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More than the Defiant Few: Lost Womanhood and Necro Women Dismantling Nineteenth-Century Gender Ideologies

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ABSTRACT

Too many scholars still rely on adjectives such as deviant, unruly, dangerous, and wild to describe women who interrogate rigid forms of womanhood, especially women of color. My project intervenes in nineteenth-century womanhood discussions, which have traditionally solidified three main categories: Republican, True, and New Womanhood. Between True Womanhood in the mid-nineteenth century and the late nineteenth-century concept of New Womanhood lies an overlooked category aptly understood as Lost Womanhood. I focus on newspaper archives, archival research, and imaginative literature to find “lost” women who critiqued a patriarchal system that thrives on women living in a status akin to being socially dead. Recovering marginalized women writers and reexamining how women openly questioned the gender roles prescribed to them proves that an alternate model of womanhood always existed. Lost Women can recognize the instabilities in their lives and work to change them through negotiation or resistance. They deeply understand their second-class status and rebel against it with successful strategies of writing located in their literary texts and the

historical archive. Lost Womanhood creates a critical approach to embracing more nineteenth-century women's material conditions and lived realities. As a more normative form of womanhood, Lost Womanhood directly critiques a patriarchal system that thrives on women as second-class citizens with a lack of rights. This new category of womanhood will remedy True and New Womanhood's problematic nature as forms of unsustainable womanhood and decenter middle-class whiteness as the principal determiner of womanhood with an interracial approach. Women who would not or could not embody True Womanhood provide a more expansive way of understanding nineteenth-century womanhood in the United States.

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Introduction

Who are the women of the world?
Who are the lost women?
Why does she not fill her grand mission?
Why does she not work out the golden threads of her mighty destiny?

Adah Isaacs Menken, "Women of the World," 1860

The inspiration for Lost Womanhood comes from a woman who understood the need to express and document her gender interrogations. In her poem, "Women of the World," first published in the *New York Sunday Mercury* on Oct. 7, 1860, Ada Menken questions a nineteen-century womanhood that focuses on submission. Menken, a controversial figure and actress, learned early in her career that performing gender could make her rich. Historians Barbara and Michael Foster, Marua Cronin-Jortner, Chris Enss, and Dana Barca explain that Menken made as much as five hundred dollars a night at the height of her career, making her the highest-paid actress of the nineteenth century. As a "breeches actress," she performed male roles quite well. Her sensational performance of Bryon's poem "Mazeppa," while riding a horse in a fabric that made it look as if she were nude, created a stir in the theater world. As a result of these performances and her photographs, she was nicknamed the Naked Lady. In addition, her performances of femininity and sexual desires, defined by masculinity, made her a stage sensation. Menken's exploitation of gender performance most certainly situates her as a Lost Woman, and her performance could be seen as a subtle interrogation of rigid gender constructions that historically situate women and their roles in the US. Even though nineteenth-century feminist and literary scholars such as Linda Kerber, Cathy Davidson, Joyce Warren, and Hazel Carby have examined women who question mothers and wives' gendered expectations, these explorations relegate rebellious behavior like Menken's

to a liminal space outside of acceptable forms of womanhood. Most nineteenth-century literary and historical scholars agree that women are second-class citizens once born, and once married, they become invisible citizens. Yet, despite these acknowledgments, nineteenth-century studies lack a category for those women who normalize this so-called deviant or unruly behavior, so their rebellious behavior remains an eccentricity rather than understood as a typical and productive response to oppression.

Nineteenth-century studies have solidified three main categories of womanhood: Republican, True, and New Womanhood. However, I propose a new category that can be understood as Lost Womanhood, and it lies between Barbara Welter's explanation of mid-nineteenth century True Womanhood and the late nineteenth-century concept of New Womanhood. During the mid-nineteenth century (1820-1860), True Womanhood created custodians of culture who governed the private sphere through the theory of influence and accessed the public sphere through reform agendas. A True Woman lived in separate spheres that dictated feminine behaviors, and women ruled only in domestic affairs. Midcentury US domestic novels such as *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *The Lamplighter* became the instruction manual for True Women. Along with domestic novels, *Godley's Lady's Book*, a popular magazine, celebrated these True Women and served as a teaching tool. In response to the limitations of True Womanhood, the New Woman appears. Sarah Grande coined this term in 1894, and her essay "The New Aspect of the Woman Question again" describes a woman who desires educational and professional opportunities. Starting in the 1870s until the 1920s, women wanted to attend college and university so they could find more professional and employment opportunities that led to upward mobility. New Womanhood expands the domestic sphere but still promotes marriage and childbirth as an end goal for women.

As a new category, Lost Womanhood recovers marginalized women writers. Unlike True Womanhood, Lost Womanhood admits the trauma of marriage and divorce, reproductive practices, and racialized gender ideologies. Lost Womanhood imagines a world that does not require marriage for survival and, more importantly, recognizes the destabilizing and violent effects of marriage and argues that the reforms based on True Womanhood cannot save them. Rather than fall into relationships that legally reduce them to children, these women choose self-reliance to argue for the right to divorce. The disruptive Lost Woman critiques a patriarchal and racial world that continually perpetuates itself. As a category, Lost Womanhood can provide a more normative view that fully captures women's historical conditions while avoiding a sisterhood approach that fails women of color. In fact, a sisterhood approach fails most nineteenth-century women because of the complexity of individual experiences. I want to prove that this alternate model of womanhood always existed and has been orbiting other forms.

The concept of Lost Womanhood echoes Russ Castronovo's concept of necro citizenship. To understand how systematic oppression connects to citizenship, Castronovo argues that the dominant culture depends on civilly dead citizens who do not have access to full rights, such as running for office, voting, and owning property. Without this interdependent relationship, Castronovo maintains, a dominant culture will not thrive. Thus, necro citizenship depends on a system where these civilly dead citizens cannot participate in civil structures that create legal protections. The ability to participate in civic life depends on the civic death of others. Similarly, under a white patriarchal system and its laws, all nineteenth-century women experience a necro status, but its degree and intensity depend on a woman's race and class. Depending on class and marital status, white women suffer from a

lesser intensity of necro status than women of color, free or enslaved. White single and widowed women enjoy more freedom and can own land and access their own money, but laws transfer their land and money to their husbands once married. Moreover, Ofari explains that black women in many states cannot marry and only receive legal protections concerning their status as property. Class further intensifies their necro state, especially after the Civil War and at the turn of the twentieth century, when freed male slaves qualified for birth citizenship, but black women did not. For Castronovo, these black women would be necro citizens; for my work, they are the epitome of Lost Women.

Scholars have long recognized that True Womanhood cannot sustain itself, and nineteenth-century scholarship requires a new category that accurately captures the material conditions of the so-called sacred space of the home[1]. Rather than assuming that a different type of womanhood cannot compete against True Womanhood or must share parameters with it, the category of Lost Womanhood defines different types of women and portrayals of women who lived outside of their gender expectations as a normative response to their second-class status. Lost Womanhood recovers those ignored and devalued voices and aims to dismantle True Womanhood's power as the prevailing, safe, or dominant form of womanhood. In *Unruly Tongue,* Martha J. Cutter paves the way for Lost Womanhood when

[1] Within True Womanhood, women were responsible for the emotional sphere but were labeled as hysterical. Responsible for reproduction, women were required to be passionless. Wanting to access land ownership, taxation with representation, and the vote, True Women do not want to dismantle oppressive systems. Cathy Davidson's *Revolution of the Word* postulates that women have always been challenging the defining characteristics of True Womanhood. Frances B. Cogan's *All-American Girl* attempts to capture the gap between True Womanhood and the New Woman; however, she places these women too closely to True Womanhood. Susan Cruea, in her "Changing Ideals of Womanhood During the Nineteenth-Century Woman Movement," appropriately consolidates True Womanhood, Real Womanhood, Public Womanhood, and New Womanhood as overlapping phases rather than a linear description of womanhood. Scholars Mary Ryan, Kathy Peiss, and Susan Cruea that Public Womanhood does not challenge True Womanhood. Rather, it cements and spreads it even further.

she theorizes that some women utilize language strategies to destabilize nineteenth-century femininity. Lost Womanhood continues Cutter's work by expanding womanhood to validate female action and experience. Her focus on language paves the way for creating categories of what "lost" can mean, and this new category opens up the field of nineteenth-century feminisms. For instance, for black women writers, Lost Womanhood as a concept validates their attempts to destabilize racialized categories of womanhood. Marriage no longer resides at the center of womanhood and argues that women already understood the problematic nature of a submissive existence where they must embrace their oppressed status. Lost Womanhood advances these critiques, focusing on women who recognize the dangers of nineteenth-century domestic ideologies and normalize rebellious women. In Lost Womanhood, they imagine a different reality that understands the material conditions of racialized womanhood.[2]

By focusing on women who cannot live up to True Womanhood or those who find it constrictive and unproductive, Lost Womanhood combines lessons from first-wave feminism with third-wave strategies that recover literary history to critique both. Because of first-wave feminism's problematic relationship with women of color writers, Lost Womanhood admits

[2] Women cannot civilize a male-dominated culture because of their power limitations, so the civilizing theory rings false. Understanding the falseness underpinning the theory of influence and civilizing helps explain why white women engage in violence against black bodies, especially enslaved ones. Nina Baym begins this interrogation by writing about the nineteenth-century unhappy middle-class home in her *Women's Fiction*. She describes the middle-class home as violent, and consequently, women want social reorganization. To interrogate True Womanhood, Baym argues that the home masquerades as a coffin for women. Additionally, Lauren Berlant's *The Female Complaint* describes the domestic sphere as a commodity and as a degraded space that requires dismantling. Laura Laffrado comes closer to validating rebellious behavior in her *Uncommon Women*. She argues that uncommon white women writers like Fanny Fern and Louisa May Alcott have the luxury of throwing gendered ideologies to the side and beginning an interrogation into those seemingly fixed concepts. While Laffrado's approach addresses the instability and unreliability of True Womanhood, her premise that these women were uncommon is too limiting, especially when considering Cathy Davidson's approach (6). Davidson argues that male and female authors were already questioning gender expectations in a developing republic.

that white women rely on violence to intensify other women's marginalized status. Black women disrupt the genres that white society employs to further violence against black bodies and then imagine a new genre that captures their realities. This method requires an intersectional reading of texts from women of color that evaluates their experiences stemming from Patricia Collins' definition of intersectionality, suggesting that black women lie in a central focal point of race and gender. Their lived experiences provide the best examples of understanding oppression's consequences. Also, Collins' work with Africana Womanism provides the right tools to avoid a tempting sisterhood approach. True Womanhood fails women of color and regulates their definitions of womanhood and their stories. Carby's repositioning of black women's ability to fight against oppression and reframing black womanhood also informs Lost Womanhood. Consequently, nineteenth-century women have different realities rooted in race and class, which need to be included in the definition of womanhood.[3] With this understanding of layered oppression in mind, Lost Womanhood examines women of color, especially activists, and their roles in domestic and economic spaces to critique a nation-state that continually refuses to liberate them.

The category of Lost Womanhood must begin with women of color because they are not afforded the luxury to develop a womanhood form that keeps them safe from a sexualized and violent existence. With this violence in mind, Koritha Mitchell's concept of homemade citizenship articulates how black womanhood "refuse[s] to ignore violence—even

[3] Collins argues that "oppression cannot be reduced to one fundamental type, and that oppressions work together in producing injustice" (18). She explains that these intersections require "structural, disciplinary, hegemonic and interpersonal domains of power" (18). In this matrix, racialized bodies, free or enslaved find themselves facing oppression from many different places. Carby traces the intertwined nature of white and black womanhood in her *Reconstruction Womanhood.* Carby addresses how black women's sexual identity excludes them from a white culture's system of morality. They could not access a stable or safe domestic space, so their representations of domestic spaces more accurately reveal womanhood's realities. Black women act in their own best interests without the need for white abolitionists.

as they persevere in spite of it" (Mitchell 3). She argues that black communities and people, both free and enslaved, create a new form of citizenship that embraces their role in the nation even when laws prevent their involvement. "Homemade citizenship exceeds American citizenship; its value does not rely on civic inclusion. In fact, homemade citizenship exists only inasmuch as community members assume civic inclusion to be an impossibility, precisely because they recognize the nation's investment in know-your-place aggression" (Mitchell 16). In the face of their civic death, nineteenth-century black women actively create a form of citizenship and success in an environment that relies on violence to silence them. They are Lost Women, not because they have been erased from history, but because they rebel against the conventions that would dispossess, displace, and disenfranchise them.

In this vein, Chapter One, "Emerging Lost Womanhood: Sojourner Truth, Harriet Jacobs, and Harriet E. Wilson," examines three dissenting figures that destabilize categories of oppressive womanhood. Given the lack of legal and moral protections, black women understand their violent material conditions and the direct relationship of their blackness to economic, physical, and sexual violence. These voices more readily recognize the violence from instability and the need for rebellion. To that end, Lost Womanhood and its origins in black women's voices depends on Patricia Collin's Africana Womanism, which gives blackness a voice outside of slavery. This new category recognizes that women of color have a form of femininity that revolves around successful resistance strategies. Systems of power have always responded to black women and their successful strategies to identify their second-class status and change it. Because Lost Womanhood sits outside of these power systems, it better articulates the relationship between womanhood and power.

Sojourner Truth's legacy clarifies that black women create rebellious and virtuous identities despite the mediation of white abolitionists. She successfully transforms from Isabella, the slave, to Sojourner Truth, the world-famous activist. Painter and Smith explain that within her lifetime, Truth understands the economic power of her image when she copyrights the phrase, *I sell the shadow to support the substance* found on her photographs. Working diligently, she advocates for black women while understanding that white abolitionists resist giving black womanhood equal status. Truth readily accepts her role as a black woman activist who disrupts a white culture that relies on oppressed citizens. Instead of accepting mediation on the part of white abolitionists, she tells an audience that she is "a woman's rights" (Truth). White abolitionists may provide her with opportunities to speak to groups of white men and women, but she hijacks those moments to speak about black women's material conditions and reassert her personhood. Truth seeks to move beyond her position as a representative of slavery and grows into an influential activist. Truth speaks to hundreds of people, asking them to recognize black womanhood and, by extension, personhood. She and other Lost Women recognize the instabilities in their own lives and rebel against them.

To further this interrogation into nineteenth-century womanhood, Harriet Jacobs' Incidents *in the Life of a Slave Girl* and Harriet E. Wilson's *Our Nig* contest the tragic mulatto figure, a prominent figure in the domestic novel, True Womanhood's mouthpiece and instruction manual. They argue that the tragic mulatto, a white-centric literary creation, only further oppresses black women. These black women writers dispel the nineteenth-century theory that whiteness saves black bodies and lessens their racial markers. Despite their light skin, Linda Brent and Frado experience physical and sexual violence. With this

knowledge, they learn to understand their economic value and how they fit into a racialized system of economics. Because they also understand that literature works for those systems, Jacobs and Wilson critique domestic novels and their strategies with a hybrid genre of their devising. Jacobs simultaneously embodies mothers' sacrifices to protect their children and criticizes True Womanhood's role in violent oppression. She crystalizes a black mother's sacrifices, for instance, by providing for the safety of her children. Her choice to engage in an illicit affair with Sanders may be considered immoral under True Womanhood; however, Lost Womanhood provides a framework where Jacobs rightfully interrogates the paradox black women face in womanhood and motherhood. While Jacobs critiques True Womanhood's sexual double standard, Wilson criticizes a free North and its reliance on black labor with its nominal wages. Thomas Lovell argues that Wilson's Frado understands her economic value, and her attempts to find work that pays living wages reveal a racialized economy built on the exploitation of black labor (7). Frado crystalizes the physical and economic violence experienced in the free North, which relies on the hidden labor of blacks to create and sustain a thriving economy. As she condemns the United States for its dependence on racialized economies, Wilson's novel asserts the importance of Lost Womanhood.

Chapter Two, "Lost in Divorce: Social Death and the Haunting the Domestic Novel," tackles how middle-class white women access Lost Womanhood to argue for divorce in opposition to those writers who perpetuate True Womanhood and its ideologies with a false narrative of power. Joyce Warren notes that marriage and the inability to divorce kill women. Traditionally, scholars have ignored moments where women challenge the insistence on marriage or gender expectations or deem them unusual. The category of Lost Womanhood

provides a framework to incorporate those rebellious texts into the entire body of work rather than insinuate that texts that support True Womanhood are more valuable or representative. Divorce is an excellent example of what can be gained by articulating a new category to describe American female life. Clare Lyons, Norma Basch, and Glenda Riley's research all cement the fact that colonial divorce was expected, and women wanted the ability to walk away from marriage because they understood that it replicated British couverture laws that relegated women to second-class citizenship.[4] When it comes to divorce, the discussion often focuses on nineteenth-century white womanhood because black women did not have access to legal marriage or divorce in most states. As a part of the dominant culture, white women can choose when to reject True Womanhood and follow it, unlike women of color.

Given the amount of marital violence and the lack of legal protection, divorce is a complex issue for women. Julia Ward Howe's unfinished *The Hermaphrodite* reveals how women writers transfer their anxieties about divorce onto the intersex body. As a True Woman, she cannot demand the right to divorce or question reform tactics, but as a Lost Woman, Howe turns to the intersex body as a metaphor to argue that women need divorce because reform will fail. Laurence, the principal character, lives in a divided state with his intersex body, and minor characters, Berto's sisters, directly speak to women's dispossessed status. With Laurence's intersex body, Howe challenges gendered behaviors and ideologies, but in opposition to Howe's metaphor, Berto's sisters purposefully create a domestic space that allows them to skirt the rules and remain independent. Two of his sisters represent the variety of ways that women resist marriage because they understand the consequences, while

[4] Clare Lyons turns to colonial newspapers to explain that without legal divorce, colonists created new ways for ending marriages that were socially accepted. Both Norma Basch and Glenda Riley examine emerging divorce laws and the rise in the national divorce rate to find a divorce narrative when the US domestic novel insists on marriage.

his youngest sister suffers from the consequences of following courtship and marriage under True Womanhood's ideologies.

Louis May Alcott's "Behind a Mask" also directly addresses the duplicitous and perplexing state in which a divorced woman lives. Her short story deals with the consequences of divorce for women when the legal system reinforces their socially dead status. As a result, divorced women are lost rather than liberated because they do not live up to True Womanhood. While Alcott names Jean Muir's divorce, her dissolved marriage haunts the narrative, and Alcott relies on transferring these anxieties to a British trope, the governess. Alcott questions how divorce operates for women and argues that when laws mirror British coverture and divorce, women cannot find freedom because they haunt marriages and homes as specters of the domestic novel.

Chapter Two ends with Elizabeth Stuart Phelps' *Story of Avis*. Five years prior to Howell's *A Modern Instance,* the first recognized divorce novel, Phelps resists naming divorce directly but still imagines a world without husbands: she creates a world where men and their sons die instead of women. Phelps does not allow a male figure to reinstitute oppressive systems that force women to choose between the home and aspirations. Instead, she examines marriage reforms that stem from True and New Womanhood to reveal their failures. The novel ends with a thriving Avis and her daughter, named Wait, living without the interference of a father, husband, and son. Phelps critiques the effectiveness of marriage reform to show that women need a world where they can avoid marriage. These Lost Women render visible the instability of women who reside in marital relationships and show a desire for self-reliance without marriage.

Given the central role of reproduction in the female experience, Chapter Three, "The A Word: Abortion and Lost Womanhood," explores the role of abortion in Lost Womanhood through a woman who chooses to pen the word while others avoid it. True Womanhood refuses to openly acknowledge the role of abortion in family planning and life as a nineteenth-century woman. Feminist scholars and historians such as Leslie Reagan and Janet Farrell Brodie agree that women from all forms of life avoid this word when speaking about reproduction and birth control. However, no matter how many people avoid the word abortion, men and women create a thriving business that forces us to reconcile with its reality nineteenth-century womanhood. Brodie argues that "married couples sometimes discussed contraception and abortion in letters; women occasionally confided to their diaries; advice passed between friends in letters, but few such exchanges seem to have been preserved" (2). Thus, even though historically, abortion was a widespread practice and a thriving unregulated business, this word is actively avoided in nineteenth-century literature, and authors adhere to a strict code surrounding femininity and sexuality that originates from True Womanhood.

Despite the silence around abortion under True Womanhood, women had access to knowledge about abortion and texts such as Charles Lohman's 1855 *The Married Woman's Private Medical Companion,* published under the pseudonym Professor A.M Mauriceau, Alfred G. Hall's 1843 *Mother's Own Book,* and Eastman's 1848 *Practical Treatise on Diseases Peculiar to Women and Girls.* These manuals covered childbirth practices and reproductive issues, such as a weak pelvis. When speaking about abortion, the chapters rely on coded phrases such as *returning menses* and *removing an obstruction from the womb*. This reliance on codified language reveals the silence surrounding abortion and allows them to discuss reproductive matters without compromising morality codes. Some examples

include *water cures* for vaginal douching and *bring her around* or *to bring my courses on* for ingesting pills to induce an abortion (Reagan 24). Women found ways to keep the silence around abortion to continue to access it as a primary method of family planning. If silence equals acceptance, the silence around abortion protects the practice.

One of the most famous abortionists of the nineteenth century, Madame Restell, provides a powerful example of a Lost Woman. Much like Sojourner Truth, she transforms from the immigrant Ann Sommers to Madame Restell, the wealthy businesswoman. With midwifery knowledge, she successfully creates a stable abortion business. Helen Horowitz and Cheree Carlson tell the story of a young woman, Ann Sommers, who emigrated to the United States in 1831 and is widowed within a year. Sommer's experience is a common one for widows because of rigid gender constructions. After her husband's death, she finds work as a seamstress but realizes she can make more money selling abortifacients. Like so many other women, she found it challenging to support her family in a culture that only allows men to earn high enough wages to provide for a family. She recognizes that her services simultaneously meet a need and provide her family with a stable income. She placed her first advertisement in the *New York Sun* in 1839 and described herself as a "celebrated midwife" or a "female physician" (Horowitz 200). Ann Sommers, now Madame Restell, understands that women's predicament is not limited to pregnancy, so she arranges for adoptions through discrete delivery and helps create a network of surgical abortionists. The *National Police Gazette* may have labeled her as the wickedest woman on earth, but Restell nonetheless built an income that helped other women plan their own families and take control of their futures.

Susan Magoffin also factors into the discussion about Lost Womanhood and abortion. The first Anglo woman to record her journey on the Santa Fe trail with her husband Samuel

Magoffin on the eve of the US-Mexico War, she pens the word abortion in her travel journal. Published in 1927, her journal, *Down the Santa Fe Trail*, provides an opening into a Lost Woman who willingly describes her child's loss as an abortion. Before this moment of clarity, Magoffin relies on the codified language surrounding reproductive practices so successfully that she hides her pregnancy throughout the text. Many readers may not know about Magoffin's pregnancy until she describes the moment that she loses her child. She only references her pregnancy one other time when she explains that her husband Samuel worries so much that he finds a doctor for *women's issues*. A puzzle herself, scholars have long ignored Magoffin or treat her as an appendage to her husband's journey. At the age of nineteen, she decides to travel west with her husband. Traditionally, she would have remained at home near her family and set up her household while her husband traveled. She is lost from her family when she decides to travel with her husband. This act makes her an excellent example of Lost Womanhood. When she describes her child's loss on the trail as an abortion, she moves even closer to Lost Womanhood and the realm of female instability. Lost Womanhood rescues her and her journal from biographers and historians to understand her willingness to leave her home and pen the word abortion. Because she travels on the Santa Fe Trail, a regional lens provides a better way of understanding how the expanses of Mexico impacted Magoffin. Lost Womanhood recognizes the connection between the West and Magoffin's willingness to pen the word abortion. The West, while a colonial space, offers women a different role. Contrary to the confines of eastern and southern womanhood, the West, with its open spaces and varied cultures, creates a moment where Magoffin's truth finds its way into her journal.

To understand the continuing potential for Lost Womanhood at the turn of the nineteenth century, Chapter Four, "A Constellation of Lost Stars: Female-Driven Black Nationalism Before the 20th Century," examines women of color writers and activists Mary E. Ashe Lee, Alice Ruth Moore Dunbar-Nelson, Sarah J. Early, Josephine J. Turpin Washington, and Lucy Parsons. It aims to consider successful activist strategies within a female-driven black nationalism that relies on coalition politics rooted in Koritha Mitchell's notion of homemade citizenship. True Womanhood focuses on the community by subsuming and even burying women into the community's needs, and in response, New Womanhood attempts to assert white female individuality. Against these tropes, black female personhood moves in the other direction. Black female activists understand that the individual does not have to be subsumed to help the collective. As an inversion of establishing white womanhood, black female activists begin with the individual and ask them to join the collective rather than demanding that women disappear into the community of the family and society. These activists become precursors to modern intersectional theories of oppression. Earl Ofari supports this reading that reframes black activists.[5] These women question white womanhood as a universal trope of behavior and elevate black women's role in a Jim Crow world. They focus on a black history in the United States when black voices are purposefully silenced. They rely on two critical approaches that Collins and others have identified as negotiation and coalition politics. Most importantly, in a female-driven black nationalism, activists control the narrative around their bodies to acknowledge that they understand a

[5] While Ofari focuses on male black workers, he explains that when black workers were left out of organizing efforts in the North, they created their own trade unions and groups like the National Colored Labor Union and Colored Farmers Alliances. After Emancipation, black journalists like T. Thomas Fortune urged black workers to organize against rising capitalism. Ofari reframes these male activists outside of white abolition, and the same can be done for black female activists.

white culture's insistence on disappearing black bodies. These tactics form a type of womanhood that requires rebellion. Nineteenth-century black womanhood understands the relationship between gender and race well before Kimberlé Crenshaw's term, intersectionality.

Black women have a long history of organizing and rebelling, and these activists create a form of black nationalism that depicts how black citizens actively fight for their rights. Ashe Lee's "Afmerica" imagines a future with black women as full citizens. Lost Womanhood recognizes the narrative where Lee presents black women shifting to full citizenship. Dunbar-Nelson presents a historical description of nation-building that relies on black bodies and voices. She focuses on nationalism and collectivism that allows black citizens full rights and protections. As a Lost Womanhood, Alice Dunbar-Nelson is an activist and writer on her own terms, making her more than her husband's assistant or a representative of the Harlem Renaissance. Her archived scrapbooks crystalize a female-driven black nationalism that highlights one individual's contribution to a collective.

Black women activists such as Sarah J. Early and Josephine Turpin Washington understand the power behind the sheer numbers of black women and their potential. Most importantly, they recognize that they must rebel and organize if they want to understand their power and change their oppressive reality. Like other black activists, Sarah J. Early's life is not well-documented, and scholars have begun to recover her life and activism. She navigates the dilemma that black activists face when encouraging dissent. Early clearly advocates for open rebellion that challenges oppressive systems and aligns their rebellion with the revolution that founded the United States. As a black citizen and woman, revolution is necessary, and Early envisions a female-driven revolution. Black women activists work in

an environment where male black leadership and voices believe in the idea of women's natural subordination and separate spheres. Josephine Turpin Washington's works and legacy reveal that she straddles gendered ideologies by seemingly appealing to patriarchy as an act of coalition politics and negotiation. With her coalition politics, she directly addresses the rise of Anglo-Saxon identity that reinforces Jim Crow ideologies to recall a time when women were revolutionary helpers. She articulates the problematic position where black female activists reside. With their coalition politics, black activists contend with racial and gender ideologies that oppress them.

Not all black activists relied on coalition politics; some focused more on controlling the narrative around female bodies. Once labeled America's most dangerous woman, Lucy Parsons was an outspoken social revolutionary who critiqued class oppression and working conditions. She advocated for an "American version of syndicalism where workers would own and control the means of production" (Zandy 52). Parsons expertly composes a narrative of her heritage and marriage to push her social agenda's momentum, especially after her husband's death. She purposefully keeps silent about her racial history to focus on class issues. A powerful example of how race and class intersect to challenge working conditions, her work makes her one of the most influential activists in Chicago well into the twentieth century. Women like Lucy Parsons openly challenge gender expectations and move discussions from gender to personhood. Lost Womanhood embraces Parsons, a woman of color, as the loudest voice of anarchism.

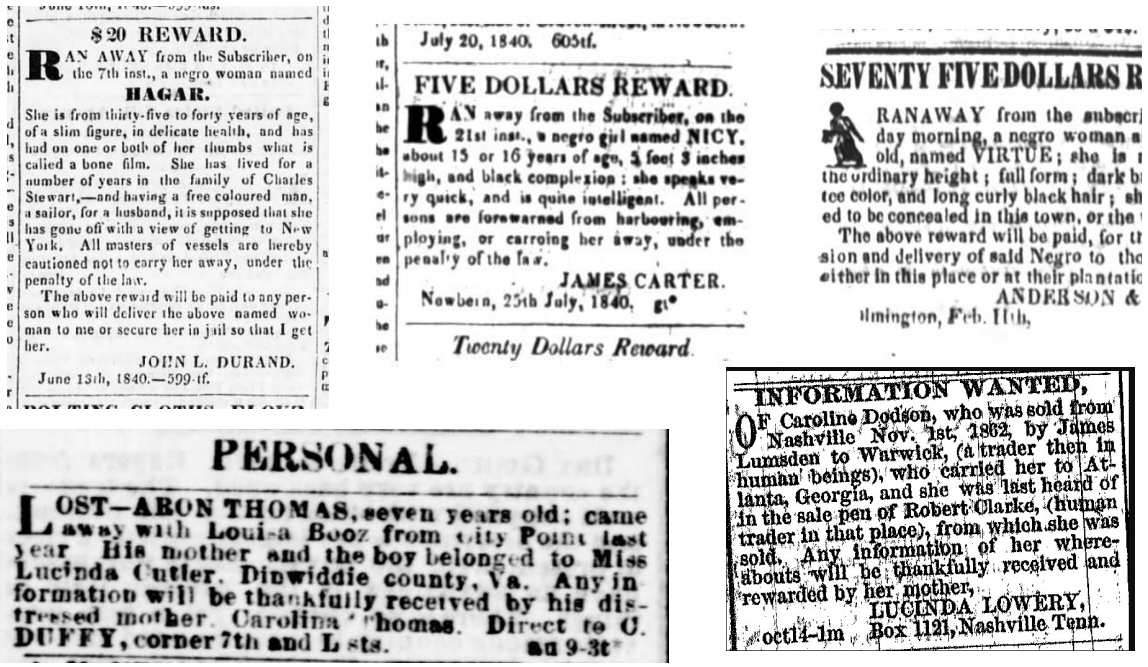
Finally, Lost Womanhood can dismantle True Womanhood's hold on nineteenth-century scholarship. Lost Womanhood reframes one of its strongest ideologies, motherhood. While True Womanhood places motherhood and reproduction at its core, Lost Womanhood

focuses on change, evolution, and individual identity. Women like Madame Restell and Sojourner Truth can transform and create identities outside motherhood. Isabella Dumont evolves into Sojourner Truth on her own terms. She creates and maintains an identity that better represents her worldview. A slave becomes an activist, preacher, and teacher. As Truth, she becomes one of the most crucial nineteenth-century abolitionists and suffragists. She created this identity that removed motherhood as the single way to define her. An immigrant, Ann Sommers transforms into Madame Restell to align herself with medical practitioners. Restell builds wealth by acknowledging the need for more control over women's bodies. She understands that women cannot better their lives unless they understand and control reproduction. Two women, one a slave and the other an immigrant, find a way to create identities that challenge the ideology that depends on motherhood as the only essential role for women. As Lost Women, Truth and Restell control a narrative about their personhood that proves that women directly interrogate True Womanhood.

The word *true* in True Womanhood and its many theological and cultural implications negates the voices of women who could not or chose not to participate in a highly rigid and controlled structure of femininity. Without a proper category for women who critique True Womanhood, these women's voices reside in a liminal space waiting to be found. Nineteenth-century literary scholarship tends to place rebellious women as outliers rather than normalizing their behavior. Additionally, describing a woman in the negative or a failed state limits scholarly discourse and further disembodies women who sit outside of True or New Womanhood. While True Women find false power in civilizing and reforming behavior, Lost Women value rebellion only after understanding the oppressive systems and structures. Lost Women want to dismantle, not modify, ideologies. They cannot accept the

role of the submissive wife or slave. For these women, submission only reconstitutes power structures that depend on women as socially dead. Improving the conditions of women's lives through disobedience rather than civilizing men remains at the heart of Lost Womanhood. They view rebellion as a virtue rather than an act that labels them as dangerous, and these voices deserve a new descriptor.

Most importantly, these women belong in a productive category that raises voices that have been too long ignored or undervalued. Lost Womanhood normalizes those authors who interrogate True Womanhood and a patriarchal society that requires women to reproduce their second-class status. Lost Womanhood recognizes that women refuse to go quietly; it also recognizes rebellion takes many forms. Some women challenge ideologies with writing, and others transform into advocates and activists. While True Womanhood works to limit claims on their label, Lost Womanhood finds and accepts women who understand that True Womanhood operates to serve oppression and violence. No longer unruly, deviant, or uncommon, these women can take their place in scholarship that acknowledges that True Womanhood was never a safer form. Lost Womanhood articulates a trajectory of womanhood that begins with how women assert selfhood and personhood and then examines that selfhood within ideologies that describe marriage and family, especially within reproductive practices. Lost Womanhood vocalizes how selfhood and personhood interact within a community built around solidarity without subsuming womanhood. These voices can dismantle the master tongue of scholarship, allowing more voices and experiences to capture the realities of nineteenth-century women, which for too long have been lost in silence.



$20 REWARD.

RAN AWAY from the Subscriber, on the 7th inst., a negro woman named HAGAR.

She is from thirty-five to forty years of age, of a slim figure, in delicate health, and has had on one or both of her thumbs what is called a bone film. She has lived for a number of years in the family of Charles Stewart,—and having a free coloured man, a sailor, for a husband, it is supposed that she has gone off with a view of getting to New York. All masters of vessels are hereby cautioned not to carry her away, under the penalty of the law.

The above reward will be paid to any person who will deliver the above named woman to me or secure her in jail so that I get her.

JOHN L. DURAND.

June 13th, 1840.—599-tf.

July 20, 1840. 605tf.

FIVE DOLLARS REWARD.

RAN away from the Subscriber, on the 21st inst., a negro girl named NICY, about 15 or 16 years of age, 5 feet 3 inches high, and black complexion; she speaks very quick, and is quite intelligent. All persons are forewarned from harbouring, employing, or carroing her away, under the penalty of the law.

JAMES CARTER.

Newbern, 25th July, 1840. 6t*

Twenty Dollars Reward.

SEVENTY FIVE DOLLARS R

RANAWAY from the subscri day morning, a negro woman a old, named VIRTUE; she is r the ordinary height; full form; dark b tee color, and long curly black hair; sh ed to be concealed in this town, or the

The above reward will be paid, for t sion and delivery of said Negro to the either in this place or at their plantatio

ANDERSON &

ilmington, Feb. 11th,

INFORMATION WANTED,

OF Caroline Dodson, who was sold from Nashville Nov. 1st, 1862, by James Lumsden to Warwick, (a trader then in human beings), who carried her to Atlanta, Georgia, and she was last heard of in the sale pen of Robert Clarke, (human trader in that place), from which she was sold. Any information of her whereabouts will be thankfully received and rewarded by her mother,

LUCINDA LOWERY,

oct14-1m Box 1121, Nashville Tenn.

PERSONAL.

LOST—ABON THOMAS, seven years old; came away with Louisa Booz from City Point last year. His mother and the boy belonged to Miss Lucinda Cutler, Dinwiddie county, Va. Any information will be thankfully received by his distressed mother, Carolina Thomas. Direct to C. DUFFY, corner 7th and L sts. au 9-3t*

Chapter One

Emerging Lost Womanhood: Sojourner Truth, Harriet Jacobs, and Harriet E. Wilson

By its very nature, something that is lost only needs to be found or rendered visible. It lies in wait in a liminal space. Because scholarship has examined the role of the nineteenth-century domestic novel in maintaining True Womanhood, scholars cast aside those voices which challenge or interrogate it. With the focus on the domestic novel as True Womanhood's manual, Lost Womanhood must turn to other mediums. The newspaper, with its low cost and accessibility, offers a way of recovering an emerging Lost Womanhood. As an essential part of recovery work in nineteenth-century African American literature and culture, the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History and Cornell University's archive *Freedom on the Move* has created databases of runaway slave advertisements from eighteenth and nineteenth-century newspapers. Collecting these advertisements recover the past and give voice to the horrors of slavery. Newspapers represent the public's persistent

nature in reinforcing institutional and structural power. When these runaway advertisements purposefully leave out last names and rely on descriptions of bodies, they cement racialized ideologies stemming from slavery. The words *runaway* and *negro* create an image of a marginalized citizen who can be bought and sold. A socially dead citizen cannot create, claim, or protect their families, and under the parameters of slavery, the description categorically denies the bonding relationships that come with last names.

Numbering in the hundreds, the sheer volume of advertisements in the *Freedom on the Move* archive reflects how women of color ran away from slavery and True Womanhood. True Womanhood depends on the separation of black families, and the number of advertisements reinforces the fact that black women understood their role in slavery and ran from it. As a category, Lost Womanhood rethinks these advertisements by examining the language used to describe enslaved black women. When viewed through a historical lens, these advertisements sanitize the violence of slavery. The framework of Lost Womanhood instead crystalizes the knowledge that black women held and frames their decisions to escape as proof of activism.

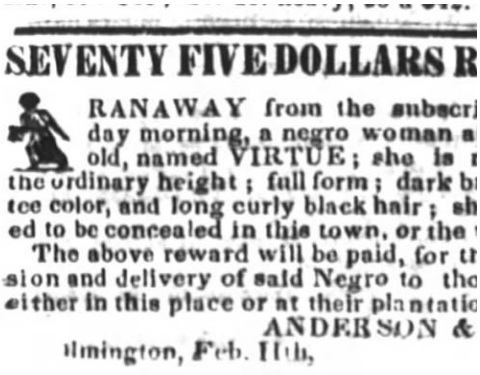

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Figure 1 Runaway Advertisement from Freedom on the Move, Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History and Cornell University

A tension exists in these runaway advertisements that realizes the power that black women held in slavery. On February 12, 1850, shortly before the Fugitive Slave act passed in September 1850, Anderson and Young placed an advertisement in the *Tri-Weekly Commercial* in Wilmington, North Carolina. They offered a seventy-five-dollar reward for the return of a runaway slave, Virtue. The fact that an owner offers such a large amount of money for her

return bears questioning. Many of these advertisements offer five dollars or even twenty dollars, but this slave owner willingly offers a large sum of money for returned property. The advertisement describes her as "rather under the ordinary height, full form; dark brown or mustee color, and long curly black hair" ("Seventy Five Dollar Reward"). When considering the slave's name, Virtue, the owner places a high price on an ordinary black woman whose name, perhaps coincidentally, embodies True Womanhood. Her description and large reward reinforce a need for a form of womanhood that better understands how black women navigate power structures. The large reward directly contradicts the ordinariness that the description creates.

In contrast to True Women, slavery robs black women of their virtue. Slavery's conditions create an environment for black women where virtue is impossible to maintain, so she must redefine it, and she does so with her act of escape. Accepting the compromising conditions of slavery without question, slave owners define virtue for enslaved women as submission, particularly sexual submission. This tension continues when placing the escaped slave's name with the sexualized description of her racialized body. Virtue, the woman, has a "full form" and "is dark or "mustee" color with "long dark curly hair" ("Seventy Five Dollars").[6] These descriptors invoke the sexual objectification of black women's bodies and code her body as black. A racialized full form means a shapely body with long hair that fulfills sexual desires. Under the conditions of slavery, the expectation is that sexual submission is a virtue. Under the parameters of slavery, her owner presents her as a sexual object. Stealing herself back, she resists the specific forms of sexual and gendered valuation placed on her body and labor.

[6] Mustee is another description for mulatto.

Slave owners actively and unabashedly worked to possess slave women and delegitimize their marriages. On June 13, 1840, in the *Newbern Spectator*, John L. Durand offered a twenty-dollar reward for the return of Hagar in a runaway advertisement. Durand estimates her age from thirty-five to forty years old and describes her "slim figure in delicate health, and has had one or both of her thumbs broken, called a bone film," which likely indicates that both of Hagar's thumbs were broken ("Twenty Dollar Reward"). Relying on these runaway advertisements' language, Hagar's large reward of twenty dollars for a slave in "delicate health" reveals that owners care more about owning property rather than owning productive property. Unafraid, Durand asks for the return of a woman married to a free black man. Matthews and Wright explain that under the conditions of slavery, a slave marriage, even if one spouse is legally free, lacks legal standing in southern states. The last line of the short description clarifies the slave owner's intention. Marriage implies access to laws that only a white person can access, and if his runaway slave has married, he attempts to paint her not only as a rule-breaker but as a danger to white social expectations and white women. "The above reward will be paid to any person who will deliver the above-named woman to me or secure in jail so that I get her" ("Twenty Dollar Reward"). This phrase "I get her" illustrates his intentions to own a married woman completely. Much like Linda Brent cannot escape Dr. Flint in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Hagar cannot escape her owner. These advertisements demonstrate that Jacobs'

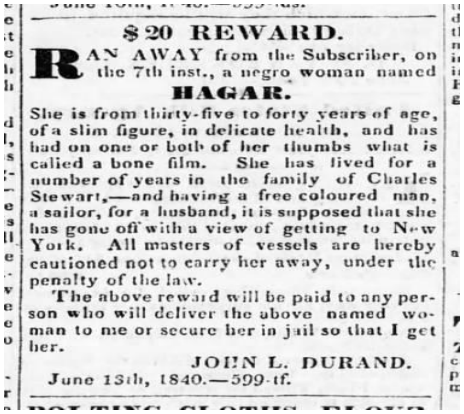

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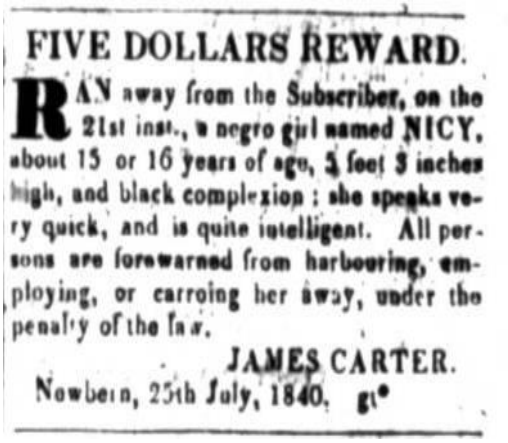
Figure 2 Runaway Advertisement from Freedom on the Move, Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History and Cornell University

narrative follows a shared experience that nineteenth-century black women endure and understand.

Runaway advertisements also provide evidence of how black girlhood depends on a special knowledge. Nazera Sadiq Wright examines the stages of girlhood for black girls, both enslaved and free. She acknowledges that black women have access to stories outside of wifehood and motherhood because black girls very early in life develop strategies to protect themselves from sexual violence. Wright points out that black girls can reject the role of victim and "unsettle traditions and alter preconceived notions" (19). Even with a happy childhood, young black girls have an early awareness of the conditions of slavery and sexual violence. Wright tracks the critical ages for a young black female slave, fifteen or sixteen, and at this age, a young black girl already has knowledge and strategies that serve them well. "They reject the constricting bonds of domesticity that editors laid out in the 1820s" (27). Black girlhood centers on fighting back when white middle-class girlhood focuses on preparation for submissive domestic roles such as wife and mother. Black girls learn to "take an active role and revolutionary stances that reject their objectification as victims of violence or as models for marriage and reform" (86).



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JAMES CARTER.

Newbern, 25th July, 1840. gt*

Figure 3 Runaway Advertisement from Freedom on the Move, Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History and Cornell University

Once again, the newspaper can provide an example of black women's experiences that cannot be labeled as fictional or unusual. In a runaway advertisement on July 25, 1840, James Carter placed a runaway advertisement in the *Newbern Spectator* in New Bern, North Carolina

and offered a five-dollar reward for the return of a young slave girl named Nicy. He paints her as a conniving and scheming girl, and his phrasing demonizes her. Merely providing an estimate for a physical description, Carter suggests her age to be fifteen or sixteen years old and her height at five feet five inches. Additionally, this advertisement reveals she is arriving at the age where white men will view her simultaneously as a sexual and economic object. Her body, while offering pleasure, now produces more enslaved people. Even though he identifies her as a negro, he still describes her "black complexion" to reiterate her blackness several times so that his description of quickness and intelligence is read correctly within the social construction of slavery. A quick and intelligent slave is cunning and constantly working on running away and, therefore, a danger to white society. "She speaks very quick, and is quite intelligent" ("Five Dollars Reward"). The description reiterates all the codes for the construction of blackness. Under True Womanhood, white readers will imagine her as a cunning slave who uses her intelligence to escape from an owner who simply wants to protect his property. They will see her as a threat to the current system, a slave fighting against her natural place in a slave economy.[7] These descriptors that focus on her intelligence prove that she is a Lost Woman and highlight her actions as a product of her girlhood. The various codes for her blackness cannot undo her skillful use of her girlhood.

The concept of Lost Womanhood offers a different reading to normalize resistance and cements the historical fact that slaves actively worked against their historical conditions that did not rely on the noblesse oblige of so-called enlightened whites. After the Civil War,

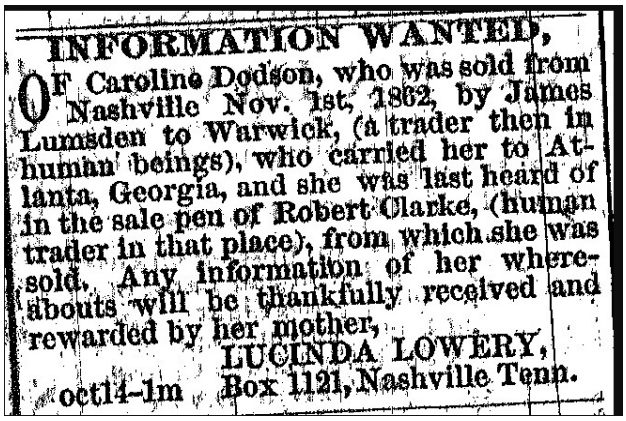
[7] Janet Yellen's and Hazel Carby's exploration into black womanhood reveals that white womanhood relies on viewing black women as chattel, and when they reaffirm their personhood, white womanhood responds with oppressive structures and ideologies.

for example, newly freed families began to place unification advertisements. In collaboration with the Mother Bethel AME Church, Villanova University's History department has created a different archive that tells the story of unification: *Last Seen: Finding Families after Slavery*. This archive proves the desire for reunification and the newspaper's role in making formerly enslaved families whole again. These families access the same print medium to reunify that previously worked to separate them from one another and continue their slavery, especially after the Fugitive Slave Law. Some of these were black-owned papers like the *National Era* and *the People's Advocate*, telling the accurate story of slavery and race.

Dismantling racialized ideologies, unification advertisements focus on human trafficking. When runaway advertisements sanitize the violent conditions of slavery, the unification advertisements speak truth to power when they name human traffickers. The advertisements focus on personhood, selfhood, and family. In the black-owned newspaper, *The Colored Tennessean*, on October 14, 1865, Lucinda Lowry placed an advertisement in the Nashville newspaper looking for her daughter, Caroline Dodson. Sadly, the only information Lowry can provide is how many people sold her daughter. James Lumsden sold Caroline on November 1st in 1862 to a slave trader with Warwick's last name. Later, Peter Clark sells Caroline in Atlanta, Georgia. To highlight the hypocrisy behind slavery, Lowry identifies both Warwick and Clark as human traffickers. The archive *Last Seen* locates an article in the *Daily Republican* in Wilmington, Delaware, explaining how black family members found each other. A December 6, 1865 article begins with the title *A Memory of Slavery Days* and tells the story of a daughter looking for her mother. The archived entry reports that Mrs. Marcia Calmikle's only information is that she was taken from her mother and sold when she was only one month old. Again, a free black woman calls attention to the

fact that slave owners sold babies, and slave traders bought black babies at such a young age. A one-month-old infant wholly relies on a mother, and True Womanhood should find this appalling. The article explains that after placing an advertisement in the newspaper, she received information after looking for them for several years. Her family, including her mother, was alive and well in Richmond, Virginia. Despite being torn apart, this family is reunified and has the power to repair their closest relationships.

These placements remind a white culture that black people are a part of humanity and challenge a world where economics depends on selling human bodies, including children and infants. This act alone challenges Welter's tentpoles of True Womanhood and questions the apparatuses used to reconstruct slavery under the guise of Jim Crow laws.[8] By focusing on reunifying families as a direct result of violence, black women challenge the hypocritical notion that True Womanhood only allows white women to have families and the idea that white women are exceptional. These black women begin to form an alternate form of womanhood through newspapers used to reunify families. Because the lost advertisements rely on their voices without mediation, they recover



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LUCINDA LOWERY,
Box 1121, Nashville Tenn.

oct14-1m

Figure 4 Reunification Advertisement, Last Seen, Finding Families after Slavery, Mother Bethel AME Church, Villanova University's History department

[8] In Welter's work, she explains four cardinal virtues: piety, purity (virginity), submission, and domesticity. True Women uphold religious beliefs, and the common belief was that, for women, religion was a divine right. Nineteenth-century women were expected to protect their virginity at all costs. Seduction narratives reveal the cost of sexuality for women. Because in nineteenth-century religious beliefs, women were passive and secondary to the husband. Submission as a virtue focuses on women who require protectors. Domesticity requires that women are helpers and nurturers in the home. These women then become the guardians of civilization.

a history that involves black women directly fighting against slavery and other cultural institutions, including True Womanhood.

Sojourner Truth's journey into activism further exemplifies the relationship between print culture and black women. Despite not being able to read or write, Truth navigates the abolitionist waters to control descriptions about her. She understood the power of articles that covered her speeches and activities. Like most slaves, Truth's family lacks genealogical records other than ownership deeds and sale receipts. Because of the lack of access to other record-keeping, it is difficult to establish her personal history. Scholars suggest that she was born in the 1790s to Johannis Hardenberg's slaves, James and Elizabeth. After Hardenberg's son Charles, an innkeeper, dies, she is sold four more times. Biographers Isabell Richman, Nell Painter, and Margaret Washington acknowledge that she experiences the most physical violence with the Neally family because she speaks Dutch rather than English. Her activism and new life begin when she leaves the last family to own her, the Dumonts.

The transformation from Isabella the slave to Sojourner Truth the activist exemplifies how black girls and women attempted to survive True Womanhood. Isabella experienced the horrors of slavery in the upstate Dutch country of New York; Sojourner traveled the country speaking against slavery and for black women's rights. Isabella famously leaves the Dumonts after experiencing visions where Jesus offered her a better version of non-racialized Christianity, and with this decision, Sojourner Truth begins to emerge from Isabella Dumont. Scholars all document the fact that Truth walks away from the Dumont home with few possessions. As a part of Lost Womanhood, Truth recognizes a woman's ability to transform and rebel. After choosing to walk away before she legally was emancipated, she becomes an outspoken abolitionist, suffragette, and preacher. Painter's scholarship documents Isabella's

experiences that reflect the complicated approach to emancipation.[9] Dumont, her last owner, agreed to free Isabella in 1826 but failed to follow through with his promise. In response to his decision, Isabella walked away. Only taking her infant daughter, Sofia, she packed a few belongings and left. According to the law, her other children are considered Dumont's indentured servants until their twenty-fifth birthday. A runaway slave, she found refuge with the Van Wagenen family, who agreed to pay John Dumont twenty dollars a month until July 4th, 1827. In return, Isabella provided the family with domestic help. At the Van Wagenen's home, she begins her transformation from slave to activist.

An alternate reading of her life from Lost Womanhood solidifies Truth as a woman who creates her form of womanhood outside of True Womanhood. Because of her experiences, she recognizes the need for activism to transform the acceptable outcomes of womanhood. For fear of alienating audiences, many abolitionists avoid engaging with the sexual violence that enslaved people experience. Some scholars such as Richman have pointed out that Truth avoids openly discussing her past with sexual violence to achieve True Womanhood's status. However, with Lost Womanhood, scholars can make room for trauma. Female slaves experienced horrific sexual violence, and their refusal to speak about it demands a model of womanhood that does not require reliving trauma or confession. True Womanhood causes trauma and relies on it to stabilize white womanhood. In this relationship, trauma impacts black women in specialized ways that force them to reckon with their relationship to sexual violence. While feminist scholarship most certainly understands

[9] Abolishing slavery in New York state was a complicated issue, and the state relied on gradual emancipation beginning in 1799 with all slaves freed by 1827. Any children born to slave mothers after July 4th, 1799 would be born free but would provide free services to their mother's master until the age of twenty-five as indentured servants. In 1817, the New York state legislature decided to pass a law saying that owners must emancipate all slaves by July 4th, 1827. Slave owners in New York frequently used indentured servitude to legally keep their slaves past 1827.

the role violence plays in stabilizing racialized ideologies, Lost Womanhood continues the next step in understanding that trauma does not need to be relived to impact change.

Lost Womanhood does not require that women speak about their trauma and acknowledges that it informs their lives and choices, spoken or not. Margaret Washington acknowledges the sexual violence that Truth does not address in Olive Gilbert's 1849 biographical narrative. Washington suggests that because of the tension between Dumont's wife Sally and Isabella, a sexual relationship most likely occurred between Dumont and Isabella (*Sojourner Truth's America* 52). This unsurprising suggestion recalls a violent history where many slave owners raped their female slaves. Depending on how enslaved black women encountered sexual violence, the role of trauma dictates how activists like Sojourner Truth create strategies. Slave women often found power in sexual relationships to negotiate a different form of slavery. Inherently, True Womanhood relies on viewing black women as sexualized objects even when narratives do not explicitly discuss sexual violence and behavior. In contrast, Lost Womanhood creates a framework that understands that black women have been purposefully sexualized to their detriment. Truth does not have to confess her sins under the umbrella of Lost Womanhood because sexual violence is not her sin. Rather, it is a part of an oppressive racialized construction from True Womanhood.

True Womanhood ignores the fact that slavery and constructions of race deny black women protections, and it instead depends on their trauma. Washington describes the traumatic scenario often found in the domestic novel of a jealous white slave mistress who seeks vengeance on a female slave. To continue this argument, Nell Irvine Painter claims that Sally Dumont may have sexually abused Isabella. Whether or not Painter's claim is valid, she recognizes the variety of trauma women face:

> The sexual abuse came from her mistress Sally Dumont, and Truth could tell about it only obliquely, in scattered pages in her *Narrative*. Truth spoke straightforwardly about most of her suffering in slavery, 'this putrescent plague-spot,' but only vaguely about this. Despite all the abolitionists' investigations, she said, 'there remained so much unseen.' We have no statistics for the early nineteenth century, but in the late twentieth century, the assailants of about 5 percent of sexually abused girls are women. In Isabella's hierarchical, slaveholding family, she responded to John Dumont's beatings by identifying with him. But she despised Sally Dumont. (Painter 16)

The concept of True Womanhood depends on an angel such as Sally, who acts like an angel according to social conventions and commits terrible violence against others. Angels commit terrible acts and create trauma in the house, and enslaved people must be silent about that violence. Lost Womanhood's concept rectifies this paradox without forcing black women to recollect trauma because an alternate construct reframes white and black women in the system of slavery differently. Lost Womanhood acknowledges that these experiences create a woman who deserves a life outside such an inhumane system and validates her creative and courageous search for such a life. She survived terrible violence and should not have to pen her trauma for readers or abolitionists.

For most nineteenth-century black women, surviving physical or sexual violence becomes their form of virtue; they live to tell the tale or provide evidence of these brutal acts. Truth invokes this paradox when she evolves from Isabella to Sojourner. Isabella suffers from this cruel paradigm, whereas Sojourner calls into question the construction of this role and its paradoxical nature to demand access to privacy and protections. She cannot wait for a

racialized society to change its views so that an opportunity presents itself; instead, she invents a new one on her own terms and capitalizes on white abolitionists. She preaches and joins movements such as the suffrage and temperance movements. She forces white abolitionists to understand how they depend on black women and their images. She demands that black womanhood takes its rightful place along with white womanhood. With her deep understanding of how race and gender work together, she focuses on an alternative form of womanhood that desexualizes the black female body.

While it may appear that Truth tries to adhere to True Womanhood, her choices reflect her desire for a change about her body's narrative. In Lost Womanhood, scholars recover Truth on her terms rather than depending on abolitionist writing. Sandi Russell explains a historical moment for Truth when she reveals her breasts to prove her womanhood. In this moment, Truth negotiates the expectations of True Womanhood with her Lost Womanhood. She relies on breasts as a signifier of motherhood rather than sexual objectification. Russell articulates it best when she writes, "it was a dramatic demonstration of her best-known speech" (7). The audience reckons with the bodily truth of black womanhood and, therefore, her personhood. Truth completely understands that the exposed breast from nineteenth-century art symbolizes both female subjugation and female liberty. Once again, Truth appropriates a cultural understanding of the body to bring black womanhood to the forefront.

Despite the heavily mediated presence of black female bodies and their words, Truth recognizes a unique form of abolition for black womanhood. As Painter points out, Truth knew that "black women needed it [the vote] more, having less education and more limited choice of jobs. '[W]ashing,' she said, 'is about as high as a colored woman gets' "

("Proceedings of the First Anniversary" 20). Truth voices the problematic nature of a racialized economy where blackness defines low wages. Washington also documents Truth's brazen advocacy for black women's rights to challenge how a white culture views them. Truth understands her unique position to articulate the apparent problem with middle-class white suffrage, especially when Stanton and Anthony align themselves with white supremacists that fight against an economy rooted in industrial advances. They cannot imagine a world where black women stand next to them to seek redress in rights and wages. Addressing an audience in 1866, Truth tells them, "I suppose I am about the only colored woman that goes to speak for the rights of the colored woman" ("Proceedings of the First Anniversary" 20). Truth recognizes that she has been silenced, and she wants to bring black womanhood out from the shadows of white womanhood. Because of her words and acts to bring black womanhood center stage, Truth creates an alternative form of womanhood that needs to be recognized. In Lost Womanhood, scholars recover Truth's ability to transform into an activist in the face of mediation and misinterpretation. Rather than align herself with the other speakers, she highlights the critical difference, skin color. White women have different desires and view the term *rights* differently. While she does not explicitly call attention to the fact that white abolitionists aligned themselves with masculinity and wanted similar rights, calling attention to her skin color focuses on the fact that black women must fight differently.

As an activist, Truth cannot always avoid mediation but auspiciously navigates her alliances. When Francis Gage amends and alters Truth's signature speech, this mythic construction advances white abolitionism rather than a black woman challenging True Womanhood and its place in slavery. Gage alters Truth's words to create a southern voice

and a representation of black womanhood rooted in ignorance rather than Truth's success as an abolitionist and preacher. Scholars like Chanta Haywood, Martha Jones, and Julie Jeffrey agree that few have successfully captured Truth's extemporaneous speech; however, as Washington reveals, the most accurate version comes from Marius Robinson's 1851 article in Salem's *Anti-Slavery Bugle*. Robinson's version includes a voice that matches the low Dutch country dialect that Truth most likely spoke in rather than a Southern dialect. "May I say a few words? I want to say a few words about this matter. I am a woman's rights" ("Women's Rights Convention"). As a Lost Woman, Truth wants to define herself as an active agent of change rather than a reformer, and Robinson's version of her speech reveals that she challenges the dependence of white womanhood on submission and slavery. In comparison to white womanhood, Truth focuses on the fact that work, instead of wifehood or motherhood, defines black womanhood. In the early nineteenth century, Truth suggests that rights are not limited. With this realization, she calls attention to a white womanhood that thrives because it denies black women (and men) rights. Without damaging her alliance with white abolitionists, she insists that universal suffrage helps most people. Her quiet call for universal suffrage challenges white abolitionists who cannot envision a United States that accepts its black body politic as full citizens.

For Truth, her blackness has another power; instead of associating blackness with slavery, she links her blackness to activism, strength, and, most importantly, success. When describing a photograph of Truth, Grimald Grigsby writes that "the overall effect of the image is aggressive. She does not bear arms, but she holds a cane that stands between her body and us. Her blurred, mysteriously warted right hand, perhaps covered by a mitten, heightens the tension" (33). Truth recognized the need to control her image, so starting in

1864, she added her name and captions and filed a copyright petition for the phrase *I Sell the Shadow to Support the Substance* in the Eastern District of Michigan on April 16, 1864. After this decision, she began to sell her photographs for profit to support her activism. Grimaldo Grigsby suggests that Truth sat for three different series of photographs, mostly in Michigan. Truth's ability to control her narrative through her abolition work proves that Lost Womanhood has a viable place in feminist studies. She recognizes the power of directing her narrative, and on her own, she capitalizes on nineteenth-century technology to validate this narrative. Truth quietly and successfully challenges white womanhood as the answer for black women. She balances the needs of the white abolitionists with her visions of black womanhood. She knows when to deviate from their narrative to emphasize her own, and she does not openly rebuke them. Capitalizing on their tools (like the *carte de visite*), she begins to form her brand of activism.

Truth's attempt to retain active control of her image reveals that she fights for a world that recognizes her as a black female activist intentionally excluded from the suffrage debate. She refuses to allow True Womanhood to keep her from becoming one of the most famous abolitionists and women's rights speakers of the nineteenth century. While Carla Peterson acknowledges that Truth mostly traveled within white abolitionist circles, this choice does not negate her ability to create womanhood that revolves around personal freedom for black women. Given the historical conditions of black women, Truth only can create change in ways that are accessible to her (46). Feminist scholars have rightfully critiqued True Womanhood as exclusionary, making it all the more important to give voice to Truth's self-actualization outside of it. Challenging a patriarchal system that requires white-orientated True Womanhood, she transforms herself through rebellion. When Isabella Dumont morphs

into Sojourner Truth, she challenges abolitionists and suffragists who are reluctant to fight for universal suffrage. She recognizes that gender ideologies have to be taken seriously because even if black women are emancipated, they cannot find economic opportunities to survive. Truth realizes that emancipation alone will not save black women. Black women need a form of womanhood that demands universal suffrage and personhood, but when black women are considered dangerous, forms of womanhood, True or New, fail them and continue to force them into a liminal space where Lost women live.[10]

Harriet Jacobs: Lost Womanhood and Motherhood

While Truth spends her life navigating the waters of activism with white abolitionists, Harriet Jacobs challenges the largest perpetrator of True Womanhood, the domestic novel. Both women attack mediating forces that black women must overcome when speaking for themselves. Krista Walter makes it evident that in literary studies, True Womanhood has become the "master tongue of womanhood" (193). In *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Jacobs critiques the dangers that stem from True Womanhood's stronghold. Ushering in Lost Womanhood, Jacobs invents the sub-genre of a hidden womanhood. She tackles the violence implicit in the domestic novel, particularly its reliance on sexual, physical, and economic violence against black bodies. Jennifer Larson and Yyvonne Johnson show that True Womanhood's power drives women outside its constraining spheres to a space where new hybrid genres and other forms of womanhood emerge. Marjorie Pryse argues that black

[10] With a multi-faceted activist agenda, Truth's legacy as a thinker and national figure has been largely ignored. Gloria Joseph explains that Truth found a new way to exist as a black activist. Not only was she a famous orator, but she won court cases. She sued for her son's freedom and sued when she was pushed off a streetcar. Not only did she win her case, but the conductor lost his job. Truth's legacy must move beyond her "Arn't I a Woman" speech.

women write with a sense of urgency and conjure themselves into being. This urgency stems from a need to "transform silence into speech" (Pryse 5). The silence that white readers expect from black women only harms them and their families.

In *Incidents*, Linda Brent manipulates concealment to prove that when black women could not uphold True Womanhood's tent poles, they create a form of womanhood that understands the complex nature of trauma. This act validates the false construction of womanhood and critiques a form of motherhood that depends on one's skin color. CE Henderson contributes to this new way of viewing Jacobs' narrative to shore up the fact that the construction of black womanhood's social, political, and economic freedoms requires understanding paradox. "Most African American women had to form alternative spaces of self-fulfillment which gave them agency when it appeared they had none" (52). Because the nineteenth-century domestic novel relies on a narrative that reinforces racialized constructions of black people, Jacobs intercedes to reshape the domestic novel. She reveals the role of white women in slavery even as she frames a narrative where black women resist slavery to fight for personhood and womanhood.

Jacobs situates the escape from sexual violence as one of Linda Brent's primary motives for her resistance. Lauren Berlant argues that "the currency of True Womanhood" is used "to authorize [the] rape and sexual exploitation" of black girls and women, leading to unsolicited sexual knowledge and experience (502). This forced knowledge causes them to think differently about the tent poles of womanhood, so they offer an alternative form of womanhood where they can "govern their bodies and integrity" (503). Like Jacobs and Linda Brent, Lost women rely on rebellion to interrogate True Womanhood and its stronghold that "harms both black and white women by exclusively defining them with their roles as wives

and mothers" (502). When a form of white-only womanhood denies black women the role of wife and mother, these black wives and mothers must crystalize the truth that white women and their protections are secured at the cost of sexual violence for black women, free and enslaved. As Berlant explains, Jacobs' narrative asks readers to "reexamine their attachment to a discourse with chastity and domesticity that harms both black and white women by exclusively defining them in relationship to their roles as wives and mothers" (502). Womanhood, as a racialized construction, only serves to reinstitute violence and terror. Berlant is not alone in her scholarship; Harriet Jacobs' text has long been considered essential for nineteenth-century black feminist scholarship. Voices that proclaimed True Womanhood's benefits may have rung louder, but black women generated a form of lost womanhood that valued rebellion and deviance.

Under the master tongue of True Womanhood, some scholars view Jacobs' work as an attempt to appease white readers with understated sexual references and innuendo that focus on victimhood. True Womanhood frames Linda Brent as a failure and a victim because she cannot protect her morality and virginity. Instead, under Lost Womanhood, Jacobs reframes black women's trauma to let them control their narratives without requiring confessions. Rather than holding Linda Brent accountable for the violence from slavery, Lost Womanhood realizes that the trauma from the violence forces her to behave in ways that True Womanhood labels as morally questionable. Trauma-based resistance requires a form of womanhood that gives women more control over their narratives. Rather than assuming that black women writers refuse to write about their trauma, the concept of Lost Womanhood creates a framework that acknowledges that black women need more control over their narratives to counteract the lack of control in their lives. In Lost Womanhood, narrative

control returns to black women writers. Jacobs explains her motives in her preface when she writes, "I do earnestly desire to arouse the women of the North to a realizing sense of the condition of two millions of women at the South, still in bondage, suffering what I suffered, and most of them far worse" (3). Jacobs rises to the daunting task of convincing those who read and write domestic novels to understand the dangerous role they play in the brutal violence of slavery.[11]

By subverting the very genre that keeps black women silenced, Jacobs demonstrates how this subversion fits into the larger scope of resistance from black women who change their circumstances. "Only by experience can anyone realize how deep, and dark, and foul is the pit of abominations" (4). Jacobs' novel goes far beyond Stowe's adaptation of the sentimental novel for political purposes. Turning the genre on its head to expose the depth and breadth of complicity in the system through the seemingly innocent act of writing and reading sentimental literature that sustains such a system of oppression, Jacobs subverts social assumptions and the literary form that has created them. As slave women understand the horrors that impact their lives, she exposes the limitations of True Womanhood's sympathy for black women. Because white women cannot experience slavery's violence, Jacobs understands that merely describing violent acts does little to change the minds of those who thrive under a racially constructed society. Jacobs artfully dismantles the domestic novel genre to expose its limitations and failures. Forgoing a traditional slave narrative to create a fictional biography within a domestic novel, she relies on a cruel seduction narrative

[11] Beth Maclay Doriani and Sarah Way Sherman explore how Jacobs navigates white readership. Both scholars acknowledge the hybrid nature of the text and argue that the limitations of a racialized society forces Jacobs to appease white female readers.

that illustrates how True Womanhood depends on a racial binary system where black women with charm are constructed as dark sexual forces that bewitch white men into sexual encounters.

Jacobs' counter-narrative interrogates the sympathy that drives the nineteenth-century domestic novel's tragic mulatto and proves that the sympathy rings empty. Williams Wells Brown's *Clotel* and Francis Harper's *Iola Leroy* typify the tragic mulatto narrative. In such a narrative, the tragic mulatto is unaware of her blackness, and as the story unfolds, she discovers that her mother was a slave. The tragic mulatto spends her life hidden and sheltered following True Womanhood and its principles, but few witness her successes at white womanhood. Eventually, her frail body dies, and this racial construction insinuates that blackness poisons her whiteness. The tragic mulatto reaches out for life but never will find it.[12] The tragic mulatto history impacts Lost Women like Jacobs.

Even though nineteenth-century authors rely on this trope to gain sympathy, this interracial woman cannot survive because she poses a threat. She compromises a white culture dependent on racial binaries. Eve Raimon describes her as a personification of "the anxieties and fantasies about the ascendant nation's future" (8). Because a racialized society values whiteness, the tragic mulatto must die, and her death allows a dominant white culture to contain this perceived threat. Futureless, she never fully receives the sympathy that would spark change. She does not attempt to fit in with white society, and instead, she passes to the great beyond, where socially dead citizens spend their entire lives. Unable to find a place, this white literary creation dies to prevent any remnants of mixed-race women who can pass

[12] Eve Raimon defines the tragic mulatto as a "refined, orphaned, mixed-race slave character whose 'tragic' destiny is overdetermined by the iniquities of planation slavery" (5). She writes that the tragic mulatto embodies northern and southern ideologies and "operates as a vehicle for exploring the complexities surrounding the interrelated identification of race" such as important questions about freedom and citizenship (4).

in white society. If a black woman can pass as white, whiteness reveals itself as unstable. Because black women writers must maintain their identity while pleasing a white audience, the tragic mulatto becomes the ideal black woman for white womanhood, not black womanhood. For True Womanhood, the natural way for interracial people to integrate into white society is to die. The overused plot placates white northern women who cannot imagine a world with mixed citizens. Mulatto women who disappear still pose a threat because they remain as a ghostly presence. This presence is evidence of mixed-race women who successfully perform whiteness. Under True Womanhood, it is easier for white women to imagine that racially mixed women die rather than disappear.

Jacobs subverts this overused trope of a mixed-race woman who threatens white womanhood because she can pass in a white society. Unlike the traditionally constructed mulatto figure, Jacobs' entire family knows their interracial history. Linda Brent cannot give her birthday but knows of her Anglo-Saxon ancestry from the Revolutionary War. In the opening chapter, Jacobs challenges the tragic mulatto figure when she informs the readers that her parents were interracial because of her grandmother's Anglo-Saxon heritage, a coded description for rape. Jacobs refuses to give in to the white constructed tragic mulatto because this woman does not exist. Miscegenation, a white culture's worst fear, was already present and part of the nation's foundations. When slave plantations began in earnest, miscegenation occurred, especially after slavery became more profitable. Mixed race people began when slavery began, and Jacobs makes this clear by placing her grandmother's childhood during the Revolutionary War at the front of the text. Jacobs dismantles the tragic mulatto trope by revealing the historical truth that many slave children were of mixed race, and their white fathers usually raped their black mothers. They are large families living among them, not

hidden in remote locations. Brent's interracial genealogy simultaneously challenges the death of the tragic mulatto and the stability of whiteness.

Jacobs also contributes to a new understanding of nineteenth-century womanhood by redefining the racially integrated color of motherhood. Frances Foster Smith claims that black women "do not go against the cardinal virtues of womanhood: instead, they argue for a freer interpretation" (35). It may be true that they do not "abandon piety, purity, submission, and domesticity," but they do understand that those virtues do not conjure themselves into being (35). Lost Women redefine and dismantle these expectations because they undermine black motherhood to bolster white motherhood. Because of her slave status, Linda Brent can only access motherhood by haunting her children. She remains hidden in her grandmother's attic and witnesses their lives. Relying on one of the most domestic moments of a mother's life, Jacobs relies on the Christmas holidays to convey the pathos of her condition. Brent cannot open presents with her children or eat a meal with them. She only watches her children and cannot participate in rearing them. The power of her exclusion from this religious holiday is not lost on Jacobs. She presents a grim version of the deprivation that black families live through each year during the holidays.

At one point, Jacobs creates a moment that allows her to express her pain about black motherhood and slavery. Historically speaking, slave owners rely on dogs to inflict violence on enslaved people. Linda Brent describes a moment when a dog bites her son. She witnesses a violent act that rings true with all slaves from her peephole, especially mothers:

> One day the screams of a child nerved me with strength to crawl to my peeping-hole, and I saw my son covered with blood. A fierce dog, usually kept chained, had seized and bitten him. A doctor was sent for, and I heard the groans and screams of my child

> while wounds were being sewed up. O, what torture to a mother's heart, to listen to this and be unable to go to him! (137)

Jacobs invokes the violent tactics that slave owners relied on to terrorize their slaves, even children. Jacobs focuses on the relationship between slaves and dogs to reinforce the violent domestic life they endure. Linda Brent must witness and hear her son's pain and agony without comforting her son or intervening in his pain. Haunting her son's pain mimics slave mothers' loss when they witness their children taken from them and sold into slavery. Cementing the slave experience in domestic moments, the dogs serve as a symbol for slave owners. This moment captures the complexity of a slave's life. True Women will not save black families because they profit and benefit from this system. They cannot and will not civilize those who rely on violence for wealth. Jacobs and other enslaved mothers must find powers outside of traditional True motherhood to mother their families. Linda Brent becomes a mother who haunts her children until she safely can mother in a less violent but racially divided North. When she defies slavery and white womanhood, she finally can participate in active parenting. Active rebellion helps her to actualize her role as a mother.

Linda Brent's grandmother, Martha, also provides a powerful example of a Lost woman who subverts institutional power systems to create alternate forms of womanhood. As a formerly enslaved person, Martha proves that freedom can be taken away at any moment. Linda Brent recalls her grandmother's story of re-entry into slavery. As a young girl, Martha's family was freed and given enough money to travel to St. Augustine but were captured on their passage. Their family was divided and sold. Martha was free and then sold back into slavery and taken from her family as a child. Her experiences solidify the insecurity that black bodies faced because their freedom was never stable or permanent. Martha resides

in a precarious position when her mistress dies. Flint refuses to comply with the will that freed her, so she remains Flint's property until he sells her. Jacobs explains the story that Martha would not tolerate a private sale, and when Flint sells other slaves at the auction, she jumps onto the auction block. Martha fights for her personhood by refusing to let Flint conceal his actions. Her sale appalls everyone at the auction block, so no one bids except one elderly woman, Flint's mother-in-law's sister, who frees her. Several facts combine to demonstrate that she is too fair to be bought and sold as a slave. Her grandmother is of an Anglo-Saxon heritage, no one will bid on her, and she repeatedly confronts Flint. White-looking people on the auction unsettle buyers and force them to acknowledge that they traffic in humans. Given these relationships with the family and community, she develops a space to become a local fixture. In this space, she manipulates a racialized society to find a measure of power to invite the constable and free black men who hunt fugitive slaves for dinner to help her daughter Linda with her ruse. Martha's house resembles a Lost Woman's house: her precarious livelihood and economic status can be changed instantly, but she controls the narrative around her life and home.

While slaves still follow the mother's condition, Jacobs imagines a different life for her children. Concealment and secrecy help her foster a relationship with Sands to create a different future for Benny and Ellen. Her actions in the narrative reveal that Jacobs works with a sound understanding of the economics of slavery, including inheritance laws. Because the slave culture denies black people personhood, their children can only inherit slavery. Furthermore, her plan to create a false journey causes Flint to spend much money as a sunken cost. Jacobs realizes that he will spend his profits on recovering her physical body. She causes Flint to waste money searching for her in New York. She understands the journey for

freedom and manipulates that journey to convince Flint to spend his money. Rather than focusing on attempts to mimic white womanhood, Jacobs has a keen sense of economics outside of the home and uses this knowledge to dismantle a racialized narrative. She successfully avoids Flint's sexual advances and works to bankrupt him in the process.

Black Bodies in the North

While Jacobs relies on the female slave experience to challenge the hypocrisy behind a racialized form of womanhood, Harriet E. Wilson's *Our Nig* establishes a different form of personhood and womanhood for free blacks in the North and dismantles narratives that claim racial injustices reside only in the South. She voices the truth that there are two United States of America in the so-called free North, one for whites and one for blacks. Black workers could not earn equal wages and had difficulty securing employment to support themselves and their families with necessities such as basic shelter and food. Like Jacobs, Wilson creates an autobiographical novel. Wilson's work may appear frenetic, but this hybridization reveals her deep understanding of how these economic and social systems mimic the frenetic and unstable existence of the socially dead. She creates an African American novel that offers a counter-narrative to domestic novels that tell blacks that they are free once they arrive in the North.

Lost Womanhood emerges as a viable form of womanhood akin to Wilson's rebellion. Henry Louis Gates Jr., Eric Gardner, and Barbara White have unearthed the story of a young black woman who experiences horrific violence and provides an alternative narrative for black women and the black community that faces the north's racialized spaces. Much scholarly work has focused on Wilson's experiences with publishing and selling her book, and these experiences reveal the need for a category of womanhood that acknowledges

the rift between black women's voices and True Womanhood's insistence on racial constructions. Gardner asserts that the abolitionist world purposefully avoided Wilson's text. He argues that Wilson's abolitionist characters are weak and ineffectual, and the novel's end includes a marriage to a false abolitionist who claims to have escaped from slavery. This abolitionist abandons his family, leaving a sickly adult Frado to survive in a North with no place for her desires for equal wages. Given Rand's publishing power in the nineteenth century, Wilson's text should have been available to abolitionist circles, but Gardner's research reveals that more young white people owned her book than abolitionists.

Gates' scholarship begins delving into how Wilson understands New England's slave history. New England and its shipping harbors trafficked slaves, so its slave past conflicts with its mid-nineteenth-century freedom narrative. Mags' interracial relationship from *Our Nig* shores up the racialized gender and womanhood constructions that permeate throughout the North. Moreover, Elizabeth J. West articulates the notion that womanhood is the best possible mirror through which to understand how a white culture uses marriage and reproduction against black bodies even when the black community has resided there for many years. Wilson's decision to tell the story of an interracial relationship provides a previously and purposefully ignored description of domestic history. Mags' relationship makes evident the existence of a black community that she can turn to when she cannot escape the consequences of sex out of marriage. It also reinforces that the racialized economy of the North is not about freedom but rather more continuing ideologies that refuse to allow black people economic stability.

When Gates reintroduces Wilson's *Our Nig* to the literary world, he and scholars Eric Gardner and Barbara White began the task of bringing Harriet E. Wilson's life to the

academic world. Much like many women from the nineteenth century, women are often in documents about men. Gardner's research shows that Harriet appears in documents as Hattie and more definitive evidence appears on Thomas Wilson's 1853 death certificate, which includes his wife's name from their 1851 marriage. Her son George's death certificate also confirms her identity and race.[13] White's research also shows that Joshua and Irene Fisher Hutchinson may have taken in her son George when Wilson experienced poverty despite working as a seamstress, a house servant, and selling hair products. Revealing that the Bellmonts most likely describe the Hayward family, White's work helps validate the fictional *Our Nig's* autobiographical nature. In fact, Foreman shows that Wilson may have based the character Mags on her mother, Margaret Smith. Foreman appropriately wonders why a small local paper paid so much attention to one black woman. He uncovered an obituary in *The Farmer's Cabinet* that describes Margaret Ann Smith, whose body was discovered living with a black man, and she died as a result of a violent beating after drinking a "pint of raw rum" (Foremen 127). The newspaper obituary describes her as a black woman, and Foreman asks essential questions about her situation. Is she a black woman because she lives with a black man, or is she racially mixed? Is she white but has a relationship with a black man? Gardner does not have a definitive answer, and these types of questions prove that a new form of womanhood better positions black women's voices.

As a Lost Woman, Wilson spends most of her life navigating death spaces and economies. John Ernest researches her career as a medium to highlight her attempts to find a stable environment in a racialized North. Wilson's thirty-year career as a spiritualist

[13] Foreman discusses that some scholars have discovered that Wilson has been identified as white in some census records. On two documents, the 1870 census and her second marriage certificate, it appears that white is marked for race. However, other documents make it clear that Wilson is identified as black, and the 1880 census reveals that white is stricken through and MU (mulatto) replaces white. (136).

crystalizes how black women successfully navigate liminal spaces. The spiritualist resides in two spaces where the living can speak to the dead, and in this case, it makes sense that a socially dead person speaks to the actual dead. Her success as a spiritualist reveals that she understands the exoticism of black female bodies and their relationship to death, and Wilson, one of the few black mediums in the 1860s, gave lectures and private sessions. Ernest and Ferguson suggest that the spiritual movement allows her to tackle abolition, temperance, women's rights, Native American rights, and meaningful reconstruction in the South. She recognizes fellow oppressed citizens, such as indigenous people and Jim Crow's role in the South, and her role as a medium creates openings that she cannot find elsewhere. She grows into a Lyceum leader when she is elected as the Lake Group leader of children. *The Banner of Light*, a newspaper for the medium world, contained many of her advertisements and wrote pieces about her skills. Her success reveals that she was able to advocate for issues and still retain her social status as a medium, entrepreneur, and author.

However, with the racialized construction of capitalism that operates parallel to a slave economy, Wilson cannot rescue herself under capitalism, even as a spiritualist and a hair tonic entrepreneur. In *Our Nig*, Mrs. Bellmont focuses on the surplus value Frado creates for the Bellmonts when she says that "I'll beat the money out of her, if I can't get her worth any other way" (Wilson 90). Northern capitalism relies on the surplus value that comes from black workers who are paid lower wages or no wages in Frado's case. Carla Peterson explains that an industrial economy depends on black underdevelopment, much like slavery depends on black bodies (560). Wilson simultaneously captures the economic oppression that purposefully constructs a poor black community and shows that white women like Wilson's Mags fall victim to social death. When Mags first decides to live within the black community

before marrying, Jim and Mag have several conversations about money. Jim falsely believes that Mag's whiteness equals wages. He fails to realize that with their interracial marriage and children, she loses the value that whiteness can bring to a worker. Under a racialized nation, a marriage to a black man darkens her skin. In the North, Mag's children will follow the black father's condition, and because these tacit ideologies cannot be challenged in a court of law, the black community finds no recourse to remedy their own lives or futures.

Wilson calls to question the underlying problems with a form of capitalism that accepts black workers as property under the guise of indentured servitude. Simply put, indentured servitude resides in a liminal space where a worker is described as a worker but lacks protection. When Mags and Seth give away Frado's labor without a contract, Wilson cements Frado's oppressed status, and Frado lives in conditions that mirror slavery. Naomi Greyser captures the North's reality when she describes it as a space of pain and suffering that creates a false narrative of sympathy (165). Since Wilson reveals that indentured servitude plays a role in oppression, scholarship needs to understand how indentured servitude works for free blacks in the North. The Bellmonts refuse to pay Frado any wages and aggressively rely on violence to create a strong worker, much like slavery. Historically, white indentured servants had a little more negotiating power. Carla Peterson explains that traditionally indentured servants created a contract that dictated their contract terms, especially the length and location, and could even dictate the terms of their care. To further Wilson's argument that indentured servitude mirrors slavery for black people, Mary Louis Kete points out that it was standard procedure to indenture children in New England; however, a white child was not placed in a black family. Indentured servitude has legal

constraints for white citizens, but a white culture manipulates this system to deny wages to black citizens.

As the North economically fails black communities, black women cannot escape sexual violence. Wilson's text dispels the myth of the safe North. Sabine Sielke explains the complex function of rape in a country that requires racialized hierarchies. Historically, rape functions as a part of torture and lynching, which Sielke calls the "Southern Rape Complex" with a "violation of a white beauty by a black beast" (2). However, rape was never limited to the south. Cynthia Davis articulates the silence behind sexual violence when she points out that Wilson focuses on violence and pain instead of sexuality to counteract True Womanhood's insistence on chastity. Black women have no protections against this violent act. If, as Sielke points out, rape is a "transfer point for power," this violence serves as a central trope that black women veil (11). Black women writers like Truth, Jacobs, and Wilson do not directly vocalize this sexual violence not because it precludes them from True Womanhood, but more importantly, because they understand its role in True Womanhood and reject it.

As in Truth's activism and Jacob's text, Wilson conceals sexual violence. Cassandra Jackson suggests that Frado experiences same-sex sexual abuse from Mrs. Bellmont similar to the abuse Truth suffers. Jackson dissects the repeated imagery where Mrs. Bellmont gags Frado with a wood block. When rape operates as a form of torture for black citizens, Jackson examines what is silenced. She suggests that the Bellmont household cannot keep servants, and Frado is the first black girl in the house. Wilson "codes the scenes of torture to indicate rape as the expression of Mrs. Bellmont's antipathy and relies on images associated with rape: gagging and wood" (Jackson 159). Because no "discursive space, linguistic unit, or

legal idiom with which to name the sexual violation of a child by a woman" exists, Wilson must rely on codified language (Jackson 160). The codified language allows her to protect herself from reliving trauma and still lets readers understand the violence black women experience. Jackson argues that upon seeing Frado for the first time, Mrs. Bellmont points out her skin's lightness and then blackens it with sexual violence. Scholarship accepts Frado's silence as a Lost Woman, reframing it as a natural part of trauma and elevating the unspoken. Wilson calls into question the double standard of hypocrisy and racialized constructions of womanhood that True Womanhood expects.

Contrary to True Womanhood and its angel of the hearth, Wilson envisions the home as a space that violently oppresses black people when the literary world attempts to create a false narrative of northern domestic safety. The home requires more than reorganization; it must be dismantled. Leveen and others focus on Wilson's title of her novel, *Our Nig; Sketches from the Life of a Free Black in a Two-Story White House, North Showing that Slavery's Shadows Fall Even There by Our Nig*. With this title, Wilson argues that the North cannot escape its dependence on racialized constructions and narratives, especially from abolitionists who actively aim to conceal the role of black citizens in the North. Wilson's references to a plantation and to Mrs. Bellmont as a woman with southern values reiterate that the home's racialized constructions extend beyond the South. Because of the family's power in the nineteenth century, the home as a death space yields unimaginable force and violence. Mrs. Bellmont's son John articulates the power that Mrs. Bellmont holds. "Women rule the earth, and all in it" (Wilson 44). John's character speaks to the perceived power of True Womanhood, and when combined with Mrs. Bellmont's reliance on violence, this

moment emphasizes the role that violence plays when women seek power through brutal oppression.

Witnessing how her mother runs a home, Mrs. Bellmont's daughter Mary mimics the violence that will give her the most power. Learning lessons from her mother, Mary executes violence against Frado. "'Saucy, impudent nigger, you! is this the way you answer me?' and taking a large carving knife from the table, she hurled it, in her rage, at the defenceless girl" (Wilson 64). To complete the cycle of violence, she threatens to kill Frado if she mentions the knife to Aunt Abby. White mothers teach violence, and black mothers teach resistance. Focusing on Frado's second-class status, Mary only reacts to Frado with violence and does not speak this way to any of the other servants. Everyday items found in the kitchen can all be used to harm or kill Frado, and unafraid, Mary readily employs them. Mrs. Bellmont has passed down the hierarchy of marginalized citizens to her daughter. Motherless, Frado learns lessons that come from living like a slave for her formative years. Frado's behavior focuses on non-violent resistance. Even when given the opportunity, she tells Mrs. Bellmont that she will not accept any more violence rather than use direct violence. Frado tells her oppressor that she will not work for her. Frado's labor-focused resistance effectively forces Mrs. Bellmont to respond to it.

In this hierarchy, white women brutalize black bodies, showing that black women can be maimed and killed. As long as Frado resides in the Bellmont home, she cannot escape those death spaces; even her bedroom is directly connected to the kitchen. To reinforce this discussion, Miranda Green-Barteet writes about the Bellmont home and its rooms. She argues that Frado's room represents the liminal space that connects her life to the kitchen. Representing the uncertain position of black women in the North, the space between the

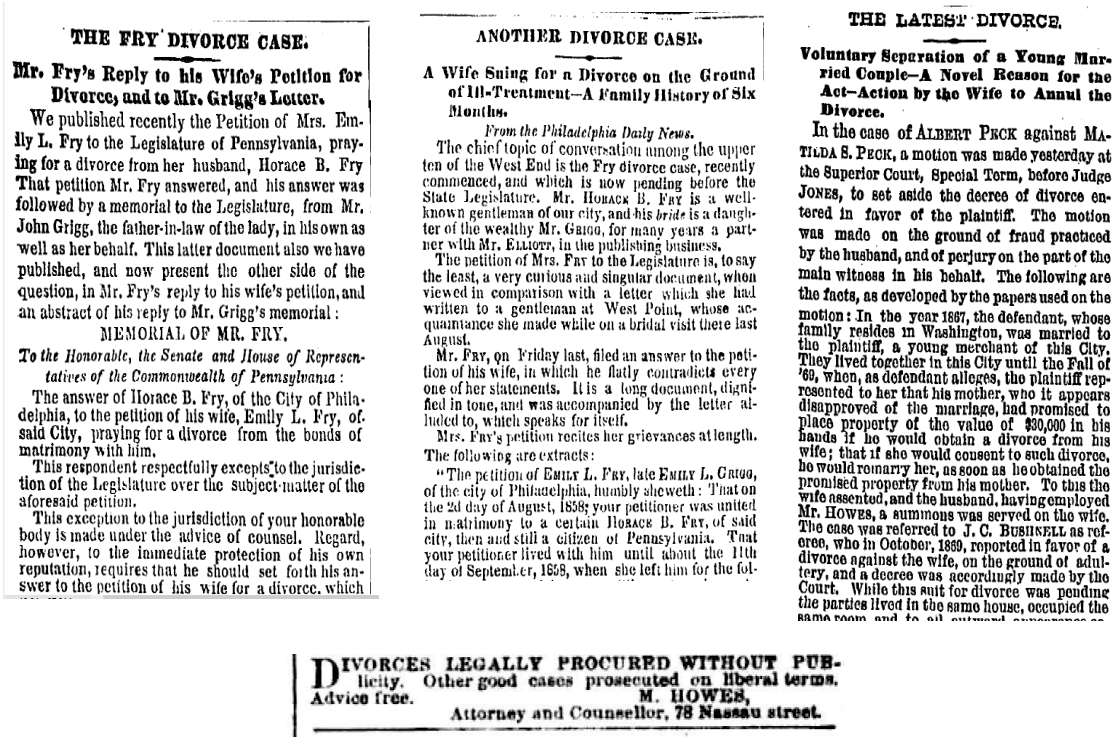
kitchen and the unfinished attic lacks a function, and this L chamber cannot exist architecturally. Black bodies in the North that refuse to integrate them lack a function. This L chamber represents Frado's status and proves that the domestic spaces that empower white women, mostly under True Womanhood, kill black women. Furthermore, when white women rule the home, the kitchens, parlors, and dining rooms are deadly for black bodies.

While most scholars focus on Frado, Mags' story explains why Lost Womanhood provides a more normative form of womanhood. Wilson appropriates the popular seduction narrative at the beginning of her novel to reveal True Womanhood's dangers. Eighteenth and nineteenth-century seduction novels may be more about the seductive role of democracy, but the plot focuses on women suffering from sexual hypocrisy. Seduced, Mags has a child out of wedlock. Much like the young slave girl giving birth in Jacobs' novel, Mags gives voice to her relief when her daughter dies. She describes her newborn's death as a "blessed release" and knows that the mother's sins will follow her daughter (Wilson 6). Despite her best efforts to diminish the effects of her fall, her "new home was soon contaminated by the publicity of her fall" (7). Even though she isolates herself, hides her pregnancy, and moves after her daughter's death, her community still knows about her indiscretion. Because according to True Womanhood, if Mags can get someone to marry her, she can remedy her situation. However, when she attempts to "regain in a measure what she had lost," she fails (7). Sarah Sillin makes the critical point that True Womanhood's strict ideologies give fallen women few choices. Mags chooses to turn to the black community because her white circle condemns her pregnancy. It is no coincidence that Mags' reaction to her infant daughter's immediate death parallels many black mothers' reactions upon giving birth. Wilson makes it evident that those believers in True Womanhood lack compassion and empathy.

Wilson's opening page immediately questions a society that lacks compassion for all of its members. White women occupy death spaces as well, and their status does not stop them from using violence against fellow oppressed citizens or castigating them. They do not fully recognize how this status impacts their own lives. "Alas, how fearful are we to be first in extending a helping hand to those who stagger in the mires of infamy; to speak the first words of hope and warning to those emerging in the sunlight of morality!" (7). Wilson appropriates the seduction plot to show that the category of marginalized citizens includes white women. Silin notes Wilson's choice to include a white mother who cannot fight the fallen-woman label because it questions the success and power of reform. Frado's mother Mags reinforces the idea that race and poverty are connected; within nineteenth-century cultural practices, the mother as savior cannot work for any woman. Wilson shows that white women can become black through constructions of race, and when Mags turns to the free black community, she must relinquish her whiteness. As a black community member, she faces poverty and even chooses to abandon her children because of her low wages. In her white community, she is no longer white, but she cannot hide her whiteness in the black community. In Lost Womanhood, scholarship rescues Wilson, Frado, and Mags while avoiding the sisterhood trap.

For women like Truth, Wilson, and Jacobs, who immediately challenged racialized gender ideologies, Lost Womanhood reframes resistance and rebellion as a natural and immediate responses to oppression. Because the very definition of True Womanhood relies on submission, women of color in the nineteenth century recognize their place outside of it. Lost Womanhood names that space and frames the productive actions of these women in terms other than failure. Most importantly, Lost Womanhood refuses to let True Womanhood

falsely claim a master tongue and deny the journey for personhood. Lost Women outnumber True Woman, and in a new framework, these voices stand on their own. Lost Womanhood's emphasis on black womanhood as a point beginning reinforces the truth that all women are oppressed citizens. black women's intensified status of oppression creates a barometer to examine the strategies women employed to change their situations. More nineteenth-century women simply did not accept True Womanhood as a guiding principle. They saw its limitations, its failures, and its violence.



THE FRY DIVORCE CASE.

Mr. Fry's Reply to his Wife's Petition for Divorce, and to Mr. Grigg's Letter.

We published recently the Petition of Mrs. Emily L. Fry to the Legislature of Pennsylvania, praying for a divorce from her husband, Horace B. Fry That petition Mr. Fry answered, and his answer was followed by a memorial to the Legislature, from Mr. John Grigg, the father-in-law of the lady, in his own as well as her behalf. This latter document also we have published, and now present the other side of the question, in Mr. Fry's reply to his wife's petition, and an abstract of his reply to Mr. Grigg's memorial:

MEMORIAL OF MR. FRY.

To the Honorable, the Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania:

The answer of Horace B. Fry, of the City of Philadelphia, to the petition of his wife, Emily L. Fry, of said City, praying for a divorce from the bonds of matrimony with him.

This respondent respectfully excepts to the jurisdiction of the Legislature over the subject-matter of the aforesaid petition.

This exception to the jurisdiction of your honorable body is made under the advice of counsel. Regard, however, to the immediate protection of his own reputation, requires that he should set forth his answer to the petition of his wife for a divorce, which

ANOTHER DIVORCE CASE.

A Wife Suing for a Divorce on the Ground of Ill-Treatment—A Family History of Six Months.

From the Philadelphia Daily News.

The chief topic of conversation among the upper ten of the West End is the Fry divorce case, recently commenced, and which is now pending before the State Legislature. Mr. HORACE B. FRY is a well-known gentleman of our city, and his *bride* is a daughter of the wealthy Mr. GRIGG, for many years a partner with Mr. ELLIOTT, in the publishing business.

The petition of Mrs. FRY to the Legislature is, to say the least, a very curious and singular document, when viewed in comparison with a letter which she had written to a gentleman at West Point, whose acquaintance she made while on a bridal visit there last August.

Mr. FRY, on Friday last, filed an answer to the petition of his wife, in which he flatly contradicts every one of her statements. It is a long document, dignified in tone, and was accompanied by the letter alluded to, which speaks for itself.

Mrs. FRY's petition recites her grievances at length. The following are extracts:

"The petition of EMILY L. FRY, late EMILY L. GRIGG, of the city of Philadelphia, humbly sheweth: That on the 2d day of August, 1858; your petitioner was united in matrimony to a certain HORACE B. FRY, of said city, then and still a citizen of Pennsylvania. That your petitioner lived with him until about the 11th day of September, 1858, when she left him for the fol-

THE LATEST DIVORCE.

Voluntary Separation of a Young Married Couple—A Novel Reason for the Act—Action by the Wife to Annul the Divorce.

In the case of ALBERT PECK against MATILDA S. PECK, a motion was made yesterday at the Superior Court, Special Term, before Judge JONES, to set aside the decree of divorce entered in favor of the plaintiff. The motion was made on the ground of fraud practiced by the husband, and of perjury on the part of the main witness in his behalf. The following are the facts, as developed by the papers used on the motion: In the year 1867, the defendant, whose family resides in Washington, was married to the plaintiff, a young merchant of this City. They lived together in this City until the Fall of '69, when, as defendant alleges, the plaintiff represented to her that his mother, who it appears disapproved of the marriage, had promised to place property of the value of $30,000 in his hands if he would obtain a divorce from his wife; that if she would consent to such divorce, he would remarry her, as soon as he obtained the promised property from his mother. To this the wife assented, and the husband, having employed Mr. HOWES, a summons was served on the wife. The case was referred to J. C. BUSHNELL as referee, who in October, 1869, reported in favor of a divorce against the wife, on the ground of adultery, and a decree was accordingly made by the Court. While this suit for divorce was pending the parties lived in the same house, occupied the

DIVORCES LEGALLY PROCURED WITHOUT PUBlicity. Other good cases prosecuted on liberal terms. Advice free.
M. HOWES,
Attorney and Counsellor, 78 Nassau street.

Chapter Two

Lost in Divorce: Social Death and the Haunting of the Domestic Novel

On July 2nd, 1857, the *New York Times* ran the story "A New Phase of the Dalton Case—Strange Developments—Personal Encounter." This article tells the story of family discord when a father seeks a divorce on his daughter's behalf, and nineteenth-century laws support the father's ability to intervene in his daughter's marriage. As the story unfolds, the article speculates on the veracity of the father's intervention, especially because the young man and woman were often seen together in public. Despite the father's attempt to force a divorce on the couple, they found ways to communicate and spend an evening together. In a strange turn of events, the young man, Mr. B. F. Dalton, responds to the article, stating that he "[had] not seen her but once since the trial" ("New Phase of the Dalton Case" 5). Dalton explains that he was "arranging for a new trial of divorce, and [was] consulting with his

friends respecting the best course to adopt to secure a legal release from his wife" ("New Phase" 5). It would seem that the father was able to pressure his son-in-law to divorce his daughter, and the husband's willingness shores up the fact that marriage resembles a business transaction between men. Much like lost and runaway advertisements, the divorce story reveals how institutional powers constantly reiterate second-class citizenship. Because the private is made public, these divorces were fodder for newspapers; smaller local papers and larger urban papers relied on the airing of grievances for sales. As women did not have the right to privacy, laws often required public testimonies and forced unhappy families together even in the face of physical and financial violence. Lost Womanhood recognizes two contrasting narratives: a clear demand for divorce in newspapers and a clear denial of this demand in domestic novels.

A New Phase of the Dalton Case—Strange Developments—Personal Encounter.

From the Boston Bee of Tuesday.

The *Traveller* of Saturday evening contained the following:

RUMORED EPISODE TO A DIVORCE CASE.—It is stated that the father of the lady defendant in the divorce case which, with its attending circumstances, lately made such a general stir in this community, announced his intention Friday to make legal application for authority to pursue and recover his daughter, who had disappeared from the city under such circumstances as to lead to the supposition that she had actually *eloped with her husband!* The father had his fears for the personal safety of his daughter, but we have no *reason* to believe that there is any ground for the apprehension of any result of a tragical character from so natural an occurrence as the flight together of husband and wife.

This announcement took the public somewhat by surprise, although while many (who had become familiar by the incidents brought to light during the long and tedious trial with the history of the warm affection still existing between the young couple) believed in the truth of the rumor, yet a great majority were disposed to look upon the matter as a very good joke. On Saturday, MRS. DALTON was seen on the street in company with some ladies, and there was every reason to believe that no elopement or strange circumstance had taken place. But it now appears that that circumstance, strange as it may appear, did occur, to prove that the course of "true love" never did run smooth, as somebody has said.

We have been put in the possession of the developments, and coming, as the narrative does, from reliable parties we give currency to the same. Our informant says that since the trial for divorce the respondent and libellant have cherished a mutual desire for reconciliation, and the former has met the advances of the latter, as eagerly as they were tendered. Baskets and bouquets of exquisite flowers have often been employed to convey to the young and loving wife love's unwritten language; and these tokens of holy affection have as often been readily responded to. Private meetings, too, it is said, have taken place, with an occasional ride amid the delightful environs of our City, where, surrounded by the beauty and freshness of early Summer, they recounted the happy hours

Figure 5 Divorce article July 2nd, 1857

Even though many women faced terrible, violent, or bigamous marriages often described in newspaper articles, the domestic novel insists on marriage reform that wants women to accept violence rather than divorce as a solution. As a manual for True Womanhood, the domestic novel teaches women to accept their secondary social status and its relationship to violence to secure a future for patriarchy. Mary Kelley explains that even though the domestic novel undeniably and unabashedly promotes marriage as a national responsibility, citizens wanted divorce. Glenda Riley and Norma Basch's research shows that

many people sought and achieved divorce, despite its scandalous and public nature.[14] As a category, Lost Womanhood examines the contradiction between the national desire for divorce and the domestic novel's insistence on gendered ideologies. As Amy Kaplan and Jane Tompkins have proven, the domestic novel and True Womanhood uphold the dangerous cultural work of a patriarchal system where marriage upholds a system of rights, responsibilities, and institutions that further deny women rights. However, the category of Lost Womanhood imagines a world where marriage reform fails because of marriage's legal and cultural dependence on women's marginal status. Divorce was not an easy decision for women. Depending on state laws, divorced women could never remarry or could remarry only after the husband remarried or after a period of years. Divorce meant that a woman and her family might find themselves in poverty. As a concept, Lost Womanhood calls into question these structural ideologies that require women to endure violence without legal recourse. While women might be hidden in the legal arrangement of marriage, they were lost in divorce as socially dead subjects who haunt the domestic novel.

History of Divorce

As women had their voting rights stripped away, their history of divorce also vanished. Historian Clare Lyons discusses self-divorce's prevalence in late eighteenth-century Philadelphia. Lyons finds that because of the British law's distance and the cost of legal divorce, women often walked away from marriages, and in reaction, their husbands

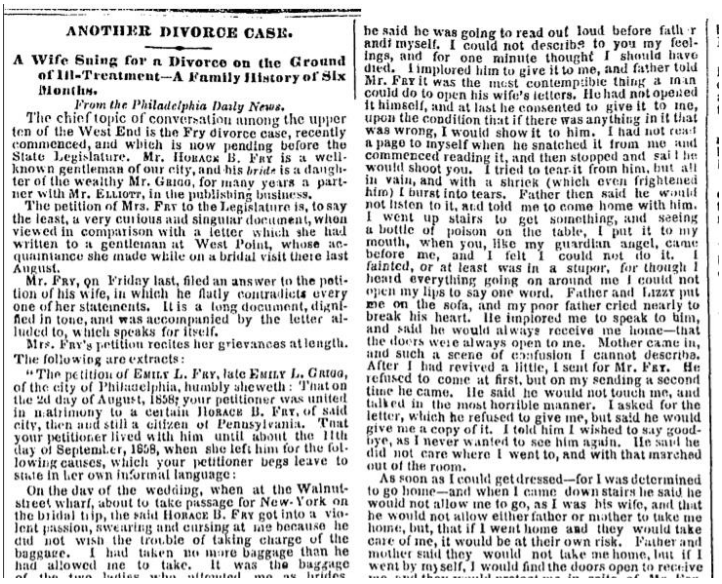
[14] In 1907, Joseph Hill, an American statistician, analyzed trends in divorce and marriage in the United States. His report "Statistics of Divorce" reveals that from 1867 to the turn of the century marriage and divorce rates increased steadily from year to year. In the last decade of the 19th century, divorce rates outpaced marriage rates. Hill tabulated that divorce increased by 27.9% from 1872-1876 and 30.3 % from 1877-1881. While Hill attributes these dramatic increases in divorce to financial panics, living conditions in western states, and occupations, the fact remains that more Americans were willing to divorce than in other European countries.

placed runaway wife advertisements in local papers. Between 1726 and 1786, 841 husbands placed these runaway wife advertisements in Philadelphia's *American Weekly Mercury*. The law stated that the husband must support the wife even if the couple chooses to live apart. However, if his wife "eloped from him," the husband was no longer financially responsible (Lyons 18). Lyons explains that most social circles "recognized and respected" this alternate means of divorce (15). Additionally, husbands could also cry "a wife throughout the town or [post] notices around the neighborhood, declaring a wife had eloped and proclaimed the termination of the marriage," and a more infamous method of self-divorce was the "transferred guardianship of his wife to another man" (16). The less common wife sale "required bringing a wife to market with a noose around her neck and engaging in a ritualized mock sale to her new husband" (16). This open circumventing of the law suggests that before independence, the overwhelming need for self-determination superseded marital expectations.

Basch and Riley document beyond a shadow of a doubt that the divorce question preoccupies the nation as states decide how to best deal with its overwhelming support. Glenda Riley reveals that divorce serves as a metaphor for the American Revolution, demonstrating that the beginning of US culture is invested heavily in separation. Basch further connects the marriage contract to maintaining social hierarchies and social order as a way to curb the revolutionary spirit so that nation-building can begin. As states begin to form their laws about divorce, they now have the potential to "undermine the contract of marriage" and thus shake up "the foundations of social order" (3). The domestic novel's powers intervene in this divorce narrative and transcend beyond taste-making into the world of

nation-building based on republican and patriarchal ideologies that required women to accept their second-class status in marriage.

Marriage was not always the sacred event that True Womanhood and the domestic novel espouse. For instance, the Fry Case in 1859 became so sensational that the *New York Times* ran almost all of Mrs. Emily Fry's grievances from her original petition. Her husband ran a lengthy response to these accusations in the *New York Times* on February 26, 1859, two weeks after the *Times* ran their article "Another Divorce Case." In her petition for divorce, Mrs. Emily Fry alleged that Mr. Fry was a violent man who had hidden his true nature from her father. Mr. Fry lost his temper over how much baggage her bridesmaids brought with them. She claimed he threatened to kill her several times once they arrived at West Point. She alleged that he told her that he married her for her money and was waiting for her to die. After her husband introduced her to a young man, she began a relationship with him, which further infuriated him. To discredit her and disarm her father from any interventions, he composed a verbal attack of Emily's character in the tabloid the *Police Gazette*, a nineteenth-century New York crime-based newspaper. His decision to place his advertisement in this particular newspaper reveals his understanding of the role of the newspaper and divorce. Painting Emily as a criminal sways the court of public



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Mrs. Fry's petition recites her grievances at length. The following are extracts:

"The petition of EMILY L. FRY, late EMILY L. GRIGG, of the city of Philadelphia, humbly sheweth: That on the 2d day of August, 1858, your petitioner was united in matrimony to a certain HORACE B. FRY, of said city, then and still a citizen of Pennsylvania. That your petitioner lived with him until about the 11th day of September, 1858, when she left him for the following causes, which your petitioner begs leave to state in her own informal language:

On the day of the wedding, when at the Walnut-street wharf, about to take passage for New-York on the bridal trip, the said HORACE B. FRY got into a violent passion, swearing and cursing at me because he did not wish the trouble of taking charge of the baggage. I had taken no more baggage than he had allowed me to take. It was the baggage

he said he was going to read out loud before father and myself. I could not describe to you my feelings, and for one minute thought I should have died. I implored him to give it to me, and father told Mr. FRY it was the most contemptible thing a man could do to open his wife's letters. He had not opened it himself, and at last he consented to give it to me, upon the condition that if there was anything in it that was wrong, I would show it to him. I had not read a page to myself when he snatched it from me and commenced reading it, and then stopped and said he would shoot you. I tried to tear it from him, but all in vain, and with a shriek (which even frightened him) I burst into tears. Father then said he would not listen to it, and told me to come home with him. I went up stairs to get something, and seeing a bottle of poison on the table, I put it to my mouth, when you, like my guardian angel, came before me, and I felt I could not do it. I fainted, or at least was in a stupor, for though I heard everything going on around me I could not open my lips to say one word. Father and LIZZY put me on the sofa, and my poor father cried nearly to break his heart. He implored me to speak to him, and said he would always receive me home—that the doors were always open to me. Mother came in, and such a scene of confusion I cannot describe. After I had revived a little, I sent for Mr. FRY. He refused to come at first, but on my sending a second time he came. He said he would not touch me, and talked in the most horrible manner. I asked for the letter, which he refused to give me, but said he would give me a copy of it. I told him I wished to say good-bye, as I never wanted to see him again. He said he did not care where I went to, and with that marched out of the room.

As soon as I could get dressed—for I was determined to go home—and when I came down stairs he said he would not allow me to go, as I was his wife, and that he would not allow either father or mother to take me home, but, that if I went home and they would take care of me, it would be at their own risk. Father and mother said they would not take me home, but if I went by myself, I would find the doors open to receive

Figure 6 Divorce Article New York Times, Feb. 26, 1859

opinion and influences the judicial court. Fry manipulates gendered ideologies that describe women who do not accept their marginalized status.

The newspaper article even includes a letter that her husband found from Emily to her young lover, Mr. Grigg. The letter outlines many behaviors that she asserts in the petition and expresses a desire to end the marriage. Mr. Fry's lengthy response on February 26th is three and a half columns that contest each of Emily's assertions with a simple response: *it did not happen*. He did not have a gun with him at West Point; he did not throw furniture or hit her. He claimed that he called a doctor who found nothing wrong with Emily. He characterized her behavior as "morose, rude, and cruel," and she was destroying his happiness ("Fry Divorce Case" 2). Ironically, he ends his response with, "I had hoped that my private griefs would have remained with the small circle of parties immediately concerned" ("Fry Divorce Case" 2). As a free citizen, he expects privacy, but publicizes his case in print because he knows that the relationship between newspapers and divorce will work in his favor.

A similar situation appeared a year earlier in 1858 with the Bennett case, which describes a common road map to divorce. Mrs. Mary Bennett petitioned for a divorce because of her husband's violent behavior and failure to earn enough money to keep her family safe. She documents her married life as far back as 1850 when her husband refused to allow her to seek another doctor to help with her children's scarlet fever. Much like the Fry case, Mary Bennett alleged that her husband threw her from a chair and attacked her. She recalled a time when she believed he was trying to poison her. Most interestingly, like in the Fry case, she accused her husband of encouraging her to have an extramarital affair ("New Haven Divorce Case"). Adultery is a promising avenue to win a divorce suit. These cases tell

a story of violence that women have come to expect in marriages and are willing to describe publicly, even if they know a judge may not rule in their favor.

As cases appear in the newspapers, so did the debate about the direction of divorce. In 1870 the *New York Times* ran an article titled "The Disgrace of Indiana—The Divorce Law," where the writer condemns Indiana's lax divorce laws.[15] "We venture to say that if the Indiana legislators desire to sap public morality, substitute concubinage for marriage, degrade women, and breed a weekly and puny race of children, they could take no more efficient means than by thus making the marriage tie a farce and divorce an amusement" ("Disgrace of Indiana" 4). It would seem that the *New York Times* moves from profiting from writing about divorce cases to condemning divorce even though its earlier articles often focus on the violence and poverty that women experience. Twenty years later, in 1892, D. E. Vorse (a clever pun for a pseudonym indeed) in the Helena *Daily Independent* wrote an article outlining the various divorce rules state by state. The article placates its conservative readers by acknowledging the impact of rising divorce rates; however, the writer expresses the national attitude toward divorce. "The greatest individuality and desire for freedom in the United States, as well as the fact that she has no state religion forbidding absolute separation, would lead one to expect more divorces. Besides, women here are more independent and able to make their way in the world" (Vorce 10). While this article focuses on the western state that historically afforded more women rights, it outlines a critical aspect of divorce. When

[15] Basch and Riley discuss that historically Indiana becomes one of the states with the least restrictive divorce laws. People could take up a six-month residence in any Indiana county and file for divorce. Wives especially found access to divorce easier in Indiana.

courts began to consider poverty, cruelty, desertion, bigamy, and violence, they realized that women benefit from divorce.[16]

When True Women and their supporters eventually explore divorce, the domestic novel ultimately advocates for marriage reform and relies on anti-divorce rhetoric, as found in Southworth's *Deserted Wife* (1850), TS Arthur's *The Divorced Wife* (1850), and Howell's *A Modern Instance* (1892). Rather than mirroring the nation's desire for divorce without penalty, domestic literature transforms into an apparatus that hinges on marriage. While the cultural logic behind the domestic novel privileges a white middle-class voice that determines the True Woman and her role in society, the concept of Lost Womanhood recognizes that marriage reform cannot remedy the problem within a legal system that generally excludes women in the first place. Basch also reasons that because literature and law begin to coalesce, a divorce narrative begins to grow, and "women and men [are] beginning to make sense of divorce and assess its long-term consequences by reading divorce stories, both real and fictional" (7). When women write about divorce and challenge marriage reform rooted in patriarchal laws that depend on socially dead citizens, they displace divorce rather than directly name it. They transform the divorce narrative to make it more palatable for a nineteenth-century society that yearns for True Womanhood. Voicing the divorce narrative that dominates the newspapers allows these writers to mimic the conditions of divorce without directly naming it. Legally, women have little say in divorce laws, and with its laws and consequences, divorce silences nineteenth-century women so much that in

[16] In terms of the custody of children, largely women retained custody after a divorce and even received child support. Riley's research documents that in a "random same of fifty legislative divorce records that occurred between 1802 and 1850 [in Virginia] women always received custody of children" (39). Basch points out that when courts granted divorce on the basis of adultery on the wife's part, women lost custody of their children. An adulterous mother was deemed unfit. If a court did deny mothers custody of their children, women could get custody.

imaginative literature, displacement serves as the most productive way for Lost Women to critique their material conditions.

The category of Lost Womanhood reflects not only a desire to find marriage equality but also a world where marriage is not the all-encompassing goal of womanhood. In this new concept, Alcott, Phelps, and Howe engage in a dialogue about marriage and divorce. Marriage under patriarchy supports those who embrace True Womanhood's ideologies, and in Lost Womanhood, Alcott, Phelps, and Howe challenge male-defined relationships and regulatory systems that determine women's futures. These writers suggest alternative futures for women outside of True Womanhood's trope of marriage. One may divorce, but one may also remain single or choose not to remarry. Scholarship calls into question True Womanhood's acceptance of violence under patriarchy. Rather than find ways around it or rely on the theory of influence that insists that women can civilize men, women want to escape marriage and the double proposal with its false narrative of safety. They understand that marriage reform cannot work when True Womanhood continually insists on masculine behaviors that allow men to treat women as possessions. Women writers like Alcott, Phelps, and Howe understand that women haunt society, so to speak, from a place of Lost Womanhood that allows them to interrogate, challenge, and imagine a form of womanhood outside of submission and the theory of influence.

In the concept of Lost Womanhood, Alcott is not necessarily a feminist writer. While she often describes marriage as a "form of domestic slavery for women," her texts rely on marriage as a way of female survival (Cheever 169). In the trajectory of Alcott scholarship, research often focuses on her successful novels, such as *Little Women*. When her pseudonym, A.M. Barnard, came to light, feminist scholars began to reframe her life and works, and a

new Alcott came into view. In 1978, Madeline B. Stern describes Alcott as an angry feminist with her short story "Behind a Mask:"

> In July 1975, *Behind a Mask: The Unknown Thrillers of Louisa May Alcott* was published, followed a year later by *Plots and Counterplots: More Unknown Thrillers of Louisa May Alcott*. Those collections of nine blood-and-thunder narratives written during the 1860s before the appearance of *Little Women* and never before assembled reflected a totally different image of Louisa Alcott who achieved fame as *The Children's Friend*. In those stories, most of them pseudonymous or anonymous, the author had wielded a lurid pen, invented plots of violence and revenge, and created heroines who were not only proud and passionate but filled with feminist anger. The manipulations of those obliquely feminist heroines of Louisa Alcott's salad days prompted many readers to view the author as a militant feminist herself, a previously unacclaimed leader in women's causes. ("Louisa Alcott's Feminist Letters" 429)

Stern's phrasing of a "lurid pen" and "plots of violence and revenge" echoes the Women's Rights Movement of the 1970s more than Alcott's nineteenth-century voice. Although Stern's argument makes room for scholars to examine sexuality and power in Alcott's gothic sensual work, this reductive connection to the first-wave feminist movement problematizes Alcott's scholarship. The category of Lost Womanhood better frames Alcott outside of a 1970s feminism that cannot reconcile the complexity of nineteenth-century womanhood.

Like other white middle-class women writers, Alcott does not remain in one category. Her novels that portray women as submissive domestic healers sell well, and her successes allow her to provide for her family. As Alcott scholars like Susan Cheever have documented, Alcott's family and larger-than-life father, Bronson Alcott, influenced her writings and

choice to remain unmarried. Additionally, the influences of Emerson, Fuller, and other literary powerhouses made for a woman who understood how to profit from publishing. Alcott's gothic short stories more accurately capture the tension within her own life and her relationship to her texts. As a concept, Lost Womanhood better explores the tension between Alcott's fictional True Women and Lost Women. Through the nineteenth-century British governess in her short story "Behind a Mask," a long-studied example of labor, class, and gender, Alcott examines True Womanhood's dependence on the marriage contract and the realities of divorce for women.

Like Alcott, literary scholarship has difficulty finding a category to describe Elizabeth Stuart Phelps. Most nineteenth-century literary scholars have categorized her as a New Woman writer because her writing career extends to the turn of the century. Her open and unabashed examination of marriage and the role of professional women does resemble New Womanhood's rhetoric. Scholars Christine Stansell and Sylvia Jenkins Cook have avoided labeling her a New Woman and instead describe her as a Diana figure.[17] Lost Womanhood offers a more complex approach to Phelps. While she may question the insufficient True Womanhood and its insistence on marriage to imagine life for a professional woman, she also critiques New Womanhood's form that does not radically change its attitudes toward masculinity and femininity within gendered spheres. In fact, Phelps finds great success in her literary career because she imagines a world where women work outside of the home and resist marriage. Karen Tracy provides a look into the backward and forward-looking writer

[17] For Stanstell and Cook, Diana, the Roman goddess of the wild and the hunt, represents Phelps' use of sexually charged nature imagery where Avis "riots in sinuous fields and over raging seascapes" (Stanstell 248). Because of Avis' independence and resistance to marriage, she becomes a Diana figure who tries to guard her future.

that “negotiates between old and new loyalties” (149). Her attitude toward temperance and morality reiterates True Womanhood’s insistence on the civilizing effect and moral influence of women. Simultaneously, her texts challenge marriage as a singular goal for women and the lack of professional opportunities for women. In her *Story of Avis,* Phelps does not directly name divorce, and she does not need to pen this word. For Phelps, divorce does not save women and their families. Gender ideologies, with the support of a legal system and patriarchal culture, ensure that women face a deadly future even after divorce. To suggest an alternative narrative, she displaces divorce and marriage into death.

Along with Phelps, Julia Ward Howe appropriates death as a metaphor for womanhood, especially in marriage. While Howe’s traditional literary endeavors typically espouse True Womanhood and its ideologies, her unfinished and unpublished manuscript, *The Hermaphrodite,* critiques True Womanhood’s components and rigid ideologies by suggesting that the lives and experiences of women cannot be contained in limited types and tropes. Howe’s work cements the fact that True Womanhood was never stable or fixed and that Lost Womanhood is far more normative. The category of Lost Womanhood affords her the opportunity to rightfully argue that like intersex bodies, the female body inherently exists in a socially dead status.

Lost Womanhood examines how a female-driven divorce narrative looks distinctive in the writings of Alcott, Phelps, and Howe. Because the cultural work of the novel upholds True Womanhood’s gender and cultural ideologies, these writers create narratives that depend on displacement. One of the key differences found in novels that displace divorce is the single woman character with (sometimes) an absent mother, otherwise known as the redundant woman. Rather than rely on a single woman whose only goal is marriage and

submission, Alcott, Phelps, and Howe create a cast of single women who function as a symbol for the complex experiences of nineteenth-century women. Phelps' *Story of Avis* relies on spinsters and widows: Aunt Chole, who does not resist marriage or see value in her freedom, and Avis, whose widowhood saves her and her daughter. In *The Hermaphrodite*, Howe creates a trio of unmarried sisters: engaged Nina and perpetually single Briseida and Gigia. In her 1866 short story "Behind a Mask; Or, A Woman's Power," Alcott complicates the single woman by making her a governess to underscore the terrible realities female citizens must navigate. These characters allow these writers to displace divorce to mirror the consequences of divorce for women.

Single and Unmarried Bodies

Published in the family and literary newspaper, *The Flag of Our Union*, Alcott's 1866 short story "Behind a Mask; Or, A Woman's Power" reimagines the governess novel to explore the ramifications of legal divorce for women. The governess's invisible labor supports wealthy families. Despite being paid very little, the title governess creates its own liminal space because, in the United States, a young unmarried woman has more freedoms than a married woman. However, the governess fills the domestic responsibility of a family, and if the husband is a widow, she plays the role of wife. Simply because the governess acts as wife and mother, she becomes socially dead and loses her personhood.[18] The most alluring part of the governess job is the possibility of marrying into wealth. With little money and no property, she must secure a future, so there is an expectation that she will find a wealthy husband who willingly looks past her status or wishes to marry her because she has been

[18] Mary Poovey, Margaret McFadden, and Melanie Dawson explore the role of the governess in European and American cultures.

play-acting the role of wife and mother. Alcott's narrative reveals that the United States replicates limitations from couverture and divorce laws for its female citizens. Because Alcott proposes a scenario with a governess as a divorced woman, Jean Muir lives in a twice-divorced state of existence: one of legal divorce and the other as a governess, divorced from proper standing within a family. "Behind a Mask" scrutinizes the haunting effects and scandalous consequences of legal divorce for women.

Indeed, it is Alcott's contention that women fare worse than men in both marriage and divorce. As long as laws favor men, divorce will not free women. In "Behind a Mask," Jean Muir admits to having married a "disreputable" actor. To earn a living for herself after her divorce, Jean leaves for Paris to find governess positions. This choice is telling because the British governess story follows young unwed women–not divorcées–looking for financial stability in a marriage. With this choice, Alcott transforms the governess into an elaborate metaphor for divorce to explore how white women survive the shackles of gender ideologies. Because divorced women often cannot find employment that will support them and their families, these women rely on rebellious strategies to find a way to survive either on their own or with a new husband. Alcott illustrates that unmarried women and women on the domestic fringe and unmarried women threaten True Womanhood and its ideologies. Alcott illustrates that women of divorce, like the governess, have few options, and this specter quality forces them to become exceedingly adept at finding financial stability.

Given divorce's stigma and the marriage contract's strength, Alcott reveals that women need to manipulate or reverse gender expectations to escape social death. In a conversation with Gerald, she fervently reinforces a desire for independence. "I love my freedom, I have no wish to marry at this man's bidding. What can I do? How can I keep my

freedom?" (Barnard 665). Jean invokes the American suffrage talk of 1866 to reveal that she understands that laws, like divorce laws, deny women rights. This governess symbol reveals the disenfranchised status of a wife. Much like the governess, the wife haunts a marriage, and marriage haunts her. Residing in the liminal space of personhood, she cannot find full citizenship rights.

Alcott appropriates Jean's specter status to offer one advantage— the ability to maneuver and control perceptions. Although Alcott's narrator reveals the "magic" of Jean's "spell," the family (except for Gerald) sees her as a mere governess (Barnard 649). Upon her arrival, the narrator identifies the protagonist Jean Muir as an actress that lies about everything from her family to her age. "She was the perfect mistress of her art" (649). This "uncanny specimen" never allows her new family to get a grasp of her true self (649). She ignores no detail from the walk from the train station to the timing of her entrance. Purposefully manipulating perceptions, Jean's plain clothing and ordinary appearance complete the governess image. The narrator points out that the family should pay attention. "But something in the lines betrayed strength, and the clear, low voice had a curious mixture of command and entreaty in its varying tones" (649). They could see the truth if they only look. She even slips into a Scottish accent when she pretends to faint. Despite Jean's best attempt at controlling her anger, her true feelings surface. Her performance reveals True Womanhood as an understandable construction, and Jean Muir dismantles this so-called fixed category.

Her performance calls into question True Womanhood's ideologies that require frailty as its lynchpin, and Jean is no frail True Woman. When Jean relies on her anger to upend gendered behavior, she interrogates the image of the silent woman. As Mrs. Coventry

comments on fainting fits, Jean cannot contain her anger. “But at the instant [her eyes] seemed black with some strong emotion of anger, pride, or defiance” (639). What follows reveals her magic’s true power: Alcott’s inversion of a tea service, a ritual of True Womanhood. According to gendered behaviors, the governess and the wife are expected to be domestic servants. Edward attempts to make tea to soothe Jean, who faints from what she claims is hunger. His disastrous attempt empowers her, and she gains the upper hand through the trope of the frail woman and forces Edward into the domestic act of serving tea. By manipulating gender roles, Jean challenges True Womanhood.

Because of her knowledge of gender expectations and the marriage contract, Jean Muir triumphs at every turn but is not without doubters. Despite the fact that Gerald recognizes Jean’s duplicity, he still finds her performance irresistible. This performance is so important that as long as she presents as a True Woman, Gerald will look past his doubts even when she slips out of character. When Lucia asks Gerald his opinion about Jean’s physical appearance, his response focuses on his inability to read Jean. He describes her as “a most uncanny little specimen” (Barnard 649). However, his ability to recognize her slippage does little to save him because of his assumptions about his power. He assumes that the title of wife will ensure that she complies with expected submissive behavior. He becomes entangled in her scheme even despite reading his friend Sydney’s cautionary letters that warn him of Jean’s previous attempts at marriage. No matter what the men write about her, Jean still succeeds in her pursuit of marriage as an interlude that will provide her with stability and a possible beneficial widow status.

To prevent reading Jean Muir as a cautionary tale of women who control their fates, the concept of Lost Womanhood acknowledges the concrete limitations that women face and

how they must maneuver to either avoid or secure an advantageous marriage. Through the single governess trope, Alcott permits Jean to control the male gaze. After securing her position with Sir John, she speaks to Gerald, where he confesses his troubling desire for Jean. "You make a slave of me already. How do you do it? I never obeyed a woman before. Jean, I think you are a witch. Scotland is the home of weird, uncanny creatures, who take lovely shapes for the bedevilment of poor weak souls. Are you one of those fair deceivers?" (Barnard 681). Not a reformed single man, Gerald labels a woman who challenges rigid gender expectations as a deceiver and liar. His admission of submission reveals the anxiety that lies behind a shift in power dynamics in gender. Because of Jean's power, Gerald no longer can rely on traditional gendered expectations to maintain a masculine identity. Alcott renders Jean so powerful that she manipulates a man into acting contrary to his best interest. Alcott refuses to let the fear of a civil death deny Jean her narrative control. "I am a witch, and one day my disguise will drop away and you will see me as I am, old, ugly, bad and lost. Beware of me in time. I've warned you. Now love me at your peril" (Barnard 681). Her understanding of gender expectations and the ability to control her fate in the marriage contract creates the label of witch. She realizes Gerald knows too much, and eventually, his affections will wane because he does not want to hold the second-class status in marriage.

While Alcott focuses on the single governess trope, Phelps examines spinsterhood and widowhood to displace divorce. In the 1877 *Story of Avis*, Phelps calls into question the well-intentioned single sister who perpetuates True Womanhood's ideals. Aunt Chloe chooses to find a relationship that resembles remarriage. Aunt Chloe, "of excellent Vermont intentions," invokes the northern abolitionist women who perpetuate True Womanhood ideals (*Story of Avis* 26). A specter waiting to fill the role of mother, she even prays about

Avis' father Dobel's request to help with Avis' domestic training. Aunt Chloe arrives ready to embrace the "most difficult of human tasks, the training of another woman's child" (Phelps 26). As a part of the True Womanhood network, she can pass down those lessons of submission that Avis has avoided for most of her life. Quickly disappointed with Avis' failures at bread making and her lack of domestic skills, Aunt Chloe only rises to the occasion to reiterate the lessons of True Womanhood when she could experience greater freedoms. True Womanhood's success relies on women haunting other women, and when mothers are absent, daughters can question their future outside of marriage, but other women will step in to fill that role. Nancy Theroit discusses mothers and daughters creating a kinship that serves patriarchy. "The boundary-fuzziness between mothers and daughters affects the content of feminine ideology because it prepares the girl for an overrelated life, a life in which she defines herself only in relation to others" (63). Theriot describes women who were "active agents" in passing along definitions of womanhood (63). It seems that even when men and women are brothers and sisters, they sometimes mimic gendered behaviors and expectations from marriage. Avis' father Dobel and her aunt Chloe recreate an incestuous marriage, making it evident that gender ideologies force women into these roles even when an alternate gender ideology exists, such as New Womanhood. The novel focuses on Avis, but Aunt Chloe's insistence on marriage reveals that True Womanhood still asks her to be responsible for marriage and domestic duties as a replacement mother. True Womanhood's dangerous lessons eventually find their way to Avis.

Phelps interrogates marriage reform and the country's interest in divorce without significant social changes by questioning how daughters are raised. With an absent mother, a woman can realize that she cannot civilize men. In her 1871 essay "The True Woman," she

focuses on the problem of True Womanhood when she writes, “Woman is not man’s ward and man is not woman’s guardian” (270). Women cannot be seen as exclusively responsible for civilizing men, and men cannot protect women from a system that only serves men. Despite Avis’ freedom, her father believes that “it is proper that little girls should learn to sew and cook” (*Story of Avis* 28). Even though he allows her to develop her artistic skills, he still reinforces the ideology of the natural role of wife and her role in marriage. Because of True Womanhood’s strength, when one mother dies, another will step in to provide those lessons. Aunt Chloe means to replicate what Theroit describes as “the necessity of female self-sacrifice, womanly submission, and the equation of self with gender role [that] was part of the gender script middle-class daughters of the mid-century period inherited from their mother” (Theroit 62). Powerful networks within True Womanhood and eventually New Womanhood reiterate and spread gender ideologies rather than challenge them.

What saves Avis is Ostrander’s trip to France, which allows her to earn her own money from her paintings, and her career flourishes. Phelps makes clear that education alone cannot save women from the lives of domestic labor. Divorce, too, creates problems for women because they cannot earn enough money to support themselves or their families. Laws that prevent remarriage and divorce’s stigma may prevent women from finding a new marriage. As if to remind women that husbands can return from trips to diminish their successes, Phelps kills off the husband and son. Ostrander never recovers from his illness and dies on their trip to Florida. Both the father and son die within this new marriage. As a spinster widow, Avis returns to her father’s home to enjoy a career and model a new type of womanhood outside of True or New Womanhood for her daughter, Wait.

Unlike Aunt Chloe, Avis experiences a life without forms of masculinity pressing on them. Widowhood provides women with a cover. Some will assume that she has accepted her widowed status and remain a perpetual wife when in reality, for some, a husband's death frees them. As a widow, Avis has survived marriage. Ironically, she will appear to be a faithful wife, and society rewards her solidarity and loyalty to her dead husband. Widowhood provides a level of freedom where some women can choose to live independently, but Phelps imagines a world where a son dies, so he cannot continue the practice of marriage in a legal system that favors men. For Phelps, the spinster widow status provides the most opportunity for Avis to embrace her freedom of widowhood without men in her household. This strong condemnation of the marriage contract and divorce laws reveals that when roles are reversed, men pay a high price as well: the single reformed man has no future in Lost Womanhood.

Phelps recognizes that most forms of womanhood require conformity and blind acceptance, and even knowledge of these practices cannot prevent women from considering marriage. In "True Woman," she writes, "In truth, this entire notion of regulating the position of women by conformity to an established ideal of womanly character is, both in theory and in practice, almost the bounds of sober argument" (270). Even Phelps feels the pull of marriage. Ronna Coffey Privett documents a letter that Phelps writes to John Greenleaf Whittier expressing her loneliness. "We ought each of us to have married somebody when we were young. But, as you say, it is too late now" (qtd in Privett 200). When she eventually marries Herbert D. Ward, she writes to Whittier, saying that he was a "very good husband" (qtd in Privett 201). Phelps scholars have documented the bewilderment people expressed when she married and were not surprised when her marriage fell apart. Lori Duin Kelly

reveals that Avis was Phelps' favorite character, and perhaps, Avis and Ostrander's marriage reflects her marriage to Ward.

As a part of her interrogation of single womanhood, Phelps critiques late-nineteenth-century educational reform for single women still framed within True Womanhood's expectations. While education became more readily available to white women, domestic education helps women run their homes, and an education in basic history and art makes women expert conversationalists when meeting potential husbands. Theriot discusses the fact that "three-fourths of the late-century women" chose to attend eastern coeducational state universities that were clearly different from the female academies and female seminaries of the time (79). This "availability of university education challenged the idea of women's innately limited intellectual capacity and women's naturally constricted home activity," but Phelps' satirical treatment of Harvard and Dartmouth and its intellectuals affirms educational reform's disillusionment for women (79).

For True Womanhood, submission disguises itself as usefulness. Even though single women can earn an education, few women actualize their education into a career. Wifehood and motherhood force women to surrender their education to meet domestic expectations. Avis' moniker provides the metaphor for her father's and society's attitude toward women and education. The most successful dove trainers release the birds, and those who "do not return readily without interference are cast aside as too dull to be worth the trouble of further education" (*Story of Avis* 35). Those birds that are unwilling to learn are not useful. Nineteenth-century women face the same dilemma. If they do not have any aspirations outside of motherhood, they are not women. Marriage, divorce, and education only provide partial solutions for nineteenth-century women. In a reversal from the domestic novel's trope

of women dying, Phelps posits the death of men. This certainly is unusual; however, her marriage to Ostrander gives her a daughter, Wait, to whom she can pass on these new lessons.

Single women also appear in Howe's *The Hermaphrodite*. The novel may focus on Laurence's experience as an intersex individual, but Howe creates a group of sisters who represent the variety of ways that single women navigate the roles ascribed to them. Engaged to a young man who is traveling, Nina, the youngest sister, has not seen her fiancé in months. In his absence, she slips into a catatonic state. As a contrast to Nina, Howe creates two women who avoid marriage. Nina's sisters Gigia and Briseida purposefully divorce themselves from gender expectations. This hard-earned agency reflects Howe's need to speak about marriage reform and the marriage contract because she removes the principal character's voice. (Admittedly, these women are a privileged voice both in class and race and have the luxury of being able to walk away from marriage without starving.) These Lost Women speak for themselves, endorsing Lost Womanhood as a stable category that better articulates the realities of marriage, divorce, and single life for nineteenth-century women. First of all, Nina, Briseida, and Gigia live in a house with a noticeable absence of men. Two sisters purposefully cultivate this environment to remain single. Without men in the household, they can escape some gender ideologies that dictate women's behavior in the home. They resist marriage and outwardly rebuke nineteenth-century marriage's consequences. To do so, they participate in the rituals long enough to keep the marriage contract at bay, unlike Nina, who loses her body and mind.

These three sisters each present a rationale for their inevitable state of divorce because of the insistence on marriage. Briseida articulates the deceitful nature of marriage for

both genders. “Love and marriage are, so to speak, in a state of divorce, one finds them in spite of, not in each other. Marriage is here completely an affair of reciprocal interests and convenience, in which the mere circumstance of womanhood makes it incumbent on us to require little, and to offer much” (153). She articulates the fact that the laws of couverture require that women give up property and money. They lose their rights to political opinions if they have them. Women cannot enter a marriage with expectations of continuing intellectual or artistic aspirations as Briseida and Gigia enjoy. They understand that if they agree to a marriage, they must willingly accept True Womanhood’s explicit conditions and social death, and they refuse to do so.

Gigia perhaps holds the most intriguing attitude about remaining single: she keeps a lover, Flavio, whom she never intends to marry. This distortion of courtship parameters allows her to continue her life as a student while still fulfilling the basic requirements of True Womanhood. She appears to succumb to the expectations, and in her cleverness and willingness to manipulate the marriage contract, she perseveres in her painting and studies. Uncomfortable with Gigia’s deception, Laurence describes her in the “odious position of a woman who makes love” (157). His masculine mind finds it appalling that Gigia actively engages in courtship rituals that never end in marriage. As a Lost Woman, she subverts and undermines the marriage contract (but not gender expectations) to remain single and continue her artistic aspirations.

The failure of New Womanhood to reform the status of women is caused not only by single reformed women but also by single reformed men. In *The Story of Avis,* Phelps makes transparent the civil war women face when they encounter single reformed men, such as Ostrander, who remain part of a social system that resists and impedes change for women.

No matter what attraction Avis may have for Ostrander, she is not "made to yield these to any man" (*Story of Avis* 107). Most importantly, if she were a man, she would not ask a woman to give up her natural instincts. Because the legal and marriage contract favors Ostrander, his response is idealistic. "I refuse to accept any such sacrifice from the woman I love. You are perfectly right. A man ought to be above it. Let me be that man" (107). His marital and gender privilege allows him to believe that he has discovered a "new type of womanhood" (107). Despite understanding the dangerous nature of marriage, he still wants to be an explorer who renames an animal, plant, or person. He is the one who names this new marriage even though Avis' attitude toward marriage began early in her childhood. His willingness fails to convince her, so she attempts to remind him that she cannot handle the simplest of wifely responsibilities: making coffee, baking bread, and keeping house. When these domestic failures do not convince him, she refuses to give up her art. Even though they negotiate the terms of the marriage instead of having a third party and a dowry, the marriage ends in Ostrander's and her son's deaths. With their deaths, Phelps implies that even the enlightened single reformed man cannot save men or women. Marriage reform cannot resolve the prevailing ideologies of separate spheres as a so-called natural part of coupling and gender expectations.

Pushing against the marriage reform that the single reformed man appears to offer, Phelps demonstrates that even when men and women discuss the implications of marriage, it remains largely unchanged. Avis puts off her engagement because she wants to remain an artist, leading to a discussion with Ostrander about traditional marriage roles and expectations. Kelly explains that "Ostrander represents a new kind of manhood that will be compatible with [Avis'] new kind of womanhood" (101). However, this failing form of

seemingly progressive manhood cannot improve their relationship. Ostrander is willing to change, but it has unexpected consequences. He proposes a "show tolerance of individuality, even the enthusiasm of superiority, could be a perfectly mutual thing" (*Story of Avis* 69-70). His fragmentation allows him to believe he can accept these drastic changes, but as a consequence, he dies. While it may seem that Ostrander's progressive attitudes could save their marriage, they still live in a world that relies on a strict division of behaviors and labor. As Poovey illustrates, the labor contract clearly fails Avis as it will fail other nineteenth-century women. Before agreeing to marry a single reformed man, Avis articulates the domestic novel's damage when it refuses to acknowledge marriage's violent nature for both partners. "'Marriage,' said Avis, not assertantly, but only sadly, as if she were but recognizing some dreary, universal truth, like that of sin, or misery, or death, 'is a profession to a woman. And I have my work; I have my work'" (*Story of Avis* 71). Avis does not trust this single reformed man. She even eschews a nurse's role and lets her friend Barbara nurse Ostrander to health after returning from the Civil War. If he dies or falls in love with Barbara, she avoids marriage. However, even though both people recognize marriage's implications, divorce or avoiding marriage does not seem to be an option. Ostrander shares Avis' skepticism about marriage. He understands that he stands to benefit and will not lose his individuality or personhood, but women will. "And in feeling this he felt deeper than he could reason into the joy and pain and peril which weld two individual human souls into the awful fusion which we call marriage" (155). Ostrander recognizes that marriage destroys individuality and is perilous. Despite these conversations and interrogations, their marriage mirrors a traditional one where Avis will fill the limiting role of wife and mother. Under patriarchy, a married woman becomes invisible.

Death Spaces

In *The Story of Avis*, gender inequality leads to death, and that death is represented in the natural landscape. Christine Stansell recognizes the sexual imagery and the wild, untamed descriptions of death in nature in Phelps' works. These gothic tropes push against her traditional use of realism to articulate the problematic nature of a self-supporting patriarchal system. One of her most essential arguments is that patriarchy claims its natural place. Early in the novel, when Ostrander first comes to town, he wanders around, taking in the scenery. At the same time, Avis explores an ice cliff engulfed in a lava gorge:

> The reef, traversable at low tide, ran from it to a gorge within the cliff. The well-defined metallic tints common to the New-England coast—the greens and reds and umbers, the colors of rust, of bronze, or ruins--covered the reef. The gorge was a vein of deep purple lava, which to Ostrander's educated eye told the story of a terrible organic divorce. (*Story of Avis* 42)

Phelps describes the energetic greens, reds, and umbers often found in nature and contrasts them with images of decomposition: rust, bronze, and ruins. This wild environment encapsulates how gender operates in the nineteenth century. The male gender symbolizes the color of life, and decomposition, the color of death, represents the female gender. This divided environment signals the truth for women: in marriage and divorce, men and women reside in separate spaces that have been torn apart purposefully. Ostrander views the separation and even recognizes the divorce but describes it as organic. This description focuses on nineteenth-century gender ideologies that view the gulf between genders as the natural and proper way of viewing marriage and women. Presumably, women naturally

reside in the space of social death, and apparatuses like marriage and divorce only further support this necropolis.

While Avis and Ostrander eventually marry in an official ceremony after his return from the Civil War, their encounter near the gorge is their first symbolic marriage ceremony in a death space. When Ostrander wanders in the deadly wilds, he witnesses Avis walking. "It was the figure of a lady, slight and delicately dressed. It was not so dark but that he could see that she moved with great difficulty. The reef was jagged as a saw, and glared with the thin, blue, cruel ice. Ostrander, as he watched her, felt the blood tingle about his heart" (*Story of Avis* 43). Enjoying this terrifyingly dangerous place, Ostrander feels excitement as he watches Avis stand on the ice. The possibility of Avis' death in this unearthly space appeals to him, not her, and represents how, for women, marriage is a cruel social death.

For Avis, marriage chains a woman to the domestic sphere. Describing her engagement ring as a manacle reveals what she cannot articulate to Ostrander. Even when women understand marriage as dangerous and deadly, they cannot lift themselves in a society that wants them to adhere to gendered spheres. Thus, when Avis meets Ostrander and requires his assistance in the deathly gorge, they exchange language that resembles wedding vows:

> If you do not give me your hand immediately, I cannot possibly answer for what I shall do.
>
> Promise me, that if I slip, you will let go.
>
> I promise nothing. Give me your hand.
>
> Promise that you will not let me drag you after me.

> I promise any thing. For God's sake, give, this instant, the fingers of your right hand. (*Story of Avis* 45)

Coupled with the direct use of marriage language and promises, Ostrander's insistence on taking her hand resembles their courtship and eventual wedding. Wedding vows involve promises, and while their vows appear to be progressive, the setting of the gorge invokes the phrase *let no man put asunder*. Considering that the relationship has already been put asunder because of Avis' interrogation, progressive thinking between two people cannot succeed in a system that relies on women's social death. Phelps also makes it plain that death is part of wedding vows.

In Phelps' 1874 essay "A Dream within a Dream," she reimagines traditional wedding vows to reflect womanhood's changing nature:

> You promise to be considerate of the other's happiness, above all other earthly claims. You promise to assist each other in your mutual and individual life's work, rendering each to each such tender thoughtfulness and such large estimate of the other's nature that neither shall absorb in petty exactions or in selfish blindness the other's subject life. (Phelps 164).

Phelps understands that conventional vows destroy a woman's individuality. Her new vows place high importance on a woman's personhood and question the necessity of blind submission and the disappearance of the wife into the husband under couverture laws. In particular, she understands that women come to marriages with external goals. Marriage may be a part of a domestic life, but it does not end women's aspirations. In a quiet way, she questions the word *obey* or the phrase *until death do us part* in traditional vows. She eliminates this verbiage to question its necessity.

Ultimately, Phelps argues that without a change in gender ideologies and expectations, women cannot escape marriage. As Aunt Chloe cannot avoid marriage, neither can Avis. Despite Avis' multiple descriptions of marriage as death, she still marries Ostrander. Once married, she understands that she will lose more than mind and body; she loses the right to be an artist and self-determination. "The plain truth is, that I cannot accept the consequences of love as women do" (*Story of Avis* 68). She has an innate understanding that "success-for a woman-means absolute surrender, in whatever direction. Whether she paints a picture or loves a man, there is no labor division possible in her economy. To the attainment of any end worth living for, symmetrical sacrifice of her nature is compulsory upon her" (70). Phelps shows that this circumstance cannot save marriage because of women's social and legal disparities, and the price of marriage is civil death. When Avis imagines a man who can shift in thought, he comes from the "dead, sacred, [and] safe" (69). The man that can embrace and survive this new marriage resides only in the world of imagination. Single reformed men cannot change marriage when its very legal structure dispossesses women.

Death spaces can also be found in the body. Viewing Laurence from Howe's *The Hermaphrodite* as a marginalized citizen provides an alternate reading of nineteenth-century womanhood, especially from women writers who tend to uphold the cult of True Womanhood. The intersex body becomes a powerful metaphor for the deathly spaces that impact nineteenth-century women. Showalter's biography reveals that Howe secretly wrote this novel in the early 1840s. Influenced by George Sands, Howe turns to the intersex body to critique the obstacles women face in a gendered society. Many scholars discuss the body in this text, but I want to provide a less phallic reading of this text that focuses on womanhood.

While scholars like Derek Bedenbaugh focus on Laurence's failed manhood, the nineteenth-century intersex figure, a body that relies on signifiers to create gender, also contributes to scholarship on Lost Womanhood.

Like Phelps, Howe does not pen the word divorce directly; rather, she displaces the subject onto the intersex body. Howe emphasizes that marriage reform that stems from True Womanhood is impossible when ingrained gender ideologies and couverture disenfranchise women. Howe's characters postulate that this legal union only exacerbates suffering and violence for women. In this nineteenth-century intersex trope, the instability of the female body intensifies and mirrors the implications of divorce for women. Laurence cannot find stability because he accesses both genders, and neither gender wants to claim him.

An unreadable or confusing body is dangerous to patriarchy. Elizabeth Reis expresses the fact that these bodies create anxiety about gender, sex, and sexuality. The original myth of the first intersex body tells the story of a female nymph, Salmacis, who fell in love with Hermaphroditus. She wishes to be with him forever, and the gods grant her wish by merging their bodies with two perfect sets of human genitals. Reis explains that biologically speaking, the definition of intersex presents a far more complicated metaphor than having two different sets of genitals. Rather, intersex individuals have ambiguous developments that often do not surface until puberty. As far back as the sixteenth century, medical treatises and doctors believed that only animals could be intersex, not humans. Reiss documents the long history of describing intersex persons as monsters and a divine sign of pollution. [19]

[19] For nineteenth-century literary and medical studies, the term hermaphrodite from Greek mythology is a medical term that made its way into common use. Howe's title and use of the word represents its nineteenth-century common usage. The more modern term intersex (a body having multiple components of sexual anatomy) more accurately captures this complexity and normalizes these naturally occurring bodies (Reis 153). Reis' details the historical use of the medical condition hermaphroditism to codify reactions to atypical genitals. Her last chapter discusses the rise of the term intersex and its implications. She explains that the term intersex purposefully focuses on naturally occurring events in biology and to be respectful of these bodies, I choose to

In one unexpected place, colonial divorce proceedings intersect with intersex bodies. Reis finds evidence of intersex lives and the anxiety these bodies create. Women and men would file for divorce when their partners could not engage in sexual acts or procreate. Reiss explains that until the mid-nineteenth century, when an intersex person was discovered, they had to commit to one gender and dress the part. For example, in 1662, Mary White filed for a divorce from her husband Elias, who could not perform his sexual duties. The court asked the couple to describe their sex life and decided that the court could refuse to grant her petition because he was still a male. Women had a slightly different fate; if a woman dressed as a man had any indication of womanhood, they often had to choose to live as a woman for their safety. A woman dressing as a man threatens masculinity and renders visible the performance of gender. Gender performance questions the biological imperative of masculinity as a dominant power. Another court case in 1669 from Virginia explains that the court was not concerned about Thomas/Thomasine's intersex body. Instead, they found the fact that he dressed as both a man and a woman unsettling. After several physical public examinations, he had to choose a gender and could not dress as both anymore. The courts did not want him to engage in relationships with the wrong gender. Instead, they insisted that he reinforce gender expectations of a free white citizen.

To reveal that patriarchy depends on readable bodies, Howe opens her unfinished novel by critiquing the notion of fixed categories of gender. When Laurence dresses as a man, people respond to his masculine clothing signifiers and treat him as a man. Young Emma, in love with Laurence, helps take care of him when he grows ill. This typical scenario

use the modern term. However, it is not without its detractors. One of the most important of Reis' points is that today the medical world still relies on the term hermaphrodite with examples of current medical usage of the terms "male pseudohermaphrodite" or "true hermaphrodite" (Reis 155).

from the domestic novel reinforces True Womanhood's lesson that when a young woman nurses a young man back to health, they fall in love and marry. Her participation in this domestic ritual indicates her readiness for marriage. However, marriage requires intimacy, so Laurence reveals himself to encourage her to look elsewhere:

> With the same deliberation, she surveyed me from head to foot, the disordered habiliments revealing to her every outline of the equivocal form before her. She saw the bearded lip and earnest brow, but she also saw the falling shoulders, slender neck, and rounded bosom—then with a look like that of Medusa, and a hoarse utterance, she muttered: 'monster!' (Howe 19)

Emma relies on the pre-twentieth century terminology, *monster*, to express her horror at Laurence's unreadable body. The disconnect between the signifiers and reality creates a moment that she cannot process. She can no longer read Laurence's body correctly, nor can she depend on his masculinity to reaffirm her femininity. She faints unsurprisingly, and Laurence must deal with the fact that she may not keep his secret. Emma's reaction captures the fear and anxieties about his inability to fit into either sphere. Laurence attempts to pass with his unreadable body as a man, but he fails because the death space of his feminine body overrides any masculinity.

To cement the notion that womanhood resides in a death space, Laurence's femininity has the power to undo his masculinity. According to nineteenth-century gender ideologies, if any part of his body resembles a woman, he is feminized. To complicate matters, his friend Wilhelm agrees to keep Laurence's secret and even describes his acts as noble and heroic. Wilhelm's definition of noble and heroic depends on Laurence choosing to avoid marriage and keeping his femininity hidden. His willingness to not marry as a man and to walk away

from Emma is a masculine act that permits Wilhelm to keep Laurence's secret. Howe describes Laurence's feminized body, complete with breasts. His "rounded bosom" indicates that he recognizes his body as highly feminized. When he dresses as a man, he fears that his breasts will erode his masculinity and further his internal state of divorce. If Laurence appears and behaves as masculine, the simple pronoun *he* reinforces gender ideologies that others can read. Even though he attempts to create stability through his insistence on *he* as an identifying pronoun, he classifies his permanent state of bodily divorce as grotesque. More accurately, he describes his femaleness as grotesque. More female than male, his feminized body will end in actual death for him.

While others may read his clothing signifiers as masculine, Laurence experiences a civil war within his mind. "While yet my form threatened to take a strongly feminine development. My complexion was singularly delicate, and my hair, though continually cropped, would retain its silky softness, and fell in many curls around my neck and brow" (4). This feminized version of his body initiates social instability, what he describes as "a sort of crisis, a struggle between death and life" (4). Howe's inversion of the phrase "life and death" suggests the gendered divisions between social death as a woman and civic life as a man. He chooses to identify as and dress as a man, and therefore should be able to participate in a masculine society, but that is not what he experiences. Instead, Laurence is received as a grotesque social monster.

Neither clothing signifiers nor the pronoun *he* can save Laurence. As a consequence, Howe questions reform that depends on universal masculinity as a means to escape death spaces. Laurence's dissonance mirrors women's permanent state of crisis in marriage and divorce. Marriage only intensifies this crisis, especially when there are too few options for

dissolving a marriage. The title of wife creates a new set of behaviors, performances, and expectations. This social permanence cannot be changed by a pronoun. Barrett suggests, "Howe indicts marriage and motherhood for circumscribing antebellum women's freedom, and she envisions what a life lived outside these institutions might resemble" (3). This unstable vision is fraught with difficulty, but Lost Womanhood recognizes that women are already in a state of divorce and imagine a life with fewer restrictions and more opportunities outside of death spaces.

Howe's Laurence shows the problematic nature of reform based in True Womanhood because the female body itself resides in a state of being alive but not living. When Laurence articulates the idea that the female body poisons his masculine mind, he makes plain the condition the female body cannot avoid, married or not. Howe's reliance on the intersex figure challenges True Womanhood's conception of marriage reform will succeed when women have the right partners. Howe could be questioning Margaret Fuller's notion of wholeness from her *Women in the Nineteenth Century*—that to be a full and complete person requires both a female and male half.[20] In *The Hermaphrodite*, Laurence laments, "Like all other young creatures, I was gladly in the company of the gay and of the gentle, but I could not be in it long without learning that a human soul, simply as such, and not invested with the capacity of either entire possession or entire surrender, has but a lame and unsatisfactory part to play in the world" (5). The male and female dimensions of a self in intersex Laurence are at war with one another and are unable to achieve harmony because of external gender

[20] "Male and female represent the two sides of the great radical dualism. But, in fact, they are perpetually passing into one another. Fluid hardens to solid, solid rushes to fluid. There is no wholly masculine man, no purely feminine woman" (Fuller 103).

expectations. His feminine body requires rigid gender expectations and a surrender to patriarchy. Like Laurence, women who question gender ideologies and will not surrender willingly live on the domestic fringe. The feminine physical form allows a masculine society to enforce artificially constructed gender paradigms that ensure the marriage contract and will continue to support nation-building that depends on women living in a permanent state of divorce.

Laurence engenders death as feminine and actively attempts to divorce his mind from his body. He cannot understand the feminine side, and his feminine attributes are an "object of mystic reverence and wonder" (43). Laurence expresses the female body's duality that is often glorified and idealized, but this reverence reinforces the feminine gender's restrictions. Idolization does not save women; the act of idolization further dehumanizes women and intensifies their marginalized status. He knows this female death will find him because it already sits in his "inmost soul" (43). Laurence understands that structured gendered ideologies cannot provide a haven for him despite the idolization of the female body. Homeless, he travels to Rome as a man, where he then experiences a sexual assault, reminding him that he cannot escape his feminized body. This event solidifies his feelings that his female body kills his masculinity. According to nineteenth-century masculinity, Laurence becomes feminized once he experiences sexual assault. Howe crystalizes the relationship between violence and womanhood. When this trip fails him, he returns to his trusted friend Berto to live with his sisters, Nina, Briseida, and Gigia, as a woman. As a last resort, Laurence succumbs to femininity. However, the mind and the body cannot reside in a state of divorce, and this moment actualizes what it means to be a True Woman, a state of the walking dead.

Divorce's history, single and unmarried bodies, and death spaces contest the domestic novel's insistence on marriage. With these interrogations, a different kind of domestic narrative critiques the lack of legal standing for women and develop a different divorce narrative, one that is much more creative, complex, and comprehensive, covering landscapes, bodies, gender, and social roles. These writers critique the lack of a legal standing for women and present a different imagined future outside of marriage that reveals how marginalized citizens readily realize they can reach a readership. Silence around the word divorce protects their abilities to argue for it and to critique marriage reform that does not address the lack of legal standing for wives.

TO MARRIED LADIES.

MADAME RESTELL'S PREVENTIVE POWDERS. These invaluable Powders have been universally adopted in Europe, but France in particular, for upwards of thirty years, as well as by thousands in this country, as being the only mild, safe and efficacious remedy for married ladies whose health forbids a too rapid increase of family.

Madame Restell, as is well known, was for thirthy years Female Physician in the two principal Female Hospitals in Europe—those of Vienna and Paris—where favored by her great experience and opportunities, she attained that celebrity in those great discoveries in medical science so specially adapted to the female frame for which her medicines now stand unrivalled, as well in this country as in Europe. Her acquaintance with the physiology and anatomy of the female frame, enabled her—by tracing the decline and ill health of married females, scarce in the meridian of life, and the consequent rapid and often apparently inexplicable causes which consign many a fond mother to a premature grave—to their true source—to arrive at a knowledge of the primary causes of female indispositions—especially of married females—which, in 1826, led to the discovery of her celebrated "Preventive Powders." Their adoption has been the means of preserving not only the health, but even the life of many an affectionate wife and fond mother.

The advertiser feeling the importance of this subject, and estimating the vast benefits resulting to thousands by their adoption, would most respectfully arouse the attention of the married, by all that they hold near and dear, to its consideration. Is it not wise and virtuous to prevent evils to which we are subject, by simple and healthy means within our control? Every dispassionate, virtuous, and enlightened mind will unhesitatingly answer in the affirmative. This is all that Madame Restell recommends or ever recommended. Price five dollars a package, accompanied with full and particular directions. They can be forwarded by mail to any part of the United States. All letters must be post paid, and addressed to MADAME RESTELL, Female Physician. Principal office, 148 Greenwich street, New York. Office hours from 9 A. M. to 9 o'clk P. M. Boston office No. 7 Essex st. d7 1m d&w*

MACHINE BLANKETS AND LAPPINGS for sale by FERSSE & BROOKS, 61 Liberty st.
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COUNTERFEIT. FEMALE MONTHLY PILLS.

OWING to the celebrity, efficacy and invariable success of Madame Restell's Female Monthly Pills in all cases of irregularity, suppression, or stoppage of those functions of nature upon which the health of every female depends, since their introduction into the United States, now about four years, counterfeits and imitations are continually attempted to be palmed off for the genuine. Cheap common pills are purchased at twelve cents a box, put up in different boxes, and called "Female Monthly Pills," with the object of selling, if possible, at one dollar. Females are therefore cautioned against these attempts to impose upon them. It is sufficient here to state that all Female Monthly Pills are counterfeits, except those sold at Madame Restell's Principal Office, 148 Greenwich st. New York, and No. 7 Essex street, Boston. Price $1.

Madame Restell's signature is written on the cover of each box.

N. B. The married, under some circumstances, must abstain from their use for reasons contained in the directions. d7 1m*

MADAME RESTELL,

FEMALE PHYSICIAN, Office and residence 148 Greenwich street, where she can be consulted with the strictest confidence on all complaints incident to the female frame.

Madame Restell's mode of treatment in all cases of irregularity or suppression of those functions of nature upon which the health of every female depends, is such as to require but a few days to effect perfect cure. Ladies desiring proper medical attendance during confinement or other indisposition, will be accommodated during such time with private and respectable board. "Preventive Powders" for married ladies whose delicate or precarious health forbids a too rapid increase of family, will be sent by mail to any part of the United States, Price $5 a package. All letters (post paid) addressed to 'box 868, N. Y. city,' will be received.

Boston Office No. 7 Essex st. d7 1m*

PORTUGUESE FEMALE PILL.

INVENTED AND PREPARED BY M. DE BOUDELOQUE, M. D. LISBON, PORTUGAL.

THEY are the wonder and admiration of the world, on account of being the only preparation ever discovered that has always proved certain in producing the monthly turns. So certain are in their effects, that the cause of stoppage &c should be known, otherwise they must not be used. They are always mild and safe. English directions accompany each box, with the seal of the imported stamp. Price $5—half boxes $3. Sold by appointment at 284 Grand, cor. Allen st. They can be sent by mail. Address Dr. F. Melveau, box 24, N. Y.
n27 1m*

TO THE LADIES

MADAME COSTELLO, Female Physician, still continues to treat with astonishing success all diseases peculiar to females. Suppression, irregularity, obstruction, &c, by whatever cause produced, can be removed by Madame C. in a very short time. Madame C.'s medical establishment having undergone thorough repairs and alterations for the better accommodation of her numerous patients, she is now prepared to receive ladies on the point of confinement, or those who wish to be treated for obstruction of their monthly period. Madame C. can be consulted at her residence, 34 Lisepenard st, at all times. All communications and letters must be post paid. d14 1m*

Chapter Three

The Other Scarlet Letter: Abortion and Lost Womanhood

While Hawthorne never touches on the issue of abortion, his A calls attention to the nineteenth-century's insistence on containing women's bodies and sexuality. Scholars have spent much time discussing Hawthorne's women and the stability of such a signifier. Monika Elbert's work maintains that nineteenth-century literature displaces anxieties onto women's bodies where "unrestrained female sexuality (or unrestrained in the eyes of men) is perceived as a danger to the social order" (23-24). This displacement represents the process by which a patriarchal social order requires female sexuality to stabilize maleness rather than develop its own set of behaviors. Hawthorne imagines a social order for women that depends on True Womanhood, and his novel serves as a cautionary tale where motherhood offers redemption for women who lose their way from True Womanhood. Elbert's work discusses all of the anxieties Hawthorne places on women's bodies from race to class, but they all revolve around the power behind domesticating women's sexuality. True Womanhood takes these anxieties and attempts to control them through motherhood and reforming wild masculine-

like behavior. While Hawthorne famously attempted to dismiss women writers' selling power, his fictional women reiterate the patriarchal desire for True Womanhood, and his novels struggle to come to terms with women's desire. His *Scarlet Letter* reinforces the unspoken silence around women's bodies and sexuality, as well as reproductive practices in society. The other scarlet A, abortion, falls into this realm of silence, and in that quiet, women potentially disrupt patriarchy.

Like divorce, reproductive discussions can be found in the newspapers and court cases. This disruption depends on a woman's class and race. Despite this silence, "at mid [nineteenth] century, more than two hundred full time abortionists reportedly worked in New York City" (Solinger 61). Women have different relationships with abortion. Because of nineteenth-century slavery practices, women of color work against practices of genocide. Class impacts women as well when economic disadvantages can force working-class women who want to control family planning to look to abortion. Klepp, Manning, and Zlotucha make it quite clear that an emerging middle class turns to family planning to keep their economic status. True Womanhood continues to deny women this control, but the category of Lost Womanhood values the economics of abortion as a means of asserting agency.

True Womanhood, in its dedication to motherhood, denies the historical realities of abortion through anti-abortion rhetoric. Historians have shown that colonial women sought voluntary motherhood and actively thought about family planning. Cornelia Hughes Dayton researches abortion trials in eighteenth-century New England. Relying on court documents from the Superior Court of Connecticut, she shows that both men and women had a working knowledge of abortifacients. As an example, Dayton writes about a court case involving Amasa Sessions and his lover Sarah Grosvenor. She surmises that Sessions procured an

abortifacient, and when his lover did not miscarry, she *removed the obstruction* and died a month later (25). Over the next year, magistrates investigated her death and determined Sessions' guilt. Dayton argues that since the justice system spent two years investigating and gathering documents, a complicated relationship between abortion and the law existed. She points out that few records of abortion exist in the colonial United States, but records such as this case prove that abortion occurred, and the courts had a vested interest when mothers died. Because of the silence around abortions, successful ones were ignored. She points out that if Grosvenor and Sessions would have married or if she could have hidden her pregnancy, she would have lived. Grosvenor knowingly risked death to avoid her affair coming to light. If this case exists, other moments like it happened, but they simply were not recorded. Historically, Lost Womanhood always ran parallel to True Womanhood, but courts reinstitute True Womanhood rather than accept another possible reality.

While court documents, the domestic novel, and behavior manuals cement True Womanhood and its rhetoric, abortion's history hides in plain sight in the newspaper. When the newspaper business develops, abortionists find a place to make family planning more accessible. Novels and manuals are more costly to print and buy, while newspapers cost pennies. Because of this accessibility, Lost Womanhood's stories recount a more normative, everyday form of female life. Newspapers may allow abortionists to place advertisements, but they still require the codified language surrounding reproductive practices. Despite this historical evidence of the role of abortion, silence still surrounds it, and scholars often ignore abortion even when women like Susan Magoffin pen the forbidden A word. Nineteenth-century women's desire for personhood must be examined in relation to reproductive practices and childbirth, and the category of Lost Womanhood reveals women who become

financially independent by providing abortion services. In turn, abortions become a way for women to have greater control over their finances and family planning. The silence around abortion may help to protect the practice, but it also makes it difficult to locate a normative practice.

Framing Women's Bodies

When discussing reproductive practices and womanhood, conversations need to understand the dynamic interaction of knowledge and morality: who has knowledge; who shares it; and who limits or silences it. Carol Smith-Rosenberg illustrates how morality limits the understanding of reproductive practices. In this morality model, manuals describe women's bodies as a closed system with a womb that dictates growth and impacts behavior. Reinforcing a patriarchal model of moral reproduction, many health manuals present the idea that men create a fetus, and the womb passively carries it. The popular anonymous health manual *Aristotle's Masterpiece* invokes his name and discusses various health topics, including abortion. Charles Rosenberg shows that this manual may have begun in 1684 and continued through various iterations until 1920. Perpetuating a morality model, manual after manual like William Buchan's *Domestic Medicine* or Peter Smith's brochure, "The Indian Doctor's Dispensary," repeatedly reminded women that the brain and the ovaries could not develop simultaneously. Women are thereby reduced to their body part, the ovaries, which not only ensured pregnancy but also their second-class status. If women's bodies are described as a closed system, these manuals represent a widespread patriarchal dictate about women's behavior.

Moreover, the abortion debate has always been intertwined with the problem of race. Abortion's complicated relationship to enslaved black women must be framed correctly.

Maria Jenkins Schwartz's *Birthing a Slave* gives an in-depth historical account of this relationship. Because black women produced more enslaved people, plantation owners cared about reproduction and abortion, and enslaved women could be punished or sold for stillbirths and miscarriages. These owners often called doctors to help enslaved people prevent abortions or miscarriages because "an enslaved woman who aborted a child without owner approval challenged the slaveholder's authority" (Schwartz 110). Enslaved women had reproductive knowledge from indigenous practices using local plants like highly accessible cotton roots or dogwood roots. Because these reproductive practices gave enslaved women access to power through fertility regulation, owners often prioritized the mother over an infant's survival. Schwartz documents two cases when doctors performed abortions at an owner's request. In 1849, Dr. W.W. Harbert documented in the *Western Journal of Medicine* an abortion he performed on an enslaved person, Jane, who ultimately died. In 1858, Dr. Joseph Logan aborted an enslaved Lavinia's pregnancy at her owner's request. Doctors typically followed the enslaver's orders. Preventing the horrors of enslavement, abortion responds to the terrible fate of their children, especially girls. Black enslaved women accessed abortion to counter the prevalence of rape. Black womanhood's complicated relationship to reproductive practices cannot be ameliorated within forms of womanhood that perpetuate violence.

In contrast, the questions around abortion, beginning around the 1840s, stem from whiteness and ensuring that immigration and miscegenation do not dilute a white culture. In *Birthing a Nation,* Joann Lahey proposes that the abortion debate responded to the falling birth rate of white citizens. When the mid-nineteenth-century US birthrate fell by half, anti-abortion rhetoric became a tool for white supremacy. While immigrant and slave birth rates

stayed steady and did not decrease, white middle-class families grew smaller and smaller.[21] Out of this declining birth rate combined with nationalist ideologies about westward expansion, women's bodies became vehicles for birthing an Anglo-Saxon race, especially after the Civil War. Thus, the abortion debate becomes a direct response to black bodies and their disproportionate rate of reproduction in relation to white bodies. Karen Weingarten explains that women became "national vessels of reproduction and believed that disruption of this process was against the nation state and their race" (19). Patriarchy's vested interest in producing white bodies reinstitutes sexist and racist ideologies that ensure white men retain power. As a way of tracing this complicated relationship to reproductive practices, Rickie Solinger explains the notion of racializing a nation. She writes that racializing a nation is the "process carried out by elites whereby the nation's inhabitants were divided into racial groups" and "each group was subject to special laws and rules depending on race, with the overall goal of maintaining white supremacy" (Solinger 47). Under these social constructions, white women have a responsibility to produce white citizens. Patriarchy relies on True Womanhood's ideologies that respond to people of color and their birth rates.

Abortions: A Coded History

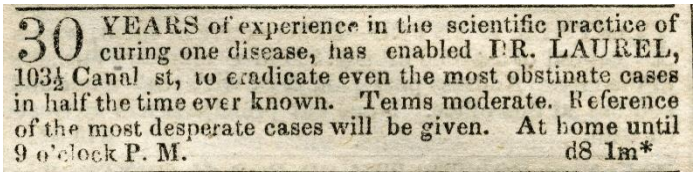
Difficult to locate, abortion's history and its code do not appear in many documents or narratives. Scholars have begun to uncover the fact that women accessed abortion and more importantly, depended on the silence around it. This silence allows them to continue the

[21] Working-class women suffered a similar fate as women of color. Leavitt captures how doctors justified giving abortions to working-class women who suffered from tuberculous. Leslie Reagan's work shows that working-class women who had abortions were often subject to public trials and investigations when their middle-class or wealthy counterparts did not. Working-class women needed to control their resources even more so than middle-class women and were more likely to access abortion. Anti-abortion rhetoric has never been about women. Rather, abortion serves to protect a dominant white culture that needs to produce more marginalized citizens, but not so many that their supremacy is threatened.

practice and to help others. Linda Gordon discusses how pre-agricultural and nomadic societies benefitted from lower birth rates, so they practiced birth control forms, including abortion. Before the twentieth century, mothers passed down the folklore of birth control to their daughters and created an "underground of midwives and wise women" (Gordon 13). Even if herbs and potions are ineffective, Lost Womanhood recognizes that women actively gained and circulated knowledge to others.

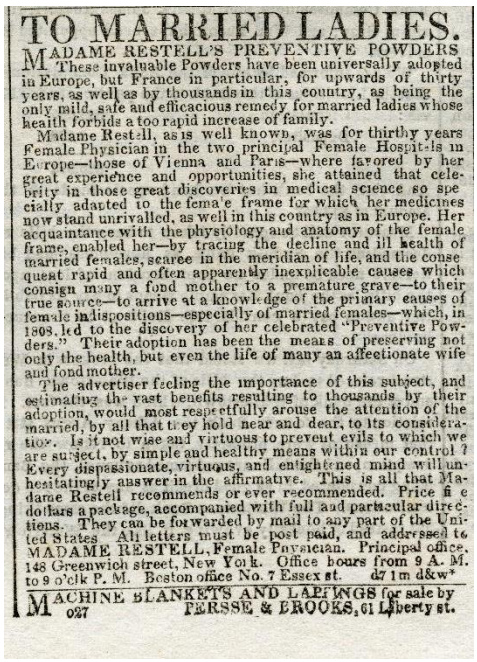
Marriage sometimes requires abortions, and husbands and wives depended on abortion to improve their lives. However, men and women rely on a codified language to discuss reproductive matters without compromising Victorian morality codes. Because scholarship cannot access these marital conversations, nineteenth-century newspaper advertisements reveal that women had relatively easy access through the mail to pills, herbs, and powders to terminate a pregnancy and to restore monthly menstruation. They only need to open the pages of the newspaper to find Dr. Bronson's Pills, which promised to "[bring] on the monthly period with regularity, no matter from what cause the obstructions may arise" (Brodie 248). Historically, it was relatively easy for women to find abortifacients. Women could buy "toilet vinegars" with names such as "Cullen's Female Specific" and "Rimmel's Medicated Vinegar" (Brodie 71). Women encountered phrases such as *water cures* for vaginal douching and *bring her around* or *to bring my courses on* for ingesting pills to induce an abortion (Reagan 24). Advertisements contained the words "obstruction," "blockage in the womb," and "taking the trade" (Horowitz 196). Women spent money on these common and readily available abortifacients for the chance at family planning. Even when faced with regulation, nineteenth-century women used their medical knowledge and codified language to push for more control over their bodies.

The category of Lost Womanhood can easily be found in the newspaper, where advertisements for abortion are common even when some cities like New York eventually ban abortion. The newspaper provides women a medium to resist and rebel. Where black families searched for reunification in the newspaper, women turn to the penny press to fight for family planning. These advertisements render visible the well-established code and the language of reproductive practices and culture. For example, in the December 15, 1841 edition of the *New York Herald,* a short advertisement reveals the common language women decoded. Despite midwifery's long history, abortionists reassure their patients that they have extensive experience with abortion and reproduction practices.



30 YEARS of experience in the scientific practice of curing one disease, has enabled DR. LAUREL, 103½ Canal st, to eradicate even the most obstinate cases in half the time ever known. Terms moderate. Reference of the most desperate cases will be given. At home until 9 o'clock P. M. d8 1m*

Figure 7 Abortionist Advertisement New York Herald



TO MARRIED LADIES.

MADAME RESTELL'S PREVENTIVE POWDERS These invaluable Powders have been universally adopted in Europe, but France in particular, for upwards of thirty years, as well as by thousands in this country, as being the only mild, safe and efficacious remedy for married ladies whose health forbids a too rapid increase of family.

Madame Restell, as is well known, was for thirthy years Female Physician in the two principal Female Hospitals in Europe—those of Vienna and Paris—where favored by her great experience and opportunities, she attained that celebrity in those great discoveries in medical science so specially adapted to the female frame for which her medicines now stand unrivalled, as well in this country as in Europe. Her acquaintance with the physiology and anatomy of the female frame, enabled her—by tracing the decline and ill health of married females, scarce in the meridian of life, and the consequest rapid and often apparently inexplicable causes which consign many a fond mother to a premature grave—to their true source—to arrive at a knowledge of the primary causes of female indispositions—especially of married females—which, in 1809, led to the discovery of her celebrated "Preventive Powders." Their adoption has been the means of preserving not only the health, but even the life of many an affectionate wife and fond mother.

The advertiser feeling the importance of this subject, and estimating the vast benefits resulting to thousands by their adoption, would most respectfully arouse the attention of the married, by all that they hold near and dear, to its consideration. Is it not wise and virtuous to prevent evils to which we are subject, by simple and healthy means within our control? Every dispassionate, virtuous, and enlightened mind will unhesitatingly answer in the affirmative. This is all that Madame Restell recommends or ever recommended. Price five dollars a package, accompanied with full and particular directions. They can be forwarded by mail to any part of the United States. All letters must be post paid, and addressed to MADAME RESTELL, Female Physician. Principal office, 148 Greenwich street, New York. Office hours from 9 A. M. to 9 o'clk P. M. Boston office No. 7 Essex st. d7 1m d&w*

MACHINE BLANKETS AND LAPPINGS for sale by FERSSE & BROOKS, 61 Liberty st. o27

Figure 8 Madame Restell 1841 Advertisement, New York Herald, Dec. 15, 1841 Courtesy of Library of Philadelphia Company

This description reveals that abortionists described themselves as physicians. Even though they did not possess medical degrees, Madame Restell and Madame Costello, two famous nineteenth-century abortionists, position their knowledge about women's bodies as a part of the medical world, even when the American Medical Association purposely excludes it. In Doctor Laurel's advertisement, she relies on the familiar trope of describing pregnancies as a disease, and the phrase *to eradicate even the obstinate of cases* signals an abortion. Like others, Restell claims in her advertisements to have thirty years' experience and elevates her

learning experiences to “two principal Female Hospitals” in Vienna and Paris (“To the Married Ladies”). As a Lost Woman, Madame Restell’s advertisements differ from most advertisements because she focuses on the mother’s health and women’s problems when they cannot plan their families. She calls attention to the fact that many “a fond mother [go] to a premature grave-to their true source” (“To the Married Ladies”). Restell understands that the lack of family planning and obstetrical knowledge makes pregnancy a terrible risk with a high probability of death. She knows that most of her customers are white middle-class married citizens, not lone young women who have been taken advantage of by some scoundrel, as the seduction plot insists. Mohr and other abortion scholars, like Caron and Engleman, prove that abortion is more about family planning and economics rather than saving a woman’s reputation from her sexuality. Abortion allows women to change their lives.

While newspapers ran advertisements that relied on a codified language, even sensational genres such as the dime novel and the gothic short story refuse to name the act of abortion. Barclay’s 1871 dime novel *The Great Trunk Mystery of New York*, which was based on Alice Bowlsby’s death from a botched abortion, did not name the causes of her demise. This case dominated New York newspapers for many months in the summer of 1871 and into the fall. While newspaper articles did not name Bowlby’s act, they did, however, name and describe Jacob Rosenzweig as an abortionist. The August 29, 1871 edition of the *New York Times* ran the following headline, “The Evil of the Age; Satisfactory Progress in Developing the Trunk Mystery. Discovery of the Truckman Through the Published Accounts. Arrest of the Abortionist. “When writing about the victim, Alice Bowlsby, the word abortion is avoided; however, the reporter labels Rosenzweig as an abortionist when

describing the criminal (8). Solidifying his criminal status, a man who would give a woman an abortion fails patriarchy. In the October 28, 1871 edition, this decision to label Rosenzweig as an abortionist continues when they run the following title, "The Trunk Mystery; Trial of Rosenzweig, the Alleged Abortionist The Handkerchief Said to be the Property of a Miss Bowlsby from Brooklyn Rebutting Evidence Upsets Rosenzweig's Defense." While running these stories and describing Rosenzweig as a murderer, the *New York Times* still runs advertisements for abortionists and abortifacients. These two titles and the fact that the newspapers still ran advertisements reveal the complicated national discussion about abortion. Even Poe did not name the act of abortion in his 1842 short story, "The Mystery of Marie." Originally published in three installments in *Snowden's Ladies*, Poe constructs a murder mystery around the real Mary Rogers, a woman who may have died from a botched abortion in 1842. *The New York Tribune* ran several articles covering her disappearance and her eventual death, which influenced Poe's work. Journalists and novelists replicate what women knew about an open and dangerous discussion of these practices. Discussing abortion brings it to light and makes it possible to become a criminal act rather than an act of family planning or voluntary motherhood. For nineteenth-century women, the first rule of abortion is not to talk about abortion, and their codified language and discretion allowed the abortion business to boom and continue until the end of the nineteenth century.

Even though the word abortion historically does not appear to be widely circulated in print outside of newspaper advertisements, people write about the act and its impact in health manuals. Because many women were interested in abortion, home medical guides and health manuals sold many editions. Mohr's research into nineteenth-century reproductive practices shows that women could attend Walter Channing's lectures on midwifery as early in the

1820s and read such titles as Alfred G. Hall's 1843 *Mother's Own Book* and Eastman's *Practical Treatise on Diseases Peculiar to Women and Girls*. In particular, one home manual, *The Married Woman's Private Medical Companion,* reveals the prevalence of a heavily codified language about reproduction. Under the pseudonym Professor A.M Mauriceau, Madame Restell's husband, Charles Lohman, offers advice for female reproductive practices. His chapter on abortion, titled "Miscarriage or Abortion," attempts to place these two events in the medical realm rather than the home. The first half of this chapter covers the many reasons why miscarriages occur and how to prevent and recover from them. The second half of this chapter discusses that some diseases such as pelvic deformity require abortions; however, he fails to mention the process of abortion or the types of pain associated with it. He argues that medical abortions are necessary and are not criminal.[22] In contrast to the nineteenth-century anti-abortion discussions and attitudes, women did not consider family planning as criminal. Lost Womanhood demonstrates that women challenged True Womanhood's demands on sacred motherhood.

However, abortions as birth control surface in an earlier chapter titled "Retention of the Menses," describing which medicines work best for abortions at home. Mauriceau (Lohman) tells women who want to *bring back their menses* to take aloes, mandrake root, pennyroyal, or Desmeaux's Portuguese Pills. Mohr, Brodie, and Reagan all agree that this last pill, like other abortifacients, was advertised in many newspapers and helps scholarship understand how abortion operated as a business. Because his manual's success depends on the use of codified language, he never uses the word pregnancy in this chapter; instead, he

[22] In New York, abortion after quickening was always illegal. Medical scholars like Withycomb define quickening as when women can feel the fetus move. Modern obstetrics argue this movement occurs after five months. In 1873 after the Comstock Law passes, abortion at any month becomes illegal.

describes pregnancy symptoms: weight gain, listlessness, and fatigue. Abortion in actual practice is hidden into a heavily codified language about menses that nineteenth-century women understood from home medical manuals and shared experiences.

To remove morality from reproductive practice models, Frederick Hollick produced two health manuals during his lifetime, and his first health manual was for women. His 1847 *The Diseases of Woman, Their Causes and Cure Familiarly Explained: With Practical Hints for Their Prevention and for the Preservation of Female Health* includes important engravings of female body parts such as the pelvis, womb, ovaries, and fallopian tubes. These engravings give women a glimpse into their bodies when True Womanhood creates ideologies that convince women they do not need to understand their bodies. When he clinically describes individual female body parts, he removes morality from the female body. This intervention challenges True Womanhood's hold on domesticity. Hollick gives women the knowledge to better understand how their bodies work by making visible the invisible. Giving women the knowledge to understand how they can control their bodies, his second critical health manual directly ties reproductive health to marriage. His *Marriage Guide, or Natural History of a Generation* openly discusses health issues tied to sexual relationships. While Hollick maintains the Victorian ideal that sexual relationships should only happen in marriage, his discussions and engravings help lift the veil around sexual and reproductive health for men and women. Most notably, in his second manual, he openly and clinically discusses female sexual pleasure. Without a moral tone, he acknowledges women as sexual beings rather than vessels for childbearing. Additionally, he discusses how patriarchy has attempted to control women's sexual pleasure when he claims that in ancient times, women who were caught having an affair could have their clitoris removed. He declares that after the

fourth time a woman is caught having an affair, she had a clitoridectomy in a courtroom. His open admission of this practice proves that patriarchy longs to control the female body to reinforce a second-class status.

Lost Womanhood understands that the single most important idea from Hollick's second manual connects sexual pleasure to the female body and the brain. Hollick writes, "it is sheer nonsense to say that the strong sexual desire experienced arises merely from *depravity*, or that it can be overcome by *moral efforts* alone" (24) (author's empbathe hasis). To challenge the connection between morality and female sexual desire interrogates rigid gender expectations. He disconnects problematic morality from female sexual desires with a continued clitorectomy discussion. Because clitorectomies still happen in the nineteenth century, he shares that he has performed many clitorectomies on female bodies of varying ages to reveal the dangers of such a morality. Unlike other health manuals, he challenges discussions around virginity. He asserts that virginity and the hymen should have no relationship because many women can be born without a hymen, and it can be destroyed in different ways. He argues that a thin membrane is not an indicator of virginity, which is why "bridal sheet rituals are absurd and unjust" (27). This last descriptor – unjust— indicates that patriarchy purposefully propagates inaccurate medical knowledge to create cruel gender expectations and underscore the oppression of females.

When discussing abortion and miscarriage in Hollick's *Diseases of Women* and *Marriage Guide*, he interchanges the two terms. However, he distinguishes between the two in his *Matron's Manual for Midwifery*. First, he clarifies the difference between an abortion and a miscarriage. He describes abortion as when a fetus is expelled before it can survive. A miscarriage occurs when the fetus can survive if it occurs after the seventh month. These

fundamental differences push against the woman as a murderer rhetoric. Secondly, he acknowledges that when women have an abortion, a fetus is expelled, not a baby. He acknowledges the development of embryos, and this clinical and medical description helps to deescalate abortion as murder. Another critical discussion he includes is the simple point that both miscarriages and abortions are dangerous for women. He writes that miscarriages can be symptoms of more significant medical issues, distinct from moral ones. Two crucial ideas come out of this statement. Women are not at fault for reproductive issues that cause miscarriages, and motherhood and childbirth are medical issues, not a sacred responsibility with moral or nation-building implications.

In Hollick's *Marriage Guide*, a separate section titled "Prevention of Conception-Abortion, ETC" places birth control in men's hands. He acknowledges that women often turn to fake abortifacients for family planning and questions the double bind that women live in when it comes to family planning. Women have so few choices that they turn to fake medicines or abortion, both of which can end in death for them. As a way to balance publication needs, he acknowledges New York State laws concerning abortion and contraception. However, his manual argues that these laws risk women's and men's lives since condoms prevent venereal diseases. When men help with family planning, their wives do not have to risk death. Hollick's descriptions and discussions illustrate that men could help with family planning and keep their bodies healthy. He removes morality from discussions of condoms and family planning to question the reliance placed on women for family planning when another option works for both of them. Hollick's manual frames nineteenth-century reproductive experiences, which makes Lost Womanhood a more normative form of womanhood.

In addition to Hollick's manuals, personal writing captures abortion's disruptions and physical and emotional pain. Because women cannot speak about abortions, nineteenth-century middle and working-class women relied on personal letters and journals to show that they wanted control over their bodies. They wanted double standards to disappear; they wanted sexual autonomy; and they wanted access to abortion. When women write in their journals that they want to plan their families to improve their lives, they mean it. Judith Leavitt's research with archival letters shows that married women understood the possibility of death with each pregnancy. In a letter from Lizza Cabot to her sister, Lizza writes that she composed her will after finding out she was pregnant. Her fear of mortality demonstrates how the category of Lost Womanhood gives women a more realistic and humane form of life, allowing them to interrogate the necessity of their deaths. Shannon Withycombe accesses nineteenth-century personal narratives that document the burden of pregnancy. In the 1870s, Alice Kirk Grierson writes in a letter, "Henry succeeded her [Emily] too soon to give me as much rest as I would have liked. . . and told you before he was a year old, that I would rather die, then have another child" (qtd in Withycombe 18). While True Womanhood idolizes pregnancy and motherhood, Lost Womanhood's category acknowledges its cost and the relief at miscarriage for some women, like Alice.

With archival work, Leslie Reagan documents the fact that middle-class married couples sought abortions. In her diary, Frances Collins writes about her family planning conversation with her husband. "Frances Collin knew she was pregnant. She told her husband she had 'missed.' This had happened before and she had taken care of it before" (qtd in Reagan 19). Her vague pronoun of "this" allows her to avoid directly naming the act, and they both understand the reproductive code that describes their choice of birth control. She

went to Dr. Warner, where he "opened up the womb," and after the procedure, she told her husband that "I had it done." (qtd in Reagan 19). This documented private conversation between a husband and wife reveals that abortion was an essential and sometimes necessary part of marriage and domesticity. Her use of the word "again" indicates that Collins had previous experiences with abortions and allowed it to be a natural part of their marriage. Lost Womanhood's category does not label these women as failures but rather as women by seeking, naming, and having the unspoken: abortion.

Madame Restell, a Lost Woman

The category of Lost Womanhood can turn to one of the most famous abortionists of the nineteenth century, Madame Restell, who successfully creates a stable abortion practice. Helen Horowitz and Cheree Carlson tell the story of a young woman, Ann Sommers, who emigrated to the United States in 1831. Within a year of marriage, she finds herself widowed when her husband Henry Sommers dies shortly after arriving in the United States. Ann's experience follows the familiar trajectory for working-class widows. Like other widows before her, she finds work as a seamstress but realizes she can make more money selling abortifacients. Under True Womanhood, mothers cannot earn wages to provide food and shelter, so they must seek remarriage. But Sommers sees an opening where other women need her services. Willing to take risks, Sommers is able to provide a stable income for herself and her daughter. In 1836, she married Charles Lohman, who became her partner in her business. Rather than take over her business, he writes *The Married Woman's Private Medical Companion* to promote her work. In his footnotes, he tells readers where they can purchase abortifacients, condoms, and abortions with Madame Restell's services. Horowitz surmises that Dr. William Evans, a neighbor, may have trained Ann. With this knowledge,

she created an enterprise in 1838 and placed her first advertisement in the *New York Sun* in 1839, describing herself as a "celebrated midwife" or a "female physician" (200). As an abortionist, she finds success and a stable income.

The category of Lost Womanhood recognizes women who help fellow women with needs like family planning. Restell's life tells the story of a successful immigrant who begins as a widowed seamstress who faces poverty and transforms into a wealthy leisure class business owner. Cheree Carlson focuses on Restell's immigrant and working-class status, and her focus clears the path for the category of Lost Womanhood. Restell understands that predicament of women extends beyond pregnancy because she also arranged for adoptions through discreet delivery and helped create a network of surgical abortionists. The crime tabloid *National Police Gazette* may have labeled her the wickedest woman, but she built a wealthy business that helped other women plan their own families and take control of their futures. Horowitz describes abortion as a sexual and commercialized culture with women as active participants in an emerging system of capitalism. In this liminal space as a Lost Woman, Restell recognizes her relationship with death. Marriage kills women; birth kills women; abortions kill women. As socially dead citizens, women must be risk-takers when it comes to pregnancy and birth control. Restell's success depends on making abortion available to women; she wisely chooses to use mail order requests and charges different prices depending on class standing. She often charged wealthier clients one hundred dollars and more impoverished clients twenty dollars for similar services. Restell's awareness about class reveals that she understood that all women needed access to abortion. Because women largely controlled birthing practices through midwives, women could create successful businesses that helped other women.

Combined with the growing anti-abortion rhetoric and direct attacks on her, Madam Restell faced legal consequences. Horowitz explains that for most of her career, she carefully followed the law, and it was not until 1840, when Maria Purdy died from tuberculosis, that Restell faced a trial. As in the Sessions case at the turn of the eighteenth century, abortions became problematic and public when a woman died, and Restell paid the price. Purdy sought Restell's abortion services in 1839, and a year later, she died from causes unrelated to the abortion. Unfortunately, Purdy's husband brought charges against Restell, and in 1842, a judge found Restell guilty. She appealed to the New York State Supreme Court, and her retrial cleared her of all charges. Eventually, she faced a similar situation five years later. In New York, all forms of abortion after quickening were already illegal, but in 1845, if a woman died as a result of an abortion, the abortionist could be charged with second-degree murder. Despite the increased legal ramifications, Restell's practice continued to thrive. Horowitz and Carlson document that in 1847, Maria Bodine approached Restell for an abortion, and because of the changes in the law, she refused to perform it because Bodine was too far along in her pregnancy. After denying Maria, John McCann and Bodine's boyfriend negotiated with Restell for the risky and criminal abortion. Months later, Bodine became ill and sought treatment from a local doctor, who suspected an abortion and reported it, even though Bodine never told the doctor that she had one. Once again, Restell's downfall came from men. Eventually, all parties were convicted, even the two men, but she was dealt the harshest sentence, a year at Blackwell's Island. Late in her life, patriarchal culture continued to plague her: Comstock decided to target Restell until her death. In 1873, he pretended to require help with family planning and bought some of her pills. The next day he returned with police officers to arrest her. This last act doomed her; instead of fighting the

growing anti-abortion rhetoric and facing a drawn-out trial that could result in another sentence of prison time, she committed suicide on April 1, 1878.

Abortion and Susan Magoffin

The coded appearance of abortion in print culture runs alongside its discussion in private letters, journals, and records. The diarist Susan Magoffin is important to discussions about reproductive practice because she pens the term abortion. On the Santa Fe Trail, she loses her child, and to describe the loss of a child in her travel narrative, she chooses the word abortion. Too many scholars have ignored this significant moment in her narrative. Her decision to set aside codified language demonstrates her willingness to step outside the canopy of True Womanhood. Instead, she examines her decision through the lens of Lost Womanhood. Admittedly, Magoffin's elite status distinguishes her from the indigenous and Mexican women she meets on the trail. Magoffin's skin color and class status certainly create a vastly different expedition. Because the category of Lost Womanhood recognizes marginalization of various intensity levels, it offers a way of understanding Magoffin's choice to leave her family and cultivate a different form of womanhood.

On the eve of the US-Mexico War in June of 1846, Susan Shelby Magoffin left for Mexico's prairies with her new husband, business trader Samuel Magoffin. Historians Lillian Schlissel, Virginia Scharff, and Deborah Lawrence present a similar biography of Susan Shelby. The Magoffin brothers had traveled the Santa Fe Trail since its opening in 1821 and developed trading and commercial relationships with Mexico. President Polk capitalized on this relationship to convince James Magoffin, Samuel's brother, to travel along with Samuel and a military escort to prepare Mexico for the advancing US army (A Mexican army eventually captured James and held him hostage). Because of the possible dangers, Susan

and Samuel traveled with an army that secures Santa Fe, and despite the impending invasion, they head to Mexico. In her chapter "The Hearth of Darkness: Susan Magoffin on Suspect Terrain," Virginia Scharff imagines how Magoffin replicates colonial discourses in the emerging capitalism in the West. The category of Lost Womanhood continues Scharff's work and provides a framework to move Magoffin out of biographers' shadows and into nineteenth-century womanhood scholarship.

Scholars have avoided asking why Magoffin walks away from her family home. As a True Woman, Magoffin would have stayed at home and created a domestic space for her husband and her impending family while her husband traveled. Her husband's absence would give her more power in the domestic sphere and should appeal to her. True Womanhood depends on this pseudo freedom, and ordinarily, many True Women would have considered her situation ideal. Instead, she travels with her husband from Kentucky to Independence, Missouri, the Santa Fe Trail's starting point.[23] On this lengthy journey, she recorded her experiences as a travel narrative with the intention to publish. Influenced by Gregg's *Commerce of the Prairies*, she may have sensed an opportunity as many westerly Overland Trail travel narratives were published in the 1840s.

To begin to explore why she leaves, scholarship should turn to her family. Her biographers, such as Susanne Berthier-Foglar, describe Magoffin's family history, revealing a desire for journey and risk. Her great grandfather Evan Shelby came to the colonies, fought in the French Indian Wars, set up a store in Virginia, and supported the US revolution. His son Isaac, Magoffin's grandfather, fought and earned military honors in the US

[23] They continue to the dangerous Raton Pass, and before stopping at Santa Fe, they spend some time in Las Vegas, New Mexico. Eventually, they make their way to Mexico City, where Samuel typically trades his goods after these stops.

Revolutionary war, after which, he became Kentucky's first governor. Isaac left his son, Magoffin's father, both a wealthy plantation and a long shadow. Thus, Magoffin's family history had deep political and historical roots in the developing republic.

Historians know more about Magoffin's grandparents and their slave-owning past than her parents. Despite this past, biographers attempt to create a picture of a pioneer woman, like the Overland Trail women, largely because Magoffin attempts to frame herself as such. Scholars, biographers, and historical societies try to distance Magoffin from her family's plantation and dependence on slave ownership. The Shelbys owned slaves, yet many biographers will tell readers that she brought a servant or maid with her on her journey. Mimicking the travel journals she has read, Magoffin also labels Jane as an attendant in her travel narrative. Because Magoffin never describes Jane's skin color, she does not reveal Jane's race throughout the text. She freely describes servants as Mexican but only describes Jane as her maid or attendant. In nineteenth-century racialized cultural descriptions, the term maid equates with whiteness. I argue that she purposefully chooses to reinforce the northern travel narrative, and the silence around Jane's race helps Magoffin achieve this goal. Early in the narrative, she writes, "We have a strange compound of Americans, Mexicans and negroes" (18). Additionally, she identifies "a negro woman, who is coming up from the fort" (6). Given Magoffin's family history, Jane's role connects Magoffin to the context of slavery. It is possible that Jane had been given to Magoffin as a child or was given to her for the journey by her father. Historically, relationships between young white and black girls in slave-holding families are common, and it is possible that Jane has always been Magoffin's slave. The question about whether Jane would want to leave the plantation is open, but the owner and slave relationship between Susan and Jane needs to be framed correctly.

There is a strange insistence on framing Magoffin as a white northern middle-class pioneer, not a part of a wealthy slave-owning family. Historical societies such as the State Historical Society of Missouri write that she grew up with servants, purposefully avoiding the word slaves. Biographers begin her life story when Susan and her husband arrive in Independence, Missouri, ignoring her life on a slave-owning plantation. In reality, she leaves a plantation family at the age of nineteen. The word negro may resemble twentieth-century language, but Magoffin's original text shows that she chooses that more neutral word to describe black people. Growing up on a plantation, she would have heard more vulgar nineteenth-century terms, and the word negro indicates that she wishes to distance herself from her slavery past. Admittedly, her husband's wealth and attitudes toward coloniality in the West allow her to create a vastly different experience on the trail and leave the South behind. Yet, her journal's tone as a new act gives the impression that she eagerly rejects her suffocating home. Magoffin may understand that she cannot live up to True Womanhood's dependence on racialized ideologies. She may reject her family, and they may reject her. This rejection transforms her into a Lost Woman. She recognizes that she lives in a liminal space, and scholars continually attempt to force her into True Womanhood. The category of Lost Womanhood better suits her experiences outside the prevailing physical and cultural landscape of the nineteenth-century ideology concerning women.

Magoffin interprets the West in a way that transforms her during the journey. The American West as a signifier has long been studied by scholars like Krista Comer and Margaret Walsh. Margaret Walsh writes that "there remain possibly as many wests as there are interpreters" (1). As Magoffin begins her adventure with her husband, she participates in a capitalistic and colonial view of the land and its people. Like her husband, she recognizes

the economic potential for her new family. However, it is essential to recognize that this new opportunity can sit outside slavery despite attempts to push slavery westward. Her family wealth comes from a dependence on a slave economy, whereas James Magoffin's livelihood depends on imports and exports with Mexico. His relationships with Mexico offer a different world view for Susan as she travels along with him, and these interactions with the West decidedly transform womanhood for her. While Susan Magoffin believes in Manifest Destiny at the beginning of her journey, she begins to see Mexico and its people in a new light. This change does not mean that she completely embraces the diversity of Mexican people on the soon-to-be annexed land. In this journey, she recognizes their second-class status and sees a possible alliance with them. With this reframing, Magoffin may consider the ways that the US government will treat these new citizens, and she most certainly questions the war against Mexico.

Her journal is different from the traditional westerly narrative, for it expresses the voice of a young married woman who wants to be a part of her husband's business and see the West. Because she does not intend to start life anew, she can imagine a trip where she does not have to reproduce the southern home as she travels. In her journal, she italicizes the phrase, "*my own table* and in *my own house*" (Magoffin 6). This emphasis on *my own* reveals that she has a different vision of home and does not want merely to replicate her mother's home. In her travel narrative, she often describes her childhood home as oppressive, filled with gossipy women. She enjoys the "uncontaminated air" and the liberation from women and domestic spaces (10). Without the pressure of True Womanhood, she explores the land, rides horses, sees new animals, and enjoys the prairies that she only read about in Gregg's *Commerce on the Prairies*.

Fortified by Samuel's wealth, their wagon train contains enough furniture to create a bedroom space where Mexican and black servants pick flowers for her, and she calls herself "a wandering princess" (11). Yes, this term princess invokes problematic class issues and frames Magoffin under a colonialist umbrella that she sometimes deserves. This term also shows that women aspire to positions of power, and the position of princess is one that she understands. She titles her journeys westward *Travels in Mexico Commencing in June 1846, El Diario de Dona Susanita Magoffin*. (Stella Drumm retitles the journal to *Down the Santa Fe Trail and into Mexico.*)[24] Her opening lines capture her enthusiasm and reveal a desire for something different than life had offered her. "My journal tells a story tonight different from what it has ever done before. The curtain raises a new scene. This book of travels is *Act 2nd*, literally and truly. From the city of New York to the Plains of Mexico, is a stride that I myself can scarcely realize" (author's emphasis) (1). The tone reveals a desire for a new environment and life that she cannot quite yet imagine. Like others before and after her, the expansive spaces of the West embody that new act that Magoffin envisions.

Krista Comer's approach of new regionalism expertly frames Magoffin's narrative. Comer argues that a gendered traditional western space "relegates women to a forever status of no-space" (277). In this no-space, Magoffin sets aside her own voice and attempts a masculine one in her private journal, but the strategy falls apart when reproductive issues disrupt the masculine voice. Comer argues that "feminist geographers, in particular, have pointed out that women's relation-ships to spatial structures most often revolve around reproductive roles" (27). This statement most certainly captures how Magoffin's painful loss

[24] Drumm's edition is problematic in many ways. The first problem in renaming Magoffin's text is that she negates the diary aspect and focuses on a travel narrative. Drumm's edition is the only one in print, and so Magoffin's voice and experiences are immediately mediated upon publication with an editor's agenda that surfaces throughout the text. Under these conditions, Magoffin's voice never gets to stand on its own.

disrupts her ability to maintain the traditional travel narrative approach. Her loss becomes a provocation, disrupting the feminine space of childbirth and moving her to choose the word abortion. Her pain cannot be contained, and her language shifts from the private to the public. Comer points out, "by finding, risking, and embracing public visibility, with all of its dangers and sanctions, women writers transform public spaces, make them more conducive to female subjectivity and political visions" (29). Magoffin's word choice brings to light the necessity of openly discussing reproductive issues like abortion and loss. In the masculine West, Magoffin brings reproduction's realities, which were commonplace on the trail, into print. In the contained field of her journal, reproductive issues erupt through her codified language. This eruption reveals that women like Magoffin seek stability, and the West may have made it possible.

Western women or women who leave behind True Womanhood to travel West conjures a new type of womanhood. Comer discusses the fact that the Northeast may be primarily the center for feminism. Competing versions of womanhood develop in tandem in this region. Western womanhood is shaped by different forces: distance from the northeast and proximity to indigenous and Mexican cultures. Western womanhood looks different because of its distance from the northeast and the influences of indigenous and Mexican women. In light of Comer's work, Magoffin's narrative can be read as a desire for a new form of womanhood: one that allows her to name her pain as she sees fit rather than burying her pain in language that downplays women's reproductive experiences. With this decision, she begins to see True Womanhood's obstacles that disempower women.

Even though most travel narratives do not describe a married couple's sex life, the new regionalism of open spaces reorients female understanding, creating a space for an

author like Magoffin to describe a sexual moment on the trail. Even when she relies on the code around women's sexuality, she still describes the marital bed. In an entry labeled "Camp No. 1 'Lost Spring' June 23rd," she describes a lazy morning when they have returned to bed after breakfast because of the rain. She describes the moment when they lay down for a nap, and Colonel Owens interrupts them. "Rather a sad predicament that; he found us in rather a more *thriving* condition" (author's emphasis) (23). With her use of italics, Magoffin isolates this moment in her narrative. She describes a loving moment in their tent where a husband has laid his head in his wife's lap while the sound of rain fills the moment. This description makes evident Magoffin's desire for sexual connection. Rather than focus only on the journey, she tells the story of women on the trail, including sexual activity. She looks at this journey as a honeymoon of sorts, which includes the sexual desires of a newly wedded young woman. The category of Lost Womanhood welcomes this moment, whereas True Womanhood ignores this moment and allows a codified language to bury feminine sexual desire.

Scholars have long avoided figuring out how many months Magoffin was pregnant when she left for her journey. Only a few acknowledge her pregnancy, but Shannon Withycombe, a medical historian, scrutinizes her entries to confirm Magoffin's pregnancy. In *Lost,* Withycombe confirms that Magoffin was between three to five months pregnant on her nineteenth birthday when she loses her child. Lost Womanhood's category accepts a pregnant woman's choice to leave for Mexico's prairies and give birth on the journey. Though she desires a new form of womanhood, she is not without doubt. Despite her transformation, she cannot leave True Womanhood completely behind and writes about her decision to risk her health. On July 28th, after meeting with a doctor, she expresses her

complicated feelings: “I should have never consented to take the trip on the plains had it not been with the view and the hope that it would prove beneficial; but so far my hopes have been blasted, for I am going down hill than up, and it is so bad to be sick and under a physician all the time. But cease my rebellious heart!” (64). One interpretation allows her to reconsider her decision to travel west and rebel against True Womanhood’s expectations out of fear. Before her, many pioneer women traveled and gave birth under these dangerous conditions on the trail; however, Magoffin is traveling with only her slave, Jane. If women help other pregnant women, Jane is now her only support. Additionally, she could turn to indigenous or Mexican women for help, but Magoffin’s beliefs in racial discourses prevent her from doing so. A different interpretation offers a more complex approach to Magoffin’s reaction. When she comments on her rebellious heart, she may not like her initial reaction to her fears. She should be strong enough to endure this trip and her pregnancy. She knew she was pregnant when she decided to travel with her husband, and this act begins her rejection of True Womanhood.

I am not concerned with whether or not she has an actual abortion. Instead, I find it more productive to argue that her word choice creates an opening where only an unutterable word can describe her pain. True Womanhood’s gender ideologies tell women to embrace the sacred responsibility of motherhood, and the consequence of this dangerous ideology creates a romanticized notion of death. The word abortion disrupts this model and admits the role that abortion and death play in motherhood. Caroll Smith-Rosenberg’s *Disorderly Conduct* captures the bind that nineteenth-century middle-class women face when she points out that women were expected to manage the financial resources at home but could not control their

families' size. Abortion was the answer since it allowed them to control their lives but at the significant risk of death.

Magoffin's journal captures her transformation from a failing True Woman to a Lost Woman. In her travel narrative, Magoffin strictly adheres to the nineteenth-century Victorian reproductive code of polite silences and refusal to describe her pregnancy until she writes that she needs a doctor specializing in *women's issues*, another code for pregnancy and reproductive practices. She writes as if she follows True Womanhood and its ideologies but cannot sustain this approach. For example, in her entry dated [July] Saturday 18th, Camp 38, she writes that she and Samuel decide to seek out Dr. Mesure, a doctor who understands female cases, after not feeling well. This italicized phrase stems from her dependence on the codified language:

> Now that I am with the Doctor I am satisfied. He is a polite, delicate Frenchman (Dr. Mesure) from St. Louis. He has sandy hair and whiskers, a lively address and conversation- called an excellent physician '*especially in female cases*,' and in brevity I have great confidence in his knowledge and capacity of relieving me, though not all at once, for mine is a case to be treated gently, and slowly, a complication of diseases.
>
> The idea of being sick on the Plains is not at all pleasant to me; it is rather terrifying than otherwise, although I have a good nurse in my servant woman Jane, and one of the kindest husbands in the world, all gentleness and affection, and would at any time suffer in my stead. (53)

As expected, she relies on three heavily codified Victorian phrases: *female cases*, *sick*, and *diseases*. While True Womanhood may have heightened childbirth to a sacred responsibility,

women describe childbirth as an illness and a disease. Brodie, Reagan, and Withycombe discuss the multiple fears and dangers that women face from pregnancy and delivery. In her narrative, Magoffin hints that she wishes she had her family and friends near but understands that she only has a husband, doctor, and slave. Her situation anticipates the male doctor's takeover of midwifery and obstetrics. Magoffin crystalizes the paradox for women in True Womanhood. Women must sacrifice their lives for the sacred duty of motherhood. Nevertheless, the very responsibility that makes them special can end in death. The fact that they can die estranges them from their own personhood, making them primarily vessels for birth. The category of Lost Womanhood normalizes how women react to pregnancy and childbirth, and it also acknowledges that True Womanhood's definition of motherhood is a social death trap.

Until the medical world inserted itself into reproductive practices in the mid-nineteenth century, women traditionally helped other women with pregnancies, sometimes as midwives. Being alone on the trail is a very different experience for Magoffin, and as she points out, she wants relief. This relief could be from the anxiety of being alone or from some of the pregnancy complications that she experiences. Eleven days later, after writing that she does not feel well, on July 29, she indicates that she has lost much weight and is thinner than when she started her journey. "The dear knows what is the cause!" (Magoffin 66). She knows that she should be gaining weight for a healthy pregnancy. Again, without knowing for certain what medical conditions she suffers, scholarship focuses instead on her

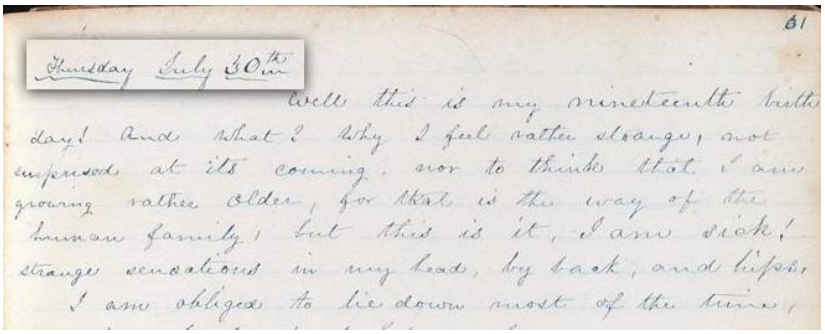


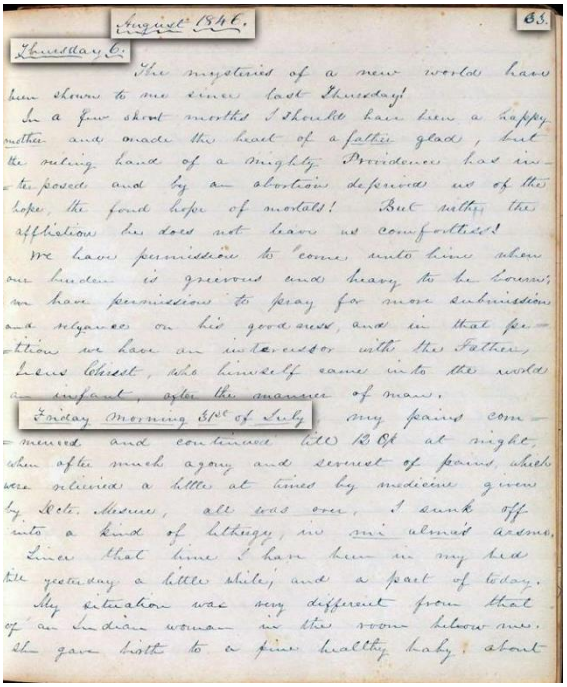
Figure 9 Magoffin Diary Thursday July 30th Courtesy of Western Americana Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University

anxiety about this pregnancy. Her descriptions suggest that she may have had to seek a medically induced abortion because of her complicated pregnancy. One of the most disruptive moments in the narrative is when Magoffin reveals her pain in a series of entries. After a July 28th entry, where she expresses concern about her illness and her decision to take the journey, she composes another entry on "Friday, morning July 31st of July." In this entry, she describes the pain of an abortion. The doctor gives her some medicine, which relieves her "much agony and severest of pains," and she describes the moment when she loses her child with the phrase "*all was over*" (68). Her italicized words suggest that this is the actual day the abortion occurs because *all* can refer to both the pain and her pregnancy. In her entry on August sixth, she describes and identifies her loss from July 31st as an abortion. During her intense experience, codified language fails her, and after a week passes, she chooses to identify her loss as an abortion. This forbidden word expresses her deep and profound feelings. Lost Womanhood's category recognizes this trauma and normalizes Magoffin's reactions.

The moment she loses her child and identifies her loss as an abortion, she transforms into a Lost Woman. Her loss occurs at Fort Bent, one of the historic staging arenas for the US Mexico War. In an entry titled "August 1846 Thursday 6," she writes that "providence has interposed and by an abortion deprived us the hope, the fond hope of mortals!" (67). This

traditionally medical word, abortion, should make readers pause, and nineteenth-century readers most certainly would have felt unease at seeing the word in print outside of a medical manual. Magoffin understands her deviation and purposefully pens a word that most other writers avoid. Unfortunately, Magoffin's journal was never published within her lifetime, so nineteenth-century readers never saw her word choice.[25] When Drumm publishes her narrative at the turn of the century, abortion becomes a divisive issue that describes women as murderers. Rather than viewing this word as shocking, the category of Lost Womanhood explains how she processes her loss.

Lost Womanhood makes room for trauma and better understands Magoffin's inability to process her loss, both emotionally and on the page. Her loss creates such chaos within her that she cannot keep temporal control over her writing. Her journal loses temporal order and becomes achronological. After July 30,th she labels the next entry August 6,th, and the following entry is dated July 31st, after which she returns to August 6th. She continually returns to the moment of death. This disorder represents the powerful pain that she internalizes. The chaotic entries create a loop where she returns to the moment of her loss.



August 1846. 83.

Thursday 6.

The mysteries of a new world have been shown to me since last Thursday! In a few short months I should have been a happy mother and made the heart of a father glad, but the ruling hand of a mighty Providence has interposed and by an abortion deprived us of the hope, the fond hope of mortals! But sutley the affliction has does not leave us comfortless! We have permission to come unto him when our burden is grievous and heavy to be borne; we have permission to pray for more submission and reliance on his goodness, and in that petition we have an intercessor with the Father, Jesus Christ, who himself came into the world an infant, after the manner of man.

Friday Morning 31st of July my pains commenced and continued till 12 Oc at night, when after much agony and several of pains which were relieved a little at times by medicine given by Dr. Mosure, all was over. I sunk off into a kind of lithargy, in wh almost asleep. Since that time I have been in my bed till yesterday a little while, and a part of today. My situation was very different from that of an Indian woman in the room below me. She gave birth to a fine healthy baby about

Figure 10 Magoffin Diary August 6th and July 31st Courtesy of Western Americana Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

[25] Drumm prioritizes the masculine voices in Magoffin's text with extensive historical footnotes. In fact, initial reviews of her narrative focus on Drumm's contributions and research rather than Magoffin's experiences. Virginia Scharff's 2003 essay "Hearth of Darkness" is the first to call Drumm's footnotes to task.

When Magoffin's narrative starts to lose control, Comer's "new spatial field" emerges. (55). Her work with place, space, and time explains how Magoffin loses control over time in her journal. When powerful pain happens, time begins to operate differently. This new spatial field is a time loop that she creates to survive her trauma. What is more, she does not experience this medical problem in a familiar place where she can ground herself in recognizable markers. At Fort Bent, conflict and danger surround her. Time may have no meaning for her, and her loss only exacerbates her reactions. She reveals that her trauma remains with her and continues to draw her inward and backward. She then resumes temporal control with an August 7th entry where she explains that it has been eight days since she left her room. In this entry, she acknowledges that she lost her child on July 31st and that her entry on August 6th (where she employs the word abortion) is reflective in nature. Once dependent on a travel narrative structured around masculine ideals, she discovers that such an approach cannot contain her pain. Her bold insertion of a scarlet A word profoundly changes the narrative's direction.

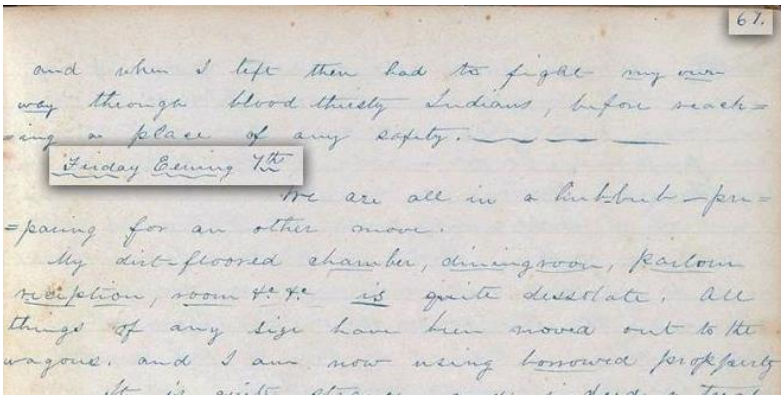

67.
and when I left them had to fight my own way through blood thirsty Indians, before reaching a place of any safety.
Friday Evening 7th
We are all in a turbulent preparing for an other move.
My dirt-floored chamber, diningroom, parlour reception, room &c &c is quite desolate. All things of any size have been moved out to the wagons, and I am now using borrowed property

Figure 11 Magoffin Diary Friday Aug. 7, Courtesy of Western Americana Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University

These temporal problems can give insight into how Magoffin processes her loss. In the category of Lost Womanhood that loss does not equal failure. The Thursday, August 6th entry describes a warrior. Magoffin imagines that she "should be obliged to buckle on my pistols and turn warrior myself, rather a touch above me at Amazonianism!" (Magoffin 70).

The conflicted and bloody space of the West better articulates her pain and loss. After this violence-filled entry, her writing returns to a stable temporal order to break the cycle. Only later can she find a more accurate word, and the category of Lost Womanhood validates the complexities of her reactions and trauma.

The trauma of her abortion always remains with her. A year later in an August 1847 journal entry, she tells the readers that she would have had a son. She receives a letter from her sister Letty recounting the birth of a son for her sister Anna, who named him Isaac Shelby after their father. Magoffin's reaction is telling. "[It's a] mean thing for taking the name from me, she might have waited a few more months" (245). After this second mention of taking, she articulates why she pens the word abortion: her son was taken from her. The space of loss is so expansive that she still resides in it a year later, and she demands that her readers remember that the word abortion appeared earlier in her narrative and her life. Lost Womanhood's category does not force her to forget her pain to focus on future children. Instead, it values her reactions and her pain as it seeks to normalize the deathly spaces of childbirth and maternal loss.

Scholars have long avoided Magoffin's use of the word abortion, assuming that she experiences a miscarriage or an early delivery. It seems as if scholars cannot or will not entertain the fact that Magoffin either had an abortion or feels as if she had an abortion. Withycombe, Menard, Scharff, and others propose her loss as a spontaneous miscarriage or an early delivery because of the rough travel on the Santa Fe Trail, a common medical issue for women pioneers.[26] Other scholars assume that a crash with their wagon at Ash Creek on July 4th may have contributed to or caused her miscarriage. Both Deborah Lawrence and

[26] Withycombe presents a case for early delivery, and Menard and Scharff describe a spontaneous miscarriage.

Monica Reyes suggest that the crash at Ash Creek leads to a miscarriage in late July. Dee Brown and Virginia Schraff both avoid directly connecting the crash to a miscarriage. Historians JoAnn Chartier and Chris Enss suggest that Magoffin experiences a stillbirth. Liza Ketchum completely avoids naming Magoffin's loss and only devotes three sentences to the event. Many jump to the conclusion common in other nineteenth-century medical narratives that end with "she recovered quickly" (16). These disagreements suggest an unwillingness to consider the literal nature of Magoffin's word. Because Magoffin fails True Womanhood's ideologies, scholars ignore or gloss over her choices. The category of Lost Womanhood takes an entirely different approach which understands the value of her trauma and accepts the pain that manifests in her travel narrative.

Given the widespread knowledge about abortion, Magoffin had to understand the power of naming the loss of her child as such. Scholars often have difficulty placing Magoffin in westerly travel or feminist literature, but Lost Womanhood, as a category, provides a place for her narrative by examining her word choice and the impact of this loss beyond the bounds of her biography. By engaging this loaded term, she breaks from tradition, violates gender codes, and upsets reader expectations. Magoffin draws attention to her desire for a form of womanhood that frames sacred motherhood and reproductive practices. No longer are nineteenth-century women expected to sacrifice their bodies in childbirth or pregnancy.

After her loss, Magoffin resorts to the colonial narrative of racialized bodies where women seemingly have easier births. After her abortion, she describes the birth of an indigenous baby, and to process her loss, she describes the birth of a racialized child and comments on nineteenth-century birthing methods:

> She gave birth to a fine healthy baby, about the same, *and in half an hour after she went to the River and bathe herself and it*. It is truly astonishing to see what customs will do. No doubt many ladies in civilized life are ruined by too careful treatments during child-birth, for this custom of the hethen[sic] is not known to be disadvantageous, but it is a hethenish [sic] custom (68).

When Magoffin invokes women of color to deal with the loss of her child, she may be reflecting on the pain and the strength of women of color to process her sense of weakness, both mental and physical. Magoffin is absorbing historical descriptions from nineteenth-century white male doctors who study black and indigenous women to learn reproductive knowledge. Rich documents the violence against black women in the name of reproductive practices. In 1875, Joseph Taber Johnson's work in the South was far more consequential because he clinically established black women as inhuman. Claiming to have watched 200,000 births but not taking any firsthand accounts of black women, he dismissed those who described difficult labor as unreliable, while disqualifying other sources. He concluded that black women had different nervous systems. He used only two skeletons to measure the pelvis and determined that black babies had smaller skulls, so women did not struggle with birth. Samuel Stanhope Smith made similar descriptions of indigenous women. When Magoffin invokes this discourse, she betrays travel writing's complicity in solidifying the racialized rhetoric. As Rich points out, "the fixed and disembedded part - the uterus, or the pelvis- was capacitated as a signifier for all-subsuming categories of 'civilized' and uncivilized,' of 'white" and 'black'" (10). Because Magoffin most likely has read travel narratives, she internalizes these racial discourses, and they surface when she processes her pain and loss.

Abortion and its effects continue to affect Magoffin on multiple levels. In trying to process her abortion, she describes herself as an Amazonian as she will be "obliged to buckle on my pistols and turn warrior" in order to "fight [her] own way through blood-thirsty Indians" (Magoffin 70). Avoiding Victorian femininity when describing abortion, she employs common nineteenth-century racialized metaphors about nonwhite bodies and expansion rhetoric. These conquest images mirror her pain and bloodiness more accurately than the silence of True Womanhood, and the warfare at Fort Bent provides a potent metaphor to describe the war within her body and mind. Yes, she resorts to racialized stereotypes, but Lost Womanhood can suggest that after her loss, she sees a possible alliance with both a violent indigenous male spy and a female Amazonian. In this alliance, she imagines being transformed into a racialized body who readily trains and engages in warfare. This comparison crystalizes women's attitudes toward pregnancy and birth. Women must be warriors and fight an emotional and biological war to survive. This alliance also articulates her desire for power and her ability to command. Combining the feminine with a new masculine identity, she imagines herself as a woman who successfully can fight a man. A few days later, in Poni Creek, she writes, "Here I am both Madam and Mr. of the whole concern" (86) and later, "I am capable of commanding" (87). After she names her abortion, she abandons Victorian sensibilities about gender expectations. In this loss, she finds the ability to name herself as a leader and claim both genders. The category of Lost Womanhood accepts her desire to experiment with gender dynamics.

The dismissal of Magoffin's loss prevents a complete understanding of her body's reaction to abortion. While Menard identifies Fort Bent as a pivotal moment on their journey from Santa Fe to Mexico, he does not acknowledge the word abortion. Instead, he focuses on

her reactions to reproducing a home on a dirt floor. His refusal to acknowledge her abortion and his descriptions of unsettled domesticity fail to consider the disjunctures and deviations in the narrative following her abortion. When Menard postulates that she resists a "somber mood" after Fort Bent without acknowledging her abortion, he fails to consider the powerful effects of abortion on women's bodies and minds (174). Abortion, no matter the reason, causes trauma for women, and unlike Dr. Mesure, Menard does not specialize in "*female cases*." Historian Lillian Schlissel, who focuses on the Overland Trail, intervenes in this type of representation by acknowledging that women "seemed to see something different than their men saw," a new perspective that "might prove to be historically valuable" (11). A feminist lens does not discount her own words. Rather it removes her from the footnotes of scholarship's patriarchal systems.

As an outcome of her trauma and transformation, Magoffin learns to feel sympathy and empathy for Mexico's people. Her pain brings her to Lost Womanhood and allows her to understand the Mexican citizens' dispossessed status. After Fort Bent, she wonders about Mexico's pain and how its citizens will suffer under this war. In an entry marked the 22nd, she focuses on the military with her speculations about the motives of General Taylor:

> I suppose to determine by one great battle the fate of the traders *here*, as well as many other things testing the Republic. Our presumption is, if the American arms are successful, the war is at an end, without further say, if not the whole Republic will be so elated and so confident of their superior valor, they will be unwilling to close it till they have been entirely beaten by the still increasing force of the American Army, as Congress has ordered out *60,000* in case the present army is unable to end the War (179)

She deliberately transposes the impact of the military onto the economic spaces of Mexico. She decidedly places the traders in Mexico and openly condemns the US Congress for engaging in an unequal fight with marginalized citizens. She reveals the excessive approach to the US Mexico war and the impact on trade relationships with Mexico. She sees Mexico as its own country rather than a land waiting for the US capitalist expansion. The category of Lost Womanhood creates a moment where the disenfranchised can recognize each other, and this recognition allows for change across political, economic, and racial divides.

Genre and Abortion

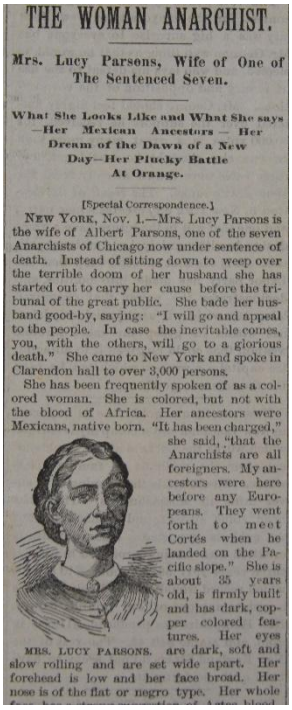
The subversive hybrid nature of the travel narrative, posed somewhere between domestic novels and print culture, makes possible Magoffin's outspoken text and her employment of the precise word for her child's death: abortion. Traditionally, travel journals provided advice to future travelers and advanced the rhetoric behind Manifest Destiny and colonial discourses. Instead, Magoffin infuses her travel narrative with personal experience to articulate her pain. Magoffin's original title *Travels in Mexico Commencing in June 1846, El Diario de Dona Susanita Magoffin* reveals that she desires to document her travels, but the Spanish word for diary makes it possible to express personal and private reactions. This hybrid genre creates a space where Magoffin momentarily and purposefully disrupts the Victorian codified language surrounding pregnancy and childbirth to create a space for mourning, for guilt, and for healing. This unstable genre not only captures Magoffin's instability after her painful loss but also creates a space for deviations, especially when the author expects to publish it.

The category of Lost Womanhood understands that she purposefully makes an intensely private moment very public when she leaves her journal entries out of order rather

than editing their temporal order. In addition to losing control of time, the jarring effect of the word abortion disrupts this interior moment, and this genre gives Magoffin the rhetorical power to break the rules. Cynthia Huff aptly explains the problematic but resilient nature of diary writing. “Like feminist criticism, the diary, in its diversity of approach and focus, its melding of various disciplines, its tendency to mesh the inner with outer, has been accused of looseness and a lack of rigor, the very antithesis of much canonical literature and literary criticism” (6). The blending of private and public moments allows a Lost Woman to break from True Womanhood and reveal its instability. Influenced by Mary Ellman’s feminist scholarship, Huff argues that diaries “know no boundaries” (7). Indeed, “it is precisely the subversiveness of this trying-on and living-through of various modes of experience” that gives diaries their truths and vitality (7). The journal’s very flexibility of form properly inspires Magoffin to pen the word abortion. Diary writing rests in the space of subversiveness, where boundaries disappear and dissolve. In this liminal space, Lost Womanhood surfaces.

Lost Womanhood creates a more productive space to examine how women achieve personhood rather than categorizing them only as mothers, daughters, or wives. Magoffin actively negotiates these roles, and feminist studies can turn to writings about and by women to elucidate their complex and multi-faceted lives. This new scholarship demystifies the code surrounding reproductive practices to recover texts about women and their bodies. While True Womanhood focuses on the sadness in losses like miscarriage, the new category of Lost Womanhood understands that women feel relief along with sadness. Women like Magoffin and Restell normalize the complexity of reproductive practices instead of solely focusing on failure. Understanding the historical and material conditions behind abortion openly dispels

True Womanhood's acceptance of sacred motherhood. With family planning, women can create financial empires that allow them to compete with men openly. Magoffin and Restell attempt to control their domestic lives by exposing the heresy of angel of the hearth. Most importantly, the category of Lost Womanhood acknowledges that a woman's response to abortion depends on her social status and accepts all responses to trauma.



THE WOMAN ANARCHIST.

Mrs. Lucy Parsons, Wife of One of The Sentenced Seven.

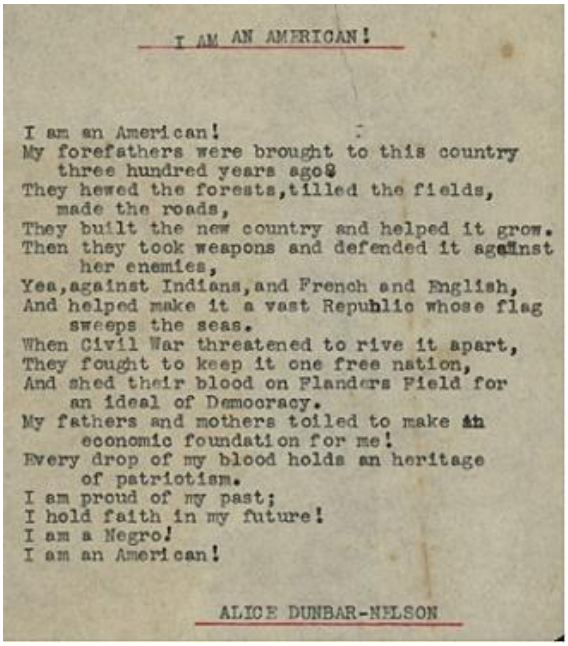
What She Looks Like and What She says —Her Mexican Ancestors — Her Dream of the Dawn of a New Day—Her Plucky Battle At Orange.

[Special Correspondence.]

NEW YORK, Nov. 1.—Mrs. Lucy Parsons is the wife of Albert Parsons, one of the seven Anarchists of Chicago now under sentence of death. Instead of sitting down to weep over the terrible doom of her husband she has started out to carry her cause before the tribunal of the great public. She bade her husband good-by, saying: "I will go and appeal to the people. In case the inevitable comes, you, with the others, will go to a glorious death." She came to New York and spoke in Clarendon hall to over 3,000 persons.

She has been frequently spoken of as a colored woman. She is colored, but not with the blood of Africa. Her ancestors were Mexicans, native born. "It has been charged," she said, "that the Anarchists are all foreigners. My ancestors were here before any Europeans. They went forth to meet Cortés when he landed on the Pacific slope." She is about 35 years old, is firmly built and has dark, copper colored features. Her eyes are dark, soft and slow rolling and are set wide apart. Her forehead is low and her face broad. Her nose is of the flat or negro type. Her whole

MRS. LUCY PARSONS.



I AM AN AMERICAN!

I am an American!
My forefathers were brought to this country
three hundred years ago
They hewed the forests, tilled the fields,
made the roads,
They built the new country and helped it grow.
Then they took weapons and defended it against
her enemies,
Yea, against Indians, and French and English,
And helped make it a vast Republic whose flag
sweeps the seas.
When Civil War threatened to rive it apart,
They fought to keep it one free nation,
And shed their blood on Flanders Field for
an ideal of Democracy.
My fathers and mothers toiled to make an
economic foundation for me!
Every drop of my blood holds an heritage
of patriotism.
I am proud of my past;
I hold faith in my future!
I am a Negro!
I am an American!

ALICE DUNBAR-NELSON

Chapter Four

A Constellation of Lost Stars: Female-Driven Black Nationalism before the 20th Century

In 1980, a black woman articulated a truth that nineteenth-century black female activists already understood. Nancy White, a seventy-three-year-old black woman, spoke to John Gwaltney in an interview and described why nineteenth-century black female activists changed their strategies. "When you come right down to it, white women just *think* they are free. Black women *know* they ain't free" (qtd in "The Social Construction of Black Feminist Thought" 758). Nineteenth-century black female activists begin to move beyond relying upon masculine language and aligning themselves with Black men.[27] These activists lay the

[27] In their fight for personhood, early nineteenth-century black women activists embrace the way that black men access white masculinity and the rights that come with it through the black press. Jane Dabel discusses the impact of the black press on nineteenth-century black women activists. The black press clearly communicates

groundwork for modern critical race and gender theorists. A more vigorous form of activism emerges when black female activists articulate their intersectional complexity. Patricia Collins argues that black women have three layers of ideologies to navigate as citizens, and while Collins may focus on twentieth-century women writers, her work describes how nineteenth-century black female activists strategize against layered oppression. Jane Dabel further asserts that black women's public roles develop from racialized gender expectations. While White womanhood limits reform agenda and public speaking, black activists find more freedom and can make different gender expectations work for them rather than against them. As a precursor to the modern Civil Rights movement, late-nineteenth-century female black activists anticipate the dialogue that discusses the unchanging material conditions of people of color, especially black women. When True Womanhood expects women to subsume themselves into the community, and New Womanhood argues that women deserve individuality until they are married, these black female activists create a community that is dependent on individuality that only strengthens the community. These nineteenth-century black female activists find themselves on the Progressive Era's cusp and already understand the truth of Nancy White's words.

Lost Womanhood's category finds and recovers this complex trajectory of female-driven black activism that has been largely silenced. Patricia Collins argues that the purposeful silencing of black women and their works comes from many different ideologies. Historically speaking, the black male voice from abolition to the Civil Rights movement

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gender ideologies that mirror white True Womanhood when it reinforces marriage as an end goal for women. They "denounced unmarried black women for their failure to accept their important roles" (7). Dabel argues that when black men want to replicate white True Womanhood, the Black press mimics white masculinity and writes about a paradigm where wives are subject to their husbands. Even though these black female activists understand that True Womanhood only serves to deny them personhood and womanhood, they rely on masculine language as a negotiation tactic to humanize the black community, especially black women.

dominates the freedom and rights discourse. Collins explains that because black women reside in a space that simultaneously renders them visible and invisible, their activism must emerge differently. While their racialized bodies render them visible, their lack of personhood and their gender relegates them to an invisible status. Black women's bodies invoke racial stereotypes while gender ideologies depend on black women remaining silent to the point of invisibility. It is a double-edged bind.

Nineteenth-century female black activist voices reckon with gender, racial, and class politics, and in this new trajectory, coalition politics plays a key role. Bernice Johnson Reagon describes how activists use coalition politics to advance progress for black women. "Coalition work is not work done in your home. Coalition work has to be done in the streets" (Reagon 346). For successful coalition, activists must align themselves momentarily with other causes even when it may not seem like a productive alliance. She describes the process of how coalitions work, acknowledging that, at times, one side will give up, which is often not very rewarding. "You can't stay there all the time. You go to the coalition for a few hours" (346). These women strategically seek advantageous alliances but do not expect them to solve their problems. The very nature of coalition politics creates temporary and precarious alliances that will need to be continually revisited and renegotiated. Since coalition politics respond to gender politics within the black community, nineteenth-century black women must address how black men want black women to mimic white True Womanhood. Black female activists begin by speaking men's language, and after they have established this alliance, they move on to gender equality.

Coalition politics proves fruitful, even as Lost Womanhood recognizes that some alliances fail their activist's ambitions and goals. White abolitionists attempt a sisterhood

approach as long as these black activists are quiet sisters who understand their role as bodily signifiers. Inherently, this false sisterhood narrative only serves white abolitionists who cannot imagine an integrated society with black and white citizens. Lost Womanhood avoids the pitfalls of this troubling sisterhood approach and rejects an alliance with True Womanhood and late nineteenth-century New Womanhood. To achieve this type of community that does not subsume women, a female-driven black nationalism supports black women in more successful ways. As a category, Lost Womanhood accepts their principled rebellion and recovers female black activist voices that understood racial, gender, and class discourse long before Kimberlé Crenshaw named it intersectionality.

In a necessary step in developing their nationalism, black female activists imagine a form of black nationalism that envisions full female citizenship to counteract a fragmented state. They understand that black nationalism may have begun in shared oppression that stems from slavery, Jim Crow, institutional racism, and segregation with Plessy v Ferguson. However, they insist that nationalism looks beyond masculinity. As these activists create their female-driven black nationalism, they understand that freed blacks experience a dual consciousness. Tunde Adeleke explains that the black nationalism that stems from the last half of the nineteenth century focuses on women's fragmented state. Out of African and American identities at odds with each other, a dual national consciousness develops so that they can shift between American and African nationalities (6). Some black female activists such as Mary Ashe Lee and Sarah J. Early add a third consciousness, black womanhood, that imagines a future where black female citizens have full rights. With a focus on black nationalism, these black women activists begin to document a black history and interrogate a white-centric history that denies black bodies' value and contributions. These activist leaders

focus on black womanhood, creating a female-driven black nationalism that cements a black history and secures a future.

Instead of relying on black women's activism as either exceptional or a part of white middle-class reform, this constellation of stars reframes activism as a natural part of US history and literary studies. Rebecca Fraser proves that these voices reframe activism. These stars create an undeniable body of evidence that challenges a focus on white reformers in nineteenth-century literary studies. They better understand the relationship between race and gender with economics that lies at the center of change-making. Their forms of female-driven black nationalism powerfully articulate the awareness needed to understand the impact of layered oppression. In fact, these activists predate many twentieth and twenty-first century discussions about race, class, and gender. Their critical foundations in a female-driven black nationalism cement their place in history.

These black radical female writers— Mary Ashe Lee, Alice Dunbar-Nelson, Sarah J. Early, Josephine Turpin Washington, and Lucy Parsons— and their writings not only make the ideals of True Womanhood obsolete but also signal the class and racial limitations of New Womanhood before it even gains political traction. As a category, Lost Womanhood recovers and reframes these rebellious women who challenge a dominant white heteronormative patriarchal cultural narrative. Their activism needs to be a normalized part of discussions around nineteenth-century womanhood, and it needs to include the realities and inspirations of black female life beyond the remnant of True Womanhood or New Womanhood.

Nineteenth-Century Female-Driven Black Nationalism

This form of black female nationalism imagines how black citizens actively fight for their rights. Paula Benett suggests that Lee answers Crevecoeur's question: what is an American. Born in 1851 in Alabama to free parents, Lee grew up on a farm near Wilberforce University. Stephan Adams explains that she was a teacher, poet, and essayist. She contributes essays and poems to the *Christian Recorder*, *A.M.E. Quarterly Review*, and *Ringwood's Journal*. In poetry form, Mary Ashe Lee presents a narrative where black women shift from necro citizens, to recall Castronovo's phrase, to free citizens. She documents black bodies' role in her nation's founding. Lee's poem "Afmerica" pays homage to her predecessors, who pave the way for black nationalism to emerge in the late nineteenth century.[28] Lee references Wheatly, a historical example of a black female intellectual, to present a case study on black womanhood's complexity beyond slavery. She surmises that Wheatly understands her role as an enslaved person and refuses to let racial stereotypes deny her poetic voice. Furthermore, Lee argues that as a black female poet and intellectual, Wheatley cements the idea that blacks must fight against their oppression to develop an "Afric intellect" (Lee 343). Wheatley's inclusion in the poem reiterates that black women always voiced a type of rebellion, and that resistance comes in all forms. Lee argues that while a slave, Wheatley found a friend in her mistress, Susanna. Wheatley describes herself as a maid and a servant rather than a slave, which may seem problematic, but Lee contends that Wheatley attempts to dispel her slave status with this description. Both Wheatley and Lee desire more control over the narrative of their experiences. Maid and servant descriptors represent better the role that Wheatley plays in the family. Wheatley could also see value in reframing her status outside of slavery to counteract her invisible status. At the very least, she

[28] Lee's poem originally appeared in the July 1885 A.M.E. *Church Review*. For this chapter, I am using the reprint in the October 10, 1886 *Southern Workman and Hampton School Record.*

creates her narrative to tell a story of her choosing. For a black woman as a slave to pen poetry dispels the nineteenth-century notion that black people were incapable of intellectual activities.

While criticisms of Lee's own racial prejudice toward indigenous peoples are accurate, her focus on black nationalism deserves examination. Lee opens her 1886 lengthy poem "Afmerica" with the charged word that impacts many black people. Addressing lynching directly with the word, "hang," she invokes the violent reality that black bodies encounter in a country that refuses to release its grip on slavery. In that vein, Lee begins the poem with a reminder of the violence that all black bodies face. Many other readers will continue to the following phrase, "up the harp," without pausing. These opening lines provide a sense of urgency for her female-driven black nationalism that interrogates oppressive realities. If black activists do not change their approaches, black women will continue to die in violent and horrific ways. Lee asserts that while the Civil War is over and emancipation has technically freed black Americans, they remain in a liminal space where they are not accepted and where their agency is curtailed. Without acknowledging the role of gender, Lee asserts that black nationalism is not enough to safeguard black women. She focuses on the problem that freed black citizens face as they fit into a society that depends on racial constructions and black citizens, especially black women. She underscores this liminal positioning by acknowledging the interracial bodies that "stand with no identity" (stanza 1, line 17). Before the twentieth century, Lee identifies the liminal space that black women must dissect and challenge. Lee's "daughter of futurity" creates a form of womanhood that sees the violence that black women experience, even as it envisions a more just and peaceful future (stanza 3 line 13).

Within a female-driven black nationalism, citizens embrace rebellion rather than submission. Lee potentially presents a country that not only integrates its interracial citizens but, more importantly, its female citizens. The poem's very title "Afmerica" illustrates that two Americas exist, a "turbulent America" where black bodies and women suffer and the other, "Afmerica," spelled with an f, that acknowledges and accepts its black citizens. Afmerica does not deny its black female citizens rights and documents its history accurately to include black people. For Lee, American history requires knowledge of a black history that does not whitewash or ignore black people's contributions or their experiences with violence. Describing the hypocrisy behind a democracy built on black bodies and the refusal to accept that history, she imagines a possible future where black women shed their second-class status to enjoy full citizenship with rights and privileges. Lee imagines a black national identity that disrupts white hegemonic forces.

For Lee, a black woman during slavery was "a normal creature" (stanza 4 line 5), and emancipation transforms her into "a child of liberty, /of independent womanhood" (stanza 4 line 9-10). Purposefully expanding the definition of liberty to womanhood, she performs the shift that black female activists must do to achieve their goals. She describes a black woman under the conditions of slavery as a creature, and only when black communities are free can a child grow into a woman and not into a creature. With this revolutionary word "liberty," it is fair to imagine that she envisions a black womanhood independent of whiteness and True Womanhood. She asks the rhetorical question: "why should she be strange to-day? (stanza 4 line 1). Because black bodies are a direct part of nation-building, black women should not be an afterthought or a limb that can be torn away. She has always been here. Lee hopes to

move black women from strangeness to normalcy even as she secures freedom for black women outside of masculinity.

Voices of color understand how institutional and structural racism work to denounce and dehumanize their violent material conditions. Lee realizes that female-driven black nationalism requires a communal documented history. Forces of oppression actively silence histories that document oppressive strategies and voices of resistance. Recognizing that slavery made possible the development of colonial America, the Revolution from England, and the establishment of the Republic, she is also aware that the foundations established were then used to create systems that punish and silence dissenting black voices. To counter this silence, nineteenth-century black women long for "freedom and womanhood" (stanza 9 line 6). Identifying the need for womanhood and freedom calls into question the lack of womanhood for black women. Unlike True Women, Lee understands that womanhood confines women. Lee insists that white culture must acknowledge black people's historical place in the United States and its fabric. She knows that without integration, black women cannot leave that liminal space.

To argue that black women deserve a place in the citizenry, she claims that God "wrought this glorious victory" (stanza 10 line 13). For Lee, God ordains the end of slavery and the freeing of black bodies. To continue this logic, God believes in rebellion as the North righteously rebels against the South. This spiritual power sets up an Afmerican's future that roots rebellion and liberty as God's will. With this freedom, this black citizen finds activism, opportunities, and uplift. For Lee, God supports liberty, not slavery. Her twelfth stanza marks a condemnation of a "turbulent America" that refuses to accept its black female citizens (stanza 12 line 1). She wonders if the country will ever learn to accept its black female

citizen because she knows no other home and “her destiny is marked out here” (stanza 14 line 5). She further asserts that “providence planned this home” (stanza 14 line 14). Instead of focusing on the afterlife found in slave narratives and spirituals, Lee looks to temporal future of the United States with black citizens living in a “brave America” as God’s providence demands (stanza 14 line 11). Purposefully eliminating the letter f from this instance of America, she underscores the resistance to the integration of its black citizens. America needs oppressed citizens, and Afmerica does not.

What separates Lee’s future black citizen from True Womanhood and New Womanhood is that she has creative and artistic qualities. “We find her, though in numbers few, / Engaged heroic in the strife. / In song and music, she can soar; / She writes, she paints and sculptures well” (stanza 15, lines 3-6). Lee reimagines black women as artists, not mothers or laborers. While her last stanza invokes coalition politics to ask for protection from the men surrounding these citizens, Lee imagines these black women as future change agents. These activists have a proper place in an Afmerican society that can only be achieved through divine rebellion.

When Lee writes about interracial marriage, it may be tempting to suggest that she affirms the racial ideology that blackness is better when mixed with whiteness. A more productive reading suggests that she solidifies the truth of racial heritage in a country built on slavery. “O turbulent America! / So mixed and intermixed” (stanza 12 line 1-2). Given the prevalence of rape and interracial relationships in the nineteenth century, a female-driven black nationalism better understands the constructions of race and the impact of these relationships. Forms of whiteness do not save or negate racial constructions and the violence that free and enslaved black people and communities experience. Moreover, because of the

one-drop rule, they understand that laws reinforce slavery by forcing children to follow the mother's condition. The category of Lost Womanhood recognizes the pivotal role that black women play in reconciling the relationship between gender and race.

Lee's life reiterates a need for black nationalism. Widely read during her lifetime, Mary Ashe Lee's work has been seen as an acceptance of True Womanhood. Most scholars have failed to understand how she focuses on a female-driven black nationalism. Much of this criticism stems from Lee's history as a member of a middle-class African American family. Eric Gardner's research reveals that Lee's father, Simon Ashe, once freed by his white father, became a prosperous cotton dealer. Ashe then joined the black masonic organizations and became part of the African-American elite. Like other free black families, Lee's family became involved in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Mary Ashe attended Wilberforce University's pre-college program after her family moved to Wilberforce, Ohio, in 1859. While in college, she became an essential part of the educational community. An education was instrumental to the career advancement that black people needed to change their lives. They also need purposeful strategies to construct their female-driven black nationalism and imagine a vibrant black futurity.

Alice Dunbar-Nelson is the daughter of futurity that Lee envisions: an artist, a speaker, a teacher. Because scholarship has focused too long on black male activists, Alice Dunbar-Nelson spends too long as the poet Paul Dunbar's widow rather than a precursor to modern civil rights activism who articulates layered oppression's complexity for black women. Despite her long and prolific career as a teacher, writer, and activist, recovery work has only recently begun to find a place for her beyond the Harlem Renaissance. Caroline Gebhard argues that Dunbar-Nelson's well-developed archive and publishing career,

especially in the most crucial black-owned periodicals, allows us to see her and women like her in all their racial complexity. Gebhard illustrates that even Dunbar-Nelson was aware of her invisibility, which may have inspired her to turn to scrapbooking. Ellen Gruber Garvey describes the three-volume collection of Dunbar-Nelson's scrapbooks held at the University of Delaware's special collections and contends that the scrapbook as an unmediated genre better documents black achievement. Garvey discusses how scrapbook practices allowed black male suffrage and early civil rights leaders to critique white voices. Sensing a similar opportunity, Dunbar-Nelson's decision to scrapbook documents her important role in creating a female-driven black nationalism.

As decentralized texts, scrapbooks offer unseen histories and voices, and they archive experiences that could have been lost or deemed unimportant. These self-made archives rely on disorder and uniqueness to tell an otherwise silenced story or history. Because of its unusual nature, the scrapbook as an archive of marginalized groups and people reveals lived realities. Ellen Gruber Garvey's *Writing with Scissors* documents and explores scrapbooking's popularity in the nineteenth century, especially among abolitionists and suffragists. Garvey's scholarship argues that the practices of scrapbooking explain how otherwise ignored people and groups express citizenship. When a white culture creates obstacles to citizenship, marginalized peoples create layered spaces, like scrapbooks, that open places for themselves within the citizenry. These makers choose what to cut and paste and include in their scrapbooks, and these choices identify the process behind the expression of self and citizenship. If systems continually deny personhood and humanity, the act of cutting and pasting helps to solidify a self with physical evidence that cannot be erased or denied.

From the choice of scrapbook to the selection of newspaper clipping, these choices provide a glimpse into materials and accessibility. While black writers had difficulties finding publishers for novels and other literary forms that normally support white culture, scrapbooks show that newspapers, both black and white-owned, published black writers and highlighted abolition and suffrage successes. Jacqueline Emery argues that black voices can be found in the newspapers, and activists such as Alice Dunbar-Nelson, with her archive, piece together records of the past from these newspapers. These women use double literary production to create an outlet for their voice and control the information that describes them to curate a narrative about their lives. Because individuals, like William H. Dorsey, view scrapbooks as heirlooms to pass down, share, and collect, they get a say in their legacy.[29] Dunbar-Nelson controls the narrative around her work in her scrapbooks, and she creates her personhood with each clipping. While white abolition, reconstruction, and pre-civil rights histories may not sufficiently document Dunbar- Nelson's work, she maintains her own legacy with her homemade archive.

As scholarship finds these lost voices, it can shed light on what it means to construct a self and then articulate that identity. Garvey reveals the potential of thousands of scrapbooks as a tremendously valuable archive. While focused on practices, Garvey explains that those who compiled scrapbooks assumed that their future selves would remember why they included items. Without leaving annotations to explain their choices, the power of memory must suffice when they reminisce about the scrapbook. The key argument from her work is that the black community imagines a future self. Activists such as Mary Church

[29] Garvey's research describes Dorsey's collection of more than 400 scrapbooks. Throughout his life, he archived the fall of reconstruction and the rise of segregation through newspaper clippings. His diligent collection contains articles that are indispensable to documenting nineteenth-century black history.

Terrill, Ida B. Wells, Frederick Douglass, and William Henry Dorsey continued the practice of scrapbooking, in whose footsteps Alice Dunbar-Nelson follows. Black women suffer from erasure, and scrapbooking reaffirms their presence, their work, and most importantly, their successes. Reframing scholarship around the scrapbooks of black female activists allows us to see their success at changing-making unmediated by white editorial intervention.

Scrapbooks document a history to counter white-washed or hidden accounts. These collections document black history and black experiences with evidence of oppression, success, and racial pride. They celebrate the black press in a way that creates a community of readers; they are no longer outsiders to the white press. They prove the existence of change-making from black voices. Scrapbooks keep the truth of history alive and often provide counterexamples often to texts, like the novel, that inevitably support racist ideologies and constructions. Most importantly, they support a black definition of abolition, reconstruction, and Lost Womanhood. They document the horrors intentionally excluded by white culture. For Lost Womanhood, scrapbooks document black women's knowledge about their second-class status. They provide examples of what Koritha Mitchell describes as "homemade citizenship," a strategy to remedy their exclusion from the public sphere. These pieces of evidence push against second-class citizenship (3). Making permanent the self and citizenship, these acts and choices mimic the act of creation. To create is human, and these scrapbook makers affirm black female humanity in the past, present, and future. They were, are, and will be citizens.

Alice Dunbar-Nelson's scrapbook collection documents a complex woman who catalogs a small part of her authorial life.[30] While scholars focus on Dunbar-Nelson's novels,

[30] Alice Dunbar-Nelson's three-volume collection begins with her sister Mary Leila Moore Young's scrapbook. Including letters from family members, name cards, marriage, and birth announcements, her scrapbook

plays, and short stories, her scrapbooks focus on activism and newspaper writing. They also place her in the archive, ensuring her life and work can be found. Responding to her literary successes, she chooses to include reviews of her 1895 *Violets and Other Tales,* and she pastes copies of her columns "As in a Looking Glass" and "Little Excursions" for *The Pittsburgh Carrier* and the *Washington Eagle*. Additionally, she decides to include typed manuscripts of these columns. These choices capture her process as well as her activist presence in the newspapers. Among these clippings, she documents the journey she and others make with suffrage outside the literary world. She includes her interviews and flyers for speaking engagements where she encourages black women to vote in order to combat racism. These scrapbooks counter the historical documentation of Susan B. Anthony and Matilda Gage, which presents black women activists as quiet sisters and bodily signifiers of slavery.

Given the popularity of nineteenth-century scrapbooking, Dunbar-Nelson could choose her supplies. Her choice of commercial scrapbooks reveals her keen interest in the art of scrapbooking. Five scrapbooks in the collection are Webster's composition scrapbooks, and for the most part, they are unaltered until scrapbooks three and six. On the cover of scrapbook six, she adds a sticker that reads "unbridled servant of the people" ("Scrapbook 6" Cover). Given that she does not alter other covers, this sticker sends a message about how she values her labor. When composing this scrapbook, she documents her service for the

represents typical scrapbooking from a nineteenth-century woman. She includes a play program from when she and her sister Alice performed in Charles Dance's *Marriage, A Lottery*. While much of her scrapbook focuses on a domestic life, she includes an image of a black athlete who attended the Cambridge Manual Training School. She cuts out the photograph in a circular shape and not unexpectedly, does not provide information about her newspaper choice. Even without annotations, this photograph provides a different narrative around black men. She documents the success of this young black man when others may not.

suffrage movement and for black womanhood. Thus, both Alice Dunbar-Nelson and her scrapbooks act as servants for black activism as well as Lost Womanhood.

Countering a white-focused abolition and suffrage narrative, Dunbar-Nelson compulsively documents her success and the success of black women's suffrage on her own terms. Her calling to activism comes from a higher power and reveals her dedication to changing the lives of the black community. Her scrapbooks answer this calling. She presents an exhaustive narrative history of a black female intellectual and club woman. This narrative only can be found in an unmediated archive that she gathers and assembles herself. Additionally, her scrapbooks serve to elevate her own life and as proof of black success as a black woman.[31] While many nineteenth-century scrapbooking techniques emphasize the power of domesticity and the private sphere, Dunbar-Nelson's scrapbooks provide a powerful narrative about activism and the public sphere. Following in the steps of other black male activists, her scrapbooks focus primarily on her activism rather than domesticity. The potential that lies in both women's willingness to document their lives reveals the necessity of studying and examining scrapbooks as an unmediated and autobiographical archive.

In her third scrapbook, Dunbar-Nelson displays a female-driven black nationalism and the impact of layered oppression on black women. While the majority of her scrapbooks are made from commercial scrapbook products, scrapbook three is not. Instead, she repurposes a household ledger account book where she documents her suffrage work. Also, she alters its cover with a votes for women image that celebrates her thinking and activism. Most importantly, she places herself within the discourse around activism that traditionally

[31] Considering recent scholarship about her sexuality, she documents a queer black woman's history. Because a queer identity runs many risks for a black woman in the nineteenth century, she turns to an unmediated genre, the scrapbook.

focuses on black male leaders. She places herself in the pantheon of black male leaders such as Frederick Douglass and WEB DuBois.

Each page of scrapbook three contains columns with titles such as Household and Kitchen Furniture, Gifts and Loans, Laundry, Groceries, and Daily Total Expenses. She chooses to paste clippings letters, and even cross-stitching onto the pages without hiding these categories. It is as if she places her career over her domestic life without eliminating it. This visual representation demonstrates the navigation required of black women to participate in activism. Neither activism nor domesticity disappears; rather, they are integrated to create something new. Countering the worry that public women will leave their families, black female activists do not walk away from their families; instead, they incorporate their domestic lives into their activism. These pages represent the hidden spaces (or space otherwise designated) that black women find and participate in a female-driven black nationalism.

Figure 12 Cover of Alice Dunbar-Nelson's Scrapbook Three, Courtesy of University of Delaware Library Special Collection

Despite her literary success, many articles about her activism, writing, and speaking engagements pasted in scrapbook three call her the poet's widow or Mrs. Paul Dunbar and reiterate her femininity over her intellect. Many of the articles focus on her womanhood. One writer describes her as "youthful looking" and her voice as "delightfully modulated." Focusing more on her "charming manner" than her

literary talents and abilities, this article presents her as a widow rather than an activist.[32] Though those descriptions affirm a black person's womanhood, they represent a challenge for black women endeavoring to secure freedom, citizenship, respect and autonomy. Describing Dunbar-Nelson as a wife does change the nineteenth-century rhetoric around black women; however, the focus on marriage and gender expectations does limit women like Dunbar-Nelson, especially when considering her queerness. By choosing these articles, she reveals the tension that exists for black women. In the face of limiting gender ideologies and equality, they must insist on personhood and womanhood. Describing a black woman as charming validates her womanhood and humanizes her. Describing her as a wife and then a widow also confirms her rights as a citizen to marry. However, since nineteenth-century marriage laws subsume women and negate most rights, marriage laws only keep personhood at bay for black women. This tension challenges True Womanhood's false narrative of safety in marriage and makes evident that True Womanhood only reinforces whiteness without citizenship rights. As Nancy White articulates, "black women know they ain't free" (qtd in "The Social Construction of Black Feminist Thought" 758). While True Womanhood falsely insists that whiteness can save women, Lost Womanhood recognizes the inherent dangers of a racialized narrative that ignores black women. Activists like Alice Dunbar-Nelson understand and demonstrate how nineteenth-century marriage and womanhood do not protect women, especially black women.

Thanks to these domestic and feminine descriptions, Alice Dunbar-Nelson resides under Paul Dunbar's shadow, even after his death. To mitigate these effects and put pressure on the limitations that black women experience, she organizes her scrapbooks to focus on her

[32] See *Scrapbook 3*, the article "Prominent Speaker" in *The Swarthmore News* from July 30, 1915.

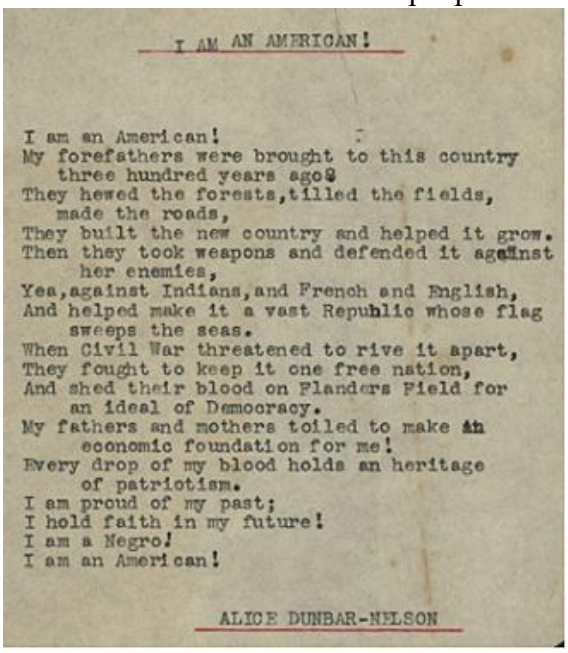
actions and successes. These archives spotlight her intellect and determination and allow her to escape the shadow of being a widow. Dorothy Deane describes Alice Dunbar-Nelson as an attractive woman with a "rare amount of intelligence" not "resting on her husband's laurels but daily making a name for herself" ("Scrapbook 3" 16). Written by a woman, this article counters others that merely describe her as charming or that focus on Paul Dunbar's successes. Dunbar-Nelson personifies the role that black female activists play in change-making, arguing that black women cannot afford to stay at home even if they want to. Black women relate to domesticity very differently than white women, so they must relate to activism differently as well. As a genre, these scrapbooks offer an unmediated history and protect the successes of a black woman. These homemade archives highlight how these women save themselves from white and black patriarchy.

In scrapbook three, Dunbar-Nelson features a photograph of herself. She repeatedly pastes an image of herself on twenty-eight out of thirty-six pages, including the cover. Only eight pages do not have this particular image. Taken by Addison Scurlock, this headshot shows a demure woman and appears in most of her columns from early in her career. [33] She prefers a similar photograph later in the twentieth century. She chooses to include this Scurlock photograph with most of her press. This act reveals a compulsion to reassert her personhood even within her autobiographical archive. Koritha Mitchell's concept of homemade citizenship allows us to see Dunbar-Nelson's photo for what it is: a declaration of female black citizenship. The repeated image refuses to let a reader deny her existence and indicates that she expects her archival to be preserved and read by others. Amid a white

[33] Leavy's research reveals that the Scurlock Photographic Studio in Washington, DC, photographed much of late nineteenth-century and twentieth-century black history and important black male figures such as Frederick Douglass and WEB DuBois.

culture that denies black personhood, her photograph offers evidence to the contrary. She takes as many opportunities as the pages will allow her to reiterate her personhood. Dunbar-Nelson collects proof of her career to anticipate a deep understanding of her legacy. Like Lee, she argues for a documented role for black citizens in the United States' history. Instead of imagining the future, Dunbar-Nelson establishes the role that black citizens have played in founding and maintaining this nation, and her scrapbooks ensure that those experiences find daylight.[34]

In her archive at the University of Delaware, she includes a typed unpublished manuscript of her poem titled "I am an American!" written sometime around 1919.[35] In this poem, Dunbar-Nelson turns to the past rather than to the future to focus on black people's marginalized status as a part of a female-driven black national history. Enslaved and free black people fought alongside their white neighbors and owners for that republic. She reframes revolutionary language to discuss the parallel Black history that built the United States. She first describes her black forefathers, that were brought to the colonies as a labor force to cement the fact that without black bodies, the United States would not have flourished in its



I AM AN AMERICAN!

I am an American!
My forefathers were brought to this country
three hundred years ago
They hewed the forests,tilled the fields,
made the roads,
They built the new country and helped it grow.
Then they took weapons and defended it against
her enemies,
Yea,against Indians,and French and English,
And helped make it a vast Republic whose flag
sweeps the seas.
When Civil War threatened to rive it apart,
They fought to keep it one free nation,
And shed their blood on Flanders Field for
an ideal of Democracy.
My fathers and mothers toiled to make an
economic foundation for me!
Every drop of my blood holds an heritage
of patriotism.
I am proud of my past;
I hold faith in my future!
I am a Negro!
I am an American!

ALICE DUNBAR-NELSON

Figure 13 Manuscript of Alice Dunbar-Nelson's poem, Courtesy of University of Delaware Special Collections

[34] The Rosenbach Library, along with the special collections from the University of Delaware, has created an exhibition called " 'I Am an American!' The Authorship and Activism of Alice Dunbar-Nelson," where they work to recover her voice and works.
[35] She also archives a newspaper version of the poem in scrapbook seven.

early days. This important description rewrites the narrative about US colonialism. In the place of a small hardy group of persecuted white individuals working the land, there are colonists who brought slaves that "hewed," "tilled," and made" (Nelson Line 4). These verbs compare her forefathers to the colonists who developed the land. Like those colonists, her forefathers "built the new country and helped it grow" (Line 6). Placing enslaved people in colonial history reframes a republic's foundations and exposes hypocritical democratic ideals given its reliance on slavery. Before the *1619 Project*, Dunbar-Nelson understands that slavery "helped make" a fledging republic in "a vast Republic whose flag sweeps the seas" (Lines 10-11). Her black nationalistic history springs from the evidence of black labor and hypocrisy surrounding constructions of whiteness and blackness in nation-building.

To develop a black nationalist history, she reframes the Civil War as a threat to the Union. Without mentioning slavery, she writes, "When the Civil War threatened to rive it apart,/They fought to keep it one free nation,/And shed their blood on Flanders Field for/an ideal of Democracy" (Lines 12-15). Enslaved people built a republic, and even though enslaved, they defended a democracy that required bodily violence. If they defended the ideal, they should have access to it as a full citizen with civil rights. Her claim that "I am an American!" in the title and first and last lines - complete with an exclamation point - only reinforces her argument. Her last three lines, "I hold faith in my future!/I am a Negro!/ I am an American!" cry out with hope that the United States accepts its black citizens and encourages black nationalism (Lines 21-23). This poem helps articulate Nelson-Dunbar's desire for black nationalism, and though she seems to avoid political writing in her fiction, Lost Womanhood scholarship can place her as a anti-lynching crusader, a paid suffrage field worker, and the first black woman to serve on Delaware's Republican State Committee.

While True and New Womanhood focuses on her status as a wife and widow, Lost Womanhood acknowledges her as an activist who fights for a thriving black female nationalism.

Lost Womanhood also allows us to examine the issue of class as yet another layer of oppression with which black women must contend. Through class, Dunbar-Nelson extends her progressive views on black womanhood outside of the New Negro and the New Woman. Adenike Davidson argues, "it is clear from the biographical information that Dunbar-Nelson was searching for freedom from the confining definition of race as well as the expectations demanded of African American artists. The experimentation of the poet's prose offered her a sense of freedom she did not experience in life" (58). In her 1895 essay "The Woman," Dunbar-Nelson argues that earning sufficient wages impacts a female-driven black nationalism. Most importantly, she imagines a world where women earn enough money to live independently, without the necessity of marriage. Her essay opens up with "the literary manager of the club" beginning a debate about marriageability and women who earn as much as men ("The Woman" 21). The men begin the discussion, and the women "interposed, and jumped on the men," and a "wordy war ensued" (21). In this opening, she envisions a debate where black women feel comfortable enough to speak out about issues that affect them. Secondly, these women feel confident enough to discuss these matters actively. She writes about a group of women, not a single unique woman who is an outlier. With this many women in the room, her narrative demonstrates that it is common for women to think and discuss these issues. She openly questions True Womanhood and its insistence on separate spheres, especially in an effort to deny women an intellectual life. She tells the literary manager that her idea was forming as she spoke, but "it was already there" (21). She explains

that black women are already thinking about a life outside of domesticity. They do not want to imitate a form of white womanhood that depends on marriage and all the domestic labor it entails. Combining her female-driven black nationalism with Marxist economic theories, she describes women who can escape this dilemma by earning equal wages. They avoid "the dead level of despair" and the "exchange for a serfdom" (22). Women who can earn enough money have the potential to live on their own, travel, or work on their studies. Their money is theirs and theirs alone. Living in a world of possibilities, they avoid a "yoke upon her shoulders" to live a life of their own (26).

As a part of this female-driven black nationalism, Dunbar-Nelson also forges a complex argument for divorce in the essay "The Woman." To initiate this discussion, she addresses the idea that some women may want marriage. A problematic moment occurs when she writes, "it is not marriage that I decry, for I don't think any really sane woman would do this" ("The Woman" 25). A more accurate reading is to take this moment as a tongue-in-cheek comment. She spends the first half of the essay discussing the benefits of earning wages and advocating for a world where black women earn higher wages and live without marrying. Her use of verbal irony reveals the insanity of a marriage where women find unequal footing and are responsible for both "the baby's milk and the husband's coffee" (23). She continues to suggest that young women often marry for the wrong reasons. Few acknowledge the double labor that black women perform. Dunbar-Nelson articulates the very problem with True Womanhood's dedication to separate spheres, motherhood, and marriage. Like working-class women, black women often could only find domestic labor for employment, and home responsibilities fell to them after working. To solidify her argument against True Womanhood, Dunbar-Nelson suggests that women may be better off without

marriage as long as they earn wages equal to men. With a female-driven black nationalism, women preside, brandish, tramp, hammer, smear, and lead. These verbs create a woman who becomes an active woman who makes changes for other women. To emphasize this point, she relies on the word "wield" twice. This word invokes an image of a woman wielding a sword rallying other women to fight for divorce and equal wages. Black women must sustain a different relationship to marriage, and they need a way out when their partners fail them. Divorce would allow formerly married women to seek a new life where they could have their own opportunities to earn money, travel, and seek education. A black female nationalism imagines a counter narrative where black women control their domestic realities and marital freedoms.

Freedom from marriage is paramount for Dunbar- Nelson, who seeks to address the false insistence on marriage as a safety net for women. But she admits that this new vision is only a dream and not yet a reality. However, her female-driven black nationalism helps turn this dream into a reality, at least for her. Scholars like Gebhard and Hull have documented Dunbar-Nelson's decision to leave her turbulent and violent marriage to Paul Dunbar. While they never officially divorced, they remained separated, and upon his passing in 1906, she claimed the title of widow. With this title comes power. It allows her the freedom to live alone and travel without male supervision. Widows have more freedom than married women with living husbands. In her essay "The Woman," Dunbar-Nelson writes, "yet when the right moment comes, she will sink as gracefully into his manly embrace, throw her arms as lovingly around his neck, and cuddle warmly and sweetly to his bosom as her little sister who has done nothing else but thinks dream, and practice for that hour. It comes natural, you see" ("The Woman" 29-28). When the social construction of marriage is presented as the natural

order, a woman permanently remains a child. This perpetual girl dreams, thinks, and practices the role of a wife. Nineteenth-century gender expectations train women to sit in their husband's laps. This specific description reiterates the parent-child relationship and firmly places wives as a dependent rather than a partner and legal adult. Revolutionary ideas about marriage are not enough to combat the legal power that places women as dependents. When an early twentieth-century society naturalizes and legalizes this moment, women face an upward battle, so they need to be willing to wield their words and actions. Within True Womanhood's confines, widowhood provides power that women can access. Lost Womanhood understands widowhood status only impacts some women and aims to recover those voices who seek gender equality apart from marriage.

Like other Lost Women, Dunbar-Nelson lives a complex life with complex attitudes toward marriage. Widowhood is not enough for her. Though she has more freedoms as a widow, she still chooses marriage later in life. However, she does not let marriage stop her from seeking gender equality or relying on divorce to resolve harmful marriages. Scholars are beginning to spend more time on her life and now suggest that she may have engaged in relationships with women during her lifetime. After Paul's death, she marries once again, and when this marriage to Henry Callis fails her, she divorces him. She does not allow the stigma of divorce to prevent her from finding a successful partner. Her third marriage to Robert J. Nelson proves the most successful. Her decision to walk away from a marriage through divorce places her outside both True Womanhood and New Womanhood. Dunbar-Nelson's desire for women to find the right partner without suffering consequences also challenges black masculine support for True Womanhood.

Scholars who consider her sexuality and attitudes toward marriage are able to chart the influence of her biography on her conception of female-driven black nationalism. Her knowledge of the creole culture and her ancestry inform how her female-driven black nationalism conceives gender, racial, and class contradictions. Growing up in Louisiana, a person can be legally white but socially black, and one can be socially white but legally black. This state of existence becomes very fluid for racially mixed bodies like Dunbar-Nelson. This fluidity may also have allowed a woman of color like her to be more politically active. Jordan Stouck focuses on the division that lies between Dunbar-Nelson's literary works and her own life. Stouck points out that the literary world was often disappointed in her reliance on charm and local color while avoiding politics that impacted black women and communities. Instead of making this assumption, her work can be read as an act of negotiation or coalition politics. She understands that the novel genre often fails black people, especially black women, so she cannot rely on it as her primary outlet for her political work. Instead, her scrapbooks reveal that she relies on her non-fiction writing in newspapers for her political activity.

Like Dunbar-Nelson, Sarah J. Early's activism and lectures provide an excellent example of female-driven black nationalism. On the day of her 1893 lecture, "Organized Efforts of the Colored Women of the South to Improve Their Condition," Early was one of five black women to speak. As with Lee and Nelson-Dunbar, Early depends on women to create this nationalism as the "great impulse" (718). During "the period of restlessness and activity the women of all lands should simultaneously see the necessity of taking a more exalted position" (718). Instead of working to convince white women of the need for universal suffrage, Early inspires and organizes black women and young people to think

"thoughts that bring revolution" (719). She navigates the dilemma that black activists face when encouraging dissent. White abolitionists have clear expectations about how black women should protest as quiet sisters. In opposition, Early clearly advocates for open rebellion that challenges oppressive systems and aligns their rebellion with the United States Revolution. She continues this tactic with her classical allusion to Plato's cave. Like Dunbar-Nelson and Lee, she imagines the black community emerging from the darkness where education and rebellion bring lightness. "Step by step, as the dark cloud of ignorance and superstition is dispelled by the penetrating rays of the light of eternal truth" (719). Her lecture expressed the desire for a black nationalism where black people have citizenship and are "on the same plane" (719).

She refuses to downplay the violence that female black bodies endure. Her death imagery of a shroud not only covers their body, but it covers their minds. She never directly names the system of slavery; instead, she identifies the impact and horror that come from the darkness. The darkness "crushed their energies of their soul, robbed them of every inheritance save their trust in God, they found themselves penniless, homeless, destitute" (719). Again, a black female activist relies on the founding ideals of the Revolutionary War to situate black lives and contributions to the United States. As with the colonists, a tyrant crushed them, robbed them, and refused to support their ventures. This alignment invokes the promise of citizenship, and the right to organize, the right to protest, and the right to rebel that drives citizenship.

Early documents the black history that parallels a white-centric historical narrative based on rebellion. Like the founding fathers, black women understand the art of self-government. Like the forefathers, black women organized and raised money. To challenge a

racialized construction that only views blackness as enslavement, she provides examples of black men and women who owned property and opened banks and schools. Her argument that black women can be wealthy and raise money provides a narrative that has yet to be included in the narrative of nineteenth-century black womanhood. After the Civil War, black people were "the legal owners of real estate to the value of two hundred and sixty-three millions [sic] of dollars. Then they were penniless, but now they have more than two millions [sic] in bank" (Early 723). To openly state that black people have millions of dollars dramatically changes this failing narrative of a struggling black woman. A female-driven black nationalism places black women as economic players despite Jim Crow and segregation's impact on black bodies.

Like Lee and Dunbar-Nelson, Early provides an account of the Civil War that focuses on black contributions. The narrative of the female-driven black nationalism is solidified with her descriptions of black women who showed up to the "blood-drenched field" and showed

> the deepest sympathy for suffering humanity and the highest valor and loyalty by stanching the bleeding wounds, and cooling the parched lips with water and raising the fainting head, and fanning the fevered brow with tender solicitude watching by the dying couch, and breathing the last prayer with him who had laid down his life for his country. (722)

A history that focuses on a female-driven black nationalism places black women along with the white nurses who followed the camps and tended to the wounded. Once again, Early locates black women in the same places as white women, while focusing on documenting black history. Black women performed the same responsibilities as white women. With

Early's work, Lost Womanhood highlights that both white and black women are second-class citizens, but black women live in a social death as well. To counter their intensified disenfranchisement, black women earn money, organize, and perform civic responsibilities like white citizens. Most black nationalism does more than contribute to the nation; it seeks to rectify its wrongs, including the horrors of slavery and oppression during Jim Crow. In black nationalism, black women rebel and fulfill the "desire of self-independence" that was always with them (719). As a black citizen and a woman, revolution is necessary, and Early envisions a female-driven revolution.

This form of feminine black nationalism matters to her community. Sarah J. Early, like other black women activists, understands the power and potential behind the sheer numbers of black women. "I hear the tramp of a million feet, and the sound of a million voices answer, we are coming to the front ranks of civilization and refinement" (Early 724). She recognizes that they must rebel and organize if they want to change their oppressive reality. Andrew Lawson Scruggs documents Early's success in his 1893 *Women of Distinction*, and he acknowledges her lengthy career as a speaker and educator. His description captures the power of her strategies and tactics: "She was a woman, and with such brave and invincible character as she could stay in the field. Amid threats and suspected bodily harm by night and by day in those dark days of our history, Mrs. Early stood like a granite wall in the defense of right and truth" (74). Lost Womanhood values women like Early, who convince others to challenge oppressive systems. Early recognizes the impact of her status on her community. Her desire to place such political responsibility on the shoulders of women demands a new form of womanhood. The rebellious acts in which Early engaged to save herself and her community are viewed as a virtue by Lost Womanhood.

Josephine Turpin Washington also argues that black nationalism requires a black history, especially for black women— A female-driven black nationalism only when black women can define black womanhood outside of whiteness. For too long, womanhood has been aligned with whiteness, and black womanhood dismantles True Womanhood and preemptively dismisses New Womanhood as an alternate potential form of womanhood. Well-known in her lifetime, Washington was included in the 1893 *Noted Negro Women: Their Triumphs and Activities.* However, scholars are just now beginning to understand Washington's contributions to nineteenth-century activism despite her successes. Washington's black nationalism mirrors Early's mantle of putting black women on the same plane as black male activists through coalition politics. Like Lee, Early, and Dunbar-Nelson, Washington desires a form of black female citizenship.

Her introduction in Scrugg's 1893 *Women of Distinction: Remarkable in Works and Invincible in Character* reveals how Washington maneuvers public perception of public women and challenges the lack of equality for black women. When she composes this introduction, her words forge a coalition with black manhood, but first, she must establish racial definitions of womanhood. She describes the role of women based on race. "In one age or clime, man's slave and beast of burden, in another his pet and plaything" ("Introduction" 9). She establishes racialized forms of womanhood: a black woman as a laboring slave and a white woman as a domesticated animal. Neither of these women has personhood. They are in service to masculinity: one as a laborer and the other as entertainment. Her thesis begins with her brilliant rhetoric which questions "her true place and station" ("Introduction" 9). After establishing two forms of womanhood, the vague use of the pronoun "her" muddies the

waters a bit because it is unclear if she is referring to black or white womanhood. Clarity comes after she pens the word "true" to describe womanhood, indicating white womanhood.

Washington explicates colonial women's status to argue that womanhood was aligned with whiteness in the United States. "The true woman takes her place by the side of man as his companion, his co-worker, his helpmate, his *equal* ("Introduction" 9). She conflates True Womanhood and the colonial helpmate when she explains that even if a woman is equal to the man, "she retains her womanly dignity and sweetness, which is at once her strength and her shield" ("Introduction" 9). Washington melds the colonial helpmate with Welter's True Womanhood to remind black women that white women have forms of womanhood that have given them power. Washington masters most forms of popular nineteenth-century white womanhood from colonial to True and New Womanhood. Black nationalism can do the same for black women. She refutes what she identifies as a progressive woman or the New Woman. Washington claims that women can work outside of the home and maintain their family responsibilities. Rather than adopting white womanhood, a female-driven black nationalism responds to a black history in order to create a multi-faceted black womanhood.

For a female-driven black nationalism to prosper, black women need to have a vision of equality and progress that draws from different sources. She continues to provide examples of white activists and reformers who organized and widened their sphere. She claims that white women have been able to remain single or put off marriage. Washington views a world where white women do not require marriage to be made whole. Independently, they are capable of "proving [themselves] worthy of their womanhood" (13). To show black women can find opportunities outside of marriage, she answers the "woman question" by referring to Edward Bellamy's socialist utopian *Looking Backward*. In his narrative, women

work and are equal members of society. She references white artists and ends with a white version of the future to signal that if white society can envision equality, so can the black community. Washington recognizes that white people dominate the discussions of future progress. Black voices must engage in similar discussions. A community needs to document its history and imagine its future. Black female nationalism requires that women document their historical oppression to imagine a different future for themselves.

After reminding readers what defines citizenship and nationalism, she asks the direct question: "What of Afro-American womanhood?" and what role should black women play in "these movements of progress" ("Introduction" 13). Here Washington definitively separates white womanhood from black womanhood. She argues that "it is not just to rate them according to the status they occupy in comparison with Anglo-American womanhood" (14). black women occupy a different space due to the physical and economic violence of slavery and the oppression of Jim Crow laws in the United States. Washington anticipates Crenshaw's intersectionality theory when she articulates the dual consciousness of black women that separates them from white women:

> All the disabilities which affect the race in this country our women have to contend against, with the added disability of sex. These disabilities, while artificial and transitory in character, must affect our expectation and our estimate of the work hitherto accomplished. (14)

She articulates the difficult position where black female activists reside. They must contend with race along with womanhood. She chooses to describe both race and womanhood as disabilities. Black activists like Washington are successful in their activism because they recognize and build strategies around these complex intersections. Black female bodies are a

site of difference, and women like Washington scrutinize and upend frameworks of womanhood that fail to recognize those differences.

Like Lee and Early, Washington's argument for education includes girls and women. When black women can access education, they can "work out their own salvation and that of the race" (16). When discussing the impact of education, she writes about Edmonia Lewis, an interracial artist who moved to Rome to sculpt. The Smithsonian American Art Museum has documented her life and houses her work. Born of a free African American father and a Chippewa mother, Lewis was the first professional African American sculptor of the nineteenth century. She spent most of her career in Rome after leaving Oberlin College when she was accused of poisoning two white classmates and stealing art supplies. Largely untrained and with little exposure, she became a respected sculptor in a highly masculine art form. Despite any formal training, she produced medallion busts of abolitionist and indigenous figures. While Washington may appeal to a marriage narrative for black women, her example of Lewis reveals a desire for a world without marriage. Lewis never marries and spends her entire life working to further her artistic career. Additionally, Lewis succeeds in a masculine art world that could easily disregard her. As a daughter of futurity, Lewis manifests a different future for black women that they can find success and realize a dream that largely has been considered masculine. In promoting Lewis, Washington carefully navigates activism's hostile waters that aim to control black women and their representation. Lewis' life reveals that nineteenth-century women have personal and professional options outside of marriage.

Under the pseudonym Joyce, Washington employs a similar argument in her 1880 "Notes to Girls" series published in the *People's Advocate*. In these essays, she explicates

how black women have to address race along with womanhood. While it may seem that she espouses the ideals of True Womanhood, her focus is to help black women navigate the many layers of oppression. She is savvy enough to understand the relationship between respectability politics and activism. Her first essay in the series connects domestic excellence to womanhood. She tells young ladies to wear aprons and to keep a nice home complete with flowers. Yes, this advice mirrors True Womanhood's manuals. Against the backdrop of racialized language in both pro-slavery and abolitionist discourse that describes black women as animals, Washington urges her black female readers to keep a clean and nicely decorated home, so they are not perceived as beasts of burden. This choice does not emulate white womanhood but instead reframes black women as humans who can control their own representation.

Her second essay in the series advocates for intellectual pursuits. She reminds young girls that they "may study what men study" and asks them to resist the idea that they "know enough for a girl" (65). In this essay, Washington also hints that marriages fail because women lack education. When young women leave school, married women "take each other for worse" and "make one another miserable for life" (65). She suggests that young ladies organize literary clubs and nurture their gifts, no matter what they are. In other essays outside of this series, Washington convinces young black women to learn science and math. She reinforces the fact that domesticity and activism are intertwined. The home is the place for change. Creating a safe home for black families is itself an act of rebellion. She also suggests that women can have more choices. They can be artists, teachers, mothers, or organizers:

> Some women, among the gifted few, grow great in fame; others remain in the security and seclusion of a domestic sphere; but education of heart and brain is essential to all.

> Some brighten the world with the blaze of their genius, and instruct with grand truths many a fellow creature; while others gladden the hearts at home, and bestow a mother's teachings. Some hold court with learned men; others bless with congenial companionship a loving few. (66)

In Washington's vision of womanhood, women can be anything they want to be. Through Lost Womanhood, we can see that Washington repositions black womanhood and advocates successfully for a female-driven black nationalism.

Once reframed in Lost Womanhood, Washington places black womanhood on its terms rather than within a limited form of white womanhood. Her third essay in the "Notes to Girls" series may seem problematic when she tells young women to dress cleanly and appropriately. This comment reminds young black women to control the narrative about their bodies. She understands how bodies are read and instructs young women how to use those signifiers to their advantage. Washington continues to elevate black womanhood when she encourages black women to accept their natural hair. During the nineteenth century, hair products became a booming business, and like today, black women's hair needs were ignored, or they were encouraged to mimic white women's hairstyles. Accepting natural black hairstyles repositions black womanhood outside white womanhood and its expectations. Washington's assertions predate modern conversations about black hair; her work anticipates the long-term resistance to acceptance of black womanhood and its signifiers. Black women's definitions of womanhood may overlap with other definitions but continually framing them as mimicry or opposition dismisses their accomplishments. Black women have created opportunities on their own terms. Lost Womanhood provides space for communities to define themselves apart from, rather than in response to, others.

In her last three essays in the "Notes to Girls" series, Washington begins a shift in her argument by interrogating community-building practices in relation to the home. She advises black women not to avoid social gatherings because of the lack of money. Social gatherings are important because they lead to connections and opportunities. In essay number four, she focuses on friendships and discourages young black women from gossiping. This comment about a particular feminine behavior reflects Washington's knowledge about how women interact with other women. For her, women need to support each other rather than engage in harmful behavior. Washington predates the modern feminist discussions detailing how patriarchy isolates women so they will compete with each other rather than come together to make changes. She also could be implying that white women gossip, and black women must rise above these behaviors. For Washington, black womanhood has better behaviors and morals. To pass down those strong morals, she argues that boys and girls need "to grow up together in friendly companionship" (70). She discusses the fact that boys and girls need to be raised with similar gender expectations.

If black families change their approaches to child-rearing, "the absurdity of 'turning out' would not exist" (70). Washington continues this argument in the following essay by questioning the notions of courtship. "Were youths and maidens to discard the prevailing subject of the 'courtship' in general meeting, and manifest brotherly and sisterly regard, when a girl strives only to be pleasant and friendly, men would not be so idiotic as to suppose her on the verge of falling in love with them" (72). This strategy allows her to return to the topic of marriage, and she makes it clear that marriage should not be a woman's only goal, even if it is to marry well. Her last essay reveals the complexity of black womanhood, underscoring the reality that their activism does indeed begin with the home. Washington's

descriptions of home counter the violent homes of True Womanhood. Instead of violence, a black mother creates a home of family and community uplift. While True Womanhood asks that mothers pass down lessons of violence to their daughters, Lost Womanhood documents that black mothers focus on change-making in the family and the community. When black women create homes, they are safer.

Washington has a vision of black womanhood that only female-driven black nationalism can create. In her last essay of the series, she concludes her argument: "Girls should learn more of independence, more of self-reliance, than they usually possess" (73). black women need to be able to earn their own money, or they need to be able to contribute to their family's well-being. She expands on what work can mean for black women. "Whatever be your work, you can be a lady" (74). Ushering in the end of True Womanhood, she writes, "I would not use this word [lady] to mean a delicate shrinking, fastidious creature" (74). The word delicate describes the differences between white and black womanhood. White womanhood depends on frailty, whereas black women must fight against the racialized "beast of burden" descriptions. Washington understands that black womanhood fights these two discourses, race and womanhood. She recovers black womanhood from the pressure of submission valued by white womanhood. In contrast to this narrative, she esteems self-reliance and independence and understands that gender ideologies must change.

Washington's life follows a similar path as the other women in this chapter. She was college-educated and one of the youngest voices of the emerging turn of the century black press. Rita B. Dandridge claims that women like Washington need to be considered WEB Dubois' Talented Tenth perhaps more so than their husbands. These women "shaped the discourse well before WEB Dubois, who only included black men" (11). Washington

deserves inclusion as "the youngest known post-Reconstruction black Virginian writer of published essays" (11). Born free to freed slaves in Goochland, Virginia, she attended the Richmond Colored Normal School (now Armstrong High School) and published her first essay, "A Talk about Church Fairs," in the *Virginia Star*, the first black newspaper in Richmond, Virginia. In 1883, she entered Howard College, where she argued for coeducation and called for access to higher education for black women. When she graduated in 1886, she was the only female student. After marrying Dr. Samuel Sommerville Hawkins Washington and moving to Alabama, she wrote and taught at the newly formed black colleges. She continued her club work and organization activities when she became involved in the Alabama Federation of Colored Women's club. Danbridge describes Washington's essays "as guides articulating the responsibilities and aesthetic standards that will allow the black press to establish a reputable literary sphere" (11). Lost Womanhood's category directly ties the emerging black press to black women and their activism instead of depending on black male voices. Black women's voices lay in wait in those newspapers, and Lost Womanhood can claim them.

Out of a Female-Driven Black Nationalism: Anarchy

The category of Lost Womanhood embraces a woman of color who becomes one of the loudest voices of anarchism. In her 1905 pamphlet, "The Principles of Anarchism," Lucy Parsons outlines anarchism's points that only a Lost Woman can explain. According to her pamphlet, the government depends on oppressed citizens, and the government will stop any progress that actively improves the lives of the dispossessed. The government will build institutions and systems to retain power. She identifies the root of the problem: a government that depends on legalized forces of violence like slavery under capitalism. In an 1886

interview via telegraph in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, she argues that we "have a semblance of a republic, but it has fallen in the hands of a powerful few" (4). Chattel slavery is transformed into wage slavery. A female-driven black nationalism helps Parsons challenge this third layer of oppression: emerging capitalism and racial classism. She understands that enslavers created an economy where a few amassed wealth and power. In the aftermath of the slave labor system, a new form of slavery is created. The ruling class will not peacefully accept a change that destroys their power and profits. Parsons explains that "all history shows that all attempts to wrest from the wealthy and powerful that which they have has been made by force" ("A Female Anarchist" 4). While she may not claim a connection to a female-driven black nationalism, she stands on its shoulders and invokes its language.

With Early and Washington, she laments the lack of black history. She employs the strategies of female-driven black nationalism to accomplish her anarchist goals. With this political language, she speaks to the black community, which has migrated to Chicago and other northern cities to find housing and employment, while simultaneously speaking to white working-class listeners who do not want to become economic slaves. For Lucy Parsons and other women, layered oppression requires a different approach, so she turns to anarchism and focuses on issues that impact women as well as the working class. Steven Shone argues in "Lucy Parsons on the Lives of the Poor" that issues of class rather than race become the focus of Parson's work. In Lost Womanhood, female-driven black nationalism unites Lucy Parsons with other women of color activists.

Because Parsons purposefully maintains silence about her race, she seems less likely to be a voice of black nationalism; however, she quietly depends on black nationalism in her rhetoric. A female-driven black nationalism allows women of color to control their image. To

endorse coalition politics and add a sense of mystery to her persona, she stays quiet about her race to focus on gender and class issues. While Parsons avoids openly acknowledging any racial heritage, Chicago newspapers described her as a black or mulatto radical. Scholars also explore her racial heritage to claim her. Henry Gates includes her among black female activists, and most recently, Laura Lomas considers Parsons as Afro-Latino. Hedda Garza, Alfredo Mirandé, and Rodolfo Acuña claim Parsons' Mexican heritage. Finally, Laura Basson argues that she focuses on her indigenous and Mexican ancestry to counteract her blackness.[36]

Understanding that race plays a complex role in studies concerning Parsons, Streeby describes her as "a part of a larger world of migrants, writers, and organizers at odds with or openly critical of states and state power, including anti-colonial revolutionists, socialists, and anarchists" (*Radical Sensations* 40). Because of her influential career as an activist and anarchist, her life becomes heavily documented once she arrives in Chicago with her husband, Albert. Streeby's description of Parsons as a bilingual, antiracist, class conscious, and globally beloved figure makes the critical case for rebellion as an imperative for women. Parsons puts aside race to focus on womanhood. She depends on the black female activists who create a female-driven black nationalism: their rebellions forge a platform for Parsons' radical anarchist ideologies. Lost Womanhood accepts this turn as a further response to layered female oppressions.

[36] See Laura Lomas' " 'El negro es tan capaz como el blanco' José Martí, 'Pachín' Marín, Lucy Parsons, and the Politics of Late-Nineteenth- Century Latinidad." *The Latino Nineteenth Century*; Hedda Garza's *Latinas: Hispanic Women in the United States*; Alfredo Mirandé's *La Chicana: The Mexican-American Woman*; Rodolfo Acuña's *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos;* Lauren Basson's *White Enough to Be American?: Race Mixing, Indigenous People, and the Boundaries of State and Nation*.

Like other late nineteenth-century female black activists, Parsons competes with masculine voices who often control a reform narrative. The anarchist movement is no exception. While anarchists focused on the contributions of men such as her husband, Albert Parsons, Lucy Parsons gave as much to the movement as her white male counterparts. Donna Kowal captures Parsons' legacy when she points out that Parsons, a woman of color, becomes the recognized leader of the predominantly white male working-class movement in Chicago. To further support this view, Gale Ahrens' edition of Parsons' body of speeches, lectures, and letters contains a copy of a 1901 engraving that shows drawings of Adolph Fischer, Louis Lingg, August Spies, Michael Schwab, Samuel Fielden, Oscar Neebe, and Albert R. Parsons. In this image, these men form an oval, and in the center of that oval resides an image of Lucy Parsons.

Both Jaqueline Jones and Donna Kowl describe the central role Parsons plays in multiple reform efforts, speaking about economic exploitation, working conditions for factory workers, child labor, marriage, and sex trafficking. She takes leadership roles in the Working Women's Union in 1877 before her career shifts in 1884, when the government executes her husband and six other men for the Haymarket bombing. In 1891, she helped create the newspaper *Freedom: A Revolutionary Anarchist- Communist Monthly* and advocates for an "American version of syndicalism where workers would own and control the means of production" (Zandy 52). She finishes and publishes *Anarchism*, the book started by her husband. She helps create the Labor Assembly #1, which establishes a library and funds the publications of fellow anarchists. In 1912, she published a memorial edition of her own famous speeches. After the death of her husband, her tactics change. She recognizes her power as a widow and reminds others of her abilities and successes.

While activists like Alice Dunbar-Nelson build an archive in anticipation of the silencing of their voices, Parsons is not able to attend to her legacy quite as well. During her lifetime, she understands that she must reiterate her leadership power and skills, even if she does not build a lasting record of her work. The University of Illinois archive houses several letters that she has written. The letters appear innocuous, explaining that she cannot find some books or returning a dollar because she has no more copies of the *Life of Albert R. Parsons*. What is most striking about these letters, however, is the letterhead. At the top, underneath her name, is the word "publisher." She includes some of her most important titles, *Life of Albert R. Parsons*, *Famous Speeches of Chicago Anarchists*, and "Principles of Anarchism." With each letter that she sends, Parsons seeks to cement her legacy. Identifying herself, a woman of color, as a publisher in a male-dominated group and business requires real boldness. Parsons understands that she must remind others of her successes. Lost Womanhood carves out a space for her contributions and her leadership roles, even though her work is not represented by a substantial archive.

A female-driven black nationalism creates activists who understand the power of lectures and speeches. Even though Parsons does not directly speak about black nationalism, its ideologies and structures allow her to become a disruptive force through her speaking tours. Her career spans into the 1930s, and she spent most of her life as an activist who toured and lectured across the United States. Jones' biography *Goddess of Anarchy* explains that during the fall of 1886 and into January of 1887, Parsons traveled to Ohio, Kentucky, New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Missouri, Nebraska, Kansas, and Michigan. Her lectures were so successful that *Harper's Weekly* reported that Chicago "feared this one woman more than all the chief Anarchists combined" ("Labor Vote"). Like

Madame Restell, Parsons finds herself such a threat to patriarchy that institutional powers purposefully silence her. To counter her successes and cast doubt over her words, patriarchy must create a narrative that diminishes her work. Because of her ability to disrupt systems of power, she was often jailed. Jones and Kowal both describe her as a powerful orator who often speaks for two and half hours and appeals for workers' rights. She critiqued class oppression and worked with the Knights of Labor, the International Working People's Association, the Socialists, and most famously, the Industrial Workers of the World.

Woodhull and Goldman, contemporaries to Parsons, felt that her husband's death radicalized her. At this point, she became the Haymarket widow. Lost Womanhood reframes her endorsement of anarchy as a rebellious form that accesses the power of widowhood. It is not so much that she became radical when her husband died; rather, his death allowed her to resituate her rebellion within her powerful new role as a widow. As a widow, she focuses her efforts on agitation through gendered behaviors. The widow status gives her a power that appeals to her audience. As a widow, her dedication to her husband's memory gives her a form of credibility that many white listeners find appealing, and her activism now becomes part and parcel of her domestic life. Parsons understands the undercurrent of this role and its power— a wife who staunchly defends her murdered husband and shares that incredible loss with followers. In this instance, Parsons relies on gender expectations and extracts power from them. Jones describes one particular moment when Parsons drives a buggy around Chicago with banners declaring, *Let the voice of the people be heard*! She takes the role of a widow in a direction that gives her the most power. When the police intervene, she begins yelling to attract a crowd. Calling the police murderers, she warns that the executed men will haunt them and their future generations. Even after the police chief chastises her, she takes

her son, Albert Jr., with her to hand out flyers for her husband's book at the Grand Pacific Hotel two days later. Once again, she creates disruptions that highlight her vision for the future of her cause, which will not be thwarted by state-sponsored violence. Her numerous contributions to The *Alarm* and other anarchist causes prove her willingness to develop her particular brand of activism. Because a female-driven black nationalism reframes rebellion as a natural part of domesticity, Parsons can leave the home to change her home. She did not limit her energy to the United States. In the late 1880s, she traveled to England and spoke in Norwich and Ipswich. Because the public was interested in her lectures, American papers reported on her European tour when they reprinted descriptions from London newspapers.

For women of color and Lost Women, marriage and widowhood operate differently, and she subverts conservative attitudes toward monogamy. Despite some of the controversies over her choice of sexual partners, she remains one of Chicago's most important radical voices until her death in 1942 from a house fire. Parsons may never have openly accepted Woodhull and Goldman's free love theories, but she never remarried and lived unabashedly outside marriage. She challenges both True and New Womanhood as a singular way to create womanhood. James and Mona Rocha suggest that Parsons demands a reframing and redefining of marriage for women. Free love and traditional marriage do not provide women with enough choices. Free love creates a pariah, and traditional marriage asks women to stay home and give up ambition. James and Mona Rocha explain that Parsons understands that "the problem then lies in the structure of society as a whole. While living under patriarchy, all social arrangements for love and sex will be problematic" (77). Many scholars have avoided dealing with Parsons' personal life after Albert's death, but her choice to engage in

sexual relationships without marrying is an important expression of her understanding of Lost Womanhood.

As historical biographers create a whitewashed narrative around Parsons, scholars avoid reckoning with the implications from the lack of legal evidence of the Parsons' marriage. Jones and others willingly divulge Parsons' ability to divest herself from traditional attitudes toward marriage. One of the narratives around the radical Lucy Parsons focuses on her sexual life after her husband's death. After returning from England, she tells an interviewer that she was engaged to Eduard Bernstein, the German Social Democrat editor. The next day, she denies the engagement. In 1888, Robert Lacher left his family and began to live with Parsons. Later in life, she takes in boarders to help pay her bills, and biographers suggest that she may have had sexual relationships with them. A more productive understanding of Parsons comes from acknowledging that she may have escaped traditional and legal marriage for her entire life. Her attitudes about marriage and race were always radical. Jones and Kowl both explain that there is no legal documentation for the Parsons' marriage. Lucy marries Albert Parsons, a white man and former Confederate soldier, in Texas, but they soon flee to Chicago. Laws against interracial marriage may have kept them from an official and legal wedding. Parsons may tell the story that she and Albert marry in Austin, Texas, but scholars have not been able to find legal documentation to support her claim. Without a legal marriage, Parsons may be able to create a more equitable relationship, and because they live as a married couple, the confines of traditional gender expectations and sexual relationships allow her to claim the widow status. It is important to remember that the Parsons' marriage, though never legal, was still accepted within their lifetime. The label of widow perpetuates the idea that their marriage was accepted. As a widow, she creates the

platform of an angry and grieving wife continuing her husband's legacy while focusing on her agenda of changing women's lives.

While Parsons' racial identity remains a mystery, it is crucial to understand how she engages in coalition politics to control her image. In her 1886 article in *The Alarm,* "The Negro: Let Him Leave Politics to the Politician and Prayers to the Preacher," she acknowledges the historical violence done to the black community without claiming blackness herself:

> This is the history in brief: The plain unvarnished facts of this most damnable outrage which, with it and similar occurrences almost innumerable of a like nature perpetrated upon these people, should bring a tinge of indignation to the cheek of every soul who can at all comprehend the meaning of the word Liberty! (2).

She connects the anarchist principle of the least restrictive government: freedom from restriction and the lack of interference to an improved life. Focusing more on constriction and less on the violence that slaves experienced, she identifies them as "these people," not her people or people like her (2). She distances her persona from blackness and markers of blackness to focus on working-class individuals, including people of color, immigrants, and women. Her most problematic statement denies the role that race and skin color play in creating oppression. She argues that it is not blackness that oppresses black people, but rather class. "It is because he is poor" (2). For Parsons, class issues outweigh race issues. A female-driven black nationalism also understands class oppression as one of the three layers of oppression. Instead of race, Parsons focuses on class to further her argument that "the overseer's whip is now fully supplanted by the lash of hunger! And the auction block by the chain-gang and convict cell!" (55). Rightfully, she comments on how segregation and Jim

Crow deny black people further economic opportunities. Without acknowledging black nationalism, she focuses on wage slavery in an industrial economy in the North that Wilson addresses earlier in *Our Nig*.

Lauren Basson helps us understand Parsons' insistence on keeping her racial identity a mystery. Basson argues that those who supported capitalistic economic systems used racialized stereotypes to describe rebellious workers. Socialists and anarchists were described as foreign or aberrant in order to mark anarchism as a radical unamerican political doctrine. To be a true American was to believe in capitalism and live under and within its systems, even with low wages or dangerous working conditions. Anarchists especially were described as alien, and, therefore, unamerican. According to Basson, a national status then is defined in racialized moral and economic terms rather than legal ones. If Parsons understands this definition, she can manipulate her racial identity to counteract these racialized descriptions directly. In her interview with the *Colorado Graphic* in 1886, she tells the reporters that "It has been charged that all anarchists are foreigners. My ancestors were here before Europeans" ("Woman Anarchist" 3). Her claim to a pre-European and pre-colonial Mexican heritage connects her more deeply to the land and firmly places her outside the exploitation of capitalism and industrialization. When the opposition describes socialists and anarchists as alien, inhuman, or animalistic, Parsons cleverly dismantles those descriptions. Her successful strategies make her the most dangerous anarchist.

In fact, according to Basson, Parsons argues that capitalists are the foreigners. White men are the invaders. Insisting on her own indigenous ancestry, she argues that she is more American and more directly connected to its soil. Parsons makes anarchism "an authentic American ideology by linking it to her roots in the American continent" (Basson 135). While

her black ancestry may hinder this work, her connection to indigeneity and Mexican ancestry advances it. The newspapers push against her strategies by insisting that she is biracial. The newspapers use blackness to discredit her success, but they cannot impede it. Not only is she successful, but she has married a white man and has mixed children. As a black woman, she breaks all the rules and defies expectations. Black men and women are lynched for much less. Parsons realizes that she must rely on a different strategy. As an indigenous and Mexican woman, she represents a different argument. Both of her people were here first and had land stolen from them. Because her ancestral people were not colonists, immigrants, or brought from Africa, she defines herself as more American than those who discredit her.

Eventually, she stops avoiding race issues. When Parsons feels compelled to write about lynching, female-driven black nationalism surfaces more directly. While she hopes to avoid addressing race, given its particular impediments to her cause, she cannot maintain this distance in the face of lynching throughout the country after the Civil War and especially after the end of Reconstruction. In her 1892 article "Southern Lynchings" published in the newspaper *Freedom*, her language shifts to the brutal violence women experience from lynchings. Many journalists and activists like Ida B. Wells wrote about lynchings, but they often focused on men's stories. Parsons instead focuses on women who suffer from this horrific violence. When she argues "against the outrages being perpetrated in the South upon peaceful citizens simply because they are Negroes" (70), she also insists on the citizenship of black women. This moment is one of the few times she connects race to citizenship, and ultimately, this shift focuses on citizenship for black women. Along with men, women and children were lynched, and too often, only descriptions of lynched men made it into the papers.

When writing about race, Parsons relies on coalition politics to describe both the violence that black women experience and the demand for traditional citizenship that protects them against this violence:

> Women are stripped to the skin in the presence of leering, whited-skinned, black-hearted brutes and lashed into insensibility and strangled to death from the limbs of trees. A girl child of fifteen years was lynched recently by these brutal bullies. Where has justice fled? The eloquence of Wendell Phillips is silent now. John Brown's body lies moldering in the grave. But will his spirit lie there moldering, too? Brutes, inhuman monsters-- you heartless brutes-- you who forms by molding you in it, deceive not yourselves by thinking that another John Brown will not rise. ("Southern Lynchings" (2)

Parsons incites her audience to act through organization or violence. She carefully describes a naked adult black woman and only briefly mentions the young woman. She preserves the child's dignity and relies on the shocking imagery of violence against a black woman. Parsons centers her argument on a black woman, and then to appeal to male listeners, she invokes John Brown. She may begin with women, but she includes men in her description to organize as many activists in coalition as possible. If scholars are correct that Parsons possesses African ancestry, the lynching of black women would strike her close to home, especially considering the violence against her husband, her interracial relationships, and her power within an activist circle made up mostly of white men. Her intense language choices incite action and reveal her anxieties about her race and the possible violence that she could potentially experience. This article and its departure from her usual strategies demonstrate the unavoidable interrelation of different layers of oppression. Female-driven black

nationalism articulates these three layers of oppression and their dangers for black women, including Parsons.

Within this approach, she rebels against and interrogates race, class, and gender. She opposes the Enlightenment supposition that the world is no longer dependent on brutal violence. Instead, her 1905 "Woman: Her Evolutionary Department" argues that women require change and rebellion. The industrial revolution brings about factory work, which challenges women and their roles in domesticity, especially for working-class women. With this possible freedom, a patriarchal culture still worries that these women will become public women: mannish, coarse, and unsexed. Parsons attempts to dispel the mannish woman discourse by suggesting that she knows of "no activity from which woman is debarred because of her sex" (93). However, there are many activities that nineteenth-century women cannot participate in, such as voting or opening a bank account in her own name. The list of activities in which women cannot participate is rather long. But Parsons' idealism may encourage women to stop accepting jobs where employers pay women less and refuse to hire men for that very reason. In an attempt at coalition politics, Parsons aligns working-class men and women, so workers can rise together against emerging capitalism.

In a further effort to dismantle oppression, Parsons discusses reproductive issues. In 1905, she publishes "The Woman Question Again?" in *The Liberator* in response to a funeral in Kewanee, Illinois, where a funeral home used only two coffins to bury an entire family. They used one coffin for the mother, Mary Markham, and one coffin for her seven children. This method of burial highlights both the priorities and the demands of True Womanhood. Such an ideology affirms that children become the sole reason for a mother's life but fail to count the costs, including death. The example of Mrs. Markham, who killed herself and her

seven children, proves Parsons' point that women cannot sustain a household or a life without being able to control pregnancy:

> Poor burden- bearing, poverty stricken, care-worn, child-bearing to excess Mary Markham, you are gone! And you have taken your sorrows and your little ones with you in the Great Unknown, but you were a victim of our false society which makes it a crime to impart information that would have made your young life a mother's joy, with a few healthy children to caress you; but instead, you saw from day to day a helpless burden of poverty and despair. Or maybe our care-worn sister was one of those who had been taught, 'Wives submit yourselves unto your husband and his desires at all times' ("The Woman Question Again?" 102)

Instead of describing Mary Markham as a murderer of her children, she describes her as a victim who had little choice in her future and no control over her own body. Parsons references the 1873 Comstock Law, making it illegal to send information about birth control or abortion in the mail. Parsons understands that the anti-abortion rhetoric at the turn of the century harms women. It would seem that mothers cannot escape the term murderer. Parsons argues that women cannot escape their relationship to death. Instead of asking why Mrs. Markham was driven to such drastic measures, society deems her a murderer. For Parsons, anarchy asks the more important question: how can a woman's life be changed for the better. The answer is that women need to be more than mothers.

Unlike True Womanhood, New Womanhood suggests that women can work. However, it is only until they marry. Once they marry, they need to set aside their ambitions and raise their families. As an alternative narrative for women, Parsons includes a section titled "Wife Quits Home for 'Business." She describes a scenario where Mrs. Hamblin leaves

her husband and family for a job as a traveling businesswoman, and her husband Eugene files for a divorce. Parsons explains that "Probably Mrs. Hamblin never intended to sink her whole individuality when she married" ("Wife Quits Home for 'Business" 102). Once again, Parsons proves that women do not want to leave their children, but domesticity requirements create an untenable situation. Like the black female activists before her, Parsons argues for divorce when she can show that children will be better off with separated parents. Parsons understands that women, like Mary Markham and Mrs. Hamblin, will not survive New Womanhood, so she relies on ideologies from a female-driven black nationalism.

To continue her attack on True and New Womanhood, Parsons interrogates the very manuals that cement rigid and dangerous nineteenth-century gender ideologies. In her 1879 "Working Women," she refutes pieces of advice from "Hints to Young Housekeepers" in *Scribner's Magazine*. Parsons questions the unfair employment contracts for working-class persons, especially women, that are promoted in this advice section. This advice column suggests that wealthy families deduct a week's wage from their servants when they quit because they did not provide due notice. The treatment of servants is also discussed. Wealthy families and women running households are to require "strict obedience to your orders" and are advised to provide a pound of tea, a pound of sugar, and one candle per servant each week (42). These working conditions anger Parsons and cause her to encourage young women to avoid working in bondage. Parsons mirrors how nineteenth-century black women writers and activists criticize white womanhood and their dependence on physical and economic violence. While some black female activists address the relationship between physical violence and white womanhood, Parsons focuses on the economic violence that working-class and black women experience.

The category of Lost Womanhood is essential to an appraisal of the life and work of Lucy Parsons. She is a lost woman with a lost archive. Her robust and defiant activism is lost to us because there is not an expansive or unified physical record of her work. While some collections contain letters, images, and writings, her work is spread across different collections, from the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, the University of Illinois, The Industrial Workers of the World, to the Online Research Center on the History and Theory of Anarchism. Her archives are scattered across different institutions and often buried in collections about the Haymarket bombing or Albert Parsons. However, despite her many successes and longevity, only bits and pieces are left and have yet to be put into one archive dedicated to Lucy Parsons. Lost Womanhood cannot accomplish this change, but it can take those pieces and create a more normative category of womanhood that frames her as a successful activist and leader of the anarchist movement.

These activists reveal a history of Lost Women who document a black history rooted in rebellion. No longer in a failed state of white womanhood, they eschew its value and its violence. Female-driven black nationalism creates a new form of community that allows for individualism that can argue for full rights and protections. Instead, they rely on coalition politics and negotiation to overcome the obstacles within layered oppression. To create a female-driven black nationalism, they begin by negotiating race. Black activists come from all sorts of backgrounds; the category of Lost Womanhood expands the narrative around black female activists who engage with coalition politics and negotiate with many audiences. A female-driven black nationalism documents their struggles that stem from layered oppression. In this new category, black women challenge a white, masculine, heteronormative narrative that relies on them remaining marginalized. Before the late

nineteenth century, black female activists like Sojourner Truth point out that black women can only find jobs as washerwomen. Truth's comment anticipates black women's role in domestic work during both first and second-wave feminism. Late nineteenth-century female black activists recognize this problem and create a female-driven black nationalism to counteract it. Through black nationalism, they silence True Womanhood and refuse to let New Womanhood replace it. These precursors to modern theories of intersectional feminism demonstrate how layered oppression compels them to create a female-driven black nationalism that becomes the foundation for twentieth-century activism in gender and racial discourses.

"Despite their alleged purpose, archives are notoriously difficult, disorderly, impenetrable spaces, prone to multiple and conflicting narratives." (Kate Eichhorn)

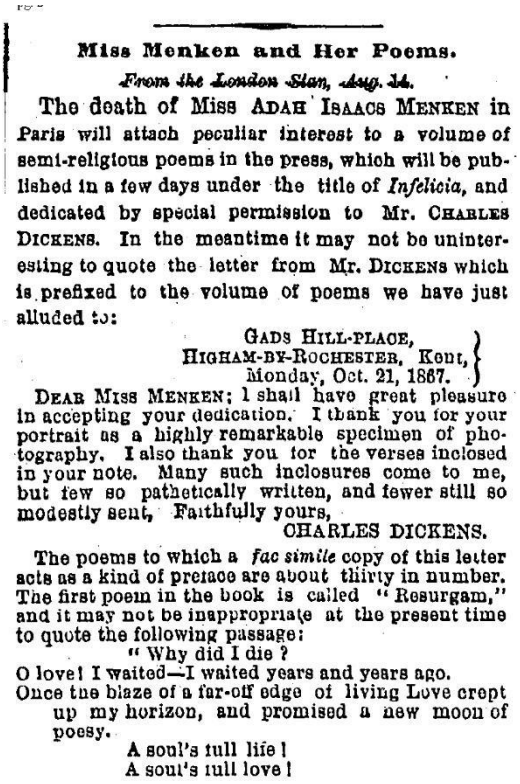
"enter via the archive

unlock drawers (give out free keys)
dispose of gloves (beautiful dirt.)"

("The Feminists are Cackling in the Archive")

Conclusion

As with the other women in this project, Ada Menken's story resides in the newspapers and many spread-out archives. Barbara and Michael Foster's most recent biography of her describes their decade-long search in eight different archives all over the world. Their search mirrors the time and dedication it takes to find lost women in the archive. The time it takes to investigate a woman who challenges rigid gender ideologies is extensive; such attenuated searches keep stories like Menken's virtually inaccessible. Her poem "Woman of the World" raises the very questions I have sought to answer: Where are the Lost Women? While Menken focuses on her Jewish faith and religious responsibilities, she connects gender ideologies directly to the demands of a patriarchal nineteenth-century society. "The unclean thing, called Society, has swallowed her body" ("Woman of the World" line 16). Menken's argument that a sordid society devours a



Miss Menken and Her Poems.

From the London Stan, Aug. 14.

The death of Miss ADAH ISAACS MENKEN in Paris will attach peculiar interest to a volume of semi-religious poems in the press, which will be published in a few days under the title of *Infelicia*, and dedicated by special permission to Mr. CHARLES DICKENS. In the meantime it may not be uninteresting to quote the letter from Mr. DICKENS which is prefixed to the volume of poems we have just alluded to:

GADS HILL-PLACE,
HIGHAM-BY-ROCHESTER, Kent,
Monday, Oct. 21, 1867.

DEAR MISS MENKEN; I shall have great pleasure in accepting your dedication. I thank you for your portrait as a highly remarkable specimen of photography. I also thank you for the verses inclosed in your note. Many such inclosures come to me, but few so pathetically written, and fewer still so modestly sent. Faithfully yours,

CHARLES DICKENS.

The poems to which a *fac simile* copy of this letter acts as a kind of preface are about thirty in number. The first poem in the book is called "Resurgam," and it may not be inappropriate at the present time to quote the following passage:

"Why did I die?
O love! I waited—I waited years and years ago.
Once the blaze of a far-off edge of living Love crept up my horizon, and promised a new moon of poesy.
A soul's full life!
A soul's full love!

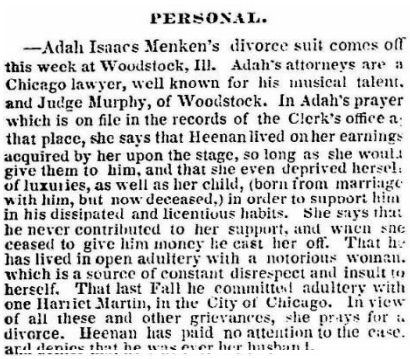
Figure 14 New York Times, Aug 27, 1868

woman's body underscores the culturally grotesque status of women's bodies as food for a gendered and racialized society that thrives on a form of racial cannibalism. Unfortunately, its appetite is so strong that women pass down dangerous ideologies. Menken argues that a woman's soul "is left uncared for, uncultivated, overgrown with bitter poison/ weeds of ignorance, indolence, and folly!" (lines 23-24). Her adjectives describe the impact of True womanhood's false narrative of power. Menken crystallizes the idea that nineteenth-century gender ideologies dehumanize women and keep them ignorant, and "they are educated only for display" (line 58). Menken's words reveal how True Womanhood continually reconstitutes itself and is therefore almost impossible to overcome. To reinforce women as objects, she condemns how gender ideologies discourage women from supporting other women. "Charity, gentleness and love for her sister-woman are all/ crushed out of her nature, by petty jealousy, envy of face, and/ form, love of senseless admiration" (lines 27-29). True Womanhood thrives when women accept their second-class status in isolation and are kept from networks of support.

As with other Lost Women, Menken challenges marriage as a singular goal for women. This scandalous figure understood how marriage could work for her when she married and divorced multiple times. Given her public persona and fame, she could use the newspaper to her advantage when seeking a divorce. Her divorces primarily benefited her scandalous persona, which depended on recurring appearances in the newspapers. She points out that "a daughter is trained to be accomplished, and that the ultimate/ end of every accomplishment is to please the opposite sex" (lines 83-84). For Menken, "there are other missions for women than that of wife and/ mother (lines 117-116). A letter she sends to Robert Reece reveals that she long held this attitude:

> I don't believe in women being married. Somehow, they all sink into nonentities after this epoch of their existence. This is the fault of female education. They are taught from their cradles to look upon marriage as the one event of their lives. (qtd in Foster 280).

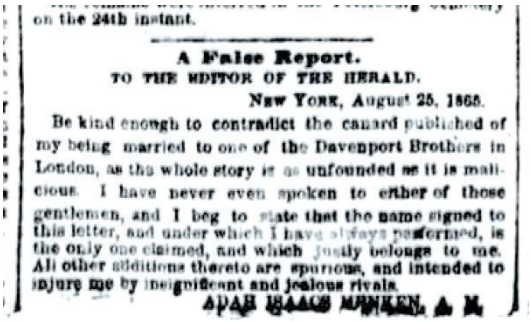
In this letter, she articulates how a social death accompanies marriage. Her choice of the word "nonentities," which echoes Castronovo's "necro status," is one aspect of Lost Womanhood—a category of women who are displaced socially.



PERSONAL.

—Adah Isaacs Menken's divorce suit comes off this week at Woodstock, Ill. Adah's attorneys are a Chicago lawyer, well known for his musical talent, and Judge Murphy, of Woodstock. In Adah's prayer which is on file in the records of the Clerk's office a that place, she says that Heenan lived on her earnings acquired by her upon the stage, so long as she would give them to him, and that she even deprived herself of luxuries, as well as her child, (born from marriage with him, but now deceased,) in order to support him in his dissipated and licentious habits. She says that he never contributed to her support, and when she ceased to give him money he cast her off. That he has lived in open adultery with a notorious woman, which is a source of constant disrespect and insult to herself. That last Fall he committed adultery with one Harriet Martin, in the City of Chicago. In view of all these and other grievances, she prays for a divorce. Heenan has paid no attention to the case, and denies that he was ever her husband.

Figure 15 Menken Divorce Article, New York Times Nov 03, 1861.



on the 24th instant.

A False Report.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD.

NEW YORK, August 25, 1865.

Be kind enough to contradict the canard published of my being married to one of the Davenport Brothers in London, as the whole story is as unfounded as it is malicious. I have never even spoken to either of those gentlemen, and I beg to state that the name signed to this letter, and under which I have always performed, is the only one claimed, and which justly belongs to me. All other additions thereto are spurious, and intended to injure me by insignificant and jealous rivals.

ADAH ISAACS MENKEN, A. M.

Figure 16 Menken Divorce Article, The New York Herald, Aug 27, 1865

In searching for Lost Women and Lost Womanhood, I knew I had to turn to the archive to find these women. At the same time, I understand the archive as a patriarchal space that still elicits distrust. Therefore, it only made sense to begin with an archival source that did not require special permission, gloves, and a trip to a dusty basement: the newspaper. Even when considering the simulacra issues of digitization, the newspaper is far more accessible than other forms of archival research. Lost Women were right there in the newspapers waiting to be found, but this search reveals that the archive remains a necropolis for women. In "Researching Eighteenth-Century Maritime Women Writers," Gwendolyn Davies articulates that the archives are not always a neutral zone because they can potentially

destabilize a fixed category of women. If a woman writes or is written about, she can be easily located. While the newspaper itself often is described as a masculine space, women are not purposefully hidden. As they are discovered, definitions about their lives can be altered or upended. This strategy works for racialized individuals as well.

Archives matter. The novel and its publication rituals have been deemed the tentpoles of greatness for too long. What alienates scholars from this productive space is the belief that publication defines importance. If genius is associated with the published written word, it cannot be found in a box with scraps of paper. No third party has intervened to declare its necessity. However, genius can be found in all sorts of places, especially in the archives. If these lost women and voices are to be rendered visible, the archives need their place along with the novel. The nineteenth-century publication world valued a particular narrative that supported patriarchy that modeled True Womanhood. If the publication world only serves forms of oppression, these lost voices cannot use those forms. Instead, they turn to diaries, newspapers, or letters to speak their truths. We only need to turn to those archives to find a more normative form of womanhood that women accessed. Most importantly, the archives unshackle True Womanhood from literary and cultural studies.

Because of the complex relationship between the archive and women, digitization saves these silenced voices even when scholars interrogate the simulation issues. Some scholars believe that going into cramped rooms with boxes represents true archival research. Some scholars believe that going into cramped rooms with boxes represents true archival research. But such research, however difficult, is a privileged process, requiring time, money, and established relationships. Ultimately, it is available only to those with resources. Examining paper materials, pen strokes, containers, and touching items, even with gloves,

can lend authenticity to silenced voices and lead to new insights. But such archival research, conducted in many different collections in disparate places, is a bit like True Womanhood: both narrow rather than expand what is possible for women to accomplish. For Lost Womanhood, digitization remains critical. From the digitization of Magoffin's narrative to Dunbar-Nelson's scrapbooks and manuscripts, this technology makes available collections that usually remain unseen. When collections are digitized and placed on the internet, they can reach more people. Then the stories of such women are no longer lost. Keeping collections in buildings only keeps the archive in a closed system that discourages and impedes access. When the Rosenbach Museum put Alice Dunbar-Nelson's collection online, more people could discover her extraordinary work.

The plight of nineteenth-century homemade archivist William H. Dorsey reveals the tenuous position of some archival materials. William H. Dorsey, a prolific collector and scrapbook maker of black achievement and scrapbook maker, carefully archived thousands of artifacts, such as a first edition of Phyllis Wheatley's book of poetry. Ellen Gruber Garvey and Cynthia Greenlee's historical research indicates that Dorsey's son may have gifted his father's collection to Cheyney University in Pennsylvania when William died. Unfortunately, the university did not consider it worthy enough to create an accessible collection. Finally, in 1996, Eric Dulin, the archivist at Cheyney, began cataloging and organizing the Dorsey collection. Greenlee explains the disarray of priceless materials that Dulin found. Among piles of materials on the ground, he found discarded photographs of WEB Dubois and other critical black figures on the floor. It took over twenty years for the collection to be partially cataloged and archived.

Because these scrapbooks took up quite a bit of space, Pennsylvania State University agreed to assess and house the three hundred and eighty-eight volumes:

> According to Jennifer Meehan, the director of the Eberly Family Special Collections Library at Pennsylvania State University, which holds the scrapbooks, a 2013 report on the state of the volumes found them to be in 'fair to poor condition. Some of the condition issues identified are mold and water damage; damaged and/or missing bindings; brittle pages; acidic, brittle and folded clippings.' Opening some scrapbooks would be difficult and scanning to digitize isn't always an option. (Greenlee)

Digital photography could have saved this collection. When scanning is not an option, archivists need to photograph materials, so scholars can still access the most delicate materials. The only reason these items could not be scanned is that they sat in disarray for long. Unfortunately, this vital collection is still inaccessible and sits in a liminal space. If scholars want to see this collection, they first must contact the current archivist at Cheney to get special permission and then travel to Pennsylvania State University. Currently, only two hundred and sixty out of four hundred of his scrapbooks are available, and only on microfilm, because of a lack of funds. This potentially disruptive archive remains lost.

This collection archives black achievement and creates a narrative of black success, and Dorsey took great pains to compile these artifacts that point to productive black history. However, unfortunately, all of these historical pieces sit in boxes, and its future is unclear:

> As for the Dorsey scrapbooks, we know at least that they are being stored in acid-free boxes away from heat, light, and moisture. Without stabilization and conservation, easily available microfilm copies, or an agreement about their upkeep, they will be

> accessible in theory, but in practice beyond reach. The Dorsey collection remains at once lost and found—and in limbo. (Greenlee)

It is not lost on me that a black man's collection wastes away without funding. The question of what gets archived and, most importantly, what is made available to the public still plagues the archive. Dorsey's collection makes it clear why digitization matters. Had his collection been photographed and cataloged, scholars could access these materials that have the potential to disrupt narratives around nineteenth and early twentieth-century black bodies. Because of their disruptive potential, scholars have strong feelings about archives, and since the turn to the archive in the 1990s, the archive has proven to be a contested space.

rescue	classicism
social justice	racism
activism	privilege
cultural production	absence
memory	trauma
promise	instability
possibility	shared pain
power	shared suffering
civil disobedience	loss
intervention	ableism
	patriarchy

These opposing descriptions capture the complex relationship of the researcher to the archive. After two decades of literary scholarship that have given increasing attention to the archives, even anticipating the problems of archival scholarship cannot save any scholar who goes in search of boxes from the past. It does not matter that Derrida asked all the right questions and immediately foresaw this complicated relationship. Feminist scholars understand the archive's privilege as it relates to social, cultural, and institutional powers, and they have decided not to tread quietly into a place of hiding. Having dissected the complexity of the archival space, scholars like Helen Buss, Gwendolyn Davies, and Jill Richards take all of these issues with masculine white privilege and forge ahead. They find ways into community and institutional archives where they sit in cramped rooms, opening boxes, exploring lost documents.

Aside from the questions of what and who is important enough to archive, it is no surprise that lost voices get forgotten in the archive. Women's voices get lost because, for too long, archives were created and maintained in masculine spaces. Naydia Swaby and Chandra Frank argue that a "colonial archival ordering system" creates silences in the archive (125). I would extend their argument to suggest that cataloging is also purposefully patriarchal. What hides these women in the archive is the simple fact that women's names are difficult to find in finding aides unless a collection is directly about them. In finding aides, women's names are an afterthought or an accessory to a masculine voice. In "Locating Female Subjects," Carole Gerson confirms the lack of women in the archive, positing that women without heirs especially suffer an archival death because there are too few people to gather and save her materials. Feminist scholars have discovered that in order to find women, they have to come at the archives sideways. They have to look at relationships between males and other women in records of clubs and organizations that often catalog women. For example, my own experiences with Susan Magoffin demonstrate the complex strategies of archival work. In my search, I found more documents about her husband and brother-in-law than her in her collection. In essence, the collection was about the Magoffin family, not Susan, though she was the first recorded Anglo woman to document her experiences on the Santa Fe Trail on the eve of the US Mexico War. Masculine names and relationships took precedence over her name and writings.

Searching an archive is a highly privileged act that many feminist scholars find limiting. When collections are housed in large institutions like universities, they become more challenging to access. Rosa Sadler, Andrew Martin Cox, and Maryanne Dever discuss different accessibility issues within the archive. Buildings and rooms need to be wheelchair

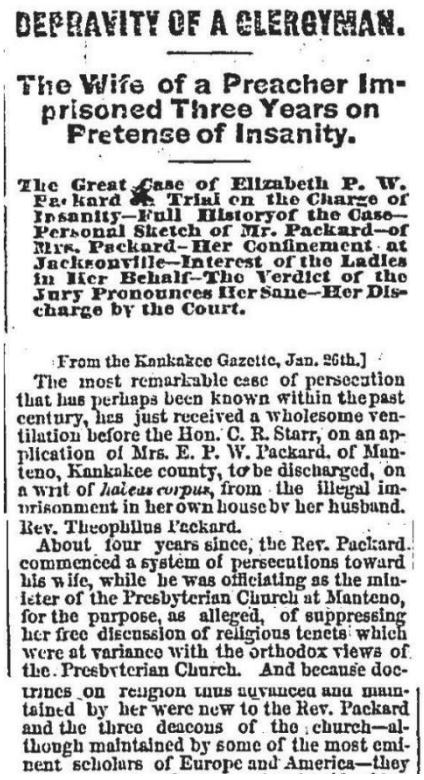
accessible, or materials need to be easy to work with for visually disabled persons. These obstacles can prevent scholars from accessing materials that would enhance their studies, and when these issues are not addressed, scholars can be discouraged. Because records of women tend to be spread out instead of housed in a single archive, as in Lucy Parsons' case, scholars need funding to travel. Scholars need support so they can devote weeks to sifting through materials. Rosa Sadler and Martin Cox interviewed archive users to understand their experiences when studying collections about women. Even though users knew that archival investigations only improved their scholarship, they still had a negative attitude about working in archival research. Sadler and Cox report that scholars complain about the difficulties of requesting and accessing fragile materials. An essential complaint about supervision proves that archives are not always neutral. Participants in their project described "the rules and procedures in archives as particularly off-putting and authoritarian" (Sadler 164). It would seem that sometimes the archive is not a friendly and welcoming place.

The labor involved in archiving materials mirrors gendered attitudes toward labor. It is assumed that women will document other women's lives, and their labor is not as highly valued as masculine labor, even in academia. Dever's examination into archival practices reveals the underbelly of archives about women. Frequently, archivists are expected to work for free or very little, especially if the archive is community-based. Collections about individuals who are not white, cis-gendered males are often not funded at the same levels, such as in William H. Dorsey's scrapbook collection. Dever argues that larger institutions will not fund collections if there is no public or scholarly interest. However, their closed systems only appear as if there is no perceived scholarly or public interest. While Derrida's privileged topography is slowly dissipating, archival collections still depend on funding, and

the questions of who and what gets archived still remain at the center of archival scholarship. Michelle Casell and Marik Cifor trouble archival scholarship by focusing on the role of the archivist, and that role might be reoriented toward greater inclusion. They explain that archives will improve when archivists get rid of detached professionalism that too often focuses on a white male, cis-gender audience. This change could open up archives and make them more attractive and accessible.

Archival work also has much potential outside of academic writing and projects. In 2020, Kate Moore published her *The Woman They Could Not Silence*, a novel based on Elizabeth Packard Ware. Known as E.P.W., Elizabeth was institutionalized against her will because she disagreed with her husband's religious beliefs. (Her father also institutionalized her for excessive mental labor in 1836 because she wanted to keep her job as the principal for Randolph College in Massachusetts.) For three years, Elizabeth attempted to escape and fight for those who were institutionalized. While much of her focus was on white women, she fought for better treatment for all institutionalized individuals. To write this novel, Moore relied on archival research. Using diary entries and Packard's writing to tell the story of a Lost Woman, Moore's novel crystallizes the archive's power. Instead of imagining her life and guessing how she reacted to the patriarchal idea that a woman who did not believe in submission was crazy and could be institutionalized, Moore found Packard's words and writings to tell the story of nineteenth-century womanhood. Breaking with novel writing traditions, Moore includes endnotes directly in the text that allows readers to access the archival research.

Because Packard knew that women's voices were purposefully silenced, she documented her experiences in a hidden journal. As her writings and Moore's novel make plain, Dr. Andrew McFarland, the director of the Jackson Insane Asylum and a powerful voice in the Illinois state government, hid letters from Elizabeth and used her writings as evidence of her so-called insanity. Packard decided to keep her journal writing safe from prying eyes, and this choice gives feminist scholarship a glimpse into nineteenth-century women's lived realities. Moore's choice to uncover Packard's words and let them capture her rebellion against patriarchal submission speaks to the archive's potential and its necessity in finding Lost Women. Pulling directly from the archive, Moore fulfills Packard's wishes of being heard. E.P.W. Packard spent most of her adult life taking significant risks in order to be heard. Because of the archive, Moore brings this voice to twenty-first-century readers other than academics.



DEPRAVITY OF A CLERGYMAN.

The Wife of a Preacher Imprisoned Three Years on Pretense of Insanity.

The Great Case of Elizabeth P. W. Packard — Trial on the Charge of Insanity—Full History of the Case—Personal Sketch of Mr. Packard—of Mrs. Packard—Her Confinement at Jacksonville—Interest of the Ladies in Her Behalf—The Verdict of the Jury Pronounces Her Sane—Her Discharge by the Court.

From the Kankakee Gazette, Jan. 26th.]

The most remarkable case of persecution that has perhaps been known within the past century, has just received a wholesome ventilation before the Hon. C. R. Starr, on an application of Mrs. E. P. W. Packard, of Manteno, Kankakee county, to be discharged, on a writ of *habeas corpus*, from the illegal imprisonment in her own house by her husband, Rev. Theophilus Packard.

About four years since, the Rev. Packard commenced a system of persecutions toward his wife, while he was officiating as the minister of the Presbyterian Church at Manteno, for the purpose, as alleged, of suppressing her free discussion of religious tenets which were at variance with the orthodox views of the Presbyterian Church. And because doctrines on religion thus advanced and maintained by her were new to the Rev. Packard and the three deacons of the church—although maintained by some of the most eminent scholars of Europe and America—they

Figure 17 Article describing Packard's trial from the Chicago Tribune January 28, 1864.

When Adah Isaacs Menken asks, "who are the lost women of the world," Lost Womanhood answers her ("Women of the World" line 1). She argues that fashionable True Women are lost to marriage and rigid gender ideologies that refuse to give them personhood. For this new category, Lost Women interrogate these expectations and ideologies, but their stories have been ignored or silenced. They attempt to "work out the golden thread of [their] mighty desire," but True Womanhood's deceptive narrative rings a little louder than their

desires (lines 14-15). Lost Womanhood gathers these women's successful strategies that explain their "grand mission" and puts them in the spotlight. Because archives play such a pivotal role in finding these women, archival research must become accessible and thoughtfully cataloged. When we acknowledge that the archive is not a neutral zone, these women will stop being buried in dark boxes that sit in closets and rooms, never to be studied. Much as Phelps sought access to divorce, Magoffin sought access to abortion, and Parsons sought access to well-paid labor, scholars must be able to access the archives of women who were agents of change so we can begin to understand how progress and change for women is accomplished.

Women like Sojourner Truth, Julia Ward Howe, Alice Dunbar-Nelson and their achievements come together to realize a far more accessible form of womanhood that vocalizes the realities of oppression. The most important defining characteristic of Lost Womanhood is its understanding of the layered oppression of women. By rooting the category of Lost Womanhood in black women's rebellion, domestic behavior transforms into rebellion, and nineteenth-century women no longer need to rely on giving speeches as the most prominent form of activism. Activists no longer need to separate their rebellion from their domestic responsibilities or home life. These women and their works should feel familiar. Lost Women are responsible for speaking against cultural practices that would deny them a place in the United States as a citizen. These Lost Women, like Sojourner Truth and Sarah Early, imagine a world where women can choose to make activism a part of their domestic lives and pave the way for twentieth-century movements that fight to make sure women remain lost no more.

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