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Bringing the Laboratory Dog Home: Elizabeth Stuart Phelps and the Antivivisection Narrative

“We are told that there is no need of any public sensitiveness on this subject [and that] there must be no lifting of the veil to the outside multitude.” — Dr. Albert Leffingwell, *Vivisection* (1884)

“They try to pacify the public by crying that there is no pain, -- but details, taken from laboratory records, tell the story.” — Sarah Nelson Carter, *For Pity's Sake* (1897)

“The situation in the United States is extremely volatile. Over the last five years, exposés by animal rights activists ... have highlighted glaring inadequacies in the current system of control.” — Dr. Judith Hampson, Chief Animal Experimentation Research Officer, Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (1987)

“The men and women who broke into the laboratories ... had to make sure that people got enough of a peek behind the scenes to realize that the ‘science’ was worthless.” — PETA President Ingrid Newkirk, *Free the Animals* (2000)

Vivisection Exposed. Historically, the purpose of antivivisection rhetoric has been to expose scientific atrocities inflicted on animals in laboratories. The quotations introducing this essay offer an epigraphic slice from this discursive tradition. Animal experimentation became a source of public debate in the United States following the laboratory revolution in medical science during the 1860s and 1870s. As early as 1867, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) in New York, under the leadership of Henry Bergh, publicly decried animal experimentation and advocated legislative prohibition of the practice. Inspired by their British allies, who successfully shepherded through Parliament the Cruelty to Animals Act of 1876, American humane activists sought to expose the frightful inner workings of the vivisection laboratory to public scrutiny. In an effort to raise public awareness, the American Anti-Vivisection Society (AAVS) began distributing images of vivisected animals at community gatherings and state fairs. The Exhibit Committee of the AAVS

even produced a traveling display of vivisection tools and practices, which it launched in Philadelphia in 1910. Antivivisectionists on both sides of the Atlantic employed metaphors of exposure and unveiling in representations of their humane labor. This discursive practice framed anticruelty reform as the inevitable consequence of disseminating the unvarnished truth about vivisection among the people. In 1882, Bergh himself thematized the notion of cutting to the facts, so to speak, with his ironic and provocative lecture title: “Vivisection Vivisected.”

While SPCAs and other humane organizations served as the official mouthpieces of the movement, a diversity of social groups, including teachers, clergy, scientists, and club women, contributed to the fin de siècle antivivisection effort. These groups exercised manifold forms of social influence and adopted such varied persuasive modes as lecturing, pamphleteering, letter-writing, and front-parlor pontificating. Though ranging in style and effectiveness, antivivisection texts were characteristically disturbing in their graphic descriptions of animal suffering. Armed with firsthand knowledge, antivivisection scientists published alarming descriptions of the “dim-lighted underground dungeons” in some of the nation’s preeminent medical colleges (Leffingwell, *The Vivisection Question* 47). “In the august name of Science,” testified Dr. Albert Leffingwell, “animals have been subjected to burning, baking, freezing; saturation with inflammable oil and then setting on fire; starvation to death; skinning alive; larding the feet with nails; crushing and tormenting in every imaginable way” (“Vivisection in America” 136). Clergy, teachers, and reform-minded women embedded the scientists’ graphic accounts in moral arguments about the debasing nature of violent acts on those who perform them. Humane writers hoped to restrict or abolish vivisection by shining a light on the scientists’ secret world of animal suffering. “I have seen a great deal of vivisection,” British surgeon Francis Cann reflected, “and I think if the people were only allowed to see these operations, there would very soon be an end put to them” (*The Zoophilist* 46).

The Laboratory Dog in Fictional Space. In a prefatory note to her antivivisection novel, *Trixy* (1904), American author Elizabeth Stuart Phelps propounds a democratic vision of humane fiction as a purveyor of moral light and verity to the literate public: “[A] novel, which cannot be a homily, may be an illumination. This one approaches regions whose very existence is unknown to the majority of readers, and doubted by many intelligent and kind-hearted people. I take this opportunity of saying that I am familiar with the map of these dark sections of life and know whereof I write” (vii-viii). Imaginative literature, she suggests, might add emotional heft to the antivivisection platform by exposing murky terrains of inhumanity to the light of public consciousness. Phelps

suggests that the novel form, unlike the polemic or the homily, invites particularly vivid experiences of identification with its human and canine characters. The moral and social impact of the humane novel supposedly emanates from its power to usher readers through clandestine geographies, otherwise unknown or inaccessible to them.

Curiously, while Phelps's preface braces readers for a tour through the coarse underworld of mercenary dog-trafficking and scientific torture chambers, it also makes a point of characterizing this imaginative journey as an "approach" rather than a full exposure to the dark regions of animal vivisection (*Trixy* vii). Phelps's narrative, in other words, is itself a restricted site from which grisly scenes of canine torture are conspicuously and deliberately omitted. "If *Trixy* were a polemic," Phelps elucidates, "there might be presented a variety of authentic physiological diversions as sad as they would seem to be incredible. Such being the material of the apostle rather than the artist, these pages have been closed to scenes too painful for admission to them" (*Trixy* vii). At various moments in her story, Phelps peels back the veil on the scientist's privileged institutional domain, but rarely does she grant more than a glimpse at the horrors that reside therein. While the vivisector-dog interactions in *Trixy* supply moments of high drama and suspense, most of the novel's interspecies relationships unfold *outside* of the laboratory.

Why is the laboratory relegated to peripheral space in a narrative concerned primarily with scientific experimentation and in a genre predicated on the graphic exposure of vivisection? Vivid descriptions of the animal laboratory, which serve as the focal point of other humane discursive forms, are intended to shock audiences into political action. Yet, authors who dwell on the flesh-carving in the laboratory run the risk of turning sensitive readers away. If the details prove too grotesque or technical, then readers with weak constitutions might avert their attention from the bloody spectacle and, by extension, from the plight of the laboratory dog. In shielding readers from scenes of savagery, Phelps also interpellates them as part of a "humane" public invested in keeping the "vagaries of science" and the "shames of the human race" in check (*Trixy* 160). In a direct address to her imagined audience, she vows to steer clear of "sights which the readers of these pages could not bring their delicate sensibilities to witness, facts which you who follow this narrative would not permit its writer to relate" (*Trixy* 160). This meta-textual moment simultaneously conjures into being an ideal reading public and circumscribes its values. It also indicates that the novel will not rely on

realist descriptions of mass slaughter in the laboratory to galvanize its audience to join the antivivisection cause. Phelps's insistence on a sanitized narrative codifies the vivisection laboratory as a site *too real* for realist fiction. The unspeakable realities of the laboratory cannot be signified in the context of humane literature, as they belong to a realm beyond fiction.

Trixy retains its fictional status by re-contextualizing the laboratory dog as both a cherished family member and as private property with sentimental and market value. For this reason, the home (as the seat of familial intimacy) and the court (as a site for formalizing property claims) assume central positions in Phelps's narrative topography. Unlike the antivivisection polemic, which functions as an *exposé* of the morally intolerable treatment of animals, Phelps's fictional work builds pathos for laboratory dogs by envisioning them as treasured members of the American household and as defensible property in the context of the courtroom. The movement of Phelps's canine characters among the home, the laboratory, and the courthouse generates what I henceforth refer to as "the stolen-pet plot," a coinage that implies the dog's context-contingent status as cherished dependent and private property. In delineating humane and inhumane behavior in these three narrative sites, Phelps presents sharply gendered portrayals of human-canine interactions, such that appropriate treatment of dogs is necessarily appropriately "feminine" or "masculine." The interruption of these gendered relationships by dog-bandits and vivisectors undermines heteronormative family values, as the filching of the family pet disrupts the maternal imperative of woman and violates the property rights of man.

Although Phelps relies on conventionally gendered depictions of interspecies relations in *Trixy*, she nevertheless resists the widespread *fin de siècle* habit of placing ethical concern for animals under the special purview of women. Her multi-contextual portrayals of interspecies interactions, instead, frame the antivivisection cause broadly as a "human" concern and as a litmus test for a particularly American sense of "humaneness," which translates here as a [compensity]propensity/capacity for mercy toward the weak and a respect for private property. By tracking Phelps's canine protagonists through the narrative nerve-centers in *Trixy* and several other dog-themed works, this essay illustrates how the stolen-pet plot construes vivisection as a threat to the most sacrosanct of American values. It argues, furthermore, that by explicitly rejecting graphic descriptions *à la* the antivivisection polemic, Phelps constitutes a humane reading public lauded for its gentle feeling and acute sensitivity to suffering.

Digging Up Phelps's Antivivisection Fiction. During the three decades preceding Houghton, Mifflin and Company's release of *Trixy* in 1904, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps attracted an enthusiastic readership for her popular fiction and wrote numerous influential essays in support of temperance, woman suffrage, labor reform, co-education, and other contemporary social causes. Undoubtedly, Phelps is best known for her popular "Gates" novels, which offered utopian visions of heaven to a nation still reeling from the devastation of the Civil War. The first volume in the *Gates* series, *The Gates Ajar* (1868), launched Phelps's literary career, achieved mass-circulation in the United States and England, and attracted the attention of famed literary "power couple," James T. Fields and Annie Adams Fields, who were instrumental in the book's publication. *Beyond the Gates*, *The Gates Between*, and *Within the Gates* (a dramatization serialized in *McClure's Magazine*) followed the first novel in 1883, 1887, and 1901, respectively. In addition to the smash-hit *Gates* books, Phelps's fiction and nonfiction prose appeared frequently in periodical flagships, such as the *Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, the *Independent*, and *Woman's Journal*. Although Phelps's literary appeal dwindled after her death in 1911, she garnered popular and critical acclaim during her lifetime and bequeathed a vast legacy to the history of letters.

Today, this literary boon remains largely untapped, except by a small cohort of scholars engaged in the important enterprise of documenting Phelps's participation in the antebellum women's movement. On Phelps's contribution to humane reform, however, literary critics have been either reticent or apt to interpret her portrayals of animal exploitation as "symbolic" of women's oppression (Kessler 111). Carol Farley Kessler's characterization of Phelps's "anti-vivisection concern" as "an indirect expression of her feminist interests" is typical of this scholarly approach (111). Kessler has emphasized those aspects of Phelps's fiction which imply that "women were treated by men as pets, vivisected as experimental subjects" (111). Ronna Coffey Privett, similarly, has summed up *Trixy* as a story about "intelligent, loving dogs whose mute cries for help often resemble women in society who are voiceless without the vote and who depend upon their 'masters' to save them from their inhumane situations" (246). Ann Douglas Wood has argued that many prominent nineteenth-century women, including Phelps, believed that "male doctors were performing a kind of 'vivisection'... on their female patients" (48). In "'The Fashionable Diseases': Women's Complaints and Their Treatment in Nineteenth-Century America," Wood documents the rhetorical associations these women forged between the abuse of laboratory animals and the

treatment of female patients for “mental illness, ‘nervous’ conditions, and sexual difficulties” (25). She credits (in a footnote) Phelps’s antivivisection novels with making the broader symbolic link between “male cruelty in vivisection [and] male cruelty in marriage” (Wood 49). Wood concludes her essay with the assertion that Phelps made “no pretense of interest in medicine as a science” but viewed the field purely “as a weapon in a social and political struggle for power between the sexes” (52). While Phelps undoubtedly drew provocative parallels between vivisection and sex discrimination, my study suggests that her animal advocacy was more than merely metaphorical or analogic. Her commitment to the antivivisection cause, as we shall see, was ardent, enduring, and multi-faceted.

The plight of laboratory animals occupied a significant portion of Phelps’s professional energy during the final decade and a half of her life. Her prominence in the antivivisection movement even inspired public denunciations from leading U.S. scientists, including one Harvard physiologist who singled her out in an 1899 issue of the *Philadelphia Medical Journal* for her “maudlin sentimentality” and refusal to “listen to the facts” (*Journal of Zoophily* 127-128). Between 1901 and 1904, Phelps delivered three addresses on the subject of live-animal experimentation to the Massachusetts State Legislature and wrote several antivivisection pamphlets, including *A Plea for the Helpless* (1901), *Vivisection Denounced* (1902), and *Vivisection and Legislation in Massachusetts* (1902). She also published three antivivisection works, in addition to *Trixy*, that remain to be critically excavated after more than a century of dust-gathering. Five years prior to the publication of *Trixy*, Phelps wrote an initial stolen-pet tale, *Loveliness*, which appeared in the August 1899 issue of the *Atlantic Monthly* and was reprinted in gift-book form by Houghton, Mifflin and Company later the same year. *Loveliness* introduces a trademark feature (also exhibited in *Trixy*) of Phelps’s antivivisection fiction: the pairing of a disabled or orphaned child with a loyal canine companion. The abduction of a silver Yorkshire belonging to an “invalid child” named Adah supplies the story’s precipitating complication (*Loveliness* 22). Wracked with a “gallopin’ heartbreak” over the loss of her only playmate, Adah deteriorates “to a little wraith” (*Loveliness* 27, 20). A thorough search of the city’s underground dog-trafficking network by Adah’s father culminates in the Yorkshire’s nick-of-time recovery from the vivisection laboratory at the “famous medical school of the University of St. George” (*Loveliness* 31-32). The joyous reunion of dog and girl sends “peals of laughter and ecstatic barks” through the “happy house” (*Loveliness* 41).

In October 1908, *Woman’s Home Companion* published Phelps’s short story, “Tammyshanty,” which also celebrates mutual affection between dogs and children.

The story features orphaned newsboy Peter “Jacket” Roosevelt Tammany and his Irish terrier, Tammyshanty. When a private experimenter notorious for vivisectioning dogs in his home laboratory abducts Tammyshanty, Jacket enlists the help of a humane philanthropist, a reporter, a policeman, and two young officers of the Newsboys’ Association. Pooling the adults’ professional expertise and the newsboys’ “subterranean intelligence,” Jacket ascertains that the vivisectioner has imprisoned Tammyshanty in his robustly secured laboratory (“Tammyshanty” 9). When a mob of outraged newsboys encircles the vivisectioner’s home demanding the dog’s release, the “fugitive physiologist” absconds by moonlight with a throng of canine captives (“Tammyshanty” 62). The street-smart mob overtakes the vivisectioner, however, and Jacket reclaims his beloved companion.

In the same year that *Woman’s Home Companion* published “Tammyshanty,” the magazine also serialized Phelps’s second antivivisection novel, *Though Life Us Do Part*. The work, which Houghton, Mifflin and Company promptly released in book form, echoes *Trixy* in several respects. Both novels feature dog-loving society women caught between dueling male suitors. Like protagonist Miriam Lauriat in *Trixy*, Cara Sterling in *Though Life Us Do Part* acts as guardian to a canine survivor of vivisection. Cara’s enterprising cousin, Reverend Sterling Hart, discovers that Clyde the Collie once suffered a stint as the experimental subject of a “rising young physiologist” at the local university (*Though Life Us Do Part* 7). As it happens, the vivisectioner, Dr. Thomas Frost, is also one of Cara’s eager suitors. The lack of sensitivity that serves Dr. Frost well in the vivisection laboratory translates poorly into the romantic arena, and his affection for Cara remains unreciprocated at the story’s conclusion. This thwarted marriage plot of 1908 is strikingly reminiscent of the interspecies love triangle Phelps portrayed four years earlier in *Trixy*.

Delicate Readers. It is reasonably clear that what attracted many readers to *Trixy* was Phelps’s literary reputation. Having achieved widespread name-recognition by the 1880s, Phelps enjoyed a broader circulation for her humane texts than did most antivivisection writers of the era. More often than not, antivivisection literature was hampered by its self-selecting audience. Although the AAVS and other humane organizations sent pamphlets and periodicals to libraries, social clubs, schools, and cabstands, they struggled to expand subscription lists beyond a loyal core. In both the United States and Britain, the movement’s leading periodicals, such as the *Journal of*

Zoophily, Our Dumb Animals, The Anti-Vivisectionist, and The Zoophilist, attracted audiences consisting largely of true believers.

The graphic content in these publications, which included visual materials copied from scientific manuals, served to confirm what most readers already knew or suspected about vivisection. Although Britain's *The Anti-Vivisectionist* ran such gruesome material that it issued warnings to those coming "fresh to the subject," the weekly's editorial staff nonetheless encouraged the public to confront the horrors of modern physiology:

We would again remind our readers that, though engravings illustrative of Vivisection may usually be found on our second and third pages, the sight of them, so horrifying to many, may be entirely avoided by leaving the first two leaves of the journal uncut. That they are of the utmost value in bringing a distinct idea of what Vivisection is to the minds of those people who come fresh to the subject, is beyond question. People often have no notion of the reality until they are shown these perfectly authentic illustrations, taken from the actual work of the Vivisectors themselves; but when they see them, there is no need of further argument to produce conviction. This is the purpose for which they are intended. (37)

While this warning adds a layer of anticipatory horror (and allure) to the experience of viewing the ravaged animal body, it also betrays an underlying anxiety about the reader-text relationship. Will the average reader, who happens upon an antivivisection tract, consent to view what is said to be unviewable? As we shall see, Phelps circumnavigates the problem of recoiling readers by omitting graphic images altogether.

Since Phelps's humane fiction circulated in the mass market, it attracted readers from all sides of the anticruelty debate. In this respect, Phelps was not remarkable among writers of imaginative literature. Contemporary authors in England, Canada, and the United States promoted compassion for animals by writing anticruelty stories for popular audiences. Animal "autobiographies," such as Anna Sewell's *Black Beauty* (1877), Marshall Saunders's *Beautiful Joe* (1893), and Virginia Sharpe Patterson's *Dickey Downy* (1899), dismayed readers with their dolorous first-person accounts of suffering at the hands of humankind. Mark Twain's "A Dog's Tale," which first appeared in the December 1903 issue of *Harper's*, chronicles the life of a mixed-breed dog whose cherished pup succumbs to a physiological experiment. Like other animal

autobiographies, “A Dog’s Tale” mobilizes sentiment by encouraging reader-identification with its sympathetic and psychologically complex narrator.

To a much higher degree than the animal autobiography, Phelps’s antivivisection narratives foreground human-canine relationships outside of the scientific laboratory. The implied reader of Phelps’s fiction is necessarily a stranger to the savage underworld of animal experimentation. Possessing a delicate nature evocative of gentle womanhood, this figure shrinks from sensational violence as a matter of course. In contrast to writers of antivivisection tracts and animal autobiographies, Phelps spares her readers from the sight of the eviscerated dog, for fear that they might “lose” their senses. Indeed, antivivisection literature deplored the desensitization of medical students to the suffering of laboratory animals. This blunting of sentiment, which hardened the budding scientist, threatened to destroy the gentle reader for whom “sensitivity” was an essential trait. For this reason, Phelps’s *Trixy* encourages readers to identify not with the shocked (and ultimately insentient) bodies in the laboratory but rather with the gentle creatures inhabiting the spaces of humanity.

The Stolen-Pet Plot in *Trixy*. What makes *Trixy* such a rich object of analysis in terms of Phelps’s antivivisection corpus is that it combines several features of her other canine tales. Like *Loveliness* and “*Tammyshanty*,” *Trixy* follows the narrative trajectory of a dog abducted from a particularly vulnerable child. (The boy hero in *Trixy* is both disabled and orphaned.) The novel also resembles *Though Life Us Do Part* in various respects, such as its inclusion of man-woman-man and man-dog-woman triangles. Of further interest is the fact that *Trixy* represents Phelps’s first novel-length articulation of the stolen-pet plot.

The stolen-pet plot in *Trixy* actually concerns two snatched dogs: Caro the Cocker Spaniel and *Trixy* the Poodle. The latter dog, who is the precocious companion of a poor tenement boy named Dan Badger, earns her master’s keep by performing clever tricks and acrobatics for crowds of friends and neighbors. Among *Trixy* and Dan’s most zealous supporters is Miriam Lauriat, a soft-hearted philanthropist and tenement owner. In addition to overseeing her properties and ministering to the city’s downtrodden, Miriam serves as the fawning owner of a timid black spaniel called Caro. Despite the dotting vigilance of their human caretakers, both *Trixy* and Caro fall victim to mercenary pet-traffickers, who illicitly supply local scientists with animal test

subjects. In a well-secured basement laboratory at the prestigious Galen Medical School, Trixy and Caro languish in a room full of unfortunate animals, all awaiting sacrifice in one of the nation's many "slaughter-houses of science" (*Trixy* 256). The chair of the physiology faculty and head researcher at the Galen vivisection laboratory is Miriam Lauriat's suitor, Dr. Olin Steele. Once a sensitive young medical student who shuddered at the sight of animal suffering, Dr. Steele now performs live-animal dissections with the steady hand of a seasoned vivisector. Compelled by professional aspirations and institutional pressure, he makes the colossal blunder of performing a series of experiments on his paramour's beloved Caro. Luckily, Caro and Trixy manage a narrow escape from the laboratory before Dr. Steele and his colleagues can administer their lethal knife-cuts. Caro, understandably, emerges from the harrowing experience far worse for wear.

The dognapping incident at Galen results in a public scandal, a courtroom battle, and the permanent estrangement of Olin Steele and Miriam Lauriat. In an ultimate blow to his ego, Dr. Steele's case is prosecuted by his chief rival for Miriam's affection: the modest and upstanding lawyer, Philip Surbridge. A stark contrast to Dr. Steele, Philip Surbridge is a man of "perennial sympathy" and uncalculated self-sacrifice (*Trixy* 200). The prosecution presents a cogent case against the Galen Medical School, and by the trial's end Dr. Olin Steele is personally and professionally shattered. In a final irony, the vivisector finds his death-bed vigil attended only by his loyal Saint Bernard, Barry. At home with his canine companion, Dr. Steele is haunted by the ghosts of his former vivisection subjects and wretchedly cries out, "Poor things! Poor things!" (*Trixy* 279). Like Thomas Frost in *Though Life Us Do Part*, Olin Steele proves the cad of Phelps's love plot when his ruthless professional aspirations render him unredeemable as a romantic hero. Miriam's disbelief that "any true woman [could] take a vivisector's hand" suggests the extent to which the narrative's romantic and humane storylines are intertwined (*Trixy* 274). In choosing the humane man over the inhumane self-promoter, Miriam also exhibits her sound judgment, moral fortitude, and readiness to face the challenges and responsibilities of marriage. Phelps concludes her story on a bright note with the tail-wagging reunion of the dogs with their owners and a pledge of romantic devotion between Miriam and Philip.

Bringing the Plight of the Laboratory Dog Home. Dr. Steele's bedroom hallucinations of his animal victims bring the specter of the vivisected dog into the domestic sphere. Here, dogs that he formerly conceptualized as scientific material are re-imagined as pets. Envisioning laboratory animals against a domestic backdrop forces Dr. Steele to draw a connection between the scores of dogs he sacrificed in the name of scientific

progress and his beloved boyhood companion, Barry. The domestic space re-contextualizes (for Dr. Steele and Phelps's readers) anonymous scientific subjects as precious members of human families. Stirred by "momentary contact with life and love" in the canine form of Barry, Dr. Steele recognizes in each of his former victims a value apart from their instrumental function in the laboratory (*Trixy* 265). Gripped by this awful recognition, his "fevered brain" conjures up a phantasmagoric procession of "mute and sentient" creatures (*Trixy* 266, 265). No longer perceiving these creatures as anonymous test subjects, Dr. Steele re-encounters them as the "domestic animals that comfort our homes" and the "little spirits, born to be playthings for children" (*Trixy* 265-266). This solemn procession triggers the terrible epiphany that Dr. Steele's victims belonged to the same docile society as Barry. It also transforms the interchangeable animals of the laboratory into precious individuals. Once Dr. Steele comprehends the animals' familial status as former or potential domestic pets, he recognizes their individuality. As the ghosts pass by his bed, Dr. Steele searches the eyes of "each martyred creature" and confronts its uniqueness (my emphasis) (*Trixy* 265). He even pays special homage to certain individuals: a greyhound he vivisected in Vienna, a kitten from his medical school days, and, lastly, Miriam's precious spaniel.

Throughout *Trixy*, Phelps juxtaposes the instrumental attitude of the vivisector toward his anonymous mass of dogs with the pet-lover's valuation of the *individual* animal. A heated exchange between Miriam Lauriat and Olin Steele, which takes place prior to the latter's sickbed revelation, encapsulates these two contrasting sensibilities. Hoping to vindicate himself for vivisecting Miriam's dog, Dr. Steele explains that he was unable to distinguish Caro from the multitude of nameless test subjects in the laboratory:

"There wasn't one chance in a million that--I didn't know it was your dog!
You know I didn't!"

"You knew," said Miriam coldly, "that it was somebody's dog—a cherished one. He was gentle. He was high-bred.--And there was this." She drew the tarnished silver collar from her pocket, and with shaking fingers put it into his hand.

Steele's white face turned a ghastly gray.

"I give you my word I never saw this before!"

"Are you not the head of your department? Where does responsibility lie if not on you? This collar came out of your laboratory yesterday morning. How many other lost dogs have the faculty of Galen College unlawfully taken besides mine?" [...]

"What is one dog--what are ten thousand dogs compared with the life of one baby?" he demanded fiercely.

Miriam now turned her averted head, and, for the first time that morning, looked him straight in the eyes. The misery in them held her rising denunciation back.

"You have tormented many dogs. How many, I do not want to know. Have you ever saved the life of one baby?" (*Trixy* 217-219)

Dr. Steele's attempt at personal absolution hinges upon the interchangeability of all animals that are no longer or not yet pets. In the context of the physiology laboratory, each dog is an equally expendable unit of living matter. The validity of Dr. Steele's research depends on the homogenizing reduction of "half a hundred dogs" to "half a hundred living brains" (*Trixy* 55). Miriam's hostility toward Olin Steele stems largely from the fact that Caro bore the distinguishing markers of a pet. His silver collar, gentle disposition, and high breeding imply that he was not simply owned but domesticated into a privileged social class. From these signs, Dr. Steele ought to have recognized Caro's special status as a "cherished" pet. The scientist might have vivisected countless other animals without a twinge in his cold conscience, but should not he have realized that *this dog* was imbued with sentimental meaning and even social status? In the homogenizing and objectifying context of the laboratory, however, Dr. Steele views Caro as just another experimental subject.

Domestic space in *Trixy*, therefore, is crucial for producing the dog's status as a pet and for codifying certain interspecies relationships as familial. For these reasons, the home is an indispensable narrative space and the main site for generating pathos in relation to canine characters. The home is also a site of *cathexis* where humans invest particular canine bodies with incredible importance and treasure individual dogs as outlets for emotional energy and expression. Once a dog is chosen for a pet, its personal value to its owner may be limitless. From the perspective of its caretaker, a single pet can matter

more than ten thousand laboratory dogs or even one human baby. The novel's domestic scenes essentially *familiarize* anonymous laboratory animals, endowing them with names, personalities, families, and deep personal meanings.

The primary way that Phelps familiarizes the laboratory dog is by invoking maternal caretaking imagery. She often feminizes interspecies relationships in the home, construing the dog as a child substitute. As the above passage reveals, Dr. Olin Steele considers vivisection justifiable if it saves "the life of one baby." Miriam Lauriat, on the other hand, views vivisection as intolerable because she relates to her dog as if he *were* a baby. The frontispiece of the novel visually reinforces the narrative's infantilization of the canine. The color plate depicts a domestic scene in which Miriam Lauriat comforts her surrogate human child, Dan Badger, while the infantile Caro reposes in a bassinette at her feet (Figure 1). An upright and square-shouldered male figure, who turns out to be Philip Surbridge, gazes out the window, thus completing the heteronormative family scene. Notably absent from Phelps's stolen-pet stories are visual representations of vivisection laboratories. *Loveliness* gestures toward the horrors of vivisection through artist Sarah S. Stilwell's visual rendering of a dognapping, but none of Stilwell's illustrations depicts the laboratory itself.



Figure 1.

Like their accompanying visual representations, Phelps's textual descriptions stress the familial nature of human-dog interactions in the home. *Trixy* contains countless scenes in which dogs appear as children and their human guardians as parents. This analogy works well as an affective device because it aligns the dog with a culturally valued life-form: the human baby. It also possesses symbolic purchase due to the literal and psychological propinquity of pets and babies in the Western bourgeois family. In his psychological investigation into the social construction of "pets" as a cultural category Yi-fu Tuan describes the human child as a pet *par excellence*. He explains, "Whatever views a mother may have toward her infant, in the actual practice of mothering she has to treat it as an incontinent young animal and even as a thing ... The small child is a piece of wild nature that must be subdued and then played with — transformed into cute, cuddly beings or miniature adults as the mother or the surrogate mother sees fit" (Tuan 115). Tuan classifies mother-to-child and owner-to-pet relationships as *intimate*. What exactly does this intimacy entail? He elaborates, "Gestures of physical intimacy may express equality and brotherhood: picture two friends with their arms around each other's shoulder. On the other hand, more often and (I believe) more deeply, they presuppose inequality: picture a mother hugging her child, a horsewoman patting the flank of her steed, or think of such historical bonds as that between a knight and his squire, a man and his valet" (Tuan 163). While these forms of intimacy may have a positive impact on both the empowered and the dependent party, they are characterized as much by dominance as by affection.

The reunion between Miriam and Caro, which follows the latter's death-defying escape from Galen laboratory, evokes stock images of intimacy between mother and baby. Miriam — an unmarried, self-supporting property owner — invests her maternal energy in Caro rather than a human baby. Instead of marrying into a domestic situation, Miriam keeps her *own* home by renting domestic space to others (in the tenement she owns). Her financial independence buys her time to choose between suitors and allows her to support the alternative family she has formed with her elderly aunt and dog. Caro compensates for the fact that Miriam is a professional woman with an already established domestic situation. She enthusiastically directs her maternal feelings at Caro who, in turn, looks to her for comfort and protection. Seeing Miriam for the first time since his abduction, the "deeply loved" and "exquisitely cherished" spaniel struggles "to crawl," like a baby, toward his mistress (*Trixy* 188-189). Miriam "stoop[s] to lift" Caro and holds "the little creature in her arms — its face against her own, its paws around her neck" (*Trixy* 189). She then becomes "absorbed in a series of efforts to induce the dog to swallow some milk" (*Trixy* 191). "It was not," we are told, "until she

had succeeded in these attempts [to feed Caro], and Caro had fallen asleep, that she recovered in some degree her own composure" (*Trixy* 191). In this moment of domestic intimacy between human and dog, Phelps idealizes Miriam's single-minded (or what Tuan might call "overbearing") ministrations to Caro's needs and celebrates her "maternal" lack of self-concern.

Phelps further underscores the familial status of the novel's pets by repeatedly rendering them as child-like. Just as Caro crawls and coos like a baby, Trixy the Poodle resembles a child and relates to her human caretakers accordingly. On several occasions, Trixy's guardian, Dan Badger, characterizes her as a child in a dog's body. Addressing the audience of a theatrical performance, at which Trixy dons a "little white tulle-covered dress," Dan proclaims, "You see her now, ladies and gentlemen, a little dog in child's clothes; but you wouldn't understand mebbe as well as I do--that really, Trixy is a child in dog's clothes" (*Trixy* 73, 75). As part of the evening's repertoire, Trixy parades on two legs, curtsies, leap-frogs, rides a teeter-totter, somersaults, sings, dances, and plays with various toys. For the finale, she prances into Miriam Lauriat's lap, wrapping "both paws around the young lady's neck" (*Trixy* 76). In this pose, the pair radiates the exalted bearing of an interspecies Pietà. "The face of the dog could not be seen," Phelps continues, "and its child's dress and infantile attitude gave a strange impression, as if some new Madonna, gently owning her kinship to the subject races, had arisen to protect them" (*Trixy* 76-77). This scene of familial intimacy foreshadows the later integration of Dan and Trixy into Miriam's household. Following the traumatic episode at Galen laboratory, Philip Surbridge tells Miriam's aunt that her niece "has adopted the lad--and Trixy--into the family" (*Trixy* 230). Aunt Cornelia, aghast, exclaims, "She might give Trixy a high chair" (*Trixy* 231). Indeed, she might.

The domestic spaces in Trixy produce intimate bonds between humans and dogs akin to those of family members. As Sterling Hart remarks of his cousin's dog in *Though Life Us Do Part*, "I'm rather fond of Clyde myself. He's been in the family a good while" (54). While Phelps's canine protagonists retain their child-like qualities outside of the home, their status as family pets is violable, unstable, and always under threat. The precariousness of the dogs' domestic position stems in large measure from an incongruity between narrative constructions of intimacy and private ownership. The tension between these two concepts inheres in the paradoxical notion of "pet ownership," in which dogs are at once family members and owned objects (that may be

bought, sold, or stolen). Although the dogs in Phelps's antivivisection stories may feel as though they belong in a particular place or with a particular person, their lawful homes are not necessarily "where their hearts are." A passage describing the turmoil Trixy experiences while imprisoned at Galen suggests the complexities and contradictions associated with her position as a stolen pet. Phelps writes: "For two weeks the French poodle had been bewildered by the agony of homesickness. Torn from its master, from its home, from its occupation, it had fallen into lethargy that had dispossessed it of its natural reason. Now, after the last desperate and futile attempt to break or gnaw the rope, the baffled creature had cast itself upon the floor. In that moment of exhaustion, memory flooded its brain. With a bound the dog leaped to its feet. It uttered a short, piercing bark of triumph. Suddenly Trixy had found herself" (*Trixy* 162). Trixy's "homesickness" indicates that she feels dispossessed of her proper place and of her occupation as a theatrical show-stopper. She is a lost dog in two senses: Dan has lost possession of her and she has lost a sense of herself and her place in the world. In the Galen laboratory, Trixy's feelings, faculties, and unique traits are irrelevant. She matters only as an object of scientific inquiry. Yet, sadly, she retains the old loyalties, desires, and affections of a pet. She feels dispossessed because her owner has been dispossessed of her. Phelps's inconsistent use of pronouns (i.e., it, she) in the above passage and elsewhere in the novel reflects Trixy's paradoxical position as both a child-like individual and an object of property.

Dogs in Court: The Question of Ownership. Dogs — as mobile, sentient, and self-directed property—have a tenuous relationship to their homes and human intimates. They can stray, run away, or get lost. Dognappers can coax them with treats, snatch them from yards, or intercept them during unaccompanied walks. Both Trixy and Caro temporarily lose their familial status when black-market dog bandits steal them from their homes. Ironically, Dan and Miriam's best recourse for restoring Trixy and Caro's family position is to invoke their legal status as property. For both humans, this strategy ultimately proves effective in regaining custody of their canine companions.

Much of the drama in *Trixy* derives from challenges to owners' legal claims to their dogs. A dispute over Caro, in fact, drives a bitter wedge between Olin Steele and Miriam Lauriat. When Dr. Steele finds Miriam cradling "his" missing dog (who turns out to be her lost pet, Caro) in her arms, he blurts out, "Why, that's my dog! Where did you get it? I've been all morning hunting for it" (*Trixy* 193). Dr. Steele recognizes the animal as his professional possession, the live instrument of "his own work" (*Trixy* 193). Miriam challenges his professional claim to Caro with the sentimental rejoinder: "The dog is mine. This is Caro. I lost him two years ago. I thought he was dead. I never cared

for any other dog" (*Trixy* 198). Miriam's expressions of love for Caro prove less effective, however, than her invocation of legal rights to him. Only after she produces Caro's collar and licensing tag does Dr. Steele finally capitulate.

Unlike the relatively quick resolution to the dispute over Caro, the battle for Trixy plays out in a very formal and public arena. In fact, the dispute culminates in a courtroom trial that pits little Dan Badger against the heavyweights of the Galen medical establishment. Again, Dan's recovery of his beloved companion hinges on the construction of the dog as private property. As attorney Philip Surbridge reminds the court in his closing statement, the case boils down to "respect [for] the sacredness of property" (*Trixy* 256). In order to bolster Dan's ownership claim, Philip Surbridge submits into evidence a torn blanket on which the boy had indelibly scrawled: "This belongs to Trixy Badger. She is a little white dog. She belongs to Daniel E. Badger, 123 Blind Alley. If lost, please return her" (*Trixy* 252). The blanket, recovered from an ash barrel outside of Galen's vivisection laboratory, sways the judge in Dan's favor. Following the revelation of the blanket, there is no longer any question in the judge's mind that "the dog was stolen" by Galen's canine banditti (*Trixy* 257). The blanket (an object evocative of both childhood and domestic space) not only implies Trixy's familial situation but also serves as evidence of Dan's prior possession of her. Like Caro's silver collar, Trixy's blanket indicates a specifically classed ownership. The modest blanket with its handwritten message suggests a working-class affiliation, and it raises the possibility of a non-sentimental attachment to the dog. Dan loves Trixy but also relies on her as a source of income. The judge's ruling, thus, protects an investment that is both sentimental *and* economic.

The disjuncture between intimacy and ownership is a driving force behind all of Phelps's stolen-pet plots. Loving and caring for a dog is not, as we have seen, enough to establish legal ownership. Human caretakers (as well as vivisectors) bear the burden of establishing a legal right to their dogs under the laws of private property. Although the court intervenes favorably on behalf of Dan and Trixy, Phelps critiques humane law enforcement as incommensurate and insipid in certain circumstances. Difficulties arise for the human protagonists in both "Tammyshanty" (1908) and Phelps's canine-themed story, "Jonathan and David" (1904), when legal conceptions of ownership fail to coincide with interspecies bonds based on mutual intimacy and cohabitation. In "Tammyshanty," the dog license stands as a synecdoche for humane law and poses a

significant obstacle for poor Jacket Tammany, who cannot afford the city's pet-licensing fee of two dollars. Through the generosity of a senior officer of an unnamed humane organization, Jacket eventually acquires a dog-owner's license at the city hall for his "mongrel" terrier, Tammyshanty. When a dognapper abducts Tammyshanty, Jacket naively assumes that the license will expedite his companion's recovery. Jacket scours the city with unflagging persistence, greeting countless strangers with his robotic query: "Say, mister, hev you seen a lost dog anywheres? A *licensed* dog?" ("Tammyshanty" 8). The law, Jacket eventually realizes, can bestow ownership but not necessarily protect it. Bolstered by "a mob" of humane citizens, Jacket finally recovers his dog from the vivisection laboratory. His humble interspecies "family" remains intact only through the generosity of a concerned public.

Phelps's short story, "Jonathan and David," also suggests a disjuncture between bonds of intimacy and legal ownership. Like Jacket Tammany in "Tammyshanty," Jonathan Perch is initially unable to purchase a license for his beloved dog due to a lack of financial resources. Although Jonathan cannot assert legal ownership of David the Collie without the two-dollar license, he nevertheless proves a scrupulous caretaker to his canine charge. Throughout the narrative, Phelps feminizes Jonathan's nurturing relationship to the dog with whom he dutifully shares "his fire, his food, his bed, his mind, his heart, his past, [and] his future" ("Jonathan and David" 365). In establishing the pair's familial bond, Phelps recounts how Jonathan "guarded [David] anxiously from every snow-storm, covered the shivering little body with his own ragged comforter a dozen times a night, brooded over him like a mother through distemper and teething, and patiently educated the growing dog with the passion and the opportunity of love and leisure" ("Jonathan and David" 365). At times, Jonathan even addresses David with the affectionately diminutizing salutation: "Why, you're nothing but a baby — you!" ("Jonathan and David" 365). Despite Jonathan's parental devotion, he knows that he is not David's "lawful owner" ("Jonathan and David" 370). "You're a tax-dodger..." he regretfully informs the dog, "It's my fault, David. I can't pay. I can't get together two dollars — not any way. I've only got seventy-six cents. Your taxes are most two months overdue. I've been so worried I can't sleep" ("Jonathan and David" 366). Jonathan fears that if he does not purchase the license soon, then the city dogcatcher will destroy David. Hoping to save David from this fate, Jonathan sells him to a conman for the price of a dog license. With no foreseeable way of recovering his dog, Jonathan lapses into a depression. As in "Tammyshanty," it is not the court that intervenes on Jonathan's behalf but the humane public that effects the eventual return of David to his loving home.

Without the economic advantages of the middle-class pet owner, Jacket Tammany and Jonathan Perch must rely on a sympathetic public to restore their interspecies families. Their predicament underscores the importance of humane citizens, whose random acts of charity hold the long arm of physiology at bay and compensate for the limited protections offered by the legal system. While “Tammyshanty” and “Jonathan and David” end with happy reunions between guardian and dog, both stories present interspecies relationships based solely on love and cohabitation as tenuous. The home in Phelps’s antivivisection fiction fails to sustain the family bond it produces between its human and canine inhabitants and, ultimately, proves an ineffective barrier against unwanted penetration from both authorized and illicit intruders.

Creating Exigency: “Yours May Be Such a Household.” To underscore this point in her humane narratives, Phelps calls attention to the liminal sites between the home and the streets. In *Trixy*, for example, a dog-bandit abducts Trixy from the open area just outside of Dan’s tenement building. In “Tammyshanty,” the dognapper takes the even bolder step of breaching Jacket’s living quarters (presumably nabbing Tammyshanty through a broken window). Describing Jacket’s frantic search of his tenement, Phelps emphasizes the porosity of domestic space. Snow drifting through shattered windows suggests the utter violability of the home structure. Tammyshanty’s vulnerability to abduction is compounded by the fact that he spends the majority of his time sitting at broken windows, reposing on the tenement stoop, and patrolling the alleys surrounding his home. Windows, doorways, and stoops are conspicuous features of the urban architecture in all of Phelps’s antivivisection works. Her canine characters and their human caretakers spend an inordinate amount of time gazing through, sitting at, and lingering near these liminal sites. The color illustrations in *Loveliness* suggest the importance of these spaces in Phelps’s narrative landscape. With the exception of the story’s frontispiece (a portrait of *Loveliness*), its illustrations all depict characters in liminal positions: Adah keeping vigil at her windowseat, a dognapper stealing *Loveliness* from his family’s doorstep, and Adah and *Loveliness* skipping down a path in their yard (Figures 2, 3, 4).



Figure 2.



Figure 3.



Figure 4.

As we have seen, Phelps's canine abduction narratives complicate popular conceptions of the home as a safe, private, and impenetrable space for interspecies families. That dogs spend much of their time in the liminal territory between the home and the street (e.g., yards, stoops, doorsteps, gardens) makes them all the more vulnerable to abduction. The dog, whose familial status is produced by and sustained in the home, faces innumerable risks when removed from its domestic situation. Like slippery tentacles stretching out from the laboratory, mercenary dog-suppliers extend the reach of the scientific establishment into the city streets, the public parks, the yards, and even the homes of America's animal lovers. The ease with which dognappers violate domestic space feeds our horrifying sense that public and private spaces can never exist in total isolation from each other. By the 1908 publication of "Tammyshanty," Phelps's vivisection laboratory and private home have become one and the same. Although the home laboratory in "Tammyshanty" remains unsignified as a narrative space, it literalizes the anxiety that modern science knows no limits. In populating her stories with dog bandits and private vivisectioners, Phelps generates exigency for the antivivisection cause by suggesting that anyone's dog may be stolen from anywhere at any time. She decreases the emotional distance between the reader and the anonymous laboratory animal with her subtle insistence that *this could be your dog*. Rather than exposing her readers to mass suffering in the laboratory, Phelps individualizes the laboratory dog and frames humane activism as a defense of family bonds and private property.

Although the laboratory remains an unsignified space in Phelps's narrative, it is nonetheless an ever-present and indispensable nerve-center of her antivivisection fiction. The specter of the laboratory always looms at the narrative outskirts, and its vast network of dognappers poses a constant threat to the sanctity of the interspecies home and to pet owners' property rights. The laboratory constitutes what Michel Foucault might have called a heterotopic site, or an "other" space that exists simultaneously within and outside of society. Foucault described such sites as "outside of all places," even if locatable in physical reality (24). We might conceptualize Phelps's laboratory, then, as a kind of *disaffective* heterotopia in which scientists violate legal and social standards of behavior toward animals. As a negative mirror of the interspecies home, the laboratory threatens to destroy the values and meanings that owners invest in their pets. In Phelps's antivivisection fiction, the laboratory is an unseen space yet also "the greatest reserve of the imagination" (to borrow Foucault's language again) (27).

The terrifying ubiquity of the laboratory implies that every pet owner ought to support the antivivisection platform so that Miriam and Dan's story does not become *their* story. In a stirring recapitulation of Dan's ordeal, Philip Surbridge admonishes the dog-loving public: "[Dan's] tragic experience is one of hundreds that never reach the knowledge of the public, or the protection of the courts. The merciful dénouement of this dark tale does not often await the bereaved household that has mysteriously lost its dumb and cherished friend. Yours may be such a household. Mine might be such bereavement. We, too, may be elected to share this fate into which the physiology of our day drags the animal and the human too" (*Trixy* 255). Philip Surbridge confronts his audience with the harrowing suggestion that all domestic pets are vulnerable to abduction, even those ensconced in warm, nurturing homes. Yet, the true rhetorical force of his monologue emanates from its portrayal of both the animal and the human as victims of modern physiology.

Framed in this way, vivisection's most sinister corollary is what Surbridge calls the "bereaved household." The private bourgeois home, which contemporary print media rhapsodized as the nucleus of emotional fulfillment and a refuge from the burdens of the outside world, is the unexpected casualty of physiological science run amok. In its idealized form, the American home fostered affective bonds, proper sociability, and kindly care for dependent beings. As the locus of childrearing, it also supplied the principal context for instilling in future generations the domestic virtues of empathy, self-restraint, and fair play. In antivivisection fiction of the period, threats to the home are embodied differently by the mercenary dognapper and the vivisector. The dognapper, who ostensibly participates in the black-market animal trade out of economic necessity, breaches his victim's home clandestinely and with utter anonymity. The vivisector, by contrast, enters domestic space through the legitimate avenues of middle-class sociality and with a range of possible motives. In *Trixy*, Dr. Olin Steele gains access to Miriam Lauriat's home through culturally sanctioned protocols of courtship and with the intention of securing a suitable wife. While an attractive prospect by measure of his wealth and social position, Dr. Steele lacks the requisite personal qualities for intimate companionship and, consequently, poses a liability to any domestic dependents that might come under his purview. As Miriam Lauriat realizes, marriage to such a man likely would produce a home bereft of "tenderness," "kindness," "sympathy," and "the daily shelter of a safe character" (*Trixy* 298).

Indeed, Dr. Steele's scientific ethos contravenes the culture of compassionate self-restraint in which the turn-of-the-century family ideal was rooted. His professional

mandate compels him to devalue or deny any phenomenon that defies explanation by the scientific method, and his quotidian practice of brutality blunts his emotional acuity. Dr. Steele even contends, for example, that maternal affection does not exist because he is unable to observe it in the brain cells of vivisected dogs (*Trixy* 54). This finding inspires him to undertake a follow-up investigation into the existence of love. For two months, Dr. Steele probes the brains of laboratory animals in an effort to collect material evidence of love. But love, we are told, was too evasive: “It was not to be cut out by a scalpel or grasped by pincers; and Dr. Steele therefore [wrote] a paper, learnedly contending that love was only a Greek hypothesis, a psychic disease, the dream of the past, the illusion of the present, and did not exist” (*Trixy* 55). Dr. Steele’s thesis on love’s nonexistence, for which he is awarded the highest degree in physiological science, renders him inadmissible to the affective realm of domestic life. He, thus, constitutes an antagonist on multiple narrative registers, serving as the embodiment of the novel’s most reviled values, the foil to its dog-loving characters, and the chief impediment to its romance plot between Miriam Lauriat and Philip Surbridge.

Through this interplay of the romantic drama and the stolen-pet plot Phelps’s narrative achieves its most unsettling tensions and satisfying resolutions. The antivivisection novel insists — by means extrinsic to journalism, polemic, and other generic forms — that readers envisage the modern physiologist in a variety of social contexts and relationships. The figure of the vivisector-as-suitor compels readers to project into the sanctified realm of nurturance, intimacy, and tender care the habitual violence of the physiology laboratory. Imagine, the narrative exhorts us, this type of man as a husband and father! In conveying her antivivisection message as romance fiction, Phelps suggests the broad horizons of moral decay engendered by the physiologist in American society. Ultimately, it is in the *familiar* roles of lover, husband, father, and friend that the vivisector threatens to extend his deleterious social influence. For Miriam Lauriat, whose independent income, discerning judgment, and secure living arrangements permit her to defer marriage or forsake it altogether, the vivisector proves only a temporary vexation. But even the redoubtable heroine of *Trixy* succumbs briefly to the vivisector’s wiles, leading us to wonder what might become of a woman with meager resources and clouded judgment. As Miriam herself predicts, such a person would sacrifice an essential part of her gendered identity, as no “true woman” could ever “take a vivisector’s hand” (*Trixy* 274). Although *Trixy* concludes with a scene of

domestic tranquility, it augurs only darkness and disquietude for the bereaved family of the vivisector.

Trixy is as much about the cruelty that humans inflict on dogs as it is about the suffering that human beings impose on themselves. The novel's interlocking plots beg the question: What type of *humans* should we — Phelps's "intelligent and kind-hearted" readers — strive to be? The story's haunting displacement of the vivisector and his canine victims into the domestic arena encourages readers to define and defend the structuring values of their most intimate spaces and relationships. In the context of Phelps's literature, dogs make compelling figures because they mediate the range of emotional and physical geographies that underpin American social life. Reduced to a grotesque spectacle, the dog of the antivivisection polemic bears scant resemblance to its former self and inspires revulsion as much as sympathy. To Phelps's mind, society was best-served when canine bodies remained intact both in the laboratory and in literature.

In *Dog Love*, a cultural study of human-canine relationships in the United States, literary scholar Marjorie Garber notes that humane organizations exist in order to moderate our species' staggering propensity for inflicting pain on the weak. Yet, she reflects, "Humane societies' ... evoke in their very titles the good qualities of human beings: kindness, mercy, compassion" (Garber 15). To be *human* is to exist in a natural state that encompasses a full range of flaws and brutalities. To be *humane*, however, is to adhere to a socially prescribed standard of compassion. In defining the cultural parameters of humaneness, Phelps's narratives stayed well within the bounds of popular fiction and, therefore, appealed to a broader segment of the reading public than did other humane discursive forms. Writing against the conventions of the antivivisection *exposé*, Phelps upheld reader-sensitivity as a hallmark of humaneness rather than an obstacle to it. It would seem that the antivivisection novel, as she conceived it, is intended not so much to accommodate gentle readers as to create them.

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Notes

1. *Vivisection* refers to the scientific practice of experimenting on live animals. The term is a compound of the Latin words, *vivus* (living) and *sectio* (cutting). Vivisection, thus, denotes “the cutting of the living.” In the context of Western medicine, the tradition of live animal experimentation can be traced as far back as the mid-fifth century BCE, when Alcmaeon of Croton sliced the optic nerves of living animals and documented their ensuing blindness. Vivisection became a source of public controversy in the United States during the latter half of the nineteenth century. The rise of the antivivisection movement was coeval with the institutionalization of experimental physiology in American universities. Public reprehension reached a fevered pitch at the turn of the century, when physiology became a standard course of the medical curriculum. For a historical account of the vivisection controversy in Western societies, see Nicolaas A. Rupke’s *Vivisection in Historical Perspective* (1990).

2. See, for example, Susan Coultrap-McQuinn’s *Doing Literary Business: American Women Writers in the Nineteenth Century* (1990), Carol Farley Kessler’s *Elizabeth Stuart Phelps* (1982), and Ronna Coffey Privett’s *A Comprehensive Study of American Writer Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, 1844-1911* (2003).

3. A more recent essay by Lori Duin Kelly chronicles Phelps’s serious engagement with the antivivisection movement in Massachusetts. Kelly, nevertheless, frames Phelps’s disapprobation for vivisection as part of a larger concern with the mistreatment of human patients by physicians.

4. Ann Douglas Wood has published most of her scholarly works under the name Ann Douglas.

5. It was not uncommon for *fin de siècle* antivivisection stories to feature “home laboratories.” A notable example is Mark Twain’s “A Dog’s Tale” (1904).

6. For an interesting analysis of the relationship between graphic antivivisection materials and constructions of femininity, see Susan Hamilton’s “‘Still Lives’: Gender and the Literature of The Victorian Vivisection Controversy” (1991).

7. In addition to the novels and short stories discussed here, Phelps wrote several other fictional works that discuss vivisection and thematize human-canine love. Her novel *Walled In* (serialized in *Harper's Bazaar* between Dec. 1906 and Dec. 1907) celebrates the bond between a disabled professor and his canine companion. Phelps's chapter in the collaboratively written novel, *The Whole Family* (1908), makes explicit references to vivisection, though only in passing.

8. Phelps likely named her fictional medical school for Galen of Pergamum (c. 130-210), who served as a physician to Marcus Aurelius and authored a treatise on live-dissection techniques.

9. This sentimental scene in *Trixy* recalls other death-bed revelations in nineteenth-century American literature, such as Eva's vision of heaven in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852). Notably, Phelps and Stowe were neighbors in Andover, Massachusetts from 1851 to 1864. Phelps revered Stowe and admired the ethical content of her fiction.

10. Sigmund Freud's concept of cathexis refers to the concentration of mental or emotional energy on an object, person, or idea. This concept is implicit in much of Freud's work and is discussed explicitly in *Studies on Hysteria* (Breuer and Freud 1895), "Project for a Scientific Psychology" (1895), and *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* (1905).

11. It is likely that Phelps modeled Dr. Steele's "one-baby" speech after a comment made by Harvard University president, Charles William Eliot. Eliot, who served as Harvard president from 1869 to 1909, popularized the pro-vivisection argument that the lives of thousands of animals are worth less than the life of one human child. Eliot's remark came on the heels of the 1894 development of an antitoxin for diphtheria.

12. As Katherine C. Grier explains in her history of pets in America, the "domestic ethic of kindness" was expected to encompass both the human and nonhuman dependents of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century household.

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