Marion Mahony Griffin and The Magic of America: recovery, reaction and re-entrenchment in the discourse of architectural studies

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Marion Mahony Griffin and *The Magic of America*:

Recovery, reaction and re-entrenchment in the discourse of architectural studies

By

Elizabeth Joy Birmingham

A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Major: Rhetoric and Professional Communication

Major Professor: Margaret Baker Graham

Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

2000

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Graduate College
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This is to certify that the Doctoral dissertation of

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Major Professor
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For the Major Program
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For the Graduate College
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My warmest and most sincere thanks to Marty Graham, who put the notion of this degree into my head in the first place, and who has consistently assured me that I do want to undertake research. Without your gentle pushing and generous support this would not have happened; it is a goal I would not have had for myself before knowing you.

Likewise, I thank my committee, Charie Thralls, David Roberts, Loring Silet, and Clare Cardinal Pett for superhuman patience, as well as insight, intelligence, and occasional willing suspension of disbelief. I have been lucky to learn from you all.

I thank all those women who helped me claim an education—Dr. Frances Steiner, who first introduced me to the Griffins in architectural history class—my love affair with beautiful buildings is thanks to you; the many sisters in the English department at Rosary College who introduced me to the moderately guilty pleasures of an intellectual life: Sr. Jeanne Crapo, Sr. Clemente Davlin, Sr. Carolyn McGinty, Sr. Mary Paynter, and Sr. Melissa Waters. And, of course, my thanks to Mary Scott Simpson and Rosalind Hays who regularly made me work harder than I wanted to and helped me achieve more than I was capable of. I am lucky to call you all friends. To Lee Hadley, whose absence I feel deeply and often, and to Brenda Daly and Jennifer Bloomer, both of whom, through their works of stunning intricacy and honesty, inspire me to be a scholar when I grow up.

Many thanks to all those organizations who provided me with financial support during this expensive journey: the Haggard dissertation fellowship from Iowa State University, the Society of Architectural Historians, and the Fulbright Foundation. In
addition, I thank those scholars who generously shared their time and their work with me, Anna Rubbo, Aja Preliasco, and Mary Woolever.

Last, though most importantly, I thank my family, whose support on this long, strange trip has been unwavering and occasionally unnerving and unwarranted: Jim and Connie Birmingham; Mike, Margaret, Matt, Carole, Mark, Sarah, and beautiful baby Duncan. My aunt and uncle, Joy and Don Donahue, who, with my parents, insisted on I begin an undergraduate education and supported me both emotionally and financially. My Caity, who has been helping me through college for most of her life, and who has been my inspiration since her three-year-old self told me she wanted to be a waitress like mama when she grew up. My Griffin, who will remember his mama as neither a waitress nor a student, and who has been the most lovely distraction a procrastinator like me could ever wish for. Finally, Kevin, without whom. Without whom.
ABSTRACT

The discourse that defines and supports the discipline of architectural studies has historically focused its attention on the study and veneration of great men and great monuments, a focus that has erased the contributions of many women in the field. By examining the secondary scholarship surrounding one such woman, architect and theorist Marion Mahony Griffin (1871-1961), this paper argues that women are invisible in the history of architecture because they are described in ways that dismiss their contributions, characterize them as essentially different from male architects, and undermine their status as "real" architects. A long and complex involvement of women in architectural practice has been written out of history because habits of scholarship accept and reassert the culturally received notion that men build while women decorate. This case study reveals the cultural assumptions that inform and reinforce practices of scholarship that habitually ignores women, and their architectural and theoretical work, suggesting this is not a problem that disappeared with the introduction of feminist scholarship to the discipline. In fact, after a decade of scholarly recovery of women's architectural contributions, a strong backlash has swept into the area of Griffin studies, confronting not just the historical figure of Mahony Griffin, but "disciplining" the scholars whose speculation has attempted to open the field to a wider range of research questions.
A FEW NOTES ON NAMES, DEFINITIONS, SOURCES, CHOICES, AND ABBREVIATIONS

Because this text is, in part, an attempt to re-tell the story of a woman whose life and contributions have been clouded in earlier histories, and because this story is for an audience whose knowledge of architectural history may be varied, the purpose of this section is to provide some insight into the names, terms, and texts I have used and why I have chosen them, as well as to offer insight in the authorial choices I have made.

Names

Marion Lucy Mahony* was born in 1871; in 1911 she married and took the last name of her husband, Walter Burley Griffin, becoming Marion Mahony Griffin. Most early texts that include her work refer to her as Marion, even when they refer to Frank Lloyd Wright as Wright, or Walter Burley Griffin as Griffin. (And letters would suggest that even her closest friends at Castlecrag, the Griffins' planned community in Sydney, referred to her as Mrs. Griffin.) A few texts do refer to her as Mrs. Griffin, though in this instance, Wright is still Wright and not the equivalent Mr. Wright. This lack of equivalency in name status is notable in many texts. Because this seems part of a larger story in architectural history in which a woman's identity is either subsumed under her husband's, or the familiarized use of her first name marks her within the text as categorically different and less valued (gendered), I want to avoid these options. But while I do not want to drop her husband's last name which she used for fifty years of her life, I also want to avoid the confusion of a story whose two central characters have the same name. Her own professional monogram that appears on many of her renderings is
MMG, Marion Mahony Griffin. Therefore, as far as possible, I refer to Marion Mahony Griffin as Mahony Griffin, to Walter Burley Griffin as Griffin, and to Frank Lloyd Wright as Wright (etc.)

When I refer to the Griffins’ work, I am assuming some level of architectural collaboration. This is hardly an unproblematized stance—it is the single issue being most forcefully argued right now with Griffin studies. My belief in the notion of the Griffins’ collaboration is based on my readings of the primary texts and the secondary arguments, my visits to more than fifty structures designed by Walter Burley or Marion Mahony Griffin or both of them across the American midwest and Australia, and my more idiosyncratic beliefs about collaboration, marriage, and shared intellectual pursuits. And although I will discuss the contemporary debate about the Griffins’ collaboration late in this text, the reader needs to be aware that I claim no more special knowledge about this topic than other scholars, and I base my consistent assertion on the power of those secondary arguments that reflect my own experiences of life, of reading the primary texts, of the buildings themselves.

While I am convinced by the argument for the Griffins’ collaboration, my intention is not to show that those reasserting the genius-helpmate depiction of the Griffins’ architectural practice are wrong, but rather to interrogate the gendered nature of the discourse they produce to support their assertions. I do not attempt to tell a story of heroes and villains; rather, I argue that disciplinary discourse functions in ways that can be enabling or constraining to women, and that constraints on women’s ability to function within the discipline are rarely intentional, but more a matter of habit that must be interrogated and exposed in order to be changed. Therefore, while my telling of the
story of the Griffins' work as collaborative is one way of changing the habit of ignoring women's architectural contributions, it is a way that is still highly contested in architectural studies, and the ways in which it is contested provide yet another area of inquiry within the larger story of architectural historical practice.

**Definitions**

Several terms that I use in this text may be unfamiliar, even to architectural historians. The first is "The Sullivan School" of architecture. The term "Sullivan School" was recently suggested by historian Paul Sprague in his article, "The Significance of Griffin's Indian Architecture." Sprague argues that this term, rather than the more commonly used "Prairie School" more accurately reflects Louis Sullivan's (1856-1924) role as the intellectual parent of this architectural movement (85-6).

Sullivan, who imported the history of American Transcendental thought into architecture to argue for the development of a truly American form, was hugely influential on the young, radical architects practicing in Chicago near the turn of the century. Because Sullivan's influence is especially more appropriate to the Griffins and their work than Frank Lloyd Wright's (1867-1959), I use this term instead of "The Prairie School," which had been the favored term in architectural studies for many years.

For a detailed history of the birth of the term "Prairie School" see H. Allen Brooks's *The Prairie School: Frank Lloyd Wright and his Midwestern Contemporaries* pages 3-13. Brooks's notion of the Prairie School is based on that brief period of time from 1900-1914 and focuses mainly on midwestern residential architecture, like Frank Lloyd Wright's "Prairie House." This term refers to mainly midwestern practitioners of a style of residential architecture that was roughly horizontal, and emphasized horizontal
line through the use of bands of windows, varied (natural) materials producing horizontal string and belt courses, low, over-hanging eaves, and a simplicity of ornament all in a style that was not referential to earlier historical periods. While this term would accurately describe the Griffins' work early in their careers, Griffin's later work in the U.S. and the couple's work in Australia and India reflect the inspiration of Sullivan rather than the stylistic indebtedness to Wright that the term Prairie School connotes. Moreover, the Griffins themselves wrote of their inspiration by Sullivan, who thought of himself as a teacher of "The Young Man in Architecture" through his Kindergarten Chats.

I also use the terms Griffin studies, Griffin scholar(s), and Griffin scholarship to denote, respectively, a sub-discipline of architectural studies focused on Walter Burley and Marion Mahony Griffin, those who take part in this sub-disciplinary discourse, and the secondary texts that these scholars produce. Since the late 1980s a Griffin exchange program has been in place between the U.S. and Australia to promote the development of an international network of Griffin scholars. A decade later, several articles in Anne Watson's 1998 catalogue of the Sydney Powerhouse Museum's exhibition on the Griffins, Beyond Architecture allude to a disciplinary specialty in architectural studies—Griffin studies.

**Sources**

The primary text on the Griffins and their life and work together is Mahony Griffin's monumental text, The Magic of America. This 1000+ page auto/biography has never been published; therefore, scholars who use this source use one of two slightly different typescript copies available. The first is at the Ryerson and Burnham Libraries
at Chicago's Art Institute, where it has been since 1949 when Mahony Griffin donated it after being unable to find a publisher or, according to Mary Woolever, the funds to self-publish (140). The copy at the New York Historical Society is nearly identical, though the supporting visual materials are different. My textual citations are from the New York Historical Society version, which the society makes available to scholars and other institutions via micro-film. Therefore, the New York Historical Society version is also the most commonly cited version.

One difficulty with Mahony Griffin's text is its pagination. Most pages have between two and seven page numbers penciled in and crossed out in the corner, clearly the result of Mahony Griffin shuffling her material, organizing and reorganizing. Usually, the reader is clear about which page number Mahony Griffin wished to assign; occasionally, page numbers are appended in her hand with a letter, a, b, c, etc. In addition, the text itself is divided into four volumes, with each volume's pagination beginning with page one, usually after an unpaginated index and several pages of visual material which may or may not be paginated. In text cites therefore look something like this: (IV 323a) or (II 16). Some visual material is not paginated; therefore, that is cited based upon surrounding pages and looks like this (I 12-13a).

When I cite this document I do not correct spelling, grammatical, or typographical errors, nor do I call attention to them with the usual bracketed [sic]—unless I am quoting a secondary source that does so. In some cases Mahony Griffin corrected her own errors by hand, and I do not note that, or other handwritten additions or deletions unless the changes affect the readers' understanding of the quote. Many authors of secondary sources have complained of Mahony Griffin's spelling and
grammar—I found few instances of spelling or grammatical problems that interfered with my understanding of the text. Moreover, such comments are part of the discourse that has attempted to discredit this text and its author, a project in which I am not interested in being a part.

Choices

I've made several choices as a writer which I hope will make the reading of this document more pleasant for you as a reader. I have a good story to tell, one which, like any good story, needs to keep moving along. To this end, I've extensively footnoted material that would require the story to backtrack or slow down. Combined with the thesis office's insistence that footnotes be endnotes, reading all the footnotes becomes a nearly hypertextual exercise. I sincerely hope you do still read them—I think they include important information and additions that not only make this a richer text, but strengthen my argument.

To a similar end, that of keeping the story moving and the plot tight, I've appended material that might be part of a traditional literature search and a more formalized discussion of a framing theory—particularly feminist theories of autobiography (Appendix A.). While this material certainly enlivens and informs my argument, it is only tangential to the story I wish to tell, and incorporating it into the larger narrative seemed to undermine and compete with the story I want and need to tell about discourse, gender, and architecture. For a similar reason, I've also appendicized a brief discussion of the similarities between Sullivan's writing style and that of Ralph Waldo Emerson in Appendix B. In the body of my text I assume a connection between
Sullivan and the Transcendentalists, but in the appendix I briefly discuss some textual examples that would support my reading of Sullivan's style.

Finally, I've included in Appendix C. a bibliography of all the sources on the Griffins I've discovered. Some of these cites are only partial, from half-mentions I've seen in other sources. And while this list is certainly not yet complete, it is more complete than any previously published bibliography, and may therefore be of use to future scholars.

Abbreviations

Finally, some text name abbreviations used in footnoted material or citations:

MOA—*The Magic of America*—a typescript by Marion Mahony Griffin, written between 1939 and 1949. I use a microfilm copy of the New-York Historical Society version.


KC—*Kindergarten Chats*—Louis Sullivan's treatise on American architecture and architectural pedagogy, originally published as 52 serialized, individual articles in *Interstate Architect and Builder* from 16 February 1901- 8 February 1902. Sullivan later compiled, revised and edited these essays with a new forward; they were published in 1918. I use a 1979 Dover edition which is an unabridged republication of the 1918 version.
**PSR—The Prairie School Review**

**JAE— Journal of Architectural Education**

**JSAH—Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians**

A few name abbreviations that appear in letter citations:

**MMG**—Marion Mahony Griffin

**WBG**—Walter Burley Griffin

**FLW**—Frank Lloyd Wright
PREFACE: A STORY

Jennifer Bloomer begins her book, Architecture and the Text: The (S)crypts of Joyce and Piranesi, by (dis)claiming:

All conventional scholarly work ("original research") is written in the implied first person. Under the mask of objectivity, "I am interested in" becomes "The focus of this study is." The following chapters make no claim at objectivity: they represent the residue of my self, my cultural condition, my passion (love and hate) for architecture. The non-neutrality of language and history (and architecture) are my concerns. (3)

Though my project is vastly different, I make the same disclaimer. I am not objective. And unlike Bloomer, I am not an architect, though I finished the course work of a graduate program in architectural studies. My relationship with that discipline is one of love and hate. I wrote once, in a short story about language and architecture and my passion for both, that we all follow the paths of our pathologies. Producing this text leads me back to that line again and again. This project is the path of my pathology, my return to a dysfunctional home: I know now there are better places to live, but none of them are quite home.

Here, up front, is a truth as far as I know it: I couldn't cut it in architecture school. There were many reasons, some having to do with the discipline's callous treatment of women, the lack of female faculty, the lack of female peers, and courses
peopled by what seemed an unending stream of the worst sort of conservative, anti-intellectual little boys. I so internalized the discipline's discourse that I feared being a feminist, because I knew viewing the discipline through a critical lens would interfere with the pleasure I found in beautiful buildings, and feminism, I knew, taught that beauty came with a price. I pushed through all that. But when I wanted to write my thesis on Marion Mahony Griffin's *The Magic of America* and its connection to the accident that I saw as history, I was told by my major professor that to do so would be academic suicide, and to focus instead on a contextual analysis of Walter Burley Griffin's Rock Crest/Rock Glen housing development in Mason City, Iowa. I like to think that this kind, gently paternalistic man, who was a very fine scholar, saw scholarly potential in me, and wanted to shelter me from the potential fall-out of such a project—fall-out like being unable to gain admission to a doctoral program in architecture.

But it was ten years ago and I was a very good girl and I tried to do the thing he wanted, only I could not. I had no idea what a contextual analysis was, except I was fairly certain my goal in writing one was to show that history was no accident, that a logically linear path of causes and effects led to an entire neighborhood of Sullivan School houses being built in Mason City, Iowa. I never defended that thesis (and I likely could not have “defended” it, as its goals and claims were entirely foreign to me, written with the objective, third person disinterest of a person truly disinterested). So I am a failed architecture student and a good girl who was so good that rather than disappoint my professor, the kindly but controlling father of my dysfunctional family, I preferred to walk away from a degree into which I had invested thousands of dollars and
more than two years of my life. That passive act was my avoidance of the discipline’s attempt to discipline me—to make a man of me.

Ten years later, the paths of my pathology lead me home, to the thing unfinished, the story untold. The story is larger and more compelling than I could ever have imagined ten years ago. It is a story in which, strangely, all my preoccupations are central: the crossing paths of gender, discourse, architecture, and the machinations of an interested history written by the victors. My preoccupations are central because it is my story—if I slip briefly into that disinterested third person voice, do not be lulled into thinking this project is in any way objective. It is auto/bio/ graphical; my text writes me as I write my text. When I’ve finished, I hope to have come to terms with my anger at all those years of being a good girl in a dysfunctional discipline, not questioning abusive academic practices, and always feeling embarrassed because this thing I loved and hated, the discourse that is architecture, could steal away my breath and my self esteem, simultaneously, assuring I would never really leave, no matter how horribly it treated me. Every path(ology) leads home.

This is an unobjective truth, as far as I know it. This is why I can write about Marion Mahony Griffin; this is why I can’t not write about Marion Mahony Griffin.
CHAPTER 1.
WHY ARE THERE NO GREAT WOMEN ARCHITECTS?
THE INNOCENT QUESTION AND THE DISCOURSE OF ARCHITECTURE

The absence of women from the profession of architecture remains, despite various theories, very difficult to explain and very slow to change. It demarcates a failure the profession has become adept at turning a blind eye to, despite the fact that it places architecture far behind the other professions with which architects frequently seek to align themselves [law and medicine]. If we consider architecture as a cultural construct, both vessel and residue, we can but wonder what this symptomatic absence suggests about our culture and the orders that govern the production of its architecture. One thing is clear, however: just as the absence of either sex from a large constituency must indicate some internal crisis in which gender plays a crucial role, the absence of women from the profession of architecture points to a profound gender-related crisis at the base of architecture.

—Francesca Hughes, *The Architect: Reconstructing Her Practice*

Architecture is a discourse: it is a vessel that carries meaning and to which residual and excess meaning cling. It is a construct—a cultural construct that is both discursively and literally constructed. Because we can see and inhabit monolithic structures we refer to as architecture, and because we have developed an Art we call Architecture, it is easy to begin to think that when we talk or write about architecture, that we are somehow referring to the thing itself, the structures and constructs of our built environment, and not to discourse that has both shaped the thing and given it its meaning. Theorist Catherine Ingraham suggests as much when
she writes, "the building is the site of a gap filled up, provisionally, with the multiple descriptions that create a web of reality..." ("Losing It" 161). The substantiality of the architectural construct is created not so much of the builders' materials of steel girders or reinforced concrete piers but of gossamer layers of description. Scripts. Stories. Words. The architecture is the discourse; the discourse is the architecture.

This discussion is far from some sort of postmodern posturing—it is central to thinking about the ways in which disciplinary knowledge is constructed and contested. When we forget that architecture (or any disciplinary practice) is a *logos*, we forget what is at stake in its discourse, and we can give up contestation of the right to shape that discourse,¹ to write the script, rather than to play a part already written. As Donna Haraway argues, "to do that [contest for the discourse] you've got to understand how those discourses are enabled and constrained, what their modes of practice are" (5).

Haraway is not alone in asserting the importance of contesting constraining discourses. Lorriane Code begins her 1995 *Rhetorical Spaces: Essays on Gendered Locations* by asserting that her book is "about knowledge and subjectivity: about their multiple enactments—their mutually enabling and constraining effects—in the legitimating and discrediting structures of late-twentieth-century western societies" (ix). Rhetorical spaces, then, are those locations where the enactments of knowledge and subjectivity play themselves out—are legitimated and discredited—and historically such locations have been occupied by that universal descriptor of subjectivity, the white western man of property, who, not surprisingly, is also the subject in overwhelming control of the discourse that is architecture. In her essay, "The F Word in Architecture," Sherry Ahrentzen writes, "Defining what is architecture is the purview of those who have the power, clout and the marketability to label. Architecture historically has largely been defined by men..." (76).

For those who are not universal subjects—the Other to the white, western man of property—negotiating rhetorical spaces is a treacherous business because of the uneven
distribution of expertise, power, and authority (and access to them) within our culture. In fact, only recently have theorists begun to chart the ways in which the marked bodies of women, people of color, and other colonized peoples impact their access to the rhetorical spaces in which discourse is constructed and contested. According to Code, "territorial imperatives structure and limit the kinds of utterances that can be voiced... with a reasonable expectation of uptake and 'choral support': an expectation of being heard, understood, taken seriously" (ix-x). It is in the public territories where cultural knowledge is produced that women and other colonized "others" have had the most difficulty entering rhetorical spaces "with a reasonable expectation of uptake." The discipline of architecture is closed to women because the discourse of architecture is constructed in a rhetorical space whose doors are closed to women. And vice versa.

In her focus on the interaction of rhetoric and epistemology, Code introduces a critique of traditional philosophical epistemology, a tradition that has tended to assert an apolitical and disinterested neutrality in the historic construction of knowledge and the construction of the knowledge of history. Code's book is about a commitment to

'changing the subject' who has been the main character—albeit a shadow presence—in the stories that epistemologists of the Anglo-American mainstream have favored: the abstract, interchangeable individual whose monologues have been spoken from nowhere, in particular, to an audience of faceless and usually disembodied onlookers. (xiv)

She argues instead that, "I engage this project by example, showing how monological epistemologies tend to down grade testimony unevenly, according to whose it is... how they mask their own complicity in structures of power and privilege" (xiv).
This story I tell is one that attempts to interrogate the discourse of architecture, a discourse that tightly polices the utterances that can be made within its borders. According to Code:

This is an epistemology oblivious to experiential and political specificity. Yet its appeals to a taken-for-granted normality, achieved through commonality, align it with all of the positions of power and privilege that unthinkingly consign to epistemic limbo people who profess "crazy, bizarre, or outlandish" beliefs, and negate their claims to the authority that knowledge confers. (32-33)

She is keenly aware of how easily voices from the margins can be dismissed as fundamentally unknowable by those at the center who police truth and knowledge claims. In the studies of architectural history, women generally have been constructed as unknowable, as "other"-than-architects. Their testimony is downgraded, their voices ignored. Code theorizes the narrowness of rhetorical space in the margins—the necessity of not just having knowledge to share, but of receiving acknowledgment in the form of a listening audience.

Code specifically theorizes the uneven access to power that renders many speakers less likely to be heard. She points repeatedly to Wittgenstein's claim that "knowledge is based on acknowledgment." She asserts, however, that one step in the move toward acknowledgment is a demystification of the ways in which credibility has been established by exposing the abstract and disengaged agent as interested and privileged: "For there is no doubt that only the supremely powerful and privileged could believe, in the face of all the evidence to the contrary, that there is only one true view, and it is theirs; that they alone have the resources to establish universal, incontrovertible, and absolute truth" (54). She is closely aligned with other feminist theorists, then, in her interest in concretizing experience in order to expose the nearly invisible power functions of Enlightenment universality: the universal man and his cousins, the disinterested philosopher, the unbiased scientist, and the object of my concerns, the politically
neutral (architectural) historian. The politically neutral architectural historian who has claimed the right to construct the discourse of the discipline has created a simple "universal, incontrovertible, and absolute truth" with the axiom that there are no great women architects, and the comfortable corollary "men build, women decorate" (Lindquist-Cock and Jussim 9). It is into this discourse that architectural historians write their histories; it is this conventional wisdom they must invoke if they hope to engage their peers with "an expectation of being heard, understood, taken seriously."

The Problem: Building Discourse Without Women

If a high school student were to ask what to do to be remembered as a great architect, Roxanne Williamson, in her book *American Architects and the Mechanics of Fame*, has some suggestions which boil down to be wealthy, well-connected, and shamelessly self-promoting (230). She needs to add to that list: do not be a woman. Of the 247 famous architects she names in her "Index of Fame," only one, Marion Mahony Griffin, is a woman. Though her book avoids the discussion of gender, Williamson alludes to it when she notes the absence in the survey textbooks she reviewed of even a mention of California architect Julia Morgan. She notes, "As my lists began to grow to extraordinary lengths, I discovered that the names of many architects I personally thought were famous were not included. . . . I expect many knowledgeable readers will experience disbelief over names missing from the Index..." (14).

Of course, Williamson is referring to the actual names of actual architects missing from her list; scholars preoccupied with gender issues simply note a telling absence of women. As Ingraham writes, "Wherever we find a specific group of people almost entirely excluded—in this case women from the profession of architecture—we might suspect that there is some sort of identification crisis underway" (155). The telling absence of women in the discourse of architecture is the central preoccupation of this story.

In contemporary architectural history courses the "problem" of women is regularly "solved" in one class period with a single question: why are there no great women architects?
Sherry Ahrentzen and Kathryn Anthony describe architectural history as "a curriculum of great men and great monuments" (13) and go on to argue that architecture students are presented with "a history in which women do not appear and in which women’s particular accomplishments are not recognized" (14). The notion of recognition is an important one, for as Julie Willis notes in "Invisible Contributions: The Problem of History and Women Architects," women are rarely deliberately excluded, though they are almost always excluded in fact (60). Historians’ habits of scholarship exclude them.

It would not be difficult to address the issue of women in architecture in a single one hour class period; of the five most commonly used survey textbooks written or reissued since 1980, none mentions more than two American women and no three mention the same women, suggesting a lack of critical consensus that undermines the possibility that these women might be "great." The survey text feminist architectural historian Karen Kingsley uses, Kenneth Frampton’s *Modern Architecture: A Critical History*, mentions four women (internationally). Kingsley uses the text, not because of its inclusiveness, but because it can be read oppositionally, to subvert the canon (261). Most professors do not attempt to subvert the canon; women are as absent from the standard curriculum as they are from survey texts, rarely receiving more attention than a single class period.

Some professors skip this day entirely and move on to discuss a semester’s worth of male architects, buildings designed by men, architectural texts written by men, and a battery of secondary texts, which, until very recently, were also nearly all composed by men. A word that often arises in such classes is genius—and the notion of genius permeates the study of architectural history. As Garry Stevens writes in *The Favored Circle: The Social Foundations of Architectural Distinction*, "the ideology of artistic genius... is one of the fundamental axioms of architectural thought" (9). Anna Rubbo concurs, arguing, “the profession, the public, and the historians who follow on, seek heroes, individuals in whom they believe the locus for architectural creativity resides” (25). In her book, *Genius and Gender: Towards a*
Feminist Aesthetic, Christine Battersby traces the contemporary notion of genius to the romantic period when the word became gendered—that is, it became a male trait. Although the star quality of the lone genius in architectural history is itself a problematic paradigm, its gendered nature makes architecture a discourse doubly difficult for women to enter.

The ideology of artistic genius flourishes, in great part, because architects are famous for writing articles and treatises that proclaim their genius, and such texts are then used by architectural historians to better understand and promote the work and genius of these architects. Williamson concurs when she writes: "Self-promotional activity has been a fact of architectural history since the Renaissance. . . . The words 'publication,' 'publicity,' and 'fame' are so closely related that it is hard to conceive of architectural fame without both the printed word and photographs or drawings" (167). The printed word is central to the discourse that lends architecture its substantiability: yet, women are represented in the texts of architecture most frequently by their absence. In the texts of the history of architecture, women constitute a negative space. Ahrentzen and Anthony ask if this textual absence coincides with a real absence, then answer their own question. "No. Female absence in architectural history and precedence results from the definitions of architecture and architect established by the gatekeepers of history: instructors, writers, and publishers" (14). They go on to assert that “The construction of architecture’s history reflects the firm grip of the star system on architectural education” (14).

Such views of architectural history also help explain why male architects become famous. Stevens refers to "four presuppositions" among architectural theorists that are used to account for architectural genius, and from which fame (deservedly) follows:

- Great buildings, qua works of art, are unique.
- Great buildings are executed by a single creator.
- Aesthetic value is inherent in the great building.
- Architecture is the expression of the creator's singular genius. (16-17)
Interestingly, while the social is useless in the discourse concerning of the genius of male architectural "stars" (for, as Stevens points out, "social" concerns are collective), it is employed compulsively to explain the absence of women from architecture. So if a professor is interested in explaining to his students (and tenured professors in architecture departments are nearly all male) why the class will not include the work—and genius—of women architects, he will discuss women's lacks. Some professors still discuss women's intellectual lacks, though more politically aware professors discuss women's historical lacks: lack of access to higher education; lack of access to the professional connections through which commissions are awarded; lack of access to the apprenticeship process through which professional practice is established; lack of a wife to carry on reproductive labor of cooking, cleaning, child care, entertaining clients, running a household, etc.

Such historical lacks are not fictions and they do help explain the difficulties women have had in obtaining architectural training. But as Susanna Torre argues, "They do not forcefully challenge the ideological assumptions underlying [that one] persistent and reproachful question" (10): Why are there no great women architects? Although few, there are women architects. Torre's book, *Women in American Architecture* chronicles nearly 300 pages of achievements of women who have practiced architecture in the US—without approaching the total number of women who have practiced architecture here. Ten years later, Ellen Perry Berkeley and Matilda McQuaid's *Architecture: A Place for Women* adds significantly to that list and further expands the disciplinary boundaries of architecture so that it admits even more women. So this listing of women's historical lacks does not explain why there are no great women architects, because clearly there are accomplished women architects. Torre asserts that:

this question, like so many others thrown at women with varying degrees of animosity or bewildered sympathy, [quoting Linda Nochlin]

'falsifies the nature of the issue' while it supplies at the same time its own
insidious answer: 'there are no great women architects because women are incapable of greatness.' (10)

That women are incapable of greatness is clearly the answer the romantic notion of genius asserts, according to Battersby, who argues that the possibility of genius in women did not exist because by definition, geniuses were men. Such a convergence of thought has informed the practice and pedagogy of architectural history: architectural greatness requires genius; genius is a male trait; architectural greatness requires a man.

When the first of my many architectural history professors asked this question ten years ago, I took the bait. I offered three examples of women architects whose work I thought was great (my undergraduate experience at predominately women’s college had deluded me), to be told, with a very patient smile, that one, Julia Morgan, was a prolific architect, and two, Marion Mahony Griffin and Margaret MacDonald Macintosh, were designers who were wives of very good architects. It is a telling response, in terms of what the field values and dismisses. It values individual success and creativity; it dismisses collaborative contributions. Julia Morgan alone was allowed to even keep the title of architect—Julia Morgan, who was never attached to a man and for whom, therefore, issues of attribution are relatively simple. She designed over 800 projects, all of which are attributable to her office, in which she was the principle architect; therefore, she is at least prolific (and—according to my professor, anyway—a possibly good, certainly not great, architect). Marion Mahony Griffin and Margaret MacDonald Macintosh present problems of attribution, because they married architects whose signature claimed all the work their firms produced. Attribution is difficult; they are named designers (help-mates) so that their husbands can retain their canonical positions; to call them architects would challenge the notion of the singular genius.

Those answers, and question itself, I’ve come to realize, are about power. The question is about telling women, sitting in architecture classes, that the history of greatness is not their history. The assumption that women cannot be great architects is so pervasive that it shapes
(and distorts) scholarship. It is so pervasive in educational practices within architectural studies that even feminist teachers repeat the question (with that "bewildered sympathy") and list historical-cultural constraints to answer it. But the problem is not simply historical; it is present. It is a present problem built on an historical foundation that at every turn assumes and asserts women's mediocrity: technical competence without creative genius.

The Project: Building Women's History

My purpose in writing this text is to begin to recover a history of women in architectural practice, not by simply adopting one woman and arguing that she is, too, great, but by interrogating the discourse that is architecture. As Silvestra Mariniello writes in *Gendered Agents: Women and Institutional Knowledge*, "The understanding that everything is political, that is, that there are no 'innocent' statements or gestures, is one of the most important 'truths' that feminism has helped bring forth" (10). The discourse of architecture is neither objective nor innocent: it is raced, gendered, and classed in ways that have led to a history of racism, sexism and classism in practice and in the academy that have been well documented in the last decade (Kingsley and Glynn, Ahrentzen and Anthony, Groat and Ahrentzen, Ahrentzen, Kingsley, Frederickson). The absence of women and people of color from the history of architecture is both the cause and the effect of the absence of women and people of color in the present tense of architectural practice and scholarship. When the history assures at every turn that the archetypal architect is the white "gentleman" there develops what Groat and Ahrentzen call "a tacit double standard whereby male students are perceived by some faculty as inherently more architect-like" (172). Dana Cuff, in her history of architectural practice, reaffirms that notion, asserting, "The acculturation process indirectly teaches that full-fledged architects are supposed to be men" (145).

Moreover, such acculturation has been imported into the culture at large. The star system in architecture has brought us architects who are household names (like Frank Lloyd Wright), and all those names belong to men. The result is a public that associates being an
architect with being male. One practicing male architect in Kingsley and Glynn’s study suggested this may be one reason women have difficulty gaining the respect of clients; he offers, “[the] average citizen could not name one nationally recognized female architect [and] therefore perceives it to be a man’s profession” (16-17). It becomes difficult to separate cause from effect: is there no history of nationally recognized female architects because women cannot get clients, or can women not get clients because there is no history of women in architecture? Or is there a lengthy past of women in architecture and simply no history of it? Why are there no great women architects?

The compelling story painstakingly documented by scholars in architectural education over the past decade asserts an education that is separate and unequal, that not just tolerates but promotes harassment of women and minorities, and has occluded the history of their contributions to the field (both another manifestation of harassment and another reason harassment can occur). In the field of architectural history, scholars compose a similarly compelling story as they recover the histories of women practitioners. Like Torre’s Women in American Architecture, Berkeley and McQuaid’s 1989 book Architecture: A Place for Women recovers the names and practices of a whole history of women in architecture. Scholars have begun to write biographies of women architects—and although book-length treatments are still having difficulty finding publishers, women in architecture are increasingly the subjects of article-length biographical treatments.

In addition, women’s historical roles as critics, historians, collaborative partners, clients, and designers of domestic and sacred spaces have all been taken up in an effort to expand understanding of women’s roles in architecture. Diane Favro’s analysis of the work and practice of Julia Morgan, Gwendolyn Wright and Delores Hayden’s work on women as designers and users of domestic and public spaces, and Beatriz Colomina’s research on collaboration all show how feminist research in architectural history is changing the field. Colomina writes in “Collaborations: The Private Life of Modern Architecture” that “Critics
and historians are shifting their attention from the architect as a single figure, and the building as an object to architecture as a collaboration" (462). Scholars like Anna Rubbo have defended using ethnographic methodologies in architectural histories, noting that, "architectural history traditionally tends to approach its subject through one of two interpretive routes: architecture-as-object or architect-as-author" ("Through the Looking Glass" 38). Often, as Rubbo goes on to note, neither of these traditional strategies is appropriate for describing the careers of women, who do not represent themselves in such ways. This shift, however, is very slow, and the historians and critics who make it their work often find themselves relegated to the fringes of their discipline. But the combined weight of these stories is providing a counter-narrative that rattles the windows of architectural history, highlighting points of weakness in its asserted stability, contesting for the right to construct its discourse.

**Text: Construction and Reconstruction**

Perhaps because of the growth of interest in women and collaboration in architecture, scholarship concerning Marion Mahony and Walter Burley Griffin has increased exponentially in the past ten years. There is more and more interesting work being done on the Griffins, their lives and beliefs, and their prolific architectural production—they produced between 350-500 projects across three continents. Though most of what is known about the Griffins comes to us through their architectural work and through secondary interpretations of their texts, both were also prolific writers whose texts are available to scholars. Mahony Griffin's *The Magic of America*, often described as a biography of Griffin, is over 1000 manuscript pages long, and contains hundreds of illustrations. Griffin's many essays might be described as his *Kindergarten Chats*, outlines of his architectural philosophy addressed mainly to other architects and appearing in trade journals. However, because these texts are not easily available to the general public—Mahony Griffin's *The Magic of America* has never found a publisher and most of Griffin's essays were published in Australian architectural or theosophical journals in the early decades of this century—what we really know of these architects and their work
together comes through secondary sources. Therefore, what scholars assert these texts say and say about these texts has been central in the ways in which the Griffins and their work have been understood. Not only is "the building the site of the gap filled up" but even texts do not speak for themselves: they are spoken for, by historians, critics, and practitioners who create a discourse that shapes existing texts for future historians, critics, and practitioners.

Since its first mention in secondary sources, *The Magic of America*, has proven itself difficult for scholars to evaluate, to read and even to use. Anna Rubbo, in "Marion Mahony Griffin: A Larger Than Life Presence" writes:

> While 'The magic of America' is a key source of information about this important early twentieth-century architecture practice in the United States. Australia, and India, its value as a historical record has not been fully explored. Its postmodern fragmentary quality, and the interpretive task the text demands may partly explain this. (46)

Admittedly, even the most sympathetic reader could leave the text feeling unfulfilled by the many questions it raises and the few questions it answers, particularly if a reader approached it with an idea it would follow traditional generic conventions of autobiography or biography. In contrast to texts that typify those genres, James Weirick writes, "It offers not a totality of vision, but an endless array of possibilities" ("Vision and Text" 14). But in spite of interpretive difficulties, this unpublished text has been important to four decades of scholarship.

Although a large body of scholarship now exists on the Griffins, their lives and their careers, little has been written about *The Magic of America* and its contested position in research on the Griffins. Even less has been written that attempts to understand the text in its own right, as an argument attempting to shape the discursive practice that is architecture; heretofore, its only importance has been in whatever light it has been able to shed on the Griffins' lives and work (and most regularly to quote Mahony Griffin describing her husband's superior genius). However, because the text has been so thoroughly constructed for readers by
early historians, whose feminized characterizations of the text and its writer have undermined the text's potential use for academics, the newest generation of scholars have had to do painstaking reconstructive work on the text's reputation before they could use it. Such attempts to reclaim the text—usually for use by feminist scholars, have themselves faced a sort of feminized characterization that have undermined these scholars’ work. This study follows that story as well—the construction and reconstruction of the complex arguments Mahony Griffin attempted to add to the discourse of architecture.

Constructing the Woman

And even after nearly ten years of considering Marion Mahony Griffin's life and work, I am not much closer to understanding those complex arguments this woman put forth: a delicate balance among her seemingly contradictory beliefs in strident individuality, commitment to democracy, and an architecture that created spaces for both. My fascination with her life and writing have led me, at various points in my ten years with her, to cast her as a feminist, a revolutionary, an overlooked, proto-post-modern literary genius, a religious zealot, a political theorist, and most recently, a very good architect who was a very difficult writer. None of these alone is quite an accurate depiction though there may be pieces of the "real" woman in all of these characterizations. And any of these is closer than the "embittered" and "angry" or "naive" that have typically characterized her in secondary texts; these characterizations can not be supported easily by available primary evidence—letters, interviews, her own or Griffin's writing.

All these characterizations have appeared in secondary sources all of which point to two pieces of "evidence": strongly worded passages expressing a dislike for Frank Lloyd Wright and a repudiation of his influence (which Mahony Griffin would hardly have been alone in) and the unexplained discovery that someone (likely Mahony Griffin), some time after his death, inked out Griffin’s name of many of the architectural drawings Mahony Griffin had produced for their architectural practice. These two stories are repeated, nearly word for word.
throughout secondary sources on the Griffins, to assert Mahony Griffin’s profound “bitterness,” though such a characterization is incompatible with more than one thousand pages of text and countless interviews with the Griffins' associates.\textsuperscript{31}

More accurate, I think, is the dawning view that Mahony Griffin was a woman with a passionate interest in political, philosophical and religious theory, who worked her entire adult life in a profession dominated by men, and who thought of herself as a "battler"\textsuperscript{12} in the Australian sense—the little guy, Everyman, fighting the powers that be. The prolific architectural work she and her husband produced reflects their political and religious beliefs and her auto/biographical manuscript, \textit{The Magic of America}, represents an attempt to augment the historical record left by their buildings, to write herself and her husband into the history of architecture and perhaps also the history of American thought by outlining their battles with authority in the name of democracy. Her text, then, was a permanent record explicating her (and Griffin's) overtly political architectural practice.

**Reconstructing the Text and the Woman: the Feminist Problem**

At times, my political goals and Mahony Griffin’s are difficult to reconcile. Although by the end of her life, Mahony Griffin appeared aware of the hardships her woman's body cost her professionally, and her manuscript depicts her as keenly aware of women's issues and in support of greater freedoms for women, it is difficult to read her as a feminist—at least not in any contemporary sense. As much as I have searched for her manuscript to reveal clues of buried feminist leanings, traces of rebellion against the law of the father, or an understanding that patriarchy was somehow implicated in the colonizing tendencies she identified as the antithesis of democracy, her text thwarted me at regular intervals. She is not silent on such issues and exhibits a great empathy toward the women of color she meets in Australia and India; however, she repeatedly ignores gender as a factor in shaping \textit{her} life and choices. In fact, as a young woman, when composing an update for her MIT class letter in 1898, she
refuses to acknowledge either her own privilege or her family connections—her early commissions came through her family's social connections and she was hired by her cousin:

I felt right proud when I obtained a position as a draftsman one week after leaving Tech, and prouder still to be earning the lordly sum of six dollars a week, my employer's estimate of the value of my service far exceeding my own. (Chicago men welcome women into the profession with open arms.) (qtd. Berkon 75)

Though other women's lives might be constrained by details of their race, class, colonization, and religion, she spends no time considering that her own life might be constrained by such factors, or conversely, that her white, liberal Christian, middle class family may be tied intimately to her early success. Moreover, in spite of the fact that she was "welcomed with open arms" by her cousin, she suggests that the Chicago architectural community in general was welcoming to women. On the difficulty she might have faced without family connections, she is silent.

While such silence is not surprising, it is important to note that few women of her time were able to engage in architectural practice, even after earning their degrees. As Susan Fondiler Berkon and Jane Holtz Kay report in "Marion Mahony, Architect":

In two decades (1878-1900) only ten of the 25 women who passed through "Tech" actually practiced their profession. Discrimination was severe. Firm after firm barred women architect apprentices while lack of apprenticeship closed the door to opportunity. . . . Before 1900, only one woman, Louise Bethune of Buffalo, New York, was admitted to the American Institute of Architects. (11)

Mahony Griffin's refusal to consider either her privilege or the limitations placed on her potential achievement by her gender is not uncommon. And while certainly I could reread her text and frame that silence in terms of psychoanalytic or materialist theory, discussing her internalized normalization of confining patriarchal and class structures, I prefer, I think, to take
her at her word and consider her as the exceptional and privileged woman she creates in her letters, essays, and narratives that comprise her manuscript. However, taking her at her word creates interpretive problems. She contradicts herself repeatedly—she portrays herself both as architect and devoted help-mate, both as a professional woman and a woman whose interests lay very much in the domestic sphere, often surround by children (though she never had children of her own). Which of these manifestations is the exceptional woman and which the great architect?

My concern is to forge a connection to the material that will avoid the possible negative effects of what Susan Gubar and Sandra Gilbert call "fantastic collaboration." Though their 1984 *The Madwoman in the Attic* assumes the positive power of the sorts of feminist textual recuperations and recoveries made possible through the "fantastic collaboration" of the proto-feminist text by the contemporary feminist critic, I do not want my desire to discover the great woman architect to overshadow Mahony Griffin's experience of her own life—she writes quite humbly of her architectural achievements. Feminist scholars often find themselves in the position of wanting to be the perfect reader and interpreter of a newly discovered, recovered or uncovered "feminist" text: we desire to have the woman's text reflect the goals of contemporary feminist criticism. I don't decry this phenomenon: in fact, I understand perfectly the long-term love affair a contemporary reader can have with a dead woman's text, recovering "truths" from silences and fragments. Such an idealization of a sisterhood of women dialoguing across time creates an imaginary feminism, a utopian impulse which has both positive attributes and negative effects.

The positive attributes I embrace are those that lend themselves to a speculative scholarship—one that challenges the very questions that have driven previous academic inquiry, redefining concepts of genius, the drive toward attribution, and the dismissal of substantiative collaboration. My speculative scholarship interrogates why, as a discipline, architectural studies
focuses on genius and attribution and undermines collaboration. Who benefits from this focus?

The negative effects of fantastic collaboration that I hope to avoid are those that attempt to align the text with the goals of contemporary feminism, which I embrace but which were nearly unimaginable to even the politically radical Mahony Griffin, writing The Magic of America in the 1940's. Though she supported and spent her life working for individual human rights and freedoms, to cast her as a feminist probably would be unfair to the brand of humanism she embraced through her Anthroposophic religion—a religion that was central to defining and clarifying her beliefs about human beings, architecture, and democracy.

**Feminist Theories of Autobiography**

Moreover, the text is even difficult and resistant to analysis using traditional feminist literary theory. Feminist critical theory seems to work best when it is applied to pliable texts—texts either feminist or feminine. In her book Space, Time, and Perversion, Elizabeth Grosz asserts a vague taxonomy among what she calls women's texts, feminine texts, and feminist texts. Women's texts, she offers, are those written by women primarily for women; feminine texts are those whose formal components make them seem to be written by women—their point of view or style are "culturally designated" feminine. Feminist texts are those that overtly challenge the "methods, objects, goals, or principles of mainstream patriarchal canons" (11). All of these are problematic when working with some texts written by women—texts like Mahony Griffin's that seem to be none of the above—because such texts resist analysis in any of these typical categories, they have fallen through the cracks of scholarship and are ignored.

For example, Mahony Griffin's text is not a woman's text—though written by a woman, the text was prepared for an audience of professional colleagues—nearly all men. It is not a feminine text in that it conforms to the stereotypical feminine in terms of neither style nor content; in fact, it self-consciously employs writing strategies typically designated male—it is
most often monologic, didactic, and treatise-like. It regularly ignores personal relationships and privileges professional life and individual accomplishments. Finally, it is not an overtly feminist text. According to Grosz:

- A feminist text must not only be critical of or a challenge to the patriarchal norms governing it; it must also help, in whatever way to facilitate the production of new and perhaps unknown, discursive spaces—new styles, modes of analysis and argument, new genres and forms—that contest the limits and constraints currently at work in the regulation of textual production and reception. (23)

In contrast, Mahony Griffin's text self-consciously employs the "methods, objects, goals, and principles of a mainstream patriarchal text" (12) or at least the principles of patriarchal architectural autobiography, following the lead of Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright.

Mahony Griffin's text is resistant to such categories and therefore resistant to simple feminist recovery. Such a recovery would have to overlook the ways in which Mahony Griffin employs stereotypically masculinist style and content and rejects opportunities to specifically address women as her audience. However, rather than creating, as previous scholars have argued, an incoherent and bitterly inaccurate autobiographical manuscript, (characterized by her woman's writing), she created a treatise characterized by its attempt to connect with the discourse of her professional community (often cited as a characteristic of men's writing).

Rubbo asserts succinctly, "'Magic of America'... has often been dismissed as rambling and fragmentary. In reality it is contemporary and demanding, a text that challenges the reader to interpret a world of creative work, ideas, sharp commentary and personal reflection" ("Through the Looking Glass" 38). By using this kit of rhetorical tools, tools that require interpretive work on the reader's part, Mahony Griffin attempted to gain access to the rhetorical space available to those of her profession, but not of her gender. It is her attempt to negotiate professional rhetorical spaces that differentiates her text from the typical woman's text. Her failure to gain...
a listening audience is not because she employed women's language, or even because she
employed men's language ineffectively. Rather, Mahony Griffin's text was rejected by
publishers and peers because of her presumption that she could enter and navigate treacherous
public rhetorical spaces—as Sidonie Smith argues in A Poetics of Women's Autobiography, "If
she presumes to claim a fully human identity by seeking a place in the public arena, therefore
she transgresses patriarchal definitions of female nature by enacting the scenario of male
selfhood" (8). Mahony Griffin's rhetorical strategy in her manuscript—to present herself as the
artistic man who was the subject of proper autobiography—conflicted too overtly with her
woman's body (which she attempted to deny as much as possible) and her self-characterization
as a normal woman with exceptional accomplishments. Clearly, then, in spite of my personal
politics, a feminist lens alone does not assure readers entry into this difficult text or into web of
secondary texts that have attempted define and determine the meaning of Mahony Griffin's life,
work, and text for future scholars.

Deferring the Solution

Instead, this project examines the history of architecture as "vessel and residue:" as a
way we can read the past in the present, and the present through the past. Women in the history
of architecture are present as "residue" or trace. Their contributions have been, in many cases,
erased, marked out, reattributed, redescribed, or spoken-for: a literal erasure of a signature. As
Jacques Derrida asserts in "Signature Event Context":

By definition, a written signature implies the actual or empirical
nonpresence of the signer... the signature also marks and retains his
having been present in a past now or present... in the transcendental
form of presentness. (Bizzell and Herzberg 1183)

Though Derrida critiques the signature as an attempt to tether the written word to a single author
in the way speech is always already tethered to the speaker, his assertions raise interesting
questions in terms of architecture, because the missing signatures of collaborators from project
drawings have led to those collaborators being rendered absent in a past in which they were truly present. Moreover, a controversy in Mahony Griffin's life, one which has taken on mythic proportions, involves her previously mentioned act of adding her signature to certain project drawings, blacking out her husband's signature from other drawings, and appending her signature with the words "designing architect" on other drawings. Mahony Griffin appears to have wanted to be certain she was present in a past that seemed conspiring to erase her.

Such a history of traces, absences, and occlusions calls out for not only feminist but postmodern readings. Although my telling of Mahony Griffin's story is too rhetorical to be truly deconstructive, it does borrow from that tradition in vocabulary and its focus on textual manipulations—my manipulations of texts, the texts' manipulations of me. Like Derrida's famous "il n'y a pas de hors-texte," I assert that our knowledge of an architectural world is constructed through discourse—that texts connect to other texts, rather than transparently to the world, and how we know that world is through reading texts—interpretations of that world. I attempt to disrupt history, or in Cheryl Glenn's words show that, "Thus history is not frozen, not merely the past. It provides an approachable, disruptable ground for engaging and transforming traditional memory or practice in the interest of both the present and the future" (389).

In this project, I take my cues from Bloomer working archi/textually through Derrida. Bloomer describes her project in Architecture and the Text: The (S)crypts of Joyce and Piranesi as a sort of "radical empiricism" (7), in which she closely analyzes texts, seeking her method within the texts themselves. Bloomer's project is political in that it challenges traditional academic notions of logic, linearity, and objectivity—phallogocentrism—as well as the traditional notions of architectural theory/practice split.

My project is a form of radical rhetoricism, for though I also closely analyze texts, reading for traces, residues, occlusions and absences, all the texts I read are connected through their attempts to shape and control a specific discourse, the story of architects Marion Mahony
and Walter Burley Griffin. The contestation over this discourse is intimately linked to the lack of women in architectural education and practice, the history of occlusion that is the history of women in architecture, and the academic notions of rationality, linearity, and objectivity that have shaped and gendered disciplinary discourse. Although I work at the textual level, my story shuttles and shuffles between the texts that construct one small corner of the architectural world—the lives, work, and texts of the Griffins. And my analysis is based in Glenn's understanding of postmodern and feminist historiography, assuming that:

historiographic practices are so firmly situated in the postmodern critique of rhetoric that many of us already take for granted that histories do (or should do) something, that they fulfill our needs at a particular time and place, and that they never and have never reflected a neutral reality. In choosing what to show, how to represent it, whom to spotlight, all these maps subtly shape our perceptions. . . . (388)

My goal is to show the non-neutrality of architectural history and the ways in which this unobjective history has (mis)shaped a discipline devoid of women.

My indebtedness to Bloomer is in her articulation of the operations performed at the textual level: "digging, peeling away, cutting, and dissecting, operations that in revealing the structures of the text simultaneously reveal the processes of making in the text" (21). Bloomer's operations are violences to the body of the text—rather than assuming a sacred text, they assume a non-neutral text constructed by a "process," a process that can be revealed and studied. My application of those operations visits a violence on the context, on the sacredness of history and assumptions of its objective and transparent (non)construction. This textual cutting and dissecting reveals the processes by which architectural historians have committed a history of violences on women practitioners through misreading, miswriting, erasing—in Bloomer's translation, "(Je vous lit difficilement). I misread you. I miswrite you. I molest
you” (107). My goal is not to reclaim one “great” woman or her work, but to call into question the violent processes by which she and Others have been rendered invisible, silent. The purpose is, as Elizabeth Grosz argues, “not so much to eliminate as reveal the masculinity inherent in the notion of the universal, the generic human, or the unspecified subject” (257) who has held the subject position in architectural studies and practice.

Keeping this in mind, my goals are overtly feminist: by following the critical response to one woman’s architectural discourse (both buildings and texts), I interrogate the mainstream history as an attempt to chronicle a(n un-objective) history of women’s mediocrity. In doing this, I have specific feminist goals: I object to the notion that there are no (and cannot be) great women architects and to the discourse constraining power that would make a professor believe the assertion innocent or instructional; I question the assumption of individual genius and the discourse that has made the assumption seem natural; and I expose the somewhat arbitrary workings of a scholarship machine that has created a canon of great works, great texts, and great men. As Shari Benstock argues, I attempt to challenge “the white, male, heterosexual ethic . . . behind the facade of a supposedly apolitical artistic practice” (153).

If these goals are overtly feminist, my methods with their reliance on Bloomer’s violent deconstruction, are only covertly so: I read the subtextual politics of academic prose and argue that it is never innocent. To do this, I employ a case study—first I introduce an architect, Marion Mahony Griffin, whose career of collaboration with her husband, Walter Burley Griffin, challenges the notion of the architect as an individual genius in that the couple’s work together was greater than the sum of its separate parts. As Rubbo notes:

Historians proverbially divide the Griffin’s careers thus: he was the architect, landscape architect and planner; she the renderer and designer of decorative detail. To the former goes prestige and elevation to the status of a quasi-hero; to the latter goes appreciative, but often scant recognition. (“A Portrait” 15)
Both Griffins had mature, independent careers before they married, and these modest individual successes can easily be compared to monumental output, creativity and international acclaim of their work together after their marriage. Even this discourse of “influence,” though, is as highly contested as the discourse of attribution.

Second, I discuss Mahony Griffin’s auto/biographical text, *The Magic of America*, by contextualizing it within the recent history of architectural self-promotional activity and then analyzing its primarily rhetorical, rather than literary goals. Although the text is similar to other architectural autobiographies (those of Frank Lloyd Wright and Louis Sullivan) of its time in purpose, content and style, historically, it has been constantly gendered; like women it has been considered an unknowable anomaly, and scholars have rewritten it in secondary sources in ways that have undermined its use to scholars.

Third, I chronicle the history of this architect’s construction by and this text’s occlusion from the discourse of architectural studies, an occlusion that mimics the omission of women from this field. I use Mahony Griffin’s text, and the secondary scholarship that has shaped it, as a case study to describe one way in which women’s important contributions to a disciplinary field are first gendered—that is summarized and described in gendered terms—and then devalued and dismissed. Such a project is necessary because it challenges as historically situated and biased the seemingly natural and normalized processes by which architects, texts, and buildings become part of a canon. Moreover, the project examines how disciplinary knowledge is created and contested, which arguments are effective and which are easily dismissed. Mahony Griffin’s arguments have been dismissed for nearly forty years, in part because the first scholars who encountered them first discredited the author and her architectural abilities, described her arguments in gendered terms, and finally condensed a lengthy and challenging text into one or two sentences, and making those arguments seem anomalous in the discourse of architectural studies.
Filling the Gaps

Therefore, I see this study as an attempt to interrogate the secondary research on the Griffins and the absence in that research of meaningful analysis of the central text about the couple, *The Magic of America.* My goal is to frame the primary text in a way that makes it more accessible for future scholars to interpret and use, and to follow the history of the secondary research in detail, to operate on those secondary texts in order to expose the situated nature of this discourse and the ways in which it is used to play out larger ideological battles concerning the policing of the discipline of architectural studies.

The story I tell in the following chapters is an attempt to respond to that persistent question: why are there no great women architects? I respond not so much with a single argument, but rather an exploration/excavation of closely related sites at which the discourses of gender and architecture collide, a collision which usually results in the erasure and silence of women from the discourse and the discipline. So this is my new answer to the question of why there are no great women architects: no reasoned chain of causality, but instead a radical rhetoricism, a belief that peeling away, dissecting discursive practices can illuminate the layers of myths and beliefs that have structured "objective" understandings and violently displaced a history of women in architectural practice. There are no great women architects because we do not study women architects, their lives, their work, or their texts. As in many fields, there is, in architectural studies, a canon around which was constructed a myth of individual genius, a myth in which many current disciplinary practitioners have an inexplicable investment. The goal of my story is to reveal the ways in which great architects are made by architectural historians, who despite their attitude of disinterested cultural observer, have a history of scholarship that suggests they are, like all of us, interested, situated, and influenced by cultural biases such as those that assert there are no great women architects for easily understandable social reasons that can be analyzed and explained in an hour long class period.
CHAPTER TWO
ERASING A WOMAN: THE CANON, ABSENCE, AND GENDER

We give things meaning by how we represent them—the words we use about them, the stories we tell about them, the images of them we produce... the ways we classify and conceptualise them, the values we place on them.

—Stuart Hall, *Representations: Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices*

Conferring meaning is perhaps the central task of the scholar. As Hall suggests, meanings are articulated (and come to stick, tenaciously) through the stories we tell as disciplinary practitioners. As these stories accrue, as their residue becomes so weighty it seems to have the substance of reality, meanings fix and crystallize, entombing what was a story, a description, in an architecture of meaning. A Truth. The central task of the contemporary feminist scholar must be to exhume these dead truths and dissect them: examine and display their decayed innards and help make new stories stick—at least for a time.

One of the first steps in this process is to demonstrate how meanings can accrue and stick because they simply reflect the easy truths that are part of an uninterrogated cultural knowledge. As James Weirick writes of Mahony Griffin:

Marion Mahony has been frequently relegated to a supporting role in discussions of the work of Wright and Griffin. Quite apart from her architectural work, the simple facts of her life have been treated with a disregard verging on contempt... This appalling record of scholarship places Marion's story on another plane, demonstrating, if any proof is needed, the precarious position of a woman isolated in a patriarchal world. ("M.I.T." 49)
Writing in 1988, nearly twenty-five years into the history of Griffin scholarship, James Weirick is the first author to analyze the lack of correct biographical material on Marion Mahony Griffin. He correctly identifies the cause of misinformation, I think, when he calls it "a disregard verging on contempt." Mahony Griffin was not studied for her own contributions to architecture, but to situate (and sublimate) her and her work in relation to the men in her life, Frank Lloyd Wright and Walter Burley Griffin. Because the goal was not to establish her place in the architectural canon, the specifics of her life (spelling of her name, dates of birth and death for example) fell victim to the primary scholarly effort—to establish and fix the canon of "great men" whose genius—personalities, buildings and texts—would become central to the story of architecture. As Thomas Tallmadge wrote in the forward to his *Story of Architecture in America*, the canon was composed of:

> the pivotal buildings [which] alone are described in detail, and only those greatest personalities who, like mountain peaks, elevate themselves above the foothills. These men are the 'heroes' of architects, and their names will live long after their earthly works have perished.

(qtd. Williamson 215)

Tallmadge was right, for as Williamson points out, the rule of the architectural canon is "once a name is on record in several histories, it is likely to appear again" (211). Conversely, once a name is left out of the histories of its time, it is unlikely to appear later, except by a great effort to reassess the discipline in the way that feminist scholarship has attempted to reclaim the work of early women practitioners.

In these ways, the process of canon formation in the discipline of architecture works in much the same way as it does in other disciplines—the canon is a great part of the discursive apparatus constructed by disciplinary practitioners to create meaning—to turn buildings into Architecture, the privileged term in the binary pair. As Garry Stevens asserts:
The central function of the discipline of architecture is to provide the intellectual instruments by which 'architecture' is valorized. . . . We can simply note in passing that all the instruments are arbitrary in that they could be other than they are, provided they served to convince others that certain parts of the built environment are good and great, and others are not. (206)

The canon is one such "intellectual instrument"; one of the stories this instrument weaves is about gender in architecture. The works of women, because they are not part of the "major" canon, are perhaps good, but not great.

The canon has a three part construction—great men, great monuments, and great texts. Architects, the great men, design buildings and, sometimes, write texts, which sometimes, become part of the canon. Architectural historians write texts that canonize great men and great monuments, and which, sometimes, become part of the canon. Both are necessary for the existence of architecture: this is not to say that without architectural historians (or architects, for that matter) we would not inhabit buildings, for clearly we would. But we would not have the discourse that has valorized architecture and those who produce it. The discourse is the architecture. Therefore, historians occupy a very important position in the discipline; in fact, critics like Stevens assert that the "discipline" is entirely composed of scholars, while the "profession" is made up of architects (206).

I begin this first chapter with a discussion of recent biographical treatments of Mahony Griffin, then provide a context for this study with a brief biography which attempts to introduce a competent and compelling woman whose life and work are too little known. This Marion Mahony Griffin perhaps lurked beneath the surface of earlier depictions, but was hidden behind a caricature description—one that was part woman and part Woman, informed, formed and deformed by the notion of Woman that plays at the edges of the discourse of architecture. I then discuss the larger architectural canon, women's almost total exclusion from it, Marion
Mahony Griffin's position in it, and her related treatment in the canon of Griffin studies. I argue that within Griffin studies, early depictions treated her with a "disregard verging on contempt." When she was mentioned, the very facts of her life were treated with a disregard that suggested even minimal scholarly efforts were wasted on her. Moreover, the details of her life that were included in these minimal representations worked to gender her in ways that kept her from the canon of "great men." After tracing the early secondary scholarship concerning Mahony Griffin, and examining the ways in which it undermined her professional contributions by focusing on personal idiosyncrasies (whether accurate or not), I suggest that Mahony Griffin's treatment is not anomalous, but is the standard in the field, as the case of Julia Morgan attests.

Biographies

Two book-length treatments of Mahony Griffin's life have been discussed for over ten years—Anna Rubbo's which was first mentioned in 1987's "Marion Mahony Griffin: A Portrait"—and Aja Prelasico's which is now fighting to find a home at its third publishing house. Although as late as 1996, it was still general knowledge within Griffin studies that at least two biographies were nearing publication. four years later, there is still no published biography of Mahony Griffin. Prelasico suggested wryly that "the movie may be out before the book." In addition, though scholars have called for its publication for more than ten years, Mahony Griffin's own text The Magic of America is no closer to publication.

Although the fight for a complete discussion of Mahony Griffin's life is far from won, there do exist several fine article-length biographies of Marion Mahony Griffin and her work, but each of these has a narrow focus that leaves readers wanting and needing more information. Berkon and Kay's article for a 1975 Feminist Art Journal and Berkon's subsequent entry on Mahony Griffin for Susanna Torre's 1977 Women and American Architecture are brief, but accurate early biographical treatments of Mahony Griffin's life and work. Although they do not mention previous scholarly inaccuracies, Berkon and Kay do note and take issue with earlier
"Historians who have seen her marriage as her [Mahony Griffin's] lifelong ulterior goal" (13). Although their article was published in 1975, it was not cited in Griffin studies until much later, and many articles and books written after it retained the inaccuracies of (male) scholarship that mar the early works on the Griffins. That such inaccuracies remained prevalent late into Griffin scholarship suggests that Berkon and Kay's feminist biography had little impact on mainstream architectural historians whose work on Mahony Griffin must not even have included a search of available secondary literature. Neither Berkon and Kay's article nor Berkon's encyclopedia entry are cited by Griffin scholars for more than ten years, until 1988, when the Australia's Monash University Gallery published a catalogue, Walter Burley Griffin — A Re-View, which attempted to reconsider the Griffins' work and assert the possibility of professional, as well as personal, collaboration.

Anna Rubbo's 1988 "Marion Mahony Griffin: A Portrait" published in Walter Burley Griffin — A Re-View is a strong first effort as scholars began to try to tell Mahony Griffin's story within the larger story of the Griffins' architectural practice. Rubbo's strengths are in her ability to work outside typical architectural studies methodologies and to speculate that the historical attribution of the architecture to Griffin and the decorative work to Mahony Griffin might not be based in fact but in habit. The extensive quotations from MOA lend the article a sense of voice and of Mahony Griffin's energy and intensity, which had never been accessible to readers of secondary sources before this one.

Weirick's "Marion Mahony at M.I.T." is another strong biographical effort—he both corrects earlier misinformation about the facts of Mahony Griffin's life and attempts to push at the edges of scholarship about her architecture as well, wondering if her thesis designs from M.I.T., "The House and Studio of a Painter," might not have influenced Wright's choice to build a studio connected to his home. Weirick's speculation is strongly argued and is the first of several other speculative articles questioning the central claims of the first generation of scholars. One of these central shifts is that later (Australian) scholars move to drop issues of
individual attribution and often write about the work of "The Griffins" (Weirick, Rubbo, Burns, Hamann, Proudfoot).[^38] Weirick's addition to the catalogue *Walter Burley Griffin A Re-View*, like Rubbo's, attempts to breathe life into the historical figure of Mahony Griffin and argue that scholars should take her text seriously.

This catalogue, rounded out by Conrad Hamann's essay, "Themes and Inheritances: The Architecture of Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony" and Peter Y. Navaretti's inventory of the Griffins Australian projects, represented a turning point in scholarship about the Griffins. Not only did these scholars expand Mahony Griffin's role in the architectural practice, they simply treated her with an intelligent dignity that seems wholly appropriate.

Janice Pregliasco, writing her "The Life and Work of Marion Mahony Griffin" in 1995, does not cite any of the earlier Australian scholarship on the Griffins. Although her biography is the most complete (and compelling) telling of Mahony Griffin's life, she becomes mired in the politics of attribution, making some strong claims for Mahony Griffin's work as designing architect on several important projects. Although the speculation is fascinating, and the assertions are no more or less scholarly than the speculations of the previous generation of scholars, the assertions are fundamentally like the speculations of previous scholars in that they privilege individual contributions and refuse to interrogate the disciplinary discourse that requires and respects only architects for whom individual attribution can be proven. Another Griffin scholar has since focused his career on refuting Pregliasco's assertions. This intense focus has undermined the authority of Pregliasco's research.

These authors, in spite of some of the limitations of the scope of their biographical treatments, employ Mahony Griffin's own text and words consistently in their telling of her life—this is very different than earlier scholars who tended to both dismiss her text and then characterize her (and her text) in specifically gendered (and dismissable) terms.
A Story

The Chicago fire of 1871 occupies a central space in the narrative of modern architecture, a story in which modernism is the phoenix rising from the ashes of a woman's (Mrs. O'Leary's) careless accident; the old song asserts playfully: "as her cow kicked it over, she winked her eye and said, 'There'll be a hot time in the old town tonight.'" By mythic association, Mrs. O'Leary becomes the woman most central to the story of modern architecture, and her association is accidental—borne of an accident—she is blamed for her cow's carelessness. Born in 1871 in Chicago, Marion Lucy Mahony's autobiography describes her infant self being carried from the burning city in a clothes basket. Although the story was no doubt truly Mahony family lore, its inclusion in her narrative attempts to tie a second woman to the first cause of modern architecture, born the same year, growing and learning under the same influences that shaped modernism in Chicago.

After the fire, the Mahony family settled in an area just north of Evanston, Illinois, then known as Hubbard Woods, a neighborhood in Winnetka. According to Michael Ebner, in Creating Chicago's North Shore, Winnetka itself was founded by Unitarians (which may be what drew the Mahonys there, as they were also Unitarians); by 1880 it had a population of 584 and was more "like a pioneer town than a suburb" (83). The area of Hubbard Woods within Winnetka was "A smaller cluster of homes mostly larger in size, several of them owned by families associated with the merchandiser known as Carson, Pirie, Scott" (83). Mahony Griffin describes a pastoral childhood where she had easy access to a natural world that became central to her developing religious beliefs. Hubbard Woods offered intellectual opportunity as well, of which it seems likely the Mahonys would have been a part.

Mahony Griffin's father, Jeremiah Mahony, was an Irishman born in County Cork, Ireland, a "poet, journalist, and educator" (Rubbo "Portrait" 16) who according to Weirick, "had the reputation of being a better teacher drunk than most teachers sober" ("M.I.T." 49). Her mother, Clara Hamilton Mahony, was the daughter of a respected doctor who moved from
New Hampshire to down state Illinois and had ties to liberal politics of Abraham Lincoln and Daniel Webster—her mother's reminiscences suggest that Lincoln was a guest in her parents' home (*MOA* IV 92). The public hall of Winnetka's Unitarian chapel saw discussions of literary works and contemporary issues (Ebner 84). Intellectual couples like Henry Demarest Lloyd and Jessie Bross Lloyd—described in Ebner's book as "intellectual activists"—organized a variety of community activities and political actions; they considered Winnetka "a laboratory where he [Henry] tested his theories about the practice of democracy" (84). The Lloyds' beliefs were certainly in step with those of Mahony's parents—and they had friends in common, from liberal educators to the Unitarian minister Robert Collyer (84). This combined access to liberal intellectual activism and an unspoiled natural environment must have had a profound influence on the child Marion, for she attempted to replicate the combination throughout her life, though most specifically in Castlecrag, in Sydney, Australia.

This life in Winnetka ended after Mahony's father died when she was eleven and the family's youngest child was four (*MOA* IV 134). Pregliasco calls the death suicide (165), though Weirick writes that Mahony died "from a self-administered overdose of laudanum" (49). Weirick goes on to quote his obituary which suggested Mahony "was cursed with a physical organization which rendered him particularly alive to incidental evils" ("M.I.T." 49); such a comment seems to suggest not suicide, but the accidental overdose of an addict.

After their own home caught fire, sometime after her father's death (*MOA* III 77), the five Mahony children and their mother moved to the west side of Chicago, where Clara Mahony studied for and passed the Chicago Public School Board exam to become an elementary principal. Active in school reform, she served as principal of the radical Komensky school until she was 76 years old. In *The Magic of America* Mahony Griffin suggests she keenly understood her mother's position as a single parent, writing, "the whole responsibility in every field on her alone, economic, domestic, educational and social" (IV 137). Mahony Griffin's aunt Myra Perkins, herself never married, moved in with the family and became young Marion's
confidant, encouraging her intellectual pursuits. Mahony Griffin reports that the women in her family were noted for their "refinement, intellect and good cooking" (MOA IV 91). It was in this household of strong women that Mahony Griffin was exposed to their women friends, people such as Ella Flagg Young, the educational reformer who helped Clara Mahony study for her Chicago School District Board exams (MOA IV 137), and Mary Hawes Wilmarth the Chicago suffragist (Weirick "M.I.T." 49). She never lacked successful women as role models.

Neither did she lack architects as role models. Mahony Griffin's cousin, Dwight Heald Perkins, studied architecture at MIT for two years (Davis 4); it is likely that this connection led Marion to MIT in 1890. Her education was funded by Anna Wilmarth, the daughter of her mother's friend Mary Hawes Wilmarth (MOA IV 152). In the pages of Magic of America devoted specifically to her own life, Mahony Griffin provides little information about the time in her life between her childhood in Hubbard Woods and her graduation from MIT, although she writes of her interest in the theater: she played, at various times, Beatrice, Portia, and Olivia (III 39) and according to Weirick, she was the first woman to take the stage in the dramatic productions at M.I.T. ("M.I.T." 51). She also writes of her friendship with her "idolized" Aunt Myra (III 76) her penchant for lying, (which she asserts must have been a general stand against authority) (IV 133) a habit of stealing change from her father (III 74) and a friendship of intellectual intensity with another Marion (Marion Lincoln Lewis), who Mahony Griffin described as a Pre-Raphaelite beauty of the "Burne-Jones" sort with whom she discussed Kant (III 72, IV 156).

Her senior thesis at M.I.T., titled "The House and Studio of a Painter," was assumed to be lost for many years, but was discovered buried in the M.I.T. archives in the 1970s (Weirick "M.I.T." 50). The plan is for a house attached to a studio by means of as colonnade enclosing a courtyard garden. The house is vaguely Second Empire in style—which would have been quite popular in 1894—drawings show a mansard roof and French neo-classical details. The studio is a charmingly simple rectangular building with large windows and pedimented ends.
The project itself is not particularly interesting (by which I mean it shows none of her later architectural preoccupations), but the concept is unusual as it connected a suburban home to a workplace. Weirick suggests that it is quite possible this unusual living/working concept influenced Wright's choice to build his studio adjacent to his home—a project he began working on in 1897-98, two or three years after Marion Mahony joined his office. The possibility certainly exists, and historians like Grant Carpenter Manson had been guessing at Wright's unusual decision for years, asking, "It is life in a Continental vein—paternalistic, imperious, strangely alien to American customs. Where did it come from?" (Weirick 52, Manson 46). Although David Van Zanten, in his "Frank Lloyd Wright's Kindergarten" connects the home studio to Henry Hobson Richardson's home office in Brookline, Massachusetts (59), he goes on to assert the differences between the two. Richardson's home would have been known to Mahony, studying in Boston, where Richardson's untimely death in 1886 made him something of a legend. Whether or not Mahony Griffin did influence Wright's decision to build his studio attached to his Oak Park home, Weirick's willingness to begin to speculate in new ways about the relationship architectural historians had established for Wright and Mahony Griffin opened the door to a new wave of speculative scholarship in Griffin studies. This new work has attempted to reexamine received habits of scholarship by noting that they, too are in good measure speculative.

When she graduated in 1894, Mahony Griffin was just the second woman to graduate from Massachusetts Institute of Technology's school of architecture, and the first to succeed in placing herself in an apprenticeship position following graduation, in the office of her cousin, Dwight Perkins, who began practice in Chicago in 1888. She joined Perkins's office in 1894, following her graduation, and helped him complete the drawings for his eleven story office/theater building, Steinway Hall. As she writes in MOA, "One year in the office of D.H. Perkins getting out at that time the working drawings of Steinway Hall, with the whole drafting
force lending me a hand to put me through my paces, gave me a sound foundation in that field" (IV 110).

After Perkins had to let Mahony Griffin go in 1895 due to an economic downturn, she briefly worked with two other architects who she identifies in the *1894 Classbook* only as classmates from M.I.T. who did not graduate. She and Hunt were at M.I.T. at roughly the same time as Mahony Griffin, but both had already studied or earned degrees at other institutions. It seems possible that they would be the classmates for whom Mahony Griffin worked briefly, before she moved on to Wright in his Schiller Building offices. Moreover, historian H. Allen Brooks discusses this 1896 period as the time in which "Wright apparently helped Myron Hunt with a double house in Evanston for Catherine White" (*Prairie School* 28). This is a commission which, according to architect Barry Byrne, Mahony Griffin also claims to have worked on, suggesting she was interacting with the architects of Steinway Hall during this time before the house was built around 1897 (Van Zanten "Early Work" 10). This means that at least some of the time she worked for Wright his offices were at Steinway Hall.

Placing Mahony Griffin within the creative milieu of Steinway Hall is not just a mental exercise—it was a time of mythic architectural activity in Chicago, the birth place of Sullivan's Kindergarten, within view. Historians tell, of Sullivan's own office high in the Auditorium Theater tower. As Brooks argues, in introducing the importance of Steinway Hall's working environment, "Frank Lloyd Wright's development as an architect should be traced not only in the buildings he designed, but in the milieu in which he worked" ("Steinway Hall" 171). Such an environment is clearly important to Wright's and others' architectural development; Brooks closes his article by asserting, "Thus the group at Steinway Hall had had an influence far beyond the confines of official practice" ("Steinway Hall" 175). Yet, Mahony Griffin has never been placed in this hotbed of radical young Chicago architects, even though she had clear connections to almost all the other architects who moved through the office, including Griffin, the politically radical Pond brothers, and later Hermann von Holst. Because this is such an
important architectural milieu, it is a stunning omission that Brooks makes not once, but twice, when he refuses to connect Mahony Griffin to this important architectural moment. Part of the work of this study is to begin to project her into those important moments of history which she may have inhabited but from which her presence has been occluded.

Mahony Griffin’s presence at Frank Lloyd Wright’s Studio is much more carefully documented. Architect Barry Byme, who came to the studio in 1902 as a nineteen-year-old, lived until 1967, and was able to offer insight into the workings of Wright’s studio and the lives of the architects who worked there. Other informants on studio life were Wright’s second son John, the inventor of Lincoln Logs who also became an architect, and the sculptor Richard Bock whose own unpublished autobiographical manuscript informs several secondary sources on Wright. Mahony Griffin seems to have been a close friend of not just Wright, but his wife Catherine (Kitty), who was within a few months of Mahony Griffin’s age and with whom she was photographed early in the century. From the Wright’s home, connected to the studio in which Mahony Griffin worked, Catherine Wright ran a kindergarten for her own children and others in the Oak Park, Illinois neighborhood. Mahony Griffin’s life-long interest in children and education would have been shared with Catherine Wright.

It was Byme who suggested that Mahony Griffin was "the most talented member of Frank Lloyd Wright’s staff, and I doubt that the studio, then or later, produced anyone superior" (109). Wright’s son John, in an often quoted letter to historian Mark Peisch (now in the Avery Architectural Library) recalled as a child first fearing Mahony, writing that she: "was so ugly, and her laugh so boisterous that I was afraid of her. Later, after seeing and appreciating her beautiful drawings, I thought she was beautiful" (qtd. Pregliasco 166). Though often described by contemporary scholars as "homely," Mahony Griffin seemed to possess a dynamic personality that made her attractive to others, although most early secondary sources omit references except those to her physical appearance. Brendan Gill, in his biography of Wright entitled Many Masks, somewhat more charitably describes her as a "gaunt, beaky, beauty" (186)
and "A tall young woman of Irish ancestry, in appearance and disposition much like Yeats's beloved Maud Gonne" (187). And certainly photographs of her from this period depict a young woman with strong, but attractive features, usually dressed theatrically, with flowing, unfitted dresses skimming her tall, willowy frame. Byrne, though describing her as unattractive, goes on to suggest she was a "fiery, spectacularly brilliant person" (qtd. Rubbo "Portrait" 18). Richard Bock wrote that she was a "brilliant intellectual and a match for Wright in debate. She served as a source of practice and training for his lecturing" (qtd. Pregliasco 166).

Byrne also describes the informal competitions Wright would hold in the studio among employees, to design the details of a project: stained glass, murals, mosaics, linens and furnishings. Occasionally, staff even designed plans and elevations as well. Byrne remembers that Mahony Griffin won most of the competitions, and that Wright filed the results of the competitions for future use. Wright retained credit for all these designs—and Byrne asserts that Wright sharply reprimanded anyone who referred to "Miss Mahony's design" (Van Zanten "Early Work" 10. Pregliasco 166. Rubbo "Portrait" 20. Manson 217).

Gill asserts that Mahony Griffin seemed to be "one of the few people whom Wright appears not to have dared patronize" (187) and it seems that Mahony Griffin did have some sort of intense intellectual friendship with Wright. Byrne reports that their lively conversations promised an interesting day in the studio, writing, "Her dialogues with Frank Lloyd Wright, who we all know is no indifferent opponent in repartee, made such days particularly notable" (qtd. Rubbo 18). Gill adds, later in his story, that Wright "felt drawn to women who assumed an embattled posture vis-à-vis accepted rules of male conduct... Marion Mahony, Mamah Cheney, and Miriam Noel, to say nothing of his third wife, Olgivanna Milanov (246). Whatever Mahony Griffin would have thought about being listed among Wright's lovers (we can assume not much, based on her anger at Wright following his defection from his family), it seems clear Wright respected her enough to grant her huge responsibilities within his office.
Grant Carpenter Manson, another Wright biographer, asserts that in a more conventionally organized office, she would have held the title of "head designer" (217). Mahony herself suggested that she was hired by Wright as "superintendent of his drafting force" (Berkon 75). Though the title would have been hollow when she was first hired in 1895 and was Wright's only employee, it does seem clear that she took up such a role as more employees were hired. She was also put in charge of creating many of Wright's presentation drawings, and historian Eileen Michels notes an improvement in Wright's drawings starting with the rendering for the Francis Apartments (302). In her autobiography, Mahony Griffin notes that the first project she worked on in Wright's office was the Francis Apartments (IV 110).

During the time she worked for Wright, she completed work on at least three independent projects: a house for her mother and herself, an addition to her brother's farmhouse in Elkhart, Indiana (from which a stained glass window exists in the collection of The Art Institute of Chicago), and a Unitarian Church in Evanston, Illinois. Mahony Griffin originally designed an octagonal plan for the church, one not unlike Wright's octagonal studio. But the congregation wanted something more conservative and "more Gothic" (Pregliasco 171). The little Neo-Gothic church that resulted was built in 1903 of rough-faced limestone—historian Carl Condit wrote of it:

Her original design for the Unitarian Church was apparently more radical than the constructed building . . . but was toned down to its relative orthodoxy by its unorthodox congregation. The pleasing little church, the only one of honesty and dignity in a city dominated by overblown ecclesiastical monuments, was demolished in 1960 to make way for a supermarket parking lot.

(210)
The project for which Mahony Griffin is perhaps best known during her years in Wright's studio did not come to be associated with her until long after its publication in 1910. Wright's portfolio, *Ausgeführt Bauten und Entwürfe, von Frank Lloyd Wright*, published in Berlin after he left the country, is according to historian Vincent Scully, "one of the three most influential architectural treatises of the twentieth century" (*Studies and Executed Buildings* 5). The portfolio, drawings of Wright's work through 1909, established the Sullivan school as part of a movement of international modernism, introducing it to Europe for really the first time. Part of the portfolio's success was its use of Mahony Griffin's distinctive drawing style—it was influenced by the sparse detail, continuous line, and skewed perspective and dramatic space of Japanese prints. The visual effect of these drawings was heightened by the contrast between the linear style of Wright's architecture and the curvilinear forms of the naturalistic environment in which Mahony Griffin sited the structures. Most historians now credit her with at least half the drawings in portfolio (Rubbo "Portrait" 15, Gill 209, Berkon 75, Brooks "Frank Lloyd Wright" 20, Pregliasco 170). According to Pregliasco, Byrne retained an annotated copy of the monograph which attributed more than half the drawings to Mahony (170). Rubbo suggests that, "However. Wright's eagerness to suppress co-authorship probably led him to delete her characteristic monogram from the published drawings" ("Portrait" 21). H. Allen Brooks asserts that of the 27 attributable drawings, 17 were by Mahony Griffin and ten were by Mahony Griffin and others ("Wasmuth Drawings" 202).

When Wright left for Europe with Mamah Cheney, a married client and neighbor, abandoning his own wife and six children as well as his practice, he collected fees on a number of unfinished projects in order to finance his trip and left the rest to a young architect at Steinway Hall named Hermann von Holst. Though it seems Wright first offered the opportunity to Mahony Griffin and others in his studio, most of them had had prior bad experiences in business dealings with Wright; they all refused. von Holst had no prior experience with Wright's architectural style and immediately hired Mahony Griffin to complete
Wright's commissions. Of the eight projects that came from this period, four were built. The projects for Henry Ford's estate of Fairlane, near Detroit, Michigan, the house for Childe Harold Wills, the designer of Ford's Model T, a commercial building and a project for a small house were not built. A house for David Amberg in Grand Rapids, Michigan and a cluster of three houses in a development called Millikin Place, in Decatur, Illinois were all built. The discourse surrounding these houses and their attribution will be discussed in the following chapter, but in terms of Mahony Griffin's personal and professional life, this period was important. Working with von Holst at Steinway Hall reunited her with Griffin, who had left Wright's studio several years before over non-payment of wages (the reason most of Wright's employees—including his own son John—eventually had to leave). Griffin worked out the landscape schemes for the Millikin Place houses, and may have collaborated with Mahony Griffin on the actual designs. This professional proximity led Mahony Griffin to fall in love.

In *The Magic of America*, she describes falling in love with Griffin:

> But when I encountered W.B.G. I was swept off my feet by my delight in his achievements in my profession, then through the common bond of interests in nature and intellectual pursuits and then with the man himself. It was by no means a case of love at first sight, but it was a madness when it struck. (IV 157)

Marion Mahony was forty years old in the spring of 1911 when she found herself in love with the thirty-four-year-old Griffin, who lived with his parents in Elmhurst, Illinois and was described by Van Zanten as an "imperturbable bachelor" ("Early Work" 19). The courtship began with the joint purchase of a white canoe which they used for weekend camping explorations of the Chicago River and connecting waterways. In her short essay "The Autobiography of Xantippe," Mahony Griffin describes their weekends sleeping in canvas bags with the boat "Allana" as her bed (*MOA* IV 274-276). After one such weekend, June 29, 1911.
they eloped to Michigan City, Indiana (the Indiana Dunes), on the east side of Lake Michigan, and were married.

Mahony Griffin began drafting her presentation drawings for Griffin soon after their marriage. The project that would change their lives was the announcement of an international competition to design the new Australian national capital, Canberra. The competition was announced in April, 1911, before the Griffins married, though it seems likely that procrastinating Griffin did not begin much work on the plans until several months later, at Mahony Griffin's prompting. Mahony Griffin composed the presentation drawings with several other architects, including Roy Lippincott who would later marry Griffin's sister Genevieve and accompany the Griffins to Australia.

*Magic of America* provides insight into both the work on the project and the Griffins' temperaments and collaboration. She asserts that while Griffin was still a university student he noted the newly federated Australia and guessed that an international competition would be held to plan a suitable capital:

> For ten years he watched the architectural publications and then, sure enough, there was the announcement before his eyes. Owing to a busy practice in 14 states, the months slipped by and nothing was done about it, though doubtless the matter was brewing within, till finally his wife, performing that valuable function of the Xantippees of the world, flew into a rage and told him that if he didn't start on the design that day she wouldn't do a stroke of drafting on the thing. The design was begun that day and, after 9 weeks of driving work, toward midnight of a bitterly cold winter night, the box of drawings, too long to go in a taxi, was rushed with doors open and men without their coats... to the last train that could meet the last boat for Australia, the imperturbable Mr. Griffin himself the only one not quite frantic by this time... (II 435)
In order to complete the many drawings for this project, Mahony Griffin employed a rendering technique she had developed which produced inked drawings on satin fabric in a lithograph inspired technique that employed photographic dyes (Peisch 111). The resulting renderings are now a part of the architectural drawing collection at the National Archives of Australia. Mahony Griffin's drawings were the only ones of the 137 entrants that sited the capital within the context of Canberra's semi-arid mountains—the other mainly European and North American architects depicted a green city and a blue sky. Mahony Griffin's renderings captured the rich variety of ochres, Golds, browns, and russets that comprise the Australian landscape neither of the Griffins had seen but for black-and-white photos. Such a depiction of the beauty of the harsh landscape perhaps resonated with the judges. On May 23, 1912, Griffin was declared the winner of the competition. Although some critics were unimpressed with the results of the competition, several cited Mahony Griffin's unusual presentation drawings as perhaps influencing the judges.56 Peisch notes that "A British critic, commenting on the fact that an unknown American architect had won such a distinguished prize, said that the beauty of the renderings probably had a great deal to do with the judges' decision to award the prize to Griffin's plan" (111). Pregliasco quotes *Town Planning Review*'s assessment of the competition:

We have only the reproductions of the originals before us, but are struck by the beautiful, though somewhat eccentric method of presentation which Mr. Griffin has adopted in his drawings. It is quite possible the Board of Assessors may have been carried away with the mere charm of this display. (176)

Already Mahony Griffin's contributions were being subsumed in her husband's work, but this early assessment suggests that those contributions to the partnership were an important part of the Griffins' ability to win important commissions.
Of the last important commissions the Griffins were to undertake in the United States, one seems to have come to Griffin through Mahony Griffin's influence. The housing development of Rock Crest/Rock Glen in Mason City, Iowa is the most extensive planned community of Sullivan School dwellings built. Dr. Robert McCoy, in his detailed 1968 *Prairie School Review* article, best describes the sequence of events that led Wright, and then Griffin to Mason City. He asserts (and his assertions are supported by the recollections of Mahony Griffin in *MOA* and Barry Byrne) that Joshua Melson of Mason City first came to Wright for the design of a house—Wright designed a house and Mahony Griffin drew up a perspective drawing that was later published in the Wasmuth portfolio. For whatever reason, Melson did not build at the time, but when he was still seeking a house in 1911, he approached not Wright but Mahony Griffin, with whom he seems to have had a good relationship, according to McCoy (16). By her own telling, Mahony Griffin attempted to brush off Melson when he approached her; she was busy and knew his history of requesting plans and never building. In any case, Melson then revealed his problem. He and Mr. Blythe of Mason City had bought 18 acres on the banks of the river in their home town and would I make a prospective drawing of it. The spark caught and I said I thought I could do that but if it was a landscape scheme he ought to talk with Mr. Griffin about it . . . . (IV 295)

Mahony Griffin then shared drawings of her husband's work, and soon Griffin traveled to Mason City and returned with a commitment signed by the buyers to reclaim the land, which had been used as a garbage dump, and maintain large tracts along the creek as open common space after houses were built. Mahony Griffin's perspective of colored ink on silk depicts as community of sixteen homes set in the green ravine of a meandering creek. Five of these homes were built to the Griffins' designs, but other architects of the Sullivan school also designed homes for this area. More than a dozen houses were built: the Griffins', Barry
Byrne's, Drummond's, Wright's and those by a local builder/architect Einear Broaten. Although Mahony Griffin's exact role in these commissions is not known, she clearly was point of contact between these clients and Griffin and she undoubtedly created the presentation drawings that were such convincing arguments in themselves for the intelligence of hiring Griffin for the job.

In 1913, Griffin was appointed Federal Capital Director of Design and Construction, and moved to Australia in order to oversee the construction of Canberra from the city that was the previous national capital, Melbourne. Mahony Griffin and the Lippincotts stayed in Sydney, where they opened another architectural office. It is through the Sydney office that most private commissions came, while Griffin fought the battle to keep his Canberra plan intact. During this time, the Griffins designed two of their most important early Australian commissions: Cafe Australia (1915) and Newman College (1916). Griffin's appointment was terminated after a heartbreaking and disillusioning interaction with the Australian federal government. and both Mahony Griffin and the Lippincotts joined Griffin in Melbourne in 1917 where they stayed until the 1920s. the Griffins living in the one room house Pholiota (mushroom).

It was in 1925 that Mahony Griffin "half in a temper, half in desperation" (III 118) at the state of their marriage, returned alone to Sydney and another community planning experiment, this time along an unspoiled stretch of Sydney's Middle Harbor. They called their suburb Castlecrag, and it became a true experiment in communal and community living. Like Melson house in Mason City, the first houses at Castlecrag were built of native stone to integrate the buildings more thoroughly with the natural landscape. Later, the houses used concrete blocks and Griffin's patented Knitlock system.

Jill Roe, in her account of life in Castlecrag entitled, "The Magical World of Marion Mahony Griffin," describes Castlecrag as a center of Theosophical and Anthroposophical thought in Sydney. According to Roe:
'Anthroposophy' must surely be one of the clumsiest and most unrevealing of words. The early twentieth century neologism anthroposophy (which does not appear in all dictionaries) refers to the development of a spiritual science of and by humanity, specifically along lines first laid out by Dr. Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925). Thus, badly stated, anthroposophists were, and are, followers of Rudolf Steiner.\(^8\) (94)

The Griffins were committed Anthroposophists\(^9\)—Weirick and Rubbo suggest that their interest in occult religion and Steiner may have intensified following their disappointments over Canberra ("Spirituality and Symbolism" 58-59, "Numinous World" 126), disappointments which they seemed to associate with a growing materialist bent in Australian culture which they felt, left unchecked, would destroy the country's natural beauty (Roe 94-98). In addition to creating a lecture series in Anthroposophy at Castlecrag, Mahony Griffin spent an active life developing a "little theatre" which is still in use, acting in and costuming plays, teaching local children, and generally being the heart and soul of Castlecrag.

Although The Magic of America asserts Mahony Griffin's interest in drama from her teen years, the religious beliefs she came to later in her life asserted the centrality of dramatic creativity to the creative soul. Mahony Griffin worked tirelessly to develop Castlecrag's open air theatre, which according to Roe was performing the most interesting and progressive dramatic work any where in Sydney, at that time (90).\(^10\) Mahony Griffin writes about costuming these plays, asserting, "Indeed, my own knack at costuming was, I am convinced, the only faculty that ever won real admiration from my husband..." (III 58). Indeed, the Griffins' penchant for arriving in public in full costume is noted in several sources. Roe quotes sculptor Bim Hilder's first experience of the Griffins, when he encountered them in 1926 in a Sydney Bohemian haunt called Pakies:
Pakie decided to hold a Mexican Night, and one was expected to wear something suitable, and the Griffins turned up with their whole staff dressed as Aztec Gods, dressed in brilliant colours with many gold ornaments. It must have been a big effort to create this dramatic effect but it was typical of Marion. (88)

That such costuming was one of Mahony Griffin's great loves is clear from the descriptions that fill her letters to Griffin during the time he spent apart from her in India, and indeed from her interest in her own clothing, which is often described in some detail in MOA and in letters, and was regularly remarked upon in outside sources.

It was in 1935, during the height of the Great Depression, that Griffin's services were sought (through Anthroposophical connections) to consult in the project of building a university campus in Lucknow, India. Griffin eventually went to India, where he was inundated with both private and public commissions. After a series of letters entreating Mahony Griffin to give up her semi-retired status and join him in India, she came in 1936, and the two began one of the most architecturally fruitful periods of their career. Griffin died in February of 1937 of peritonitis suffered following a ruptured gall bladder. The Magic of America contains the letter Mahony Griffin wrote to her sister-in-law, Genevieve Lippincott, telling her of the death:

When I got there at eleven, he was really unconscious, eyes half closed. An hour or so later he talked steadily for half an hour, mostly irrational and all about his work... Then as his breath began to fail, I talked to him, told him what a wonderful life I had had with him, how he was beloved by everybody and suddenly he turned and fastened his eyes wide open and round on mine, startled and intense as if it had never occurred to him that he could die and they never left mine till he ceased breathing and I closed them. (I 305)
After Griffin's death, Mahony Griffin stayed briefly in India to finish drawings for projects and to see through several commissions (like the Pioneer Press Building). She returned to Castlecrag briefly in 1938 to settle Griffin's estate and then returned to Chicago where she began writing *The Magic of America* as an epitaph to Griffin's life and an explication of their professional work and philosophical beliefs. She continued to work late into her life, mainly on community planning schemes, but also lecturing, drawing and teaching. She died on August 10, 1961 at Cook County Hospital at the age of 90.

Only a very few of the women who took up highly public professional lives at the turn of the century were able to enjoy satisfying personal lives as well. In the course of her professional career, Mahony Griffin worked among, and had her abilities noted and admired by some of the most famous architects of her time, while in her personal life she married Walter Burley Griffin, the man whose architectural style "delighted" her—whose work she claimed she loved more than she loved the man. Their 26 year marriage led them both to great achievements, creatively and intellectually. They practiced architecture in the US, in Australia, and in India designing as many as 500 structures and communities of which roughly half were built. Five hundred projects is a huge number, representing an incredible level of creativity—particularly at that time for their small office.

Mahony Griffin's life and work are not well known, perhaps in part because her career spanned sixty years and three continents. However, the scholars in many fields who work to recover women's lives and contributions are discovering that it also seems likely that many women, like Mahony Griffin, fell victim to the machinations of a male-centered history which allowed many of their achievements to be attributed to the men in their lives. In Mahony Griffin's case, her employers, Dwight Perkins, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Hermann von Holst, and her husband Walter were regularly credited with her work, often in entirety, while she was credited with designing "linens" or "tiles"—of carrying someone else's grand vision to the details. This brief biography serves as background for the following chapters' discussions of
the ways in which Mahony Griffin's life, work, and autobiography have been characterized in later sources—characterizations that gendered her, asserting at every turn she was not an architect because she was not a man.

**Forming the Canon: Great Men**

Based on Williamson's study of fame in architecture, Marion Mahony Griffin is the only woman to have achieved canonization, though at a minor level. She is mentioned in five of the twenty-four survey texts Williamson examines, more than any other women, and in fact, the only American-born woman to be mentioned in three or more texts, which is the basis for inclusion in Williamson's "Index of Fame." Her first mention is in Wayne Andrew's 1947 *Architecture, Ambition, and Americans: A Social History of American Architecture* and the most recent in the 1982 *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects*, where her 1+ column mention places her firmly in Stevens's list of minor architects. Reyner Banham, one of this century's most renowned architectural critics, said of Mahony Griffin, that she was "America's (and perhaps the world's) first woman architect who needed no apology in a world of men" (101).

The statement reveals the level of respect accorded to both Mahony Griffin's talent and the strength of character that enabled her to find success in a thoroughly male professional world. Other early sources mention her briefly, though they tend to focus on her husband. It is interesting, then, that even this modest level of respect did not find its way into Griffin studies or more general studies of the Sullivan School.

Perhaps because early secondary sources were primarily interested in Walter Burley Griffin or Frank Lloyd Wright, they included much misinformation about Mahony Griffin—from misspelling her family name (Mahoney) and her first name (Marian) to incorrectly dating her birth, her death, her marriage, together with details about her graduation, her family relationships and her birthplace. Although including information that substantially gets wrong even the basic facts of her life seems, as Weirick would say, "appalling," other early authors writing on Griffin simply refer to his "wife," leaving Mahony Griffin unnamed and
absent from the history. As H. Allen Brooks writes in a 1966 review of Mark Peisch's book, "No author can achieve perfection, yet careless documentation is inexcusable. . . . This sampling from among these numerous errors of fact and interpretation is sufficient to make its point. That so much . . . is unreliable cannot help but jeopardize the whole" (226). Brooks suggests that such lax scholarship is widely considered inexcusable; therefore, I assert that perhaps the scholarship concerning the Griffins, particularly Mahony Griffin, as filled with errors as it is, should at least lead us to question many of the truisms that these same scholars have invented about the Griffins and their work.

While such a record of scholarship is indeed appalling, especially when, as I will argue later, historians of this generation have leveled charges of poor scholarship against feminist historians attempting to recover Mahony Griffin's contributions to the discipline, what is even more startling are the ways in which early scholars of the Griffins and scholars of the Sullivan School depicted Mahony Griffin. The number of comments about her physical appearance, her "stormy" relationships with others, and her "bitterness" serve to create a gendered picture of her, one that is in conflict with the standard picture of the architect as a rational and cultured "gentleman." In addition, because the history of professionalization in architecture has consistently presented a picture of a man as a great architect, and has described his attributes in masculine terms, clearly the presentation of Marion Mahony Griffin in gendered language undermines her position to architectural practice and greatness. I do not argue that such use of language was entirely intentional, or that its purpose was to keep women from the architectural canon. Rather, such gendered readings of women in the arts represent the status quo—a habit of scholarship that habitually omits the contributions of women: as Battersby argues, "the achievements of women who have managed to create are obscured by an ideology that associates cultural achievement with the activities of males" (305).

In architecture, such has been the norm since the first woman graduated from architecture school and began (and ended) her practice with one building, the Women's Pavilion
at the 1893 Chicago Colombian Exhibition. The first woman to graduate with a four-year degree in architecture in this country (also from MIT), Sophia Hayden, became ill soon after her graduation with what American Architect and Building News referred to in an 1892 article as "brain fever." The illness was used in the article to illustrate women's innate incompatibility with the architectural profession, stating: "If a building of which a woman seems so proud is to mark the physical mien of its architect, it will be a much more telling argument against the wisdom of women entering this especial profession than anything else could be" (134).

In addition to entering her professional life at a time when women's creativity was generally dismissed, Mahony Griffin's professional life was written into a history of western philosophy and aesthetics that has refused to credit women with creative impulse. For example, depictions of Mahony Griffin are consistently in keeping with Kantian notions of women's subordinate relation to genius. Kant would suggest, in Observations on the Feeling of Beautiful and Sublime, that the woman with intellectual pursuits "might as well have a beard" (78) suggesting her interests make her ugly, and even ridiculous and unnatural (83). But as Battersby asserts. "The rhetoric of genius operates to exclude women on so many different and contradictory levels..." (7). The contradictions, of course, vary according to place and time, and the idiosyncratic ideas of the rhetor espousing them. As Battersby summarizes:

For Kant, women are passionate creatures; genius is a matter of reason; and women lack reason. For Rousseau passion is valued, and therefore it is passion that women are seen to lack. This is typical of late eighteenth-century theories of genius... whatever faculty is most highly prized is the one that women are seen to lack. In the case of William Duff, for example, genius is a matter of imagination... but a female imagination is, of course, inferior to that of a male. (78) [ellipses are the author's]
Battersby goes on to argue that such beliefs were further entrenched in 19th century rhetoric of genius. It seems not surprising, then, that early depictions of Marion Mahony Griffin consistently portray her in contradictory, but always gendered terms: sometimes an unnatural woman, but always as embodying negative female attributes as Kant and other theorists of genius like Rousseau, Duff, Arthur Schopenhauer, and Otto Weininger asserted. While Schopenhauer theorized genius as related to creative, as opposed to procreative abilities, Weininger could only assert a circular argument: "A female genius is a contradiction in terms, for genius is simply intensified, perfectly developed universally conscious maleness" (Battersby 114). He adds to that assertion one more female lack—the lack of memory, without which genius is impossible. Once these terms of femaleness have been laid by the whole of the history of western philosophy, the characterization of women who create deviates little. In fact, in the twentieth century, modernism perhaps entrenches the cult of genius even more deeply than before. As Battersby argues, "I am the author. 'I am male.' 'I am God.' Romantic and modernist art binds these three sentences together in an unholy trinity" (43). The texts on Mahony Griffin present a female with delusions of genius: an ugly, ridiculous, unnatural, woman whose memory fails her. It was into this rhetorical history of women as creators that early sources attempted to situate the life and work of Mahony Griffin.

Depictions: Ugly, Ridiculous, Unnatural

James Birrell’s *Walter Burley Griffin* was first published in 1964, and is the earliest text to focus exclusively on one of the Griffins—here the focus is clearly Griffin. The 187 page text mentions Mahony Griffin on thirteen pages and includes near the beginning an extremely unflattering photo of her in her later years. The photo has had all background removed so that her masculine profile is laid against a blank, white page. The use of this photo is interesting in several ways. Her age is never identified, nor is the photo’s source. The background has been eliminated to accentuate her heavy brows, sharp nose, mannish haircut and leathery skin. She looks distinguished, but entirely unwomanly. In contrast, of the three photos of Griffin in the
book, two are posed portraits which reveal his Hollywood good-looks, and one is a snapshot in which he exudes boyish charm. Birrell's text began the history of depicting them so.

H. Allen Brooks, writing eight years later, is compelled to include a quote suggesting that Mahony Griffin was "so homely she was almost distinguished" (Prairie School 79). Peter Harrison, writing in 1970, asserts, "Although she was less than six years older than Griffin, those who knew them in Australia assumed she was at least ten years older" (25). Other authors note that she was "taller than Walter," (Harrison 25) "angular," "sallow-skinned," and had a "beaked nose" (Brooks Prairie School 79, Rubbo "Portrait" 18, Preliasco 175) or "tomahawk profile" (Harrison 82). Harrison further asserts that she was not "part red-Indian" though her looks led some to that assumption (25). While providing physical descriptions may add another layer of character to the stories these historians hoped to tell, little physical description is typically provided about male architects, and in these texts Griffin's good looks are only described in contrast to Mahony Griffin's "homeliness." Moreover, in many cases, she is reduced to these descriptions, because they exist in the place of descriptions of her architectural work, which is always the focus of texts on male architects.

In addition to constructing her as physically unattractive, these texts create a character that is unnatural and ridiculous. As Judy Wells asserts, "Her achievement has been subverted over time with representations that depict her as a kind of overbearing crone. She is described variously as a 'battletaxe' (John Patterson, urban planner) or 'completely dotty' (David Marr) or 'the Castlecrag goat' (Bernard Hesling)" (123). Wells points to the language used in these popular Australian depictions of Mahony Griffin—language that reinforces her absurdity. Moreover, a recently well-received book on Canberra (published in 1993) maintains Mahony Griffin's "dottiness," using as evidence an anecdotal meeting with unnamed Australian visitor. Jim Gibbney writes of the ninety year-old Mahony Griffin that "Not long before her death, an Australian visitor found her trying to make contact with the spirit of her dead husband" (43). This 1993 source, as in the much earlier sources, substitutes this anecdotal information about
Mahony Griffin for any substantive analysis of her real work on the Canberra project or her assertion that she was the driving will behind the project’s completion.

Another of the ways in which she is shown as ridiculous is in her "old maid" status. She was forty when she married Griffin; although her autobiography contains a first-hand description of their courtship, these texts offer their own interpretations. As Birrell writes, "Although their acquaintances greatly admired Marion's technical ability, many felt she married Walter because of his stupendous rise to fame after Wright had left..." (14). Even the construction of the sentence undermines her work (technical ability) to her grasping attempt to catch Griffin's ascending star. There are several other problems with the unsubstantiated assertion. The first is that "many" of their acquaintances were not cited in Birrell's research, and the second, and more important, is that Griffin's "stupendous rise to fame" did not occur until after his marriage to Mahony in 1911.

In a similar vein Brooks writes, "Marion fell inextricably in love with Walter, offered her rendering services to him as bait, and on 29 June 1911, married him" (Prairie School 165). Mahony Griffin, in her own telling, did fall in love with Griffin. Griffin, we may assume from his letters to his wife that open Magic of America, also loved her. Brooks's use of the word "bait" suggests that the love was one-sided and Griffin entered into a business arrangement, an arrangement that had to be baited for him to accept. While this may certainly be true, there is scant evidence in the primary sources to suggest such a reading and Brooks does not cite anyone to explain this assertion, although it may have come from David Van Zanten's 1966 article, "The Early Work of Marion Mahony Griffin."

Van Zanten makes a similar assertion, also without citing a source: "What had been a friendship... now became love, at least on Marion's side" (19). He also discusses the Griffin's courtship in terms of battle—Mahony Griffin "pursued," laid "siege," and "took him by storm" (19). Harrison reports that Australian acquaintances wondered how the "shy Walter Griffin" could have proposed marriage. "The initiative," he writes "was attributed to Marion with the
words "Come along now, Walter, we must get married" (25). All suggest a very reticent Griffin, pursued by a comical spinster, a very different picture than Mahony Griffin's depictions of their quiet weekend canoe trips camping and exploring the waterways of the Chicago area.

Moreover, in the process of casting Mahony Griffin in the role of the homely, desperate spinster who trades professional ability for domestic security, these sources tend to create a subtext (surely unintentional) that suggests Griffin was innocent, fey, virginal, possibly homosexual: Griffin is variously described as "sweet-natured" by Mark Peisch and "small, of slender build" according to Byrne (Kruty 18). Harrison reports "Griffin was then 34 and still living at the family home in Elmhurst" (25). Brooks offers that "The Studio match-makers paired off Griffin with Isabel Roberts, but this came to naught" (Prairie School 81). Gill, also without citing a source, characterizes Griffin in these ways most strongly:

She was several years older than Griffin, who appears to have found her intimidating: not without some difficulty, she would talk him into going off on weekend canoe trips with her, in the course of which they would bivouac chastely in the same tent. The virtuous conduct was evidently Griffin's idea, and Mahony at last outwitted it by a proposal of marriage accompanied by an architectural proposal: if they were to marry, she would make all his presentation drawings for him. (188)

Like the earlier authors, Gill's assertions cite no other texts, either primary or secondary, nor does he at any point in his book cite either Brooks or Van Zanten; the source of his assertions is entirely unclear. In this telling, though, Mahony Griffin becomes nearly predatory while Griffin is shy and virginal; the deal he makes, these sources suggest, is a sham marriage entered into as a professional, not a personal relationship.

Paul Kruty is able to distance Griffin from his wife without suggesting Griffin might have been homosexual by suggesting, "Griffin's sister, Gertrude Sater, always maintained that
the only woman her brother had really loved was Wright's sister Maginel," ("Walter Burley Griffin" 35). Kruty also repeats the original courtship story, thirty years after Van Zanten originated it, suggesting, "Mahony, five years Walter's senior, fell in love with him and became convinced that her own future lay in joining hands with this talented man" ("Walter Burley Griffin" 26). Again, it is noted that she is older, enough older that it is remarkable (worth remarking upon), and Kruty's telling makes sure the reader knows the love was not mutual she "fell in love with him." Moreover, in this telling, it is clear that Griffin has the talent—enough more talent, in fact, that Mahony Griffin's future may have been in doubt if left to her own devices. Kruty even adds, for emphasis, that "Griffin's family was not as convinced of his feelings or of the wisdom of the match" ("Walter Burley Griffin" 26).

Whichever of these pictures the reader believes, Mahony Griffin is drawn as an "unlovable" woman who baited her husband into a marriage of convenience. Whether or not this was true, the result is that scholars are able to distance Griffin from any taint of Mahony Griffin's influence: the story that is repeated is that though they were married, he could not have loved her, found her attractive, or fallen under her intellectual influence. She simply drew for him.

Yet these depictions ignore the central evidence on the couple's intimate life that comes from MOA. Although Mahony Griffin on many occasions describes the couple's volatile relationship, for which she takes much of the blame, she never suggests that theirs was anything but a marriage of strong passions. In her autobiography she writes, "With that man of mine I was possessed. It was as if a demon took hold and shaped me to its whim," (IV 130-133). She goes on to assert that her marriage was "full of every joy and every anguish" and to explain the anguish, she quotes Rudolf Steiner 73 "In love when one really loves a person there exists in the depths of his being a terrible antipathy to that person" (IV 156).

About the couple's brief separation in 1930, she writes, "at the end of that character testing decade... which followed the seven year battle over Canberra, I threw up my hands and
ran away, this time to America. My parting words to Walt were—'Well now you are a free man'. His to me—'I'm a perfect damn fool'" (IV 156). Writing to her husband from the U.S., she alludes specifically to the love in their relationship, blaming it, in part, for their fiery battles: "I myself as you may remember have said that it was absurd to look upon the marital relationship, if it were based on love, as having any relationship to friendship, that it is more like that of enemies" (IV 137). Mahony Griffin here directly refutes those scholars who describe their marriage as a professional relationship based on a somewhat compatible friendship, asserting instead that their relationship is passionate, and sometimes not even friendly, because it is based on love. Again, whether or not the Griffins were in love much of their marriage seems less the issue here than the early historians' refusal to use available primary resources. Instead, they made speculative claims that directly ignored available primary sources, perhaps influencing later scholars like Kruty with their assertions.

In addition, the language employed in these secondary sources attempted to describe Mahony Griffin as an unnatural woman and in gendered terms. Harrison asserts that "By all accounts, Marion lacked most feminine graces" (25). Birrell describes her in overtly masculine terms when he writes. "Her forceful, businesslike, coldly intellectual manner, held her, and eventually Walter, apart from the family" (14). But to contrast her "coldly intellectual manner" Harrison calls her "impetuous" (39), a word often suited to a young girl, Birrell calls her "bitter and critical" (132), and Brooks claimed that "it is probably true she lacked the imaginative mind to create..." (164). Readers are also told variously, that she "was not much liked by Griffin's family" (Birrell 14), "that some standards at Castlecrag were lowered by Marion Griffin" (Birrell 132), and that when Griffin's design arrived too late for the Chicago Tribune Tower competition that "Marion must have failed in her role" (Harrison 67). Most of these comments are throw-aways, clearly the author's opinion, and entirely speculative: Marion must have failed in her role; it is probably true she lacked the imaginative mind to create. And some of such a list of comments might serve to deepen a reader's understanding of Mahony Griffin's character,
if they were augmented by other information about her or her work. Although the next chapter discusses her work (and the gendered discourse surrounding it) in greater detail, similar comments also comprise the discourse about her work and writing, as well.

These comments represent nearly the total of information about Marion Mahony Griffin available to scholars and students using secondary sources. Although two very early sources mention the Griffins and even include Mahony Griffin in their indices (one mention in each text), in both cases she receives mention only because of her marriage to Griffin. Australian architectural critic and historian Robin Boyd's 1952 *Australia's Home* mentions Mahony Griffin as a subordinate clause, only in relation to the two other major architects in her life "In 1912, with Marion Mahony, another Wright pupil and his [Griffin's] future wife . . ." (141). In the 1947 book *Architecture, Ambition and Americans*, Wayne Andrews also mentions Mahony Griffin, also as a subordinate clause, "He [Griffin] shared certain of Wright's objectives, as did his wife, the former Marion Mahony, who spent eleven years as the master's draftsman" (236). Mahony is characterized as a pupil, a wife, and a draftsman—a pencil in the master's hand—but not a highly educated architect in her own right. The characterization of Mahony Griffin (or Griffin for that matter) as pupil is simply wrong; both worked at Wright's side as colleagues: although in later years Wright would be the master, in the Oak Park Studio, in the case of the Griffins, he was an employer—both the Griffins were trained and experienced architects by the time they came to work for Wright. However, the compulsive assertion that Wright was the genius in the Oak Park Studio, Mahony Griffin the draftsman and Griffin the pupil awaiting his moment for individual glory is still the ascendant story in the discipline, and it mimics the telling of the Griffins' story as the story of the genius and the helpmate. The pattern is about denying the social nature of architectural collaboration, because a social reading of architectural practice would in many ways de-mystify the architect-as-god notion that floats about in our western cultural consciousness, introduced through romantic notions of genius and entrenched by modernist architects themselves, and perhaps Ayn Rand.
Although Boyd and Andrews dealt with Griffin's work in far greater detail than they did Mahony Griffin's, there were five important early books on the Griffins that provided somewhat more information on Mahony Griffin as well. The first of these, Mark Peisch's 1964 *The Chicago School: Early Followers of Sullivan and Wright*, contains by far the most sympathetic treatment of Mahony Griffin. Not surprisingly, it cites her *The Magic of America* and personal interviews the author had with her through the 1950s, as well as archival sources including letters and interviews with others. This reliance on primary resources, combined with a focus on Mahony Griffin's architectural work, creates a very different story than the one told by later historians. The single instance of personal information Peisch includes is about the Griffins' marriage:

He [Griffin] was collaborating again with Marion Mahony, Wright's most talented designing assistant. It was this renewal of their friendship which resulted in their marriage in 1911. In many ways their marriage was a complete merging of personalities and ideals, an artistic union so complete that to distinguish or separate their careers after this date becomes impossible. (58-59)

Peisch's account of the Griffins' courtship and marriage is very different than Brooks's version of Mahony Griffin offering Griffin the "bait" of her rendering abilities. Moreover, his assertion of the couple's collaboration is one that would not crop up again in Griffin scholarship for nearly fifteen years.

It was Birrell's 1964 book that seemed to set the tone for Mahony Griffin's depiction in later texts. Several later authors picked up his repeated use of the word "bitter" to describe her. In addition, Birrell asserts several times that Mahony Griffin was less than generous with money, writing that she "intellectualised on economics" (184) and "refused financial advances to Lippincott" (132). Each time she is mentioned in Birrell's text, Mahony Griffin's character is drawn as cold, calculating ("she married Walter because of his stupendous rise to fame").
bitter, and alienating of pleasant Griffin's family and friends. This is a very different story than Peisch's "complete merging of personalities and ideals, an artistic union"—and yet it becomes the ascendant story in Griffin studies for nearly fifteen years, perhaps because this drawing of the creative woman is more in line with the easily available notions about her that exist in western culture.

In 1970, one more major secondary work was added to the canon of Griffin scholarship, in addition to an important master's thesis written by a respected Griffin scholar. Peter Harrison's master's thesis for the University of Sydney remained unpublished until 1995. Harrison's work was not widely circulated, so it is best examined not in terms of its impact on other scholars, but as containing the sort of characterizations about Mahony Griffin that are in line with the scholarship of that time—he writes about her appearance, her alienating influence on Griffin's friends (39), the inaccuracies of her memory (87, 90)—but he also incorporates a counter-discourse, based on Mahony Griffin's own voice in The Magic of America in which she relates, for example, her "delight" with the young Indian students she is training to do drafting work (88). Although joy and delight permeate her own writing, they rarely seep in to secondary sources, perhaps because her own writing has been historically dismissed as unreliable, as I discuss in chapter three. Although Rubbo would later write that "Harrison's antipathy to Marion Griffin is thinly disguised" ("A Creative Partnership" 83), even that "thin disguise" creates a more complex portrait of Mahony Griffin than any written before this time.

In contrast, Mahony Griffin haunts David Van Zanten's 1970 book Walter Burley Griffin: Selected Designs like a ghost. Though she drew the majority of the designs that comprise the book, she is only mentioned once in the accompanying text—as Griffin's unnamed "wife" when Van Zanten writes: "Three of the following pieces are taken from undated and unidentified texts transcribed by Griffin's wife in her manuscript biography, The Magic of America" (31). Although Van Zanten discusses the chronology of Griffin's work in detail, never does he mention that "Griffin's wife" was an architect who drew the majority of the
drawings included in his book, and she is therefore reduced to the role of typist (and a poor one at that—he goes on to assert he has had to correct some spelling errors and typos).

There is no real accounting for this omission; Van Zanten wrote a 1966 article for the *Prairie School Review* entitled the "Early Work of Marion Mahony Griffin" and so was clearly aware of Mahony Griffin's work. Although the thesis of that article was that Mahony Griffin clearly had no influence on her husband's later architecture because her own architectural work was "derivative and decorative" (21), Van Zanten admits her existence and his very willingness to argue such a proposition assumes that the question of how to attribute Griffin's work already existed. Perhaps his later erasure of her life and work in relation to Griffin's is based on his assumption that his earlier article had dealt with the issue thoroughly.

However, perhaps Van Zanten's most stunning omission is his most recent. In an essay for Berkeley and McQuaid's 1989 *Architecture: A Place for Women*, Van Zanten's "Frank Lloyd Wright's Kindergarten: Professional Practice and Sexual Roles," makes the audacious claim that Wright had a commitment to a feminine, nurturing environment for his employees at the Oak Park Studio. While such a claim demonstrates established scholars' unfathomable ability to misread and misunderstand primary sources, the essay also entirely omits reference to any of the women who did pass through Wright's "kindergarten" as architects or artists. For Van Zanten, Wright's access to feminine nurturing (thin as it was) is more interesting than an examination of real sexual roles in professional practice.

H. Allen Brooks's 1972 *The Prairie School: Frank Lloyd Wright and his Midwest Contemporaries* is still considered the seminal work on the "Prairie School." According to its cover, it is "The finest study of architectural history this writer has ever read...it is a definitive work...." And Brooks's scholarship is amazingly good. He combines and synthesizes primary sources, secondary scholarship, photographs, and architectural plans with a variety of appropriate non-architectural materials (literary sources, social histories, and memoirs). The
result is a focused analysis of the architects of the Sullivan School and a taste of the social milieu that produced them and their work.

In spite of the truly fine scholarly effort that produced this book, Brooks seems to have the same blind spots concerning Mahony Griffin that previous historians displayed. Though Mahony Griffin appears throughout his text, she disappears, and is therefore erased, at important junctures. For example, when Brooks discusses the failure of the Sullivan School to maintain itself, he notes that the architects to join the movement later (Bentley, Van Bergen, Willatzen, Francis Sullivan and Berry) "were not the equal of Purcell, Elmslie, Griffin, Byrne or obviously Louis Sullivan and Wright" (343). Mahony Griffin is erased—she is included among neither the great nor the lesser architects of the movement—she simply disappears, despite that her 13 year tenure in Wright's office makes her perhaps the longest practitioner within the movement.

Brooks goes onto assert, still in an effort to explain the "death" of a seemingly vital movement, "The movement's accelerated growth, rapid though it was, was inevitably affected by the departures of Wright, Griffin, and Purcell" (344). Brooks is attempting to assert that the movement did not dissolve from the scandal surrounding Wright's departure to Europe with Mamah Cheney. From a simple argumentative standpoint, it would seem to be in Brooks's interest to lengthen his list with the addition of Mahony Griffin's name, for simply by the numbers, a movement of under twenty practitioners that loses four of its members would be even more "inevitably affected." But Brooks seemingly undermines his own argument by omitting Mahony Griffin's departure. There are, I think two possible explanations for this, which are probably closely related: he does not think of her as an architect, or he believes she is so discredited as an architect that to include her name would assign her an importance contrary to the argument the rest of the text asserts.

Both possibilities seem likely. Earlier in the book, when Brooks attempts to introduce readers to the characters of his story, he describes the birth of the movement at Dwight Perkins'
Steinway Hall building, the building that Mahony Griffin first worked on, under her cousin's supervision, after college. In naming the central characters of his story, Brooks attempts to name the members of the group Wright refers to in his An Autobiography as The Eighteen—a "little luncheon roundtable" (The Prairie School 31). Wright, in his reminiscences names ten men, mostly Steinway Hall regulars. To that group, Brooks adds six more names, for a total of sixteen, then suggests that "It is also possible Webster Tomlinson should be included, too" (31). He cannot come up with an eighteenth name, even when guessing.

Of course, Mahony Griffin may not have been the eighteenth name. But the possibility never even occurs to Brooks, though she was at the time a young architect working in the same architectural office as several of the men Brooks names: Perkins, (Myron) Hunt, (Robert) Spencer, and Wright. In "Chicago of 1900: The Griffin's Come of Age," Paul Kruty places both Wright and Mahony Griffin at Steinway Hall until late 1898 (12). In addition, when identifying Steinway Hall architects, Brooks writes, "Three of them studied at M.I.T." (Prairie School 29). The three he mentions: Perkins, Hunt and Spencer: in spite of the fact that she was the only Sullivan School architect to graduate from M.I.T., Brooks leaves Mahony Griffin absent from this list and this important architectural milieu.

Brooks makes clear that it was an important historical moment in his 1975 book, Prairie School Architecture: Studies from "The Western Architect." I quote the following material at length because Brooks's use of specifically gendered language reveals the reason he does not think of Mahony Griffin as an architect (she is not a man); in addition, it reaffirms that Brooks's blind spot about Mahony Griffin's contributions was most certainly gender related:

The Prairie School began in the last years of the nineteenth century, perhaps at that moment in 1897 when Dwight Perkins, Robert Spencer, Frank Lloyd Wright and Myron Hunt formed a coterie at Steinway Hall in Chicago. ... To Louis Sullivan they turned for inspiration. ... But a form-giver, not a philosopher, was
needed, and Sullivan's preoccupation with commercial architecture offered little guidance to men primarily concerned with designing houses.

Sullivan's disciple, Frank Lloyd Wright, was the first among the group to achieve a viable synthesis, and thereafter leadership passed to him: the center of activity moved from Steinway Hall to Wright's Oak Park studio. There several younger men obtained their training, including Walter Burley Griffin, William Drummond, Barry Byrne, and John Van Bergen. (ix)

Brooks fails to mention Mahony Griffin twice—in connection with either Steinway Hall or the Oak Park studio—two of the most important moments in the history of the Sullivan School. At the same time, Brooks works to establish the importance of Steinway Hall by naming it the birthplace of the movement, but limiting its founders to four "men," although historians know five architects inhabited the Steinway Hall offices at this time. The four men Brooks names and Mahony Griffin. In addition, it is important to note that Brooks's repeated use of "men" to describe the architects at both the Oak Park studio and Steinway Hall reinforces his omission of Mahony Griffin's name and reflects his inability to envision Mahony Griffin as an architect.

Brooks's inability to recall Mahony Griffin into his history of the Sullivan School is curious, because to have thought of her would have potentially solved a problem (that eighteenth name) he was actively investigating. The problem with such omissions is not that they are purposefully attempting to keep women from their rightfully earned position in the canon, but that every time habit leads those producing disciplinary discourse to not think of women as architects, they produce a secondary source that reinforces that habit of scholarship by further erasing a woman's signature from a past in which she was present.

For example, in her 1974 master's thesis, "The Work of Marion Mahony Griffin: 1894-1913," Donna Russ Munchick asserts that "she [Mahony Griffin] evidently had little to do with
the mealtime meetings of 'The Eighteen,' a group that included Wright, the Pond brothers, Myron Hunt, Robert Spencer, Dwight Perkins, and later, Walter Burley Griffin" (16). She cites only Brooks for this assertion, not mentioning that Brooks had cited Wright for ten names of the group, and then had been left guessing. In fact, the only primary source available concerning "The Eighteen" is Wright's An Autobiography, which recalls only ten names. That Brooks's assertions about The Eighteen are mainly conjecture falls away in Munchick's text, showing the ways in which later scholars are influenced by that early secondary scholarship. Early scholarship helps form and shape research questions, limiting what is and is not a legitimate area of inquiry; because Brooks's highly praised book ignores the possibility that Mahony Griffin might have been a charter member of the Steinway Hall milieu and therefore Wright's "Eighteen," speculation into the issue is finished and scholars feel free to offer that "she evidently had little to do with" this group of men with whom she worked nearly every day.

It is in Brooks's second book, Prairie School Architecture: Studies from the Western Architect, even more than his first, that Mahony Griffin is written from the historical record. Here, she become merely a corollary to Walter Burley Griffin. Brooks's introduction to that book includes brief biographies of all the major players of the Sullivan School, who are listed alphabetically. Mahony Griffin appears not under her own name, but under her husband's where her date of death is mistaken and she is given credit for "beautiful renderings" and "furniture and interior ornament" for Wright's houses, which Brooks insists were "designed, under Wright's direction" (xv). Brooks ends by adding, "She influenced Griffin, yet none of his post-marriage work was entirely by her hand" (xv). Note that Brooks assures readers that the work is "his"—"his post-marriage work." Moreover, this single reference is all readers learn of Mahony Griffin—none of her work from The Western Architect is included, although Brooks himself, in his earlier book, worked to correctly attribute to her the houses in The Western Architect that had been published under von Holst's and/or Wright's names.
Although it can certainly be argued that the omission was simply an editorial decision, the consistent decisions to omit Mahony Griffin except as dependent clause in discussions of her husband's work, while at the same time including the work of male architects more tangentially associated with the Sullivan School, reveal a pattern of omission, a habit of scholarship, not just in Brooks's work, but across the scholarship on the movement.

Another Non-Canonical Example

Mahony Griffin is not an isolated example of this habit of scholarship that does not see women as architects. That Mahony Griffin has a traceable history in texts is yet another way in which she is exceptional in the architectural canon. Although much of what was written undermined her position to architecture and the architectural canon of great men and monuments, a history exists which later scholars can compare against existing primary documents. One of America's most prolific architects, Julia Morgan, best known for her design of the Hearst family's San Simeon, had no such afterlife in secondary sources, which kept her so invisible her recovery required a heroic effort. Morgan lived at roughly the same time as Mahony Griffin—she was born in 1872 and died in 1957. Like Mahony Griffin she was an early pioneer as a women receiving formal architectural education. She attended engineering school at Berkeley, beginning in 1890, the same year Marion Mahony went to M.I.T. After Berkeley, she worked briefly for architect Bernard Maybeck. In 1896, she went to Paris and was the first woman admitted to Paris's Ecole des Beaux-Arts and the first to receive a certificate from the Ecole six years later in 1902. Like Mahony Griffin, she practiced architecture nearly all of her adult life, retiring in 1951 at age 79. Her work was remembered only in relation to her richest client (Hearst), though she designed nearly 800 structures, mainly in and around Berkeley, California—houses, churches, YWCAs and women's clubs (Boutelle 109-110).

In spite of her major contributions to the development of an important regional style in California, in 1972, Morgan was all but unknown. Sara Holmes Boutelle made recovering Morgan's life and work her life's work; although she could find only one published work on
Morgan when she began her search, she eventually gained access to primary sources and wrote Morgan's first biography, *Julia Morgan, Architect*. Before Boutelle took up the project of her recovery, Morgan was so invisible that photographs of her with Hearst compiled in a book on San Simeon identified them as "Mr. Hearst and Secretary" (Boutelle 115). Books on Bay Area architecture by eminent architectural historians Lewis Mumford and Vincent Scully did not even mention Morgan, much less describe her work, and she received no attention in early surveys of American architecture—even those surveys that spent time discussing the development of Bay Area architecture. If her name is now known, it is due to Boutelle's recovery and the subsequent work by Diane Favro to compile Morgan's drawings into the book *Julia Morgan*. Morgan's drawings from her study at the *Ecole* were discovered, as Boutelle writes, "literally in garbage cans in the College of Environmental Design at Berkeley" (112).

Such stories represent not the exception of the historical treatment of women in architecture, but the general practice. A professionally dressed woman pictured with a client is assumed a secretary. A wealthy client is more historically noteworthy than his architect—if the architect is a woman (Mahony Griffin's historically drawn relationship to Henry Ford and Fairlane reflects a similarly unusual—for architectural studies—focus on the client, just as historians' focus on Hearst's role in San Simeon). Archival materials which could help in the recovery process are misplaced for years (or left in garbage cans). In such situations, creating an accurate biography requires that the author begin from nothing, because secondary sources either do not exist, or are suspect because of the lack of respect previous scholars have had for their subject.

Julia Morgan's example suggests that the monumental task of excavating an entire career may be more possible than reclaiming a life that has been half-written with disregard and contempt. Not only does the discourse of architectural history mistake the facts of women's lives and mistell their stories, the same disregard characterizes the stories of their work, which is also gendered and dismissed.
CHAPTER THREE
ERASING AN ARCHITECT:
THE PROBLEM OF COLLABORATION AND THE POLITICS OF ATTRIBUTION

Most professional women can recount horror stories of discrimination.
. . But some less common forms of discrimination came my way when, mid-career, I married a colleague and we joined our professional lives just as fame (though not fortune) hit him. I watched as he was manufactured into an architectural guru before my eyes and, to some extent, on the basis of our joint work and the work of our firm. . . . By the time we wrote Learning from Las Vegas, our growing experience with incorrect attributions prompted Bob to include a note at the beginning of the book asking that the work and ideas not be attributed to him alone and describing the nature of our collaboration. . . . His request was almost totally ignored. A body of theory and design in architecture apparently must be associated by architecture critics with an individual. .

(238)

—Denise Scott Brown "Room at the Top?"

Like history's erasure of Julia Morgan, Brown felt the effects of architectural history moving to describe and define her "as sexism defines me as a scribe, typist, photographer to my husband" (240). It is no coincidence that as late as the 1970's and 1980's Julia Morgan was being misidentified in photographs as Hearst's secretary and David Van Zanten was describing Mahony Griffin as a (bad) typist. Brown's experience of being the devalued, female partner in a collaborative architectural practice is not uncommon. But what Brown can best attest to is the speed at which critics remove the female collaborator from the historical record. She writes:
To avoid misattributions, our office provides an information sheet describing our preferred forms of attribution. . . some critics now make a pro forma attribution in an inconspicuous place; then, in the body of the text, the *design* of the work and the *ideas* in the writing are attributed to Robert Venturi. (238)

Brown notes that she attempts to fight these misattributions when she discovers them, but that she began "to dislike her own hostile persona" (239) as well as the descriptions of her hostility that would litter the architectural press. That women become characterized as bitter and hostile when they attempt to receive credit for their own work may explain why more women do not.

Brown's essay suggests that other women in collaborative partnerships were perhaps the least supportive of her attempts to receive just recognition, asserting that they either claimed they would be flattered to have their partners receive credit for their work (239) or that the success of a collaborative effort between men and women really does owe itself to male genius (238-9).

*A History of Women in Collaboration*

Brown's experiences have been common within the history of architecture. Though most educated people can name few women architects, a great number of women have actually practiced architecture, in independent practice, like Julia Morgan, in large architectural firms, like Denise Scott Brown, and in collaborative partnerships, like Marion Mahony Griffin. A host of recent books attempt to reveal the contributions of women in collaborative professional and personal relationships. One of the most interesting of these texts, Chadwick and Courtrivron's 1993 *Significant Others: Creativity and Intimate Partnership* describes the way creative relationships spark new levels of creativity in both partners. The text examines the interplay among a number of intimate couples in the literary and art worlds, arguing for a reassessment of the ways in which intellectual intimacy and compatibility spurred both partners to new levels of creative achievement. This assertion undermines the notion of genius operating outside social influences, but moreover, it debunks the assumption that genius operates on a model of scarcity.
Rather than the notion that one person's successes diminish another's, such an assertion assumes that creativity begets creativity. Therefore, the creative intellectual situation of an intimate partnership is a reasonable space to search for new or shifting creative output, as critics have noted in the Griffins' work following their marriage.

Several recent books and articles have attempted to examine collaborative partnerships in the history of architecture—a collaboration in which the woman's contributions are devalued—of which Beatriz Colomina writes, "The secrets of modern architecture are like those of a family, where everybody knows about things that are never acknowledged" (462). Colomina writes about the collaboration of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Lilly Reich, suggesting that it was Reich who made Mies Mies, because there was nothing in Mies's work before his collaboration with Reich that would suggest the work he would later do—"a radical approach to defining space by suspended sensuous surfaces, which would become his trademark" (462). Although Reich was credited with her contributions in early publications, once Mies was declared a genius and the history machine began its work, Reich's work and contributions—including her work on the famous Barcelona pavilion—have been nearly entirely erased. Sonja Günther's *Lily Reich, 1885-1947: Innenarchitektin, Designerin, Ausstellungsgestalterin* published in Stuttgart in 1988 was the first book-length treatment of Reich's independent work and collaboration with Mies. Matilda McQuaid and Magdalena Droste's 1996 collection, *Lily Reich*, has been one attempt to recover Reich's work for an English reading audience.

Pat Kirkham's 1995 book, *Charles and Ray Eames, Designers of the Twentieth Century* and Donald Albrecht's collection two years later, *The Work of Charles and Ray Eames: A Legacy of Invention* both attempt to recover a place for Ray Eames in the history of architecture, where her influence has been largely ignored in the focus her husband has received. Similarly, in the journals of the 1920's, according to Karen Kingsley, Charlotte Perriand, sometime collaborator with Le Corbusier, was credited with sole design "of many
significant pieces of furniture" which today textbooks credit only to Le Corbusier. Although
history has nearly forgotten her, she was "considered an important independent designer in her
own right" (255). Several recent major exhibitions on Perriand's work have made her fifty year
career the focus of renewed study: the 1996 exhibition in Paris at the Centre Georges
exhibition at the Architectural League in New York.

In other important architectural collaborations involving intimate partners, even well-
educated people know only the name of the male partner: Margaret MacDonald and Charles
Rennie Mackintosh; Aino Mariso and Alvar Aalto; Anne Griswold Tyng and Louis Kahn; chair
of the University of Pennsylvania Department of Architecture, Adèle Naudé Santos and her
husband-partner Antonio de Souza Santos; Joan and Marvin Goody. More well-known
couples like the Eames, Peter and Alison Smithson and Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown
have attempted to share credit for their work, but still have had the female collaborator nearly
erased from history. Kingsley theorizes why this has occurred by asking, "Is it because the
recognition of her [Reich's] presence de-emphasizes the isolation of [his] Mies' talent?" (255).

The answer to this question must be yes—true genius, as Battersby has argued, can
know no influence, but particularly harmful to the architect's status within the cult of genius
would be the influence of a woman. As Carl Jung asserts, "man brings forth his work as a
complete creation" (207). Such notions bar the influence of a collaborator. Moreover, that
this notion persists today is clear in the collection that begins to assert the Griffins'
collaboration, Beyond Architecture. particularly in Paul Sprague's 1998 article "Marion
Mahony as Originator of Griffin's Mature Style: Fact or Myth?" After asserting that forty
years ago evaluation of Griffin's work would place him easily in the company of Wright and
Sullivan as "distinguished originators of modern architecture in America," Sprague writes:

However, time has not been so kind to Walter Burley Griffin. In a
recent essay, 'The life and work of Marion Mahony Griffin', Janice
Pregliasco writes that . . . 'historians have noted the sudden maturity of Walter's architecture beginning in 1910. Walter's movement away from Wrightian-inspired idioms to a more personal style was directly related to his professional and romantic collaboration with Marion.' (28)

Sprague later suggests that such an assertion, even if unintentional, is "demeaning Griffin's achievement" (31). That Griffin's achievement is diminished by discussion of his wife's influence, and that time has "not been kind" to Griffin because "feminist" (28) scholars are attempting to recover his partner's contributions to architecture, suggests that the machinations of history are still churning out notions of the individual genius—a word which Sprague uses repeatedly in his essay.  Although Sprague's role in policing the borders of Griffin studies will be examined in greater detail in Chapter 5, it is sufficient to note now that contemporary scholars have so thoroughly ingested the cult of genius that it has affected their ability to write the objective histories they claim to value. As Cheryl Glenn explains, "all historical accounts, even those most seemingly objective historical records, are stories. And even these stories are selected and arranged according to the selector's frame of reference" (388). In the history of architecture, that frame of reference has been the cult of genius and the consequential erasure of collaborators from collaborative endeavors.

Historians on Mahony Griffin's Work

In much the same way that historians cast Mahony Griffin's life and person in gendered terms, her work was gendered, too. Descriptions of her work took several forms. Early Griffin and Sullivan School scholars asserted that her talents made her a designer not an architect; refused to acknowledge the possibility of the Griffins' collaboration; balked at attributing architectural work to Mahony Griffin alone; and typically employed feminized language when describing her work. All of these habits of scholarship can be traced through to the most recent work on the Griffins, which in some cases employs language nearly identical to that used by the
earliest sources and which certainly confers the same emphasis on issues of attribution. Most important, though, is the consistent construction of Mahony Griffin as not-an-architect—a construction that plays out both in the descriptions of Mahony Griffin as an "artist" or a "designer" as opposed to an architect, and in depictions of her that serve to gender her female—to assert her other-ness to the rational white gentleman who is the architect.

The reasons for this may be more complex than they at first seem. It is easy enough to argue that general anxiety about women in the discipline may have accounted for the perhaps unconscious but consistent depictions of Mahony Griffin as other-than-an-architect, but that anxiety cannot be separated from an unwillingness to describe a truly collaborative relationship. The cult of genius that has informed architectural studies, has determined its methodologies, and has compulsively denied the social construction of knowledge. (Change comes from the individual mind of the genius.) Therefore, there is no way to account for collaboration, because it suggests a social basis for architectural knowledge. This is why Mahony Griffin must be not-an-architect—what she added to the relationship must be specific, identifiable, and not-architecture. Even their marriage is drawn as intellectually one-sided (her "feminine" need for domestic security, his need for a draftsman), because an intellectual reciprocation would undermine the singularity of his genius. The relationship readers are shown is Griffin directing her in the drafting room: we are encouraged never to think those other places the married couple might interact (the dining room and the bedroom, for example). How might his ideas come into contact with her ideas in these other spaces? Once an idea is bounced off another mind, is it altered? How then does one person retain ownership? Such complicated problems were answered simply—by consistent assertions that only drafting room interaction occurred and that was a one way conversation.

The earliest texts, Birrell's and Peisch's 1964 books, both make the claim that Mahony Griffin's influence on her husband's architecture cannot be known. But while Birrell refers to her influence on his architecture, suggesting that at some level, he knows which partner was the
architect, Peisch consistently maintains a collaborative relationship. Birrell writes, "It is always
difficult to measure the influence a man's wife has upon him" (30). Although he goes on to
offer, "but much of Griffin's maturity must be credited to the support of Marion Mahony" (30)
it is key that he used the easily culturally available concept "support" rather than supplying for
Mahony Griffin a more active architectural role—words like collaboration, skill, or creativity.
On the other hand, Peisch asserts variously, "He [Griffin] was collaborating again with Marion
Mahony" (58) and "Although much smaller in size than the Emery House of 1902, this plan
[Solid Rock House] shows an advance in clarity over his previous work, possibly as a result of
his wife's collaboration" (59-60).

And while Birrell asserts "After her marriage she [Mahony Griffin] completely
submerged her own individuality in her husband" (30), Peisch suggests that "their marriage was
a complete merging of personalities and ideas, an artistic union so complete that to distinguish
or separate their careers after this date becomes impossible" (58-59). Though the scholars
seem to be saying the same thing (and perhaps are even trying to say the same thing), Birrell's
assertion is that Mahony Griffin became her husband's drafting tool—her own creativity was
submerged, perhaps even her personhood sublimated, as the phrase "submerged her own
individuality" suggests. In contrast, Peisch suggests "an artistic union" connoting a
collaborative artistic relationship.

In spite of Peisch's strong assertions about the Griffins' collaboration, he focuses his
discussions of Mahony Griffin on those aspects of her work that could be individually
attributed: "much of her work was in the form of interior decoration" (43); "In the field of
furniture design, the assistance of Marion Griffin proved particularly valuable" (48); and "The
interior decoration with its furnishings, however, demonstrates how completely Wright's chief
draftsman, Marion Mahony, had mastered his style" (58). Of the Capitol Theatre, he is able
to go a step further, in the direction of later scholars, and attribute problematic features to
Mahony Griffin and what he sees as the building's design strengths to Griffin:
The interior decoration was somewhat bizarre and was probably the work of Marion Mahony Griffin, who was frequently responsible for the interior decor and furniture design for Griffin's buildings. The plan of the theater itself, however, was perfectly logical and met the needs of cinemas... (130)

Although Peisch is willing to assert that the Griffins collaborated, he is still focused on individual attribution within that collaboration, and even in the areas where he most grants Mahony Griffin credit, the "feminine" areas of interior design and furniture design, he refuses to grant her creativity by attributing that to Wright—she merely "mastered his style."

Moreover, in the discussion of the Capitol Theatre, he assures readers that the "somewhat bizarre" interior can be credited to Mahony Griffin: Griffin's building was "perfectly logical."

Although Peisch does not denigrate Mahony Griffin or her contributions to the profession in the ways that later scholars do when they focus the central claims of their discussions on her person over her work, he does begin the history of gendering her contributions (the illogical "bizarre" as opposed to Griffin's masculine perfect logic) and privileging her interior design contributions over her (possible) architectural contributions in their collaborative endeavors. While her individual architectural contributions are rarely clear, architecture is one of the only collaborative endeavors in which it has been historically so important to maintain that the "architectural" features (whatever exactly that means), are the work of a single creator. Peisch, and this generation of Griffin scholars, write into this history without letting their research, or research questions, challenge it.

Like Peisch, Birrell seems to feel a tension between his data and his disciplinary understanding of architectural creativity. For example, Birrell both asserts that Mahony Griffin "never claimed for herself any credit for the work of his [Griffin's] office" (30) but goes on to note that those who worked with the Griffins "attest that she had a marked influence on him" (30). Birrell is clearly having difficulty with the contradictory evidence he found, for in
traditional terms of the architectural community, if she were influencing him, why would she not be claiming to do so? (Architects like Wright are known for aggressively asserting their influence and stylistic dominance over others.) And although like Peisch, he notes a sudden maturity of Griffin's style "as early as 1912 when Griffin built such houses as the Mess Residence, Winnetka, Illinois, a duplex in Chicago and an unidentified house at Kenilworth, Illinois" (30) he does not connect the new stylistic sophistication to collaboration with Mahony Griffin, whose influence on Griffin was the subject of the previous paragraph of his text. Instead, he simply spits out these contradictions all onto one page of his text without interrogating them, and goes on with 150 more pages about Griffin's life and architecture. That Birrell's story, complete with perplexing contradictions, is the one taken up by later historians is not entirely surprising. As chapter three of this text discusses, one of the things Birrell did most convincingly was to discredit Mahony Griffin's primary text. In the mean time, the primary human subjects of these studies aged and died. Once the primary sources were no longer available—the text discredited and potential interviewees dwindling away, such contradictions fell away.

Van Zanten's "Early Work of Marion Mahony Griffin," notes that the "Griffins' work after their marriage... recently [has] been the subject of several publications" (5)—Peisch's and Birrell's. Van Zanten sets out to respond to the assertions of Mahony Griffin's possible stylistic influence on her husband by reviewing her early independent work. It is in this article that the contradictions of early scholarship first fall away; Van Zanten's argument consists mainly of reading Mahony Griffin's architecture and providing an aesthetic evaluation of it. Unlike earlier sources, this article contains no strong subtextual contradictions, because Van Zanten's evaluation is singularly focused on asserting Mahony Griffin's limitations as a designing architect. He uses primary sources only to date buildings. His evaluation replaces the primary sources upon which Birrell's and Peisch's research centered, and although
aesthetic evaluation has an important history in architectural history, it is certainly part of a
tradition that is implicated in that important notion of individual genius.

Van Zanten's article would seem to be one attempting to introduce the work of an
overlooked architect of the Sullivan School; it is the first treatment to focus solely on Mahony
Griffin and her work. Yet he is really arguing that Mahony Griffin's ability as a designing
architect was so limited that she could not have influenced Griffin. Every one of her early
structures receives a scathing review. Of All Souls Church he writes, "Marion did manage to
imbue it with the exotic flavor of Wright's work" (9). The juxtaposition of "Marion" with
"Wright" is the first clue that genders Van Zanten's assertions about Mahony Griffin—she gets
"first-named" as Boutelle would call it, a familiarity that both asserts her gender and undermines
her professional position. Van Zanten goes on to assert that she "did manage to imbue" her
design—but "manage" suggests it was work, not the natural flow of ideas that stem from
genius—and in fact, she imbues it not with her own animating creativity, but with an imitative
"flavor of Wright's work." Since this is Van Zanten's most flattering assessment, the reader is
left thinking that Mahony Griffin is at her best as a hollow imitation of Wright, an assessment
that continues throughout the article and across Griffin studies.

In describing Mahony Griffin's Amberg House, Van Zanten comments, "Lippincott
asserts that it was entirely designed by Marion and one is inclined to agree, if only on account
of the numerous esthetic mistakes Wright would have avoided" (13). Similarly, in describing
the house Mahony Griffin design for Childe Wills, the designer of the Model T, he writes, "The
small number of piers and variety of spaces go beyond Wright, but perhaps lose some of the
lucidity of his planning" (18). He continues that the plan "is chiefly remarkable for . . .
decorative devices" (18). Of a store design by Mahony Griffin, Van Zanten asserts, "It is not a
very effective design" and goes on to use the phrases "heavy-handed" and "weakly articulated"
(19) to describe the project. Her house for Henry Ford demonstrates her "essentially derivative
and decorative approach" (21) "an uneasy combination of the styles of Frank Lloyd Wright and
Walter Burley Griffin" (21) which he later calls "naive planning and ill-digested borrowings" (21). As if this were not enough of an assessment, finally, he asserts, "The plan is inconvenient and probably structurally impossible" (22). Van Zanten employs language that genders Mahony Griffin’s work: decorative, naive, uneasy, not lucid, not rational (inconvenient, ineffective, impossible). In addition, his assertions attempt to cast her as not-an-architect, if an architect is creative, original, and male. Her work, in contrast, is derivative: it borrows, it combines (procreatively, not creatively) the styles of "real architects." It decorates, rather than constructs.

In case his readers did not catch all that the first time, Van Zanten summarizes his argument. "As an architect, Marion seems to have been capable only of decorative elaboration. Consistent architectural conceptualization and invention were beyond her" (22). Even if one were to agree with him generally that the focus of her work was decorative elaboration, note that Van Zanten asserts that "conceptualization and invention are beyond her." His language implies a stunting of her creative growth (as well as that feminine inconsistency). He doesn’t, for example, suggest that Mahony Griffin was offered few opportunities to demonstrate invention, or that she was most interested in decorative elaboration (not unlike her stylistic mentor, Louis Sullivan, who is not regularly denigrated for his interest in decorative elaboration).

Moreover, Van Zanten reiterates, "she was a great designer of isolated decorative details, but not an architect and planner" (22). She is not even allowed to keep the title of architect, though she earned a degree in architecture and was the first woman licensed to practice architecture in Illinois. Interestingly, Van Zanten wants so much to argue that Mahony Griffin lacked the creativity to function as a designing architect that he even argues she did not originate the drawing style for which she became so famous. Suggesting that Birch Long was the first to try the "trick," Van Zanten continues, "Therefore, not even the famous 'Mahony renderings' would seem to have been her original invention" (10). Again, the language is gendered—Mahony’s drawing skill is referred to as a trick—a sleight of hand, a con, like her
fame, based not on her originality or invention, but upon some deceit, wile, ruse. Even as an artist (not-an-architect) her work not original or inventive. And though she is nearly unanimously considered one of the finest architectural draftspersons of the 20th century, Van Zanten works hard to assert that even that accolade is mistaken—she lacks male genius: "original invention."

In Van Zanten's article, the consistently negative evaluation of Mahony Griffin's work seems based on only one aesthetic criterion—how closely it resembles the work of Frank Lloyd Wright. With this as the only criterion for judgment, Mahony Griffin cannot win a favorable evaluation: if her work does resemble Wright's it is derivative, if it does not resemble Wright's it is unsuccessful. In spite of the justifiably high praise Wright's work continues to receive in architectural studies, this standard is unusual, and unusually applied in this instance. Van Zanten's scholarly interest in Mahony Griffin is also unusual; it is rare in any field of the humanities for a scholar to chose a subject of inquiry based on an interest in discrediting the subject and his or her work. In fact, in my readings in architectural studies, I cannot think of another parallel instance where the object of the research is to undermine and discredit the work of a "minor" artist or architect. If the subject's work is not worthy of mention, scholars generally choose to leave the architect in relative historical obscurity; there seems little reason to "recover" a figure in order to discredit her.

Van Zanten's next project, Walter Burley Griffin: Selected Designs, was not about Mahony Griffin at all—it was a book focused on Griffin's designs, a project which made little attempt to even credit Mahony Griffin with the drawings she produced, much less any intellectual or architectural influence she may have had on the designs. By the time Van Zanten's book was published in 1970, Dr. Robert McCoy's 1968 PSR article on Griffin's work in Mason City had already quoted Barry Byrne in asserting that "much of the design for the Melson House was Marian's [sic]" (29). And although the Melson's house is much like Griffin's other Mason City houses in its manipulation of interior space, its exterior design is
very different than any either of the Griffins had ever designed to this point in their careers. Van Zanten published the house without ever mentioning in the text that the presentation drawings were drawn by Mahony Griffin, much less that recent scholarship suggested she had at least influenced the design and possibly taken the lead on the project.

Van Zanten's project (a monograph) required that he present Griffin as a singular creative genius—he had to argue that Griffin's style matured away from "Wrightian" influences. Therefore, in writing into the tradition of architectural history, he could hardly argue that the move away from Wrightian influences was precipitated by other influences, namely his wife. (Better, in fact to be influenced by "the master" than one's wife, no doubt.) Within the history of the history of the Sullivan School, one of the goals of scholarship has been to show the ways in which the architect being championed moved out from under Wright's or Sullivan's shadow to develop his own architectural idiom. If mere influence is problematic to the scholar establishing an architect's canonical position, the suggestion of collaboration would be even more detrimental. Van Zanten's 1966 article on Mahony Griffin set the stage, though perhaps unconsciously, for her erasure from his 1970 book—he had so discredited her architectural ability and even her claim to fame in rendering and design, that to include her would discredit Griffin by association. She becomes his unnamed "wife" in order to avoid contamination.

Van Zanten's article was extremely influential as the only early published work focusing on Mahony Griffin. For example, Donna Ruff Munchick's master's thesis, "The Work of Marion Mahony Griffin: 1894-1913" relies so heavily upon Van Zanten's assessment of Mahony Griffin's work that it almost repeats his criticism verbatim, "Mahony's architectural style must be labeled derivative, but essentially decorative" (70). But the only reason Munchick offers as to why this "must" be so is because Van Zanten asserted it. Thus, "Early Work" was and is regularly cited, and its basic argument is still for the most part unchallenged in Griffin scholarship. Moreover, its arguments seem to have influenced historian H. Allen Brooks,
whose book on the Sullivan school is undoubtedly the most widely available, widely read and influential text discussing Mahony Griffin.

Though less vitriolic than Van Zanten's, Brooks's commentary on Mahony Griffin's architecture clearly extends Van Zanten's basic premises by asserting she is best categorized as not-an-architect. Although Brooks's overall story simply excludes Mahony Griffin from the history of Sullivan School architecture at several key junctures, he also picks up the double threads of Van Zanten's argument: Mahony Griffin was competent but not creative, even her "decorative" ability was indebted to Wright or Griffin. He claims she was "a gifted designer, perhaps more an artist than an architect" (80) and then reiterates, "She designed—under Wright's direction—many of the furnishings and decoration for his houses—tables, chairs, murals and mosaics—but the task of preparing architectural drawings was usually left to others" (80). It is unclear what Brooks means by architectural drawings here, because historians know that Mahony Griffin was responsible for as many as half of the presentation drawings that were produced by the Studio during the time she was there. However, he seems to be extending Van Zanten's argument by associating Mahony Griffin only with "decoration," as an "artist" not an architect. He says that twice, when he will not even grant that she prepared architectural drawings. Moreover, he is certain to point out that this "decorative" work was still done under Wright's direction: that is, she was not being creative, even as an artist. And though we know from other members of the studio that Wright respected Mahony Griffin and her work, enough in fact to offer her the studio and his unfinished commissions when he left Oak Park with Mamah Cheney, when Brooks mentions the incident he uses it not to suggest Wright's trust in his head draftsman, but to show how limited Wright's options were when he turned over operations to "a relative stranger from Steinway Hall" (The Prairie School 86), von Holst. Brooks writes, "Mahony, although hardly suited for the task, was asked, but she declined" (86). It is somewhat unclear why Brooks believes Wright's head draftsman who had been in his employ for nearly fourteen years would be "hardly suited for the task," for the
interviews (some of which Brooks cites when describing Mahony Griffin as "homely") with studio employees consistently assert Mahony Griffin's talent and competence. But the story Brooks tells would conflict with those assertions, and so they fall away.

It is interesting as well that in Brooks's dissertation, the 1957 text upon which The Prairie School is based, he falls into the trap of most other Griffin scholars of this period. He evaluates the Melson House negatively, but then ascribes those negative features to Mahony Griffin: "the manneristic keystones seem an unfortunate bid for novelty, and the ashlar, indicative of the cliff from which the house grows, creates an extremely busy wall surface. These characteristics, however, would appear as Marion's contributions to the design..." (51). Later, when Brooks revises the dissertation to the 1972 book, the criticism falls away as does the attribution of any design features to Mahony Griffin.

After Brooks describes and evaluates Mahony Griffin's architecture, he summarizes by suggesting,

Superficially at least, the appearance of these works suggests a highly personal, well-developed design maturity. . . . But to hypothesize, it is probably true that she lacked the imaginative mind to create a wide and rich variety of outstanding designs.

(Prairie School 164)

He seems to be suggesting to his readers that although they will look at the photos of Mahony Griffin's buildings and her drawings and conclude "superficially, at least" that they are beautiful and interestingly original examples of Sullivan school architecture, that this superficial evaluation should not be trusted. He offers an alternative hypothesis—that although this work is well-developed and mature, (a point on which he clearly differs with Van Zanten) this group of designs had tapped out her creativity; "she lacked the imaginative mind to create" variety. It is a bizarre conclusion for two reasons.
First, it is based on the assumption that she did no more work—that her career ended with her marriage. Brooks makes this assumption clear when he writes, "After her marriage, she so completely sublimated herself to her husband's career that—although she participated in developing certain of his ideas—she did no designing entirely on her own" (Prairie School 164). Brooks follows Van Zanten's assertion of the "submersion" of Mahony Griffin designs following her marriage ("Early Works" 5) and reworks Peisch's notion of an "artistic union" (58) to describe Mahony Griffin as "developing certain of his ideas." Far from suggesting an artistic union, Brooks can attest to whom the ideas belonged—Griffin—because he asserts that Mahony Griffin "lacked the imaginative mind to create. . . ." But the argument is circular, because he bases her lack of creativity on the evidence that she did no designing "entirely on her own" after their marriage. (It would probably be equally fitting to note that Griffin did no designing entirely on his own until Mahony Griffin went into a semi-retirement in the 1930s.)

Second, of course, simply consider Brooks's comment as if it were made about a male architect, writer, or artist, for example, poets Shelley or Byron, or architect John Wellbourne Root, men who died young (rather than ending their careers with marriage). Few critics would suggest that, yes, their early work showed great potential, "a highly personal, well-developed maturity" but we can "hypothesize that it is probably true that Byron, Shelley or Root lacked the imaginative mind to create a wide and rich variety of outstanding poems/designs." In fact, the opposite is true: we culturally mourn the fact that these men did not have longer lives in which to realize their full potentials.

Donald Leslie Johnson, in his The Architecture of Walter Burley Griffin bases most of his assertions about Mahony Griffin's work on Van Zanten's article which he cites repeatedly, suggesting in an endnote, "Most of the factual information is based on Van Zanten, The Early Work" (140). That he absorbs Van Zanten's central premise unquestioningly is clear in his use of the word "factual" to describe Van Zanten's mainly aesthetic appraisals of Mahony Griffin's work. But he also reiterates Van Zanten's thesis, stating, "It would be reasonable conjecture to
say that Marion was not an important or dominant influence on Griffin's architectural designs. .
. ." (12). Not only does he follow Van Zanten in unproblematically juxtaposing Mahony
Griffin's first name with her husband's surname, but he cites only Van Zanten to support his
assertions. His comparative analysis of Mahony Griffin's skill as a designer is made in
strongly gendered language. He asserts that "Marion's strength was her natural ability to draw"
(12). To associate woman with nature is a common way in which she is gendered through
language, but to suggest that her one "strength" is "natural" is another way of denoting her not-
an-architect status. It erases her schooling, professional licensing, and years of architectural
practice. Moreover, it is strength in a two-dimensional art form; she is "more an artist than an
architect." If her strength is a weakness—and a feminine one at that—her weakness is also
constructed in feminine language. Johnson, summarizing Van Zanten, reports, "But her own
work prior to their marriage was inconsistent, lacked restraint, and was not architecturally
rationalized as an aesthetic and technical whole" (12). He thoroughly imbues her work with
feminine qualities—inconsistent, unrestrained, irrational, unwhole, suggesting conversely, that
there is a masculine thing, architecture, which is consistent, restrained, rational, and whole. If it
is feminine, it is not-architecture. Mahony Griffin's name is mentioned on 10 pages of
Johnson's 160 page text. After page 13 there is little evidence "Marion" was even an architect,
though Johnson notes that after 1929 she "spent less time at his architectural office[emphasis
mine]" (116), the Sydney office which he had earlier asserted, "was run by Marion" (103).

By the time Johnson's book was published in 1977, Mahony Griffin's position was
settled in conjunction with his ideas, his office, and his architecture. The notion of an "artistic
union" had fallen by the wayside in secondary scholarship. Collaboration was only mentioned
in conjunction with work attributable to Mahony Griffin; only then when she worked with
Griffin (who landscaped several of the houses she designed while with von Hoist) is there that
there is agreement that their work was "collaboration" (Brooks 165, Peisch 58-59, Harrison 25,
Birrell 12-13). Clearly, collaboration is also a gendered notion; when men collaborate with
women architects, it explains why the woman's work can be successful, even when Griffin's role seems to have been limited to landscaping the grounds. Harrison's *Walter Burley Griffin, Landscape Architect*, even notes, with no cited evidence, and contrary to all available primary evidence, that:

Their close personal and professional association while working on the Millikin Place houses appears to explain how these designs proved to be so successful. The only conclusion is that Griffin assisted to the point of being the principal author, although the superb interiors and exquisitely detailed furniture can confidently be credited to Marion. (25)

Harrison's "only conclusion" is contrary to all available primary evidence, and while he clearly disagrees with Van Zanten's evaluation of the houses, he understands that the body of secondary scholarship asserts that Mahony Griffin is not a competent architect. Therefore, his positive evaluation of the houses must mean that she is not the architect. But even though he does not agree with Van Zanten's negative evaluation of Mahony Griffin's work, Harrison is clearly influenced by Van Zanten's article, which he quotes when arguing that Mahony Griffin could not have influenced her husband's sudden design maturity after their marriage in 1911. He asserts that the notion of Mahony Griffin's influence "is a most dubious explanation. . . . there is no evidence that her manifest talents extended to the design of buildings. A superb draftsman and artist. . . . she was nevertheless extremely limited as a designing architect" (23).

Therefore, when faced with having positively evaluated Mahony Griffin's architecture, only one thing can be possible: she was not the designer. There was no defined space in which to note problems of attribution within a collaborative partnership without disrupting the (his)story of history and therefore historians arrived at the culturally available and already sanctioned story—that there are no great women architects. That assumption leads inexorably to two possibilities: that the work is not "great," or that the woman could not be responsible for
the "great" work. As I have noted, both these conclusions are distributed among early secondary sources on the Griffins and both were often arrived at through painstakingly logical, though often quite circular arguments that required Mahony Griffin's work to be consistently articulated in gendered language. The use of gendered language allowed women's architectural contributions to be consistently misattributed, even by thorough and well-meaning scholars who simply attempted to write their histories using the generic conventions of the discipline without interrogating the politics of those conventions—specifically compulsory attention to attribution and compulsive denial of collaboration.

The Politics of Attribution

Attribution of buildings is a central task of the architectural historian, because it is a necessary component of canon construction and the "great men, great monuments" pedagogical approach the discipline has adopted. Because the history of architectural studies tends to posit the notion of the individual genius as creator, the work of the Griffins has been problematic for scholars who want to separate each partner's contributions to the finished work—and of course, arrive at the culturally available conclusion of a genius and a help-mate. Such scholarship, though admittedly detail-oriented and painstaking, is still based in great part on conjecture, guess-work, and the culturally received notion that there are no great women architects.

And yet, architecture is really a collaborative practice. As Rubbo forcefully asserts:

Architecture is always a collaborative effort. Immediately, it involves client, architect, assistant architect, consultant, project manager, and builder. Less immediately, it involves the source of ideas and inspiration and their re-interpretation, and the social, political, economic and intellectual climate in which work is done. ("A Portrait" 25)

Though this assertion seems common-sensical, such arguments have historically been rare in architectural studies, though they are beginning to be voiced. In the case of the Griffins, the
usual conclusions that they did not function collaboratively, or share extensively, has required that scholars misread and miswrite a large body of primary sources and rely heavily on a small number of early secondary sources whose gender biases reflect their social/historical context.

The importance to the discipline of correct attribution is especially apparent in book reviews like Conrad Hamann's review of Johnson's *The Architecture of Walter Burley Griffin*. Hamann is most disappointed with Johnson's failure to answer questions of attribution. He mentions Griffin's tendency to collaborate by naming both projects and collaborators, but wishes Johnson would have taken on such issues in very specific ways. For example, he writes, "The Australian phase is complicated by the way Griffin collaborated with several local offices after his arrival, which presents more authorship problems" (359). Hamann further asserts:

Johnson then tackles Marion Mahony's role in Griffin's architecture.
A distinguished Prairie School architect herself, one would assume she exerted a powerful influence on Griffin's work. He sees her as a counselor who never interfered with Griffin's basic design, but who supervised detailed plans, especially ornamental detail. At times, the ornament turned into full-scale architecture, as in the Capitol Cinema's ceiling. (Indeed, some attribute the theatre to Marion Mahony; unfortunately Johnson does not pass judgment on this view.) (358)

Hamann seems to suggest that attribution is an either/or issue that scholars might attempt to solve: either Mahony Griffin designed the Capitol theatre, or she supervised Griffin's detailed plans, or she designed the theatre's ceiling (an almost-architectural feat), but the possibility that she and Griffin worked together on a project so seamlessly that it is impossible to tease apart the effort is never a possibility—nor is it a possibility in any of the early texts discussed previously.

Even more than twenty years later, in the traditional discourse of this discipline, the issue of attribution nearly always arises, because establishing genius and formalizing a canon have
been the foremost tasks of the modernist architectural historian, as Roxanne Williamson argued extensively in *American Architects and the Mechanics of Fame*. She begins her chapter, “Historians as Fame Makers,” with the assertion that:

> It is obvious that historians must take much of the blame, or credit, for our recent view of America’s architectural past. In their surveys, they often focused on those architects they considered to be leading in the direction that became Modern architecture, thus assuring that some architects would be remembered, while others, perhaps equally interesting, would not.\(^9\)

These historians\(^9\) worked backward from a modernist moment to construct a roughly evolutionary, teleological history of architecture which would culminate in that most impressive achievement of phallic architecture, the modernist skyscraper.

The heroes of these narratives were individual architects, whose singular contributions were lauded as if they were heralds of a second coming. Nowhere is this intent on hero worship so blatant, Williamson points out, as in Nikolas Pevsner’s 1936 *Pioneers of the Modern Movement from William Morris to Walter Gropius*. The very title points to the problem: Morris was not only profoundly anti-modernist, he was “vocally anti-elite and convinced art would come from the little man. . . . Gropius always praised the concept of team design” (218). But both men came to be depicted as individual pioneers on the trail to modernism. Such books were written to establish a canonical chronology of modernism, which necessitated the individual messianic architect (who was always a man). Of course such histories fed, and were fed by, those individual prophets of architecture who willingly assumed the role of creative genius: Sullivan, Wright and Le Corbusier to name only a few. Moreover, these notions have been fed to generations of students through a system of architectural education that is profoundly sexist,\(^9\) turning a very recent practice of composing a canon into an historical fact, assuring students that there is no history of women in the field, and that those
anomalous women who do emerge are not great when held to enduring aesthetic standards (which exist outside history).

This history is fascinating, because it is one not of benign neglect, but of misattribution, misrepresentation, and erasure. Because the story of architecture has been one of great men and individual genius, historians writing into that existing story employed existing generic conventions—conventions which made collaboration an excess—information that could potentially deform the linear narrative of architectural history. These arguments and their conclusions, suggest that very good scholars, employing very good scholarship, have a difficult time acknowledging the limits of their knowledge and the vastness of weighty culture's illogical influences.

An Example: Millikin Place

An example that illustrates the complicated business of attribution is a project associated with Mahony Griffin, Millikin Place. The three Sullivan School houses have had a particularly active history through scholarly attempts at attribution— Attempts to actually divide up the existing work based on which architect of the collaborating architects could be assumed responsible for which parts of the structure. Because, as I have already noted, much of the early secondary textual information treats Mahony Griffin with varying levels of disregard or contempt, usually the buildings which were attributed to her were denigrated. Examining the history of these attributions in some detail reveals several important issues in Griffin studies: 1) if buildings are evaluated positively, they are usually credited to some other architect; if evaluated negatively, Mahony Griffin is credited; 2) if language of collaboration is used to describe a project, it means that Griffin ought to "really" be credited while she "helped" (with her own commissions!); and 3) research questions never question the central cultural assumption that he is the architect and she is the help-mate: in fact, primary sources are consistently misread, miswritten, and misunderstood in order that they not appear to challenge that important notion. Finally, these scholars never question the necessity of attribution, and the
related refusal to consider the possibility of a significant intellectual collaboration that would produce seamlessly integrated products of the design process.

Decatur, Illinois, according to David Newton, is "a city better known for its industry" than for its architecture. Yet in 1909, seven local businessmen jointly purchased land which would be developed into the neighborhood called Millikin Place, which they agreed should be designed "as a harmonious whole" under the charge of a landscape architect who would coordinate the streets, driveways and grounds (8-9). Frank Lloyd Wright was originally approached for this project in 1909, but left the country later in that year with a married client, abandoning his family and his architectural practice. The amount of work Wright was able to put into the three Sullivan School homes commissioned before he left is at the heart of attribution questions about the three houses, built for E.P. Irving, and Robert and Adolph Mueller. What is known is that Wright exhibited two of the homes (the Mueller Houses) as his own designs after returning to the U.S., causing a great deal of confusion surrounding the already murky issues of attribution. Moreover, because Mahony Griffin was hired by Hermann von Holst to complete the commissions, the houses were also published under von Holst's name in sources such as the *Western Architect*, causing further confusion. And because Walter Burley Griffin was hired to create a unified landscaping scheme for the entire subdivision of Millikin Place, the fact of his input has led to further speculation by scholars such as Harrison, Birrell, and Johnson, that he is the central author of the work. Scholars are left, then, to sort out the contributions of each of four architects whose names have been associated with the houses: von Holst, Mahony Griffin, Wright, and Griffin. von Holst, because his own work had little stylistic commonalty with that of the architects of the Sullivan School, has traditionally been omitted from this discussion. It is so unlikely that he could have produced the houses, that although his signature claims them (as principal of the firm), his name is almost entirely excluded from arguments of attribution. Peisch, the earliest secondary author to write about Millikin Place, undermines any possibility of Mahony Griffin authorship.
of any of the houses, writing that the commissions were "completed by von Holst, Mahony, and Griffin" (57). Peisch suggests that the "Houses at Millikin Place were a project Wright had already seen through original plans" and that while the "Mueller Houses were later published as the work of von Holst and Mahony, they are most certainly Wright's" (57). He describes these houses he has attributed to Wright as "solid, mature examples of Wright's 'prairie house'" (58), offering that the "interior decoration with its furnishings, however, demonstrates how completely Wright's chief draftsman, Marion Mahony, had mastered his style. The desk and rug for the E.P. Irving House are her work" (58).

In contrast to Peisch's attribution of the houses to Wright, Birrell asserts, "Wright departed for Europe in the autumn of 1909 and much of his work for that year he handed over to Marion Mahony and Herman Von Holst [sic]. Griffin's contribution to these designs was therefore probably in excess of the landscaping" (42). Note that Birrell's statement is clearly speculative; he writes that "probably" Griffin did more than landscaping. This is the same conjecture Harrison made about the project around 1970, although there is almost no primary evidence to support this beyond Mahony Griffin's letter to Purcell suggesting Griffin had been responsible for the Irving house (see note 104).

Johnson makes the same assertion in his *The Architecture of Walter Burley Griffin*. He unproblematically attributes the Irving house to Wright, but goes on to say of the Robert Mueller house that its attribution to Wright and Mahony (by unnamed sources) is probably correct because it "does indeed have a sophistication in plan and detail suggesting the master" (12). Of the Adolph Mueller house he suggests a similarity to the J.B. Cooley house by Griffin, asserting, "Griffin must have had some, if not a great deal of influence on the design of at least this house" (12). The houses Johnson provides a favorable evaluation of he also associates with either Wright or Griffin. It is necessary to note that the only house he gives Mahony Griffin design credit for, the Amberg house in Grand Rapids, Michigan, he describes as "heavy and rather confused" (12).
Not only are attributions to Mahony Griffin alone followed by a negative evaluation, the entire notion of the Griffins’ possible collaboration is colored by gendered notions of who is and who is not an architect. The possibility that Mahony Griffin might have influenced Griffin’s design of the Cooley house is not only unmentioned; we can assume it was not even considered. Johnson’s and Birrell’s speculation ceases to seem speculative because it repeats back to readers the assumptions they already hold. Unbiased history becomes a retelling of cultural assumptions, through which specific stories are filtered, homogenized, and bottled into clean, neat, and unproblematic packages for mass consumption.

In contrast, but to similar ends, Van Zanten’s appraisal of the houses is in language nearly identical to Peisch’s, suggesting an awareness of that earlier source. Van Zanten also asserts that “Wright had completed the working drawings for the Irving house” (16). He then writes, “they [the Decatur houses] are chiefly remarkable for the completeness with which they reproduce Wright’s style” (“Early Work” 16). Van Zanten provides little other commentary on the houses except to suggest that only a rejected early drawing of the Adolph Mueller House was “at all original” (17), asserting therefore, that the houses that were built were not “at all original.”

Brooks also attempts to attribute the Millikin Place Houses, asserting, quite contrary to the primary source of the Western Architect, that:

it seems quite certain that Wright’s participation extended well beyond the ’original sketch’ if only because of the pleasing proportions and total harmony of the parts. Even such details as the leaded glass seem subject to his control, although that would have been one of the last things designed. (149)

Brooks not only quotes the Western Architect in order to argue it must be incorrect, his assertion that the even glass must have been designed by Wright directly contradicts Mahony Griffin’s assertion in MOA that she designed “furniture, carpets, draperies, radiator screens, and glass”
And although Mahony Griffin never claimed sole authorship of this house, it does contain several features that would make it extremely unusual for Wright. The stairwell is lit with skylights, and the upper hallway lit from the attic with daylight filtered through decorative ceiling grilles. The unusual aspect of the house is that an attic exists at all—Wright is well known as an opponent of what he called useless and unsanitary spaces of attics and basements—his houses never included either.

Although Brooks goes on to suggest that Mahony Griffin "probably assisted with the furniture" (149), even this modest credit does not do justice to the importance of the furniture and built-ins in creating the roomy interiors and flow of space. In crediting the house to Wright, Brooks concludes: "The design, including its remarkably open interior planning, deserves to rank among Wright's most brilliant achievements..." (149). I do not mean to argue here that the Irving house is Mahony Griffin's singular creation: in fact, quite to the contrary, the primary evidence, including Mahony Griffin's own recollections, seems to suggest that the Irving house came to her in the form of a single preliminary sketch, that she, working with the clients and perhaps Walter Burley Griffin, altered in minor ways and fleshed out into the necessarily detailed working drawings. In MOA she even discusses her attempts to contact Wright, presumably to sign off on the working drawings, writing, "When the absent architect didn't bother to answer anything that was sent over to him, the relations were broken and I entered into partnership with von Holz and Fyfe. For that period I had great fun designing" (IV 170).

Anne Watson points out, and correctly, I think, that Mahony Griffin "was certainly not in the habit of claiming undue credit; on the contrary...she endured a lifetime of under-acknowledgment..." (127). That early Griffin scholarship habitually ignored and undervalued Mahony Griffin's contributions also required a level of misreading, miswriting, and misunderstanding primary resources. Mahony Griffin had been so thoroughly constructed as "not-an-architect" that scholars faced with the possibility of her architectural contributions (really anything other than drawing someone else's ideas) had no alternative but to doubt the primary
sources, for she could not be both not-an-architect and even partially responsible for a "remarkably open interior planning . . . among Wright's most brilliant achievements."

Brooks's attributions of the other Millikin place houses are also speculative. He notes that the Robert Mueller house is a "more intricate and interesting spatial experience" than Mahony Griffin's other houses and asserts that, "Perhaps the reason for this is that Wright left behind some elevation drawings which Mahony utilized" (159). Once again, the positive evaluation is accompanied by a speculative hope, a "perhaps," for a primary source that does not exist and that would seem highly unlikely based upon the progression from preliminary drawings (in the NYHS copy of MOA) and the final solution of the Robert Mueller house Mahony Griffin seems to have arrived at through a spottily documented, but documented none-the-less design process.

Brooks has much less to say about the single house he attributes to Mahony, the Adolph Mueller house. He does suggest, however, that it has "all the characteristics associated with Mahony" (159). However, it is this single attribution that Brooks is willing to make that Paul Sprague takes exception to twenty-six years later, suggesting:

what the Adolph Mueller house resembles most closely are houses in Walter Burley Griffin's early style . . . . It would seem, therefore, that beginning in the autumn of 1910 Marion Mahony, then attracted to Walter Burley Griffin and drawn to his architecture, switched aesthetic models from Wright to Griffin. ("Marion Mahony" 32)

Although I have not previously read an argument suggesting that sexual attraction leads to an architect's adoption of a new architectural style, clearly when the architect in question is a women, and therefore not-quite-an-architect, such speculation is necessary in scholarship. Sprague continues his argument that Mahony Griffin does not deserve space in the canon of architectural greatness, employing the language of a romance novel, "she was unable to elude the overpowering forcefulness, first of Wright's conceptions, then of Griffin's" (34). Sprague goes
on to describe Mahony Griffin's architecture as "satisfactory in a parochial sense" (34) concluding that "Reluctantly perhaps we come back full circle to Marion as an artist rather than Marion as an architect. . ." (36). He goes on to suggest that had she never known Wright or Griffin, she "might well have touched fame through her artistic renderings" (36).

It is difficult to unpack such a carpet bag of discursive strategies here, in great measure because I find Sprague's language so offensive and demeaning. He clearly incorporates most of the discursive practices the other scholars of his field use: he genders Mahony Griffin by first-naming her—she is "Marion" to "Wright"; he feminizes her by suggesting her architectural work was ravished by aggressive, inescapable masculine forces—she was "unable to elude overpowering forcefulness": she was not-an-architect. Moreover, she was so thoroughly not-an-architect that her work was influenced and undermined by sexual attractions (and the possibility that her work was enlivened and invigorated by sexual attractions is never considered—can we not see Griffin or Wright as potential muses, enabling and encouraging her to greater achievement?) Finally, Sprague tells his readers that she was, unequivocally not-an-architect, but an artist, and that had she never "touched fame" through the masters (Wright and Griffin) her own talent in fulfilling that feminine, helpmate role, as the pencil in the master's hand, might have brought her fame in her own right—or at least allowed her to "touch fame" through some other great man.

And so the scholarship on Mahony Griffin's architectural work comes full circle, beginning and ending with her status as not-an-architect. In the middle are caught Rubbo's and Pregliasco's modest assertions. Pregliasco attributes the Irving house to Wright, declines to engage Brooks on the issue of the Robert Mueller house, and suggests that the Adolph Mueller house is "most purely hers" (171) having "no Wrightian counterpart" (171). Rubbo, in "Marion Mahony: A Larger than Life Presence" asserts that "The strong vertical surfaces and sophisticated planning of the Mueller house are evidence of a mature and sure designer" (51). These are the only examples in which the Millikin Place houses are attributed to Mahony
Griffin and receive a positive evaluation. In "Commemorating Marion Mahony Griffin," Fran Martone comments, perhaps somewhat too obviously, "Some researchers credit her with more significance than others, often according to gender lines" (9). And in spite of the obviousness of Martone's assertion, there has been little discussion of why scholars who are women might wish to claim a larger role for Mahony Griffin, and why the discursive practices that have limited her role might be so chaffing to women in the discipline.
Derrida's assertion that a text is, at least in part, a game whose "laws" and "rules" can only be discerned by a reader who visits and revisits its pages provides a particularly apt metaphor for Mahony Griffin's The Magic of America. Even more than a game, though, this text functions as critical practice, in an architectural sense, an architectural space built of words, rather than materials. In "A Practice of One's Own: The Critical Copy and the Translation of Space." Dagmar Richter writes:

In critical practice it still seems more appropriate to take things apart through writing than to change conditions through spatial arrangement. I would therefore venture to say that spatial intent need not be validated by building—it can stand instead as a kind of text to read. There are many forms of architectural practice. (99)

To the many historians who asserted that Mahony Griffin's creativity ended with her marriage, I would suggest it blossomed with her marriage and branched out into a critical practice after her husband's death. Jeffery Turnbull describes Mahony Griffin's purpose in MOA as, "to record their professional and philosophical ideas and attitudes, and to be understood through reading their buildings and written thoughts" (106). Turnbull conflates reading buildings and texts, just as Richter conflates writing buildings and texts. Mahony Griffin's final contribution to the Griffins' architectural practice is textual, but it is also a complex architectural work, perhaps
better understood as a spatial construct, rather than as representing the chronological, time-bound genre of biography that earlier scholars have labeled it. Because this text challenges generic classifications of a "book," "narrative," or an "autobiography," it has a long history of being ignored or mischaracterized in secondary sources—sources which were for many years the only readily accessible scholarship on the Griffins.

In describing Mahony Griffin's text, Anna Rubbo argues that *MOA* "is a quintessentially postmodern text, and Marion Griffin is a quintessentially postmodern woman. The text is fragmentary, located in time and place, in the ordinary and the extraordinary..." ("A Creative Partnership" 81). And although at first glance it would seem that this complex game of a text is one that might be more accessible today because of contemporary readers' awareness of postmodern theory, I am unwilling to entirely forgive earlier scholars their unwillingness to play Mahony Griffin's game. For although the text is a difficult one, it is not without antecedents with which architectural historians should have been familiar, for Mahony Griffin clearly attempts to engage the earlier autobiographies of Frank Lloyd Wright and Louis Sullivan, occasionally even referring directly to the texts of these two men. Moreover, if her text is considered in the wider contexts of those architects' other works, for example Sullivan's *Kindergarten Chats* or his *Democracy, A Man-Search,* or Wright's polemical treatises or *Genius and the Mobocracy,* his own epitaph on collaboration (between Sullivan and himself), Mahony Griffin's text becomes even less an unfamiliar game and more an attempt to specifically engage issues that would have seemed necessary to a critical architectural practice.

Therefore, when this chapter follows *The Magic of America* through its use in early secondary sources, arriving at the text's generally discredited position in relation to scholarly uses, I am also arguing that when these authors attempted to "gender" Mahony Griffin's text, they did so disingenuously, for they should have been very aware of similar texts written by Wright and Sullivan. Through analysis of these secondary sources, I examine how the history of architectural studies has minimized Mahony Griffin's contributions to the field by
constructing her text as "unknowable" and refusing to place it within a knowable and accessible context: that of architectural treatise and autobiography. Again, historians can be accused not of intent but of habit; although they may have been truly confused by her text, scholars have never displayed a similar confusion when confronted with Sullivan's or Wright's texts. But because those historians could not envision Mahony Griffin as an architect or, therefore, as an architectural theorist, they assumed she was writing a biography of her husband—a great architect. Yet the text was unable to fit easily within that generic classification. In this chapter, I consider these closely connected issues by first describing Mahony Griffin's text, and then examining its treatment in secondary sources. I go on to discuss the ways in which contextualizing this text in terms of Wright's and Sullivan's texts can provide insight into Mahony Griffin's rhetorical strategies and choices. Finally, I examine the ways in which MOA can be best understood neither as a biography of Griffin, nor as an autobiography of Mahony Griffin, but as an argument (or battle) about architecture, a critical practice, in which two life stories are deeply entangled, but are incidental to the larger story about democracy, individualism, and a great hope for constructing a space for both.

Reading Magic

My experiences reading this text have punctuated my life as a scholar since I was an undergraduate in Chicago. My earliest experiences, nearly fifteen years ago, were colored by the secondary scholarship I had read suggesting Mahony Griffin's text was unreadable. After being searched for ball-point pens, I sat in the archives of the Burnham Library, wearing white cotton gloves, leafing through Mahony Griffin's musty typescript, unable to read more than bits in the two days I had allowed for my research. I found both an unreadable text and a text that gripped me—by the time I left, I was convinced that the text, described in the card catalogue as "a biography of architect Walter Burley Griffin," was far more than that.

Yet nothing I had read had described the text in any but the most dismissive terms. I became certain that my engagement with and interest in the text suggested something lax about
my scholarship—a lack of discernment that would mark me naive and unsophisticated. I did not mention or cite MOA in my undergraduate thesis, perhaps out of fear that my interest in a thing so dismissible would reveal that I really wasn't a scholar, that I was easily side-tracked by the unimportant.

My initial reading of the text is less important, I think, than my initial reading of the discipline. That reading of the text was not terribly accurate—it was a hurried, hit-or-miss reading of a lengthy text filled with references to ideas I had no context for understanding. The reading of the discipline, I think, was stunningly accurate. Where had I come by this disciplinary knowledge? Through the tone and innuendo of secondary sources—sources whose political stance it had never occurred to me to interrogate and which I assumed to be a reflection of the truth—at least some sort of historically accurate small "t" truth.

**The Magic of America**

Mahony Griffin's 90 year life speaks vividly of the ways in which women's contributions in the professions have been overlooked or undervalued as the scholarly response to her autobiography, *Magic of America*, attests. This unpublished manuscript, probably begun between 1938-1940, and repeatedly revised between 1940-1949, attempts to redefine two lives shaped by the competing forces of idealistic belief in democracy, concern for the rights of individuals, commitment to a religion that saw a place for both, and a creative marriage in which these competing notions regularly played themselves out. Although the manuscript's title reflects a genuine belief in the potential of American democracy, the text itself outlines the battles the couple fought in democracy's name—and the many occasions upon which the Griffins found democratic ideals sorely lacking.

Because previous discussions of Mahony Griffin's text by architectural historians have dismissed it variously as "untruthful," "angry" and "bitter," a common mythology developed surrounding the text, suggesting that it is not particularly useful to serious scholars of architectural history. Nor is the text by any typical definition a literary autobiography, which
has made the artifact, all 1000+ manuscript pages of thematically organized letters, short essays, newspaper articles, and over 200 pages of related ephemera, of little interest to literary scholars. More a huge scrapbook than a traditional autobiography, the text is very difficult indeed for the casual scholar to approach; its unwieldy size and lack of indexing make it a truly hypertextual document. In his 1988 essay on *MOA*, James Weirick best describes the text, asserting:

> This is in itself a highly imaginative work. Frequently dismissed as rambling and incoherent, the manuscripts, completed when Marion was nearly eighty years old, are in themselves, assemblages, collages—fragments of text, abrupt sequences of letters, original drawings and photographs almost randomly collected, unidentified lecture notes, news clippings, contemporary critiques, snatches of architectural philosophy, genealogical data and substantive historical information, all enlivened with misquotations and misattributions. (13)

In this text, Mahony Griffin describes her life in terms of a struggle against colonizing influences—on personal and political levels. She divides her text into four roughly equal, non-chronological sections describing the four major "battles" she and her husband faced in the course of their personal lives and professional careers: "The Empirial Battle," describing their search for an indigenous, democratic architecture in India; "The Federal Battle," describing their attempt to implement their prize winning plan for the Australian Federal capital of Canberra; "The Municipal Battle," describing their attempt to design and establish communities, first in the U.S. then Castlecrag, a communitarian, environmentalist suburb in Sydney; and finally, "The Individual Battle," describing the Griffins' stormy personal relationship and creative professional partnership. The ideas for which she has been most regularly criticized run through the text like a subplot: for her religious beliefs, her negative assessments of Frank Lloyd Wright and his work, and her (really quite gentle and few) assertions about her input into projects with Wright, von Holst, and Griffin. But in contrast to the consistent depictions of
Mahony Griffin's text as inaccurate and bitter, her words express a real hopefulness for change and a pleasure in the life she had lived.

"The Empirical Battle," which Mahony Griffin subtitles "or An American Architect's Year in India," records not quite two years of time, from October 1935-February 1937. The first year, while Griffin was in India and Mahony Griffin was in Australia, is documented through the letters between them, as well as some postcards, photographs and drawings. This first year is an incredible juxtaposition of the "ordinary and the extraordinary" as Griffin's letters illustrate an exciting new world of professional opportunities in India and Mahony Griffin's tell of her domestic and community activities at Castlecrag and in Sydney.

By this time in their lives, Mahony Griffin was 64 and had been at least partially retired from her architectural career for several years. She instead spent her time drawing, painting, cataloguing Australian flora for her ongoing botany projects, educating the community's (Castlecrag) children both formally and informally, developing a community theatre and directing and costuming its many productions, becoming active in Sydney's contemporary dance scene through her architectural apprentice, Louise Lightfoot, conducting lectures in Anthroposophy, and leading environmental causes to save the "virgin bush" as she was often quoted saying. Although her retirement was an active one, it was one she cherished, for Griffin's letters entreating her to join him began nearly immediately after he arrived in India and were consistently put off as she described her busy life and suggested other architects from his office who would better suit his purposes.

Although Griffin describes the novelty of India in these letters that are peppered with the Indian politics of Gandhi, talk of the weather, the lush landscape and gardens, the food (which as a vegetarian Griffin seemed to much enjoy), the cinema, and even birthday wishes for his "Valentine" (MMG had a February 14 birthday), the most compelling refrain is about the immediacy of professional practice and his need for Mahony Griffin to bring herself from retirement to join him. In a letter dated February '36 Griffin writes, "You can be content that
you have not been on this trip heretofore because there would be no escape for you from going back to drafting. Nor have I found any effective alternative" (I 74). Mahony Griffin's reply in March, "Someday I should love to come, but for now take Colin" (I 96). But Griffin rejected the idea that the young apprentice Colin Day come to India to draw for him. By May of 1936 Mahony Griffin had been convinced, and joined Griffin in Lucknow, finding him in the midst of one of the most productive periods in his career. By July 13, 1936 Griffin was finding Mahony Griffin's input invaluable as he attempted to complete the hundreds of buildings for the United Provinces Exhibition.109 He wrote of her influence over the exhibition officials, with whom his working relations had been contentious, "during this rush where Marion has been doing much valiant work filling the breach with gay, decorative sketches that have over-awed and conquered the enemy" (MOA I 134).

Although this section of MOA allows readers a great deal of insight into the Griffin's marriage, professional relationship, and varied interests, it discusses in detail their concerns about "building" a democratic India. Their battles here against the undemocratic forces of British colonization and Indian bureaucracy provide the focus for this section of the manuscript.

The section entitled "The Federal Battle" describes in detail the Griffins' battle with the Australian government to realize the Canberra they had planned. Beginning with the Griffin's entry into the international competition to design Australia's new federal capital and ending with Mahony Griffin's memories of surveying the site around 1938, this section describes both the couple's beliefs about planning an environmentally friendly and democratic city, and the difficulties they faced in actually implementing their plan. Mahony Griffin's concern is, in great measure, a concern with the parliamentary system, which she sees as entrenching bureaucracies in British colonies around the world. She writes:

I am telling this story at this late date because it is critically important now in 1947 that Americans should comprehend the difference between the Parliamentary and the congressional forms of government. . . . The British
people are lovely on the whole and like other people but their form of government is the masterpiece of Satan himself. The consequences will be dire if after the war the institutions of the world are modeled on this pattern.

(II 421-427)

Although these concerns seem somehow quaint at the dawn of the cold war, her concerns consistently remain with the numbing and paralyzing bureaucracies of Empire—which she saw as always antithetical to democracy, whether they occurred in capitalist or communist regimes.

Mahony Griffin's text also reveals the Griffins' concern for an environmentally conscious city planning. These concerns led to their detailed site analysis, and perhaps reveal why the plan was first embraced by the committee for its ability to beautifully and accurately depict the Australian landscape, but then rejected when the radical nature of the plan became more clear:

In planning Canberra every detail of the natural conditions were thoroughly studied in order to preserve them and to make the most of each and everything so that the City can indeed be a living thing, a healthy, growing thing. Such reverence for our Mother Earth is acutely necessary now for the rate of destruction is increasing so rapidly that even a century or two may make the earth incapable of supporting life.

. (II 436)

Because both she and Griffin had had such a strong initial belief in the potential for democracy in Australia, their eventual loss of a decade long battle to achieve the Canberra they had envisioned was a crushing blow to both of them, and led to real disillusionment about Australia's democratic potential. In spite of this, the second section of Mahony Griffin's text reveals little bitterness about what she calls "a character-testing decade" that nearly drove the Griffins' marriage to the breaking point. She ends the section hopefully, describing Canberra as she last saw it, upon driving down with friends before she left Australia to return to America.
She asserts that the city (of then 12,000) has become "an enduring testimonial to the genius of the late Walter Burley Griffin." She closes the section first with her own last vision of Canberra, before she returned permanently to the United States; she bolsters her argument with a description of Canberra from the Melbourne Herald, a description that is even more apt today, as the 1970s saw something of a return to the Griffins' original plan for the city:

It is a place of beautiful buildings, beautiful trees, and beautiful flowers, to say nothing about the inhabitants. There are no high buildings, nor ugly buildings, nor slums: no horrible street boardings, no unsightly fences. . . . Almost every street has a central plantation, and there are plenty of public parks and gardens. Through the trees in many places are to be seen beautiful views of the distant hills and mountain ranges.

Beautiful Canberra. (MOA II 438)

The central preoccupations of the next section of Mahony Griffin's text, "The Municipal Battle" are quite similar to those voiced previously in the text. The sub-section titles of this section focus not just on the struggles to build environmentally sound municipalities, but the problems bureaucracy creates ("Bureau-Crazy" she writes at one point), and the related but different notion of building a civilization from these municipalities. Although the Griffins' community of Castlecrag and the battles they fought to build that vision of an engaged, active community in a natural setting comprise the core of this chapter, Mahony Griffin also provides insight into a variety of the Griffins' other community schemes, in Australia, Canada, and the U.S. This section includes several addresses on town planning delivered by Griffin and many site plans for communities, as well as her rich descriptions of Castlecrag.

Although the story she tells is about a battle, she draws the battle lines by describing the beauty of that which the Griffins hoped to preserve. The passage is also a look into a moment of the Griffins' marriage, for although she left Griffin in Melbourne, he soon joined her in Castlecrag in order to plan and protect the undeveloped bush they had purchased:
We missed our canoe "Allana," our beloved but, though this Harbor was more enclosed and quiet . . . the rowboat was more sensible. Such trips! Way up to the head waters of the harbor . . . slipping by moonlight up our own Crag Cove and Castle Cove under great overhanging rocks beautifully carved by water and wind, and such . . . tracery of branch and foliage, rich and varied in its colors, and still. Oh so still! except for the occasional plunk of a leaping fish! And the incredible beauty of the phosphorescence in the water below us and dripping from our oars, Lucifer lighting the depths. (III 112).

It is also in this section that Mahony Griffin describes the social and intellectual life of Castlecrag, her lifetime interest in educating children, and a series of short essays on political topics from class issues to the rights of aboriginal peoples to the evils of bureaucracy.

Finally, the "Individual Battle," describes each of the Griffins' lives and work up to leaving the United States for Australia. Here she often casts herself as a helpmate: Xantippe to Griffin's Socrates. At other times, however, she describes herself as living fully only through her work: "I took my work so earnestly. I was devoted to my work and indeed, throughout my life have been convinced that work is the one great satisfaction of human beings" (IV 160). Mahony Griffin collects information from both her family history and Griffin's—she writes the story of their lives, as well as their architecture. Her telling of the rowboat rides in Castlecrag proceeds, in the text, her description of the canoe trips of their courtship. In the fourth section of her text she writes:

Up the Chicago River they paddled and even with the Hades of the modern city around them, though at times their eyes rested on the majestic architecture of grouped silos, they began to meditate on other universes to be entered and as they slipped past the suburban limits and as the darkness of night and a brewing storm gathered, each in his own
mind with no word spoken determined that nothing should turn them
from this escape from the grime of our modern civilization into endlessly
varied paradise—except that other conquest in creative architecture to
which their souls were dedicated. (VI 279-80)

That this passage (and many others) serves an allegorical function seems clear in Mahony’s
text; whether or not any such moment actually occurred during the couple’s courtship, they
certainly faced a lifetime of brewing storms with a determination to change our modern
civilization, through architecture. Moreover, throughout this section Mahony Griffin clearly
and repeatedly asserts her status as an architect—even when earlier in the text she has focused
on asserting her husband’s genius—she refuses to cast herself as other than an architect. She
claims her soul to be dedicated to creative architecture. Their dedication, at least, was a
collaborative endeavor, suggesting that the canoe, the rowboat, the dining room, the bedroom,
and the drafting room were spaces in which their individual ideas about architecture and
democracy crystallized to become “their” ideas.

Scholars Reading Magic

In contrast to the fascinating and complex picture of the Griffins and the seemingly
brutally honest depictions of their marriage found in Magic of America, early scholars of the
Sullivan School have to a man (and I mean man) summarily dismissed Mahony Griffin’s text
and its usefulness. And although the manuscript would seem to provide at least a starting point
for scholars hoping to answer questions about the Griffins’ work, lives, and architectural
practice, the text was so discredited that it was rarely even cited. In the following section, I note
every mention made of MOA in print between 1964 and 1987.117 There were no positive
evaluations of the text or its usefulness to scholars before 1988—and many negative
assessments occur after that time.

The first scholar to mention the text, James Birrell, writing a biography of Griffin, deals
with all 1000 pages in two short sentences, “Marion Mahony Griffin left a 12 volume
autobiography. Unfortunately, it is a very bitter document and may never be published" (14). That Birrell's two sentences bother to mention the length of the manuscript suggest that its length is something of an issue—MOA becomes excessive. Because Birrell names the text an autobiography of Mahony Griffin, who is an incredibly minor character in his story of Walter Burley Griffin's life, her excessiveness now becomes nearly comical—a tiny life that warranted a twelve volume autobiography. By next describing the tone of this twelve volume work as bitter—so bitter as to be unpublishable—readers are left with a notion of this text as ranting, excessive, meglomaniacal. This comment set the tone for the scholarly dismissal of the text for the next twenty-three years.

David Van Zanten’s scholarly career has included several allusions to MOA, most of which undermine the text’s usefulness to later scholars by questioning the source’s truthfulness, accuracy, and literary style. His PSR article published in 1966, "The Early Work of Marion Mahony Griffin," occasionally cites the manuscript, but suggests, "Many claims made throughout The Magic of America concerning designs in Wright’s office which were ‘wholly’ hers or Griffin’s should probably be understood as exaggerations, the result of great resentment she later felt toward Wright . . . " (10). Van Zanten’s use of the word “resentment” echoes Birrell’s description of the text as bitter—note that no examples of either resentment or bitterness are provided to support such an argument. Moreover, Van Zanten seems to suggest that in MOA Mahony Griffin made "many" claims about work while in Wright’s office that was "wholly" hers. There are actually few such claims—none extend to the design of whole buildings, though she did claim to have designed much of the glass, interior space, and furniture for which Wright took credit.118 Again, there are not "many" such instances, but the reality is that Mahony Griffin claims so surprisingly little for herself that her text is now used by some scholars to argue against her possible collaboration with Griffin. Van Zanten’s choice of words strongly reiterates Birrell’s suggestions that Mahony Griffin’s text exaggerates her own importance, when in fact, her reticence to claim an active role is a frustrating aspect of the text.
Van Zanten's 1970 *Walter Burley Griffin, Selected Designs*, only mentions once that Griffin even had a wife,\(^{119}\) never suggests that she was an architect, and the mention is included only to denigrate Marion's autobiography:

Three of the following pieces are taken from undated and unidentified texts transcribed by Griffin's wife in her manuscript biography, *The Magic of America*. His normally diffuse style seems to have suffered even further in the process. Here they are reproduced with only the obvious typographical errors corrected. (31)

Note that not only is Mahony Griffin unnamed, and the manuscript interpreted as a biography of Griffin, but Van Zanten's short mention suggests other things about scholarly inappropriateness Mahony Griffin's text. For example, the pieces are "undated and unidentified" as well as having "obvious [and probably less obvious] typographical errors."

Mahony Griffin is also somehow responsible for her husband's "diffuse" writing style—it has "suffered" through the process of her transcription. She did not even transcribe with honesty or accuracy.

Van Zanten's final single-sentence assessment of *MOA* occurs in his essay for John Zukowsky's *Chicago Architecture 1872-1922: Birth of a Metropolis*. The essay, "Walter Burley Griffin's Design for Canberra, The Capital of Australia," ends with the following assertion: "Then Griffin died suddenly in February of 1937. Marion returned to the United States, where she spun out utopian ideas and wrote a biography of her husband, *The Magic of America*, before dying in 1962" (342). Again readers are given the juxtaposition of "Griffin" with "Marion," as well as an incorrect year for her death, but more stunning is the notion that the professionally active Mahony Griffin spent the next 25 years of her life eulogizing her husband and "spinning out utopian ideas," a phrase which suggests to readers a level of impracticality and illogic in Mahony Griffin's work. That Van Zanten connects these "utopian ideas" with Mahony Griffin's text further adds to the story developing throughout secondary
sources that this text is naive and unusable, impractical (a gendered implication); just as she was constructed as not-an-architect, her text is constructed as not-theory.

H. Allen Brooks, in his 1972 book that became the bible for scholars of the Sullivan School, *The Prairie School: Frank Lloyd Wright and his Contemporaries*, writes, "The jumbled text, which abounds in vindictive comments concerning Wright, discusses the careers of Walter and Marion Griffin." Again, a single sentence both summarizes and dismisses the text, genders its contents, and further asserts the story of earlier authors, without ever quoting the text for evidence to support such claims.

Similarly, Donald Leslie Johnson's 1977 biography of Griffin, *The Architecture of Walter Burley Griffin*, asserts, "But the sorrow and bitterness she felt concerning what she believed to be unjust acts... fills the pages of her often incoherent and naive text" (13). These assertions, when they comprise the sole comments about the text and appear in texts that, when taken together, at the time comprised the entire field of study (Griffin scholarship) leave the distinct impression that Mahony Griffin's text is unreadable, inaccurate and unusable. The language across these texts is remarkably similar, and always gendered female—the text is described as both bitter ("bitterness," "resentment," "vindictive," ) and impractical ("jumbled," "naive," "incoherent," "utopian"). Moreover, it lacks accuracy—it exaggerates, it refuses to date, to label, to identify, to even conform to standards of grammatical accuracy. The message to young scholars is that this text offers so little that in two sentences or fewer it can be summarized and dismissed as unknowable by established scholars.

**Contemporary Readings of Magic**

Although attitudes began to shift in the late 1980s with the publication of Monash University's *Walter Burley Griffin—A Re-View*, the weight of these scholarly conclusions has been hard to shake. James Weirick is clearly aware of the history of the text's depictions and attempts to rehabilitate its reputation by suggesting at length all it has to offer. His essay is the
first to provide an extended discussion of Mahony Griffin’s unpublished text, and he works to directly refute what the previous 23 years of scholarship had said about the text.

Both Weirick and Anna Rubbo unproblematically cite MOA in their essays for the Monash catalogue, beginning the rehabilitation of the text’s reputation and illustrating its usefulness to scholars. In light of this shift in discussions of the text, the earlier scholarly dismissal eerily evaporated; Weirick and Rubbo introduced the text to Griffin scholars, it was deemed useful, and it was incorporated into a new generation of Griffin scholarship. Both Weirick and Rubbo, in their scholarship following the Monash catalogue, assert that their use of the text is in order to let Mahony Griffin speak for herself.

Judy Wells asserts that a second shift occurred with the 1998 Powerhouse Museum exhibition in Sydney:

There has been something of a sea change with the Beyond Architecture exhibition. Sentiment has shifted in ways that allow more generous representations of Marion. There is a new interest in Magic as an important social document and as a revealing account of the lives of the Griffins. (125)

By 1998 Rubbo could write that "Marion Mahony Griffin’s unpublished magnum opus, 'The magic of America', provides a key to understanding the Griffins' intellectual and creative contribution to architecture" ("Larger Than Life" 42). Responding to her audiences’ certain questions about the text’s sudden rehabilitation, Rubbo offers an interesting analysis of why the scholars had for so long ignored or denigrated this text. She suggests that it is the "quasi proselytizing religiosity of 'Magic' that has probably done most to make it a contentious document in the eyes of many Griffin scholars" ("Larger Than Life" 46). She goes on to assert that scholars have not wanted to believe that Griffin was as committed to Anthroposophy as his wife was.
While I agree with Rubbo’s insightful assertion, I think it is possible the scholarly resistance to *MOA* is part of a larger rejection of Mahony Griffin’s influence on any part of her husband’s life, for if Mahony Griffin is believed, she and her husband shared years of professional and personal intimacies—hardly a stunning assertion over a twenty-six year marriage, but a difficult one to reconcile for scholars who wish to draw Griffin as a genius, free of influences. That he might be influenced by his wife’s devotion to a non-mainstream, (even slightly wacky) religion brings into question all sorts of things—her influence over him generally, his ability to function as a "rational" architect, his adherence to the tenants of rational modernism—all issues scholars need to establish in order to make a place for him in the canon of greats.

**A Postmodern Text?**

If I am willing to join contemporary with Griffin scholars like Weirick, Rubbo, and Turnbull and argue that *MOA* is a thoroughly postmodern text just written years ahead of its time (and I have been willing to travel up that road with them a bit), it seems somewhat unfair to indict early Griffin scholars for not recognizing a thing they would have no reason to comprehend. But I think it is much more complicated than that. Mahony Griffin’s text is much more accessible since feminist, postmodern, and more recently, theories of hypertext have provided contemporary scholars with a variety of lenses through which they can study and analyze *MOA*. And each of those schools of theory would provide a range of frames into which it would be appropriate (and interesting) to situate *MOA*. And moreover, importation of these theories into architectural studies may, in part, explain the "sea change" Wells refers to in scholarly readings of Mahony Griffin’s text, for clearly feminist understandings informed much of the scholarship in *Walter Burley Griffin — A Re-View*. James Weirick’s application of Sidonie Smith ("Marion at M.I.T." 1988) and Terry Eagleton ("Vision and Text" 1987) both reflect this sort of "theory" importation. In addition, Anna Rubbo begins to claim an interest in non-standard methodologies for architectural history (the feminist ethnography, loosely
defined). Griffin scholarship opened to wider interpretations when a wider range of theoretical frames entered onto the discipline's radar. So I do not deny the impact or usefulness of these constructs.

However, early scholars' willingness to construct Mahony Griffin's text as unknowable remains problematic when we consider that MOA employs the very conventions of earlier texts with which it attempted to open a critical dialogue. The unwillingness of earlier scholars (and contemporary scholars) to name the authors MOA attempts to invoke seems a stunning blind spot, and part of a history of misrepresentation that seems certainly disingenuous, if not willful.

**Sullivan and Wright**

In fact, scholars who have made claims about the unreadability of Mahony Griffin's text have done so only by ignoring the tradition of architectural autobiography into which Mahony Griffin wrote—a tradition that includes Frank Lloyd Wright's *An Autobiography* and Louis Sullivan's *Autobiography of an Idea*—texts that MOA resembles to some extent in purpose, content and style. Moreover, when Wright and Sullivan's autobiographies are considered part of a larger body of their writing on topics of architectural pedagogy, democracy, individualism, technology and architecture, a clear pattern of intellectual preoccupations emerge—preoccupations that are closely aligned to Mahony Griffin's in *The Magic of America* and the history of American Transcendentalist thought.

When MOA is examined alongside two other architectural autobiographies, Sullivan's and Wright's, it seems clear that Mahony Griffin was not only aware of the other texts, but was in dialogue with them. *Autobiography of an Idea* was published first in 1924, while Wright's *An Autobiography* was first published in 1932, it was reissued in expanded form in 1943—just as Mahony Griffin was beginning to revise materials for her text. Her text affirms Sullivan's 'idea' repeatedly by acknowledging the Griffins' debt to Sullivan's vision of an indigenous and democratic architecture. In fact, her title refers explicitly to these ideas—democracy is the magic of America, just as Sullivan's 'idea' is for the necessity of an authentic democratic
expression in architecture. While her text pays tribute to Sullivan's theories of architecture, she also repudiates Wright's influence—not only upon the Griffins' work, but upon American architecture. She argues against Wright's assertions (mainly in his *An Autobiography*) that he founded and was the artistic vision of what became known as the Prairie School.

Later critics attempt to suggest that Mahony Griffin developed some sort of strange obsession with Wright, basing their assertions on her repeated invocation of Wright (while refusing to name him) throughout her text. As Brooks writes, of a Mahony Griffin assertion in *MOA*: "The unnamed architect, of course, is Frank Lloyd Wright, whom she ultimately disliked so much she refused to use his name" (*The Prairie School* 86). It should at least be noted that Wright employed similar strategies in his text, wherein he regularly refused to name or admit the influence of a great number of Sullivan School architects, but particularly the Griffins, who in spite of their years of work with Wright, are never named in his text. For example, Wright writes, (in his diffuse style):

> Of course, what is vitally important in all that I have tried to say or explain cannot be explained at all. It need not be, I think. But there in this searching process may be seen the architect's mind at work, as boys in the studio would crowd around and participate in it. And you too, perhaps, may see certain wheels go around. (160)

Wright asserts that the studio was made up of "the architect" and "boys." Within his studio, he attempts to provide opportunities for the boys to enter the mind of the genius at work. This excerpt is typical of Wright's text in that most other studio architects remain unnamed and are depicted as a sort of conglomerate, undifferentiated group of "boys," though most were Wright's age with six years either direction.

By the time he wrote his text in 1932, Wright had reorganized the story of the Oak Park Studio in a way that depicted him as the clear master, and omitted or ignored the contributions of other studio architects to the development of what became known as Wright's architecture.
In *An Autobiography*, Wright asserts of the others at Steinway Hall, "Never having known Sullivan themselves, at this time these young architects were all getting the gospel modified through me" (131). Wright's claim suggests he was already the master when this earlier group of young architects (all nearly the same age) met and choose to share the Steinway Hall office space. Mahony's interests in her own text seemed to be in not arguing for more than her due, but suggesting merely that Wright claimed far too much. As Anne Griswold Tyng writes, "I tend to accept Mahony’s claims concerning designs that were ‘wholly’ hers or Griffin’s and not dismiss them as exaggerations resulting from Wright’s later ill treatment of Mahony and her husband" (178).

In style and textual convention, however, *The Magic of America* owes much to Frank Lloyd Wright’s *An Autobiography*, which itself owes much to Sullivan’s *Autobiography of an Idea* which owes much to the writings of Emerson, the American transcendentalists, and the poetry of Walt Whitman. Sullivan’s text is a roughly chronological, highly fictionalized account of his early life that is broken up by several series of short essays (between a paragraph and several pages long), quotes from letters, poetry—his own. Whitman’s and unattributed quotes, and photographs of his architecture, which he used to illustrate his architectural principles. The narrative of his life, then, is fractured by these other loosely connected bits; there are multiple strands here, the life story of Sullivan and the story of the idea of a democratic architecture and the sources of Sullivan’s architectural theory all entwine to form a richly textured narrative.

While Sullivan’s text repeatedly asserts his architectural genius, it is not genius without influence. He carefully chronicles a history of American thought that flowered in the form of his "idea," which is the application of an indigenous American philosophy to architecture.

For example, Sullivan spends much of his Chapter 13 writing about the intellectual sources of his earlier ideas about architecture. While much of the earlier text, like the texts of Thoreau and Whitman, chronicles nature as his greatest teacher, he begins to turn specifically to
the intellectual influences on his architectural genius, discussing John Draper, Darwin, and Spencer, among others:

Spencer's definition implying a progression from an unorganized simple, through stages of growth and differentiation to a highly organized complex, seemed to fit his own case, for he had begun with a simple unorganized idea of *beneficent power*, and was beginning to see the enormous complexity growing out of it, and enriching its meaning while insistenty demanding room and nurture for further growth, until it should reach a stage of clarity through the depths of which the original idea might again be clearly seen, and its primal power more clearly understood. (255)

Sullivan's style, also somewhat diffuse, attempts to employ some of Emerson's metaphors of organic growth while also creating a sort of circular, organic argument with his prose (see Appendix B. for a more detailed analysis of these similarities and comparisons of Emerson's and Sullivan's texts). His arguments regularly posit the notion of a seed, or germ, which sprouts, searches for air and light, and flowers. His writing reflects a similar construction, as does, many would suggest, his profusion of organic architectural ornament. His prose style seems to serve as a metaphor for the images he attempts to evoke, while reflecting the style of the writers he emulates.

In contrast, Wright's *An Autobiography* is the tale of an anxiety of influence. Though the text itself bears incredible likenesses to Sullivan's in style, form and content, Wright specifically denies having ever read Sullivan's texts. In the last page of his text, headed with the single word, INDEX, Wright claims to have consulted the works of Pythagoras, Aristophanes, Socrates, Buddha, Jesus, Whitman, Thoreau and Nietzsche among others, but goes onto say, "Louis Sullivan's writings I have not read" (561). Such a claim seems only about fears of having his work construed as unoriginal, not appropriately an account of individualized genius.
It is perhaps also a lie—Brendan Gill writes that Wright had a copy of Sullivan's book at Taliesin for at least a year before it was destroyed in the 1925 fire (64). Not only does Wright claim to have never read Sullivan's text, he also anxiously argues, in *Genius and the Mobocracy*, "He [Sullivan] taught me nothing nor did he ever pretend to do so except as he was himself the thing he did and as I could see it for myself" (41). Wright is anxious to point out that he studied Sullivan, but was not taught by him. In fact, Wright refuses to acknowledge any influence throughout and across his texts.

Like Sullivan's text, Wright's is loosely chronological but like Mahony Griffin's it is organized not into chapters, but into thematic sections: Family, Fellowship, Work, Freedom, and Form. It contains mainly short, occasionally incoherent essays on architecture interrupting a life narrative that is highly fictionalized, but that like Sullivan's, serves to create a picture of a life and an art that feed each other in an organic and symbiotic relationship. But while Sullivan's life story pays clear tribute to the history of American thought that nurtured the young genius, Wright's story proclaims a self-made genius, a man with no real teachers, no influences, a true original, whose genius was nurtured only by his mother.

In form and style Mahony Griffin's text closely resembles Wright's: they are both very long—Wright's published text is nearly 600 pages, both are thematically organized, though they are roughly chronological within each thematic section; both are composed of short essays and both employ interrupted life narratives and include at regular intervals short essays, letters, songs, poetry, newspaper articles, etc. However, where Wright and Sullivan's texts contain life narratives that are highly fictionalized and span their texts, intertwining with proselytizing about spirituality and democracy, Mahony Griffin condenses the life narratives to short essays that interrupt the larger narrative of a professional practice which she situates within the even larger constructs of spirituality and democracy. Her central narrative is the story of democracy and a professional architectural practice that strove to create democratic spaces. It is this story that is interrupted by short biographies of herself and her husband, as well as other personal
information. What is especially absent is a tale of individual genius—though Mahony Griffin refers to her husband as a genius, the text repeatedly focuses on the work, and not on attribution, while suggesting that their goal—democratic architectural expression—was held equally between them.

In addition, Mahony Griffin's text clearly attempts to undermine a variety of Wright's claims. Most centrally, she denies Wright's influence on her and Griffin's work. Moreover, she asserts the centrality of Sullivan and not Wright to the architectural movement now called the Sullivan School. However, her most controversial claims concerned the attribution of buildings—she claimed to have designed several houses which Wright had been credited with and had accepted credit for. The double standard imposed on architects based on gender is perhaps clearest here, for when Wright is discovered to have claimed more design influence than seems warranted, even to the extent of including Mahony Griffin's Mueller Houses in an exhibition of his work, his behavior is dismissed (laughingly) as the eccentricity of a genius. When Mahony Griffin asserts (very matter-of-factly) her design ownership of the Mueller houses, even with extensive supporting evidence, she is depicted (for many years) as a grasping, bitter fraud.

Scholars reading Sullivan and Wright

Such depictions are a telling corollary to the larger story of scholars' refusal to read Mahony Griffin's text as part of a wider textual tradition—and to understand some of her rhetorical choices as based within that tradition. Perhaps it is most important to note that all three authors wrote about the connections among nature, democracy, and architecture and wrote into the tradition of the sublime, which they found through the American Transcendentalists. Their rhetorical choices were in part based upon the ideas they were attempting to share. As Longinus argues in *On the Sublime*, the rhetoric of the sublime is at least in part a response to the sublime experience. Longinus uses words and phrases like "frenzy," and "scattering everything before it" to describe the enthusiasm of the writer attempting to imitate "the effects of nature" (103).
Narcisco Menocal ties Sullivan's content to his style, suggesting "Such standard transcendentalist and romantic ideas and an extraordinarily flamboyant prose are the main characteristic of Sullivan's writings..." (16). That Wright and Sullivan are repeatedly credited with such a rhetorical strategy, while Mahony Griffin's writing is repeatedly described as incoherent asserts yet again how Battersby's notion of the gendering of genius has impacted architectural history. Geniuses write with emotional intensity—and "extraordinarily flamboyant prose" (unless they are women, and therefore not-geniuses, in which case their writing is unknowable and incoherent).

In spite of the many similarities among these three texts, Sullivan and Wright's writings have received very different responses from scholars than did Mahony Griffin's text. Although both Sullivan and Mahony Griffin wrote their autobiographies and treatises late in their lives, after their architectural careers had waned and they were living in near poverty and obscurity, Elaine Hedges, an editor of Sullivan's posthumously published *Democracy: A Man-Search*, writes of Sullivan, "It was his writings... that spiritually sustained Sullivan during this long final period of his life. His writings became more and more his sole outlet for his seemingly inexhaustible energies, more and more his sole available form of contentment" (viii). Hedges then agrees with one of Sullivan's earliest biographers, Hugh Morrison, that "his influence on contemporary architecture is to be traced more to his writings than to his buildings" (ix). One way in which Sullivan's writings were most influential, Hedges asserts, was in their influence upon Frank Lloyd Wright's own books, to which they "show striking similarities of thought and style" (ix).

Hedges and Morrison are not alone in their willingness to privilege the importance and endurance of the text over the building. Although when Sullivan's *Kindergarten Chats* were first published in 1901, little mention was made in the line-up of architecture press usually sympathetic to Sullivan's work, like *Inland Architect*. Even *Brickbuilder*, which had published some on Sullivan's earlier work, received only one response—a reader complaining that Sullivan's treatment of contemporary architects was overly harsh. Only in the *Architectural Annual*, the voice of Sullivan's own Architectural League of America, was there more mention—a
complimentary three-paragraph discussion by A.W. Barker (Twombly *Louis Sullivan* 376). Sullivan's friend Claude Bragdon, only eight years later in 1909, remarked, "Outside of a little circle Mr. Sullivan was either unknown, ignored, or discredited by those persons on whose opinions reputations in matters of art are supposed to rest" (Menocal 101). Bragdon's assertions describe both the lack of influence Sullivan's work had in its own time (fashion had changed) and also the power of historians and critics to ignore and discredit architects, their work, and their texts.

But interestingly enough, two of the men most famous for chronicling the course of modern architecture cited Sullivan's writings repeatedly to tell their stories of the development of the modern movement. Lewis Mumford, in his 1931 *The Brown Decades*, is the first historian to assert Sullivan's importance. Mumford and Sigfried Giedion both quote at length from Sullivan's works and mention his texts in passing even more often. In his *Space, Time, and Architecture* Giedion describes Chats as, "*Kindergarten Chats* . . . is a testament of Louis Sullivan to American youth. It is full of prophecies, some of which have already been fulfilled. Others, I believe, will be" (412). Moreover, Giedion's telling of the story of modernism includes not just Sullivan's texts, but Wright's *An Autobiography*, which is also quoted at length.

Mumford's and Giedion's use of these sources is important to note for two reasons. First, they canonized these texts as central to the story of the development of modernism. By pulling Sullivan, and his texts from relative obscurity, and naming him the father of American architecture, they assured Sullivan a place in the canon. Once these influential critics included these texts in their lineages of architectural theory, they were at once part of the story. Second, not only are the texts quoted at length (as opposed to summarized), but the language used to describe and explicate these texts does not assert their inaccessibility. In fact, although they are about "prophecies," even these are considered knowable, understandable, important. In addition, authors see the texts as closely related to each other in "thought and style," even in spite of Wright's denial of possible influence.
Moreover, there seems to have been little confusion about the truth claims these authors seemed to have been making in their autobiographical texts. Sullivan biographers from Claude Bragdon, Hugh Morrison and Sherman Paul to Robert Twombly seem well able to read Sullivan's *Autobiography of An Idea* as something of an allegorical text, in which Sullivan fictionalizes some of his life story to emphasize his central notions about democracy, nature, and architecture. Similarly, Wright's *An Autobiography* is treated as a potentially useful, if not entirely factual, document by both biographers—Twombly, Gill and Secrest—and scholars like Brooks, who quotes the text regularly. The contrast between such treatment and the scant, but always negative discussion that Mahony Griffin's text received is striking.

Not only have biographers and architectural historians found scholarly use for Wright's and Sullivan's texts, theorists interested in connections between architecture and American thought have written extensively on Sullivan's texts. Claude Bragdon's 1918 *Architecture and Democracy* attempts to "summarize and interpret" Sullivan's message which he describes as "a caustic, colloquial style—large, loose, discursive—a blend of Ruskin, Carlyle and Whitman, yet all Sullivan's own" (141-43).  

Narcisco Menocal's *Architecture as Nature*, published in 1981, examines Sullivan's ideas about architecture as conveyed through his texts. Menocal's text describes Whitman's influence on Sullivan's writing, placing Sullivan's texts into a larger history of American thought and letters, describing Sullivan's ability to recast transcendentalist thought in terms of nationalism. He writes, "To Whitman as well as to Sullivan, the salvation of world civilization hinged on the maturing of American democracy..." (80).  

Menocal closes his book by exploring the connection between Sullivan's texts and architecture:

"Exploring Sullivan's thought to understand his buildings yields its own reward: one encounters his passion... He found exhilaration in the belief that he was acting like the creative principle of nature and that he could raise humanity to a permanent manic god-like feeling..." (152)
Menocal's generous reading of Sullivan's literary style as a style of "passion" is based upon the cultural belief that Sullivan was a genius, which would make Sullivan entitled to believe his work was part of a larger "creative principle" that wanted humanity to feel like god. And in spite of the many similarities between their texts, Mahony Griffin's was regarded as "jumbled" rather than passionate, and her depiction of a humanity yearning for spirituality was described as "dotty."

In addition, Sullivan's and Wright's texts inform much of the scholarship about the men and their work. Although biographers such as Twombly and Gill spend time discussing the factual limits of these texts, they also use them repeatedly to tell their stories. Other biographers like Hugh Morrison and Henry Russell Hitchcock use the autobiographical texts with even less attention to contextualizing their claims. Although documenting all the uses of these texts in secondary works on Wright and Sullivan is an entire other project, I have yet to find a body of negative remarks, trite summaries, or wholesale dismissals which would serve to characterize these texts as unknowable and unusable in the ways in which an entire body of scholarship characterized MOA.

Not only have architectural historians but literary scholars have written about Wright's and Sullivan's texts. Clearly the fact that these texts exist as readily available published books has much to do with the reasons literary scholars would choose to study them (while ignoring Mahony Griffin's similar text). However, even literary scholars are interested in fitting these texts into a history of American thought, a history of autobiography studies, and a history of architecture in a way in which no architectural historians have been willing to do with Mahony Griffin's text.

with the innocent self-love of the self-made America of the turn of the century" (99) and as "an unparaphrasable prose of effusion" (101). Note that the language is gendered feminine (or conversely, ejaculatory), \textsuperscript{125} "gushing," and "effusion." But as Battersby would argue, it is the feminine language of genius, to which only men have access. The excessive nature of male genius is positive, whereas the excessiveness of women is a negative attribute—an attribute discussed only to argue that Mahony Griffin's text was jumbled and unreadable.

G. Thomas Couser, in his study \textit{American Autobiography: the Prophetic Mode}, traces the history of American prophetic autobiography, a tradition he links most clearly to the Transcendentalists: Thoreau and Whitman, as well as Sullivan and Wright, are the subjects of his chapters. Couser writes that:

> What distinguishes the prophetic autobiographer is his impulse behind his departure from historicity: he sacrifices what he considers a superficial relationship between his narrative and the \textit{facts} of history in order to achieve a more profound correspondence between his narrative and the \textit{truth} of history. (7)

I am particularly interested in Couser's methods, because though his book was published in 1979—well before the end of the first wave of Griffin studies—his work would have offered scholars a fascinating way to "re-view" Mahony Griffin's text. He writes that he chose the prophetic autobiographies that make up his text because they "demanded a reexamination of the meaning of autobiography itself" (8). He chose to examine the books that he did because they are books that show interaction with each other, "even when 'influence' is not an issue—each book may be said to extend, revise, or answer certain of its predecessors... The issue is not a matter of a few similar, but isolated masterpieces; it is an ongoing, and almost obsessive inquiry into what it means to be an American" (8-9). Though clearly unaware of Mahony Griffin's manuscript text, he suggests a method of interrogation is one that should be important and worthwhile as scholars begin to consider \textit{MOA} within a larger context of American
autobiography and thought, and particularly see it as an effort to "extend, revise and answer" Sullivan and Wright about what it means to be an American.

His book includes a chapter on both Wright and Sullivan, demonstrating just how alike their works are in purpose, content, and style. Couser summarizes the architects' preoccupations by asserting, "Whereas Sullivan devoted his autobiography to tracing the development of his philosophy of man, of architecture, and of society, Wright concentrated on the difficulties of enacting such a philosophy in both his career and family life" (122). Mahony Griffin, quite interestingly, chose to do both, describing her "battles" as support for her arguments about humanity, architecture, and democracy.

In Angels of Reality: Emersonian Unfoldings in Wright, Stevens, and Ives, David Michael Hertz provides a close analysis of Wright's writing style and its similarities to Sullivan's. "Both have the same untutored Emersonian style, mixing architectural insights together with vague, transcendental pronouncements, blending poetic utterance with pragmatic observation" (48). He goes on to assert that "The stylistic similarity between their prose makes one sense a literary connection between the two" (48). Hertz quotes Brendan Gill's assertion that "Wright wrote as badly as he did in part because Sullivan wrote as badly as he did. In each case, their worst excesses have to do with vulgarly overexcited apostrophes to nature" (48, Gill 79).

Although even Mahony Griffin's style might be better understood within the frame Hertz offers, Hertz is not willing to let Gill's accusations stand entirely. He suggest that neither Sullivan nor Wright were actually "bad" writers; in fact, "Wright had great talent, as a writer, but his foreshortened education hampered him" (306). So although literary critics were willing to point out stylistic similarities between Sullivan's and Wright's prose, and although such criticism could be easily applied to help frame Mahony Griffin's "unknowable" text, architectural historians were not aware of these literary texts, and were uninterested in possible connections among the autobiographies of Sullivan, Wright and Mahony Griffin. Since architectural historians should
have been aware of Sullivan’s and Wright’s texts (Brooks even cites them), their unwillingness to attempt to understand Mahony Griffin text is frustrating.

This lack of interest is especially frustrating when considering the history of negative evaluations of Mahony Griffin’s text, a text not dissimilar from the texts of Sullivan and Wright which have been studied and deemed historically useful to not just histories of architecture, but to histories of American thought. As Hertz says of Wright, "His writings are important to the history of American culture and letters as a whole" (306). That Mahony Griffin’s text has faced a lengthy recovery process does not seem as unusual as the repeated and consistent unwillingness for scholars to see this text as something that was knowable to them before it was illuminated by feminist and postmodern thought. While these theoretical constructs may be helpful in re-vision of this text, reading MOA alongside An Autobiography and Autobiography of An Idea demonstrates Couser’s assertion that "each book may be said to extend, revise, or answer certain of its predecessors... it is an ongoing, and almost obsessive inquiry into what it means to be an American." Most of Mahony Griffin’s rhetorical choices can be read in this light—as ways of extending, revising and answering Sullivan and Wright and delving deeply into what it means to be an American and to create a democratic architecture for a democratic America. The problem is, of course, that because the methodologies of architectural studies have been obsessively focused on identifying and describing "a few similar, but isolated masterpieces," as well as their singular authors, the social nature of discourse production is necessarily overlooked, because it is not compatible with the notions of genius that permeate the discourse of the discipline.
CHAPTER 5.
POLICE LINES:
GENDER AND THE POLITICS OF SPECULATIVE SCHOLARSHIP

Knowledge of the proper is not simply a matter of technique... but it is also a matter of epistemology, the right way of knowing and acquiring knowledge in architecture. One could point to any number of architectural treatises, the style of architectural education... and the building canon itself to see how this epistemology has been formulated and reformulated. Proper architecture and proper building, then, reside not merely in technique but in the entire engagement of architecture with its own disciplinary history and proprietal structure. Proper architecture is about having the authority to build as well as having the knowledge to build.

—Catherine Ingraham *Architecture and the Burdens of Linearity*

That women have had the knowledge to build for some time is becoming more thoroughly documented. This documentation, resulting in revisionist histories, is giving contemporary women the authority to build—the precedence, the acknowledgment (that is at the core of knowledge). What these revisionist histories call into question is the proprietary nature of the discipline, the policed borders that have denied women acknowledgment and authority. This denial is most vividly displayed through dissecting the textual practices of the discipline; slicing apart texts lays bare the processes of knowledge formulation, foregrounding the (sometimes unconscious) policing mechanisms embedded in textual practices. And while for the first generation of Griffin scholars these mechanisms functioned nearly invisibly, because
they grew so naturally from the habits of scholarship of their own time and place, a new wave of revisionist scholarship made visible the churnings of that early scholarship machine.

Even some of the first generations of scholars have undertaken their own revisions, as did Donald Leslie Johnson in 1996:

Dear Marion

At the outset I must apologize for my insensitivity to the nature of your collaboration with Walt. There are only insufficient excuses. My book was hurriedly put together and limited by a necessity to accompany an exhibition. So with little thought I called it The Architecture of Walter Burley Griffin. Only Walter? And the text tends to portray you as a gifted assistant. Mea culpa. ("Dear Marion" 130)

When Judy Wells referred to a sea change in Griffin studies, she wasn't exaggerating the depth of intellectual change—the shift—that took place in thinking about the Griffins. Johnson's apology to Mahony Griffin is an example of this change, and Johnson seems quite sincere. He attempts to provide excuses: however, among those excuses is not listed the most important one—"I took part in the habits of scholarship of my time and wrote into a discipline that could not make a space for you." But in spite of a new shift to a sincere attempt by Griffin scholars to revise and expand their understandings of the Griffins' lives and careers, creating a space for Mahony Griffin for the first time, this burst of scholarship (and scholarly good will) was relatively short-lived before a strong backlash swept the field.

My goal with this story of revision, reaction, and re-entrenchment is not to suggest that some scholars are right and others are wrong, because I find both sets of arguments interesting and compelling, and my own interpretation of the texts would place my own reading of the "truth" some where in the middle—I don't believe it is possible to separate individual contributions to truly collaborative endeavors, and I am convinced the political consequences of doing so simply reinforce traditional hegemonies. In contrast, I am most interested in exploring
the nature of speculation and interpretation, which I think are the central motivations of scholarly activity. My assertion is that revisionist scholars and those scholars reacting to that revision (I hesitate to name them reactionary though it would help me create a more lovely and parallel sentence) simply have different understandings about speculation and interpretation. The first group assumes both for active scholarship, as well as understanding the notion that all we have as scholars is interpretation—there is no historical "truth" that precedes interpretation (it's turtles all the way down, as the story suggests). In contrast, the second group believes much more strongly that texts are fixed, tethered to a knowable, pre-existing intention, not subject to interpretation, and that when two readings of the same material are dissimilar, one reading must be wrong. Moreover, the second group wants to believe that scholars themselves can be neutral readers (rather than interpreters) of texts, and that some scholars, like feminists, simply choose not to be. Secondary research has become a battleground between "those who represent established thought and those who are proposing innovation" (Graham and Goubil-Gambrell 103). Both groups now turn to Mahony Griffin's text to find evidence in support of their views, but these scholars use the text in very different ways. Established scholars attempt to speak for the text and weave short bits of "evidence" into their linear arguments; those scholars proposing innovation tend to employ longer quotes, giving the text a greater chance to speak in its own voice, seemingly more influenced by feminist autobiography criticism. I examine both the new wave of speculative scholarship on the Griffins and the strong negative reaction that seems to function as a policing mechanism within the discipline.

Over the last ten years feminist scholars, both men and women, have begun to undertake the project of recovering Mahony Griffin, her architecture, and her text in order to reform their reputations. These scholars have, in many cases, taken up what Judith Fetterley calls the first act of the feminist critic—to become the resisting (rather than the assenting) reader. Although Fetterley's work discusses the ways in which women readers can "read against" canonical literature in order to reveal its decidedly non-universal (male) subjectivity, feminist critics in
other disciplines are taking up this cause as well. Feminist criticism, according to Fetterley, "represents the discovery/recovery of a voice" (xxiii)—and it is that task of recovery to which many feminist architectural historians have devoted their careers—these historians attempt to recover Mahony Griffin’s voice by quoting her primary text extensively in their work.

Such changes have produced an environment that briefly seemed slightly more open to a speculative scholarship, one based on the "what-ifs" that, when explored and answered, could potentially shift disciplinary paradigms. Such conjecture requires scholars to move beyond the current, accepted beliefs about what is possible and probable, as Nancy Milford did in her 1970 biography of Zelda Fitzgerald. Though carefully researched and argued, Milford's book nonetheless began with a "what-if" that was unprecedented in the scholarship of the time: What if Zelda and F. Scott had a reciprocal creative relationship? A similar question was explored in Griffin studies beginning in 1988 when Rubbo reported that attribution of parts of Melbourne’s Capitol Theatre have historically been such: “Marion awarded the ceiling design; Walter the building” (24). She then asked, “Yet is that truly the case?” (“A Portrait” 24). The previous decades of that attribution had been based on no direct evidence—in fact, all stages of the drawings for this project (around 400) are attributed to Mahony Griffin. While this should not be necessarily interpreted as evidence that this project was Mahony Griffin’s alone (though some scholars have asserted this possibility), it seems strong evidence that the Griffins worked collaboratively, with Griffin providing minimal preliminary sketching and Mahony Griffin fleshing out the work (as the work at the Capitol Theatre suggested). In this case, individual attribution for a most likely collaborative project is the result of habit, not of careful research. Habit tells us he is the genius; she is the helpmate. Research suggests we cannot know for sure.

While these claims have expanded Mahony Griffin’s role in the history of architecture, ironically, the claims have undermined the careers of some of the scholars advancing them. Moreover, the first wave of Griffin scholarship was equally speculative, but now that these
scholars have become the established authorities, the "old guard," as Graham and Goubil-Gambrell would have it, their work is venerated and their speculation, even when clearly insupportable, is treated very gently. I do not decry this phenomenon, only question that such courtesy seems rarely extended to young women in the field.

Revision: A New Generation of Speculation

To best heighten the impact of the sea-change in Griffin scholarship that occurred in the late 1980s in Australia, I probably need to backtrack a bit to the late 1970s when feminist scholarship began impacting the course of architectural studies. Early feminist scholarship in this discipline represented a shift in what was studied (now some women) but not in the methods of study. There was little interrogation into how the very methods of architectural history would exclude women. A few scholars attempted to recover a few early "heroines" of architecture, providing more detailed biographical material and discussions of buildings which such women produced independently. Even early feminist scholars have difficulty working their way around issues of collaboration and attribution. Perhaps because they were already working on the margins of the discipline with hopes of getting "inside," feminist scholars were not in a good position to suggest that the disciplinary focus of architectural studies was skewed by its dysfunctional denial of collaboration—dysfunctional because architecture is always already collaborative. Susanna Torre's focus on women as lone "pioneers" fits the story of three early women architects into the story of male individualism without ever questioning what that story does to the history of women in the field:

Like most pioneers, the architects described in this chapter can be considered "exceptional women." ...All three—Sophia Hayden, Marion Mahony, and Julia Morgan—had excellent academic and technical training. ... The difference among them is one of degree in the fulfillment of the exceptional woman's role: Hayden's professional career ends with her first and last building; Mahony's wanes after her
marriage; and Julia Morgan’s attains full expression and success at the
price, however, of an unrelenting and absolute commitment to her
professional work. (70)

Over twenty years after it was written, Torre’s 1977 book, *Women in American
Architecture*, is still a fine sympathetic and systematic treatment of the struggles and successes
women in architecture have experienced. Torre describes the impact of the “Women’s
Movement” on her project which began in 1973 in terms that are still central to the goals of
contemporary feminists, discussing the importance of “historical analysis of the basic
intellectual issues underlying Western systems of thought and its various disciplines in order to
expose those ideologies imbedded in our knowledge that have rationalized and justified the
marginal role of women in the public sphere of social life” (10). In spite of this understanding,
Torre is unable to adequately critique two linked and important issues—the notion of individual
genius as central to architectural studies, and the possibility of a collaborative practice that
exposes the architectural historical preoccupation with “genius” as an ideologically marked
and marginalizing discourse.

Moreover, the disciplinary drive to attribute projects (hence creative genius) to individual
architects, rather than envisioning architecture as an inherently collaborative endeavor, causes
even reform-minded historians (like Torre) to falter when issues of attribution arise. Given that
hero narratives and stories of individual genius historically represent the primary narrative
structures in architectural studies, it is not surprising that well-intentioned and sympathetic
authors like Torre fall into the same habits of attribution that lead her to assert, “Mahony’s
[career] wanes after her marriage” (70). In fact, Mahony Griffin’s 26 year marriage was
probably the most artistically fruitful time of her career, and it was undoubtedly the high point
of her husband’s creativity. But because no architectural work is individually attributed to
Mahony Griffin after her marriage, Torre sees the marriage marking the waning of a career that
by all accounts, but especially Mahony Griffin’s own, was invigorated by the collaboration with Griffin.

In her biography of Mahony for Torre’s book, Susan Fondiler Berkon develops the first argument in Griffin studies since Mark Peisch (1964) that the Griffin’s work after their marriage was the result of a creative partnership. She claims, “The symbiotic nature of the Griffin professional partnership makes it difficult to discern Marion Mahony Griffin’s design hand” (79) and “Some architectural critics felt that the Griffin’s careers became impossible to separate at this juncture” (78). Even so, both assertions express the desire that “the symbiotic nature of the professional partnership” could be separated—that it is somehow necessary to “discern Marion Mahony Griffin’s design hand” in order to argue for her place in the architectural canon, rather than to question the usefulness of any canon.

Both Berkon’s comments go on to undermine their primary assertion that the Griffins had a symbiotic partnership by relying on the culturally available dichotomy of architect/helpmate. Berkon continues with, “Although Marion took a backseat in terms of overall design. . .” (78) and “Her allegiance to her husband’s professional reputation rather than her own hindered her professional advancement” (79). The second statement is likely essentially true—Mahony Griffin’s promotional activities on behalf of the Griffins’ shared architectural beliefs did not function to promote an individual career. The first statement, though, is very difficult to argue convincingly using available primary sources. It is instead based upon that culturally available myth (that women architects are technically competent but not creative geniuses). Berkon’s essay, while making huge leaps in Griffin studies by accurately chronicling Mahony Griffin’s significant contributions to the field, still exhibits the tension between traditional architectural history and feminist contributions to the field. She is unable to critique the myths about women that inform early secondary sources about the Griffins and from that critique, let go of the attribution of individual works or parts of works as central to the practice of architectural history.
Women who did not fit the ready-made historical role of independent hero could not be fit into such histories. Following Torre's book, other secondary sources tended to focus their hero-worship on Sophia Hayden, Mahony Griffin and Julia Morgan. The 1977 exhibition, "Women in American Architecture" for which Torre's book served as a sort of catalogue, provoked several articles which maintained this early triumvirate of women making architectural contributions, while always making the same assertions: Morgan was the architect, Mahony Griffin and Hayden had been promising young women who ultimately disappointed. John Lobell writes that "Julia Morgan suffered neither the misfortune of Hayden nor the indecision of Mahony Griffin ... she simply wished to remain anonymous" (31). Hayden's misfortune was a "nervous breakdown" (30) and/or the fact that "she later married an artist" (31) and Mahony Griffin's indecision was marriage, which led to "a career collaborating with her husband" (31). The text refuses to interrogate either why it considers marriage an indecision (or a misfortune)—for undoubtedly marriage did constrain the lives of women but not men. And to suggest that Morgan "wished" to remain anonymous simply refuses to indict the system that forced anonymity (and childlessness and partnerlessness) upon her. That women were forced to choose and then were condemned for their choices is part of the story repeated, the story whose cultural assumptions remain unquestioned.

A second article, "The Woman Behind the T Square" from a 1977 issue of *Progressive Architecture*, follows the assertions of the Torre's book and Lobell's article exactly: Morgan sought anonymity and Mahony Griffin's "career never reflected the potential she had shown in her early years" (46). Why did her career never reflect early potential? "When Mahoney [sic] married Walter Burley Griffin ... she allied her career inseparably with his" (46). This would be a useful starting point for investigation into why such collaboration meant that Mahony Griffin's career had ended. But the answer is simple: habits of scholarship would lead historians to write her contributions from the historical record. But these sources in the late 1970s seemed only willing to take up the stories of women whose careers followed the male pattern and path. Even
these feminist scholars could not question the mold into which their scholarship must fit—they
were simply left to mourn that Hayden and Mahony Griffin had not proven themselves better
heroes. What these texts did very effectively, though, was reassert the collaborative nature of the
Griffins' work—although because these scholars were writing into the past of singular
achievement in architectural history, Mahony Griffin's collaboration was cast as a
disappointment.

In contrast, Julia Morgan is an example of a woman who fit easily into this male
model—therefore, she was one of the first women architects to have monograph biography
published of her life and work (by a major press, with four-color photos, in 1988). And
although Sara Holmes Boutelle's painstaking research allowed for the recovery of this "hero,"
hers book is clearly aware of all the concerns readers might have about an unmarried woman in a
man's profession. She takes special care to describe Morgan's daintiness, feminine dress, love of
children, and lack of anger. She is aware of the stereotypes about women who create, but she is
unwilling to challenge them as stereotypes. She must simply deny them to win for her hero a
place in the canon and leave Morgan untainted by the "ugly" or "unnatural woman" labels that
characterized Mahony Griffin (and others) in secondary sources. But it is worth noting that
male architects are allowed to be good looking or not—neither characterization would define or
undermine their work.

Moreover, Boutelle refuses to interrogate Morgan's insistence that she was not the victim
of discrimination but still asserts that Morgan's designs were neither bold nor innovative,
because she acquiesced to her clients' desire. Clearly influenced by the ascendancy of
modernism and the notion that Morgan's eclectic style did not contribute much to the profession
(because is cannot be placed in the context of the inevitable struggle toward modernity), Boutelle
nonetheless marvels at the beauty of Morgan's architecture, almost embarrassed, as if admitting
her pleasure undermines her ethos as a scholar. (And of course, she was right; she had correctly
"read" the discipline, a reading which explains the pains she takes to fit Morgan's story into the framework her readers would understand. But she does not attempt to question that framework.)

The sea change in Griffin studies began with a bang—two nearly simultaneous 1988 Australian publications: *Walter Burley Griffin — A Re-View*, published in conjunction with a Monash University Gallery exhibit, and a special issue of the periodical *Transitions*, which contained three lengthy articles reconsidering the Griffins' work in terms of their usual classification as modernists. The *Transitions* articles, by Karen Burns, Michael Markham, and James Weirick, were published only months after the Monash catalogue containing articles by Rubbo, Weirick, Hamann and Naveratti.

Because of the nearly simultaneous publication of these two texts, they represent a true shift in Griffin scholarship: suddenly, in Australian scholarship at least, there are many references to "the Griffins" and "the Griffins' work." It happens so suddenly that there is not even a text that marks a transitional phase, a more generous assessment of Mahony Griffin's abilities, perhaps, though clearly the earlier feminist scholarship did impact these readings. For example, Rubbo had read (and cited) Torre, Berkon and Kay (from *The Feminist Art Journal*), and John Lobell's "Women in American Architecture" from *Artforum*. In addition, new feminist and postmodern scholarship was creeping into Griffin studies. Weirick read literary theory and philosophy: he cites Terry Eagleton, Michel Foucault, and Jurgen Habermas in his articles, as well as feminist literary theorist Sidonie Smith. In addition, some of these scholars (Hamann, Burns) were in conversation with Weirick is clear as they cite conversations with him in their own articles. Moreover, Rubbo's work continues to follow Weirick's lead in consistently incorporating sources that move beyond the traditional focus of architectural studies. Whether or not this influx of contemporary theory caused the shift in the way these scholars represented the Griffins and their work, the shift was not subtle. It led to changes in both research questions (speculation) and research methods.
The shift in research questions has been documented briefly elsewhere in this text, but summarily, Weirick shifted concerns from tracing Walter Burley Griffin's role in shaping Australian modernism to discussing the Griffins' role in creating an anti-modern aesthetic. In addition, he asks scholars to consider not only the possibility of Mahony Griffin's contributions to the Griffin architectural practice, but the heretofore unexplored possibility of Mahony Griffin's contribution to Wright's practice. Moreover, Weirick assumes a new methodology for responding to these research questions—one based in reading historical documents, particularly Mahony Griffin's *Magic of America*, which is presented to readers without gauze filter of negativity that previous texts had laid over Mahony Griffin's interpretations of her world.

Burns added to the exchange an argument that even more firmly situated the Griffin's work in the Australian social milieu that produced it. In her "Prophets in the Wilderness" she refuses to succumb to the notion of a social singularity of genius—whether it be concentrated in one or two people. Burns describes the cultural and social life of the Griffins in Sydney, suggesting:

- their lives and art have been wrought into a fragmentary, uneasy fiction.

The Griffin texts by Robin Boyd, James Birrell, and Donald Leslie Johnson lacked contextual resonance and focus on isolated individuals, alienated and despairing on the periphery of antipodean culture. (14)

Burns takes on not only the established scholars in the field, but the even more established notion that the truly great artist occupies an embattled position to his culture. It is not surprising that early scholars, in their interest to establish Griffin's position in the architectural canon, not only had to distance him from his wife's intellectual influence, but distance them both from their culture. 127

Anna Rubbo, whose work already has been cited extensively in this text, specifically attempted to revise the reputation of *The Magic of America* by quoting it extensively in her text, and without claiming larger individual authorship for Mahony Griffin, certainly questioning the
narrow way she had been previously drawn. This new wave of scholarship in 1988 began, for the first time, engaging the earlier Griffin scholars by name: Weirick takes on Donald Leslie Johnson; Burns confronts Boyd, Birrell and Johnson; and Hamann engages Boyd. It is interesting to note that these Australian scholars only engaged the earlier Australian scholarship. These same authors still regularly quote Brooks and Van Zanten, hardly interrogating these American sources.

Anne Tyng Griswold's 1989 essay for the book, Architecture: A Place for Women, is a nearly contemporaneous American-published essay that focuses on a number of women in architecture. Her brief biography of Mahony Griffin makes note of the ways she had been depicted by earlier scholars, and ends by asking not what influence Mahony Griffin might have had on her husband, (perhaps because of her own professional collaboration with Louis Kahn, Griswold seems to assume that influence) but what influence and impact she might have had on Wright's work.

In her biographical article for the Art Institute's 1995 The Prairie School: Design Vision for the Midwest, architect Janice Pregliasco suggests Mahony Griffin asserted significant influence upon Griffin: "Historians have noted a sudden maturity of Walter's architecture beginning in 1910. Walter's movement away from Wrightian inspired idioms to a more personal style was directly related to his professional and romantic collaboration with Marion" (175). Moreover, she quotes Roy Lippincott and Barry Byrne to suggest that Mahony Griffin had a profound influence on Griffin's work (175). Pregliasco, reading a variety of primary sources, speculates that Mahony Griffin took the lead on many Griffin team projects. She asserts that Mahony Griffin took the design lead on the Griffins own home in the Winnetka neighborhood of Trier Center, writing, "The first house Marion designed for herself was at the focal point of a thirty-home development Walter was planning..." (175).

Pregliasco also asserts that "The three architectural masterpieces of the Griffins' Australian career were designed by Marion: Cafe Australia, Newman College, and the Capitol
Theater" (176). She provides evidence with the suggestions that Mahony Griffin's "hand is most purely sensed in her design for the rotunda" (176) of Newman College and that "The vast majority of the drawings made for the building [Capitol Theatre]—over 400—are signed by Marion" (178). Additionally, Pregliasco cites "Griffin employees of the period also reported never having seen him at a drafting table" (n.29). It is interesting, too, that Pregliasco does not cite any of the 1988 Australian scholarship—she employs nearly all primary sources, though some sources are somewhat nebulous and loosely ties to the point she wishes to make, like the unnamed employees who never saw Griffin at the drafting table.

However, rather than adopt the argument of a seamless Griffin collaboration, she challenges typical research questions in the opposite way. Pregliasco asserts that if the "idea man" isn't drafting, he's not the architect. She never denies—or even engages—the hierarchy of early scholarship that credits him with the ideas (genius) and her with the technical skill and drive. Pregliasco simply turns that previous speculation around: earlier scholars assured Griffin was the single author of the Capitol Theatre without the evidence of a signed drawing (and in spite of the 400 or more drawings Pregliasco asserts were signed by Mahony Griffin). But again, what is lost is the possibility of a collaborative relationship. Pregliasco realized the discipline values single authorship; she interpreted her sources, as did the earlier scholars, to show single authorship. That she was able to do so merely demonstrates the fluidity of texts and the importance of a scholar's beliefs and positionality to interpretation.

I do not argue that Pregliasco could not be right, but her solution overlooks the simplest answer and the one Mahony Griffin describes in MOA—that the Griffins both worked on commissions, according to their talents. Mahony Griffin suggests they had an "equitable partnership together, making each individual independent and responsible" (IV 287). Moreover, she describes the period in which she was running the Sydney office and Griffin was living in Melbourne working on the Federal capital at Canberra. Although Pregliasco suggests a lack of professional communication between the Griffins with her assertion that "Marion [operated] the
Sydney office, and Walter the Federal Capital Office in Melbourne, 550 miles away" (176),
Mahony Griffin's account in MOA describes the Griffins' professional interaction:

One day he came in with a sketch on a usual small sized envelope
which he made on the train... He had been given the job of doing
Newman College at Melbourne University. The whole thing was there
on that envelope plus what he had in his head. (II 240)

To move from a sketch made on the train on a small-sized envelope to the 20" x 47" lithograph
on silk presentation renderings Mahony Griffin produced to a fully appointed college of the
University of Melbourne would have required extensive conversation between the two architects.
This move from what she says is his idea "in his head" to her interpretation of his idea through
her delineations the elevation renderings could not have been achieved without detailed and
lengthy discussion and interpretation. What no one can know is the extent to which "what he
had in his head" was reshaped as it came into contact with her ideas—what was in her head.
That is the nature of collaboration. It is not surprising, then, that early scholars felt the need to
distance the Griffins from each other emotionally and intellectually. Mahony Griffin, in these
depictions, became the pencil. Paul Larson entitles his article for the Print Collector's
Newsletter, "Marion Mahony and Walter Burly Griffin: The Marriage of Drawing and
Architecture." Scholars drew the marriage not as a marriage of architects, but the combining of
her drawing and his genius. Once she becomes more than a pencil, a interlocular with whom
Griffin converses, how can his ideas be separated from her rendition of his ideas? And once
those ideas come into contact with each other, in a truly collaborative relationship, how could
even the collaborators know to whom ideas initially belonged?

Anna Rubbo's 1996 article for the premiere issue of Architectural Theory Review makes
the strongest argument to date for considering the Griffins' collaboration an actual melding of
ideas, talents, and drives, rather than a "marriage of drawing and architecture." The article
"Marion Mahony and Walter Burley Griffin: A Creative Partnership" is about the nature of
collaboration within the significant relationship. What Rubbo rejects is the usual model of Significant and "Other." Instead, she suggests the "creative partnership, nurtured by different but complimentary personal, intellectual, and creative strengths and shared spiritual beliefs" (78). She introduces into Griffin studies postcolonial and gender theory in her discussions of the scholar's ability to speak for the other; she critiques a few recent sources for their attempts to "Other" Mahony Griffin; and she attempts to allow Mahony Griffin access to her own voice, by employing lengthy quotes from MOA. And although later scholars reacting against feminism in Griffin studies choose to make Pregliasco's essay the subject of their attacks, it is Rubbo's "A Creative Partnership" that is the most radically feminist essay, for it is her argument that attempts to disrupt established scholarly practices and undermine the construction of the Griffins as the singular genius and the non-architect drafting partner—the construction of which is central to the project of traditional scholarship.

Reaction: Policing Disciplinary Borders

What happens next is very interesting indeed: American historian Paul Kruty and his collaborative partner Paul Sprague produce a catalogue for the first extensive exhibition of the Griffins' Indian work. *Two American Architects in India*, published in 1997, is a beautiful book that collects some of the Griffins' least seen and most amazing projects—projects that truly represent the zenith of their careers. Tucked into the center of this book is a short article by Paul Sprague, "The Role of Marion Mahony Griffin." If Rubbo claimed that Peter Harrison's "antipathy to Marion Griffin is thinly disguised" (83), Sprague wears his antipathy like a medal of honor. Moreover, his antipathy is not just toward Mahony Griffin, but is particularly directed at those scholars who would wish to create a space for Mahony Griffin's contributions within the discipline of Griffin studies. While Sprague attempts to engage these scholars with a patronizing level of simplicity in his readings of evidence, it is important to note the amount of speculative language he uses. As I launch into several pages of lengthy quotes and Sprague's reading of earlier scholars, remember that I am not arguing that Sprague is necessarily wrong,
but rather that his evidence and readings of evidence are no more or less speculative than those of the earlier scholars he ridicules. While he is particularly venomous concerning Pregliasco, note also that his overall argument is about ways of reading texts, and particularly about feminist and postmodern ways of reading texts that see those texts as fluid and containing multiple and shifting meanings. Sprague's reading is an attempt to fix texts—he regularly inserts italics, ellipses, and brackets—and though his language is the language of speculation, he is unwilling to admit that he is just offering another story, a re-reading of the primary texts. So although Sprague particularly attempts to destroy Pregliasco's reputation as a scholar, what he is really arguing against consistently is not Pregliasco's argument, but notions that the Griffins worked collaboratively. He attempts to conflate the two positions, though Pregliasco's relation to the argument for collaboration is tenuous; in fact, Pregliasco's argument is not very different from Sprague's in terms of accepting and employing the discourse conventions that had traditionally marginalized Mahony Griffin.

Sprague begins his essay by describing Mahony Griffin's tasks in the Indian office:

That Marion's work in the Indian office was likely to have included managing the office, supervising the staff, and drafting as well as creating the exquisite perspectives for which she is justly famous, was something that would have seemed obvious several decades ago to persons knowledgeable about the work and life of the Griffins. Since then, however, a number of writers have either implied or asserted that her function was more than merely assisting Griffin. . . (31)

This is a densely packed paragraph: unpacking it a bit helps identify some of Sprague's central concerns as being as much about the field as about Mahony Griffin. For example, he asserts that Mahony Griffin's function "merely assisting Griffin" would have been obvious several decades ago to knowledgeable men of the field. This anxiety is about the changing field, writers who now question the seemingly obvious gender relations of the Griffin's work together.
Sprague also uses the language of speculation—he suggests what "Marion's work . . . was likely to have included . . ." (31) while at the same time questioning the speculation of later scholars, whose work was informed by the sort of contemporary research questions that have as their purpose to disrupt the "obvious" knowledge Sprague values. Moreover, it is important to note that like those scholars of several decades ago, Sprague will credit Mahony Griffin with every talent save one—he will not allow her the title of architect, and his lack of respect for the work he says she did do is apparent in his use of the phrase "merely assisting Griffin."

Sprague goes on to mention by name those scholars whose work troubles him—and the nature of the trouble. Anna Rubbo "protested" and "complained" about earlier scholarship, while Weirick is given marginally more masculine (less stridently feminist) verbs: he "hinted" and "implied" that the Griffins worked together. Sprague calls both Rubbo and Weirick restrained in comparison to Janice Pregliasco, who he writes "did not hesitate to propose Marion as the originator of much of Griffin's architecture" (32). But, he continues, the Indian phase of the Griffins' lives is the best documented phase of their career. "And unfortunately for those who wish to elevate Marion to the realm of designing architect, this vast Indian documentation does not appear to support their claims" (32). Again, Sprague's comment displays more of his anxiety about the discipline—he makes it clear that the role of designing architect is part of another, elevated realm, and it is to this realm that not he, but the vast documentation, will not allow Mahony Griffin entry. He refuses responsibility for interpretation—he grants that to the texts, not himself as reader.

With this article, Sprague places himself among the only scholars to deny Mahony Griffin even a role in creating decorative detail. He asserts she did not create the ornamental details of any of the Indian projects because "Griffin was perfectly capable of designing the ornamental details of his Indian buildings because there is documentation to prove that he did so in two instances before Marion appeared on the scene" (32). That Griffin was capable of this sort of design is hardly an issue; he was also capable of drawing the presentation drawings and
renderings used for publication. But in the Griffins' practice he rarely did this. Although there is documentation to suggest he twice developed decorative detail, there is no evidence to suggest he thought Mahony Griffin was not capable of designing decorative elaboration of the sort she was famous for. When he entreated her repeatedly to come to India and join him, Griffin indicated a pressing need for help. Sprague's assertion that "Marion appeared on the scene" does not credit the insistent nature of Griffin's correspondence with her. And though Sprague wants two instances of documentation to be taken as an indication of the Griffins' work practices after Mahony Griffin arrived in India, the historical record could be read very differently—that of the nearly one hundred projects the Griffins designed in India, Griffin is only known to have worked out the decorative detail on two.

Sprague's conjecture could easily be correct, but it could just as easily be incorrect. The language of speculation is strong in these passages: Sprague suggests that "Presumably Griffin made a detailed drawing of the ornamental entrance to the zenana courtyard, but if so, it is lost" (33 n.14) and that a second drawing is "evidently" the pencil study for the Raja's palace (33 n.15). "Presumably" and "evidently" Griffin developed detail, but there is no real record of it; "it is lost." He closes his argument by writing, "in the absence of any proof to the contrary, one must suppose that Griffin continued to design both the buildings and their ornament" (33).

Sprague makes an interesting rhetorical move here in asserting that he has offered "proof" (as opposed to a reading of textual evidence)—proof that must be directly countered or allowed to stand. And although Sprague goes on to assert that Pregliasco's "bold declaration . . . pushes the reader's credulity to its limit" (33), his own declaration differs little in its speculative nature and reliance on a fixed reading of textual evidence. Sprague's declaration only seems more "obvious" because it grows from habits of scholarship decades old, and refuses to challenge or interrogate them.

And although Sprague claims Pregliasco's claims push credulity to its limit, he is much less critical of established scholar Donald Leslie Johnson. When Johnson claims knowledge of
the United Provinces Exhibition that is uncited and inssupportable, Sprague simply includes Johnson's assertions in his text and provides this footnote, "Although undoubtedly this statement by Johnson is correct and based on records, its source is undocumented, and we have not been able to discover it, either in print or in manuscript" (63 n.67). The contrast here is stunning; Johnson, the established scholar, (whose works concerning Mahony Griffin were filled with errors and inaccuracies) is assumed to have simply forgotten to cite his material—an oversight (cite)—while Pregliasco, the young scholar who interprets sources differently from Sprague, pushes "credulity to its limit."

Sprague's final analysis of Mahony Griffin's role in the Indian practice, is of course, that she took no active role. He asserts, "we must conclude from the evidence at hand that Marion Mahony Griffin's role in the Indian office was not to design either building or ornament but to assist her husband in realizing his visions of architecture for the sub-continent..." (37). The vision is his, the design is his, she is the assistant, and the texts require that conclusion. The texts that Sprague believes make his point are Mahony Griffin's own letters. He writes:

in letters to her friends, where Mahony would have had no reason to protect Griffin's image as sole designer in the office, she never takes credit for the design of any building. For the most part neither does Griffin, but presumably because as owner of the practice, he assumed that his correspondents knew that it was he who designed the buildings that carried his name. (37 n.38)

There are several presumptions here that deserve interrogation. There is little reason to believe that in a collaborative relationship, either partner would feel the right to claim sole authorship of a building. Neither of the Griffins did. In addition, Mahony Griffin writes repeatedly of her long hours at the drafting table, even of curling up to sleep on her desk. Her close friends certainly were aware of her works habits, and it seems unlikely any of them ever questioned her commitment to the partnership. Sprague's own best argument here actually points to the
Griffins' collaboration. His concern for demonstrating that Mahony Griffin was not an architect, and was merely a drafting tool, one perhaps of the many draftsmen employed in the Indian office, would suggest Griffin was not a good manager or judge of his employees' abilities. After entreatying one of the best architects of decorative detail in Australia to join him in India, why would he not allow her to do the work she was best at? But that is speculation.

Sprague continued his crusade against Pregliasco and "feminist" scholars in his article for the Powerhouse Museum Exhibit catalogue, *Beyond Architecture*. The article, "Marion Mahony as Originator of Griffin's Mature Style: Fact or Myth?," reveals a much deeper level of insecurity about the changing field, and even more forcefully than his previous article, attempts to police the discipline by silencing "feminist" speculation within the discipline's borders. Again Sprague points to the contrast between "scholars who have studied Griffin's work seriously" like H. Allen Brooks, and "feminist authors intent upon correcting prejudicial evaluations" (28). He asserts:

> Had the evaluation of Griffin's American achievement remained as Brooks left it some forty years ago, it would be easy enough to argue that Griffin should be ranked along with Sullivan and Wright as one of the three distinguished originators of modern architecture in America.

(28)

It is feminist authors whose evaluations have gotten between serious scholars and their evaluations of Griffin's work. Sprague's assertions point to concern that forty years ago, in the era of serious scholarship, this argument, which presupposes Griffin's individual authorship, would not have been hard to make. Again, he points to Pregliasco specifically, using as evidence a somewhat manic and sarcastic reading of her assertions to suggest that the notion of creating a space for Mahony Griffin's contributions in the history of the Griffins' practice is somehow "demeaning Griffin's achievement" (30).
Sprague attacks Pregliasco for noting (with Brooks) that Griffin’s work became notably more mature after he began collaborating with Mahony Griffin:

If we were to follow this line of reasoning to its logical conclusion, we would be forced to admit that if Mahony was the ‘design talent’ in the Griffin office and the person who designed at least one building in Walter’s mature style, then Walter’s apparent maturity in 1910 must not have been his own doing, but that of his exceptionally artistic wife, acting for him. The next step would surely be to assert that it was not Walter, but Marion, who was the designing architect in the Griffin office. . . . If this is true, then Walter Burley Griffin ought to be assigned a minor position and Mahony moved to centre stage as the real architect behind the Griffin myth. (28)

Of course, Sprague is following Pregliasco’s assertion to an illogical conclusion, for her original point was quite modest. But Sprague’s conclusion reveals a specific set of anxieties and concerns about women in architecture: that if Mahony Griffin were a designing architect she would have to be "exceptionally artistic": and that there can only be one "real architect" and then a "minor position." His tone is sarcastic, as if it is almost a joke to consider Mahony Griffin a "real architect." But of course, he has ignored the fact that both Griffins were "real" architects. And although Sprague eventually agrees that Pregliasco is only citing Brooks, he argues that Brooks’s suggestion that Mahony Griffin’s collaboration may have helped Griffin achieve a mature style happened "quite inadvertently" (28). So although Brooks is the eventual subject of Sprague’s critique, he does not receive the scathing response Sprague gives Pregliasco.

Moreover, Sprague’s commitment to the scholarship of forty years before is clear from statements that seem to channel Brooks and Van Zanten. He asserts, "she seemed unable to develop an independent style of her own" (32) and that "Marion Mahony lacked the imagination
necessary to invent original concepts of her own" (32). In summary he writes much like Van Zanten and Brooks did forty years earlier:

What is less clear is just how gifted she was as a designing architect. Had she not made any independent designs there would be no way to appraise her architectural ability . . . Unfortunately, even when her work is approached with the greatest sympathy, it must be admitted that much of its interest lies in the rejection of historical precedent. Had she come up with a distinctive approach to design free of the trammels of historic styles, this might well have been enough to propel her to high status, even without regard to the innate aesthetic character of her designs. But she did not reach this plateau . . . partly because she was unable to elude the overpowering forcefulness, first of Wright's conceptions, then of Griffin's. (34)

That Sprague is willing to evaluate her entire career based on her work before she was forty, but not make the same evaluation for Griffin is telling. After 1911, all the work the Griffins completed together becomes his. She ceases to exist as an architect. Moreover, she ceases to exist for reasons of gender—she couldn't elude overpowering forces.

Sprague's preoccupations are repeatedly those of "status" who is in the club, on the plateau, reaching the "realm of designing architects." And although he argues that Mahony Griffin shouldn't be in the club, his concerns are about another club as well. He reverts to the scholarly practices of an earlier generation, repeating their arguments nearly word-for-word. These scholars he allows membership into the discipline, for they "have studied Griffin's work seriously" and are "knowledgeable about the work and life of the Griffins." He clearly attempts to contrast these scholars to the "feminist authors" whose work he rejects. Sprague is making a career of keeping women in their place, by reiterating the old line that Mahony Griffin is not-an-architect and creating a new one, that feminist historians are not-scholars.
His approach has seemed to work. Other scholars in *Beyond Architecture* at least nod to Sprague's vitriolic essay as if it represents something other than the same old line. Rubbo, fresh from her brilliant "A Creative Partnership," backs away somewhat from her aggressive willingness to take on established scholars (Harrison and Kruty particularly), and joins Sprague in questioning Pregliasco. Rubbo's approach in "A Larger Than Life Presence" is far more appropriate than Sprague's—a footnote suggesting that "While useful this article makes claims for sole authorship for a number of buildings by Marion Mahony for which no evidence is given..." (55 n.20). While Rubbo's acknowledgment of the issue of sources for these assertions is necessary, I should at least note the entire history of Griffin studies is a history of assertions with no citations. Only when a woman scholar asserts that Mahony Griffin is sole author of several important commissions is there an uproar about citations.

David Dolan's chapter for *Beyond Architecture* also invokes Pregliasco without mentioning her by name. He asserts, "In recent years there has been a revisionist myth that Walter was just the front-man for Marion's ideas. Thanks to Anna Rubbo's and Paul Sprague's chapters, readers of this book will also be aware that this is a caricature" (181). Dolan almost conflates Sprague's and Rubbo's arguments, though they are very different. Sprague's anxieties lead him to not only attack Pregliasco, but to compulsively deny the possibility of collaboration. And although Rubbo's *Beyond Architecture* article is long in biographical material and short on her argument about collaboration, she still asserts in the end that the Griffin's career must be examined as a collaborative endeavor.

It is also important to consider the level of tolerance scholars have shown toward the speculative scholarship of that first generation. For example, Robert Freestone, who later edited Harrison's book, suggests that Harrison was "far kinder to Marion in later forums" than he was in his book. And yet, with that small apology, the book is published and one more generation of students studying the Griffins are left with what Anna Rubbo calls "the power of the printed page and the continuation of what would now seem to be an unfortunate reading" ("A Creative
Partnership" 84). Moreover, I have yet to find a negative assessment of either Brooks's or Van Zanten's work in later sources, though both made a variety of claims about Mahony Griffin that would be difficult to substantiate. While Johnson was generous to apologize to Mahony Griffin, he was only writing into an already established history that minimized her contributions by compulsively denying her status as an architect and as an intimate partner.

Re-entrenchment: The End of Speculation?

Speculation is only speculative when it challenges established cultural beliefs. Although a generation of speculative scholarship built the myth that Mahony Griffin was an artist not an architect, no one challenged those assertions as speculation, though they were clearly not based entirely on primary, historical scholarship, but rather on a history of inaccurate assertions based in persistent cultural beliefs and a good measure of sloppiness. As H. Allen Brooks offers Mark Peisch, I know that no history can be perfect (my own story here is certainly flawed by both human constraints on my time and energy, a flood that destroyed the microfilm readers to which I had access, and undoubtedly, my own situatedness—both that which I have tried to explore here, and that which is entirely invisible to me). But the history of Mahony Griffin is so flawed, so filled with both inaccuracies and misinterpretations, misreadings so broad as to be hard to excuse as accidental, it is difficult to not assume the whole project is flawed. Once we recognize that those trying to revise these flawed histories become the targets of a brutal habit of scholarship that sees conspiracy in an attempt to write new research questions, it becomes clear why change is so slow, why there are so few biographical treatments of women in architecture, and why the monograph remains the male imperative.

How then do interested scholars unmask the interest of the disinterested scholar? Can we continue to pay no attention to the man behind the curtain? I think the answer lies in interrogating our received stories, believing our instincts when we're repeatedly told that the thing that fascinates us is unworthy, unbeautiful, unimportant when held to some undefined notion of ineffability. "F the Ineffable," as Robert Kroetsch would suggest. And then we must write
histories that chronicle the specific ways in which women and people of color find themselves written as footnotes to the "real" history. We must make a history of footnotes, pulling into the center the discourse of the (literal) margin—and relegating to the status of footnotes and appendices the workings of the traditional scholarship machine that attempts to mask in third person voice the interestedness of the speaker.

I fear the climate is growing chilly when scholars can rework the problematic histories of forty years ago, never question those forty-year-old assumptions and find their work published unquestioned. The strength of those old notions holds tight—there has been no new scholarship to answer this reactionary backlash.
CHAPTER 6.
CONCLUSIONS: WHY ARE THERE NO GREAT WOMEN ARCHITECTS?

The reader by now will have perceived that a recognition of the conventions of historiography that demand a dependence upon primary and secondary documents, upon proof of hypothesis, upon bipolar logic and hierarchical, linear thinking—that is, the conventions of research founded in what is called "scientific method"—has been abandoned. But this, to a large degree, is not true. It is not the recognition of scientific-method-based research that has been forsaken but blind faith in it. Conventional method is called into question here. Thus, this is a work of critical analysis that began with a constellation of questions rather than a hypothesis . . . (5)

Jennifer Bloomer, Architecture and the Text

To end where one began is a device with which we are all familiar—a familiar device that asserts that the hypothesis has been proven, the argument won, the reader convinced. This text began and will end with a question: why are there no great women architects? And as this critical analysis progressed, it became clear that the research question itself was flawed, just as the research that informed it has been flawed. Before we can even begin searching for our great woman architect, we must interrogate the question, question its assumptions, and confront the erasures those assumptions have cost us. We must call into question our investment in pseudo-scientific historiographic methodologies, ask who benefits from them, and attempt to reshape them.

By eviscerating the body of secondary scholarship concerning Marion Mahony Griffin, it becomes clear that disciplinary preoccupations with gender, genius, and individual authorship
occlude and obfuscate the nature (and nurture) of Mahony Griffin’s career by focusing on her ability to nurture genius in others. And although perhaps she did, (nurture genius in others) I am unwilling to ignore the possibility that her own talents were nurtured and enlivened by her interactions with some of the most innovative architects of her time. And I am even less willing to ignore that possibility when she claims it herself. But this story is just a start. It reflects my search for a woman I knew had been ensnared in a gossamer web of scholarship that had so thoroughly misrepresented her and her work that she was no longer recognizable as an architect. Recovering a single architect is not the point I wish to make, but rather that there are thousands of architects whose lives and work are obscured by a search for genius, a search that itself is gendered, raced, and classed. And that there are now, poised to enter the schools of architecture, a growing number of young women, and people of color representing a variety of social classes and castes who must begin to find themselves represented in the curriculum, if we desire and value their input. And we must, desire and value their input.

For Further Discussion

There is much that needs to be done. This story examined a tiny corner of the architectural world. Other corners are peopled with similar stories that similarly need to be examined, interrogated, dissected. That Mahony Griffin’s story is not isolated became sadly apparent as this research progressed. A detailed study comparing the reception of several women architects and the erasure of their work by the very scholars who claim to study them is perhaps necessary to demonstrate the gendered nature of the construction of discourse in the discipline. In addition, an examination of the relation between the rhetoric of genius and the denial of collaboration would provide greater insight into the lives of men and women who have been constructed as helpmate to a genius.

In terms of MOA, there remains much to be explored. For example, what is the relation of Mahony Griffin’s text to the sort of critical practice I allude to briefly; it is possible it could be better understood within the context of a contemporary “paper practice?” That there is much
more to be done in understanding the spatially of textual constructs—the architecture of autobiography and the autobiography of architecture seems clear after spending so much time interacting with Mahony Griffin's complex text. Part of such a project could include an analysis of MOA in terms of Wright and Sullivan: similarities of content and style and much more detailed analyses of these authors in terms of how scholars of the Sullivan school receive and write about their texts.

And although some feminist and postmodern literary theory has crept into analyses of MOA, nothing has been done to examine it in terms of hypertext theory, to think about how it may be understood as hypertextual document, and how it may be best published in a hypertextual format. In addition, because discussion of Anthroposophy has been largely ignored as a way of better understanding both the Griffins' work, but especially MOA, it would be useful to use Mahony Griffin's own beliefs to frame MOA and explore the ways in which it functions as a spiritual autobiography. Such a reading could situate MOA within a much larger history of women's spiritual memoir and provide yet another doorway for entering this complex text.

Finally, and perhaps most important to the discipline as a whole, there needs to be a larger examination of exclusionary or policing functions in architectural studies: for example, is feminist scholarship received more critically than other "new" methodologies? Are revisionist (speculative) histories more negatively received when they are written by women? Is this true just in architecture, or in English studies as well? The most compelling questions, I think, are about knowledge and acknowledgment, about how disciplines discipline, and about how revisionist scholars can begin to better contest for the right to shape the discursive practices that will (mis)shape us.

If we value lives of inclusively, diversity, and a richly textured tapestry in not only our built environment, but the discourses we inhabit, whether because of love or hate or some complex combination, we must allow ourselves to be enraged by the colorless history of exclusion that has shaped our discipline of architectural studies. We must recover a history of lives and
contributions, working from the far margins if necessary, crumbling the foundations of our
discipline, creating fissures through which a next generation of women and people of color can
seep in, inexorably changing our discipline and our world. It is the possibility that focused hard
work can lead to changed vision and inclusively that drove Marion Mahony Griffin, and was the
potential that she identified as the magic of America. I close my story with her words:

Now I left Castlecrag, truly a bit of paradise on earth to take on the next
adventure, the return to the land where I was born, to put my shoulder to
the wheel of moulding the destiny of my country to break down its
barriers in economic thinking, transform it, the only democratic
community in the world into a wholesome community, into a form which
would make possible the solution of problems as they arose. . . Do you
see? . . . In Australia I have stood looking over a valley and suddenly
saw the cloudlike formations of the chemical ether, outlining with a blue
band all the trees and shrubs . . . Do you see? . . . These things cannot
be seen by the at present normal eye. One not trained standing by does
not see these things at all. (qtd. Rubbo "A Creative Partnership" 93)\textsuperscript{137}

Why are there no great women architects? Because we are not, as of yet, trained to see these
things at all. It is my great hope that this text can become a first step toward retraining our vision,
seeing she who has been erased and hearing she who has been silenced by exposing the
limitations of our research practices and our heretofore rarely questioned belief in their validity
for expressing truth.
The text you have just read has been informed by a much more extensive body of theory (and history of practice) than the text itself is able to handle, although some of the ranging discussion that follows here did become part of the more linear product of my dissertating. This essay represents a somewhat feeble attempt to convey and contain and control that excess, reflecting a more traditional search of relevant literature about feminist theories of autobiography embedded in my musings about rhetorical methods, literary methods and feminist methods of interpretation. These musings informed the text I wrote, but were a distant prelude, revised again after the fact, when I recognized that some of it I would undoubtedly take back. (And I did.)

Lorraine Code begins her 1995 *Rhetorical Spaces: Essays on Gendered Locations* by asserting that her book is "about knowledge and subjectivity: about their multiple enactments—their mutually enabling and constraining effects—in the legitimating and discrediting structures of late-twentieth-century western societies" (ix). Rhetorical spaces, then, are those locations where the enactments of knowledge and subjectivity play themselves out—are legitimated and discredited—and historically such locations have been occupied by that universal descriptor of subjectivity, the straight white Christian man of property (Spivak 52). For those who are not universal subjects—the "other" to the white, straight, Christian man of property—negotiating rhetorical spaces is treacherous business because of the uneven distribution of expertise, power, and authority (and access to them) within our culture. In fact, only recently have theorists begun to chart the ways in which the marked bodies of women, people of color, and other colonized peoples impact their access to the rhetorical spaces in which knowledge and subjectivity reciprocally constitute one another. According to Code,
"territorial imperatives structure and limit the kinds of utterances that can be voiced. . . with a reasonable expectation of uptake and 'choral support': an expectation of being heard, understood, taken seriously" (ix-x). It is in the public territories where cultural knowledge is produced that women and other colonized "others" have had the most difficulty entering rhetorical spaces "with a reasonable expectation of uptake."

In this essay, I explore connections among autobiographical writing, colonization, and the attempt of one woman to enter into a treacherous rhetorical space where she hoped to engage in public epistemic discourse. After providing a background briefly tracing the history of autobiography and reviewing the pertinent literature of feminist theories of autobiography, I argue that autobiography, in the case of Marion Mahony Griffin, is a rhetorical act rather than a literary act, and that employing a critical lens of either genre or gender alone is not helpful enough in exploring the territories of her complex text. I reiterate the ways in which the text presents resistance to both these lenses, but how the addition of an explicit component examining the impact of colonizing metaphors in the text helps pry open the text for rhetorical analysis.

Public discourse has traditionally been a treacherous space for women to navigate. The authority to speak or write in public is limited across many fields—but historically gender has been one of those fields. Taking up the pen involves asserting a sort of rhetorical authority—the assumption that one has something to say to an audience. Women, whose lives have traditionally been involved in the private sphere, have had less reason to believe that they have something to say. Autobiography, as a form of public revelation, has presented specific problems for women. As it has developed and been generically classified since the Enlightenment, as retelling the lives of great Men, autobiography (by definition) has specifically excluded women's writings. Clearly the history of women's minimal access to writing practices and their historical relegation to the domestic sphere impacted their access to autobiographical expression. However, it is difficult to reconcile the relative absence of women's texts from the
canon of autobiographical criticism with the related lack of women's texts in the general literary canon when such texts have been kept from the literary canon with the denigrating charges that women's writing is "autobiographical." The double standard at play characterizes men's writing about the self as universal and transcendent while women's writing about the self is merely self-involved (or worse yet, self-aggrandizing). 139

Autobiographical writing has existed since ancient times; Cicero chronicled his life to the point of tedium. Augustine's Confessions and the varied writings of female mystics from Margery Kemp to Julian of Norwich and St. Teresa of Avila were products of medieval urges to record the individual relationship with God. Sidonie Smith suggests:

The cultural currents of the Renaissance and the Reformation promoted the emergence of autobiography as a distinct expression of human possibility, promoted, that is, a new discourse and a new man. Yet the very definition of that man reaffirms a fundamentally conservative definition of woman. (39)

So although examples of "life writing" exist from antiquity, the term autobiography has roots traceable to the Enlightenment and generic conventions that go back to the Renaissance. Clearly, the explosion of western autobiography from the Enlightenment can be traced to a variety of notions informing that historical period—a rational selfhood based in unity and agency—a "Man" that comes to stand for humanity in spite of an identity founded within interlocking system of privileges—and a purposeful life that invokes some notion of a teleological narrative. What complicates the notion of this universal Man, is that he is, in fact, a very specific man—Spivak's "straight white Christian man of property." So although all Men have potentially interesting life stories to tell, asserts Sidonie Smith, only a few people are Men. Man is "a unique individual rather than a member of a collectivity... Western eyes see the colonized as an amorphous, generalized collectivity... of undifferentiated bodies" (De/Colonizing xvii). Because autobiography is deeply implicated as one of the
epistemological processes that produces a dominating subject—by identifying the "great Man," by telling his story, by making his myths "stick"—it is important to examine the ways in which autobiographical criticism has colluded in making this an exclusionary genre. According to Leigh Gilmore in *Autobiographies*, "The near absence of women's self-representational texts from the critical histories that authorize autobiography indicates the extent to which the genre that functions as the closest textual version of the political ideology of individualism that is gendered as male" (1).

**Autobiography and criticism**

As a traditionally male form—an Enlightenment form that presupposes a unified self and a singular history—autobiography has valorized the individual "great Man" and his public life while marginalizing the impact of the social, the feminine, and the private, rendering the rhetorical spaces of autobiography a potentially treacherous and thoroughly public place for women writing their lives. The term autobiography is made up of three parts: *autos*, *bios*, and *graphia* and though simplistic, it is probably accurate to say that the history of autobiographical criticism has focused at various times on the single parts of the term. William Spengemann's *Forms of Autobiography* points to a move in autobiographical criticism "from facticity, to psychology, to textuality" (189), though he argues that to reduce a complex body of material to such a simple linearity is also problematic. Although I present these critical preoccupations as if they occurred chronologically, it is probably more accurate to consider that all three types of criticism are still being published today, though textual criticism is clearly in ascendancy.

Earliest contemporary autobiographical criticism focused on the *bios*, that is, the telling of the life. This school of criticism has been variously labeled "pre-structuralist" (by Smith) and "traditional" (by Gilmore). The focus of criticism was the facticity of the document—usually easily ascertained by the critic through historical research. Using moral language to discuss the autobiographical document, the critic could proclaim an autobiography "good"—that is, factually accurate—or "bad," inaccurate, self-aggrandizing, or denigrating to other, previously
canonized "great Men." In addition, of course, the quality of the life itself was open to moral pronouncements. Because women's lives were often narrow in scope, their autobiographies were dismissed by critics as being narrow; because women's lives lacked public significance, so did their autobiographies lack significance to the public. In addition, the "truth claims," or facticity of women's autobiography seemed more likely to be questioned by critics—and because of the relative privacy of their lives, independent confirmation of historical "facts" was more difficult. For these reasons, this form of criticism had little impact on bringing women's texts before a reading or academic public. The critical practice itself found such texts deeply flawed in their departure from a canonized autobiographical tradition.142

At this point in the history of autobiographical criticism, there was little interest in the *autos*, the self. The fact that the author and the agent, the "eye" and the "I," were one, seemed to present no troubling problems to critics. In contrast, a later generation of critics turned its focus completely to issues of the psychological self. Though truthfulness remained a central issue for critics, attention to the complexities of identity, self-representation, and self-deception captured center stage. The critic moved into the position of psychoanalyst, charting the motivating drives of the individual psyche through the combined readings of autobiography and historical texts. Critics like Harold Bloom influenced such readings—his assertions about an "anxiety of influence" become apt here. He argues that literary history is an "Oedipal battle" in which the writer-son must invalidate the poet-father in order to create a space for his authentic voice. So too, in autobiography, does the autobiographer set out to set himself apart from "others." The literary genre of autobiography requires both continuity and individuation—the great Man individuates himself while fitting the story of his life into a larger history. His is the story of struggle against the father.143

For women autobiographers, such a psychoanalytic framework of struggle against the father cannot hold, at least not in Freud's Oedipal terms144. Women do not struggle against the father to claim the mother. In fact, psychoanalytic theory in general, in spite of the insights it
offers into human (male) psychology, cannot effectively explain female subjectivity, corporeality, or their interactions. Because understanding subjectivity and the lived bodily experiences of individuals are at the center of autobiography writing and criticism, and Freud's accounts of female subject development are both inadequate and unsatisfactory in the few places he turns his attention to them (the cases of Dora and the young lesbian woman), the usefulness of a psychoanalytic model in theorizing autobiography is negated in the case of women. According to Elizabeth Grosz in *Volatile Bodies*, "Freud readily confesses his puzzlement regarding the nature, forms, and prehistory of femininity..." (181). Again, because the critical tools were at odds with the texts, the new attention to the self was unable to shift the focus of autobiographical study enough to include women's texts in any significant way.

But in either of these early critical enterprises—attention of a psychoanalytic approach to *autos* or attention to the facticity of *bios*—what seems to remain is an unwillingness to question the Enlightenment driven notions of the transparency of language (the author's ability to reflect his intentions in writing), and an authentic, unified self constituted outside of both language and culture. When poststructuralist theorists began to impact autobiographical criticism, the critic focused critical efforts on the *graphia* of autobiography—the text and the writing of the text itself. Following theorists like Derrida, these critics propose a fragmented self constituted within linguistic configurations and culture. According to Smith, "Given the very nature of language, embedded in the text lie alternative or deferred identities that constantly subvert any pretensions of truthfulness" (*A Poetics* 5).

In many ways, this textual criticism is most compatible with feminist criticism and feminist political agendas. By challenging such notions as the referentiality of language and what Derrida calls the metaphysics of presence, poststructural theorists have called into question the epistemological certitudes of western philosophical "master narratives," among which autobiography is central. Clearly such questioning is a goal of feminist critics who examine particularly the ways in which women have suffered a loss of political power after centuries of
having their "nature" written by men. A concern with the power and centrality of language and an interest in destabilizing meanings as historical and contingent constructs are ways feminist critics have responded to the notions of universalized humanism (Man) that have informed autobiography. Universalizing "Man" and "human experience" is a politically powerful move that naturalizes colonization and domination by erasing historical contingency and silencing subject peoples. Autobiography criticism has colluded in this "master narrative" by creating normative definitions of the genre that present "representative" great Men in relationship to public and professional life and discourse. According to theorist Georg Misch, the representative man of autobiography is "the contemporary intellectual outlook revealed in the style of an eminent person who has himself played a part in the forming of the spirit of his time" (14). Not only does Misch employ specifically gendered language in his definition, he also requires eminence as a criterion for autobiographical expression—a criterion women have not been able to meet, historically.

Feminist theorists, therefore, have attempted to question such normative definitions, asking whether women, until recently, could be both representative and eminent; whether women—even straight, white, Christian women of property—could reasonably be said to be part of forming the spirit of their time. The answer seems to be that such women were exceptional, not representative women, and that eminence (as opposed to the notoriety women received for exceptionality) was a rare thing indeed. Smith asserts:

Since the ideology of gender makes of woman's life script a nonstory, a silent space, a gap in patriarchal culture, the ideal woman is self-effacing rather than self-promoting, and her "natural" story shapes itself not around the public heroic life but around the fluid, circumstantial, contingent responsiveness to others that, according to patriarchal ideology, characterizes the life of a woman, but not autobiography.¹⁴⁶ (A Poetics 50)
And yet women wrote many self-representing texts, texts which are only recently the subject of critical inquiry. Before such critical inquiry could occur, a tool was needed that could examine the historical specificities of women's writing. What follows is a brief discussion of the past 20 years of feminist autobiographical criticism, focusing on four types of criticism that have been predominant. This serves to sort through some of past thinking on women's autobiographical writing by simplifying some very complex arguments. Specifically, it does not do justice to the fascinating complexities of contemporary French feminist thought, nor does it pay homage to the revolutionary thought (that now seems so conservative a reappraisal) that spurred interest in even examining women's texts and attempting to revalue them.

Feminist theories of autobiography

Smith divides feminist theories of autobiography into four groups that are all characterized by their "feminocentric" perspectives, but all are problematic in their focus on differences between men's and women's writing, tending to essentialize writing practices in gendered terms. One of the earliest "differences" to emerge focuses on the thematic content of women's autobiographical writing. These early feminist critics, like Mary Manson in her important 1980 essay "The Other Voice: Autobiographies of Women Writers," analyzed what they thought to be representational texts, showing thematic similarities among them. Common conclusions such analyses generated included arguments that the content of women's writing was proscribed by women's unequal status in a patriarchal culture. For example, while men's self-representational writing may be about the public sphere and the narrative an account of their adventures, women's writing might be about family, romance, and the private sphere (also see Jelinek). This approach set the stage for a revaluation of women's writings on their own terms, based in the historical specificity of individual women's lives, but it seems fairly conservative in its reliance on binary oppositions that are, at best, tenuously constructed and minimally interrogated. A very selective reading is necessary to support such an opposition, (a reading that precludes race and class differences, for example) and in the end, it describes only that set
of selected readings, though such scholars often argued that their account was much more encompassing than it could or should be.

A second set of theoretical preoccupations in feminist criticism also points to differences between men's and women's writing, but maintains that these are stylistic differences. For example, one such difference often considered was the fragmented and cyclic quality of women's autobiographical writing. Men's writing, such critics argued, tends to be focused and coherent, unified. The argument such critics put forth is that women's writing reflects women's experiences as fragmented by the necessity of their constant responses to the needs of others—parents, husbands and children. Though Estelle Jelinek first argued that the cultural value of qualities such as unity and coherence are informed by patriarchal interpretations, and that such qualities need to be reexamined, and those associated with women revalued, the overall logic of a binary of sexual attributes (we see two sexes, therefore sexual difference must exist in binary oppositions) was rarely explored. Such approaches essentialized men's and women's writing as fundamentally different stylistically, though again, such a reading must rely on a small sample of carefully selected texts to hold true. Generalizations to other texts become problematic.

A third and related "difference" in women's autobiographical writing is found in the narration, or the way the story unfolds. Women, these critics argue, unfold their stories through relationships to others important in their lives: fathers, husbands, children, God. Men, on the other hand, begin their stories with significant relationships—usually to parents—but end in autonomy. Several critics note this pattern in explicitly Oedipal terms; Christine Olivier suggests that the pattern may be the result of "men's fear . . . of finding himself in the same place as the mother" (qtd. Gilbert and Gubar Sexual Linguistics 143). Men's autobiography, these critics argue, plays out the process of differentiation from the mother, while women's self-representation describes patterns of affiliation with the mother and others (of taking her place in relation to her phallic lack) under the Law of the Father.
So although, according to these critics, the stories of men seem to follow a pattern of differentiation from the other, and women's seem to follow an affiliative pattern, many exceptions to this pattern appear, and the reading itself becomes strained when considering that most reasonably integrated personalities (male or female) are constructed based on a self/other dichotomy. Moreover, these critics don't seem to address the nature/nurture issue, suggesting that women's focus on the other may be an essential component of women's psychological make-up, rather than a culturally imposed construct. Finally, rarely do these critics examine the ways in which male narratives simply follow the generic constraints of earlier successful narratives—they are making rhetorical choices. (Many equally educated women follow such generic constraints in their own self-representational writing.) Such an essentialism is troubling on many levels, but mainly in the specific instance where women's texts (and selves) are not constructed in reaction to an other. What then are these women? Men? Unnatural women? Women who have internalized patriarchal constructs? or women who have rejected them?

The fourth "difference" is by far the most radical—and while still problematic—offers particularly interesting possibilities for reading the work of women whose texts resist falling into typically gendered patterns. Contemporary French feminists such as Hélène Cixous contend that rather than the binary differences that earlier critics have argued differentiate women's writing from men's, women have yet to come to their own modes of expression, an écriture féminine, and so far, there exists no distinctive women's autobiography because women are still mimicking the phallogocentric discourse of western civilization (Cixous 878). With Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva, Cixous promotes the development of a women's writing that resists reinscribing patriarchal representations of women. Though very different from the previously mentioned critical categories concerned with women's autobiography, the psychosexual essentializing of women presents a difficulty here, too.

In addition to these established feminist critical practices, three recent feminist theorists stand out as exploring new critical modes in autobiography. Jeanne Perreault, Leigh Gilmore
and Sidonie Smith all offer alternative explanatory frameworks that attempt to avoid the disconcerting essentialism of earlier practices, but retain an explicit feminist agenda whose purpose is to affirm women's subjectivity and literary practices by creating spaces in which women can tell their lives. Each of these theorists' work contains an explicit rhetorical component and an understanding of autobiography's rhetorical (as opposed to literary) nature.

In contrast to earlier feminist critical forays into autobiographical criticism, Leigh Gilmore begins by asserting that "The historical dimensions of self-representation have been severely limited by the values and methodology of many studies of autobiography" (5). Because of these limits, she attempts to backtrack and begin by positing that "women's self-representation describes territory that is largely unmapped, indeed unrecognizable, given the traditional maps of genre and periodization" (5). Therefore, Gilmore offers a feminist interpretive strategy she names autobiographies, whose genealogy she describes in Foucauldian terms: a methodology in which meaning is deferred, proceeding instead through a diffusion of desire and a patient multiplication of knowledges through "digressions that cannot predict or control their narrative ends" (5-6). Like Foucault, her interest is in tracking the discourses of power and how they function—in her case, within the autobiographical act.

Her theory of autobiographies goes farther than earlier critics in asserting the ways in which the practice of autobiography is ideologically bound:

The refusal to acknowledge the link between the "self" of autobiography and the gender of the autobiographer participates in even broader strategies, for autobiographies perform powerful ideological work: they have been assimilated in political agendas, have fostered the doctrine of individualism, and have participated in the construction and codification of a gendered personhood. (10)

Therefore, the past feminist response, to search for gendered differences between male and female writing is politically misguided, according to Gilmore. The true political work of
feminist critics is to "attend to the cultural and discursive histories of self-representation" examining the ways in which gender articulates key ideas of selfhood (like identity, authority, and truth) and the ways those articulations play out in women's autobiography (10).

Like Gilmore, Jeanne Perreault's argument in *Writing Selves: Contemporary Feminist Autography* is heavily influenced by poststructuralist theory. It turns on her differentiation between autography and autobiography. By removing the *bios* she changes the focus of inquiry from the narrative unfolding of a life as the path toward understanding a "self" to the process of writing as central to the selfhood the writer creates. The teleology that structured traditional narratives disappears as the writer is able to write herself into being. Perreault writes, "The texts produced by this process simultaneously reshape female subjectivity and agency, while reinscribing the possibility, experience, and value of being a 'self'" (4). This idea relates to Tina Modleski's assertion that women must "hold on to the category of woman while recognizing ourselves to be in the ongoing process (an unending one) of defining and constructing that category" (20). Perreault's critical framework refuses to give up the category "woman" because of the political work that category does for feminists. But she also refuses to allow that to become an essentialized or oppositional category—women are not some thing opposed to some other thing men are—but rather women are involved in a complex process of self-definition. That self-definition is intimately connected to the process of writing, which for women both claim the right to a voice and the space to resist being written.

Referring to these "simultaneous gestures" as "the excesses of feminist selfhood" Perreault asserts a "rhetoric of the self" which shares much with *écriture féminine* in that both function on the analogy of excess (that is, beyond the use of male purposes). While Perrault is intrigued by the possibilities offered by *écriture féminine* (and her own rhetoric of self), she allows, with Adrienne Rich, it "once more take[s] women out of history, economics, class, race—that is, out of either the specific and particular experience of the self or the discourse of the surrounding culture" (11).
Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson's *De/Colonizing the Subject: The Politics of Gender in Women's Autobiography* is a collection of essays that contain an important addition to feminist criticism: that of postcolonial theory. They describe the political paradox faced by women who attempt to write their lives in colonial terms:

On one hand, the very taking-up-of-the-autobiographical transports the colonial subject into the territory of the "universal" subject and thus promises a culturally empowered activity. Participation in, through re/presentation of, privileged narratives can secure cultural recognition for the subject. On the other hand, entry into the territory of traditional autobiography implicates the speaker in a potentially recuperative performance, one that might reproduce and re/present the colonizer's figure in negation. (xix)

One thing women's autobiography can do, then, is through its participation in this traditionally male form, expose the very textual mechanisms that have depoliticized women's lives (with the labels of personal and private). However, as Smith and Watson point out, women autobiographers risk much (to their own subjectivity) when they use "the colonizer's" language to describe their own experiences, though they stand to gain "cultural recognition."

There are clearly drawbacks to this appropriation of the language of colonization. First, once discussion begins to focus on Woman as a colonized person under patriarchy, the stories of victims of very real colonial practices may be occluded. In addition, such language erases the specificity of colonial practices, and how those function within varied patriarchies. Just as the position of women to colonialism varies widely, so does the position of men to patriarchy. There is no inherent equivalence among patriarchies or colonialisms, and men and women function in very different relations to systems of domination based on race, class, sexual orientation, etc. Second, to assume an equivalence among the oppression women face as women, to the oppression colonized peoples experience, is, as Gayatri Spivak points out,
"privileging the oppression of gender over and above other oppressions effectively erases the complex and often contradictory positionings of the subject" (Smith and Watson xiv).

Moreover, employing the language of colonization may be yet another sign of our western arrogance and colonizing tendencies. As Chandra Mohanty asserts, there are "political implications of analytic strategies and principles" (336). As theorists, we need to avoid the western tradition of colonizing others with our theories—and remember the lessons of the universal Man of the Enlightenment.

In spite of these drawbacks, which are really just cautions against the totalizing practices western scholarship is known for, the language of postcolonialism is a useful addition to the analysis of autobiographical practices in general because of the ways it destabilizes Western literary practices beyond a discussion of (even specific) patriarchies. In the case of Marion Mahony Griffin's text, the vocabulary of postcolonial scholarship exists in her text as she explores issues of colonization, territoriality, decolonization, resistance, collusion, and location. As an architect working in colonial, imperialist, and postcolonial environments (India, U.S. and Australia) she displayed a keen awareness of the ways in which her occupation aligned her naturally with the forces of imperialism and the strategies she used to undermine that alignment.

**Autobiography as a rhetorical act**

In addition, I find similar strategies within her text. Mahony Griffin, if we follow the work of those early feminist scholars, wrote like a man: the content of her text spoke to her professional life, the style of her text was as an architectural or political treatise including nearly 80 essays representing unified arguments rather than a single but fragmented narrative, and she writes the story of her autonomy to the point of describing an inconstant love (though admitting to an enduring passion) for her husband but according him with profound professional respect. Though perhaps it could be argued that she thoroughly internalized the language of patriarchy, the text does not entirely support such a reading.
Instead she seems to present a picture of herself as "unknowable through gender."

Gilmore argues that "some autobiographers who, for a variety of reasons, do not recognize themselves within dominant representations and self-representation of gender, refuse to present themselves as knowable through gender" (21). Again, within the text she both affirms and denies her status as a woman, refusing to implicate gender in struggles she faced (presenting her Self as an autonomous man), writing in the style her familiarity with similar male texts would have produced, but creating a text of resistances to alliances with patriarchy by enacting both the narrative of the architect/prophet and the narrative of the wife/muse/helpmate. In order to explore these textual fissures and gaps, I need to develop a tool that looks beyond a universalized patriarchy alone as a life and text [de]forming factor. I do this by discussing Mahony Griffin's manuscript as a rhetorical document, rather than an autobiographical narrative, in order to avoid couching my analysis in terms of facticity or psychology. As Gilmore argues, when an autobiographer sets herself oppositionally to some received form of truth (as Mahony Griffin often did):

she knows what she's doing rhetorically and is not merely telling what happened. An emphasis on the rhetorical dimension of autobiography indicates its performative agency. Agency as performance (that is, discourse) has been identified as the action of the subject. (25)

Because it is central to my analysis of this text that I am able to characterize Mahony Griffin's firm belief in her subjectivity and her ability to initiate discourse, discussing her manuscript as a rhetorical document is essential. What these last theorists (Gilmore, Smith and Watson, and Perreault) attempt to argue is that what autobiography is, generically and formally, may be less important than what autobiography does—that is, function rhetorically. Through this analysis, these theorists argue for rhetorical readings of autobiography. Gilmore asserts that autobiography is "No longer exclusively an object in the discourses of gender and identity,
[but] the differently positioned subject and the rhetorical and political strategies upon which this positioning depend lead us to examine not what autobiography is, but what it does" (39).

Similarly, Smith argues for a reexamination of the importance of the invoked audience in the construction of autobiographical writing by suggesting, "autobiography is a rhetorical construct; [therefore] the fictive reader created by the autobiographer to help bring that self into existence assumes prominence" (6). Mahony Griffin seemed particularly aware of writing to her audience of male colleagues, of making rhetorical choices that she thought would engage and convince them. These calls for reading autobiography as rhetorical documents illustrate the complexity of the analytic tool needed to open and explore a text like Marion Mahony Griffin's, a text employing "male" language and generic components, a text thoroughly public and political, attempting to construct for its audience both the picture of a "great man" and the architect who was a woman.

Though not the most common strategy in women's autobiography, some women do, according to Sidonie Smith, "seek to appropriate the language of the patriarchs, commanding the full resources that language makes available to men, resisting 'silence, euphemism, or circumlocution' in pursuit of equal access to public space" (56). Smith goes on to argue that because "Autobiography is public expression, she [the autobiographer] speaks before and to 'man'" (49). This is a dangerous strategy, though, for such a woman faces a sort of recolonization through her use of phallocentric discourse (Smith and Watson xix) as she becomes a ventriloquist (and possibly a transvestite), impersonating male language, but perhaps "unable to recognize the lineaments of her experience in the language and fictions that surround and inform her text " (Smith 57). Indeed, according to Smith, "However much she may desire to pursue the paternal narrative with its promise of power . . . she recognizes either consciously or unconsciously that for her, as for all colonized people, the act of empowerment is both infectious and threatening" (54).
Smith's assertions hold well when applied to Mahony Griffin's text, to a point. As an autobiographer, Mahony Griffin did both seek *and expect* equal access to public space. Her text reiterates an understanding of the audience she invoked—her architect peers and the readers of other architectural autobiographies—namely those of Wright and Sullivan.

However, in these passages Smith falls into the arguments of earlier feminist critics by dichotomizing writing into male and female strains, as well as calling into question the possibility that women writers can make rhetorical choices about their texts without losing access to agency. By suggesting that the writer's recognition of her colonized status may be unconscious seems to also assert that her writing strategies may be equally unconscious; in fact, she is "unable to recognize" her own experience, couched as it is in "male" language and fictions. Such arguments of feminist literary analysis do help readers understand what is at stake in women's writing: a tenuous access to agency, public discourse, and considered response. In addition, such analysis focuses our attention of the political implications for women writing: will they be heard? will that hearing be fair? what are the risks in assuming an agency that has been historically gendered male? These are all important issues.

But given the importance of these issues, readers need to ask as well what this framework overlooks. In this case, what is overlooked is the possibility that the writer has the ability to make reasoned rhetorical choices based upon her understanding of her audience and the ways in which she hopes to present herself to that reading audience. "Writing as a woman," whatever we take that to mean, becomes a naturalized effect of being a woman—whether "being a woman" is the result of nature or nurture. To fall back into that assumption that women's writing is somehow "natural," while men's is "reasoned" ignores the possibility that women, like men, make rhetorical choices. This is not to say that women's rhetorical choices have not been closely circumscribed at a variety of historical junctures if those women writers wanted to retain reputation by reenacting a typical life script in their autobiographies. But such a choice is a rhetorical move based on an understanding of audience expectations, just as men's
autobiographical life scripts are based on a set of audience expectations. Many women chose to employ the life scripts that readers associate with male writers. Authors like Mahony Griffin did this, it seems, not out of an acquiescence with or internalization of patriarchy, nor from an explicit feminist agenda which sought to break free of the constraints of women's life scripts, for in fact, she employs many strands of a woman's life script in her text. Rather, she seems to have been motivated by a reasoned attempt to access public space and professional discourse, to reach a primarily male audience, and to argue that she and her husband were the voice of a their age, in architectural terms—as Sullivan and Wright were before them.

Though several contemporary feminist critics (Smith, Perreault, and Gilmore) call for rhetorical readings of women's autobiography, they do not develop a method for doing so and their texts slip precariously between fascinating textual analysis and naturalized (though not essentialized) assumptions about woman and her relationship to textuality. What slips disconcertingly is a sense of agency for the woman writer—a sense absolutely imperative if the goals of feminist politics are political change. As Elizabeth Grosz argues in *Space, Time and Perversion*:

> It is only if women are ambiguously *both* subjects and deprived of a socially recognized subjective position, are *both* speaking beings and beings whose words have not been heard; and beings who have a sexuality, but whose sexual specificities are ignored, denied, or covered over that women can undertake a feminist politics. In a certain sense, women must be accredited with precisely the qualities patriarchal practices attempt to deprive them of in order to account for the very possibility of feminism, of women overcoming these patriarchal constrictions. (65)

Only acting agents can initiate social and political change; a theory that totalizes women's victimhood under patriarchy offers no possible hope of change initiated by women—feminism.
Though these feminist literary theories attempt to offer the hope of feminist politics, they slide into the discourse of patriarchal construction of women in ways that seem to call into question women's access to individual or collective agency.

**Morphing theory**

Feminist literary theory alone provides only half the solution to working with Mahony Griffin's resistant text; therefore, the development of an analytic frame that both assumes authorial agency and helps negotiate the notions of rhetorical and real space and territory that permeate her manuscript is necessary. After I read Lorriane Code's 1995 *Rhetorical Spaces*, it seemed certain that such a frame is rhetorical as well as literary—one that enables negotiation of the spaces outside of and around the margins of the text, rather than only within its narrow textual limits.

Considering the difference between the tools of literary theory and those of a rhetorical theory, I realize that these choices have much to do with the genre in which the manuscript has previously been classified. Forcing its unwieldy form of *MOA* into the shape of a traditional autobiography assumes that certain literary tools be used in analysis: historic documentation, narrative theory, psychoanalytic theory, feminist theory, etc. In contrast, reconsidering this manuscript as a treatise—one that includes autobiographical material—helps recover this text as a rhetorical text—an argument in search of an audience. Exploring that argument through rhetorical analysis is far more useful in understanding not only the document's feminist political potential, but Mahony Griffin's preoccupations with rhetorical space, democracy, and colonization.

So although I reject many aspects contemporary feminist theories of autobiography for use in examining this text, the component of these feminist theories that appeals to me most is the explicit political component, its ability to provide critique and effect change. What is needed, then, is a politically explicit frame for rhetorical analysis. Jennifer Bloomer's concept of
a minor architecture described in her 1996 essay "D'OR" suggests the possibilities of a sort of morphed theory that crosses critical boundaries in revolutionary ways. She asserts:

The concept of a minor architecture is both properly deduced from Manfredo Tafuri's concept of a major architecture and illegitimately appropriated from Deleuze and Guattari's concept of a minor literature. . . . One of the tasks of a minor architecture is to operate critically upon the dominance of the visual—the image—as a mode of perceiving and understanding architecture. . . . This is not therefore, a proposal for a style or an architecture parlante, but for a revolutionary architectural criticism, a "criticism from within" which goes deeply into the within—into conventions of architecture's collusion with mechanisms of power. (179-80)

Bloomer's notion of a minor architecture shares much with my conception of the framework I needed to enter and discuss Mahony Griffin's text: it is a "morphed" entity in that it melds theoretical perspectives to create a new critical lens with expanded possibilities; it is explicitly political in its ability to critique mechanisms of power; and it questions central modes of perceiving and understanding texts.

In architectural terms, the building has traditionally been privileged above the representations of the building—whether these representations be textual or renderings. In fact, it is Mahony Griffin's ties to "paper" buildings that have most undermined her status as an architect. Even when the buildings on paper describe unbuilt projects, historians have bemoaned the fact that we have only Mahony Griffin's interpretations of Griffin's ideas (whatever exactly that means) with the assumption that Griffin's thoughts had some clear and rational form outside of Mahony Griffin's drawings. (Never that the drawings gave form to scattered ideas.) Therefore, the critical practice—the architectural practice that lives on paper or in texts—somehow represents an even greater distance from the purity of the architect's thought.
or Idea than does the building. It is a strange hierarchy that suggests the primary flowering of
genius is the idea, which corresponds very closely to the building, but somehow less closely to
the drawings of the building, and even less closely to a text describing the theories that informed
the building. This is a notion wildly at odds with the architectural profession's denial of
collaboration, for by any method of analysis, the building is far more the result of the
collaborative process than is the architectural drawing (only once removed form the "Idea" in
the case of the Griffins) or the text (wherein the Idea is buried, in Sullivan's case).

A Minor Literature and a Minor Architecture

Bloomer's use of Deleuze and Guattari is particularly useful for discussing ways in
which colonized peoples employ majority languages subversively. Unlike the feminist criticism
I have discussed, Deleuze and Guattari refuse to assert that the use of the majority language
is unconscious, or an internalization of the colonizer, thereby retaining rhetorical agency for
their author. Moreover, the suggestion that the writer has a double awareness (of her status as
minority to the majority language and as an agent actively employing that language to
undermine its colonizing potential) seems especially useful when considering a text like
Mahony Griffin's in which the writer actively attempts to undermine her alignment with
imperialist powers. In Deleuze and Guattari's conception:

The three characterizations of a minor literature are the
deterritorialization of the language, the connection of the individual to a
political immediacy, and the collective assemblage of enunciation. We
might as well say that minor no longer designates specific literatures but
the revolutionary conditions for every literature within the heart of what
is called great (or established) literature. (18)

A minor literature, then, is a literary product constructed from the margins by a member of a
minority group appropriating the conventions of a majority language, but undermining and
subverting those conventions from within—deterritorializing the majority language through
literary production (16-18). Because of its focus on undermining and subverting the majority language, a minor literature is intensely political, "its cramped space forces each individual intrigue to connect immediately to politics" (17), making, as feminist critics would argue, the personal political. Moreover, the conflation of personal with political serves to make such a literature a collective endeavor. Though Deleuze and Guattari point to Kafka and Prague German for their inspiration, they use African American literature as a second example. Alice Walker concurs in her discussion of African-American literary traditions, claiming, "each writer writes the missing parts of another writer's story" (qtd. Showalter 174).

A minor rhetoric, then, briefly, works like Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s concept of Signifyin(g) in Black English—it appropriates and deterritorializes the majority language, and its operations are political and collective. According to Gates:

Thinking about the black concept of Signifyin(g) is a bit like stumbling unaware into a house of mirrors: the sign itself seems to be doubled, at the very least, and (re)doubled upon closer examination. . . . This level of conceptual difficulty stems from—indeed, seems to have been intentionally inscribed within—the selection of the signifier "Signification" to represent a concept remarkably different from that concept represented by the standard English signifier, "Signification."

(44-45)

Gates' discussion here is important to the conceptualization of a minor rhetoric for two reasons: it focuses on the appropriation of the master's tools to tear down his linguistic house (or at least dent his steel siding), but it also employs a spatial metaphor to describe to disorienting effect of the appropriation—the house of mirrors—which is closely related to Deleuze and Guattari's "cramped space." Both suggest the close activity of discourse in the margins—the confined rhetorical spaces available to non-majority writers and speakers and the necessity of linguistic deterritorialization before marginalized peoples can gain an authentic voice.
Deleuze and Guattari go on to discuss the two ways in which deterritorialization might occur: through an artificial enrichment or swelling of the language (which they describe as Joycean) and through establishing the poverty of the language and taking it further (as is Kafka’s approach). Deleuze and Guattari claim that in many ways the Joycean approach amounts to a reterritorialization in that it breaks with the people; therefore, they assert Kafka has it right. However, for my purposes in thinking about how to move this conception of a minor literature to a discussion of a minor rhetoric, I want to adopt Deleuze and Guattari’s usual both/and stance and retain the possibility of sliding back and forth between them. That is, in rhetorical terms, it is necessary for the writer’s bag of tricks to contain as many possible choices as are available—the elaborate and the plain styles. Clearly, Mahony Griffin’s text plays with inflated and elaborated forms, attempting to recreate for the reader the experience of the sublime the author has experienced.

Moreover, reconsidering the elaborated and attenuated written forms of French feminists seeking an écritoire féminine along side the doubled and excessive language play of Signifyin(g), it becomes clear that privileging the poverty of the majority language does not get at the spectrum of ways in which that language can be destabilized by minorities working within it. Both these methods of deforming and reforming language stretch its boundaries, creating rhetorical spaces in which a wider range of speakers may be heard.

It is important, though, to consider Mahony Griffin’s text not just an example of a minor literature, but as a minor architecture. She is much less concerned about rewriting language than in using elaborate language to rewrite architecture. She asserts that the practice of architecture can influence and change society—it is the goal of her text to explicate her architecture (and Griffin’s), and through that explication describe a textual practice critical of architecture that is not democratic and spiritual. It is far more the colonizing tendencies of the profession she takes on—in the language of other prophet architects (Wright and Sullivan). She is "operate[ing] critically upon the dominance of the visual—the image—as a mode of
perceiving and understanding architecture” by asserting that the textual (the paper practice) is a necessary component for understanding the possibilities of democratic architectural space—in fact, hindsight suggests that the textual offers many more possibilities for creating democratic spaces. Her minor architecture is democratic—costing little to produce, requiring no great commercial patron, no captain of industry upon whose largesse an architect might be forced to rely.153

The rhetorical dimension

Code’s book provides ideas that help fill in the ways in which these concepts of a minor architecture and a minor literature can be appropriated to inform rhetorical analysis. In her focus on the interaction of rhetoric and epistemology, Code introduces a critique of traditional philosophical epistemology, which tends to assert an apolitical and disinterested neutrality in the historic construction of knowledge in the west. Code’s book is about a commitment to "changing the subject" who has been the main character—albeit a shadow presence—in the stories that epistemologists of the Anglo-American mainstream have favored: the abstract, interchangeable individual whose monologues have been spoken from nowhere, in particular, to an audience of faceless and usually disembodied onlookers." She argues instead that "I engage this project by example, showing how monological epistemologies tend to down grade testimony unevenly, according to whose it is; how they suppress affective aspects of cognition and obliterate its cooperative, interactive aspects; how they mask their own complicity in structures of power and privilege" (xiv).

To counter this history of knowledge construction that has specifically been the realm of the straight, white, Christian man of property, Code conceptualizes an idea of rhetorical spaces—spaces that allow or constrain rhetorical activity. She claims that what her notion of rhetorical space should do is:

- namely, to deflect the focus of philosophical analysis away from single and presumably self-contained propositional utterances pronounced by
no one in particular and as through a neutral space; and to move it into
textured locations where it matters who is speaking and where and why,
and where mattering bears directly upon the possibility of knowledge
claims, moral pronouncements, descriptions of reality achieving
acknowledgment, going through. (x)

Rhetorical spaces then, like architectural spaces, are negotiated spaces—access to which is
determined by power. Access to the spaces is unevenly distributed across a culture in which
power is unevenly distributed according to factors such as gender, race, class, and sexual
orientation. Though metaphoric, rhetorical spaces are bound by the physical dimensions of
architectural spaces, which work together to "structure and limit" utterances. These notions
seem a necessary addition to Deleuze and Guattari's somewhat overly romanticized (and
empowered) notion of agency from the margins. In contrast to Deleuze and Guattari's
previously mentioned assertion that marginalization opens "more possibilities" for new
articulations, Code's understanding is more pragmatic:

This is an epistemology oblivious to experiential and political specificity.
Yet its appeals to a taken-for-granted normality, achieved through
commonality, align it with all of the positions of power and privilege that
unthinkingly consign to epistemic limbo people who profess "crazy,
bizarre, or outlandish" beliefs, and negate their claims to the authority
that knowledge confers. (32-33)

She is much more keenly aware of how easily voices from the margins can be dismissed as
fundamentally unknowable by those at the center who police truth and knowledge claims. Code
does not deny that the marginalized have voices and important things to say—she clearly agrees
with Deleuze and Guattari on that point. However, she more carefully theorizes the narrowness
of rhetorical space in the margins—the necessity of not just having knowledge to share, but of
receiving acknowledgment.
So although Code certainly retains agency for groups and individuals working from the cramped margins, she specifically theorizes the uneven access to power that renders many speakers less likely to be heard. Code points repeatedly to Wittgenstein's claim that "knowledge is based on acknowledgment." She asserts, however, that one step in the move toward acknowledgment is a demystification of the ways in which credibility has been established by exposing the abstract and disengaged agent as interested and privileged: "For there is no doubt that only the supremely powerful and privileged could believe, in the face of all the evidence to the contrary, that there is only one true view, and it is theirs; that they alone have the resources to establish universal, incontrovertible, and absolute truth" (54). Her goal, then, in developing this language of rhetorical spaces, is to remove the onus of establishing credibility and gaining acknowledgment away from the abstract, 'generalized,' disengaged, moral-epistemic individual of the Anglo-American tradition, and into the lives, social structures, and circumstances where 'concrete' moral and epistemic agents are engages in deliberations that matter to them. (xi)

She is closely aligned with other feminist theorists, then in her interest in concretizing experience in order to expose the nearly invisible power functions of Enlightenment universality: the universal man and his cousins, the disinterested philosopher, the scientist, and the object of my concerns, the (architectural) historian.

**A Minor (Feminist) Rhetoric**

My notion of a minor feminist rhetoric then, brings together all of these notions I've previously discussed. It entails a significant rearticulation of feminist literary theory, highlighting the importance of feminist theory's concern with telling the life stories of a diversity of women, and the centrality of the past twenty years of feminist theory in making women's autobiography increasing accessible and academically sound as a research agenda.

The problems we now identify with these earlier types of criticism in no way should undermine
their revolutionary impact in reshaping the literary canon and knowledges far beyond autobiography studies. However, while noting the powerful historical impact of these notions, it is also important to note the ways in which they have been and are being reshaped to theorize increasing complex notions of agency and subjectivity now complicated by the ascendancy of poststructuralist thought. One important concern is in avoiding the essentializing binaries of gender that seem to limit the possibilities of women's political agency, even as we see political change occurring.

The expansion of feminist theory into postcolonial studies adds an important dimension to my assertions, because of the necessity of avoiding discussions of patriarchy as the totalizing power influence in women's lives. This is important first because there is not a single patriarchy, but rather discreet and specific arenas where a variety of patriarchies effect and contain women's lives in vastly different ways. Second, gender is but one of many identities that can effect women's access to power and a voice. Postcolonial theory posits a way of examining various sorts of colonizations that both men and women experience—colonizations that force them to write and speak from the margins of society.

By grafting on to these ideas Deleuze and Guattari's notion of a minor literature, perhaps misappropriating it, I am able to compliment the emancipatory political goals of both feminism and postcolonial criticism with a framework for understanding how colonized (marginalized) writers deteritorialize the language of the majority to reform its potential of speaking for them, from the margins. The addition of Code's work offers this framework a way to theorize unequal access to discourse without the problem of totalizing patriarchy. In addition, Code's use of spatial metaphors nests neatly with Mahony Griffin's own text and experience as a writer. Such a framework is admittedly ungainly—but so is the text with which I am working. The utility of such an ungainly amalgamate of ideas is in its ability to inform readings of complex texts, opening new and exciting readings that have previously been ignored—specifically readings of Mahony Griffin's preoccupations with colonization,
connections between rhetorical and architectural space, and her own interest in writing into an established discourse of architectural autobiography. The concept of a minor rhetoric can help tease apart these connections without resorting to the essentializing moves in some theories of autobiography that exclude the texts of women whose work cannot be easily classified into categories like women's, feminine or feminist writing.

**Looking at autobiography/architecture**

These connections are especially important when discussing autobiography and architectural practices (paper and built) as a rhetorical spaces, access to which is unevenly distributed according to gender, race, class, and education. Moreover, women in architecture historically have had an especially difficult time creating for themselves rhetorical spaces within the discourse of their own professional communities. Francesca Hughes's anthology of autobiographical essays by contemporary women architects attests to the continuing validity of that difficulty. Hughes writes:

> The absence of women from the profession of architecture remains, despite various theories, very difficult to explain and very slow to change. It demarcates a failure the profession has become adept at turning a blind eye to, despite the fact that it places architecture far behind the other professions with which architects frequently seek to align themselves. (xi)

The relative crawling pace of women's progression into architecture since Marion Mahony Griffin graduated from MIT over 100 years ago leaves little hope for an explosion of change in the near future. However, it makes Mahony Griffin's story much more contemporary than it should be.

Recalling Sophia Hayden's welcome into the profession of architecture in 1892 when her mental illness received more note in major architectural journals than did her work, Jennifer Bloomer's experience as a young woman graduating from architecture school in 1981 was nearly as chilling, considering the 89 year gap between the incidents. In her autobiographical essay,
"Nature Morte," Bloomer attests to the slow change of the color and gender of the architectural profession, without ever arguing that she was the victim of a gendered profession. She writes:

In 1981, during my last week of architecture school, I went to an Honor's Banquet at which I received the American Institute of Architects' Henry Adams Medal and certificate for being the top student in my class. . . . I arrived at the hall at the same time as the second place student. . . . As we approached our table, we were introduced by our dean to the local AIA president, who was to present the awards. The president leaned across the table and heartily shook the hand of my classmate, saying "young man, you've got a job any time you want in my firm. Let's talk after lunch." Then he turned to me and said, "My, that's a beautiful blouse you have on." (245)

Like Mahony Griffin, Bloomer here narrates an anecdote in which no formal mention of gender is made. She allows the story to stand uninterpreted within her larger text, as a space where the reader can draw her own conclusions—though the overall effect is of a unified argument that foregrounds issues of gender without ever mentioning them. As Code suggests,

"Producing the memoir distills and clarifies a theoretical-political stance for the writer as much as her readers. . . . story-telling makes no prior assumptions about universalities-in-particularities: readers discover resonances with their own stories, and they find something to argue within the dissonances." (3)

By informing my larger story with the notions of a minor, feminist rhetoric, I hope to create a rhetorical space within architectural theory/practice for discussing the way one woman's story can be a case study for thinking about the ways in which women's lives and contributions have been consistently misrepresented in the major, masculinist (Universal human) rhetoric that has held a privileged position within the discipline. By contesting the stories of that major rhetoric,
I hope to not tell the story of a single woman so much as I try to understand the discourse of the discipline as the constraining force keeping women and their stories from our (his)stories.
APPENDIX B.

LOUIS SULLIVAN AND RALPH WALDO EMERSON:
A DISCUSSION OF TRANSCENDENTALIST INFLUENCE

This essay is a quick and perhaps over-simple discussion of the influence of American Transcendentalist thought and literary style on the work of Louis Sullivan, whose own writing markedly influenced both Wright and Mahony Griffin's writing in style, form, and content.

Before my vision as I go,

opens a bewitching landscape.

wherein abides an architecture of peace, of wit and of sanity—

an architecture that shall take on such natural and shapely shapes

that would seem as though Nature made it; for it will arise

graciously from the mind, the heart, the soul of man:

an architecture which shall seem as though the Lord God made it,

for it will have been breathed the breath of life—

yet it will be an architecture made by Men—

for men will then have become Men.

— Louis Henry Sullivan to George Elmslie, 1918

My idea here is a simple one: that Louis Sullivan, long considered the father of modern architecture, is a transcendentalist writer and philosopher in the tradition of Ralph Waldo Emerson, and deserves to be remembered for his contributions to American thought as well as for his architecture. This paper will compare the writing of the two men, specifically Emerson's *Nature*, and Sullivan's *Kindergarten Chats*. The texts have many similarities: though both works are essentially didactic, they are also literary in intent. Sullivan's works have not been adequately studied, and though admittedly they owe much to Emerson in both style and content, they are truly literary essays in intent and deserve to be studied as such. Such an analysis is of
a scope beyond the intent of this paper; however, this paper will attempt to compare some of the literary and philosophical similarities between *Nature* and *Kindergarten Chats*, while suggesting that both men employed the rhetorical devices they chose to reinforce the philosophical stances they took to the audiences they assumed.

Both works espouse an organic theory of development, (Emerson's spiritual, and Sullivan's spiritual and architectural); both use an "organic" literary style to reinforce the subject matter. In addition, both men hope to educate through their writings, and employ markedly different, but similarly traditional modes of discourse to persuade their readers. Equally important is the audience each man envisions for his writings, and in both cases, the audience is likely broader than it might seem to be on first reading.

That Sullivan was aware of Emerson and transcendentalism is clear. Born in Boston, in 1856, Louis Henri Sullivan grew up and was educated in the Boston area at a time when Emerson would have received significant public acclaim. At age sixteen, in 1872, Sullivan sought and found work in the architectural offices of Furness and Hewitt in Philadelphia. Frank Furness, Sullivan's employer, was the son of Unitarian minister William Henry Furness, a close friend of Emerson. Sullivan became friends with the Furness family and claims to have admired their intellectualism. In the years before the Civil War, the Furness home was a station on the Underground Railroad, and often played host to such men as William Ellery Channing, William Lloyd Garrison, and Wendell Phillips (Twombly 40). Years later, Sullivan came to know transcendentalism further through the works of Walt Whitman, with whom he corresponded (Andrews 214). Sullivan refers to Emerson specifically in two of his essays, "The Young Man in Architecture," and "What is Architecture?" Because of his interest in creating an American architecture, and indeed, an American philosophy, it seems clear that Sullivan both read and synthesized at least some of Emerson's works.

Emerson claims that the purpose of *Nature* is the same as the aim of all science: "to find a theory of nature" that will "explain all phenomena" (3). He suggests that his essay will forego
scientific experimentation to come to an understanding through reason. He goes on to explain his theory, which is in essence philosophical and has more to do with human ability to achieve transcendence than with a unified law of nature. Sullivan's *Kindergarten Chats* are so named because they describe a dialogue between a student of architecture and his teacher. Sullivan claims in the first chapter of his *Kindergarten Chats* that "We have an architecture here that is tending in the same or an opposite direction, and is evolving from itself evidences of what we may or may not become" (18). Sullivan is going to provide his readers with a definition of an architecture, and claims, in a roundabout way, that the architecture will define the people who build it. His series of essays repeatedly and stridently assert an American philosophy to build the foundation necessary for a truly American architecture which will fulfill the needs of a democratic people. He warns Americans to be careful what they build, because their built environment does not just reflect them, it is them; it is what they "may become."

The audience each man envisions while he writes is likely much larger than it at first seems. Neither man is preaching to the converted; they are attempting to engage all Americans in a radical restructuring of thought. That their calls to action came sixty-five years apart, Emerson's in 1836 and Sullivan's in 1902, suggests that the same concerns about the ability of democracy to deal with materialism and the necessity of forming a truly American philosophy to combat the problem, were still relevant.

That much said, it is not surprising there are many similarities between Sullivan's and Emerson's writings, both in style and in purpose. Both men are self-consciously literary in intent. They carefully argue for an organic, American art and thought, based on the vast natural resources and vista the country offers. Their arguments take the form of the organic, the concept that one idea grows from another, and their styles themselves are metaphors for the organismism they espouse. This creates and reinforces complex and multi-layered texts. Sullivan's ability and willingness to employ many metaphoric levels in his writing supports this
paper's main argument that his purpose was primarily literary. Both men use their writings as metaphor to depict their organic philosophy.

Both men have achieved deeply layered texts, in which metaphor is layered upon metaphor. Their reliance upon metaphor to simplify complex meaning comes from their understanding of language. In *Nature*, Emerson describes three aspects of language. These dictate the way in which he will write the essay. Emerson says first that, "Words are signs of natural facts" and that even words for abstract ideas once had root in words expressing material realities of nature (14). Second, and more importantly, "It is not only words that are emblematic: but things which are emblematic" (15). The "things" themselves are but metaphors of a spiritual truth, Emerson suggests, and human beings study these correspondences. Third, by understanding these correspondences between mind and matter, people can understand the will of God. "A life in harmony with Nature, the love of truth and virtue, will purge the eyes to understand her text"(20). Emerson's essay then, is richly layered with multiple metaphors because this is the way he understands language, and this is the way he hopes his reader will find Truth.

Sullivan was likely influenced by Emerson's transcendentalist perspective on language when he discusses the inadequacy of words:

> When the mind is actively and vitally at work, for its own creative uses, it has no time for word-building: words are too clumsy: you have no time to select and group them. Hence you must think in terms of *images*, of pictures, of states of feeling, of rhythm. .

Writing is but the slow, snail-like creeping of words, climbing, laboriously, over a little structure that resembles thought: meanwhile the mind has gone on and on. . . (50)

Because he has such little faith in the ability of words to adequately express the richness of thought, Sullivan provides his reader with many interwoven texts, layers of metaphor, hoping
that the variety will lend understanding of the subtlety of his thought to the reader's arduous decoding of, what is at best, inaccurate human language.

Related to his concern about the metaphorical basis of the correspondence between language thought, Sullivan also sees and expands on Emerson's connection between the inner and the outer. Sullivan describes the essential metaphoric quality which is what Emerson would call "correspondence":

That which exists in spirit seeks and finds its physical counter-part in form, its visible image. ... Form in everything and anything, everywhere at every instant. According to their nature, their function, some forms are definite, some indefinite. ... But all, without fail, stand for relationships between the immaterial and the material, between the subjective and the objective—between the Infinite Spirit and the finite mind. (45)

The layering of metaphor upon metaphor in Sullivan's text, then, is simply a rhetorical device to reinforce material content of the book. Like Emerson, he provides many layers of meaning, each of which corresponds to a visual image, (i.e., the garden, the seasons) which helps his reader to more fully comprehend the many facets and subtleties in the subjects he writes about.

Stylistically, both men tend to write in circles, surrounding their topics from every side to establish conclusions. Nature is typical of Emerson's writing, although it is certainly not as circular as some later essays, it serves to illustrate this point. Emerson begins and ends his essay at the same idea. He begins by suggesting that, "Our age is retrospective," but that readers should ignore tradition and the past and "enjoy an original relationship to the universe" (3). He ends the essay by pointing back to its beginning, suggesting that the "original relationship" begins when the readers take his advice and "Build therefore your own world," by conforming the realities of their lives to the "pure" ideas their minds (42). The essay moves in a large circle, as Emerson works his ideas through from the thesis, to his arguments, back to his
thesis. The arguments are carefully constructed and lead the reader the inevitability of his conclusions.

*Nature* circumscribes smaller circles as well. Each of the subdivisions follows the same pattern. At the paragraph level, Emerson's approach is similar; he typically repeats a point in several different ways, circling around it until he brings the reader close as possible to his understanding. To Emerson, restating is not repeating. Language can only go so far to reconstruct truth, and because of this, the circling is necessary to describe an idea from different and fractured viewpoints, so that by examining a thing from a myriad of angles, the truth of the thing might be discovered. Emerson describes nature in a variety of ways:

The lover of nature is he whose inward and outward senses are still truly adjusted to each other. . . . His intercourse with heaven and earth becomes part of his daily food. In the presence of nature a wild delight runs through the man, in spite of real sorrows. Nature says—he is my creature and maugre all his impertinent griefs, he shall be glad with me. Not sun or summer alone, but every hour and season yields its tribute of delight; for every hour and change corresponds to and authorizes a different state of mind, from breathless noon to grimmest midnight. (6)

Not only does each sentence describe a different way for the reader to understand nature, but Emerson suggests specifically that only by knowing the many parts, "every hour and season" and "every hour and change," can a person comprehend the whole. By providing many views of the one idea, Emerson leads the reader to a deeper understanding of his idea of nature.

Sullivan employs a similarly circular technique in his *Kindergarten Chats*. The essays are carefully organized around four topics: the garden, the seasons, architectural types and theories, and the student's intellectual growth under the teacher's nurturing care. These are interspersed and entwined to create a complex, layered text. Like Emerson, Sullivan chooses
topics of nature's cycles to illustrate his philosophical points. The gardening and seasonal topics are metaphors for the student's blossoming knowledge, which is in turn a metaphor for the necessity of nurturing an American philosophy before an American architecture can grow. The education of the often callow student is the education of the American people. The teacher never gives up on his student, the gardener never gives up on his garden, and the implication is that to everything there is a season.

The book completes the circle when the seasons return to spring, the garden blossoms, and the student, no longer slow-witted, has responded to the teacher's nurturing. He is ready to face the world with an understanding of the organic nature of his craft of architecture. Sullivan, like Emerson, is essentially hopeful, and gives his readers a variety of metaphors and viewpoints, hoping that by synthesizing them they will come to a fuller understanding of the depth of a many-faceted subject.

Sullivan also provides his reader with these circles on a smaller level. Each of the separate essays comprising *Chats* makes many little circles, particularly in the dialogue between the teacher and student. Sullivan adapts the Socratic method by which the teacher's adept questions help the student to achieve enlightenment. The ideas presented in this form are traditionally circular, as the student is (particularly at first) a little slow, and the teacher must push at the point from many different angles before the student understands. Sullivan's teacher describes the natural cycles, reinforcing the larger circles in the book's organization in a very Emersonian style:

> Forms emerge from forms, and others arise or descend from these.
> All are related, interwoven, intermeshed, interconnected, interblended.
> They exornose and endomose. They sway and swirl and mix and drift interminably. They shape, they form, they reform, they dissipate...

... (45)
Sullivan could as easily have been describing the organic way in which he states ideas in his book.

While Sullivan's *Chats* employs the Socratic method to produce a text aimed at education, Emerson also chooses a traditional mode of rhetorical discourse in *Nature*. Because it aims so clearly to change a moral climate, to move that Americans seek the richness of nature to develop their own culture, it seems reasonable to categorize *Nature* as a sort of American manifesto. Emerson is clearly making a proposal that the American lack of a cultural heritage can be a positive thing, if Americans create their own culture to fill the void. Emerson charts a course for American thought, literature and art, suggesting they should be built on the possibilities of the North American content as seen in her nature, rather than on the worn and morally inferior European models.

Like Emerson's essay, Sullivan's book grows organically; there is no linearity, rather the ideas are organized in circles and in layers. As suggested previously, *Chats* contains several metaphors which reoccur throughout the book, producing these layers. The first chapter is entitled, "Building a Tower." and is a metaphor for building the book, building an architecture, building an education. It is about building a tower, literally; however, the other layers are expressed in the dialogue between the student and teacher, a complex layering of metaphor and outright puns. Early in the book, chapter four, Sullivan picks up a second thread, that of the garden. He alludes clearly to the garden as a metaphor when his teacher says to the student: "I shall seek, only, to persuade the faculties which nature gave you at birth, and which, now, are partly shrieveled, to revivify, to send out new roots, to grow, to expand, and to bring forth as nature intended. You are to be for me, a neglected but fallow field" (25). Sullivan uses the garden as a metaphor for the student's learning, but more importantly, he is discussing the education of all Americans in the course of democracy. He is very clear that he believes "Democracy liberates nothing if it liberates not the mind. . .Democracy is large and true. So
must we be" (75). As the student's faculties revive, so can Americans revive the truth of what democracy can be.

In addition, Emerson and Sullivan's writings are similar in purpose. Both men hope to educate their readers, and because of this, both works are essentially didactic and espouse not only an inquiry into nature and an apology for an American architecture, respectively, but a moral and philosophical basis for the activities. Emerson's *Nature* provides his reader's with a framework for understanding the metaphorical connections between language and nature. Sullivan creates a similar framework in *Chats* by suggesting that an architect not only builds, he communicates. The building itself is a metaphor. "There is a parallelism between man and nature, and between man and his works, for both are contained within the domain of life, the universal power, or energy which flows everywhere at all times, in all places" (51). Sullivan's words are reminiscent of Emerson's discussion of the Over-soul and borrow much from transcendentalist thought.

The purpose of comparing Emerson and Sullivan is not to suggest that Sullivan was derivative, but rather that Sullivan became a torchbearer of transcendentalism, a torch that passed from Emerson to Whitman to Sullivan. Emerson suggested that "Each Age, it is found, must write its own books." Sullivan attempted to make *Kindergarten Chats* a book for its age, applying the American philosophical stance of transcendentalism to American architecture, and writing an apology of sorts for both. Like Emerson, Sullivan claims he never looks back; he looks to the future with an optimism. It is this essential optimism and belief in the inherent goodness of people and the promise of democracy that best categorize Sullivan with Emerson and Whitman.

Though Sullivan will best be remembered for his architectural declaration that "Form follows function," he should equally be remembered for his organic, and ultimately the transcendental philosophy from which such a statement obviously grew. The idea is simply another expression of Emerson's idea of correspondence between inner reality and outer form,
which has been applied to architecture. A literary reading of Sullivan suggests that he was true to his declaration, and his organic style of writing is but one more example of how form does indeed follow function. Sullivan's function, like Emerson's nature, is spirit in search of form. Both men suggest the two meet when a framework, worthy of the philosophy and art of a new nation, is built.
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NOTES

1 In *The Magic of America* Mahony Griffin corrects the usual American pronunciation of her last name by writing, that it is said "Ma'-ho-ny—with the accent on the first syllable as interestingly enough, we found everyone pronounced it in Australia but in America—well everything gets changed in America" (IV 69). Kruty notes this same pronunciation, adding that Mahony Griffin's cousin Dwight Perkins's son, Lawrence B. Perkins, "Is equally adamant about this pronunciation" ("Walter Burley Griffin" 34).

2 As historian Sara Boutelle writes of her research on Julia Morgan, "To people who ask me about 'Julia,' I say they may first name her only if they refer to Frank Lloyd Wright as 'Frank'

3 Williamson's "Index of Fame" is a listing she compiled by studying the survey textbooks of American architectural history and counting the mention each architect receives in the texts. Her book establishes the fact of a rigid canon in architectural studies—a canon that historically has omitted women's contributions to the field.

4 Williamson's research should put to rest any concerns that the canon is somehow becoming diluted by the "politically correct" additions of "minor" architects who happen to be women or people of color.

5 Elizabeth Lindquist-Cock and Estelle Jussim's article for the *Feminist Art Journal*, "Machismo in American Architecture," notes, "Not surprisingly, therefore, if you examine some of the major books on contemporary architecture—for example Dennis Sharp's *A Visual History of Twentieth Century Architecture*, the Abrams *Encyclopedia of Modern Architecture*, Jurgen Joedicke's *Architecture Since 1945* and Vincent Scully's *American Architecture and Urbanism*—you will find that not one woman is mentioned" (9). [Although Scully does, in fact, mention one woman, Marion Mahony, he misspells her name and mentions her only once, in the context of being Wright's inferior in terms of genius (126).]

6 Ahrentzen and Anthony relate a story where in a male professor remarked to Anthony's proposal for a class entitled "Gender and Race in Architecture," 'I could tell you all there is to know on that subject in twenty minutes" (28). So clearly some professors can cover the topic in less than a class period.

Data are from Williamson's Index of Fame (19-27).

Willis concurs, suggesting, "Such a confined view of what constitutes architecture and architectural production serves to exclude most women architects (and many men) from the mainstream architectural history by default rather than by intention" (60). Although Willis is certainly correct in this assessment, it is women who have been rendered almost totally invisible in these histories. And though history then comes to be the story of a very small number of architects, all of those are men.

In 1990 the ACSA (Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture) Task Force on the Status of Women in Architectural Schools found that tenured women represented only 2.8% of architecture faculty. Many architecture programs still have no tenured women on their faculty. Reasons for this almost total absence of women are complex, but some possibilities lie in Karen Kingsley and Anne Glynn's 1992 study published in the Journal of Architectural Education. Kingsley and Glynn found that while 70% of women in architectural practice claim they feel sexual discrimination, in the academy that number is even higher, with only 8% of women claiming they did not feel discrimination. The authors of this study call the academic environment "an isolated and sexist one" (18).

Ahrentzen and Anthony note that some still claim "women's psychological, cognitive, and analytic incapacities" (12) have kept them from achievement in architecture. They point out, however, that research finds very little difference between men and women in spatial visualization, spatial perception and mental rotation capabilities and only a small difference in mathematical abilities.

In 1995, 10.8% of the members of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) were women. In contrast, women were 20% and 24% respectively of the American Medical Association and the American Bar Association members. Women of color represented only .64% of the AIA membership in 1994.

Or art classes, or literature classes, or science classes, or engineering classes . . .

Writes Sherry Ahrentzen, "The F word in Architecture. If that word is Frank it's glorified, debated, canonized, and meticulously studied" (71).

See Willenbrock; Diaz, Buss, and Tircuit; Grant; Dutton "Hidden Curriculum"; Frederickson; Ahrentzen and Anthony; Groat and Ahrentzen; Bloomer "Nature Morte."

See Kingsley and Glynn, Ahrentzen and Anthony, Groat and Ahrentzen, Ahrentzen, Kingsley, Frederickson, Dutton and Mann, and Dutton.

Abigail Van Slyck, in her article "Women in Architecture and the Problems of Biography," asserts that the forms of the biography and the monograph are themselves problematic for women because they tend to reaffirm only the women whose careers closely followed the male model—individual, private architectural practice. Van Slyck writes, "By emphasizing an individual's activity within a discriminatory system, it cloaks the workings of discrimination" (19).
One author wrote me that her reader reports from scholars were "unbelievably narrow and conservative." Her experience seems supported by Van Slyck's findings: women like Julia Morgan whose professional lives followed the male pattern are the proper subjects of biographies and monographs. Women whose work followed other patterns receive much less attention, and their biographer have had a difficult time publishing with even small presses (Virginia Grattan's biography of Mary Coulter, Judith Paine's biography of Theodate Pope Riddle, and Doris Cole's biography of Eleanor Raymond all found very small publishing houses).

Griffin claims that Louis Sullivan was his mentor, influencing both his architecture and architectural philosophy. Sullivan wrote *Kindergarten Chats*, addressed to young architects, as individual essays published in the trade publication *Interstate Architect and Builder* from 8 February 1901- 16 February 1902.

Griffin's name was literally inked over in blocks of black India ink. Whatever meaning historians wish to draw from this, it is certainly a fascinating turn on the ways in which Mahony Griffin herself was "inked out" of her own professional contributions through the typical architectural practice of having only the firm's principle sign or stamp completed drawings to denote his approval. Such tradition has contributed to women's invisibility in architectural practice, as few women have historically been principles in firms or partnerships.

Contemporary scholars such as Anna Rubbo simply note the story as something of a mystery: "Underneath her outspokenness Marion Griffin remains quite a modest character. She claims little for herself, although the vexed question of her erasure of Griffin's name from a large number of drawings reproduced in 'Magic of America' remains unanswered. (Was this a claim by Marion to a greater conceptual and design role?)" ("Through the Looking Glass" 39).

According to G.A. Wilkes in *A Dictionary of Australian Colloquialisms*, a battler is the underdog fighting the big dog, a person for whom life is a daily battle (24). The term was used in Australia since the 1890's, and it seems likely that Mahony Griffin had its very positive Australian cultural connotations in mind when she divided her text into four "battles."

Because discussions of feminism and post-modernism slip inexorably into "theory-talk" of a sort I enjoy, but which often stall the pace of a narrative, and because this is what I hope will be a good story, I've included in Appendix A. my musings on feminist theories of autobiography and their connections to Mahony Griffin's text, *The Magic of America."

Interestingly, it privileges the professional accomplishment of Walter Griffin, quite modestly deferring to his work, but also describing Mahony Griffin's own life through the lens of her professional activities.

There is clearly room to argue that Wright, Sullivan, and Mahony Griffin all employed a style traditionally associated with the "feminine" (and theorists like Battersby would assert that artistic "genius" in men is marked by their access to the "feminine" and feminine expression). Interestingly, Battersby asserts that in Western constructions, genius could only be feminine in men. Women were forced to be doubly in drag—masquerading as "feminine" men, and as Kant would suggest, appearing absurd. Mahony Griffin's text, then, when considered independently, does indeed appear to be an example of "feminine writing"—it is non-linear to the point of being hyper-textual, it conflates the professional and the personal, and it seems to attempt to create a hybrid genre, an autobiography of "ideas". But when considered in the
context of Wright's *An Autobiography* and Sullivan's *Autobiography of An Idea*, Mahony Griffin's text reflects the conventions of those early texts, which employ perhaps "feminine" conventions, but to the purpose revealing their authors' excess of masculine "genius." They are the conventions not of feminine writing, but as Battersby would argue, of a genius's feminized artistic consciousness.

26 I'm not arguing here that her text achieves some sort of unified narrative, but rather that she succeeded in articulating a cohesive argument. The problems earlier scholars have faced in examining her text have grown from the tendency to examine it as a narrative.

27 When I write about "women's" writing here and throughout this text, I am questioning, though not entirely rejecting, gendered notions of writing which assume that there are recognizable features of "men's" and "women's" writing. Early scholars of women's autobiography such as Estelle Jelinek and Mary G. Manson assert gendered differences between men's and women's writing, associating women's writing with the domestic, the fragmentary, cyclical. My assumption is that these notions of gendered writing have been imported to the culture in very general and stereotypical ways, and have led to assumptions about writing as gendered—assumptions which permeate secondary sources in Griffin studies, leading to gendered descriptions of Mahony Griffin's text, when in fact, it employs generic conventions of other architectural autobiographies, namely Wright's and Sullivan's.

28 Bloomer's project involves, in part, revealing the architectonics of textual construction (specifically in *Finnegan's Wake*) and the textual-literary conventions of architecture (specifically in the drawing of Gaimbattista Piranesi).

29 Derrida has argued that the binary construction of Western thought and language posits a word pair which exists in a hierarchical relationship, one valued, the other (comparatively) devalued (male/ female) (rationality/ irrationality) (linear/ fragmentary) (objective/ subjective). The valued term is gendered male—and I would argue, also associated white, straight, educated, etc.

30 There are several important exceptions to this lack of analysis of *MOA*: Anna Rubbo and James Weirick began a tradition of scholarship giving voice to Mahony Griffin by including long sections of her text in their work. Both scholars have attempted to frame Mahony Griffin's text in terms of contemporary scholarship, with Weirick even employing literary scholarship (Eagleton and Sidonie Smith) in his 1988 articles "*The Magic of America: Vision and Text*" and "Marion Mahony at M.I.T." Rubbo's work, by her own account, is "ethnographic" by which she seems to mean that she extensively employs primary sources, and has incorporated into her scholarly essays lengthy quotes from *MOA* as well as letters and archival materials, allowing the texts to have a say in her work. She opposes her methodology to the traditional men and monuments focus of architectural studies ("Through the Looking Glass") 38.

31 He is also only the second author to provide correct material. Berkon and Kay in their 1975 article, "Marion Mahony Griffin, Architect" and Berkon's entry on Mahony Griffin in the 1977 *Women in American Architecture* are the only previous instances of scholars providing correct biographical material on Mahony Griffin. Berkon and Kay do not mention the previous history of inaccuracies.

32 Although in disciplines like literature, some women are now part of the major canon (perhaps Jane Austin, Emily Dickinson, George Eliot, and Edith Wharton would be names commonly agreed upon) no women are part of the major canon in architecture. See Williamson's Index of
Fame, 19-27, or Stevens' Vasari Database—his analysis of *The Macmillian Encyclopedia Of Architects (MEA)*, 122-167.

33 In literary terms, this holds true as well, but in literature the canon consists of great men, great texts (of whatever genre), and the critical apparatus that valorizes literary production (architectural monuments are the equivalent of literary texts).

34 Aja Prelisasco is Janice Pregliasco; she officially changed her name in January of 2000. In this study I refer to her most often as Pregliasco, the name under which her important 1995 essay was published.

35 Jane H. Clarke’s book review in *JSAH* notes "two forthcoming biographies of Mahony" (471).

36 Written correspondence with the author, 14 January 2000. In fact, the ABC (Australian Broadcasting Company) has just completed an hour long film treatment of Mahony Griffin’s life, which will air in 2000.

37 Donald Leslie Johnson’s *The Architecture of Walter Burley Griffin*, 1977 and *Australian Architecture 1901-1951*, 1980; H. Allen Brooks’s *Prairie School Architecture: Studies From the Western Architect*, 1975, 1983; Wilson and Robinson’s, *The Prairie School in Iowa*, 1977 are all examples of major works containing inaccuracies about Mahony Griffin’s life that were published after Berkon and Kay’s research corrected the record.

38 American scholars, conversely, do not (Sprague, Kruty, Pregliasco).

39 Whose downtown Chicago store became one of Louis Sullivan’s best known designs.

40 Like Wright and Sullivan before her, Mahony Griffin’s adult self asserted the importance of nature to her child self through her autobiographical remembrances.

41 Without this connection, MIT would seem an illogical choice; one of the three universities in the country with architecture schools which admitted and granted degrees to women was the University of Illinois—the other two were Cornell and (of course) MIT.

42 When her friend Marion, who graduated from MIT in the class of 1896 became widowed within months of her marriage, she came to work with Mahony Griffin at Frank Lloyd Wright’s Studio (Weirick "Marion Mahony at M.I.T. n. 32). Marion Chamberlain, as she became, maintained a friendship with Mahony Griffin late into their lives, as is documented in *MOA* (IV 156).

43 Although Weirick speculates the two may have been the firm Flanders and Zimmerman (and it could well have been) the connection seems more tenuous than the easy Steinway Hall connection to Spencer and Hunt, who were not partners, but for whom Mahony Griffin could easily have "ghosted." This seems particularly likely if her claims of working on the White house for Hunt are correct (Van Zanten also claims in "Early Work" that Mahony Griffin worked for Hunt). I should also mention that though Mahony Griffin notes this brief period working for classmates in the 1894 Classbook (her entry written in 1898) she does not mention it in *MOA*, where she remembers working for Wright immediately following termination by Perkins (IV 110). Both are possible as she may have been picking up work randomly.
And in fact, the house displays details like Mahony Griffin's Amberg House, according to Van Zanten, "a complex terracing in front of the entrance porch" ("Early Work" 10) and the use of colored brick with brownstone trim.

Her years with Wright are most usually given as 1895-1909. Brooks places Wright at Steinway Hall as late as 1900 (30) in The Prairie School, and as late as 1901 in "Steinway Hall, Architects and Dreams", though he also dates the Oak Park Studio from c.1898, making Mahony Griffin's time connected to Steinway from 1-5 years.

Irving (1857-1937) and Allen (1858-1929) Pond were older than many of the other Steinway Hall architects—contemporaries of Louis Sullivan, rather than his "kindergarten." They were connected to the young architects at Steinway Hall through the activities of Jane Adams Hull House, "where most of the buildings were their design" according to Brooks (The Prairie School 30) and where the Chicago Arts and Crafts Society (founded by Wright and of which Mahony Griffin was a member) met. In contrast, Hermann von Holst (1874-1955) was a later and younger member of Steinway Hall, the young architect to whom Wright turned over his practice upon leaving the U.S. in 1909—presumably because he was the only young architect of Wright's acquaintance who had few enough previous dealing with Wright to enter into a business relationship with him. von Holst hired Marion Mahony to design the Wright commissions, giving her her first opportunity for several major architectural projects.

Michels does not in any way connect this improvement to Mahony's intervention, but she notes his sudden maturity in drafting ability and asks, "Where did he learn? How did he learn?" (302). Although Mahony's appearance on the scene at this time might help answer these questions, such an answer does not occur to Michels, who notes that perhaps it was the influence of the Chicago architectural club (302) and not the possibility that Wright had hired the woman widely described as the best architectural renderer of the century.

The house was built in Rodger's Park—1946 Estes Ave. It was to this house, then owned by her niece, that Mahony Griffin returned in 1938.

Only the church in Evanston has received attention; little has been written about the other two projects or the possibility that more projects were designed or built.

That Wright along with his son John Lloyd and an apprentice Taylor Wooley retraced the Wasmuth drawings from Mahony Griffin's drawings and from photographs is well documented. Therefore, it would not be so much that Wright removed monograms from existing drawings, but did not reproduce the monograms in the process of tracing. Because the drawings were produced in his office, he owned them, omitting the monograms would not have been considered even unethical. The renderer is often considered an example of the "Pencil in the master's hand" as a recurrent motif in the Wright inspired opera The Shining Brow reminds.

"Later this architect went abroad. He asked me to take over the office for him. I refused" (MOA III 172).

And possibly even non-repayment of a $5000 loan Griffin made to Wright to finance Wright's trip to Japan (Gill).
Griffin's brother-in-law, Roy Lippincott, asserts that Griffin did not design any of the Millikin Place houses (Rubbo "Creative Partnership" 83).

Authors seem to date the announcement variously from April (Pregliasco) to June (Rubbo "Portrait") of 1911, though in her autobiography Marion suggests that by the time Griffin began to work on the project, she had just nine weeks to finish the presentation drawings. Several authors seem to suggest that Griffin procrastinated on his entry until Marion prodded him to begin work on the project.

It is unclear how certain Griffin would really have been of an international competition for an Australian capital, or if Mahony Griffin was just writing (with hindsight) into the prophetic tradition of Wright and Sullivan, who both claimed (after the fact) a certain amount of clairvoyance (or at least intuition) concerning the turns of their own careers and architectural trends.

Although the drawings were quite beautiful, Mahony Griffin suggests that the committee only saw photographic representations of them. She writes, in MOA that the first thing the judge did was "to have the presentation drawings . . . photographed" so that the committee (and then she quotes) "should not be seduced by their beauty" (II 427). She then adds, "These drawings by the way were made by myself." I find it interesting that Mahony Griffin was concerned that readers believe her work influenced the judges, perhaps instead of believing that the judges were immediately convinced by the genius of her husband's plan. Though she credits herself with the beauty of the drawings and even provides evidence of their beauty by including the committee chair's (Mr. Smith's) quote, she refuses to let readers think her contribution was the factor that convinced the judges. This is an example typical of her reticence to accept credit or acknowledge the importance of her collaborative contributions to the partnership.

Why Melson did not return to Wright is unclear—in MOA Mahony Griffin suggests that he had engaged several other architects for plans but had never built (III 116). McCoy suggests that the publicity surrounding Wright's public affair with a married woman (while married himself) had created quite a stir in Mason City, and that in the conservative city Wright could no longer even be considered a possibility. It seems equally likely that Melson simply didn't want the house Wright had designed for him (a design that was based in great part on a previous house design in River Forest, Illinois for Isabel Roberts). Whatever the case, Peisch asserts that Mahony's defection from Wright to Griffin was, for Wright at least, decided in this incident, an incident for which Wright never forgave either of the Grifffins (98-99).

For a more detailed account of these religions and their related religious communities in Sydney, see Jill Roe's book, Beyond Belief: Theosophy in Australia 1879-1939. For a better understanding of Rudolf Steiner and Anthroposophy, see McDermott's The Essential Steiner: Basic Writings of Rudolf Steiner.

Mahony Griffin formally joined the group in 1930; Griffin joined one year later in 1931.

Roe lists among the dramatic efforts of the theatre, Everyman, A Midsummer Night's Dream, an original translation of The Mystery of Eleusis, Iphigenia in Tauris, Merlin, Antigone, Electra, Oedipus at Colonus, Prometheus Bound, Sakuntala by Rabindranath Tagore, a play version of Goethe's fairy tale The green snake and the beautiful lily, and Albert Steffen's Fall of the Anti-Christ, among many others.
David Dolan's analysis of the Griffins' careers in "Looking Back on the Griffins" provides excellent insights into why the couple and their work is so little known outside Australia.

Dr. Robert McCoy's 1968 "Rock Crest/Rock Glen: Prairie School Planning in Iowa" refers to Mahony Griffin as "Mahoney" throughout. Robert Twombly's 1973 biography of Wright also names her "Mahoney." Wesley Shank's single mention in the 1979 Iowa Catalogue of the Historic American Buildings Survey names her "Mahoney" as well (72). Paul Larson's 1982 and 1984 Prairie School in Minnesota, Iowa and Wisconsin also refers to her as Mahoney. (In the second printing a note was made of the error, but it remained uncorrected in the text.) An anonymously written 1964 Prairie School Review article "A Portfolio of Prairie School Furniture" also refers to her a "Mahoney," as does a second PSR article on Richard Bock from 1974. Vincent Scully's 1988 American Architecture and Urbanism (126) and a lengthy anonymous article in Progressive Architecture, 1977, entitled "Behind the T-Square" both include Mahony Griffin, but misspell her name.


Weirick notes that eminent Griffin scholar Donald Leslie Johnson made these errors not once, but across four books ("Marion at M.I.T." 50). Mark Peisch in The Chicago School of Architecture gets both her dates of birth and death wrong; H. Allen Brooks, whose The Prairie School is still considered the "seminal" text on the Sullivan School, corrects the date of birth, (in fact, publicly chastising Peisch's mistake of it in a review of Peisch's book) but still mistakes her date of death as 1962. The date remained uncorrected through several reprints of the book and was also mistaken in his second book, Prairie School Architecture: Studies from "Western Architect." David Van Zanten's 1966 article in the Prairie School Review mistakes the year of her birth and asserts she was the first woman to graduate from M.I.T.—she was the second. More than 20 years later, Van Zanten's 1987 chapter in John Zukowsky's Chicago Architecture 1872-1922 mistakes the year of her death. Wilson and Robinson's 1977 The Prairie School In Iowa mistakes the date of her death. Williamson's 1991 book The Mechanics of Fame also mistakes the date of Mahony Griffin's death, citing the Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects (1982) as the source of that inaccuracy. Most of these facts are a matter of public record; some are available in Mahony Griffin's Magic of America, and after 1975 they were available in a secondary source, as well, Berkon and Kay's "Marion Mahony Griffin, Architect." That so many later scholars continue to misdate Mahony Griffin's death (as 1962 or 1963), attests, I think, to the willingness to leave secondary sources uninterrogated. Writers who have been clearly sympathetic to Mahony Griffin's tenuous position in secondary scholarship have included these same errors: Anna Rubbo's "Marion Mahony Griffin: A Portrait" (1988) and Walker, Kabos and Weirick's Building for Nature (1994) both incorrectly date her death to 1963, while Pregliasco's "Life and Work" dates her death to 1962.

David van Zanten in Walter Burley Griffin: Selected Designs 1970. In Brooks's Prairie School Architecture, she is listed under Griffin's name (with no entry of her own). Several key articles do not even mention that Griffin had a wife who was an architect, such as The Prairie School Review's articles by Sprague and O'Connor. While clearly Griffin's marital status may not have been important in these essays, no article on Mahony Griffin declines to name her architect-husband.

Elizabeth Grossman and Lisa Reitzes trace professionalization in architecture to a more and more gendered male norm. They point out that language about the profession was cast in
gendered (male) terms, while discussions of women in the profession were also gendered, but
gendered female, to highlight the ways in which women were incompatible with architectural
practice (29-32).

The photograph is a newspaper photo from the Daily Telegraph, 30 April 1936,
accompanying a story noting Mahony Griffin's departure to India to join her husband.
Mahony Griffin was 65-years-old. The photo in Birrell's text was severely cropped and printed
so darkly as to remove the feminine detail from her clothing. What looks in the Birrell photo
like a mannish haircut, is long hair pinned up with decorative clips (cropped from Birrell's
photo). And what appears to be severely tailored clothing in Birrell's dark photo is a soft-
collared blouse, brooch, and patterned jacket.

Though not published until 1995.

Although Rubbo and Pregliasco retain these descriptions in their biographies, their singular
focus on Mahony Griffin and their interest in providing the "thick description" of ethnography
make such descriptions part of rich characterizations, though these descriptions are also part
and parcel of a long history of depictions of Mahony Griffin within Griffin studies, and, I think,
still deserve to be interrogated.

James Weirick's "Marion Mahony at MIT" points out this passage.

There is no evidence to suggest Griffin was homosexual—and I do not assert it here. My
interest is in the authors who want so much to establish Griffin's intellectual and creative
distance from Mahony Griffin that they refuse to even consider the possibilities of an intimate,
collaborative relationship, even if their attempts to distance the architects create a coded
suggestion of homosexuality.

In spite of Gill's lack of documentation, his telling of the Griffin courtship is now cited
among Griffin scholars.

Rudolf Steiner was the philosophical leader of the Anthroposophical Society, the religious
group of which the Griffins were members. For a more detailed discussion of the Griffin's
religious beliefs, see Jill Roe's "The Magical World of Marion Mahony Griffin," and Anna
Rubbo's "The Numinous World of Marion Mahony Griffin."

For example, contrast the previous statements to Walker, Kabos and Weirick's claim:
"Marion's character and some of her habits were unusual in their time: she spoke in a direct
manner, she wore trousers, and she and Walter were vegetarians. But it would be wrong to cast
her as totally different from other women... she regularly played cards and she made chocolate
cake. But neither she nor Walter were interested in cooking or household chores. They were
work-centered idealists" (31). Such a description, which cites primary sources and interviews,
delivers a far more detailed and rounded characterization of Mahony Griffin and her husband.

The more commonly agreed upon years are 1895-1909, thirteen or fourteen years.

Roy Lippincott, the husband of Griffin's sister Genevieve, the Griffins' architectural partner
who emigrated to Australia with them.
In contrast to Van Zanten's assertion, consider Berkon and Kay's appraisal of the situation at the studio: "Genius is by no means kin to kindliness. Then, as later, Frank Lloyd Wright outdazzled whomever—male or female—shared his suburban Oak Park Studio. Caviler in his claims to possess his disciples' work and less than scrupulous about credit (whether verbal or monetary), Wright earned enough enemies to outnumber his prolific masterworks." (11)

Perkins rented the loft on the 11th floor after the building was completed in 1896. There he established his architectural offices, "subletting" so to speak, the extra room to other young architects, namely Wright, Robert Spencer and Myron Hunt.

In addition, by the time Wright wrote *An Autobiography* his relationship with Mahony Griffin had been irreparably damaged by a series of what he perceived as professional wrongs—mainly that the Griffins had left his studio to successful careers. His text was written at a low point in his own career, a time during which he repeatedly refused to acknowledge the Griffins (or the influence and importance of many of his early colleagues). Given the bad feelings between Wright and the Griffins, it is not surprising that he did not mention either of them in his *An Autobiography*.

Munchick's reliance on Brooks and Van Zanten is clear throughout her text—she repeats their mistake of the year of Mahony Griffin's death and Van Zanten's assertion that Mahony Griffin was the first woman to graduate from M.I.T. But even more interesting is her willingness to accept the assertions of secondary sources that are in conflict with her primary resources. She writes of the problem of attribution of the Robert Mueller House, suggesting, "Although both Mahony and Roy Lippincott claim her title [designing architect], Brooks points to some aspects of the design that are inconsistent with Mahony's other work" (64). I do not single out Munchick's well-argued text for criticism, I simply want to assert the power these secondary texts have on young scholars attempting to write into the disciplinary discourse—it becomes very hard to question the published word. My own master's thesis, "Walter Burley Griffin in Mason City, Iowa," misspelled Mahony Griffin's name (Mahoney—the spelling many of the secondary texts I was using had adopted) and then attempted to ignore her, because issues of attribution were too tricky for me to handle (the usual scholarly treatment, I thought, based on secondary sources).

Jung is not referring to "Universal Man" here—the second clause of this sentence contrasts man's creativity to woman's.

Sprague seems to be channeling one of the earliest authors on the Griffins, Robin Boyd, who, writing in 1947, suggests that the attribution of the Capitol Theatre ceiling to Mahony Griffin was one of the worst "slights Walter had to endure in Australia" (Hamann "Themes and Inheritances" 40). The notion that one member of a team is somehow diminished by the contribution of another is a peculiarly dysfunctional notion that has permeated Griffin studies from its inception.

Just two years later, Van Zanten repeats Peisch's assertion nearly word-for-word, arguing that Mahony Griffin's houses are "chiefly remarkable for the completeness with which they reproduce Wright's style" (*Early Work* 17). Four years later, Brooks will make nearly the same assertions (150-164). The scholars never shift the basic research question or ask, as Anne Griswold Tyng does, "Is it sacrilegious to suggest that Mahony may have had a part in creating Wright's style?" (178). In fact, they worked closely together for between 11 and 13 years, were 24 and 26 years old when they met, and by all primary accounts had an interactive
relationship. Habit leads scholars to consistently maintain the style was his, the drawing was hers.

84 This conundrum seems to perplex scholars across the history of Griffin studies, but rather than explore possible reasons, which are abundantly available to feminist scholars, they attempt to reconcile the "conflicting" data with a masculinist reading, asserting that if she did not take credit for the work, she did not influence it (see Sprague "The Significance of Griffin's Indian Architecture," (83-89) and "Marion Mahony as Originator of Griffin's Mature Style: Fact or Myth?" (26-39).

85 Probably the Bouvee duplex in Evanston.

86 Probably the Solid Rock House Peisch specifically mentions in his earlier quote.

87 This is not to suggest that Peisch and Birrell do not evaluate the work they discuss, or that Van Zanten's scholarship is less valid. Both are valid and regularly employed methods in the field. Van Zanten's telling of Mahony Griffin's architectural abilities, though, has been extremely influential in Griffin studies, and is still regularly cited.

88 The closest example, also within Griffin studies, would be historian Paul Sprague's willingness to devote two articles to discrediting the biographical research of author Pregliasco, who was attempting to recover Mahony Griffin's status as an architect in her 1995 article.

89 Byrne not only worked with the Griffins in Wright's studio, he took over the Mason City commissions for them after they left for Australia in 1914. Byrne's assertion, quoted in McCoy's article, never appears again in Griffin scholarship.

90 Although Mahony Griffin had employed rough-cut limestone as a facing material from early in her career (the All Souls church of 1902, for example).

91 I do not attempt to argue here that Byrne's recollection was accurate or that McCoy's assertions should stand uninterrogated. But the issue has never even been taken up by historians, and it is yet another example of a primary source being ignored in favor of questionable secondary sources.

92 See Sally Chappell, Barry Byrne: Architecture and Writings Dissertatation, Northwestern U, 1969. Ann Van Zanten, "John Lloyd Wright," in Barry Byrne and John Lloyd Wright: Architecture and Design. Chicago: Chicago Historical Society, 1982. David Gebhard on Purcell and Elmslie, Peisch on Walter Burley Griffin, etc. Each of these scholars makes the assertion that his or her championed architect alone was, in his mature work, able to escape the influence of Wright.

93 This assertion may come from Birrell's similarly worded statement that "Mrs. Griffin had great ability and a rare capacity to understand and help develop others and their ideas" (14). Though perhaps Birrell's most generous assessment of Mahony Griffin's character, it serves to undermine any discussion of her creativity and situates her as the helpmate to Griffin's genius.

94 Other historians, like Brooks, Johnson, Storrer, and Peisch assert that Wright must have some level of involvement in the houses because of their success.
That Marion Mahony is remembered at all in survey textbooks is because of her connection to Modernist architecture. Julia Morgan and Sophia Hayden, whose connections to Modernism were more tenuous, and whose connections to architecture itself were marginalized because of their gender, were doubly disadvantaged in the history game. Though Hayden designed a pavilion for the 1893 Columbia World's Exhibition, and the Exhibition is compulsively included as central to contemporary histories of architecture, only projects of feminist recovery like Torre's even note Hayden's accomplishment.

Williamson claims Lewis Mumford as the first modernist historian fame-maker, but mentions several more including such well-knowns as Giedion, Pevsner, Hitchcock, and Scully, all of whom she claims, worked in the "heroic" mode (207-223).

In articles for the *Journal of Architectural Education* (JAE) Groat and Ahrentzen characterize the recent history of architectural education as a history of sexism—one that asserts architectural history is a history of Great Men and architectural masters and in which sexual harassment is not just tolerated but promoted and in which design juries are gendered battlegrounds. See "Reconceptualizing Architectural Education for a More Diverse Future," and "Voices for Change in Architectural Education."

Williamson, Stevens, Kingsley, Ahrentzen and Anthony, Brown, and Battersby all writing about the function of architecture history, note similar constructions of "genius" or a "star" system in archi-historical texts. I'm calling these features generic conventions; these and others (linear paternity motifs—"fathers" of modern architecture—who begot who in terms of influence, etc.) are employed so consistently as to be markers of the genre of writing about the history of architecture.

For more detailed information about this time in Wright's career when he turned his practice over to a new architect he knew through Steinway Hall, Hermann Von Holst, see Peisch (57-58); Brooks, *The Prairie School* (85-86, 148-150); Secrest, *Frank Lloyd Wright* (193-222); Gill, *Many Masks* (203-208); Manson, *Frank Lloyd Wright to 1910* (111-113); and *MOA* (IV 169-171). Wright's 1916 exhibition at the Chicago Art Institute included the two Mueller houses. *MOA* includes preliminary sketches of both these houses—sketches that differ from the finished houses and would seem to suggest a lengthy process of drawing to reach the final houses approved by and built for the clients.

I would suggest this is because he is not a "great" architect, and as an architect working in traditional styles, his work is unimportant in tracing a lineage to modern architecture. Note that there are few knock down arguments about attribution (as this one has become) of even clearly collaborative ideas when they are claimed by the signature of a "great" architect.

For this statement, Peisch cites the notes included with the *Western Architect's* publication of the E.P. Irving House, a publication which he cites as 1914, but was actually 1913. Though Peisch's statement seems to refers to all of Millkin place (the use of the plural "Houses at Millkin Place"), the notes he cites refer specifically to the Irving House, and suggest Wright supplied "an original sketch, which is the only drawing made by Mr. Wright's office" and that the Irving's suggestions on Wright's departure "necessitated considerable changes" (38-39). The statement "only drawing" is quite specific, and in conflict with Peisch's assertion of "original plans"—suggesting the singular as opposed to Peisch's assertion of the plural "plans."
It is also unclear why Peisch would have cited the publication of the Irving house for information about all of Millikin Place, and how he interpreted "an original sketch" to mean "original plans."

103 Though Van Zanten also cites the 1913 *Western Architect* publication of the Irving house, he too employs Peisch's use of the plural "drawings" instead of the singular "drawing" or "sketch" used in the original source and makes the assertion of "working drawings" which would have been developed at a much later stage of the design process than the "preliminary sketch" mentioned in the original source.

104 Late in her life—around 1951—Mahony Griffin claims Griffin was the architect of the Irving house. In a letter to W.G. Purcell she writes, "If I remember correctly, Griffin was the architect of the first house built there, the big house. I am almost sure as I seem to remember trying to get [the Muellers] to use Griffin instead of me as their architect" (qtd. Kruty "Walter Burley Griffin" 35, brackets his). Interestingly, Kruty seems to use this cite, even with the clarifying addition of his brackets, to suggest that "Griffin also lent a hand in the design of the last of the three, the Adolph Mueller house" (26). Kruty's use of a citation suggesting that Griffin designed the Irving house "the first house built there, the big house" to assert he also designed the Adolph Mueller house is not unusual in Griffin studies. I would read Mahony Griffin's assertion as suggesting that she wanted the Muellers to use Griffin as an architect, but was unable to convince them to do that. Perhaps even more interesting is Kruty's ability to assume Griffin worked on the Adolph Mueller house (at least based on the information he cites here). I do not mean to impugn Kruty's scholarship here; I only suggest that texts are loose and slippery things and few scholars would interpret them in precisely the same way. However, once they have been interpreted in print, there is little chance those interpretations will shift much, and scholars continue to write into the discursive practices that are already defined by the discipline—in Griffin scholarship this means the continuous assertion that Mahony Griffin was not a competent architect.

105 Because it is Griffin's (not Wright's) work, Sprague argues.

106 Susan Fondiler Berkon and Jane Holtz Kay's "Marion Mahony Griffin, Architect," 1975 and Berkon's "Marion Mahony" entry for Susanna Torre's 1977 book *American Women in Architecture* both skim over both attribution and evaluation of the Millikin Place houses, though neither denies Mahony Griffin's design influence or negatively evaluates the houses. The Newton article for *Historic Illinois* is perhaps the most thorough discussion of the Millikin Place houses and treats attribution issues as secondary to the beauty of the houses themselves, which are described in great detail. Interestingly, Newton is a "Staff writer" not a Griffin scholar, and is therefore perhaps unconcerned about writing into the discursive practices of the discipline.

107 Repeated calls to publish the text seem unlikely to be carried through for just this reason—traditional publication would be hugely expensive—the text is too long, unedited, and unindexed. However, a searchable CD-ROM could exploit the truly hypertextual nature of the document, as well as provide scholars with an invaluable research tool.

108 In *MOA* Mahony Griffin describes her experience of realizing humans killed "tame cows" for food and announcing to her mother hers was the "vegetable religion." When her Aunt Myra explained eastern religion to her, she agreed that that was her religion. She claims that she lived up to her prediction (III 75), but when she became a vegetarian is unclear, and whether she convinced Griffin or he had come to vegetarianism on his own is unclear. But, like Mahony
Griffin's introduction of Griffin to Anthroposophy, which he came to have strong personal belief in, his adherence to these slightly non-mainstream beliefs, to which he was likely introduced by Mahony Griffin, is continually downplayed. The larger issue, is of course, the issue of intellectual influence (and perhaps particularly the influence of non-rational, non-mainstream ideas). For example, Michael Markham refers to Mahony Griffin's eccentricities for ideas the Griffins seemed to have held in common ("Incinerators" 42). Discussions of religious belief and the vegetarianism that was undoubtedly connected would suggest a level of intellectual discussion that could undermine claims of Griffin's singular genius.

According to Weirick, "The Griffins were also commissioned to design an exposition held in Lucknow just before the elections—a fabulously inventive scheme on paper somewhat compromised in construction. This was clearly intended as the circus component of a "bread and circus" gesture by key members of the outgoing Governor's Council hoping for support at the 1937 poll" ("Vision and Text" 6). Sprague and Kruty's *Two American Architects in India* provides a detailed description of this period of the Griffins' career.

This quote is actually on two consecutive pages; those pages are somewhat confusingly numbered 421 and 427.

The battle was officially over for them in 1920 when Griffin was removed from his position as Federal Capital Director of Construction and Design. He was removed from his position after refusing to join a newly formed Federal Capital Advisory Board, a decision James Weirick likens to "the taking of the hemlock." ("Vision and Text" 12) for Griffin—holding tenaciously to a point of principle though it meant severing all connections to the Canberra he loved.

The canoe in which the Griffins' courtship took place.

The Griffins' purchased three headlands along Sydney Harbor, but only developed Castlecrag themselves. The other two, Crag Cove and Castle Cove, were developed through a corporation, The Greater Sydney Development Association, which Griffin formed in 1919 for the purpose of purchasing land along Sydney's Harbor. In 1921, the Griffins and shareholders purchased the 650 acres on the shores of Sydney Harbor that became the present day suburbs of Castle Cove, Middle Cove, and Castlecrag. See Walker, Kabos and Weirick's *Building for Nature: Walter Burley Griffin and Castlecrag* for a description of the development and community life of Castlecrag.

Mahony Griffin refers to Lucifer regularly in terms of the angel of light.

Though it is perhaps telling that Xantippe is perhaps best known for emptying a pot full of urine over Socrates' head during an angry encounter.

I do not include instances where it was simply cited in a footnote without comment, and I do not claim that I have seen every possible source of information. But I have included everything written about MOA in each of the sources in which it is mentioned.

Mahony consistently asserted Griffin's improvements to the design of the Thomas House (Oak Park, IL. 1902). But any assertions of design ownership of other houses would be limited to those she designed while in the employ of von Holst, which it seems most likely she did.
design. I can document no other instances where she claimed a design to be "wholly" hers or Griffin's.

Actually Van Zanten mentions Mahony Griffin twice—the second instance is in a note to an illustration. It reads: "Dated six days after Griffin's death, apparently a rendering executed by his wife for a commission received earlier" (102). Van Zanten's assertion here seems to border on the dishonest—it suggests, though does not say—that this one drawing, completed after Griffin's death, was the work of MMG. Mahony Griffin drew nearly every rendering in Van Zanten's book, but is credited only here, in this drawing that was clearly completed after Griffin's death. Even in this side-ways credit she is not named, and Van Zanten is careful to assert the commission was received earlier (as it undoubtedly was) so that a reader would not think Mahony Griffin had designed a building on her own.

Even the title reflects the feminist notion of "re-seeing" those things which had been taken for granted as self-evident; as Adrienne Rich writes, "re-vision—the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction—is for us more than a chapter in cultural history; it is an act of survival" (18).

Griswold seems to be referring directly to Van Zanten's claims that, "Many claims made throughout The Magic of America concerning designs in Wright's office which were 'wholly' hers or Griffin's should probably be understood as exaggerations, the result of great resentment she later felt toward Wright..." (10). Her use of quotes around "wholly" and her word choice throughout suggest a desire to engage Van Zanten's text without mentioning him by name.

Narcisco Menocal notes that Mumford is the first historian "to recognize Sullivan's position in American architecture" (150) just as Giedion writes that Hugh Morrison was "One of the first to recognize the architectural importance of the store [Sullivan's Carson, Pirie, Scott]" (386). I think it is important to note that the language consistently asserts that Sullivan was somehow always already the great American architect and his buildings were always already great works of art—historians had only to "recognize" this inherent trait. To assert that all historians did was recognize the pre-existing condition of greatness emphasizes both the pre-existing criteria for greatness and ignores historians' positions as interested king-makers.

Bragdon, described usually as a Theosophist, undoubtedly did live a religious belief not unlike the Griffins' Anthroposophy. His book outlines relations between this religious belief and architectural ornament, geometric design, numerology, and concerns for global government and democracy. Sullivan's texts are discussed both as inspiration and illustration for Bragdon's concerns. Mahony Griffin mentions this book MOA, suggesting a continued interest in Sullivan's texts long after they had left Chicago. See also his book The Beautiful Necessity: Seven Essays on Theosophy and Architecture.

This notion is what Mahony Griffin sees as the potential of America, its "magic."

Sullivan, like Whitman upon whose writing his own style is modeled, employed as vast array of phallic and ejaculatory metaphors in his prose—writers writing about Sullivan's writing also seem to employ these motifs.

Who is cited in his "Marion Mahony at M.I.T.,” also a 1988 publication.

It is perhaps even more interesting that Mahony Griffin was drawn as the agent of this alienation—though Wright and Sullivan were alienated because of their genius, Griffin had a
pleasant personality that could have overcome the distance created by his genius. Mahony Griffin, however, was a "battle axe."

128 To support this assertion Pregliasco includes the footnote, "See, for example, H. Allen Brooks..." (n. 22). And she is correct, Brooks does make a similar claim.

129 Pregliasco's speculation that Mahony Griffin designed this house flies contrary to the usual attribution of this house to Griffin. Pregliasco does not provide a cite for this assertion, nor does she point to stylistic features that might seem more Mahony than Griffin. The plans are clearly drawn by Mahony Griffin's hand, but signed Walter Burley Griffin architect. Is this a word choice issue—does Pregliasco write "designed" when she means "drew," or does she believe that Mahony Griffin would have been unlikely to not have great design input into her own house? (And is this a gender based assumption?)

I think the Capitol Theatre, and its ceiling, are especially contentious issues for scholars, because even if Mahony Griffin is credited with the ceiling (as part of the interior decoration that could be seen as an appropriate surface for her design talents), the ceiling is entirely architectural. It required consideration as a three-dimensional surface, it is functional (has acoustic considerations). Therefore, to credit her with this interior surface of the theatre is to credit her with work that would require an architect, not a decorator.

Sprague takes issue only with the articles from Walter Burley Griffin—A Re-View. The Transitions articles were either unknown to him or not important to discussions of the Indian work; likely Rubbo's "A Creative Partnership" had not made its way to him by the time his essay went to press.

Sprague perhaps found himself in an uncomfortable place concerning ornamentation. In his dissertation, on Louis Sullivan's ornamentation, he argues that Sullivan's ornamentation is a central component of his architecture—and in fact, that Sullivan should be remembered as much an ornamentalist as an architect.

More than sixty of these hundred were buildings designed for the United Provinces Exhibition.

Although I specifically disagree with some of Pregliasco's claims about Mahony Griffin's singular authorship of much of the Australian practice (just as I disagree with Sprague's about Griffin's singular authorship), Sprague so misrepresents Pregliasco on the issue of stylistic influence that I can nearly not believe he believes the things he asserts. Pregliasco merely notes that Griffin's work became more mature after he started working with Mahony Griffin. Many other scholars in addition to Brooks had noted the same thing—Harrison, Peisch, and Birrell all also made the suggestion. Nowhere, in any of these scholars' work (including Pregliasco's) is the assertion Sprague attributes to Pregliasco—that Mahony Griffin "authored" Griffin's mature style. (I would agree with Sprague that both Mahony Griffin's and Griffin's work matured. And I would add that Griffin's work, Mahony Griffin's work, and Wright's work all matured when they worked together at the studio—not because one person is a great architect, but because all are strong architects whose work is better for sharing ideas.) The misrepresentation of Pregliasco's position in order to ridicule her scholarship is, I think, inexcusable, especially when there are honest arguments to have over sources and citations that do not require misrepresenting a younger scholar's position.

That Sprague was able to get his essay published in Watson's very fine catalogue attests, I think, to his power in the discipline. He is presently writing (with Paul Kruty) a catalogue
raisonné of Walter Burley Griffin's American work. If this publication is like Sprague's articles, I fear what it will do to the narrow inroads feminist scholarship has made into Griffin studies.

135 Here Sprague is quoting Pregliasco's assertion "As in the Wright studio, Marion was the design talent of Walter's office" (175). Pregliasco never asserts Mahony Griffin was the designer of either Wright or Griffin's style; she merely follows quotes by Lippincott and Byrne suggesting Mahony Griffin was the best designer in Wright's office, and an "imaginative" force in Griffin's.

136 Exceptions, of course, include Peter Proudfoot, Karen Burns, Jill Roe, Anna Rubbo, Michael Markham and Jeffrey Turnbull, who include discussions of Anthroposophy in understanding the Griffins' work; Rubbo discusses it very briefly in terms of MOA.

137 This passage, taken from MOA, was arranged by Jonathan Mills and Peter King for their "Lament for Lost Buildings," which played on the ABC (Australian Broadcasting Company) Radio in September of 1993. It is quoted more extensively by Anna Rubbo in her 1996 article Architectural Theory Review, a journal nearly unavailable in the United States. I thank Dr. Rubbo for sending me her article.

138 Notions of coloniality/postcoloniality almost completely dropped from my story within the body of my text. This is a metaphor Mahony Griffin used throughout her text, and one that deserves deeper investigation—not just as a metaphor or motif in the text, but as a theoretical lens through which the text might be examined. Because these notions and their relation to autobiography informed my text, I've left this discussion in this appendix. I think this is as yet entirely uncharted area in Griffin studies and deserves further exploration.

139 As Chapter 4 of this text points out, the criticism surrounding Mahony Griffin's text very often slyly suggested her writing was self-aggrandizing—by focusing only on its "excessive" length and "bitterness" authors suggested the text was the work of a woman overly self-absorbed. This criticism, though grossly mischaracterizing MOA, fit into ideas about women's autobiographical expression already easily available for scholars and readers. Perhaps, in part, this is why such characterizations remained uninterrogated for so many years.

140 Just as early theorists of autobiography defined the genre as specifically masculine, so they also defined it as a wholly western tradition, in spite of traditions of life writing in many other cultures, particularly Middle Eastern, South Asian, and East Asian.

141 Some important critics first working in this genre were German scholar Georg Misch, whose History of Autobiography in Antiquity because available in trans. in 1951; Wayne Schumaker, English Autobiography: Its Emergence, Materials, and Forms, 1954; Margaret Bottrall, Every Man a Phoenix: Studies in 17th Century Autobiography; and Roy Pascal, Design and Truth in Autobiography. Each of these early texts focused on issues of facticity in autobiography; moreover, only Schumaker discusses the work of women autobiographers, whose work he combines in a single chapter of his book, and whose lives he dismisses as "dishonest and libertine" (24).

142 Clearly, it is this tradition of reading autobiography that most influenced early scholars attempting to understand Mahony Griffin's text; their criticism focused almost entirely on Mahony Griffin's "truth claims." Finding those truth claims in conflict with standard version of architectural history at the time, Mahony Griffin's text became dismissable. (For example,
claims that she and her husband had influenced Wright—and that the work that took place in his studio was a learning experience for all the participants, even Wright, strongly contradicted contemporary scholarship on Wright and Wright's own autobiographical writings.)

143 Such analysis would provide the basis of an excellent discussion of Wright's Genius and the Mobocracy, his explication of his collaborative relationship with his artistic "father" Louis Sullivan. In the text, Wright tells a story of both continuity and individuation, but he even in his celebration of Sullivan, he always asserts his own level of genius that made him a collaborator and not a student. It is interesting that Mahony Griffin's text seems to react to this by asserting her and Griffin's allegiance to Sullivan's model, (as an artistic father), but denying being Wright's student. The Griffin's and Wright are characterized as collaborators.

144 Nor does it hold, I would argue, in Lacanian terms. Lacan's rearticulation of Freud constructs sexual difference in terms of the subject's relation to the phallus (which is not literally the penis) which represents metaphorically the interaction of absence and presence that occur in language play. If the pen(is) the penis is the phallus as Irigary and Cixous have argued, the woman's act of writing itself seems the act of appropriation of the father's tools (so to speak), not to deny her subjectivity and force her to accept her place as the Other by which man defines himself, but to enter into his realm, to identify with him and his practices. With the pen, she has the phallus (rather than its lack), I would argue, and access to the patronym. In such a framework, the struggle is that of gaining access to the father's tools (pen, phallus), but not a struggle to overthrow the father and replace him—for it isn't his story she would want to supersede in order to individuate herself—it is his story of her that must be replaced before she has access to her own subjectivity, because women are always already a fictionalized construct of patriarchy.

Women in architecture have quite literally seized the father's tools, but such a potentially castrating act must be reassigned and redescribed. Therefore, the only credit Mahony Griffin (and women like her) receive is the credit for being "the pencil in the master's hand." Her work is continually credited as carrying out a male idea—not appropriating his tools, but becoming one herself.

145 And it is certainly this type of criticism that has been recently taken up by feminist architectural theorists: Hughes, Bloomer, and Ingraham, for example.

146 Smith's assertion is very useful in understanding Mahony Griffin's rhetorical choices in her manuscript. And although early critics attempted to suggest MOA was self-promoting, it is Mahony Griffin's consistent self-effacement that is the texts' most frustrating component (for a feminist scholar). While some contemporary architectural critics use this self-effacement to assert that Mahony Griffin was, indeed, only a talented help-mate, an awareness that she may have been shaping her life story into a pre-existing template that would help her retain "femininity" in a masculine occupation is useful. While contemporary feminists may question such a rhetorical decision, it seems to me that her refusal to allow herself to be "ungendered" by her profession may be a somewhat radical move. If at some level, she expected her work to speak for itself in asserting her status as an architect (and she included hundreds of examples of her work in her text), she may have felt her text needed to assert that she was not only an architect, she was a woman as well.

147 Domna Stanton's collection The Female Autograph Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1984 contains several essays pointing toward this difference.
It is interesting to note that Sullivan, Wright, and Mahony Griffin all present basically fatherless children of mothers in their autobiographies. Wright's father abandoned his family, Mahony Griffin's father died of a drug overdose, and Sullivan simply found his father too coarse and Irish for his sensibilities and wrote him out of his text. That all of these architects identify strongly with the mother, and even point to the mother's drive to enable their achievement. Such depictions seem to have less to do with "men's" and "women's" writing than with an interest in writing into what Christine Battersby describes as the femininity of genius. Men who are artistic geniuses have greater access to this emotional connection to the feminine. Moreover, in Bloom's terms, these also succeeded in replacing the father at an early age.

These notions reflect Van Slyck's concerns about biography in architecture as well. She wonders if the form of biography simply inserts women into the patterns and processes of men's lives, gendering them male in ways that are not entirely accurate for individual women.

Though she is careful to acknowledge that a concept of a universal sisterhood may indeed be as dangerous to many women as the universal human was—erasing the individuality and historical specificity of women's lives in such a way tends to erase those women whose access to power is already more tenuous. She acknowledges that the universal sisterhood tends to be universally Western, Christian, and middle-class.

The fetishization of women's bodies as sites of "excessive" orgasmic pleasure (Cixous's term is *jouissance*) is the analogy here—clearly "excessive" pleasure is only excessive in terms of male usefulness. (Most women wouldn't claim that it's excessive.)

I admit that some feminist may have problems with using Deleuze and Guattari's work as part of an explicitly feminist frame. Deleuze and Guattari's vast body of theory is shot through with preoccupations that provide tenuous connections among widely differing texts. Though feminist response to their work has been relatively silent (when considered in the context of the feminist controversy surrounding other French radical theorists like Lacan, Derrida and Foucault), there are some important concerns that need to be voiced about employing a Deleuzian-inspired framework for critique. Though feminist theorists such as Luce Irigaray, Alice Jardine, and Elizabeth Grosz voice a variety of suspicions and concerns about the usefulness of Deleuze and Guattari's work to feminist theory, only three issues seem to impact Bloomer's use of *Toward a Minor Literature*. First, Deleuze and Guattari's work often focuses on issues of "becoming." In *Toward a Minor Literature* that becoming is often used to consider the Kafkaesque world of becoming-animal. In addition, notions of "becoming-machine" abound, not in simple terms of the individual becoming-a-machine, but also the idea of a machine for becoming. The implication of a process of dissolution—a flow from one type of being into another—seems suggest that political struggle, as a "becoming," is no more than a stage in some larger cause or process.

Second, by employing woman as a metaphor for man's becoming other "becoming-woman" seems to romanticize women's very real political struggles for a voice and a space to speak. Only man's "becoming-woman" is adequately theorized, and while a de-stabilization of sexual identity may not be an inherently bad thing for men to experience, a complete loss of embodied sexual identity seems to be slippage toward that Universal human (man). Deleuze and Guattari don't seem to adequately theorize ways in which a woman is "becoming-woman," but because she doesn't become man—gender shift—it seems the process is different for her. Feminist readers wonder, with Rosi Braidotti, "Can feminists, at this point in their history of collective struggles aimed at redefining female subjectivity, actually afford to let go of their sex-specific forms of political agency?" (120). Her concern is reasonable, it seems, because women already know the dangers of "just being human"—which means always already being a
Grosz asserts, "the question of becoming itself becomes broadly human... a maneuver that desexualizes and obfuscates one of the major features of phallocentric thought—its subsumation of two sexual symmetries under a single norm" (Volatile Bodies 163).

Third, in Toward a Minor Literature, and elsewhere, Deleuze and Guattari romanticize the political struggle of the colonized, as is the prerogative of those with cultural power. They argue:

if the writer is in the margins or completely outside his or her fragile community, this situation allows the writer all the more possibility to express another possible community and to forge the means for another consciousness and another sensibility... the literary machine alone is determined to fill the conditions of a collective enunciation that is lacking elsewhere in this milieu. (19)

While their assertion that change comes from the margins retains for the colonized a specific agency and assumption of subjectivity, the idea that oppression offers "more possibilities" seems naively conceived, as does the suggestion that a single writer from the margins can create an alternative community without the conditions of a collective movement. These are romanticized notions of the artist in society, and pay little attention to the difficulties the oppressed have in finding a voice, claiming an education to speak that voice, and being heard once the other conditions are met. Navigating the territory of the margins is perhaps more treacherous that Deleuze and Guattari let on.

However, in spite of these concerns, Deleuze and Guattari offer solutions (or at least responses) to some of the concerns this essay has raised about seeming blind spots in feminist autobiographical criticism. First, they retain subjectivity for the marginalized individual by refusing to define a totalizing patriarchy of binary oppositions. Rather than either/or oppositions, Deleuze and Guattari theorize a world of both/and which operates through intensities and flows, a world where entropy reigns and a range of forces is always at play destabilizing identities along continuums. Similarly, there is a role for political agency; in fact, the individual concern is directly connected to the political.

Second, the lack of either/or oppositions flattens out the social/psychic split of mind and body by theorizing a liquid, flowing relationship between mind and body. Because the mind/body split has been raced and engendered in western culture (and white men got the mind) the devaluation of the body as feminine/"colored" is overcome in this paradigm.

Finally, and perhaps most specifically applicable to the project of interpreting autobiography, Deleuze and Guattari, according to their translator Dana Polan:

don't see writing as a solution to the interiorized problems of an individual psychology. Rather, writing stands against psychology, against interiority, by giving an author a possibility of becoming more than his or her nominal self, of trading the insistent solidity of the family tree for the whole field of desire and history. (xxiii)

This concept offers a wholly different motivation for the writer than do many feminist psychoanalytic modes which focus on her pre-Oedipal relation to family rather than her attempts to reach a reading public. By standing against interiority, writing in this construct shifts from an internalized operation to a rhetorical act in which the author invokes an audience and attempts to engage its interest.

153 That democratic architects like Sullivan and Wright—and the Griffins—had practices that required collusion with capitalist enterprises is an interesting topic for further discussion. It is important to note that all of them (but especially Sullivan) saw entrepreneurial capitalist enterprise as a defining democratic activity.
154 It goes without saying that few people of color, men or women, have enjoyed access to the field of architecture, either. The problem is much larger than a lack of women.


Brown, Denise Scott. "Room at the Top? Sexism and the Star System in Architecture."


Griffin, Marion Mahony. *The Magic of America.*


Willis, Julie. "Invisible Contributions: The Problem of History and Women Architects."


