ten Years of the Lake Placid Conference on Home Economics: Its History and Aims,” “10 years ago one of the greatest needs of the country was the appreciation of what science might do for the housewife in her daily home keeping, in making her work both easier and more efficient” (25). In Richards’s view, home economics *had* achieved some of its early goals, through testing theories, introducing courses in home making, “scientific investigation” beginning “to take hold of the deeper problems,” and adapting Taylor’s industrial management techniques to the home to make it a more efficient site of production (25).

By 1920, however, domestic production could hardly be distinguished from consumption. Because “. . . it was widely believed . . . that women were responsible for 80-90 percent of household spending” (Graham 644), the home became another stall in the marketplace in the eyes of manufacturers, salespeople, and advertisers. Consumption replaced the production of goods, such as clothing, prepared food, soap, and labor-saving devices, and services such as washing and ironing clothing. Despite the obvious intrusion of commercial values into domestic space, the 1910s’ and 1920s’ white, middle-class mother was still expected to rear future citizens and contribute to her community as well as her country by “combat[ing] social disarray.” Now, however, she would fight the battles with “sound management” of her family and home (Banta, *Taylored Lives* 10), a home that was “still defined as a haven by most social scientists” (Matthews 184-85) and was assumed to be middle class and inhabited by a nuclear family with the financial resources to purchase equipment for multiple rooms.

Even before Taylor formally invited them to apply the principles of scientific management to “our homes,” home economists were promoting domestic efficiency (8). For example, in 1907, Bertha Terrill, who two years later went to the University of Vermont (as the first woman faculty member) to establish the home economics program, wrote in *Household Management* that “It is the work of the housewife to initiate, plan and direct the business of the house” (5), that “training is showing its benefits in the greater efficiency and skill of those who take advantage of it” (6), and that “If the house is conveniently arranged” home workers will avoid wasting time “through unnecessary steps or movements” (28). Enthusiastic rhetoric such as Terrill’s conveyed as natural the dissolution of boundaries between the domestic and the industrial.

Domestic manuals such as *Household Management* were not the only sources of ingenuous promotional material. Periodicals such as *The Outlook* whose primary audiences were neither home economists nor women encouraged the adoption of efficient, managed homemaking. Between December 1911 and April 1912, the magazine published a series of eight essays under the general title, "Home Making the Woman's Profession."<sup>3</sup> Specific titles include "What is the Home For?," "Savings or Efficiency?," "The New Home-Making," "The Home and the Market," and "Scientific Management in the Home." The "Editorial Introduction" to the series proclaimed that "the management of the home [is] one of the most complex, intellectual, and difficult of professions" and that the vocation of housewife requires technical education, ingenuity and management skills, pedagogical skills, political skills, an artistic sensibility, and developed and educated taste (909). Despite the acknowledgment of the challenges housewives faced, these articles questioned neither the gendered division of work nor the menial nature of home work. Management, it was assumed, would both decrease the time spent on the drudgery and elevate the work to "professional" status.

The application of industrial management to domestic arenas continued through the 1910s and 1920s. Although particular components of that application were questioned, for the most part the underlying principles continued to be assumed as necessary and beneficial to home makers and families alike. Christine Frederick began *Household Engineering: Scientific Management in the Home* (1919) with a personal narrative about her experiences running a household. Tired and discouraged, she found help in scientific management. Speaking with the zeal of a new convert, Frederick proclaimed, "I came to earnestly believe that scientific management could, and must, solve housework problems as it had already solved other work problems." After studying her own work and implementing more efficient action to avoid wasting "motions and useless steps," she found that she "was actually doing [her] work in almost one-third less time, without any extra physical and with far less nervous effort" (14-15). That private experimentation developed into a successful career in which Frederick not only used time and motion matrices to design efficient kitchens but also promoted women's consumption of household products.

Like Frederick, both Frank and Lillian Gilbreth unabashedly exalted domestic management. In 1912, Frank addressed the American Home Economics Association and then published his paper, "Scientific Management in the Household," in *The Journal of Home Economics*. Already an expert associated with Taylorism as well as "efficiency" and "fatigue studies" in the workplace, Gilbreth began his essay by claiming that "like all other industries, [housekeeping] can be well managed or badly managed" and that the housekeeper was a manager and a worker upon whose skill and efficiency the household depended. Gilbreth hoped "that principles that have proved of use in the scientific management of commercial industries might have an application to the business of housekeeping," and he emphasized the function of the worker as well as the standardization of work that could be achieved with the help of motion study (438).

After Frank's death in 1924, Lillian "transform[ed] her gender from a liability to an asset" by applying the skills she had gained from working with her husband in industry to the home and became "a mediator between the business world and middle-class women" (Graham 643). She also brought to her work and her 1927 *The Home-Maker and Her Job* her training in psychology which informed claims such as, "The efficient manager in industry and the housekeeper in her more restricted job of planning, operating, and maintaining an adequate mechanism, must be to some extent a psychologist and an engineer . . . [who] will study the people with whom she will work in the home . . . [and] determine how to use both these people and the material resources at her command in the most efficient manner" (21). Lillian then advised her readers to study their home situations using Taylor's method: "Just as in industry . . . [where] the available personnel is studied to see what work is to be assigned to each person, so in the home every member of the household is studied to see what his share in the home can best be" (27). Ultimately, the efficient home manager would use the production of individuals' "happiness minutes" (a concept she had developed with Frank for industry and had promoted in *Fatigue Study*) to measure her success at assigning the most appropriate tasks to each household member. Those "happiness minutes" epitomize the goal of domestic management's advocates: make domestic work efficient so that it will be less onerous. They also make explicit the assumption that the process of consolidating time spent on household chores is simple and will produce spare time that can itself be spent on happy activities.

Not all of the advocates of domestic management were as enthusiastic as Frederick or the Gilbreths, and in the 1920s, critics more openly questioned some of the movement's tenets. In *The Journal of Home Economics*' "Home Management Problems" (1924), Ida S. Harrington pointed out that "Home management has still to learn that its function is to answer the question, 'Which are the vital duties of homemaking?'" The solution to this problem, she wrote, lay in "a budgeting of woman power" (361) and the homemaker's learning "to stick to what she knows to be most important, regardless of what seems important to would-be advisers" (366). Four years later, in the May 1928 issue of *The Journal of Home Economics*, Hildegard Kneeland addressed the "Limitations of Scientific Management in Household Work." Those limitations included the application of "principles and methods . . . dependent upon large-scale conditions" in industry to the household, "the innumerable and unstandardized tasks of the housewife," the impossibility of achieving "uniform conditions of work" in the home, and the fact that "most of the rules and principles in the field of administration are concerned with . . . the management of the industrial staff and the division of work and responsibility," whereas "in the great majority of modern homes the housewife herself constitutes the entire working force" (312, 313). Kneeland decided, "There is no cure . . . for the inefficiency of household production" (314); not even the industrialization of housework would help a "housewife" complete the housework that was never done. In "Fatigue Studies

in *Household Tasks*,” published four months later, A. H. Ryan acknowledged, “housework is so varied that the best we can hope to do for the present is to analyze and improve those [household tasks] which consume a large portion of the houseworker’s time and effort” (638). Despite the promotion of proper equipment, suitable arrangement of that equipment, standardization of performance, and, of course, efficiency, home economists such as Harrington, Kneeland, and Ryan understood and increasingly claimed publicly that the homemaker’s tasks were varied and unpredictable, and they even occasionally acknowledged that “though the housewife may be the loveliest and most dignified of women, her work is to a large extent menial” (Myerson 77). And the most efficient management of that work could not alter the sheer drudgery of repetitive and unceasing work.

In *Efficiency and Uplift: Scientific Management in the Progressive Era 1890-1920*, Samuel Haber characterizes the Progressive era’s “efficiency craze” as a “secular Great Awakening” during which the “gospel of efficiency was preached without embarrassment to businessmen, workers, doctors, housewives, and teachers. . . .”; proponents promoted a strong link among efficient, good, and moral (ix). Martha Banta also concludes that scientific management was interpreted within the moral binary of “good and evil. . . . Those who backed the new systems envisioned [sic] excellent benefits: higher wages, fewer work hours, improved working conditions, defused labor unrest. Those on the attack viewed the touted ‘transformations’ as reworkings of the same old story—management’s exploitation of labor, disguised in newly deceitful ways” (*Taylored Lives* 137-38). Yet with respect to the domestic realm, very few “attacked” the benefits of adapting scientific management to the home. Yes, some experts did point out the limitations of applying the concept of management to a nuclear family home in which the wife was manager and worker, but most promoted the ideals that a good homemaker was efficient, a good home ran efficiently, and scientific management was the way to achieve efficiency.

### ***The Homemaker and Twilight Sleep***

*The Home-Maker* was number ten on the fiction best seller list for 1924. This is not surprising since Dorothy Canfield Fisher was a “beloved popular novelist.” Fisher’s popularity stemmed at least in part from her providing readers with emotional experiences (Harker, *America the Middlebrow* 24). She promoted “a Progressive vision of America—with equality and individualism at the center” (Harker, *America the Middlebrow* 51), and confronting not only issues of domestic management and consumption but also “troubling modern ‘problems’ such as sexuality, gender relations, and feminism” (Radway 178).<sup>4</sup> The first homemaker we encounter in the novel, Evangeline Knapp, is so obsessed with perfect domesticity, which includes mothering, she literally makes her family members ill. She is released from the prison of her house and housekeeping when she is forced by economic necessity to work as a salesperson. At the same time, her husband,

Lester Knapp, discovers his talent for child rearing, and he takes on the role of homemaker. The novel opens as Eva is “scrubbing furiously at a line of grease spots which led from the stove towards the door to the dining-room” (7). The “floor-cloth” Eva uses to wipe away suds is “hemmed . . . clean and whole,” and the “roller-towel which hung . . . by the sink” is “smooth and well-ironed” (8). As Fisher sets the scene and introduces the characters, she exposes the absurd homemaking standards against which a middle-class woman was measured. Fisher also makes clear in the introductory chapters that the cost of maintaining those standards was very high. The youngest Knapp child, preschooler Stephen, vexes his tired and frustrated mother with his “naughty tricks” (11), and the other two children, Helen and Henry, also suffer as a result of their mother’s rigorous housekeeping. Helen, as Eva sees her, is frail, impractical, and helpless (51), and Henry has a delicate digestive system as well as a “nervous habit of questioning everything everybody said” (48). Eva herself suffers from eczema “eruptions.”

On the evening of the grease-spot cleaning day, after a tense but typical dinner followed by Henry’s usual gastrointestinal rebellion, Eva reflects back on

the frightening moment in the kitchen . . . when for an instant she had lost her bitterly fought-for self-control, when the taut cable of her will-power had snapped under the strain put upon it. For a wild instant she had been all one inner clamor to die, to die, to lay down the heavy, heavy burden, too great for her to bear. What was her life? A hateful round of housework, which, hurry as she might, was never done. How she *loathed* housework! The sight of a dishpan full of dishes made her feel like screaming out. And what else did she have? Loneliness; never-ending monotony; blank, gray days, one after another, full of drudgery. (47)

To emphasize the monotony and drudgery, Fisher describes the ““*Tick-tick-tick-tick-tick-tick—*”” of the clock that “said pressingly, ‘So much to do! So much to do! So much to do!’” (11) and repeats the words as Eva pauses for a moment between cleaning up after dinner and preparing the oatmeal for the next morning’s breakfast: “The clock behind her struck half-past nine, and she became aware of its ticking once more, its insistent whisper: ‘*So much to do! So much to do! So much to do!*’” (45). We also learn that Eva “prided herself on never yet having set a meal on the table a single minute late” (19), and according to Eva’s domestic code of conduct, “It was very important to be on time” (27) for those meals. Ironically, Eva’s accomplishment of punctuality produces neither “happiness minutes” nor efficiency for any purpose other than time to complete additional domestic tasks.

Fisher conveys through her character what Frederick labeled women’s “most dreary shackles” (*New Housekeeping* ix) and what psychiatrist Abraham Myerson described in 1920, in *The Nervous Housewife*, as a “type” of “nervous



housewife” who was so “overconscientious” that she did “definite harm” to herself. Myerson called this type “Seekers of Perfection”—“it is their affliction that they are miserable with anything less. They are particularly hard on themselves,” while the “word *must*, self-imposed, becomes the mania” of their lives (53). And because “it is the nature of housework that it is never finished,” the “overconscientious person . . . gives way under the strain. . . .” (55). This housewife exhibits at least one of what Myerson describes as the “groups of symptoms” of hysteria: “. . . emotional instability, with a tendency to prolonged and freakish manifestations,—the well-known hysterics with laughing, crying, etc. . . .” (35). Myerson also notes that this hysterical housewife “gives her mood” over to her family (43). Eva, the epitome of “the nervous housewife,” cannot heed the advice about scientifically managing her household because she has accepted uncritically the ideals for the perfect home. The choice she seems to have is, let the grease stain remain (and have a “dirty” house), or spend hours on relentless, boring tasks. Even the most efficient methods would not resolve that dilemma. Nor could they provide for Eva an answer to Harrington’s question, ““which are the vital duties of homemaking?”” or a way to solve the problem that the “housewife. . . constitutes the entire” workforce in the middle-class family whose finances did not allow for servants.

Lester is as miserable as his wife. He “loathed his life-long slavery to the clock, that pervasive intimate negative opposed to every spontaneous impulse,” which chained him to work he hated and prevented him from knowing his children, reading books, and reciting poetry to himself (68). Unsited to his job in the accounting department at Willing’s Emporium, the local department store, he feels happy only when he is with his children. It takes Lester being fired and then having a near fatal accident that leaves him with paralyzed legs to enable him and Eva to play the roles for which each is best suited: father stays home with and for the children, mother goes to work at Willing’s as a saleswoman. And everyone benefits. Steven has fewer tantrums and learns to love and trust a parent, the older children grow healthy and confident, and Eva, who quickly proves herself to be a valuable employee, at home tells funny stories about work, plays whist in the evening, and does not even see flecks of dried mud on the couch.

After several months at home, and informed by experts’ books on housekeeping (200), Lester develops his own system of housekeeping, and he involves the children in ““executive sessions . . . to figure out ways and means to cope with life and not get beaten by small details”” (197). As the manager of “Knapp Family, Incorporated,” Lester consults the children/workers during “executive sessions,” and together they devise some ingenious, efficient solutions such as laying old newspapers on the kitchen floor and throwing away the dirty papers before Eva returns home for dinner. Even more significantly, Lester devotes himself to understanding his children. Fisher goes so far as to compare him to a scientist who “conducts an experiment station to accumulate data as material for his intelligence to arrange” so that he might make “just and far-sighted as well

as loving” decisions about the children (307). And unlike Eva, Lester does have a response to Harrington’s question: “‘Don’t go looking to see if the furniture is dusted or the floor is polished. . . We concentrate on the important things in our house and let the non-essentials go’” (200). Lester creates a home for his family not by scrubbing the floor but by following Lillian Gilbreth’s advice about studying the children, assigning appropriate tasks to them, and producing “happiness minutes.” He uses experts’ advice not to prove that he is a model housekeeper but to guide him as he develops his own “‘pattern’” for parenting and domestic chores.

In case readers missed her point that “Under its greasy camouflage of chivalry, society is really based on a contempt for women’s work in the home” (312), Fisher includes the following dialogue between Lester and a family friend, Mattie Farnham. When Mattie sees Lester sewing, she exclaims, “‘the idea of *your* darnning stockings! It’s dreadful enough your having to do the housework!’” Lester responds, “‘Do you know what you are saying to me. . . ? You are telling me that you really think that home-making is a poor, mean, cheap job beneath the dignity of anybody who can do anything else.’” “‘Home-making is the noblest work anybody can do!’” Mattie replies. “‘Why pity me then?’” asks Lester (199). Undoubtedly Fisher included such rhetoric in order to invite questions about the gender division of labor as well as about the seeming contradictory “contempt” for and “nobility” of home work.

Her stance on the larger relationship between home and marketplace is less definitive. On the one hand, she presents as admirable traits Eva’s talents for selecting fabric, knowing what will fit a woman, and selling appropriate clothing to customers with whom she develops courteous relationships. She also has Eva read manuals on retail selling and on “how to distinguish linen from cotton” (156) and even borrow a microscope “to study and analyze fabrics,” all without seeming to criticize her (156). And even as she develops Eva’s professionalization she makes clear that the character maintains respect for her customers and thinks about “details of her plans [for her department at Willing’s] with her usual orderly mastery” (279). Whereas Eva once did not feel proud of her daily housework, she now takes great satisfaction in managing and solving workplace challenges such as selling garments no customers initially wanted.

Yet Fisher also includes Lester’s criticism of Eva’s books: “They were intended to fix the human attention altogether on the importance of material things; to make women feel that the difference between linen and cotton is of more importance to them than the fine, difficultly drawn, always-varying line between warm human love and lust; to make men feel that more possessions would enlarge their lives . . . blasphemy! Blasphemy!” (310-11). Fisher conveys that scientific management can be effective in the home, in the hands of someone like Lester who does know “which are the vital duties of homemaking.” She also makes clear that Eva’s talents are put to better use in a commercial environment rather than in a home. Ironically, at least some of those talents are ones Eva cultivated *at home*. Her ability to organize clothing “‘back of a counter’” is “‘No

harder than knowing where your baking powder and salt stand on the kitchen shelf” (146). Is Fisher suggesting that not only might industrial management be adapted to the home but also that the methods of housekeeping might serve the interests of business?

The novel does not definitively answer this question or larger ones about the relationship between the domestic and the commercial. At the end of chapter eighteen, Eva, just having been offered the position of head saleswoman in the Cloak-and-Suits department, converses with Jerome Willing, the owner of the “Emporium.” Jerome exclaims, ““What I want the store to be is a little piece of the modern world *at its best*, set down within reach of all this fine American population . . . I want to select for them the *right things*, the things they never could select for themselves for lack of training.”” He concludes by pointing out the Emporium’s contributions to the ““highest interests of the country . . . on a sound business basis”” (259-60). It is tempting to read these pronouncements as ironic, openly critical, or as evidence that Fisher could not “subvert the discourse of efficiency,” but it is possible that Fisher saw the potential for national progress through consumerism. If nothing else, she did seem to ask readers to consider the vexed relationship between the Emporium and the home and to question the ostensible values each used to justify its functions.

*The Home-Maker* concludes with a silent agreement between husband and wife that they will not acknowledge Lester’s recovery because they understand “It would be easier for [Lester] to commit murder or rob a bank than to give his intelligence where it was most needed, in his own home with his children” (309). Fisher makes no direct references to Taylorism, but the novel does challenge doctrines that had become associated with domestic efficiency. Not only does it dramatize the unceasing tedium of home making and the danger of having home making become its own end, it also offers as models characters who defy the “Tradition” of separate spheres, do the jobs for which they are best suited, and thereby solve the “problem” of assigning women to the private sphere of homemaking and men to the public realm of moneymaking. The novel leaves no doubt that Eva and Lester are happier for their defiance of social expectations, but in the context of the story, their happiness comes at great cost. *The Home-Maker* hearkens back to nineteenth-century ideals: relaxed and happy family members, sharp distinction between commercial and domestic, and even the reference to the “Tradition” that assigns men to the former and women to the latter. Although the novel challenged the traditions that relegated men and women to narrowly prescribed roles, it accepted the belief that a white, middle-class, nuclear family needed a parent *at home*, tending to children, darning socks, preparing meals, and creating nurturing domestic space, even if that home work was accomplished inefficiently.

Edith Wharton’s *Twilight Sleep* more overtly indicts the application of Taylor’s “principles of scientific management” than *The Home-Maker*. Pauline Manford, one of the novel’s central characters, has so perfected the business of busyness and the management of time she actually becomes an unfeeling prisoner

of her daily schedule. Like a machine that cannot be shut off, Pauline, an extremely capable woman, wastes her energy on futile and trivial pursuits, including “cures” from the stresses she has imposed on herself. With all her privileges, she appears ridiculous and pitiful. *Twilight Sleep* contains only a handful of direct references to the management of domestic space; for example, Wharton makes sure readers know that “Mrs. Dexter Manford’s [was a] perfectly run house” (79). However, the novel does represent ways in which efficiency could distort daily life as well as conceal the interdependence of public and private, marketplace and home. Wharton describes Pauline as giving speeches in her ballroom and using the space of elaborate and expensive parties to examine issues of birth control and motherhood.

In her essay “The Great American Novel,” published in *The Yale Review* a month after *Twilight Sleep* appeared, Wharton observed that “modern America has simplified and Taylorized . . . out of existence” an “old social organization which provided for nicely shaded degrees of culture and conduct” (650). In its place was a world where “Ford motors and Gillette razors . . . bound together the uttermost parts of the earth” (653). While “the material advantage of these diffused conveniences” might be “great,” Wharton worried that “the safe and uniform life resulting from them offers to the artist’s imagination a surface as flat and monotonous as our own prairies” (650). The stinging satire of *Twilight Sleep* provides one response to that flat horizon as well as to the Taylorized modern American life Wharton deplored. By the time she wrote *Twilight Sleep*, Wharton was a popular and critical success. *Twilight Sleep* first appeared serially in the *Pictorial Review*, the women’s magazine with the largest circulation (more than two million) in the 1920s (Barlowe 47), and in its book form, it achieved best-seller status—it rose to number one within two months of publication, and it finished the year at number seven.<sup>5</sup>

In the very first scene of the novel, Pauline’s daughter Nona wishes to speak to her mother, but Pauline’s secretary, Miss Bruss, turns her away, pointing to the morning’s schedule: “7.30 Mental uplift. 7.45 Breakfast. 8. Psycho-analysis. 8.15 See cook. 8.30 Silent Meditation. 8.45 Facial massage. 9. Man with Persian miniatures. 9.15 Correspondence. 9.30 Manicure. 9.45 Eurythmic exercises. 10. Hair waved. 10.15 Sit for bust. 10.30 Receive Mother’s Day deputation. 11. Dancing lesson. 11.30 Birth Control committee at Mrs.-----” (9-10). As this list makes clear, Pauline functions like a worker who has learned well Taylor’s principles. Nothing can disrupt the perfection of her system. “Even illness and death barely caused a ripple in [her plans]. One might as well have tried to bring down one of the Pyramids by poking it with a parasol as attempt to disarrange the close mosaic of Mrs. Manford’s engagement-list. Mrs. Manford herself couldn’t have done it; not with the best will in the world . . .” (14). The carefully managed organization of daily life controls human action and resembles a “Ford production line or efficient ‘Taylorised’ programme of improving activities” (Lee 638). Mechanized to the point where she cannot experience pain or

even pleasure, Pauline has perfected her own time and motion, and embodying Taylor's principles has become its own end.

Despite one or two rare moments of insight into her warped life, Pauline uses her empty efficiency as a shield. The title of the novel describes not only the method of delivering babies while mothers were under the effects of scopolamine but also the characters' great desire to avoid the pains of life. Pauline absolutely refuses to see, let alone comprehend, daughter Nona's unhappiness and love for a married man, son Jim's failing marriage, daughter-in-law Lita's dissipated lifestyle, and second husband Dexter's attraction to Lita. What does provoke an emotional reaction in Pauline is "the thought of anybody's having the least fraction of unapportioned time and not immediately planning to do something with it. If only they could have given it to *her!*" (14-15). All the characters embody a modern emptiness; some attempt to fill the vacuum with fatigue-producing activities that then require Taylorized cures, while others indulge their lassitude without even pretending to confront the void. Although the novel does not establish a direct cause and effect between Taylorized domestic management and characters' happiness, it satirizes the substitution of organization for living.

In the *Nervous Housewife*, Myerson links fatigue not only to the "introduction of so-called time-saving, *i.e.*, distance-annihilating instruments, such as the telephone, telegraph . . . [which] have acted not so much to save time as to increase the number of things done, seen, and heard" (19) but also to "neurasthenia" whose "keynote is *increased liability to fatigue*" (20). Although Pauline rarely succumbs to fatigue, the frenzy of her attempts to save time does take its toll occasionally. She experiences "[n]ervousness, fatigue, brain-exhaustion" after she almost gives a birth control speech to a Mothers' Meeting, and she wonders, "What was the use of all the months and years of patient Taylorized effort against the natural human fate: against anxiety, sorrow, old age—if their menace was to reappear whenever events slipped from her control?" (98) Having gained no insight from her reflection, Pauline continues to rely on faddish therapies to alleviate her nervous stress. In a rare moment of reflection (but not necessarily insight), Pauline compares her "new prophet," Gobine, a Scientific Initiate, to Alvah Loft, the "great Inspirational Healer," and she concludes that the latter's "Taylorized treatments" are far less effective than the former's ability to "initiate" those "who were worthy to be drawn out of the senseless modern rush and taken in *Beyond the Veil*" (273).

When Pauline suddenly does find herself with an "hour of unexpected leisure," she is "painfully oppressed," experiences "the sense of being surrounded by a sudden void" and a "mental dizziness," and "feel[s] as if the world had rushed by and forgotten her. An hour—why, there was no way of measuring the length of an empty hour! It stretched away into infinity like the endless road in a nightmare; it gaped before her like the slippery sides of an abyss." This unplanned, unfilled hour is decidedly not like a "rest-cure [during which] one was always busy resting; every minute was crammed with passive activities; one never had this queer sense of inoccupation, never had to face an absolutely

featureless expanse of time” (116-17). Ironically, Pauline cannot experience her “leisure” time as the Gilbreths’ “happiness minutes”; she depends so deeply on manufactured activities that a single hour seems “featureless” and endless.

Wharton extends her critique of regulation into Pauline and Dexter’s marriage. For Pauline, homemaking has replaced intimacy. In a rare scene in which Wharton uses a domestic adjective to describe her, Pauline is, ironically, in Dexter’s law office: “Pauline, throwing back her furs, cast a quick house-keeping glance about her. The scent she used always reminded [Dexter] of a superior disinfectant; and in another moment . . . she would find some pretext for assuring herself, by the application of a gloved finger-tip, that there was no dust on desk or mantelpiece” (55). Not only does Pauline seem ludicrous in furs and gloves checking for dust, but also she “always” conveys to her husband what could be described as disinfected control. Later in the scene, Wharton provides more insight into the relationship. Dexter admires Pauline’s brains and character, but “he had felt, of late, a stealing boredom. She was too clever, too efficient, too uniformly sagacious and serene . . . He began to detect something obtuse in that unfaltering competence” (60). He also notes that “[i]ntimacy, to [Pauline], meant the tireless discussion of facts, not necessarily of a domestic order, but definite and palpable facts” (169) and that “as a goddess of Velocity” Pauline “enjoys [planned activity] as much as other women do love-making” (252). Sadly, Pauline believes that by showing Dexter the improvements she has made to their country estate, Cedarledge, she establishes intimacy. Wharton tells us that Dexter is so pleased with what she has done, he “had praised everything, noticed all the improvements; had voluntarily announced that he meant to inspect the new heating system and the model chicken hatchery the next morning” (221-22). His praise “paid his wife for all she had done, and roused her inventive faculty to fresh endeavour. Wasn’t there something else she could devise to provoke his praise?” (222) The dehumanizing effect of management points to a fundamental incompatibility between domesticity, with all of its messiness, and industrial efficiency, as well as between efficiency and loving closeness. Disinfectant, velocity, and facts shield Pauline from emotional and sexual intimacy with her husband.

The title *Twilight Sleep* suggests that the characters choose to live in a self-imposed drugged condition, trying to avoid the sensation of pain while their bodies actually experience the labor of living. Alcohol, drugs, schedules, work, planning house renovations, all of which figure in the novel, prevent young and old, men and women, from engaging fully in real life. With respect to the painless, drug-induced process of birth, Pauline remarks, “Of course there ought to be no Pain . . . nothing but Beauty . . . It ought to be one of the loveliest, most poetic things in the world to have a baby.” Wharton follows this preposterous rhetoric with a reference to Pauline’s “bright efficient voice which made loveliness and poetry sound like the attributes of an advanced industrialism, and babies something to be turned out in series like Fords” (18). The jarring images of an efficient voice attempting to speak loveliness, of poetry in an industrial setting,

and of babies being mass produced in factories deepen the horror of applying Taylor's principles domestically.

Pauline and Dexter Manford escape from their overly scheduled lives in New York to their country estate, Cedarledge. During one visit, Lita, for whom time stands still at Cedarledge, wonders, "'what's the use of knowing what time it is in the country? Time for *what?*'" (247) Although Lita does not function as a particularly insightful character, she voices one of the novel's most significant questions. For what purpose was efficiency supposed to provide more time? Wharton does not provide an answer. These characters, including Lita and Nona, have too much time, are no happier, no more fulfilled, no less alienated from themselves and family members than characters such as Pauline and Dexter who have too little time. Lita's lack of goals, even for a specific day or hour, lack of motivation, and "air of radiant indifference" stand in marked contrast to Pauline's vigor (193). Wharton presents both characters as incapable of real relationships and controlled by an excessive regard for, or denial of, efficient uses of time.

Wharton describes America in "The Great American Novel" as having "reduced relations between human beings to a dead level of vapid benevolence" (650). She introduces this concept of "benevolence" in *Twilight Sleep* on the very first page when the narrator observes wryly that "benevolence [was] the note of the Manford household" (9). Later, Pauline, who exudes a "diffused benevolence" (68), presides over meetings of "bright elderly women, with snowy hair, eurythmic movements, and finely-wrinkled over-massaged faces on which a smile of glassy benevolence sat like their rimless *pince-nez*" (11), as well as "delegates from small towns all over the country, united by a common faith in the infinite extent of human benevolence and the incalculable resources of American hygiene" (97). In addition, Nona wonders why she does not believe, "like her elders, that one had only to be brisk, benevolent and fond to prevail against the powers of darkness" (46). The juxtaposition of "brisk" and "benevolent" epitomizes Pauline's method for dealing with any ugly or uncomfortable emotion or experience. Lee points out that "indifference" is the "most-repeated word" in *Twilight Sleep*. Pauline, Dexter, Nona, Lita, and even Jim at one point or another have "indifference" ascribed to them. One way to read indifference is as cause and effect of scientific management's standardization. Another way is as a version of benevolence, and of a form of complacency that both produces and is produced by busyness. Ironically, the indifferent characters in the novel seem always fatigued, even though the passivity of indifference should demand so little mental or emotional energy to produce. In Wharton's rendering, both indifference and benevolence are forms of twilight sleep that conceal but do not cure human pain and that result from restrained, regulated, and managed emotions and relationships.

Benevolence and indifference also carry moral significance in *Twilight Sleep*. In Pauline's tightly controlled world, efficiency and busyness equal moral goodness. But Wharton criticizes Pauline's superficial optimism as well as her version of morality, both of which require a willful blindness to her own pain

and the pain of those she presumably loves. Toward the end of the novel, Pauline thinks, “Nona was really getting as querulous as a teething child. Perhaps that was what she was, morally” (275). In the dialogue leading up to this thought, Pauline has revealed her own childish moral view, claiming that “‘Being prepared to suffer is really the way to create suffering. And creating suffering is creating sin, because sin and suffering are really one. We ought to refuse ourselves to pain’” (275). While her last pronouncement might sound morally valuable, in the context of the preceding sentences, it conveys vacuous selfishness. Wharton uses the phrase “moral freedom” to describe Pauline’s feeling after spending an hour with the Inspirational Healer but makes very clear that this character is incapable of understanding the implications of “moral freedom” if she thinks she experiences it because the Inspirational Healer created its illusion for her (120). Pauline’s moral code is simplistic and more childish than Nona’s; it rests on the pillars of efficient busyness and a superficial benevolence.

Given her ambivalence about class, it is not surprising that Wharton depicts Pauline as vulgar because her “corpuscles were tinged with a . . . plebeian dye”: “Her progenitors had mined in Pennsylvania and made bicycles at Exploit,” and now they “gave their names to one of the most popular automobiles in the United States” (15). However, Wharton’s condemnation is not only about Pauline’s money being tainted by actual work but because this character embodies an attempt to live her life as if it were a production line in a car factory. Her “. . . killing New York life, with its ever-multiplying duties and responsibilities” (10), is as devoid of meaning as her family’s source of wealth, the automobile which has been mass produced.

Nona speaks the novel’s final words; exhausted, she says she would like to join a “‘convent where nobody believes in anything’” (315). She envies “the others who could escape by flight—by perpetual evasion,” she rejects Pauline’s belief in management and both her parents’ belief in busyness, and she has been forced to give up her belief in love (306). This privileged young woman has no hope. And certainly none would be magically created by quick cures or efficiency. Although the melodramatic events of the plot come to closure, *Twilight Sleep* concludes with nothing resolved. Wharton was clearly troubled by the “‘crisis of a ‘deadening of feeling’ she saw as symptomatic of modern America’s increasingly capitalist—even Taylorized—work ethic and habits of consumption” (Bauer, “Addiction and Intimacy” 124-25). It is primarily through satiric, even venomous, criticism, rather than through offering alternatives, that Wharton expressed her concern for what she perceived to be Americans’ naïve reliance on industrial solutions.<sup>6</sup>

### **Concluding with *Too Much Efficiency***

Edith Rathbone Brainerd and J. Chauncey Brainerd, a wife and husband who wrote under the name E. J. Rath, mocked domestic efficiency in their farcical *Too Much Efficiency*. Their novel makes vividly apparent that in the late 1910s, “True efficiency [was] an octopus, reaching out in all directions and seizing upon



all things” and a fit target for satire because its advocates had taken it too seriously (Rath 127). The plot is simple: John W. Brooke, a wealthy “manufacturer of machine tools, drills, pumps, saws, files, and other matters of hardware” (1), hires the Economy and Efficiency Corporation to help him “reform the business of running an American household” (5). Economy and Efficiency sends Henry Hedge, Efficiency Engineer, who settles into the Brooke mansion with the sole purpose of saving John Brooke money in the domestic sphere. Not surprisingly, Hedge and Constance Brooke, the older daughter of the family, fall in love, and it is this that proves the undoing of Hedge’s efficiency plans.

*Too Much Efficiency* equates domestic efficiency with cost savings. Time and motion translate quickly and easily into economic terms more explicitly than they do in either *The Home-Maker* or *Twilight Sleep*. The novel opens with a conversation between Mr. Brooke and Mr. Sherwood, President of the Economy and Efficiency Corporation, who just helped Mr. Brooke’s company save \$200,000 a year (in 1917 dollars). Mr. Sherwood pronounces, ““Running a household is a business”” (6), and he suggests that Mr. Brooke has ““no system,”” ““no accounting”” for his household (7). But he persuades his client that applying ““the eternal principles of economy and efficiency,”” which are ““immutable”” and ““can be applied to anything”” will bring order and cost savings to Mr. Brooke’s home (9).

The very first night he arrives, Hedge explains his mission using the same terms: ““to put [John Brooke’s] household on an economic basis that will correspond to that on which his hardware establishment is now operated”” (28) using ““the science of eliminating waste and installing efficiency”” (29). Hedge also explains to the Brooke children that their ““father, although an unbeliever, recently became interested in”” efficiency and that his ““business has been completely reformed”” (29). Almost as soon as Hedge appears in the novel, efficiency is made to appear absurd. At his very first dinner with the Brooke family, Hedge asks the butler, Horace, ““Do you realize that you waste from thirty-five to forty per cent. of energy every time you walk from that door to the table?”” Hedge continues:

you take a longer route than is necessary. Take a direct route—so—and you save three steps. Lengthen your stride and you save two additional steps. Let me see you step out. There! You see it can be done. There are two equally short routes by which the table may be approached. Alternate them. It saves the rugs. Walk faster. It saves time. And turn down those lights along the wall. They’re unnecessary and it will save electricity. After this evening, put only one log on the fire. It saves wood. That will do. (25)

Not only does such a passage mock Bradley’s rhetoric in ““Watch Your Step!”” but also makes equivalent the saving of money, time, and human energy as the

goals of efficiency. However, since the human energy and time, which need to be conserved, are workers' (servants'), what actually will be saved, ultimately, is money.

As the title of the novel states, there *can* be too much efficiency. It leads to prohibitions against poker, dancing, Christmas trees, and marriage engagements (248). It can even lead to judging another human being as ““useless, futile, a waste of time . . . [with] no place in economy, domestic, social or otherwise”” (129). When Hedge and Connie Brooke decide to marry, she tells her brother Billy that Hedge ““isn't an efficiency man any more. He resigned. And the efficiency is all in the fire, and the time-clock is smashed, and all the rules are abolished”” (283). As was also apparent in *The Home-Maker* and *Twilight Sleep*, clock-measured regulation decidedly does not produce “happiness minutes.” Indeed, the lovers can express their desire only after the relentless machine and its implied control over human feeling are destroyed. Not only is efficiency represented as a fitting target for humor but as decidedly not “progressive.” *Too Much Efficiency* leaves no doubt that a home and family, even upper class where servants are workers, cannot be run on the same principles as a factory. It also reifies the private/public binary so that the Brookeses may willfully ignore the workers and markets upon which their domestic luxuries and comfort rest. In part because efficiency is made to appear ludicrous, *Too Much Efficiency* projects in bold relief the absurdities of household management and even of Progressive reforms.

The novel also makes apparent that the analysis of the relationship between the domestic and business “spheres” had shifted considerably between the middle of the nineteenth century and the 1920s. Depictions of home spaces had developed from idealized portraits of the sentimentalized homemaker “influencing” family members to critically rendering the industrialized, standardized, and timed household of “The Efficient Wife,” challenging “traditions” about the gender of the homemaker while urging men and women to do their best work in either the home or in business in *The Home-Maker*, criticizing the use of domestic efficiency as a shield against the emotional disorder of life in *Twilight Sleep*, and overtly condemning the lengths to which household efficiency experts would go to economize on time and money in *Too Much Efficiency*. All four texts project angst about the function of the domestic sphere and challenge the naïve notion that domesticity in the private sphere could tame the capitalistic market place.

Cathy Davidson has asked whether or not the “separate spheres” as represented in nineteenth-century domestic fiction “actually existed in anything like a general, definitive, or, for that matter, ‘separate’ way” (445). One responder, Caroline Levine, asks her own questions: “What if the binary was crude but also sometimes operative?” Perhaps in a complex social world, Levine proposes, “multiple crude categories are always in operation, and . . . they collide, overlap, and decenter each other” (630). Certainly the binary categories of “woman’s work”/“men’s work,” “home”/“marketplace,” and “private”/“public” are apparent in nineteenth-century domestic fiction. They also help define domestic fiction

of the 1910s and 1920s, although the “collisions” and “overlapping” among the categories differ.

In her study of British domestic fiction, Nancy Armstrong has observed, “novels helped to transform the household into what might be called the ‘counterimage’ of the modern marketplace, an apolitical realm of culture within the culture as a whole” (48). I want to suggest that Rath, Fisher, and Wharton also contributed to a transformation of the beliefs about the home but did so more deliberately and explicitly politically than had many other nineteenth-century writers.<sup>7</sup> Honestly dismayed by what they perceived to be the undoing of the American home and family, they resisted and criticized the seeming simplicity of the Gilbreth’s or Frederic’s “progressive” rhetoric. In their versions of the domestic novel, the industrialized world of the marketplace was decidedly not forward-looking but was actually transforming the home into an inhuman site. The domestic novel in these writers’ imaginations had a vital role to play in challenging the management tools of the capitalistic order by peering into the most intimate of relationships of family life and by honestly criticizing the beliefs, practices, and consequences of industrializing the home.

## Notes

Thank you to my colleagues Kathleen Greene, Tamara Ketabgian, Charles Lewis, Donna Oliver, and Linda Sturtz for reading drafts of this essay. Thank you also to the anonymous reviewers whose provocative critique compelled me to articulate my ideas more forcefully.

1. Harriet Beecher Stowe articulated her theories about the function of the home and the responsibilities of the homemaker with her sister Catharine Beecher in their *An American Woman’s Home* (1869). An early domestic science manual, this volume advocated a “domestic economy” (a concept Catharine developed in her 1843 *Treatise on Domestic Economy*): a scientific, Christian, intelligent approach to housekeeping.

2. In *The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue, and the Origins of Modernity*, Anson Rabinbach provides the context of nineteenth and early twentieth-century European ideas, attitudes, and practices, within which Taylor developed his own arguments.

3. The *Outlook* had evolved from its initial publication in 1967 as the *Church Union*, a Baptist paper, to a “general family weekly with sermons, essays, fiction, puzzles, and jokes” titled the *Christian Union* and edited by Henry Ward Beecher (Peterson 156), to “a regular journal of opinion” (Peterson 157), with former President Theodore Roosevelt as a contributing editor in the early teens. The *Outlook* had a circulation of between 100,000 and 125,000 during the two decades of the twentieth century.

4. Dorothy Canfield Fisher has been described as a Middlebrow by Jaime Harker who persuasively claims that “[m]iddlebrow writers appealed to their readers’ positive emotions, or what the modern authors would term sentimental emotions—pity, love, patriotism, self-sacrifice, devotion. They focused their craft on creating the style, plot, characters, and themes that would satisfy the desires of their middle-class audience—not only for characters with whom to identify, but for narratives that would help them to understand modern life. Choices about form and plot had to be made with middlebrow readers in mind—not just their desire for identification, but which situations, characters, and formal choices would foster identification, rather than alienate them. Formal decisions were therefore pragmatic; authors would use any means necessary to move their reader. They adapted tested devices and genres—particularly the romance—to their own purposes, often mixing them” (Harker, *America the Middlebrow* 20).

5. According to Edie Thornton, all of Wharton’s novels published in the 1920s were first serialized in *Pictorial Review* (29). Thornton reads *Mother’s Recompense* in its *Pictorial Review* context in “Selling Edith Wharton: Illustration, Advertising, and *Pictorial Review*, 1924-1925.”

Surrounding *Twilight Sleep* in its *Pictorial Review* installments are advertisements for personal hygiene products (shampoo, soap, tampons), family food (breakfast cereal, beef extract, baby food), home health remedies (Dr. Scholl’s bunion pads, Unguentine, Milk of Magnesia, Olive Tablets, Glyco-Thymoline—“for mouth wash[,] nasal spray[,] or gargle”), clothing (maternity, New York fashions, boys’ clothing), appliances and home furnishings (Campbell’s Automatic Electric Fireless

Cooker Range, rugs, rug cushions, a guide to furniture buying, curtain rods), beauty products (lipstick, cream), and cleaning products (Sani-Flush, Lysol, furniture polish). In some cases, the advertisement is not marked visually or verbally as different from the “articles” and fiction. For example, “Woman’s Greatest Hygienic Handicap As Your Daughter’s Doctor Views It” is the banner at the top of what turns out to be a full-page, color-illustrated advertisement for tampons; the illustration and the type are identical to those used in the magazine’s fiction.

6. It is because of her anxiety that Wharton can be described as a “middlebrow” author. “Like the sentimentalists, middlebrow female novelists argued that the personal was indeed political, elevating the feminized culture of feeling as a forum for change over the masculinized sphere of politics,” in Lisa Botshon’s and Meredith Goldsmith’s view (10). Harker connects the modifier “progressive” to “middlebrow” to describe fiction such as *Twilight Sleep*, which attempted “to establish a middle ground in which literature heals, creates community, and saves the nation” (“Progressive Middlebrow” 119).

A number of scholars have suggested that *Twilight Sleep* mimics efficiency or scientific management in its plot, character development, and/or rhetoric. Claire Preston claims that “The profusion of detail which makes the tone of the novel so memorable is not matched in the Wharton canon except by *The Custom of the Country*. *Twilight Sleep* offers a similar analogical relation between theme and texture, only this time there is nothing like ‘rhythm’ to sustain the plot. Instead, meaning and individual purpose are engulfed in the morass of available convictions and behaviours, and ceaseless activity becomes an essential distraction from cold reality. Pauline’s rigorous exclusion of anything unpleasant from her thoughts includes personal betrayals by family members; the novel itself excludes the war by failing to admit it even in allusion” (*Edith Wharton’s Social Register* 185). Hermione Lee reads the scene on pp. 209-210 as “the whole sequence is done on the run, in rapid, interrupted dialogue” (641). Cynthia Griffin Wolff characterizes the novel as “chaotically plotted.” She suggests that “some of this anarchy is undoubtedly intended as a reflection of the disjointed quality of life in postwar America” (376). Martha Banta argues that “Taylorism . . . fostered the dream of a ‘contained’ (often excessively controlled) society, and narratives (also often excessively controlled) . . . sprang up out of the sense of urgency either to defend or to deny flat-out assertions that the Answer to All had been found at last” (x). *Twilight Sleep* is undoubtedly one of the latter narratives.

7. Ceclia Tichi suggests that “Taylorist thought offered writers new opportunities for style and structure. Its ethos of synchronized design, abundance, and functionalism, its kinetics, its utilitarian motivation and method of spatial and temporal reformulation all come to have a significant impact on American literature in the twentieth century” (90). Although I do not see Fisher, Wharton, or Rath employing Taylorist style or structure, I think that an exploration of the myriad ways in which Modernist writers, including the “Middlebrow Moderns,” did use the techniques Tichi enumerates would contribute significantly to our understanding of early twentieth-century literature.

## Works Cited and Bibliography

- Armstrong, Nancy. *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- Banta, Martha. *Taylored Lives: Narrative Production in the Age of Taylor, Veblen, and Ford*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993.
- . “Wharton’s Women: In History, Out of Time.” *A Historical Guide to Edith Wharton*. Ed. Carol Singley. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003. 51-87.
- Barlowe, Jamie. “No Innocence in This Age: Edith Wharton’s Commercialization and Commodification.” *Memorial Boxes and Guarded Interiors: Edith Wharton and Material Culture*. Ed. Gary Totten. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama P, 2007. 44-62.
- Bauer, Dale. *Edith Wharton’s Brave New Politics*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994.
- . “Wharton’s ‘Others’: Addiction and Intimacy.” *A Historical Guide to Edith Wharton*. Ed. Carol Singley. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003. 115-45.

- Beer, Janet and Avril Horner. "Wharton the 'Renovator': *Twilight Sleep* as Gothic Satire." *Yearbook of English Studies* 37.1 (2007): 177-92.
- Bendixen, Alfred. "New Directions in Wharton Criticism: A Bibliographic Essay." *Edith Wharton Review* 10 (1993): 20-24.
- Bentley, Nancy. "Wharton, Travel, and Modernity." *A Historical Guide to Edith Wharton*. Ed. Carol Singley. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003. 147-79.
- Berch, Bettina. "Scientific Management in the Home: The Empress's New Clothes." *Journal of American Culture* 3.3 (1980): 440-45.
- Botshon, Lisa, and Meredith Goldsmith, eds. *Middlebrow Moderns: Popular American Women Writers of the 1920s*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2003.
- Bradley, Alice. "'Watch Your Step!'" *Woman's Home Companion* April 1922: 47-48.
- Bruere, Martha Bensley and Robert W. Bruere. *Increasing Home Efficiency*. New York: Macmillan, 1912.
- Byard, Anne Lombard. "The Efficient Wife." *Woman's Home Companion* January 1923: 30, 32, 92.
- Churchwell, Sarah. "'Lost Among the Ads': *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* and the Politics of Imitation." *Middlebrow Moderns: Popular American Women Writers of the 1920s*. Eds. Lisa Botshon and Meredith Goldsmith. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2003. 135-64.
- Cowan, Ruth Schwartz. *More Work for Mother: The Ironies of Household Technology from the Open Hearth to the Microwave*. New York: Basic Books, 1983.
- Craig, Hazel. *The History of Home Economics*. New York: Practical Home Economics, 1945.
- Davidson, Cathy. "Preface: No More Separate Spheres!" *American Literature* 70.3 September (1998): 443-63.
- Dawson, Melanie. "'Too Young for the Part': Narrative Closure and Feminine Evolution in Wharton's '20s Fiction." *Arizona Quarterly* 57.4 (2001): 89-119.
- Elias, Megan. *Stir It Up: Home Economics in American Culture*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008.
- Farwell, Tricia. *Love and Death in Edith Wharton's Fiction*. New York: Peter Lang, 2006.
- Fisher, Dorothy Canfield. *The Home-Maker*. 1924. Chicago: Academy Chicago Publishers, 1983.
- Forcey, Blythe. "Domestic Fiction." *The Oxford Companion to Women's Writing in the United States*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995. Ed. Cathy Davidson and Linda Wagner-Martin. 253-54.
- Foster, Thomas. *Transformations of Domesticity in Modern Women's Writing: Homelessness at Home*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002.

- Frederick, Christine. *Household Engineering: Scientific Management in the Home*. Chicago: American School of Home Economics, 1920.
- . *The New Housekeeping: Efficiency Studies in Home Management*. Garden City: Doubleday, Page & Co. 1913.
- Gilbreth, Frank. "Scientific Management in the Home." *The Journal of Home Economics* 4.5 (1912): 438-47.
- Gilbreth, Frank and Lillian. *Fatigue Study: The Elimination of Humanity's Greatest Unnecessary Waste. A First Step in Motion Study*. 1916. Easton: Hive, 1973.
- Gilbreth, Lillian. *The Home-Maker and Her Job*. New York: D. Appleton, 1927.
- Goldmark, Josephine. *Fatigue and Efficiency: A Study in Industry*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1912.
- Goldstein, Carolyn. "Home Economics: Mediators." *Gender and Technology: A Reader*. Nina Lerman, et al., eds. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003. 359-91.
- Goodman, Susan. *Civil Wars: American Novelists and Manners, 1880-1940*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003.
- Goodwyn, Janet. *Edith Wharton: Traveler in the Land of Letters*. New York: St. Martin's, 1990.
- Graham, Laurel. "Domesticating Efficiency: Lillian Gilbreth's Scientific Management of Homemakers, 1924-1930." *Signs* 24.3 (1999): 633-75.
- Griffith, Jean. "'Lita is—jazz': The Harlem Renaissance, Cabaret Culture, and Racial Amalgamation in Edith Wharton's *Twilight Sleep*." *Studies in the Novel* 38.1 (2006): 74-94.
- Haber, Samuel. *Efficiency and Uplift: Scientific Management in the Progressive Era 1899-1920*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964.
- Harker, Jaime. *America the Middlebrow: Women's Novels, Progressivism, and Middlebrow Authorship between the Wars*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007.
- . "Progressive Middlebrow: Dorothy Canfield, Women's Magazines, and Popular Feminism in the Twenties." *Middlebrow Moderns: Popular American Women Writers of the 1920s*. Eds. Lisa Botshon and Meredith Goldsmith. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2003. 111-34.
- Harrington, Ida. "Home Management Problems." *Journal of Home Economics* 16.7 (1924): 361-66.
- Haytock, Jennifer. "Marriage and Modernism in Edith Wharton's *Twilight Sleep*." *Legacy: A Journal of American Women Writers* 19.2 (2002): 216-21.
- Home Economics Archive. [hearth.library.cornell.edu](http://hearth.library.cornell.edu).
- Honey, Maureen. "Feminist New Woman Fiction in Periodicals of the 1920s." *Middlebrow Moderns: Popular American Women Writers of the 1920s*. Eds. Lisa Botshon and Meredith Goldsmith. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2003. 87-109.
- Huntington, Ellen. "The Application of Science to the Housekeeper's Daily Problems." *Journal of Home Economics* 3.5 (1911): 440-44.

- Kline, Ronald. "Home Ideologies: Progress?" *Gender and Technology: A Reader*. Nina Lerman, et al., eds. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003. 392-423.
- Kneeland, Hildegard. "Limitations of Scientific Management in Household Work." *Journal of Home Economics* 20.5 (1928): 311-14.
- Leavitt, Sarah A. *From Catharine Beecher to Martha Stewart: A Cultural History of Domestic Advice*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002.
- Lee, Hermione. *Edith Wharton*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007.
- Levine, Caroline. "Strategic Formalism: Toward a New Method in Cultural Studies." *Victorian Studies* 48.4 (2006): 625-57.
- Matthews, Glenna. "*Just a Housewife*": *The Rise and Fall of Domesticity in America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- Myerson, Abraham. *The Nervous Housewife*. 1920. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1927.
- Nerad, Maresi. *Gender in Higher Education: The History of the Home Economics Department at the University of California Berkeley*. Diss. University of California, Berkeley, 1988. Ann Arbor: UMI, 1991.
- Peterson, Theodore. *Magazines in the Twentieth Century*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1964.
- Preston, Claire. *Edith Wharton's Social Register*. New York: St. Martin's, 2000.
- . "Ladies Prefer Bonds: Edith Wharton, Theodore Dreiser, and the Money Novel." *Soft Canons: American Women Writers and Masculine Tradition*. Ed. Karen Kilcup. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999. 184-201.
- Rabinbach, Anson. *The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue, and the Origins of Modernity*. New York: Basic Books, 1990.
- Radway, Janice. *A Feeling for Books: The Book-of-the-Month Club, Literary Taste, and Middle-Class Desire*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997.
- Raphael, Lev. *Edith Wharton's Prisoners of Shame: A New Perspective on Her Neglected Fiction*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991.
- Rath, E. J. *Too Much Efficiency*. New York: W. J. Watt, 1917.
- Richards, Ellen. "Ten Years of the Lake Placid Conference on Home Economics: Its History and Aims." *Lake Placid Conference on Home Economics Proceedings of the Tenth Annual Conference*, Lake Placid Club, Essex, New York, 1908. 19-25. Home Economics Archive. [hearth.library.cornell.edu](http://hearth.library.cornell.edu)
- Rubin, Joan Shelley. *The Making of Middlebrow Culture*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992.
- Rutherford, Janice Williams. *Selling Mrs. Consumer: Christine Frederick and the Rise of Household Efficiency*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2003.
- Ryan, A. H. "Fatigue Studies in Household Tasks." *The Journal of Home Economics* 20.9 (1928): 637-44.
- Stage, Sara, and Virginia B. Vincenti, eds. *Rethinking Home Economics: Women and the History of a Profession*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997.

- Stowe, Harriet Beecher. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. 1852. New York: Library of America, 1982.
- Strasser, Susan. *Never Done: A History of American Housework*. 1982. New York: Henry Holt, 2000.
- Taylor, Frederick. *The Principles of Scientific Management*. 1911. New York: Harper, 1929.
- Terrill, Bertha. *Household Management*. Chicago: American School of Home Economics, 1907.
- Thornton, Edie. "Selling Edith Wharton: Illustration, Advertising, and *Pictorial Review*, 1924-1925." *Arizona Quarterly* 57.3 (2001): 29-59.
- Tichi, Cecilia. *Shifting Gears: Technology, Literature, Culture in Modernist America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987.
- Totten, Gary, ed. *Memorial Boxes and Guarded Interiors: Edith Wharton and Material Culture*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2007.
- Tuttleton, James, et al., eds. *Edith Wharton: The Contemporary Reviews*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Walton, Geoffrey. *Edith Wharton: A Critical Interpretation*. Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1970.
- Wershoven, Carol. *The Female Intruder in the Novels of Edith Wharton*. Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1982.
- Wharton, Edith. *The Decoration of Houses*. 1897. New York: Rizzoli and The Mount Press, 2007.
- . "The Great American Novel." *The Yale Review* 16.4 (1927): 646-56.
- . *Twilight Sleep*. 1927. New York: Scribner, 1997.
- . *The Writing of Fiction*. 1924. New York: Touchstone, 1997.
- Zak, Deborah J. "Building the Female Body: Modern Technology and Techniques at Work in *Twilight Sleep*." Ed. Gary Totten. *Memorial Boxes and Guarded Interiors: Edith Wharton and Material Culture*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2007. 111-32.