Updated November 9, 2025: <u>Input and Initial Coding Progress</u>

The Flagrant Algorithms Visit 19th Century Feminist Publications

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users will select questions to ask about the role of women in the 19th Century. In response, the system will randomly choose an algorithm or a set of algorithms to apply to the question. However, which algorithms were used to select the data received will not be revealed until the conclusion of the output.



Background

In 1986, on The WELL, I created Bad Information Base no. 3 -- https://people.well.com/user/jmalloy/badinfo/bad.html -- to demonstrate how an inaccurate dataset could be created. Over 400 entries were received for this database.

Many years later, in 2024, Erin Dickey presented my Bad Information projects [1] at the National Gallery of Art. Subsequently I realized the need to understand that it is not only the data in LLMs that needs to be examined as regards accuracy. Also, the role of algorithms in output from AI apps needs to be clearly demonstrated.

To do this, rather than use fictional information, I will create a dataset of text from 19th century literature on the role of women in society. Sources will range from Margaret Fuller's "Woman in the Nineteenth Century" to 19th century suffragette and anti-suffragette tracts.

Not only are these sources copyright free, but also their subject will clarify possibilities for gender discrimination in contemporary AI apps.

How The Flagrant Algorithms will work

From a web-based application (created with HTML/CSS/JavaScript) users will select questions to ask about the role of women in the 19th Century.

In response, the system will randomly choose an algorithm or a set of algorithms to apply to the question. However, which algorithms were used to select the data received will not be revealed until the conclusion of the output.

Potential Algorithmic Control Options

The data in the JavaScript variables will always be the same, but the JavaScript array that the
system consults to select an outcome will be weighted because it will only contain certain
variables.
Output will be random (technically pseudo random), and the array will not be weighted.
Output will be random (technically pseudo random), but the array will be weighted in favor
of one aspect.
Output will be chronological, but the number of entries it contains will be determined at
random
From user question selection, the algorithm will the make an assumption about what the user
wants to see and will produce output in response (or not).
Other algorithms will probably be devised. [2]

Notes on Background:

1 On March 28 at the Center for Advanced Study, National Gallery of Art, Erin Dickey presented "Computers Never Make Mistakes': Judy Malloy's Bad Information". See Erin Dickey's Thesis at https://cdr.lib.unc.edu/concern/dissertations/3484zv07p

2 I have been working with generative output since 1987, when I began coding "Terminals," the third File of "Uncle Roger". In 2016, my work in this field earned Second Prize in the Neukom Institute for Computational Science, at Dartmouth University's Turing Test in the Computational Arts. Recent work in this field includes my *The Fabric of Everyday Life*, shown at The MIT Trope Tank in 2023. Thus, The Flagrant Algorithms will be completely coded by myself and will not use any commercial AI system. This is important because it demonstrates to students that they can make their own systems, and it is not terribly difficult to do this.

Notes on the Data Input and Initial Coding Progress

November 2025

November 9, 2025 (edited November 10)

Notes and questions:

A better title for this work might be <i>The Flagrant Algorithms Visit 19th Century Publications</i> on the Lives of Woman.
Before I can write initial algorithms, there should be at least 100 variables. About 1000 variables are intended. So far, there are only 19.
A criticism might be that I am selecting the data sources and extracts myself. Yes I am. Who selects data sources for commercial AI producers?
At this point, some AI systems are/will be trained to augment data themselves in response to questions. What data? With what algorithms is that data weighted?
So that responses to questions flow well, data citations for variables in my dataset will not be included in the user output. However, it will not be difficult to create an algorithm that in response to user requests will print out all the variables and the citations attached to them. This will be included.
New variables have been added to the Flagrant Algorithms system: They are from Helen Kendrick Johnson, who wrote <i>Women and the Republic</i> (1897) in opposition to voting rights for women and from the letters of Elizabeth Barrett Barrett, Vol. 1 (of 2) 1845-1846.
Random output of 5 variables from <i>The Flagrant Algorithms</i> is different in every run.
Generated on Sun Nov 09 2025 13:25:27 GMT-0500 (Eastern Standard Time)
The effort has not been to turn out new women, capable of doing anything man can do, from walking thirty miles to solving the problems of higher mathematics. Instead of this, the college has tried to develop its students along natural womanly lines, not along the lines that would naturally be followed in training men.
It has been claimed as a right that women should vote. It is no right, but a wrong, that a small number of women should impose on all the rest political duties which there is no call for their assuming, which they do not want to assume, and which, if duly discharged, would be a cruel and intolerable burden.
The sixth count in the Declaration of Sentiments reads: "He closes against her all the avenues to wealth and distinction which he considers most honorable to himself. As a teacher of theology, medicine, or law, she is not known.
It has been claimed as a right that women should vote. It is no right, but a wrong, that a small number of women should impose on all the rest political duties which there is no call for their assuming, which they do not want to assume, and which, if duly discharged, would be a cruel and intolerable burden.

He put the belt around my life, — I heard the buckle snap, And turned away, imperial,

My lifetime folding up

.....regenerate the data

Generated on Sun Nov 09 2025 21:01:24 GMT-0500 (Eastern Standard Time)

...High civilization, ancient or modern, has hitherto rested on the family. The family, and not the individual, has been the political unit, and the head of the family, in esse or in posse, actual or prospective, has been the political representative of the rest. To give the suffrage to women would be to reject the principle that has thus far formed the basis of civilized government.

The sixth count in the Declaration of Sentiments reads: "He closes against her all the avenues to wealth and distinction which he considers most honorable to himself. As a teacher of theology, medicine, or law, she is not known.

All I asked him to say the other day, was that he was not displeased with me—and he wouldn't; and for me to walk across his displeasure spread on the threshold of the door, and moreover take a sister and brother with me, and do such a thing for the sake of going to Italy and securing a personal advantage, were altogether impossible, obviously impossible! So poor Papa is quite in disgrace with me just now—if he would but care for that!

...In politics, the virtues of women would sometimes be as dangerous as their faults.

When I had an Italian master, years ago, he told me that there was an unpronounceable English word which absolutely expressed me, and which he would say in his own tongue, as he could not in mine—'testa lunga.' Of course, the signor meant headlong! — and now I have had enough to tame me, and might be expected to stand still in my stall. But you see I do not.

.....regenerate the data

November 7, 2025

Ultimately, because The Flagrant Algorithms will be an example of how algorithms can change the meaning of output, it should not look like a dialog. This might work best if all the variables are the same color, but because at the moment I want to distinguish the writers, shades of gray are workable. Thus, the output colors currently are specified like this:

p.fuller {color:#333333;margin-left:20px} Margaret Fuller p.emily {color:#808080;margin-left:20px} Emily Dickinson p.parkman {color:#4d4d4d;margin-left:20px} Francis Parkman

Random output of 5 variables from The Flagrant Algorithms looks like this.



Generated on Thu Nov 06 2025 21:53:52 GMT-0500 (Eastern Standard Time)

It is a womans business to obey her husband, keep his home tidy, and nourish and train his children. But when she rejoins to this, "Very true; but suppose I choose not to have a husband, or am not chosen for a wife--what then? I am still subject to your laws".

They shut me up in Prose As when a little Girl,
They put me in the Closet
-Because they liked me "still"
He put the belt around my life, I heard the buckle snap,
And turned away, imperial,
My lifetime folding up

I am still subject to your laws. Why am I not entitled, as a rational human being, to a voice in shaping them? I have physical needs, and must somehow earn a living. Why should I not be at liberty to earn it in any honest and useful calling?

...High civilization, ancient or modern, has hitherto rested on the family. The family, and not the individual, has been the political unit, and the head of the family, in esse or in posse, actual or prospective, has been the political representative of the rest. To give the suffrage to women would be to reject the principle that has thus far formed the basis of civilized government.

But from the same data, it could also look like this:

Generated on Fri Nov 07 2025 10:03:31 GMT-0500 (Eastern Standard Time)

...In politics, the virtues of women would sometimes be as dangerous as their faults.

Wild nights!
Wild nights!
Were I with thee,
Wild nights should be,Our luxury!
He put the belt around my life, —
I heard the buckle snap,
And turned away, imperial,
My lifetime folding up

...It has been claimed as a right that women should vote. It is no right, but a wrong, that a small number of women should impose on all the rest political duties which there is no call for their assuming, which they do not want to assume, and which, if duly discharged, would be a cruel and intolerable burden.

It is a womans business to obey her husband, keep his home tidy, and nourish and train his children. But when she rejoins to this, "Very true; but suppose I choose not to have a husband, or am not chosen for a wife--what then? I am still subject to your laws".

Adding four variables from Emily Dickinson has changed the output radically.

Eventually, this work will contain at least 1000 variables, but I'm still experimenting with what it will contain. Eventually different algorithms will access this data differently but for now I'm just working on the data.

Below are two examples of random output from Fuller (green), Parkman (gray), and Dickinson (blue)

Output 1



It is a womans business to obey her husband, keep his home tidy, and nourish and train his children. But when she rejoins to this, "Very true; but suppose I choose not to have a husband, or am not chosen for a wife--what then? I am still subject to your laws".

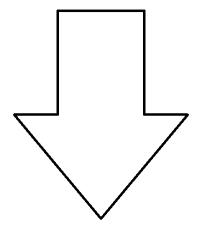
He put the belt around my life, — I heard the buckle snap, And turned away, imperial, My lifetime folding up

...why am I not regarded by the law as a _soul_, responsible for my acts to God and humanity, and not as a mere body, devoted to the unreasoning service of my husband? The state gives no answer...

...In politics, the virtues of women would sometimes be as dangerous as their faults.

...It has been claimed as a right that women should vote. It is no right, but a wrong, that a small number of women should impose on all the rest political duties which there is no call for their assuming, which they do not want to assume, and which, if duly discharged, would be a cruel and intolerable burden.

Hope is the thing with feathers That perches in the soul, And sings the tune without the words, And never stops at all



Output2

 \ldots In politics, the virtues of women would sometimes be as dangerous as their faults.

...High civilization, ancient or modern, has hitherto rested on the family. The family, and not the individual, has been the political unit, and the head of the family, in esse or in posse, actual or prospective, has been the political representative of the rest. To give the suffrage to women would be to reject the principle that has thus far formed the basis of civilized government.

...why am I not regarded by the law as a _soul_, responsible for my acts to God and humanity, and not as a mere body, devoted to the unreasoning service of my husband? The state gives no answer...

...It has been claimed as a right that women should vote. It is no right, but a wrong, that a small number of women should impose on all the rest political duties which there is no call for their assuming, which they do not want to assume, and which, if duly discharged, would be a cruel and intolerable burden.

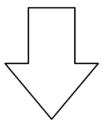
They shut me up in Prose -As when a little Girl, They put me in the Closet -Because they liked me "still"

I am still subject to your laws. Why am I not entitled, as a rational human being, to a voice in shaping them? I have physical needs, and must somehow earn a living. Why should I not be at liberty to earn it in any honest and useful calling?

October, 2025

Oct 25, 2025:

To experiment with the process before an extensive amount of data is entered, four variables from Francis Parkman,"The Woman Question", *North American Review*, 1879 have been added to the database. They are in the same database as the texts from Fuller, but I have changed the algorithm so output only calls the texts from Parkman. Unless the viewer who receives this output can access my code, that viewer will not know that this has been done.



...It has been claimed as a right that women should vote. It is no right, but a wrong, that a small number of women should impose on all the rest political duties which there is no call for their assuming, which they do not want to assume, and which, if duly discharged, would be a cruel and intolerable burden.

...In politics, the virtues of women would sometimes be as dangerous as their faults.

...Women as a whole may be said to be in the condition of persons devoid of this training in self-government, and of the sense of political responsibility that grows out of it, excepting a minority composed of the more thoughtful, who have acquired it by education, conscientiousness, and association with the better sort of men. But the vast majority have little or none of it; and hence, if they are to be admitted at all to a share in public affairs, they should be admitted very gradually. We say nothing of those differences of nature that have hitherto in all ages, countries, and races, made men the governing half of the race...

...High civilization, ancient or modern, has hitherto rested on the family. The family, and not the individual, has been the political unit, and the head of the family, in esse or in posse, actual or prospective, has been the political representative of the rest. To give the suffrage to women would be to reject the principle that has thus far formed the basis of civilized government.

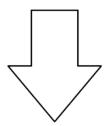
October 23, 2025:

Working on entering input from: Margaret Fuller, "Woman in the Nineteenth Century", January 1, 1845

Source: Project Gutenberg plain text available at https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/8642/pg8642.txt

Input -- in the form of variables -- consists of core sentences and paragraphs from the body of the work. I have not yet decided whether to cite the source in each variable or to code sources by color. At the moment, I am using color coding. Margaret Fuller's words are coded green.

As the four variables shown here (generated at random) indicate, Margaret Fuller's writing is a strong and fierce declaration of how women were treated in the 19th century. Every passage is difficult to confront, and I have only begun to input her words,



It is a womans business to obey her husband, keep his home tidy, and nourish and train his children. But when she rejoins to this, "Very true; but suppose I choose not to have a husband, or am not chosen for a wife--what then? I am still subject to your laws".

...why am I not regarded by the law as a _soul_, responsible for my acts to God and humanity, and not as a mere body, devoted to the unreasoning service of my husband? The state gives no answer...

I am still subject to your laws. Why am I not entitled, as a rational human being, to a voice in shaping them? I have physical needs, and must somehow earn a living. Why should I not be at liberty to earn it in any honest and useful calling?

The problem of Woman's position or "sphere,"-- of her duties, responsibilities, rights and immunities as Woman,-- fitly attracts a large and still-increasing measure of attention from the thinkers and agitators of our time, The legislators, so called,--those who ultimately enact into statutes...are not as yet much occupied with this problem, only fitfully worried and more or less consciously puzzled by it.