The "Case of a Bearded Woman": Hypertrichosis and the Construction of Gender in the Age of Darwin

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In 1877 Dr. Louis Duhring, a founding member of the American Dermatological Association and professor of skin diseases at the University of Pennsylvania Hospital, published a case study that riveted his colleagues and was later republished as a monograph.[1] In the "Case of a Bearded Woman," Duhring described a patient unlike any he had ever seen before: a young, healthy mother with a full beard (fig. 1). This woman, referred to as Viola M., was so unusual that Duhring also exhibited her to medical students at the university as part of his lectures on hair growth.[2] What confounded Duhring was not so much the thick, dark hair covering Viola's face and neck but the extent to which she lived an otherwise normal life as a married woman and mother of two. Viola's unusual appearance challenged Duhring's ideas about the "natural" boundary separating women from men and forced him to reconsider what exactly it meant to be female. Could "real" women have beards? Duhring was not alone in his fascination with the cultural and biological meanings of female facial hair; rather, he was the harbinger of a widespread trend. Between 1877 and 1920, scores of dermatologists reported at conferences and in medical journals that their female patients were traumatized by hypertrichosis, the disease of "superfluous hair."

Meanwhile, as dermatologists debated the etiology and treatment of hypertrichosis, the public flocked to see bearded ladies on display at circuses and sideshows. Presumably only specialists read the case of Viola M., yet judging from articles and cartoons in mainstream magazines and newspapers, nearly everyone had seen a bearded lady at a dime museum or sideshow. From the early 1880s till her death in 1926, the most popular bearded lady was Krao, a woman who had been captured in Laos as a young girl so that she could be exhibited as "Darwin's Missing Link" (fig. 2). Unlike Viola, who visited the dermatologist in hopes of removing her beard, Krao became famous for exhibiting hers. Key to the distinct ways in which Viola and Krao experienced

Figure 1.
Portrait of Viola M., Frontispiece, "Case of a Bearded Woman," by Louis A. Duhring, *Archives of Dermatology* 3 (1877): 193–200. Reprint, New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1877. Copy residing at the Boston Medical Library in the Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine, Harvard Medical School, Boston.

hypertrichosis, and the distinct ways in which scientific and popular culture responded to them, was the fact that Viola was white and Krao was not. For white bearded ladies, circus performers and patients alike, public and medical discussion centered on the extent to which they conformed to otherwise feminine ideals of dress and behavior and whether they could be considered "women." Krao and other bearded ladies of color, however, inspired public and scientific discussion of a different boundary: the fine line separating humans from animals. Were bearded ladies of color "human"? To make sense of Viola, Krao, and other hirsute women, specialists and popular observers often turned to evolutionary theory and, especially, the work of Charles Darwin.

Taken together, Viola and Krao reflect turn-of-the-twentieth-century ideas about the biology and construction of gender, a highly racialized category,

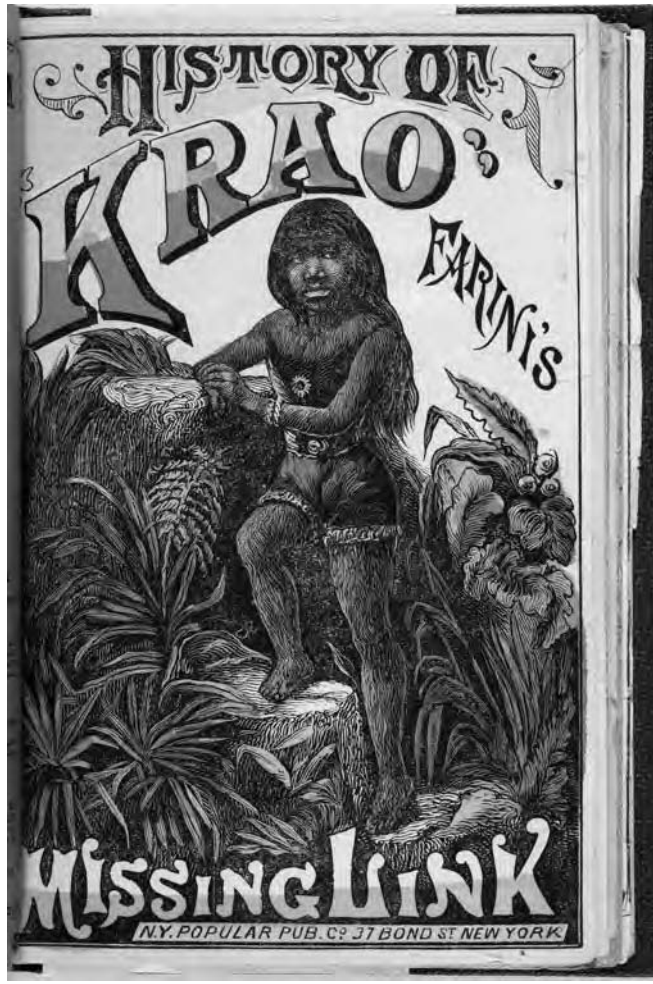

Figure 2.
Cover of Krao's souvenir pamphlet, ca. 1883. Courtesy American Antiquarian Society.

and they shed light on the understudied role that gender has played in the U.S. reception of evolutionary theory. The emerging pathology of female facial hair also provides a window into how new, evolutionary models of sexual difference were applied, appropriated, and contested in medical science, popular culture, and everyday life. A common denominator in medical and popular discussions of hirsute women was Darwin's theory of sexual selection. In a Darwinian world, as this essay attempts to demonstrate, human distinctiveness, sexual

dimorphism, and heterosexual attraction all hinged on female hairlessness, posing serious problems for women with what was considered excessive facial and body hair. If the absence of hair was supposed to distinguish women from men and humans from animals, then hairy women could only be diseased.

Darwinian Evolutionary Theory and the Pathology of Female Facial Hair

While Viola and Krao came from vastly different backgrounds and experienced their beards in contrasting ways, the two women shared an important trait: a diagnosis of severe hypertrichosis, the unsightly condition that, according to dermatologists, was a widespread disease at the turn of the twentieth century. Facial hair has long been associated with masculinity in western cultures, but facial hair on women was not considered a disease until the 1870s, when Americans were reading and digesting the work of Darwin in earnest and when the new field of dermatology was establishing itself as a medical specialty.[3] In the final decades of the nineteenth century, dermatologists published countless articles describing the dangers posed by hypertrichosis and detailing the remedies offered by members of their field. By the late 1880s it became hard to open a medical journal without reading about hypertrichosis. In fact, so much was written about the disease of "superfluous hair" that at least one dermatologist wondered if perhaps the profession was overreacting. In a review of an 1896 dermatological textbook, the reviewer noted critically that ringworm "occupied less than two pages," and syphilis only seven, whereas the authors granted hypertrichosis twenty pages of text and seven pictures "representing freaks of nature with respect to hairiness."[4] One of these seven images featured Viola M., the focus of Duhring's case study and the visual symbol of hypertrichosis.

In 1882 a leading dermatologist, George Henry Fox, attempted to determine the frequency of superfluous hair, which proved a daunting task. In addition to the bearded ladies on public display in every American city, Fox lamented that it was nearly impossible to estimate "the number of ladies in private life, who endeavor, by artifice of various kinds to conceal the unpleasant fact that they have, or might have a beard." Even more troubling, he suggested that the number of women with only a moderate amount of facial hair was "beyond computation." According to Fox, "We note evidences of hypertrichosis on every hand, in the drawing-room, upon the street, or wherever ladies congregate, and could we but know the secrets of the boudoir we would be surprised to find out how large a percentage of our female acquaintances resort occasionally if not habitually, to the use of the depilatory, the razor, or the tweezers."[5] If,

as Fox suggested, nearly every woman had some visible facial hair, why, then, was it considered a disease? Might its very prevalence have indicated that facial hair on women was in fact normal? Furthermore, why did "superfluous hair" become a topic of concern in the 1870s?

In the first half of the nineteenth century, doctors strongly advised women against removing unwanted facial hair. In 1831, *Godey's Lady's Book*, the most popular women's magazine of the century, reprinted an article on "superfluous hair" from the *Journal of Health*. A woman had contacted the journal to ask how to prevent facial hair from growing; the editors responded with a thorough explanation of how and why hair grows. In answer to her specific query about unwanted facial hair, the experts advised "under all circumstances" it was "far better to put up with the deformity arising from the superfluous hair, than to endanger the occurrence of a greater evil by attempting eradication."[6] By the end of the nineteenth century, however, medical consensus had drastically changed. Now, doctors counseled, hypertrichosis posed such a grave threat to female happiness and well-being that superfluous hair should be removed at all costs.

In their efforts to emphasize the severity of hypertrichosis, dermatologists found a convenient and convincing ally in Darwinian evolutionary discourse. Drawing on Darwin's claim that all organic life had evolved from a single-celled hermaphroditic organism, the dermatologist J. Herbert Claiborne suggested that hypertrichosis was partly due to social, economic, and cultural forces, but "the original cause . . . is a cellular one lying in her natural structural bisexuality, which in many of them is accentuated."[7] "I regard the existence of female qualities in man and masculine qualities in women," Claiborne explained, "as variations in degree of the bisexual or hermaphrodite nature of the genus homo." To observers like Claiborne, hirsute women manifested this original hermaphrodism all too vividly. G. R. McAuliff, a Chicago dermatologist, explained that hypertrichosis was, by definition, a female disease, since, according to Darwin, men had evolved to have beards whereas hairlessness was a hallmark of the fairer sex.[8] What was attractive in men was a disturbing, atavistic trait in women. Dr. Douglas Freshwater, a British physician and an expert on skin diseases, noted in the *Practitioner* that hypertrichosis was "an interesting subject, and its occurrence in members of the human race causes us involuntarily to think of the hairy covering of many animals, and of our relationship with our simian ancestors."[9] As further proof that hypertrichosis was caused by too close association with animals, Freshwater pointed to the popular idea "among ladies that hair growth is promoted by the frequent employment of an animal fat in a face cream."[10] Superfluous hair on women was a visual reminder that, in a Darwinian world, species were not fixed, humans and apes shared a common

ancestor, and humans had evolved from a single-celled hermaphroditic organism and still bore the evidence of this hermaphroditic past on their bodies.

Furthermore, hirsute women were difficult to categorize and thus threatened to upend the carefully constructed natural order. A major project of post-Enlightenment science, especially in an evolutionary context, was to organize all living things into relational, taxonomic categories. Because hair (or lack thereof) played an important role in delineating the class of species that came to be known as "mammals" and because beards were a hallmark of nineteenth-century masculinity, bearded women simultaneously challenged fixed taxonomies and binary thinking about gender.[11] With which species and which sex should they be classed?

To nineteenth-century readers, Darwin's writings helped answer these vexing questions. In particular, *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* (1871)—the book in which Darwin applied evolutionary theory to humans—reframed the biological and cultural significance of human hair, especially on women, by attributing its absence (in most cases) to sexual selection. Sexual selection provided an explanation for traits that could not be explained by natural selection (the evolutionary mechanism that determines which traits are best adapted to a particular environment and thus which individuals are most likely to survive long enough to reproduce). Certain features, such as the peacock's bright plumage, did not make sense in terms of natural selection because they did not increase, and might even decrease, an individual's odds of survival. With sexual selection theory, Darwin proposed that such traits existed simply because the opposite sex found them attractive and selected mates accordingly, thereby making it more likely that the peacock with the brightest feathers, for example, would leave many offspring even if his conspicuousness did make him more vulnerable to attack.

Likewise, female hairlessness had long puzzled evolutionists because there was no adaptive reason why men should have more facial and body hair than women. Men and women had to survive in exactly the same environment. Why, then, should one have a beard and the other none? Furthermore, why did humans have so much less hair than other mammals? The answer to both questions, according to Darwin, was sexual attraction. Darwin doubted that "the action of the sun" or other environmental factors could have caused humans to lose their hair when their close animal kin retained so much of theirs. Rather, he suggested that "man, or rather primarily woman, became divested of hair for ornamental purposes; and according to this belief it is not surprising that man should differ so greatly in hairiness from all his lower brethren, for characters gained through sexual selection often differ in closely-related forms

to an extraordinary degree." Darwin elaborated: "The absence of hair on the body is to a certain extent a secondary sexual character; for in all parts of the world women are less hairy than men. Therefore we may reasonably suspect that this is a character which has been gained through sexual selection."[12] As humans evolved, women selected mates with beards because they found them attractive, whereas men chose the least hairy mates, making hairlessness among women a highly valued trait and an essential marker of sex difference.

In Darwin's cosmology, however, beauty standards, including ideas about body hair, varied substantially according to race. And these distinct, racialized beauty standards provided the key to understanding human evolution. From the beginning of his research, Darwin's ideas about race shaped his thinking about human evolution. According to the British historians and Darwin biographers Adrian Desmond and James Moore, Darwin was motivated to publish *The Descent of Man* to discredit the long-standing pseudoscientific justification of slavery known as polygenesis. Led by Darwin's U.S. rival Louis Agassiz, proponents of polygenesis argued that different races were literally different species, evolved from distinct ancestral lines. A belief in polygenesis tended to go hand in hand with support of slavery because it could be used to dehumanize people of African descent.[13] Darwin, in contrast, firmly believed that all human beings had descended from a single common ancestor—a theory known as monogenesis—and, correspondingly, that slavery was an abomination. To garner support for monogenesis, Darwin, a lifelong abolitionist, needed to explain how it was that individuals, such as the people of Tierra del Fuego whom he encountered during his voyage on the *Beagle*, who looked so different from white Europeans and Americans, could have evolved from a common ancestor. To this end, he invoked the cumulative power of beauty in determining sexual attraction and mate selection over many generations.

In *The Descent of Man*, Darwin argued that different races of humans had developed according to distinctive, group-wide aesthetic preferences. Thus it was not that the people of Tierra del Fuego, for example, were a different species than Darwin's peers in England—it was that millions of years ago their respective groups separated according to aesthetic preferences in partners. One group preferred light-skinned mates, the other preferred mates with darker complexions; over time, distinct differences in skin tone could be seen among the two groups. As Darwin explained, "It is certainly not true that there is in the mind of man any universal standard of beauty with respect to the human body. It is, however, possible that certain tastes may in the course of time become inherited . . . and if so, each race would possess its own innate standard of beauty." Darwin clarified that "the men judge of the beauty of their women

by widely different standards" because "the men of each race prefer what they are accustomed to."[14] In this way, social and cultural factors worked in accordance with and, over time, magnified inherited aesthetic preferences according to race, making racial differences even more distinctive and explaining how numerous races, so varied in appearance, could have evolved from a common ancestor over many thousands of years.

The evolutionary importance that Darwin attributed to appearance also helps explain why hypertrichosis was considered such a formidable disease among white women and why reactions to bearded women varied so much according to a woman's race. Though Darwin's goal was to establish the common humanity of all people, this did not mean his descriptions of the different races were value free. This, too, can be seen in his discussions of body hair. As Darwin pointed out numerous times in the *Descent*, not all races could boast of beards on men, though he noted that "females in all races are less hairy than the men." Full, manly beards were a hallmark of Anglo-Europeans. Darwin also noted that groups without beards tended to eradicate any evidence of hair, at least until contact with bearded Europeans. "On the Europaeo-Asiatic continent," according to Darwin's research, "beards prevail until we pass beyond India . . . Eastward of India beards disappear." Among people of African descent, "the beard is scanty or wanting, and they rarely have whiskers; in both sexes the body is frequently almost destitute of fine down."[15] This observation may sound innocuous; however, another key element of Darwinian evolutionary theory was the belief that the most advanced species (and races) were those in which the sexes were the most differentiated.[16] Thus to remark that both men and women of African descent lacked body hair simultaneously critiqued African masculinity and marked African society as inferior to Western European and American societies, which were characterized by stark gendered distinctions in appearance and behavior. Just as the alignment of beards with masculinity was racialized, so, too, was the relationship between hairlessness and female beauty. While facial hair on women of all races was considered unusual, hirsute white women were considered diseased individuals, whereas bearded women of color were presented as racial representatives illuminating evolution at work.

"The Success of the Most Attractive"

For white women, the main problem with hypertrichosis was that it rendered them unattractive to potential suitors. In a Darwinian universe, beauty played the key role in mate choice, which meant that ugliness had intergenerational

consequences. Establishing the evolutionary power of beauty was one of Darwin's main goals in *The Descent of Man*. Darwin devoted so much attention to beauty because he hoped to offer an evolutionary, as opposed to divine, explanation of its existence. A major sticking point for skeptics of natural selection, the evolutionary mechanism described in the *Origin of Species* (1859), had been that the theory could not account for the loveliness that people saw all around them. Opponents of natural selection charged that the only possible explanation for earthly beauty was divine intervention. Darwin countered that sexual selection, a completely naturalistic phenomena, could account for the persistence of beauty in both the plant and the animal kingdoms because individual organisms consistently selected mates according to the shared aesthetic standards of their group. To Darwin, beauty, in humans and in animals, determined who mated with whom and thus the future of the species, an idea that rippled throughout scientific and popular culture.

Among the new areas of investigation prompted by *The Descent of Man*, the evolution and function of aesthetic senses topped scientists' agendas. In 1881 the *Medical and Surgical Reporter* noted:

> Now that aesthetics are ruling the day, and the pursuit of the beautiful is coming to be looked upon as one of the properest employments of life, it is well to consider the aesthetic sense from a broadly physiological point of view. Within the last score of years it has, in fact, come to be accepted as one of the most potent influences in modifying organic nature throughout nearly all its realms.[17]

Rejecting the idea that beauty was a trivial topic to study, nineteenth-century naturalists instead claimed for it evolutionary power and tremendous scientific import. The influential journal *Nature* reasoned that natural selection could better explain the prevalence of male-to-male competition (this was a common critique of sexual selection theory), but it could not account for the presence of beauty: "But though in the lists of Love the battle is often to the strong, even more frequently it is to the beautiful." The reviewer went on:

> The prevailing aspect of nature is beauty, and the prevailing taste of man is for beauty also. . . . But that many of the most striking ornaments of the higher animals, and almost all those peculiar to one sex, have been developed by means of sexual selection, is a conclusion which can no longer be distrusted. There remain doubtless many exceptions to be accounted for, many modifying influences to be discovered; but the existence of a new principle has been established which has helped to guide the organic world to its present condition. Side by side with the struggle for existence has gone on a rivalry for reproduction, and the survival of the fittest has been tempered by the success of the most attractive.[18]

The "success of the most attractive" became central to the reception of *The Descent of Man*, and this concept informed reactions to female hirsutism as well. Unlike his hypothesis about human-animal kinship, Darwin's remarks on the evolutionary power of womanly beauty accorded with Victorian ideas about gender, making the premise popularly acceptable even though it also underscored the instinctual, sexual element of human romance.[19]

Scientists and laypeople questioned whether animals were capable of choosing their mates based on looks, but few doubted that this occurred among humans, especially as Darwin described it. Among all species of animals except humans, Darwin argued that females chose their sexual partners from among a field of competing males. When it came to humans, however, Darwin contended that men had wrested the power of selection from women during "the more savage years" of human history. Among humans, women attracted and men selected. And no trait was more likely to secure a mate than beauty.[20] Therefore, not only did female beauty play an important function at the species level by fostering the evolution of distinct racial groups, it also played at a vital role on the individual level by determining which women were most likely to mate and which would be left behind. According to Darwin, "women have long been selected for beauty," passed on their traits in a "somewhat higher degree" to their female offspring, and ultimately become "more beautiful than men."[21] Moreover, as Woods Hutchinson observed in 1896, sexual selection's consistent preference for female beauty offered a revolutionary way to think about the future:

> "Beauty only skin-deep" indeed! It has entered into the very blood, bone, and marrow of the race for countless generation. With its advent hand-in-hand with love, the stern law of the "survival of the fittest" loses half its terrors, for a new world is opened up for selection. It has swayed and softened not only the hearts of men, but the great elemental forces and relentless laws of nature herself. And has it lost any of its primeval power to day? Not a whit. It sweeps everything before it as almost no other influence can. Even in this mercenary age the value of beauty as a dower is second to none.[22]

Far from being a superficial trait, female beauty tamed the natural world, including men, and was, from an evolutionary perspective, a woman's most important attribute.[23]

Sexual selection reverberated far beyond the scientific community as laypeople, too, grasped the theory's implications for courtship and marriage. Many marriage and beauty guides published between 1871 and 1920 made explicit references to *The Descent of Man*, while others relied on Darwinian terms, such as "sexual selection." Most authors agreed that, at least among humans, female

beauty was a powerful evolutionary agent. Courtship advice books popularized a version of evolutionary theory that heightened the importance of female appearance, equated outer beauty with fertility and personal probity, prioritized reproduction, and encouraged strict gender binaries. Henry T. Finck, music editor of the *New York Evening Post*, drew heavily on Darwin's observations of nature, as well as on his theories of natural and sexual selection, in his advice book, *Romantic Love and Personal Beauty* (1887). After comparing and contrasting womanly beauty in various nations, Finck concluded that the sway of natural selection was on the decline, "hence Sexual Selection has freer scope to modify the human race into harmony with aesthetic demands," ushering in the age of "Romantic Love and Personal Beauty."[24] Another courtship expert clarified that she did not necessarily agree with Darwin's suggestion that different races had different standards of beauty, but she wholeheartedly endorsed his idea that female beauty served important evolutionary purposes. "The culture of personal beauty, and, in our age, especially of female beauty, is of the first interest and importance," she exhorted. "It is impossible to separate people from their looks. A woman's natural quality is to attract, and having attracted, to enchain."[25]

As Mrs. H. R. Haweis cautioned in *The Art of Beauty* (1878), there were two types of women: the visible and the invisible. "The distinguishable ones marry—those who are beautiful, or magnetic in some way, whose characters have some definite colouring, and who can make their individuality felt."[26] One bachelor posited that perhaps "spinsters" remained single because "they could not wield the magic wand of feminine beauty, that limitless power over man." As everyone knew, "Woman does not select man and he will always seek that which is physically attractive and that which approximates to his ideal of feminine beauty. All the arguments at Women's Congresses will not change his organism."[27] The importance of female beauty could hardly be overstated. Haweis claimed that the attainment of beauty should be the top priority of all women, even "bluestockings," because "men, so to speak, pitch upon girls they can see: those who are completely negative, unnoticeable, colourless, formless, invisible—are left behind."[28] As a result of this popularized version of sexual selection theory, courtship standards shifted from demanding personal virtue to seeking physical attraction, and they amplified the importance of female beauty by giving it a scientific mandate.[29]

The Fall of Man: *Or, the Loves of the Gorillas* (1871), a well-known satirical response to *The Descent of Man*, epitomized popular reactions to the new, Darwinian definition of female beauty—a definition that equated beauty with hairlessness.[30] To begin his tale, the gorilla narrator related the story of a

mutant, hairless male ancestor with whom all the females had fallen in love. Much to the females' dismay, this prized bachelor refused to marry anyone with more hair than he had. Desperate for his affection, one female removed all of her body hair by sticking herself to a gum tree and violently yanking herself off. After her improvised body wax, the hairless gorilla agreed to marry her. He then convinced other females to remove their hair, too. The whole hairless bunch was exiled from the hairy gorillas and eventually came to be known as "man." This satire highlighted the extent to which the absence of hair distinguished humans from animals and attracted men to women, in popular imagination if not in fact.

As advice book authors and advertisers were quick to remind women, the one surefire sign of ugliness was superfluous hair, making hair removal an integral component of white women's beauty rituals. To make matters worse, it seemed as if any visible facial hair constituted too much hair, creating a large market for the remedies of hucksters and dermatologists alike. In her popular advice book, Harriet Hubbard Ayer observed that "of all the punishments meted out to our sex, the one that is the ugliest to bear—superfluous hair—is the one that practically defies science, and for which up to this writing there is no certain cure, electrolysis excepted." Electrolysis, however, was successful in only 10 percent of cases, according to Ayer, and it was very expensive, whereas "fate has dealt moustaches to the rich and poor with equal lavishness."[31] Other treatment options included injecting carbolic acid into the hair follicle, applying radiation to the hair follicle, and "punching," a method of extracting the entire hair follicle and surrounding tissue with a small knife.[32] Such treatments were rarely effective and almost always disfiguring (and, in a few instances, deadly), yet many women gladly endured them. Anything was better than superfluous hair.

If a woman had any doubt about the serious threat her facial hair posed to her well-being, the numerous advertisements she encountered in women's magazines surely convinced her otherwise.[33] "The Dream of Faultless Skin," an ad for the Tricho system of hair removal (which was essentially an X-ray), warned women, "It is surprising how many women barely miss being beautiful. It is regrettable that oftentimes some slight disfigurement, like a few hairs, mars the otherwise captivating loveliness that nature intended as a blessing."[34] Another Tricho ad exhorted women to remember that physical beauty was their principal offering to the world and that "there is no greater bar to feminine loveliness than an overgrowth of hair on the face, neck, back, chest, arms or legs of women. Even a moderate growth of such hair is extremely unsightful and if it be heavy might even be classed as a deformity. Superfluous hair serves

no good purpose and should be removed."[35] Similarly, a 1912 ad for the Roman Solvene hair removal system abandoned any pretense of subtlety in its pitch to women. Under the headline "What man could love a woman with superfluous hair," the advertisement admonished:

> Can man be blamed if love and marriage are practically denied the unfortunate woman with Superfluous Hair? True, this miserable affliction often crops out after marriage, but it is difficult certainly to keep alive the sacred flame of love under such conditions. A wife's face might be frightfully scarred, pitted with smallpox and excite only pity in her husband's breast that would make his love but the deeper. But a face and body covered with thick, coarse hair—what can still a husband's aversion to this repulsive sight, the horror of which grows constantly on him as he sees it day by day.[36]

As this ad demonstrates, within a generation, facial hair on women went from being considered a normal, if regrettable, condition to being defined as a repulsive disease.

If the sheer volume of hair removal ads in turn-of-the-century women's magazines is any indication, women tried a wide variety of depilatories to minimize the visible symptoms of hypertrichosis. Yet according to medical experts, the disease's worst symptoms could not be seen from the outside. For hirsute white women such as Viola, the worst part of hypertrichosis was not so much the facial hair itself but the attendant shame and dread that one would not be able to attract a husband because of it. As George Thomas Jackson, an instructor of dermatology at the New York Polyclinic, explained in 1885, the growth of facial hair in women "is only the beginning of evils. These women shun company, keep themselves shut up all day, their health deteriorates, and constantly brooding over their misfortune, they are prone to become hypochondriacal and melancholic."[37] Dr. Samuel Stern, chief of radiotherapy at Mt. Sinai Hospital, thought even cancer was a better fate than hypertrichosis. In an article extolling the benefits of a new X-ray treatment he had developed (one that proved carcinogenic), he told his colleagues that hypertrichosis was such a devastating disease that he and his patients had decided that this potentially deadly cure was worth the risk. While somewhat hesitant to apply radiation to otherwise healthy tissue, Stern explained what had led him to this choice:

> The mental suffering of these patients cannot be overestimated. I know of no dermatological condition that can be compared with it. I have seen them on the verge of melancholia and insanity, brooding over their condition, threatening suicide, shunning the light, and avoiding their friends, leading a very morbid and miserable existence indeed. To such an extent, that in many cases something must absolutely be done to save them from themselves and to turn them into useful members of the community.[38]

Ernest McEwen further elaborated on the threat that the disease of superfluous hair posed to women in an address before the American Dermatological Association in 1917. A woman with hypertrichosis, McEwen claimed, "feels herself an object of repulsion to the opposite sex, and as a result, set apart from the normal members of her sex. She realizes that she bears a stigma of the male and that she does not run true to the female type; therefore, every female instinct in her demands that the thing that marks her as different from other women be removed."[39] Few records survive indicating what hypertrichosis patients themselves thought about their diagnosis, and, of course, it is quite possible that doctors enhanced descriptions of their hirsute patients' suffering to legitimate the new specialty of dermatology and attract clients for costly electrolysis treatments. In any case, medical and popular culture so effectively pathologized superfluous hair that legions of women underwent painful, disfiguring, and even deadly treatments for a condition that caused them no physical pain and was not contagious or life threatening, giving new meaning to the adage that one must "suffer for the sake of beauty."

Were (White) Bearded Ladies Women?

While everyone seemed to agree that white bearded women could not be considered beautiful, it was less obvious whether they were actually women. Could a "real" woman have a beard? Was superfluous hair on women the result of other masculine traits, either mental or physical, hidden or overt? Or was it simply bad luck? Numerous case studies and articles published between 1877 and 1920 addressed these questions, but no clear consensus emerged. In 1914 Dr. J. Herbert Claiborne published an article in the *New York Medical Journal* arguing that, according to his observations, hypertrichosis nearly always occurred in masculine women; therefore, he concluded, the two traits must be linked. In fact, Claiborne viewed the disease as a transitional stage experienced by women who were on their way to becoming men. Even though Claiborne was an eye surgeon, not a dermatologist, and despite the fact that he had never treated any women with hypertrichosis, he admitted to having spent a great deal of time observing the hairy women he saw all around him. Based on these observations, he concluded that hypertrichosis represented the bisexuality naturally found in humans and animals. The reason that turn-of-the-twentieth-century women displayed signs of hypertrichosis more frequently than women in earlier times was the "the invasion by woman of many forms of business, professions, trades and heretofore recognized prerogatives of man. I refer in particular to the suffragette feminist movements." For emphasis, Clai-

borne drew on evolutionary tenets, adding, "I repeat I believe that exaggerated masculine traits in their structural and psychic being is the original cause [for feminism], and that the struggle for existence has made these qualities more obvious." Neither was Claiborne optimistic about future developments: "If we are to read the history of the future from the pages of biology, it seems that feminine invasion of man's prerogatives by woman has come to stay."[40] Good news for dermatologists; bad news for antifeminists.

In concluding that there was a causal connection between masculine traits and female facial hair, Claiborne was in the minority. What confounded most doctors was that their hypertrichosis patients were often very feminine. Furthermore, most menstruated regularly and many had borne healthy children. How, then, could they be anything besides "women"? In his description of Viola, Duhring struggled to make sense of why this peculiar condition afflicted an otherwise normal young woman. None of her immediate family members had suffered from superfluous hair, and Viola did not have any other curious symptoms. According to Duhring, Viola's facial hair was "the source of intense mortification and distress" to her, and he lamented that the best treatment he could offer was "daily use of the razor."[41] In his lengthy description, he noted that the "most interesting feature" of this case was the "complete absence of all signs of masculinity, traces of which we should naturally look for and expect to find either in the physical structure or in the disposition."[42] Not only did Viola not exhibit any masculine features, "her character is strictly womanly, all her tastes being remarkably feminine and domestic. She possesses a quiet composed manner, and is reserved, taciturn, and modest in disposition. Her facial expression, without being melancholic, is habitually thoughtful."[43] After having had excessive facial hair since birth, she began menstruating normally at the age of fourteen and, at eighteen, her beard reached its present fullness and length. At seventeen she married and later gave birth to two healthy children who bore no signs of their mother's unusual condition. After a thorough, head-to-toe examination of Viola, Duhring concluded that her hirsuteness was congenital, not related to sexual development. The fact that the patient had been hairy from birth, not puberty, explained how she could have a feminine character and a masculine appearance.

Interestingly, however, Duhring noted that his conclusion depended on the truthfulness of Viola's statements, a contingency that he had "from the first been inclined to doubt."[44] Further troubling was the fact that since her two children had died of scarlet fever, Viola's breasts had lost their feminine shape (in particular, he noted that her nipples had a "somewhat masculine appearance as to form, size, and color"), and the doctor hinted that she might soon expect

to take on other masculine traits. The reader is left with the conclusion that if, and only if, Viola was telling the truth—if she really did behave like a demure Victorian woman, and if she really was traumatized by her beard—would Duhring consider her a woman. Eventually, as Rebecca Herzig has shown in her research on hypertrichosis, the majority of dermatologists concurred with Duhring's analysis that what made hirsute white women definitively female was not necessarily their appearance but their *desire* to be perceived as female and to rid themselves of their facial hair.[45] If a woman was not sufficiently troubled by her facial hair, her claim to womanhood became suspect. Indeed, the only place to find bearded women out in the open, displaying their unusual features, was the circus sideshow.

Bearded Ladies Performing the Animal-Human Boundary

Bearded ladies were a transnational phenomenon at the turn of the twentieth century, yet their cultural meanings varied according to their race. For white bearded ladies, like their white compatriots who visited the dermatologist, femininity was the central element of the performance, as well as the crux of the many jokes about them. According to Robert Bogdan's work on freak shows, "Hirsute women typically appeared in straightforward status-enhancing motifs—except for the beards, these women represented the quintessence of refined respectable womanhood." To further emphasize their refined brand of femininity, bearded ladies often performed under names that began with "Lady" or "Princess." The juxtaposition of a beard on a woman adorned with all the conventional trappings of femininity presented a visual oxymoron for audiences to puzzle. As a publicity stunt, P. T. Barnum planted a rumor that one of his first bearded lady performers, Madame Clofullia, was really a male impostor. To settle the case, Madame Clofullia went to three doctors, and the court ultimately ruled she was in fact a woman. Barnum's trick worked, though, and audiences turned out in droves to decide for themselves if the bearded lady was male or female.[46]

While most bearded ladies were women, part of their appeal was that they blurred gender boundaries and presented viewers with the potential thrill of transgression, or at least of discovering an impostor. Scores of jokes published in newspapers across the nation attest to this fascination. Take, for example, this one from the *Cincinnati Enquirer*:

> "Doesn't it humiliate you to have to go through life this way?" asked the sympathetic woman as she purchased a photograph.

> "Yes, mam," replied the Bearded Lady. "If it wasn't for my wife and the kids, I'd throw up the job to-day."[47]

Or this one from the *Chicago Tribune*:

> "The living skeleton at the dime museum had fallen in love with the bearded lady."
> "No," she said, when he offered himself. "It is impossible. I am wedded to my art. I can never be anything but a brother to you."[48]

As these jokes reveal, even if doctors and jurists testified to their authenticity, bearded ladies' gender identities remained highly suspect. Audiences assumed that, at some level, bearded ladies were masculine, if not men.

That audiences were drawn to the exaggerated femininity of bearded ladies, and to the possibility of gender transgression and perhaps even homosexual sex, was also evident in the numerous articles detailing bearded ladies' love lives. Newspapers often reported on the marriages of "freaks" to each other, such as the 1883 marriage of the "Spanish Bearded Lady," Miss Leo Hernandez, to R. B. Moffitt, the tattooed man. The *San Francisco Bulletin* described, or perhaps imagined, the couple's private negotiations in anticipation of their nuptials: "Miss Leo wanted to have her beard shaved off in honor of the occasion, but Mr. Moffitt, who is of a practical turn of mind, opposed it on the ground that she might not be able to raise another crop, in which event her value as a 'curiosity' would be totally destroyed."[49] Such speculations about conversations that may or may not have transpired between the bearded lady and her betrothed revealed the cultural consensus that no man could honestly love a bearded woman.

In addition to the potentially apocryphal stories about the marriages of bearded ladies to other circus performers, a few news reports detailed the nuptials of bearded ladies to non-"freaks," such as Miss Grace Gilbert's marriage to Giles Calvin. After sixteen years traveling the world as a bearded lady, Gilbert retired at the age of thirty-four to marry a man she had known since her youth and move with him to his farm to "try to make him a good wife." According to news reports, the simple ceremony encountered a hitch when the judge mistook the bride for the bridegroom and addressed his remarks to Gilbert, rather than to the clean-shaven Calvin. The many articles published about this unusual marriage often contrasted Gilbert's long beard with her husband's smooth countenance, suggesting the possibility of sexual and gender transgression in both public and private.[50]

While viewers and commentators enjoyed speculating on the gender and sexual identity of white bearded lady performers, hardly anyone questioned

their species. Yet for bearded ladies of color, taxonomy was the central element of their performances and of their reception. Even before Darwinian evolution made human-animal kinship a household topic, bearded ladies of color were presented as straddling the divide between humans and animals. One of the first, and most tragic, bearded ladies of color was Julia Pastrana. Pastrana, a Mexican Indian woman with excessive hair and protruding jaws, was first exhibited in the United States in 1854 as the "Marvellous Hybrid or Bear Woman." Doctors claimed to have examined her and determined that she was a distinct species, related to a bear or an orangutan. The evolutionist Alfred Russel Wallace told Darwin about this curious woman, and she is described in Darwin's *Variation of Plants and Animals under Domestication* (1868) as "a Spanish dancer" and "a remarkably fine woman, but she had a thick masculine beard and a hairy forehead." Her husband functioned as her "impresario," and, after she died in childbirth in 1860, he continued to exhibit and profit from her embalmed remains for decades. After her death, her husband had her hair examined to determine what caused her unusual condition—the diagnosis came back "congenital hypertrichosis."[51]

In the United States and abroad, no bearded lady surpassed the popularity of Krao, the Laotian woman who traveled the world as Darwin's "Missing Link" for nearly fifty years.[52] Krao remained among the most popular and best paid of Barnum's acts until her death from influenza in 1926. The headline of her obituary in the *New York Times* referred to her as the "Best-Liked Freak" and noted that "She Never Complained."[53] While there were countless other bearded ladies and "missing links," there was something about the confluence of the two binaries—male/female, animal/human—embodied in Krao that captivated audiences for decades. Most sideshow and circus acts revamped themselves every few years, but Krao's act, including her souvenir promotional pamphlet, remained largely unchanged throughout her long career.

At the age of seven, Krao was captured in Laos by the Canadian promoter G. A. Farini, who later adopted her and became her legal guardian. To convince the Laotian authorities that his kidnapping served a higher purpose, Farini couched his descriptions of Krao in evolutionary theory, arguing that she was the long-sought intermediate step between apes and humans. He claimed that her furry covering demonstrated this linkage, as did her "half human, half monkey" habits, which ostensibly included filling her cheek pouches with food and picking up objects with her prehensile feet just as easily as with her hands. Farini also claimed that Laotian officials had reluctantly let her leave the country only to help "Europeans in their researches in connection with the theory of the Descent of Man."[54] From the outset, then, Krao's performance

and appeal was framed in terms of Darwinian evolutionary theory (did she represent a transitional species?) and a Darwinian understanding of the evolutionary significance of hair. In his discussions of hair, Farini assumed readers would be familiar with evolutionary ideas such as atavism—the spontaneous return to an earlier, ancestral form —and with the pivotal taxonomic role body hair played in separating humans from other mammals, a distinction Krao's appearance caused many to ponder.

In the promotional brochure used throughout much of Krao's career, Farini announced his "find" as a scientific achievement, centuries in the making, and veiled his exploitation of Krao in the language of progress and evolutionary discovery. Krao and her parents, he explained, were not throwbacks or anomalies but visual proof of evolution at work:

> The only possible explanation is that they are normal representatives of humanity, in a state of transition from the lower states, as represented in the various species of monkeys, to the higher state, in which we ourselves exist. All the above evidence shows that "Krao" far transcends in scientific importance and general interest any creature that has yet been seen in Europe. A slight acquaintance with the principal points in the Darwinian theory will prove this, and those who are still skeptical in the matter can hardly fail to be convinced in a single interview with Krao. . . . "Krao" fills a gap which many philosophers before Darwin had seen and endeavored to account for. She meets, and more than meets, all the requirements of a theory which has slowly grown into favor—"developed" almost as gradually as man himself. . . . To complete the story [of human evolution], to put the keystone in the arch which so many builders have labored to construct KRAO the living missing link, daughter of a tribe of hairy men and women, now makes her appearance before the Civilized World.[55]

Of course, as Nadja Durbach suggests in her study of Krao's London performances, Farini strategically employed Darwinian language to legitimize his presentation of Krao and to help turn the morally suspect behavior of gazing at the seminude body of a woman of color into an acceptable middle-class pastime. At the same time, Krao's performances and the massive publicity they generated familiarized audiences with Darwinian evolutionary theory.[56] Key to these popular understandings and applications of evolutionary discourse were highly racialized ideas about gender.

In contrast to the way dermatologists and popular writers responded to white women with hypertrichosis as individuals, hirsute women of color were predominately discussed in collective, representative terms. Farini described bearded women as "throw backs" to an earlier stage of human development and "striking indications of man's descent from a hairy animal, of which Krao is undeniable proof." Yet Farini claimed "Krao is an entirely different being from the 'bearded women' and all other curiosities that have from time to time

been exhibited in London and elsewhere." According to Farini, Krao was not an anomalous individual, or "monstrosity" in his words, but a member of a race of hairy individuals who lived in a remote, exotic part of the world. Such descriptions were central to Farini's portrayal of Krao—if she had just been an individual "freak," she would lack scientific import, but, as the representative of a transitional species, she could be the missing link between humans and simians.

Immediately following her debut, however, Krao's status as a "missing link" was debunked, regardless of numerous newspaper reports to the contrary. The *Medical and Surgical Reporter* attempted to set the record straight in 1883, noting that "Darwin again and again expressed his belief that the progenitors of mankind became divested of hair at an extremely remote period before the several races diverged from a common stock, and before that common stock became erect." Contrary to Farini's grand claims about Krao's scientific significance, "the discovery of a hairy race living in a tropical climate at the present day would therefore be almost more opposed to his theory than in favor of it."[57] In a subsequent article, the journal concluded, "The simple truth of the history of Krao is that she is merely one of those anomalies which occur in different quarters of the globe, and is not at all an example of the 'missing link,' or anything of the kind. . . . in her physical structure she has nothing whatever pithecoid or ape-like about her."[58] Or, as another medical journal explained in 1883, "The strange creature is simply a hairy child about six years of age, an excellent specimen of hypertrichosis, or superabundance of hair, cases of which have been reported at intervals."[59] Missing link or not, audiences flocked to see Krao. One newspaper reported that Krao's appearances were booked a year in advance and that her weekly rate was an astounding $700.[60]

Central to Krao's appeal was the idea that she straddled the animal-human boundary and thus could not be adequately categorized. Numerous reports alternated between referring to her as "it" and "she"; others commented on the challenge of identifying the species to which she belonged. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* announced Krao's 1884 debut at the newly reopened Chestnut Street Theater, but had trouble selecting a pronoun with which to identify her. The article noted that "it, or rather she, is a specimen of what is said to be a race intermediate between man and monkey." Nearly thirty years later, another article in the same paper again attempted to entice viewers by playing up the idea that Krao's species was in doubt: "Whether Krao is a woman or a monkey has been answered by some scientists by saying that she is neither, but that she is the long sought for link between the apes and the humans."[61] Similarly, a widely reprinted *Chicago Herald* article explained that Krao represented the

"animal lady or the lady animal—which of the two has not yet been quite settled upon."[62]

At the same time that viewers described Krao's imposing beard and apelike features, many also remarked on her poise and education. The *New York Times* headline announcing Krao's stateside debut described her as "An Educated Missing Link." In addition to speaking both English and German, the reporter explained, Krao greeted visitors with a "smiling bow which would have done credit to a lady in society."[63] Another article noted, "Her ability to speak, to learn even the ways of civilization, seem to warrant the belief that she ought to be ranked with the race which cooks and prints and laughs and talks."[64] Here the writer switched from talking in terms of species to talking in terms of race. In these reports, the binary in question was not male or female, or even human or animal, but civilized or savage, a demarcation often made according to race at the end of the nineteenth century. Like other popular "missing links," Krao promised to provide the "civilized" world with a firsthand glimpse into their uncivilized past, revealing how "savage" ancestors became human.[65]

Indeed, numerous descriptions of Krao contrasted her supposedly animal-like appearance with her civilized behavior, emphasizing that contact with (white) civilization enabled all sorts of progress. In addition to cheek pouches, Krao was described as having multiple rows of teeth; prehensile fingers and toes; soft, bendable ears like a dog; and an extra vertebra where a tail might have been. Of course, Krao did not possess such features, but her abundant hair and "exotic" features convinced viewers that she could have. The article "Half Child Half Animal" reported that while at first Krao had tended to throw cups at her governess, "by perseverance the little creature was brought around and is today as intelligent as any metropolitan girl of her age."[66] Similarly, the New Orleans *Times Picayune* observed that "most of her manners at table were as good as those of most persons, but she was unable to resist the temptation to stuff food into the pouches in her cheeks and carry it away from the table to be eaten later. Ordinarily her eyes were soft and of great depth of expression, but if anything angered her they had the fierce, intent glare that could be mistaken for nothing but the look of a monkey."[67] Krao may have been described as simian, but she spoke many languages and enjoyed knitting, emphasizing the plasticity of the human race and the potential of "savages" to become civilized, given the right environment, namely, contact with white society.

At the turn of the twentieth century, a complicated mosaic of racialized ideas about gender shaped bearded ladies' performances and audiences' reactions to them. White audiences did not interpret Anglo-American bearded ladies in terms of species or civilization; their shared racial identity made them

too familiar even as their hirsuteness set them apart. Hirsute white women were consistently described as diseased individuals, objects of pity, too ugly to attract suitors. In contrast, bearded women of color were presented as racial representatives, personifying evolution at work. White women with beards had to convincingly perform their femininity, to doctors and audiences alike, to be considered women, but their humanity was never in question.[68] For Krao and other bearded ladies of color, race complicated their unspoken acceptance into the category of Homo sapiens. They were asked, in essence, to perform human distinctiveness, making visible for audiences how human beings might have shed their "savage" ways and reaffirming the intellectual and cultural markers that separated human from animal, a distinction that Darwin dismissed as one of degree, not kind.

Conclusion

Even though their lives diverged in almost every meaningful way, Krao and Viola had much in common. After all, both women were defined by their "superfluous hair" and both performed as bearded ladies on display— Krao at the circus sideshow and Viola in front of the medical establishment (in the literal sense that she was paraded as a "case study" before students at the University of Pennsylvania and, more generally, because her picture represented hypertrichosis in medical textbooks). Discussions of Viola allowed medical practitioners to probe the essential nature of sex difference: Was it physical? Mental? Inherited? Learned? These questions were fundamentally reframed in a secular, Darwinian universe where one could no longer count on biblical injunctions about Adam and Eve to explain the distinctions between men and women.[69] At the same time, Krao's unusual appearance prompted discussions about the essential elements of humanity—could individuals who looked so different be considered members of the same species? What were the defining characteristics of a "human"? Were they visible, behavioral, or intellectual? Who counted as "human" was a pressing question at the turn of the twentieth century as women lobbied for the vote, as immigrants of various ethnicities arrived in the United States seeking political and religious freedoms, and as African Americans organized in response to the horrors of Jim Crow segregation and discrimination. The public and medical concern about female hirsutism provides a glimpse into one way Americans attempted to resolve the question of who counted as "human" and thus deserving of human rights. At the turn of the twentieth century, such questions were informed, and often answered, by Darwinian evolutionary discourse.

Despite the challenge Viola, Krao, and their hirsute peers initially posed to the sexual binary and the animal-human boundary, bearded women ultimately helped entrench the "freakishness" of female facial hair and affirm the "normalcy" of those women who removed superfluous hair. The epidemic of hypertrichosis, together with the simultaneous bearded lady phenomenon, offers us the chance to better understand the creation of the cultural norm of female hairlessness. Bearded ladies performing at the circus sideshow and hirsute women visiting the dermatologist represented two sides of the same coin. Rather than send the message that, by its very prevalence, female facial hair was a natural norm, the many cultural conversations about hirsute women like Viola and Krao convinced audiences that hair on women was an aberration and should be removed, even at the risk of death. Today, the hair removal business is a multimillion-dollar industry, and women of all races spend countless hours bleaching, waxing, plucking, visiting the electrolysist and, now, the laser hair removal center. Superfluous hair can be removed, at least temporarily, but its specter vividly reminded turn-of-the-twentieth-century viewers of the many linkages between male and female, human and animal made visible in the Darwinian world. The history of hypertrichosis allows us to reflect on these linkages, as well as on the continuous construction of what is "natural."

Viola and Krao also bring into focus the overlaps and cleavages between the popular world of the circus and the elite world of science and medicine, especially as each sought to make sense of Darwinian evolutionary theory. Darwin's description of the evolutionary significance of hair redefined feminine beauty and reframed popular understandings of human distinctiveness. These new ideas manifested themselves in the public fascination with female hirsutism. In descriptions of hypertrichosis, dermatologists referenced both Darwinian theory and bearded ladies at the circus, just as circus impresarios, like Farini, capitalized on Darwinian discourse to promote their bearded lady exhibits and just as advice book authors and advertisers popularized a version of evolutionary theory that gave female beauty (and hairlessness) a scientific mandate. The common denominator between these various discussions of hair was the attempt to understand and apply Darwinian ideas about human distinctiveness and sexual difference to men and, especially, to women. Such intersections demonstrate the central role that gender has played in the American reception of Darwinian evolutionary theory, as well as the various ways in which science continues to reframe discussions of gender and race.

Notes

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1. Louis A. Duhring, "Case of a Bearded Woman," *Archives of Dermatology* 3 (1877): 193–200. Reprint, New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1877. Copy residing at the Boston Medical Library in the Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine, Harvard Medical School, Boston.
2. This essay draws on Lauren Berlant's work on the "case study." Berlant examines how case studies function in various disciplines and how they both affirm and upend the "normal." As Berlant argues, "As a genre, the case hovers about the singular, the general, and the normative," which is certainly true of Viola M. Lauren Berlant, "On the Case," special issue, *Critical Inquiry* 33 (2007): 664.
3. Charles Rosenberg's extensive work on medical history and, particularly, the history of disease informed my thinking about the significance of hypertrichosis. See, for example, Rosenberg, "Framing Disease: Illness, Society, and History," in *Framing Disease: Studies in Cultural History*, ed. Charles Rosenberg and Janet Golden, Health and Medicine in American Society Series, ed. Judith Walzer Leavitt and Morris Vogel (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1992), xiii–xxvi. Here Rosenberg defines disease as "a biological event, a generation-specific repertoire of verbal constructs reflecting medicine's intellectual and institutional history, an occasion of and potential legitimation for public policy, an aspect of social role and individual—intrapsychic—identity, a sanction for cultural values, and a structuring element in doctor and patient interactions. In some ways, disease does not exist until we have agreed that it does, by perceiving, naming, and responding to it" (xiii).
4. J.N.H., Review 3, *American Journal of the Medical Sciences* 111 (March 1896): 328. The textbook in question was Arthur Van Harlingen, *Handbook of the Diagnosis and Treatment of Skin Diseases,* 3rd ed. (Philadelphia: P. Blackiston and Son, 1895). Viola's picture was figure 41 on page 357.
5. George Henry Fox, "The Permanent Removal of Hair by Electrolysis, report of cases," *Medical Record* 21 (March 11, 1882): 253.
6. "Superfluous Hair," *Godey's Lady's Book*, April 1831, 192. Reprinted from *Journal of Health*, January 12, 1831, 135.
7. J. Herbert Claiborne, "Hypertrichosis in Women: Its Relation to Bisexuality (Hermaphroditism): with Remarks on Bisexuality in Animals, especially Man," *New York Medical Journal* 99 (June 13, 1914): 1182, 1179.
8. G. R. McAuliff, "Hypertrichosis, Variations in Female Secondary Sex Characteristics, and Internal Secretions," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 66 (January 1916): 16.
9. Douglas Freshwater, "Hairiness or Hypertrichosis and Its Treatment," *Practitioner* 90 (1913): 825.
10. Ibid., 830.
11. For an analysis of the gendered process through which mammals came to be known as mammals, see Londa Schiebinger, "Why Mammals Are Called Mammals," in *Nature's Body: Gender in the Making of Modern Science* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2004). A discussion of hair-based alternatives to "mammals" is on page 45.
12. Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*, second edition (1879), with an introduction by Adrian Desmond and James Moore (New York: Penguin Classics, 2004), 77–78. *The Descent of Man* was first published in 1871 in two volumes; the revised, second edition was published in one volume. Desmond and Moore make a compelling argument that this 1879 edition should be considered the definitive text.
13. Adrian Desmond and James Moore, *Darwin's Sacred Cause: How a Hatred of Slavery Shaped Darwin's Views on Human Evolution* (New York: Houghton, Mifflin, Harcourt, 2009).
14. Darwin, *Descent*, 651–53.
15. Ibid., 623–25. Darwin discussed different racial standards for beards on pages 648–49.
16. For an extended analysis of the evolutionary argument that the most advanced species (and races) were those with the most differentiated sex roles, see Cynthia Eagle Russett, *Sexual Science: The Victorian Construction of Womanhood* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), esp. chap. 5.

17. "Form and Color in Evolution," *Medical and Surgical Reporter* 45 (December 3, 1881): 634.
18. P. H. Pye-Smith, review of *The Descent of Man*, *Nature*, April 3, 6, 1871, pt. 1, 442–44; April 13, 1871, pt. 2, 463–65. He discussed sexual selection and female beauty in part 2 on page 465.
19. For a study of Darwin's influence on the scientific study of sex, see Kimberly A. Hamlin, "The Birds and the Bees: Darwin's Evolutionary Approach to Human Sexuality," in *Darwin in Atlantic Cultures: Evolutionary Visions of Race, Gender, and Sexuality*, ed. Jeannette Eileen Jones and Patrick Sharp (New York: Routledge Press, 2010), 53–72.
20. Darwin, *Descent*, 665. In a section titled "The Influence of Beauty in Determining the Marriages of Mankind," Darwin postulated that "in civilised life man is largely, but by no means exclusively, influenced in the choice of his wife by external appearance." He then investigated how this might have evolved by studying the "habits of existing semi-civilised and savage nations" (640).
21. Ibid., 665–66.
22. Woods Hutchinson, "The Strength of Beauty," *Open Court* 10 (July 3, 1896): 462–64.
23. The historian Lois Banner affirms the growing emphasis on female beauty at the turn of the twentieth century, arguing that it was linked to the growth of mass media and national advertising, as well as the invention of photography. See Banner, *American Beauty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983). She discusses how Darwinian theory was enlisted on behalf of female beauty on page 205.
24. Henry T. Finck, *Romantic Love and Personal Beauty: Their Development, Causal Relations, Historic and National Peculiarities* (New York: Macmillan, 1912), 542–43. This book was first published in 1887.
25. Mrs. H. R. Haweis, *The Art of Beauty* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1878), 71. This book is located at the Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, N.C.
26. Ibid., 263.
27. Louis Lombard, *Observations of a Bachelor* (Boston: D. Estes and Company, 1909), 67, 71.
28. Haweis, *Art of Beauty*, 263.
29. The prominence of Darwinian language in late-nineteenth-century courtship advice books marked a significant departure from the tone of earlier manuals. For example, in 1870, the year before Darwin published *The Descent of Man*, John William Kirton advised men to seek "the daughter of a good mother" with "suitable temperament," who knew "the worth of money" and possessed a "religious character." Kirton, *Happy Homes and How to Make Them; or, Counsels on Love, Courtship and Marriage* (London: F. Warne, 1870). Jettisoning moral, intellectual, and religious qualities, many courtship guides published after 1871 urged men and women to select their partners based on physical appearance and to develop their own good looks to attract suitors. The idea that beauty serves evolutionary purposes remains popular today. See, for example, Nancy Etcoff, *Survival of the Prettiest: The Science of Beauty* (New York: Doubleday, 1999).
30. *The Fall of Man: Or, the Loves of the Gorillas. A Popular Scientific Lecture Upon the Darwinian Theory of Development by Sexual Selection.* By a Learned Gorilla (New York: G. W. Carleton, 1871). Published anonymously by Richard Grant White. Copy residing at the Huntington Library, rare books collection, San Marino, Calif.
31. *Harriet Hubbard Ayer's Book: A Complete and Authentic Treatise on the Laws of Health and Beauty*, Women in America: From Colonial Times to the 20th Century series, ed. Leon Stein and Annette K. Baxter (1902; rpt. New York: Arno, 1974), 107–8.
32. Teresa Riordan, *Inventing Beauty: A History of the Innovations That Have Made Us Beautiful* (New York: Broadway Books, 2004), 122–23. For an analysis of the invention and history of electrolysis, see Rebecca Herzig, "Subjected to the Current: Batteries, Bodies, and the Early History of Electrification in the United States," *Journal of Social History* 41 (Summer 2008): 867–85. For an overview of twentieth-century advertising and changing perceptions of female body hair, see Christine Hope, "Caucasian Female Body Hair and American Culture," *Journal of American Culture* 5 (Spring 1982): 93–99.
33. See, for example, *Ladies Home Journal*. By the early 1890s nearly every issue contained multiple ads for hair removal products, promising relief from that "masculine" look.
34. "Gone for Good," Tricho ad, Historical Health Fraud and Alternative Medicine Collection, box 318, folder 1, American Medical Association, Chicago. Hereafter cited as AMA.
35. Tricho ad, Neyenhouse and Co. Printers, New York, 1927, box 318, folder 2, AMA.
36. Roman Solvene ad, 1912, box 317, folder 1, AMA.
37. George Thomas Jackson, "Superfluous Hair: The Russian Dog-faced Boy, and Facial Hirsuties in Women," *Medical Record* 27 (May 23, 1885): 570.

38. Samuel Stern, "Modified Technique for the X-Ray Treatment of Hypertrichosis," *American Journal of Roentgenology* 5 (1918): 430.
39. Ernest L. McEwen, "The Problem of Hypertrichosis," *Journal of Cutaneous Diseases* 35 (1917): 829.
40. J. Herbert Claiborne, "Hypertrichosis in Women: Its Relation to Bisexuality (Hermaphroditism): with Remarks on Bisexuality in Animals, especially Man," *New York Medical Journal* 99 (June 13, 1914): 1183.
41. Duhring, "Case of a Bearded Woman," 10.
42. Ibid., 9.
43. Ibid., 5.
44. Ibid., 8–9.
45. Rebecca M. Herzig, "The Woman beneath the Hair: Treating Hypertrichosis, 1870–1930," *NWSA Journal* 12 (Fall 2000): 50–66.
46. Robert Bogdan, *Freak Show: Presenting Human Oddities for Amusement and Profit* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 224–26.
47. "The Manly Man," *Puck*, July 9, 1913, 13. Reprinted from the *Cincinnati Enquirer*.
48. *Chicago Tribune* joke reprinted in *Omaha World Herald*, May 9, 1905, 4.
49. "A Wedding of 'Freaks,'" *San Francisco Bulletin*, February 22, 1883, 4.
50. "Bearded Woman Is Now Farmer's Wife," *Fort Worth Star Telegram*, November 13, 1910, 11. Janet Davis discusses circus marriages and bearded ladies in *The Circus Age: Culture and Society under the American Big Top* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 120–22.
51. This information about Pastrana comes from Jan Bondeson, *A Cabinet of Medical Curiosities* (New York: Norton, 1999), 217–23. See also Christopher Gilseth and Lars O. Toverud, *Julia Pastrana: The Tragic Story of the Victorian Ape Woman*, trans. Donald Tumasonis (Stroud: Sutton, 2003); Rosemary Garland-Thomson, "Narratives of Deviance and Delight: Staring at Julia Pastrana, the 'Extraordinary Lady,'" in *Beyond the Binary: Reconstructing Cultural Identity in a Multicultural Context*, ed. Timothy Powell (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1999), 81–104; Rosemary Garland-Thomson, "Making Freaks: Visual Rhetorics and the Spectacle of Julia Pastrana," in *Thinking the Limits of the Body*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Gail Weiss, SUNY Series in Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art, ed. Mary C. Rawlinson (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), 129–44; Rebecca Stern, "Our Bear Women, Ourselves: Affiliating with Julia Pastrana," in *Victorian Freaks: The Social Context of Freakery in Britain*, ed. Marlene Tromp (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2008), 200–233.
52. For an analysis of Krao's British performances, see Nadja Durbach, "The Missing Link and the Hairy Belle: Krao and Victorian Discourses of Evolution, Imperialism, and Primitive Sexuality," in Tromp, *Victorian Freaks*, 134–53. Durbach argues that Krao's widespread popularity was partly due to the fact that she "literally embodied popular interpretations of evolutionary theory, reflecting back to the freak show audience its own understanding of the processes of human evolution and encouraging these spectators to participate in the advancement of scientific knowledge." According to Durbach, Krao's popularity in England also had to do with British imperialism—coming from an "underexplored and undeveloped [region] on the [edge] of the empire," Krao was presented as "part of a triumphant narrative of British imperialism." Durbach observes that Krao's souvenir pamphlet, which was sold for over two decades, reads like an adventure novel (141–42). For a study of Krao in France, see Diana Snigurowicz, "Sex, Simians, and Spectacle in Nineteenth-Century France; or How to Tell a 'Man' from a Monkey," *Canadian Journal of History* 34 (April 1999): 51–81. Snigurowicz suggests that Krao's French performances were intentionally sexualized by promoters, who depicted Krao as an exotic woman of color, sexually available to white audiences.
53. "Circus Folk Mourn Best-Liked Freak," *New York Times*, April 19, 1926, 7.
54. "History of Krao: Farini's Missing Link," New York: Popular Pub. Co. 37 Bond St. [not before 1882], American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass.
55. Ibid.
56. Durbach, "Hairy Belle," 135–36.
57. "The Missing Link," *Medical and Surgical Reporter* 10 (March 1883): 269.
58. "Krao," *Medical and Surgical Reporter* 22 (August 1885): 215.
59. "Krao, The Missing Link," *Phrenological Journal of Science and Health* 77 (July 1883): 24. See also A. H. Keane, "Krao, the 'Human Monkey,'" *Scientific American*, February 10, 1883, 89.
60. "Dime Store Business," *Bismark (ND) Tribune*, January 25, 1885, 3.

61. "A Remarkable Being," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, September 22, 1884, 2; "The World's Museum," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 28, 1920, 13.
62. Reprinted as "It's the Missing Link," *Kansas City (MO) Star*, December 30, 1884, 2.
63. "An Educated Missing Link," *New York Times*, February 6, 1886, 8.
64. "Krao—a Missing Link," *The Continent, an Illustrated Weekly Magazine*, February 20, 1884, 240.
65. Krao was one of several "missing links" in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Another one of Barnum's legendary acts was "What is it?" (later "Zip: What is it?"), a microcephalic African American man. Unlike Krao, however, "What is it" was presented as a "non-descript" curiosity and only briefly promoted in Darwinian terms. Darwinian language and references were central to Krao's performances and promotional materials throughout her long career. For more information on Zip and the search for missing links, see James W. Cook Jr., "Of Men, Missing Links, and Non-Descripts: The Strange Career of P.T. Barnum's 'What is It?' Exhibition," in *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body*, ed. Rosemary Garland-Thomson (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 139–57; Jane Goodall, *Performance and Evolution in the Age of Darwin: Out of the Natural Order* (New York: Routledge, 2002); Jeannette Eileen Jones, "'Gorilla Trails in Paradise': Carl Akeley, Mary Bradley, and the American Search for the Missing Link," *Journal of American Culture* 29 (September 2006): 321–36.
66. "Half Child Half Animal," *Macon Weekly Telegraph*, September 26, 1884, reprinted from the *New York World*.
67. "Salaries That Freaks Earn," *Times Picayune*, June 3, 1899, 9.
68. For the classic study on the performativity of gender, see Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).
69. My book manuscript, tentatively titled "From Eve to Evolution: Gender and the American Reception of Charles Darwin," explores how women responded to evolutionary discourse and used it to argue for women's rights. In many cases, women welcomed the entry of science into discussions of sex difference because it proved more malleable and rational than religious explanations for gender roles, most notably those derived from the biblical story of Adam and Eve.