JUSTICE FOR THE FALLEN WOMAN

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THESIS

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ABSTRACT

Justice for the Fallen Woman

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By analyzing the experiences of four different incidents of shaming women—Dallas police officers photographing partially nude prostitutes during booking, Anita Hill, Monica Lewinksky, and Christine Blasey-Ford—in contemporary American History in the same way as one would analyze literature, there becomes similarities between the archetype of the fallen woman and the treatment of the women. Each situation is paired with literary texts including Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, Alfred Lord Tennyson's "The Lady of Shalott," and Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*. This pairing helps to reveal that the archetype of the fallen woman may influence social praxis, and ultimately reveals that the patriarchy's hegemonic forces are at play when it comes to victim shaming and blaming.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Many scholars have analyzed the fallen woman within literature to discover the origin story, the purpose, and society's attitude toward her. They have attempted to define what it means to be fallen and explain the causes of a fall. In *The Fallen Women of the Nineteenth-Century English Novel*, George Watt explores how Victorian authors' treatment of the fallen woman reflected the widely held beliefs of the middle class. Writers like Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell, Anthony Trollope and others used their novels to "highlight the social problems and the extenuating circumstances which ought to colour the attitude towards the fallen women, prostitute or otherwise" (Watt 11). The fallen woman was seen as a scourge on society, and rightly should be punished by ostracizing them. In most cases, "Their destruction is part of the cleansing of the society *which produced them*" (Watt 20, emphasis mine). Watt acknowledges the irony. When discussing Gaskell's *Ruth*, he explains, "Girls fall, not because of an innate perversity, but because they are just not looked after. That society rejects a fallen woman it helped to create through sins of omission is, Gaskell suggests, where real perversity lies" (35). Trollope recognizes the same irony in his Preface to *The Vicar of Bullhampton*. Watt relates Trollope's argument for his decision to write a novel that includes a fallen woman. Trollope "argues sensibly and fairly that ignorance of the fallen woman's fate amongst the young of both sexes is the main perpetrator of the continuation of the lack of justice the type must face—the punishment is disproportionate to the initial crime" (47). In his own words, Trollope

defends "himself to bring upon his stage such a character as Carry Brattle … that the very existence of such a condition of life, as was hers, was supposed to be unknown to our sisters and daughters" (47-48). In other words, Trollope's novel, he hoped, would serve as an education to women about what a fall could do because, in his estimation, society hid the fallen women from its young daughters, keeping them in ignorance of the consequences of their actions, which only led to more fallen women.

However, scholars of literature are not the only ones interested in the fallen woman. Historians have written about her for as long as she has existed, and the common trope that prostitution is the oldest profession makes it clear that the topic is not new in the field. William Sanger, an early sociologist, and historians such as Ruth Rosen, Timothy Gilfoyle, Maggie O'Neill, and Judith Walkowitz discuss at length the societal causes for a woman choosing prostitution. This preoccupation mirrors the "origin stories" depicted in literature. When a woman is seduced, raped, or simply rumored to be fallen, stories and history all center around the same idea: What causes a woman to fall?

Something else of note within the historiography of prostitution is that the rise of feminism corresponds with historians' insterests and rhetoric surrounding the topic. As feminist ideals took hold, prostitution was stigmatized less. The fall was no longer as far from grace. In fact, by the 2000s, historians were "committed to producing knowledge of prostitution that shifted the view of prostitutes from marginal actors to participants in a broader social world of labour … Interpreting prostitution as a form of labour enabled us to locate prostitutes in a wider history of labouring poor" (Walkowitz 190-191). Although some historians believed prostitution was not the *best* way to economic freedom and independence, it was *a* way, and Walkowitz believed studying it in those terms offered a more precise view of prostitution.

In the Victorian Era, a fallen woman was someone who sold sex. By the Progressive Era, and the shifting attitudes toward women entering the work force, the term meant basically the same thing, but even association with someone who sold sex was enough to ruin a woman's reputation. However, by the 1920s, the rise of the flapper helped to redefine fallenness. In *Interzones*, Kevin Mumford studies black/white sex districts from 1900 to the 1940s, attempting to answer how the perception of race changed over time and how race and sexuality were constructed through two particular watershed moments: the Jack Johnson scandal and the rise of the flapper. The moment that shifted the "fallen woman" moniker to black women was the rise of the flapper. Mumford argues that the flapper "gradually blurr[ed the] stylistic distinctions between respectable and fallen women" because they "[shopped] during the day and [were] out on the town at night" causing flappers to "challenge the gendered map of separate spheres" (108-109). In other words, flapper women crossed into the public sphere, similar to how prostitutes had. However, the stigma of the "fallen woman" did not follow them because it was the color line, not the social spheres that determined a fall. Instead, as the flapper became more acceptable, "the New Fallen Woman represented the realignment of female sexual impropriety with blackness" (113). According to Mumford, the evolution of the fallen woman from prostitute to black woman was caused by the racial interplay within the areas in Chicago and New York that he called interzones. Mumford's study shows that while society might change who it deems has fallen, the consequences of *being* fallen remain constant.

However, within literature, the term "fallen woman" casts a much wider net. Those who are considered fallen can get there through a life of prositution, like Charles Dickens' Nancy in *Oliver Twist*. Others can get there through seduction, like Anthony Trollope's Carry Brattle in *The Vicar of Bullhampton*, and still others can meet this fate through non-consenual sex or other

sexual advances like Thomas Hardy's Tess in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. And finally, a woman can be considered fallen because of rumors, like in *The Mill on the Floss*, George Eliot's Maggie Tulliver falls after Stephan Guest, a man who wants to marry her, but she does not have the same feelings, overturns their boat causing them to stay alone together overnight. While there is no way to know what really happened that night, the *possible* indiscretion ruined her reputation and ultimately, brought about her death. Given the definition of a fallen woman seems to lay solely in the misogynistic assumption that women should remain pure at all costs, possibly stemming from marriage rituals that defined women like one might define a thoroughbred horse, this definition, when applied to society allows a view of women in situations other than prostutition to be analyzed with this same lens. It may help to answer the question: Why are women who are raped or sexually assaulted ostracized? Why are they blamed when a rape occurs? Perhaps, the archetype of the fallen woman and how she has been depicted in literature can offer some answers.

Review of Scholarship

Historians and novelists alike sought answers for how a woman could fall. As Jennifer Greeson points out, "Contributors to this emerging discourse focused on divining how women became prostitutes … a narrative in which her climax was invariably her sexual fall" (281). Although white slavery was one answer, as Ruth Rosen points out, the number of women in the profession because of white slavery was no more than 10 percent (133). In 1858, William Sanger attempted to understand the motivations in *The History of Prostitution*. As the first look into the lives of prostitutes living in New York, Sanger's book offered a peek into an underbelly that many ignored. Using self-reports from two thousand prostitutes, his interview questions ranged from immigration, reasons for entering prostitution, demographics, and previous home life. After

each set of statistics, Sanger offered his interpretation of the data. A common thread was the victimhood of the prostitutes. He concluded, “that fraud or force is used to entrap these females” (457). However, despite his claim, five hundred and thirteen women or one-quarter of those interviewed identified “inclination” as the cause. He defined inclination as “a voluntary resort to prostitution in order to gratify the sexual passions.” He admitted that “if a positive inclination to vice was the proximate cause of the fall” it “would imply an innate depravity, a want of true womanly feeling, which is actually incredible” (487). In other words, the thought that a woman would choose prostitution outside of any other reason made her less of a woman. His conclusion offered insight into the attitude toward prostitution of the day that did not survive in other historian’s treatment of this topic. For example, in *Prostitution & Feminism: Towards a Politics of Feeling*, a more recent study of prostitution, O’Neill, interviewed working women to determine their routes into prostitution and found most entered because of economic need, association with other sex workers, drug abuse, or living with no support in the community (83-84). O’Neill’s data collection was much smaller than Sanger’s and did not address inclination in the survey.

By 1982, when Rosen published her study, the attitudes about the reasons for entering prostitution had changed. Rosen explained, “Most women *chose* to enter prostitution … because they perceived prostitution as a means of fulfilling particular economic, social, or psychological needs” (137, emphasis hers). For the most part, economic need overshadowed any other, and Rosen mentioned no such reason as “inclination” nor did she ascribe to the idea that the prostitutes were “depraved.” However, Rosen offered context to Sanger’s data with regard to prostitutes’ family histories. Comparing Sanger’s study with the *Summary Report on the Condition of Women and Child Wage in the United States*, she found that prostitutes and working

women "in fact share many of the same life experiences and background. The single exception, however, is that prostitutes did seem to experience more frequent breakdowns in their family's economy and social relations" (149) including being orphaned or widowed.

By the late 80s and early 90s, historians' arguments about why women chose prostitution coalesced around economic reasons no matter the time period of the study. Beginning with Rosen, the idea that "prostitutes viewed their work as 'the easiest way'" (156) to earn money prevailed. In fact, Gilfoyle explains that "[o]ne woman bluntly told the reformer Felix Adler that prostitution was simply the best alternative. 'Good food, fine clothes and the easy life make it attractive'" (287).

More recent historians have moved away from Sanger's perception of victimhood and adopted an argument that brought in women's agency in the matter of choosing prostitution. Marilyn Hill in *Their Sisters' Keepers*, a study of New York prostitutes from 1830-1870, explained, "a successful prostitute gained a degree of economic and social independence from the constraints of a patriarchal, or male-controlled, structure" (2). This idea of freedom influenced studies done in the more recent eras about prostitution. Julia Laite, in "Historical Perspectives on Industrial Development, Mining, and Prostitution," pointed out the freedom offered to women through her study of prostitutes in mining communities. Laite helped to underscore how prostitution and resistance against capitalism work together. Laite described it like this: "While some historians see women's prostitution as an outright resistance strategy, and others see it more as a survival strategy, these perspectives emphasize some degree of choice for the women concerned and recognize prostitution as an alternative to poverty and other forms of women's labor" (744). Again, Laite, like Rosen and Gilfoyle recognized that economic situations provoke women into prostitution. However, Laite's study emphasized how the choice helped

women to stake a claim in the economy that she had been excluded from. While Rosen and Gilfoyle explained the economic environment led women to prostitution, they did not frame that decision in these terms. In fact, Laite's argument that "prostitution acted as a way to disregard conventional morality, and as a way to refuse or even to defy the ordered and controlled world of modern capitalism" (747) offered a new take on prostitution.

More recent studies of sex workers took a more theoretical approach to analyze prostitution and the sex industry. While the scholars thus far had attempted to understand prostitutes through historical documents, Jill Nagle in *Whores and Other Feminists* turned to contemporary sex workers by compiling a collection of essays written by prostitutes, strippers, pornography actors and actresses to allow them to speak for themselves. In the collection, a pattern emerged surrounding what the other scholars have tried to pin down: what causes women to sell their bodies? One particular essay by Larry Grant claimed that "many find freedom and fulfillment through sex work … [S]ex workers have been the only women to live independent lives, free of the control of men. Sex workers were the first feminists" (182). However, his claim that this independence dubbed them feminists is a new argument forming in the literature.

In Rosen's account of the subculture of prostitution, there was a residue of feminist ideals including that of independence and equality, especially in her discussion of the madams who "became silent partners in the local power structure." In fact, because "a madam required extreme competence in business and political matters as well as managerial, personnel, and communication skills" (87), her position in society was privileged over even women who did not engage in sex work. While Rosen ultimately concluded that "prostitute[s], like women outside of the subculture, suffered the stigma and degradation imposed by male sexual exploitation and patriarchal sexual values" (110), Hill asserts that "a successful prostitute gained a degree of

economic and social independence from the constraints of patriarchal, or male-controlled, structure" while also recognizing "they were not assertive of their rights as prostitutes per se" (323). However, as Hill points out, prostitutes were more likely to participate in the public arena through court filings, leaving home because of neglect or abuse, or leaving a job because of bad working conditions and low pay. Essentially, Hill began to find that women during the turn of the century were not the victims that Rosen suggests they were. This shift continued in history and in the retelling of history. The feminist movement shifted from condemning prostitution as exploitative to recognizing that it offered the freedom that women were fighting for. Ultimately, Rosen admitted, "Viewed from below, prostitution offered illegitimate, frequently brutal and degrading means of achieving socially acceptable goals in a society that valued material acquisition, expected upward mobility, and judged an individual's worth on his or her ability to achieve both" (111). While there were great social consequences to choosing prostituion, for some women, the sacrifice was worth the independence in a society that offered very little freedom for women.

Literature's version of the fallen woman takes many forms, including the typical historical version. While some fallen women experience some level of independence, it is at a great cost to their reputations. However, those are considered lucky because most fallen women pay with their lives. The epitome of the fallen woman archetype is the seduction novel. Hester Prynne in *The Scarlet Letter*, Gaskell's *Ruth*, Elliot's Maggie in *The Mill on the Floss*, and so many more. George Watt analyzes eight such fallen women in *The Fallen Woman in the Nineteenth-Century English Novel*. Watt explores the women's fall and the subsequent consequences. Reflective of Rosen's determination that women fall because of their lack of opportunities, Gaskell's *Ruth* asserts that "[g]irls fall, not because of innate perversity, but

because they are not looked after" (Watt 34-5). Anthony Trollope highlights the injustice of the fallen woman in his preface to *The Vicar of Bullhampton*. He argues that he wrote his novel because "the very existence of such a condition of life, as was [Carry Brattle's], was supposed to be unknown to our sisters and daughters, and was, in truth, unknown to many of them. Whether that ignorance was good may be questioned" (Watt 47-8). In other words, Trollope believed that hiding a fallen woman from polite society may have led women to a fall. The cycle of a chaste woman being seduced and then shunned from society because of the perceived sexual deviance was too much for Gaskel and Trollope, and both hoped to educate young women. This education would be hammered home in most cases because the woman in question would usually face one of two outcomes: death or ostracization.

In most cases, death is the only "solution" to the situation. Gretchen Braun points out, "For a female Victorian literary character, maidenly demise is preferable to a sexual fall" (342). However, she questions what would allow a fallen woman to survive. In her discussion of Emily Jolly's *Witch-Hampton Hall: Five Scenes in the Life of its Last Lady*, Braun determines a fallen woman can survive through what she terms a "live burial" (347). Lady Ana's fall as the result of a rape leads to a "live burial" where "[t]he shunned sexual profligate and the Gothic victim walled up alive in an underground cell are alike cursed with an intense awareness that their existence drags on although they cannot engage with the social world" (Braun 349). In Gaskell's *Ruth*, "The young heroine doesn't die. Instead she spends the rest of her life tucked away from the rest of society, dwelling on the child as the physical embodiment of her sin" (Watt 20). In both cases, survival means the removal of the blight—the fallen woman—in order to cleanse society. Hiding the fallen woman will continue the forced ignorance that bothered Gaskell and Trollope.

While the term “fallen woman” is archaic and solely couched within historical and literary studies, its legacy lives on within modern writing about women. The term sprouted from descriptions of women who strayed from the standard of purity; however, the legacy of the term lives on to describe women who stray from societal standards even outside of sexual purity. In fact, women who leave the dome of domesticity and purity are commonly referred to as “fallen,” although other pejorative terms substitute the same idea, such as “Jezabel,” “whore,” “cock tease,” and “slut,” just to name a few. Those who experience a fall are shamed and ostracized, which is the uniting theme in all cases of literary fallen women.

Howard Vincent, a police officer serving in Victorian England held a common belief about rape victims. He supported police officers that did not rush to the a scene of a rape because “[t]he victim could not prosecute. ‘Who was she to prosecute? … Even if she did, who would believe her? A woman who has lost her chastity is always a discredited witness’” (Watt 8). This idea has held up even within modern culture. For instance, Monica Lewinsky after her affair with President Clinton was simply referred to as “that woman,” or worse, a “vixen” or “little tart.” Anita Hill after her allegations of sexual harassment against Clarence Thomas resulted in a Republican senator accusing her of being a pawn used by Democrats to block Thomas’s confirmation. Chritine Blasey-Ford and her allegation of sexual assault against Brett Kavanaugh was considered “sketchy.” In all cases, the reputation of the woman at the center of the controversy was put on trial to determine her credibility. Lewinsky, Hill, and Blasey-Ford became “discredited witnesses” despite being respected women before the scandals. Certainly, those who suffer crimes against them when they are already considered fallen will have a harder path to justice because they are already considered discredited witnesses. Prostitutes in Dallas, Texas who found themselves victimized by police officers were not in a position to fight against

their abusers. However, somehow, those victims did find some justice after the policemen involved were fired ("Lucy Patterson Papers" Box 2, Folder 17).

This idea of a fall has not remained in the past or within the realm of fiction. Instead, it seems to have persisted despite the loss of the moniker "fallen woman." Sarah Ullman studied how negative reactions to a woman's sexual assault can be a revicitimization. Ullman finds that "[o]verall, negative reactions were related to more injury, more severe sexual victimization (e.g. completed rape), percieved life threat, alcohol-related assaults, and disclosure soon after the assault" (265). In other words, the worse the assault, the more negative the reactions to it. Another study of rape myths, such as the woman was "asking for it," women "want it," or women lie, and reactions to sexual assualt continue the discussion. Allison Cipriano and her fellow researchers determined that those who "reject rape myths—regardless of gender—may be more emotionally supportive in response to a woman's disclosure" (9). The rape myths that Cirpirano and her cohorts study are compelling because there are echos of those ideas within history and literature. Sanger's "inclination" and the Victorian character's early death or live burial are reminiscent of the modern reactions to sexual assault victims.

Within the discourse surrounding the specific scandals I study, much effort is given into analyzing the polls given at the time. With the Hill hearing, researchers attempted to understand the contemporary polls given by several polling agencies during events. They found that polls done in 1991 during the hearings leaned more in favor of Thomas, however, by 1992, the support shifted to Hill. The researchers suggest that while it seems there was a shift, there could be issues with how the polls were taken in 1991. In their discussion, they determine that "substantially more methodological work needs to be done to assess selection methods that are routinely used by survey organizations" (Rucinski 586). Where the polls could suggest a change in societal

opinion about the hearing, the research points out it may be more about the polls themselves, instead of public belief.

Another study focused on the polling numbers from before the Hill testimony and after the testimony. However, its purpose was to determine how the construction of a political spectacle shifted public opinion. Ultimately, they determine "construction denotes the *intent of political elites* to construct spectacles and thereby to manipulate meanings in ways that foster mass acquiescence to prevailing authority [and] the subjectivity at issue in *audience understandings* of the political spectacle quite apart from any elite designs" (Thomas, et.al. 719, emphasis his). In other words, the researchers find through their analysis of the polls that political spectacle has power to sway public opinion.

Scholars also discuss their reactions to Hill's testimony and Thomas's subsequent confirmation. A particular conversation surrounds *Capital Games: Clarence Thomas, Anita Hill, and the Story of the Supreme Court Nomination* by Timothy Phelps and Helen Winternitz. The discussion centers around representation and voice within a patriarchal society. For a group of white women, they come to see the hearings as proof that "women must often pay a price for speaking out; the risks of being violated, humiliated, and abused were palpable" (Noumair et.al 390). For a Black woman, Ella Bell likens Anita Hill's testimony to Sojourner Truth's "Ain't I a woman?" The hearings left her with "profound sorrow and outright rage" because "Anita Hill represented [her] when she testified. All of the pathological labels and mythologies attributed to Hill revealed how society perceived [her]: the wanton, sexually promiscuous woman; the scorned Black woman out to get revenge; the Black woman as one who suffered from just about every psychopathic disorder known to womankind" (148). Where the white women took a clinical and distanced approach, Bell, a Black woman, had an intensely personal take on the

hearings. This difference is highlighted by another voice in the discussion, David Ford, a Black man, who reviewed the book and both articles. Ford synthesizes the ideas from Noumair and Bell to analyze other questions surrounding Hill's motivations for silence for ten years and race and gender dynamics. He argues that "[t]he historical perspective of black men taking advantage of black women growing out of slavery, coupled with black women maintaining a code of silence, helps us understand Judge Thomas's alleged behavior toward Anita Hill and her response of silence for almost 10 years" (413). When it comes to the discourse surrounding the Thomas-Hill hearings, one of two questions are asked: How did the public react to the hearings? How do race and gender play a role in the events?

In the 1998 Clinton-Lewinsky scandal, polling is again the focus in the literature. John Zaller explains "Clinton's job approval rating averaged about 60 percent. Ten days later, following intensive coverage of the story and Clinton's State of the Union address, presidential support was about 10 percentage points higher" (182). In his study, Zaller attempts to explain the bump in Clinton's job ratings despite the scandal unfolding in the media. Considering the media's coverage, and his subsequent impeachment, it has led others to ask how Clinton survived such a political scandal. Michael Kramer and Kathryn Olson argue that "Clinton survived the Lewinsky scandal because he employed a graduated apologia strategy that progressed through the stases" (348). However, Lewinsky was not so lucky. Tracy Everbach shifts her focus from Clinton to Lewinsky to "look at how a young woman, previously a private citizen, became a media phenomenon on the cusp of social media's acceptance as a mass communication staple." Everbach analyzes how the media framed Lewinsky as "that woman," essentially dehumanizing her for the purpose of "commodifying public humiliation" (269). Since

the scholarly research focuses mostly on Bill Clinton, Everbach's article offers a new perspective in the discourse.

By the time Christine Blasey-Ford took the stand to testify against Brett Kavanaugh, many media outlets had already drawn the parallel between Blasey-Ford and Anita Hill. This parallel was not lost within the scholarship either. Of course, by 2018, the #MeToo movement was in full swing and the discourse had evolved when it came to women telling their stories of sexual harassment and assault. In her article, "From Anita Hill to Christine Blasey Ford: a reflection on lessons learned," Sarah Heck, analyzes how things have and have not changed in the intervening years between the Hill hearings and the Blasey-Ford hearings.

Scholars are also concerned with how the media shared the narratives of Brett Kavanaugh and Christine Blasey-Ford. Similar to looking at polls before and after the news of Hill's story went public, Madison Pollino compares the media coverage the week before and a week after the hearing to show "that women in the news industry perpetuate the hegemonic narrative that reinforces gendered stereotypes of sexual violence, but also produce a counter-hegemonic narrative that reveals the limitations of the dominant position that blames victims" (72). The scholarship surrounding the Blasey-Ford hearing hopes to answer how far women have come under a patriarchal, and often misogynistic society. And, for the most part, they agree, that gains have been minor.

Methodology

My work draws primarily from cultural studies, psychoanalysis, feminism, gender studies, and in some cases intersectionality. Theorists such as Stuart Hall, Raymond Williams, Kimberle Crenshaw, T.S. Eliot, Simone de Beauvoir, Sigmund Freud, and Jacques Lacan are particularly influential in my analysis.

Sigmund Freud, then Jaques Lacan attempted to define Woman through psychoanalysis. Freud's definition of Woman first mirrors his definition of Man. His Electra Complex is a less clear, more complicated version of the Oedipus Complex, and he eventually recognized the error in his theory, only to resolve that motherhood is the ultimate definition of Woman. Lacan expanded Freud with his theory of sexuation. Although still a binary system, instead of defining men as having a penis and women as lacking a penis, Lacan understood sexual difference based on how each sex (male and female, regardless of their bioligical sex) relates to a third term (Fink 105). In other words, masculinity and femininity are defined within the Symbolic Order and have nothing to do with biology. This revision of course opens the theoretical discourse to include gender and sex differently. Because of Lacan's theory, having a penis does not define a person as masculine. Further thinking within this framework also dispenses with the gender binary all together in favor of the more modern theory of gender along a spectrum. However, Lacan's work on gender as a binary produces a clear understanding of how patriarchal ideas disseminate through culture. The binary, in other words, creates the patriarchy because one side will be "othered" or feminized against a majority, and therefore a more powerful group or class. Whether by dividing by race, gender, class, or any other perceived difference, othering creates a binary. Since Western culture specifically was built by men, women were othered and feminized. Because of this, men become the master signifier, $S_{1,}$ who define the Other.

Man is defined by their relation to the phallic function and exists within a "bounded or finite" order as defined by the primal father. The focus of Man's desire is on object (a), or a fantasy. However, Woman is not defined by an outside, primal being. Everything about Woman is split because she is not completely in the phallic function, nor is she completely determined by

the signifier. Instead, she is split between the two. Because of this structure, Lacan deduces "there is no such thing as a sexual relationship between the sexes" (Fink 108).

Both Freud and Lacan focus on the father, however, Lacan's theory offers an explanation for Woman, although he admits because Woman is split, the term "Woman" does not exist in the same way the term "Man" exists. Instead, he adopts ~~Woman~~ as the appropriate term. This ~~Woman~~ cannot be defined, and this lack of definition leads to "feminine subjectivity" (Fink 117). Therefore, Man must define ~~Woman~~, but he only does so through fantasy since she is object (a) (Fink 117). Under the male gaze, coined by Slavoj Zizek, Man attempts to define ~~Woman~~. This gaze explains why the "feminine structure bears close affinities to the hysteric's discourse" (Fink 107) because the gaze is attempting to define the fantasy while the object (a), ~~Woman~~, cannot know what the male gaze is actually looking for. Led by the male gaze, the master signifier is compelled to define ~~Woman~~, resulting in feminine roles in society, such as the pure, doting housewife. Since Woman is a fantasy that the master signifier creates for the Other to fulfill, ~~Woman~~ looks to that signifier for definition, accepting herself as Other, and following suit according to the definition laid upon her. Therefore, purity and virginity are myths placed upon women to satisfy a definition created by patriarchal standards built out of ownership.

Simone de Beauvior continues the conversation when she explains how men relate to ~~Woman~~: "instead of admitting his ignorance, he recognizes the presence of a mystery exterior to himself: here is an excuse that flatters his laziness and vanity at the same time" (344). Again, because the male gaze is fixed on object (a) which he believes to be Woman, when he is confronted with ~~Woman~~ he exclaims that "Woman is a mystery!" which only perpetuates the need for his continued fantasy. However, according to de Beauvoir "The truth is that mystery is reciprocal … she is without knowledge of male eroticism" (345) harkening back to Lacan's view

that there is no sexual relationship between men and women. The sexes relate to an Other that is not each other relegating both to filling in the mystery with something else, because of course, ~~Woman~~ is only relating to the fantasy, that which she is "supposed" to be, and so she becomes it to satisfy the Other.

Where Lacan and Freud are satisfied with "Woman does not exist," de Beauvoir attempts to explain the lack of existence, the mystery surrounding ~~Woman~~. The object (a), once it is "captured" only disappears and reappears as something else, leaving the person approaching object (a) in a continued cycle of searching. Because ~~Woman~~ becomes object (a), and the mystery is within ~~Woman~~, Man is set on a never-ending cycle of trying to uncover the mystery by defining and redefining her. Meanwhile, "her mystery conceals nothing but emptiness" (347). However, Lacan concludes that it is the search for object (a) where Man's pleasure exists (Salecl 37).

Simone de Beauvior recognizes Man's attempt to define ~~Woman~~ and concludes that Woman can be defined by her historical context. She writes, "women's consciousness of herself is not defined by her sexuality alone: it reflects a situation that depends on society's economic structure, a structure that indicates the degree of technical evolution humanity has attained" (94). In other words, while Man can be defined only through his sexuality, by having a penis, Woman must be defined by her situation and her ability to assert her identity within her political and economic station at any given time in history. As history unfolds, so too does Woman's definition. Furthermore, Alenka Zupancic's discussion of Woman and femininity in terms of "the susceptibility to wear femininity as a mask" and the "masquerade" (55) will help to answer questions about the definition of womanhood. Within my work then, the question arises: if there is no Woman, how can there be a fallen woman? What is the fall from? Does she fall from

"womanhood," "femininity," or some other "woman-ness"? What is womanhood and how can one lose "it," if that is what happens, during a fall? And, while the definition changes over time, does the definition of fallen woman change along with it? Furthermore, Williams's discussion of alternative and oppositional lifestyles, when paired with de Beauvoir's discussion of women's submissive subjectivity and acceptance of hegemony offers some insight into Woman as a cultural symbol, as well as how women who fail to uphold the cultural symbol may be considered fallen.

Furthermore, because some of the texts I draw from are about Black women, Kimberle Crenshaw's work on intersectionality is important to understanding a Black woman's doubly disadvantaged position within Western culture. Especially focusing on violence against women of color, Crenshaw argues that "the experiences of women of color are frequently the product of intersecting patterns of racism and sexism, and … these experiences tend not to be represented within the discourses of either feminism or antiracism" (1243-1244). Therefore, analyzing a Black woman's experience through an either/or lens ignores part of her identity, and therefore misrepresents her.

Furthermore, "culture" has to be defined. While Marx attempted to determine what culture is and how it *becomes* through his base and superstructure; culture studies expands on and revises his ideas. Theorists such as Antonio Gramsci, Hall, and Williams are all influential in the field. Hall especially is important because of his ideas about residual and emergent culture. Williams explains "some experiences, meanings and values, which cannot be verified or cannot be expressed in terms of the dominant culture, are nevertheless lived and practised on the basis of the residue—cultural as well as social—of some previous social function" (1344). Hall also identifies

> "something decentered about the medium of culture, about language, textuality, and signification, which always escapes and evades the attempt to link it, directly and immediately, with other structures. And yet, at the same time, the shadow, the imprint, the trace of those other formations, of the intertextuality of texts in their institutional positions, of texts as sources of power, of textuality as a site of representation and resistance." (1713)

Within the study of culture, finding those residual aspects, these shadows from one generation to the next elucidates how culture transfers, morphs, and ultimately, *becomes*. Considering culture as the summation of human experience, looking to history and literature together can offer a means of analysis. In a way, flattening history and literature into a kind of kaleidoscope that shifts on top of each product and event creates intertextuality. While some scholars argue that literature should be studied within its historical context,[1] I argue that literature, as a part of history, has built a social psyche, and therefore can be used to understand eras outside of their original context as well. Borrowing T.S. Eliot's theory that "the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order" (885-886), allows for understanding culture production through layering experience atop of experience. In other words, culture becomes a study of literature and history as a dialectic formalism, both shaping and molding the other. Whereas "the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past" (Eliot 886), so too does literature and history relate to each other.

Theory concerning ideology and culture are important to understand why the fallen woman has never gone out of style and why each generation grapples with and fights against her. Williams writes:

> “hegemony supposed the existence of something which is truly total, which is not merely secondary or superstructural, like the weak sense of ideology, but which is lived at such a depth, which saturates the society to such an extent, and which as Gramsci put it, even constitutes the substance and limit of common sense for most people under its sway, that it corresponds to the reality of social experience very much more clearly than any notions derived from the formula of base and superstructure.” (1342)

The symbol of the fallen woman persists over time even with, and perhaps primarily because of, society’s attempts to eradicate her. Williams points out that Marx’s theory about culture may not fully represent social praxis. The fallen woman ideology saturates society to the point where it becomes common sense to ostracize women for their sexual encounters, voluntary or not.

CHAPTER 2

LUCY PATTERSON AND *THE BLUEST EYE*

In 1970, Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* challenged how society viewed black bodies with the Maginot Line (Marie), China, and Poland, "three whores [living] in the apartment above the Breedloves' storefront" (Morrison 50). Through Pecola Breedlove's innocent eyes, the reader glimpses these women in the most human way. Their first interaction where they ask where Pecola's socks were is mired in maternal affection and kindness, a far cry from how Victorians would characterize prostitutes in their novels; "they did not belong to those generations of prostitutes created in novels, with great generous hearts, dedicated, because of the horror or circumstance … Nor were they from that sensitive breed of young girl, gone wrong at the hands of fate … these women hated men, all men, without shame, apology, or discrimination" (Morrison 55-56). Their commodification likely spurred their hate because "[i]n order for a woman to be seen as a product, as existing for the sole purposes of having sex and making babies, that woman must be dehumanized" (Hunt 121-122). While the society ostracizes them, keeps them from going to church, ignores their existence, insists their children should stay away from them, when Pecola interacts with them, it is clear that these women are not in need of rescuing. They are just living their lives, telling jokes, and being human. When Claudia and her sister press Pecola about why she talks to them, Pecola insists, "Miss Marie is nice. They are all nice" (Morrison 106). Of course, Pecola's acceptance of them foreshadows her own fate when society shuns her as a result of her illegitimate, incestuous baby. Set against the Dick and Jane fairy tale at the beginning, Morrison's novel serves to point out clear injustices done to those

who are unable to fight for themselves, those invisible "unfortunates" that have no hope of agency within a majority white patriarchy. However, she does not use the three prostitutes to prove her point; instead, she uses a child who is sexually abused by her own father. The shades between the three women and Pecola is striking, but all characters would be considered fallen, and deserving of ostracism. However, Morrison's narrative works to connect issues of gender, race, and class to develop pathos for all who are underprivileged, and expose the hegemonic forces that work to keep them there.

Morrison, writing during second wave feminism, primarily led by white women, attempts to develop an intersection between sexism and racism. The disconnect between the women's movement and civil rights movement is a holdover from the 1920s feminist movement where white women pushed for the right to vote, leaving behind women of color. That changed in the 1960s for men, but women of color were still doubly disadvantaged by sexism and racism. In second wave feminism of the 1960s and 1970s, Pilar Rodriquez Martinez identifies white feminist activists as "hegemonic feminist." She admits that "hegemonic feminist theories are not the only perspectives that the women maintained at the time. However, hegemonic feminists contributed toward silencing" women of color (148).

When I think about 1970s feminism, I think of bra-burning and angry women with hairy legs. Of course, that perspective is more or less the patriarchal reaction to the movement. The 60s and 70s saw great strides toward equality for women; namely, the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and *Roe v. Wade* by 1973. And, while Simone de Beauvior's *The Second Sex* was published in the late 1950s, her ideas about the subordination of women certainly made their way through the academy and trickled into the cultural perspectives of what it meant to be a woman in the 60s and 70s. I can imagine her assertion that "[w]omen's actions have never been more than

symbolic agitation; they have won only what men have been willing to concede to them; they have taken nothing; they have received" (32) in the midst of a movement toward freedom was a punch in the gut. It still assumes Man is the power, and protests against the Miss America Pageant or passing laws for equal pay will not actually lead to equality. Feminist activists fought against "the ideal of feminine beauty that is destined to be possessed, her body has to provide the inert and passive qualities of an object" (de Beauvior 230). The woman's body, then is where her definition is built.

In 1973, when Lucy Patterson became the first black woman to be elected to the Dallas City Council, it was against the backdrop of so-called second wave feminism. Patterson's election helps to "question whether this state of affairs must be perpetuated" (de Beauvior 37). Her voice on the City Council allowed women to be heard, and more importantly, Black women to be heard in the halls of government. During her eight years serving on the Dallas City Council, she fought for those who were powerless to fight for themselves including women, children, and those strapped with poverty; those who may find themselves in situations like Pecola, or even Marie, Poland, or China. Looking to America's past, Patterson believed that we lived in "a system which stands as a painful reminder of the capacity of society to remain complacent in the midst of injustice. The society which today has a callous indifference to the human suffering which exists to this very day" ("Lucy Patterson Papers" Box 1, Folder 11). A callousness that Claudia references at the end of *The Bluest Eye* when she reflects, "This soil is bad for certain kinds of flowers … and when the land kills of its own volition, we acquiesce and say the victim had no right to live" (Morrison 206) and that Trollope recognized when he wrote a fallen woman's "destruction is part of the cleansing of the society which produced them" (Watt 20). By February 1975, Patterson came face to face with human suffering when she was chosen

to serve on a trial board for the Dallas Police Department after ten Black women submitted affidavits alleging officers took naked pictures of them during booking. The case sparked a need to challenge the callousness in the face of human suffering and attempted to deliver justice instead of destroying the fallen victims.

On August 15, 1974, Sandra Jo Randle and Betty Summage were arrested for prostitution. They were taken to the police station for booking. While there, they were instructed to show their breasts for a picture. By August 20, Randle had made a statement to the police "alleg[ing] that after her arrest on 8/15/74, she was forced to submit to having a photograph made of her nude breasts by an officer named Williams." A day after the complaint, Internal Affairs opened an investigation. It did not take long for more evidence to be found, though. Before lunch on August 21, investigating officers found "two photographs (semi-nude) of Vicki Sue Hodges, one semi-nude picture of Shirley Bowl, and one semi-nude picture of Carolyn Seay, in Officer W. L. Holbrook's locker" ("Lucy Patterson Papers" Box 2, Folder 17).

The women in the photographs were all women involved in sex work in Dallas. They were all Black.[2] And they were young, Bowl was 21, and Hodges and Seay were 18. Not much else is known about the women other than their arrest reports and the statements they offered. Although Randle and Summage were the first to complain about Holbrook, Carolyn Seay's affidavit is the only preserved statement. By her own hand, Seay described her encounter with Holbrook. Arrested on August 13, she explained that after she got in the police car, one of the officers "told [her] to go somewhere with them and be nice to them and they would not take [her] to jail." Understanding that "be nice" meant offering sexual favors to them, she refused the proposition. During booking, she claimed they "took two pictures of [her] with [her] clothes on and [she] was holding up some numbers," and then the officer "took a picture of [her] breasts"

because "he told [her] if [she] did not let him take this picture he would charge [her] with theft and prostitution both" ("Lucy Patterson Papers" Box 2, Folder 17).

Seay's statement was not taken until August 22; presumably the IA investigators tracked her down after finding her photograph in Officer Holbrook's locker. Considering the intervening nine days, from when the photograph was taken and her statement, I assume Seay had no intention of making a statement against Holbrook. Her reasons can of course never be known. Possibly, she could have been afraid of retribution against her since the police officers have power over her freedom. In *The Bluest Eye*, Pecola never reveals the abuse she endures at the hands of her father. Where Morrison offered a fictional account, others have revealed their inability to come forward. In Harriet Jacobs' *Incident in the Life of a Slave Girl*, she recounts her lived experiences as a Black woman trapped in a patriarchal structure where her abuser could repeatedly attack her with impunity. Writing about Jacobs' *Incidents*, Sharon Block highlights the master narrative established after a non-consensual sexual relation. She argues, "[B]y not telling anyone about her master's sexual assault, a woman increased the likelihood that their sexual relationship would not appear to be rape" (149). In Jacobs' narrative, she begs the reader not to judge her for her behavior because "[y]ou never knew what it is to be a slave; to be entirely unprotected by law or custom; to have the laws reduce you to the condition of a chattel, entirely subject to the will of another" (61-62). Although not a slave, a relationship between a prostitute and an officer of the law certainly bears parallels that cannot be ignored. Seay's situation was much like Jacobs' where she must "exhaust [her] engenuity in avoiding snares" (Jacobs 62). Told that she would face more charges if she failed to comply, Seay was left with no other recourse than to lift her shirt, do what he said, and hope he let her go. Unfortunately, her compliance may be misconstrued as consent. However, just as it is an "absolutely ludicrous

notion that enslaved women and girls were capable of consenting to sexual relationships with their masters within the institution of slavery" (Kleppinger 49), it is equally ludicrous to believe that Seay's compliance was consent given the power dynamic between her and the officers.

However, another explanation of Seay's silence is shame caused by the incident. Beverly Haviland takes a psychoanalytic approach, arguing

> "An intersubjective model proposes that shame is experienced when the subject feels that her significant object is not responding adequately to her needs. The feeling is one of shame rather than blame because, rather than find fault with the powerful caretaker, the subject finds fault with herself. It must be she who is flawed, who has failed in some way, who is inadequate to meet the desires of her object. She sees herself as she imagines herself to be seen by the significant other, and the refracted image of herself that she sees is of a defective being." (427)

When arrested, Seay was under the care of Holbrook and the other officers. However, she also carried the stigma of being a prostitute. Also, considering race, she was a Black woman facing a group of white men. In more than one way, she can view herself as "flawed" by society's standards. A Black woman prostitute has little power in the situation she found herself in, and instead of finding fault in those with the power, she turned inward, taking the shame on herself for being "flawed," "defective," and therefore deserving of the treatment she incurred.

The officers' treatment of the women should not be surprising. Prostitution has always been a profession that is met with either fascination or disgust. How can someone sell their body? For the majority of "proper" society, the thought was unfathomable. It was surely related to something terrible that happened in the woman's life to bring them so low. Much of the taboo rises from the binary of public and private spheres. Victorians especially were interested in the

division of the public and private, and the spheres laid the groundwork for gender roles still accepted today. The public sphere was masculine and chaotic. A man would leave his haven to face the world; meanwhile, his wife, squarely centered within the web of domesticity, would care for the home, the symbol of their private lives. Sex should only happen within their inner sanctum. That was the picture of purity and sanctity, and the woman was the queen of it all. However, women who allowed sex outside of this private sphere, prostitutes, came to be known as "public women." In fact, "prostitution speaks to the transgression of boundaries, where matter is out of place, where the inside is placed outside and the 'privates' exposed" (Day 1). The split between the public and private also gives rise to the split self that de Beauvoir discusses when defining the "real woman." She explains, "the 'real woman' is one who accepts herself as Other. The duplicitous attitude of men today creates a painful split for women; they accept, for the most part, that woman be a peer, an equal; and yet they continue to oblige her to remain the inessential" (350). Of course, the split subject harkens back to Lacan's theory of the ~~Woman~~ and the hysteric's discourse. In this case, Holbrook viewed Seay, and the others, as public women, available for consumption, and no longer human: "In effect, prostitutes are not fully human because they lack both a legitimate private and public self" (Day 41). Holbrook's comment about her "good body" set her as his fantasy, and in turn, she behaved in a way to satisfy his fantasy. Within the hysteric's discourse, the barred subject looks toward the signifier for definition, asking in a sense "Who am I?" However, the answer produced is never satisfactory, because it only points back to the barred subject. Essentially the "answer" is "you are you." Without a clear answer, the barred subject is left in a state of "hysteria" where she is on a "quest to which the receiver of the hysterical subject's message is summoned to respond by providing a master signifier, S_1, in the form of a secure meaning that will overcome anxiety, meaninglessness, and

shame and give a sense of stable, meaningful respectable identity" (Bracher, et.al. 123). Of course, Holbrook and the other officers were not the ideal master signifiers because they see Seay "as both a social person and carnal prey" (de Beauvoir 350-351) and only set the women they victimized further into their discourse by defining them as fallen women instead of human women. Patterson understood this dehumanizing effect that is so ubiquitous in American History. During a speech, Patterson reminded her audience of a time when "the Negro was a thing, a chattel whose body belonged to his white master to be sold or kept at will, … less than human" ("Lucy Patterson Papers" Box 1, Folder 11). Holbrook commented on Seay's "good body" defining her as an object. Because Seay was a prostitute she lost "at least some of the attributes of a person" (Day 2) making it easier for Holbrook to exploit her. Furthermore, he cited a culture within the vice squad that "left the impression there was nothing wrong with the practice." He noted "I certainly would not have done it if I had known that it could have meant suspension" (Tatum 1). Holbrook's regret was only for his own well-being, never because he treated another person like an object. Even after being caught and facing consequences, his view of Seay and his other victims remained the same.

Officer Holbrook offered a defense despite the mounting evidence against him. On August 21, Holbrook responded to the complaints made by Randle and Summage. In his three page statement, he referenced the women's claim that an officer told them there was "a new state law which requires the Police Department to maintain a 'titty file.'" His defense was that he had never heard of a "titty file." As for the four photographs found in his locker, he admitted to having all of the photos along with knowing they were there. However, he stipulated that he only took the photo of Seay. He described that the "photo shows Carolyn Louise Seay standing against the wall in the Vice Control office with her sweater pulled up exposing her breasts. In the

picture this individual has a broad smile on her face." He claimed he "commented something to the effect about her having a good body. She stood against the wall and exposed her breasts to [him]." Then, something of particular importance, Holdbrook wrote that he "asked if she minded if [he] took a picture of her." Holbrook insisted he had consent to take her photograph. He said "she agreed." As for the other pictures, he claimed to have found them in the trash can and put them in his locker ("Lucy Patterson Papers" Box 2, Folder 17).

Holbrook's mention of Seay's "broad smile" and that "she agreed" to the photo taken of her are a common defense offered by those charged with sexual assault or harassment. As already mentioned, consent in this situation is preposterous because of the power dynamic between the two parties. According to Seay's statement, she feared going to jail. Furthermore, this was the second proposition during the arrest, and showing her breasts was possibly the lesser of two evils: either "be nice" to the officers in the form of sexual favors, or show her breasts for a picture. Even if Holbrook did ask for consent to take the picture, it would not be possible for Seay to offer it.

Like Seay's position in this situation of the hysteric, Holbrook's position is that of the master's discourse. As a police officer, his job is to seek out the truth, knowledge, S_2, however, in his search, he must repress his split self. While the hysteric identifies as a part of a whole, the master "actually believes himself to be whole, undivided, self-identical" (Bracher 121). Furthermore, within his focused search for knowledge within the Symbolic Order, "the receiver produces *a*, the *plus-de-jouir*—that is the suppressed excess of enjoyment, no longer to be enjoyed, for which there is no place in the system of knowledge or belief (S_2) enacted by the receiver in response to the master's S_1. It is this *a*, this *plus-de-jouir*, that carries the power of resistance and revolution" (Bracher 120-121). It is not difficult to identify Holbrook's *plus-de-*

jouir. Also called *jouissance*, it is often referred to as the pleasure of seeking. Holbrook's collection of nude photographs indicates his pleasure of seeking. While he claimed Seay gave him consent and that there was a culture in the vice squad that made him believe he was not doing anything wrong, it is safe to assume the thrill of not getting caught kept him going.

In all cases, the treatment of the women arrested each time was likely the result of their perceived fallenness. Holbrook, a white married man with a child, was presumably a well respected member of his community. The women's position in society as below the standard of a "respectable woman" made them a target of sexual advances, and it is likely Holbrook would not do the same to someone he considered pure by society's standards. Ironically though, their fall would give them power against the officers.

After the Internal Affairs investigation, Chief Byrd suspended Officer Holbrook on August 23, 1974. By October 14, Holbrook appealed and a Civilian Trial Board was created to review the suspension. The members chosen for the trial board were Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Tim Russell, Mrs. John F. Lancione, and newly elected Lucy Patterson. The William Holbrook Hearings convened on February 19, 1975. The only preserved record of the trial board proceedings exists through the scant notes Patterson wrote on the document she received during the hearing. First, the board had to review if Holbrook violated the Dallas Police Department's Code of Conduct. Patterson highlighted some passages of note.

> "Each employee shall so regulate his or her personal affairs so that no act or conduct on his or her part, if brought to the attention of the public, could result in unfavorable criticism of any such officer or civilian employee or the Police Department, or be involved personally in disturbance or police incidents to their discredit." ("Lucy Patterson Papers" Box 2, Folder 17)

Patterson did not write anything in the margin, but given the coverage in some of the local newspapers that she had in her papers, it showed that she knew this incident was not taken well in the public eye. One article made clear that "affidavits were received from 10 women. In addition to alleging that the officers forced them to pose for the nude pictures, the affidavits also claimed that vice investigators propositioned them and had beer and liquor in squad cars" (Ewell 1). The pictures were damaging enough, but as more of the story came out in the papers and through the investigation, it was clear that Holbrook and his fellow officers were behaving in a way to draw "unfavorable criticism."

A second highlight indicates, "No employee, whether on duty or off duty, shall ridicule, mock, deride, taunt, banter, or belittle any person; not willfully embarrass, humiliate or shame any person, nor do anything that might incite any person to violence." In the margin, Patterson wrote, "Conversation with women, taking of pictures of woman Took picture — not with intent to shame" ("Lucy Patterson Papers" Box 2, Folder 17). It is likely she added this note during testimony in the hearing. Whether this is her conclusion or what the person said while testifying is unknown. From my perspective many years after the incident, it is difficult to imagine the photos taken were not humiliating.

Patterson also highlighted "All employees shall protect the rights of any prisoner held in custody." Again, in the margin, she made a note: "Not knowingly" ("Lucy Patterson Papers" Box 2, Folder 17). This note is rather confusing for the same reason the one before. It is not clear if these are her ideas or if they are part of the defense. But this note is confusing for another reason. Was Holbrook *unknowingly* violating the rights of those in custody? Was he unaware that taking photographs of their naked breasts was a violation of their right to privacy? Of course, given that the incident in question happened in 1974, these were prostitutes, and his

perception was that they offered him consent, may help to explain how he could believe he unknowingly violated their rights. But is that justification for his actions?

Finally, Patterson highlights, “No employee shall purchase or accept as a gift, any article whatsoever from any person under arrest, or police detention” (“Lucy Patterson Papers” Box 2, Folder 17). This highlight most likely relates to the proposition of sex for lesser sentences. While sex is not an “article,” it is a commodity offered in exchange for something else. Patterson makes no notes in the margin related to this violation. However, the highlight indicates the idea that the women’s bodies were objects available for purchase.

Before Holbrook’s hearing, another officer who was fired as a result of the photograph scandal was reinstated. Certainly, that offered hope to Holbrook that he might face the same fate. On February 21, the trial board upheld his suspension and Holbrook would not be rejoining his officers on the force. An article explained that “Carney (the officer reinstated) had joined the vice squad only a short time before the incident … Holbrook’s case [was] more serious” because an “investigator from the Internal Affairs Department testifies that a raid on Holbrook’s personal locker disclosed a pouch of marijuana and more than 100 pornographic photographs” (Tatum 1). While the marajuana was mentioned in the IA report, the one hundred photographs seems like hyperbole considering the report mentioned exactly four photographs were pulled from Holbrook’s locker. The newspaper does mention the four photographs, but there is no mention anywhere in the investigative reports that more than that were found. Either way, the case was clear, Holbrook could not use the defense of ignorance or innocence. He had participated enough to show a pattern of behavior that did not represent the Dallas Police Department well and he was dismissed.

Both Pecola Breedlove and Harriet Jacobs were victims of their circumstances, although they existed within very different places. Jacobs, a non-fiction account of the injustices faced under the bars of slavery, was defenseless, and therefore, feared her inability to fight back would define her as complicit in her fallenness. Pecola, a fictional account of a girl who was abused at the hands of her father, found herself within a similar situation. One where she had no help, no lifeline away from her abuser, which led her to insanity. Without anyone to upset the power dynamic, the victims' only recourse was to survive, unfortunately showing a common thread that survived from era to era in literature and history. However, Patterson hoped to disrupt that pattern for Seay and the other victims. Despite an environment where women of color were doubly disadvantaged, the women were able, through the trial board and Lucy Patterson, to receive some justice without also enduring public humiliation for their own "crimes." All of the newspaper articles about the incident focused on the men, none mentioned the women by name, and there was no campaign to discredit the women's stories. To know more about what happened to the women, more research outside of the archive would be required. Perhaps, they were able to find some agency within the patriarchal system through writing their affidavits and telling their stories to others who could act in their place against those who hurt them. Maybe that was enough.

CHAPTER 3

LIMITS OF THE THIRD WAVE

In the Victorian era, the difference between a man and a woman was his ability to choose, choose his job, choose his wife, choose whether to have children, choose his clothes. The power of choice has defined feminist movements since Seneca Falls. The right to choose of course took center stage in *Roe v. Wade*, and by the the early 1990s, the feminist discussion grappled with what "choice" actually meant. Choice, of course, is a long-standing topic within the discussion of prositution. As already mentioned, Sanger identified "inclination" as being the top reason for women to become prostitutes. While that idea fizzled over time, choice is something that comes up in later discussions of prostitution. The broadening discussion included such questions as how a woman could declare herself a feminist and still participate in activities that perpetuated the patriarchy, like participating in the stereotype of the housewife or posing for *Playboy*. However, "[b]ecause third-wave feminism insists that each woman must decide for herself how to negotiate the often contradictory desires for both gender equality and sexual liberation, it sometimes seems to uncritically endorse behaviors that appear problematic" (Snyder-Hall 255). In terms of feminism, the "third-wave" attempted to allow all women all choices. In that effort, it offers women true freedom to decide how they wanted to portray their femininity. After all, the power to choose is still power.

Anita Hill and *Jane Eyre*

Certainly ahead of her time, Charlotte Bronte portrays a woman's ability to determine one's self in her novel *Jane Eyre*. Published in 1847, it may seem that *Jane Eyre* is well outside

the bounds of the discussion happening 150 years later. However, I argue that Jane's agency in the face of the compounding effect of the Victorian patriarchy offers a framework through which to view third-wave feminism.

On the surface, *Jane Eyre* is a love story. However, under the surface lies a story of a falling woman who has to make a choice about her "identity and role in the world" (Abrams 193). Of course, in Victorian England, there is not a lot of searching that needs to be done for a woman to discover her identity. For the most part, she should look to the man in her life—father, brother, husband—and he will tell her exactly who she is. However, Jane's story offers another option: that of self-actualization. As Jane traverses the path to maturity through her single-minded quest for love and liberty, she is faced with the choice to fall, or not, and in doing so, offers falling women a framework through which they can choose their identity over the powers of the patriarchy that are acted upon them.

Early on in their relationship, Rochester and Jane, although members of different classes, recognize and appreciate their equality of mind. They begin to form a private world that only they inhabit. However, even after their engagement, Jane chooses to continue to receive her thirty pounds per annum, which helps her establish her identity outside of Rochester. Her reasoning exposes her understanding that she cannot be absorbed by anyone. After learning of Rochester's wife and his attempt to lead Jane to a fall, she declares, "*I* care for myself. The more solitary, the more friendless, the more unsustained I am, the more I will respect myself" (Bronte 270). Her declaration in the face of Rochester's desire to lead her to a fall establishes her feminist identity, her ability and insistence to choose. Her rejection of Rochester is a rejection of the patriarchy because Jane defines herself differently than society would. Jane, an orphan with no status, who is offered a life of opulence even as a fallen woman, would be less marginalized if

she accepts Rochester's proposition. She would at least have the illusion of power through Rochester's position. It is even possible that society would not shun her because of Rochester's power. While "[w]orldy love and passion become dangerous temptations for the falling woman, especially in conjunction with the dream of rank and wealth," that power is not enough to bring Jane down, and she rejects him and leaves Thornfield because "[a] fallen woman by any other name, whether she wears 'brilliant amethyst' or 'sober black,' remains ruined" (Kalikoff 361, 364).

However, Jane's story cannot end there. Succumbing to her mortification because of "her conflict and self-hatred, Jane almost dies of starvation" (Kalikoff 365). Rescued by St. John Rivers and his two sisters, she must come to terms with her temptation of the fall through her time at Marsh End. Again, Jane struggles against St. John's patriarchal position. She "daily wishes to please him: but to do so, [she] felt daily more and more that [she] must disown half [her] nature, stifle half [her] faculties, wrest [her] tastes from their original bent, force [herself] to the adoption of pursuits for which [she] had no natural vocation" (Bronte 339). Where Rochester brought her to a possible fall, St. John hopes to redefine her in his image of Victorian femininity. Either way, Jane loses her selfhood in the process. Ultimately, when St. John informs her of his intentions to marry her "not for my pleasure, but for my Sovereign's service" (343), she says, "No: such a martyrdom would be monstrous. I will never undergo it [the marriage]. As his sister, I might accompany him—not as his wife" (344). Again, she leverages her agency against the patriarchal system. Jane's choice to leave Rochester and then eventually return to marry him are both feminist according to third wave ideas. Eventually, in true Victorian fashion, Jane comes into property and is now a potential equal to Rochester, in class and mind. She returns to discover his wife died in a fire and they are able to marry, leaving her un-fallen and pure. A true

happy ending. If only all stories would end like this. No matter the ending, Jane's agency offers another view of how women face a fall.

A woman's choices took center stage in October of 1991 when the world watched as Anita Hill sat in front of the Senate Judiciary Committee composed of fourteen white men with allegations of sexual harassment against President Bush's Supreme Court Justice nominee, Judge Clarence Thomas. The nature of the allegations divided the country in support and opposition to the law professor from Oklahoma. Hill presented herself and her story in a way that made it difficult not to believe her. However, the result of her testimony made a lasting mark on how men and women thought of sexual harassment. Hill's testimony of Thomas's alleged propositions to her and explicit discussions of pornography set her as a woman on the precipice of a fall. Thomas, her boss at both the Department of Education and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), held power over her career, as she was a twenty-five year old Black attorney looking to make her way in the world. Already at a disadvantage because of her race and gender, she knew she would have an uphill battle to establish herself in the male-dominated world of law and government.

While Hill's story is not a Victorian novel, she does have many qualities and parallels with Jane Eyre that are note-worthy. Both came from meager backgrounds, Jane, a penniless orphan who relied on distant relatives to survive, and Hill, a poor farmer's daughter who grew up "several miles outside of the inconspicuous town of Morris, whose population had shrunk to barely a thousand as Oklahoma's oil lost its premier place on the national market and Oklahoma agriculture dwindled" (Phelps and Winternitz 248). Of course, while Jane exclaimed to her guardian at Lowood, "I do not love you [her guardian]: I dislike you the worst of anybody in the world except John Reed" (Bronte 30), Hill was the youngest of thirteen children and "[got] the

attention of all the older ones" according to her mother (Phelps and Winternitz 249). There is no question that Hill had a loving, supportive home as she grew to eventually become the valedictorian of her class (250), graduate with honors from Oklahoma State University (253), and go to Yale Law (254). Hill was certainly in a position to enter society on the same level as her male compatriots, despite her humble beginnings.

Furthermore, Hill is a far cry from Carolyn Seay and the other women involved in the Holbrook hearings. However, it is important to note that Hill's position against a powerful, patriarchal structure mirrored the trial board, with one significant difference. Whereas Lucy Patterson and the trial board were an unbiased third party deliberating whether Holbrook's suspension was justified, Hill faced a politically charged spectacle where biases were the driving force of the questioning, despite Senator Joe Biden's (D-Pennsylvania) admonition that

> "[t]his is a fact finding hearing, and our purpose is to help our colleagues in the U.S. Senate determine whether Judge Thomas should be confirmed to the Supreme Court. We are not here, or atleast I am not here to be an advocate for one side or the other with respect to the specific allegations which we will review, and it is my hope and belief that my colleagues here today share that view." ("Thomas Second Hearing Day 1, Part 1" 6:59)

While victims of sexual harassment and assult benefit from those who come with an unbiased opinion, Hill would not have a Lucy Patterson, as much as Sen. Biden wanted to be that for her. Instead, Hill's allegations were met with animosity, only compounding the shame of coming forward.

When she began working for Thomas, it was as his assistant at the Office of Civil Rights within the Department of Education. While working for Thomas, the parallel between Jane and

Rochester and Hill and Thomas is most striking. Of course, while Jane fits within a "woman's role" as a governess living within Thornfield, both women are subject to their bosses' whims in any given moment. Hill explained, "[Thomas] had repeatedly called her into his office, ostensibly on work-related matters, only to start talking about sex" and "[h]e kept asking her to go out with him, with obvious implications" (Phelps and Winternitz 217). These instances were repeated, and turned down a number times, according to Hill. Each proposition was another chance for Hill to fall. But she resisted and eventually fled, going back to Oklahoma to pursue life as a professor instead of her dream job working as a lawyer in Washington. Like Jane, she leaves her potential perfect life in order to avoid a fall. However, also like Jane, her story does not end there; and unfortunately, for Hill, she does not get the happy ending that Bronte gave to Jane after her humiliation and mortification of confession.

Ten years after Hill's ordeal, Judge Clarence Thomas was nominated for the Supreme Court. However, Hill did not rush to tell her story. In fact, it took months before anyone knew anything of the allegations, and they only surfaced because of a tenacious reporter who would not let the story go. Unlike Jane, Hill did not make a declaration of self to seek justice against her tormentor. At least, not at first. And her choice to stay silent was the first of many used as ammunition to discredit her. Her time facing the senators on the Judiciary Committee parallels an almost-fallen woman's requirement to undergo "a public rite of humiliation in order to attain repentance, to return to the world free of sin" (Kalikoff 364). Within that rite is a relentless questioning of Hill's choices, which would only help to inflame the third-wave feminist's call of the right to choose, no matter how confusing the choice might be to others.

The first aspect of Hill's rite of humiliation was through the press. After all, her story was brought to light because of a reporter, not because she wanted it to come to light. Surprisingly,

there were three headlines offering some kind of support for Hill calling her a “private person,” (“The Thomas Nomination”) explaining that “sexual harassment is pervasive” (Kolbert), and that Hill “passed a lie detector test” (Healy) and only two headlines that questioned her credibility posing a “trail of questions,” and saying her story was “too contrived” (Davidson) to be true.[3] While certainly not a complete view, it seems Hill’s rite of humiliation played out within the walls of the Senate, not through the media.

During the hearings, Senator Arlen Specter (R-Pennsylvania) took the helm in questioning Hill. The issue that bothered the entire committee, and especially Sen. Specter, more than anything was Hill’s behavior during and after the alleged sexual harassment. First was Sen. Spector’s insistence that if the allegations were true that any other person—he likely assumes *male* person—in the situation would have taken contemporaneous notes to use later. He outlined her knowledge as a lawyer and how crucial and in some cases damning contemporaneous notes can be when brought to a court of law, then he asked, “Why didn’t you take notes if you knew it would be helpful later?” (“Thomas Second Hearing Day 1, Part 3” 38:55). Others also mention how after the alleged harassment Hill offered to drive Thomas to the airport, (51:06) called him ten to eleven times in the span of seven years, (2:22:30) and followed him to the EEOC when he moved from the Department of Education (2:21:38). Later, Senator Hank Brown (R-Colorado) explained that since there was no corroborating evidence, no proof of the allegations, the only evidence the committee could analyze was Hill’s and Thomas’s behavior during that time period. Since neither of them treated each other differently, the harassment could not have happened (“Thomas Second Hearing Day 2, Part 3” 45:24). For Hill, she explained her behavior as one not atypical of a victim of sexual harassment. In fact, it is the “nature of sexual harassment” that victims “find it diffucult to come forward” (“Thomas Second Hearing Day 1, Part 3” 1:01:09).

Her decisions in hindsight may not have been within the best judgement, but she did what she thought was right at the time. Her explanation, although frustrating and unsatisfying is one that women, and especially Black women as I will address later, might identify with. Also, we must consider in the 90s when laws against sexual harassment were in their infancy and there were policitians, including President Bush, opposing such measures that could protect women.

During the hearing, the senators attempted to define Hill in different ways through a patriarchal lens. Sen. Specter's main argument against Hill's testimony centered around a *USA Today* article from October 9 that reported, "Anita Hill was told by Senate staffers her signed affadavit alledging sexual harassment by Clarence Thomas would be the instrument that 'quietly and behind the scenes' forces him to withdraw his name" ("Thomas Second Hearing Day 1, Part 2" 1:31:05). This assertion sent Sen. Specter on a journey to discredit and undermine her story through the rest of the hearings by defining her as a pawn of left-wing lobbyists. Picking up the definition of political pawn, Senator Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) made no qualms about his belief that several political groups banded together to block the confirmation. He asked Thomas if "political philosophy is part of the problem." Thomas did not directly confirm those suspicions that this was the case, but Senator Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) went on to make the case that the answer was indeed the affirmative. He explained while quoting from a *Post* article that "Kate Michelman of the National Abortion Rights Action League, Nan Aaron of the Alliance for Justice, and others began holding almost daily strategy sessions, at first restricting their probes to exposing what they viewed as his track record as a rigid Reagan administration ideologue" and that "the increasingly symbiotic relationship between committee staffers, liberal interest groups and the news media" prove that Hill's allegations were politically motivated ("Thomas Second Heading Day 2, Part 3" 15:27).

Much later in the hearings, Senator Strom Thumond (R-South Carolina) outlines five possible motivations for Hill's testimony, each offering a different perspective of her definition: she was looked over for a promotion she thought she earned, she suffered romantic rejection from Thomas, she disagreed with Thomas's political philosophy, she fantasized the entire ordeal, or she was simply unstable ("Thomas Second Hearing Day 2, Part 2" 45:07).

Sen. Thurmond first attempted to define Hill as a woman scorned either professionally or romantically. This definition paints her as desperate and pitiful, trailing after a powerful man in hopes of being accepted. Ella Bell argues the "scorned woman" is a stereotype laid upon women, especially those of color who "break the code of silence" to become "coconspirators of White men." This stereotype, established from the legacy of slavery, silences Black women from speaking out against either White or Black attackers. She cogently argues that "Black women knew they could never directly cry out about the grave sexual injustices inhumanly forced on them by the White male slave masters" and "Black slave women also knew that speaking out about unwanted sexual advances imposed on them by Black male slaves would be in vain … thereby enforcing a code of silence among the woman about the sexual abuse they suffered" (155). In fact, "a group of black women … had arrived at Hill's testimony wearing T-shirts to support Judge Thomas. While Hill had been testifying, anti-racist activities supporting Thomas has advanced the myth that Hill simply misunderstood 'ordinary courting' rituals between black men and women" (Heck 105). Facing white senators in the hearing and the weight of black anti-racist activities in public, Hill's position at the nexus of racism and sexism made telling her story that much more difficult. Kimberle Crenshaw explains, "Although racism and sexism readily intersect in the lives of real people, they seldom do in feminist and antiracist practices. And so, when the practices expound identity as woman or person of color as an either/or proposition,

they relegate the identity of women of color to a location that resists telling" (1242). While this helps to explain Hill's ten year silence, it also elucidates how Sen. Thurmond, a product of white male mastery, would overlay Hill's testimony with stereotypes of either woman or person of color, without understanding the intersectionality of her position.

Sen. Thurmond's second option was to paint her as a crazy hysteric that somehow fantasized the entire ordeal. This theory was spurred on when Sen. Specter brought in an affidavit from John Doggett, a man she had gone to law school with and knew while in Washington, that eventually led to Doggett's testimony in front of the Senate Judiciary Committee. The affidavit caused much debate about whether to use it without the committee first questioning Doggett himself. Sen. Specter wanted to ask questions based on the affidavit alone. However, Senator Howard Metzenbaum (D-Ohio) interjected, "[B]y accepting this affidavit and inquiring of the witness in connection with it that you open up a little Pandora's box because we can get all sorts of sworn statements, I see a number that have been handed to me a little bit ago, and it seems that there is no end." Senator Joe Biden (D-Delaware) agreed that "the best way to find out the truth is for everybody on this committee to have ample opportunity to review whatever is going to be introduced in evidence," and Senator Leahy (D-Vermont) echoed "I would find it very difficult to do any kind of a follow up on this without having been able to at least delve into a statement of somebody who is not going to be a witness, but used almost as though they had been" ("Thomas Second Day Hearing Day 1 Part 3" 1:35:19). Ultimately, the committee left it up to Hill about whether she would accept questions about Dogget's affidavit. She agreed after having some time to review the affidavit, but eventually the committee brought in Dogget himself to cross-examine him about his story. He claimed that Hill entertained a fantasy that he was interested in her and accosted him at a party after many months of no contact,

accusing him of leading her on and then ignoring her. He concluded that "Ms. Hill's fantasies about my sexual interest in her were an indication of the fact that she was having a problem with 'being rejected' by men she was attracted to" ("Thomas Second Hearing Day 3, Part 5" 53:05). Although Hill denied having any kind of fantasy about Doggett, or really even knowing him well, Doggett's testimony helped to bolster the theory that Hill was not credible because she was crazy, a common stereotype about women that cause confusion in men. If a man cannot understand a woman's actions and choices, then reducing them to mysterious hysterics that are beyond explanation makes women's behavior easier to accept and, ultimately, dismiss. After hearing the testimony, Biden pointed out that it was possible that he did lead her on considering Doggett made dinner plans and never returned her call after they fell through. In fact, during the questioning, Biden was worked up to the point of frustration at Dogget's conclusion about Hill. He eventually concluded Dogget took "a true leap of faith or ego, one of the two" (1:09:53) to make such an assertion.

No matter the definition used to help the senators understand Hill, one option they would not consider is that she was a victim. She could possibly be telling the truth. Although the country was unable to see the first moment the senators, especially on the Republican side, knew about the allegations, it was clear that they formed their case quickly against her in order to help Thomas defend against them. In hindsight, it does not matter if Hill's allegations were true for us to be able to see how women could be treated after an allegation of sexual harassment or assault, especially a woman of color against a man of color. The first line of defense was to attack her credibility and character to the point where they even questioned her sanity. This is not an isolated case. In fact, "Research also shows that men, more than women, blame women for being harassed and endorse other negative views about female victims that help limit the culpability of

male perpetrators" (Bongiorno 11). Whether Thomas was guilty of the allegations or not did not change the public's perception of how the senators attacked Hill during and after her testimony. Although they most likely believed themselves to be justified because they believed her to be a pawn in a much greater system designed to block the nominee, the ramifications of their treatment of her are still felt today when it comes to whether a victim of sexual harassment deems it "safe" to come forward. In fact, "fear of being blamed also contributes to very low rates of reporting" (Bongiorno 12).

In the confines of a Victorian novel, "through public humiliation—confession and illness, beggary and scorn—Jane find[s] redemption;" *Jane Eyre* "shows the morally besieged character as [a woman] of strong will, rather than [a] victim of ambition" (Kalikoff 365). Hill, too, chose a road not paved by ambition, but of redemption by rejecting Thomas, giving women around the United States permission to stand against the patriarchal acceptance of sexual harassment. The legacy of Hill's testimony helped to bring about ideas about intersectionality within the discourse of feminism, marking a contrast from the second wave that fought primarily for white women, toward the third wave that began to include *all* women, and purportedly, *all* possible choices. However, like most theories, there are limits. And those limits would be tested seven years later.

Monica Lewinsky and "The Lady of Shalott"

In part I of Alfred Tennyson's "The Lady of Shalott," the speaker imbues a pastoral scene, with roses, peaceful farm workers, fields of blooming flowers and even before we see The Lady of Shalott, we "Hear a song that echoes cheerly / From the river winding clearly" (30-31). However, all is not what it seems, because "A curse is on her, if she stay / To look down to Camelot" (40-41). "Thro' a mirror clear / That hangs before her all the year, / Shadows of the world appear" (46-48) like Plato's "Allegory of the Cave," the lady watches as the citizens of

Camelot live their lives. But that mirror would lead to her fall. The bucolic scene soon shatters when the Lady of Shalott can no longer be content with viewing the world through her mirror that hangs above her while she weaves. By the end of part II, her discontent begins to surface. She complains, “I am half sick of shadows” (71). Then, when “[Sir Lancelot] rode between the barley-sheaves [and] He flash’d into the crystal mirror” singing “Tirra lirra” (74, 106-107), the lady “left the web, she left the loom / She made three paces thro' the room [and] look'd down to Camelot” (109-110, 113). As the story goes, she embarks on a journey to Camelot resulting in her death before she ever arrives.

Tennyson’s “The Lady of Shalott” takes on new meaning with each new reader. Kerry McSweeney refers to this as an “indefinitiveness of meaning.” She argues that “parabolic poems encourage interpretive activity, they do not invite the one-to-one assignment of conceptual meanings to signifiers. Indeed, their distinguishing feature is that they allow for a plurality of interpretive possibilities” (37). She elaborates that scholars have interpreted “The Lady of Shalott” with numerous methodologies, all resulting in rich ambiguity. Scholars have read the poem in essentialist terms,[4] axiomatically,[5] through gender theory,[6] and an integrative constructionist view,[7] just to name a few (37-38). In all cases, the methodologies attempt to overlay the Lady of Shalott’s position with another. Making use of psychoanalysis then, I can surmise yet another interpretation that would be useful in the discussion of the fallen woman.

The Lady of Shalott’s demise closely resembles Lacan’s theory of the vel of alienation. Bruce Fink in *The Lacanian Subject* explains:

> “We could imagine a concept of alienation involving an either/or—a *vel*, as the Latin would have it—amounting to an *exclusive* choice between two parties, to be decided by their struggling to the death. Such a vel would allow for the possibility of only one of the

> parties surviving (but either one), or perhaps also the possibility of *neither* party surviving. Yet Lacan's 'vel of alienation' always *excludes* the survival of one and the same party." (51, emphasis his)

For the Lady, her "vel of alienation" stems from either accepting the curse laid upon her and keeping her life, or leaving the web and encountering reality. In either case, she must lose something, and "the sides are by no means even: in his or her confrontation with the Other, the subject immediately *drops out* of the picture" (Fink 51, emphasis his). Camelot, representing the Other, is separated from the Lady who is on an island. The river between them will only carry her voice to those on the other side. Her existence is, in fact, only offered through questions: "But who hath seen her wave her hand? / Or at the casement seen her stand? / Or is she known in all the land, / The Lady of Shalott?" (24-27). Known to the villagers only through voice and name, her "[a]lienation represents the institution of the symbolic order and the subject's assignation of a place therein" (Fink 52). In other words, the Lady's subjectivity on her island surrounded by "[f]our gray walls, and four gray towers" (15) only exists within language, she herself does not exist; she has no selfhood because of her alienation, therefore, she becomes a "place-marker or place-holder in the symbolic order" (Fink 52). Ontologically speaking, the myth about the Lady of the Shalott has more *being*, than the lady herself.

However, through her mirror, she witnesses aspects of the Other such as "red cloaks of market girls" (53), "a troop of damsels glad, / an abbot on an ambling pad, / Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad, / Or a long-hair'd page in crimson clad" (57); and, of course, "The knights come riding two and two" which reminds her "[s]he hath no loyal knight and true" (61-62). In all cases, these images in the mirror bring the Lady of Shalott a cause for her desire, or as Lacan would call it, her object (a). As objects themselves, they do not cause her desire. Instead, "the

desire manifest[s] in the very act of looking" (Fink 91). While the act of looking causes her to proclaim "I am half sick of shadows" (71), she still "delights / to weave the mirror's magic sights" (64-65). Instead of acting upon her desire, she finds pleasure in integrating them into her art. However, it was Sir Lancelot's voice that makes her act upon her desire. His voice is "unspecularizable: you cannot see [it] per se, [it has] no mirror images, and [it is] extremely difficult to symbolize or formalize. [It belongs] to the register of what Lacan calls the real, and resist[s] imaginarization and symbolization" (Fink 92). The lady's inability to possess Sir Lancelot's song and integrate it within her web offers an explanation why she "left the web" (109) and allowed "[t]he curse [to] come upon [her]" (116).

The curse itself speaks to Lacan's vel of alienation because it represents "[a] place she does not 'hold' as of yet, but a place designated for her, and for her alone" (Fink 52). Of course, Victorian society had deeply held beliefs about the separation of the public and private selves which developed into the "'cult of true womanhood' or the 'cult of domesticity,' which both elevated women to a new level of veneration in the public's consciousness and relegated them to a sphere separate from the dominant and more significant world in which men operated" (Hill 17). This elevation of womanhood, or in the case of the Lady of Shalott, her alienation, positions her for an eventual fall. The Lady of Shalott, hearing Sir Lancelot's voice becomes so subsumed with desire that she could no longer allow herself to be relegated to the position society had built for her, and she attempts escape, knowing that it would bring calamity upon her, and enters into the public sphere, breaking the symbolic definition of her. Of course, that it leads to her physical death only perpetuates the myth that the feminine must be protected at all costs, even at the loss of one's being. It is equally significant that upon her discovery the knights "cross'd themselves for *fear*" (166, emphasis mine). When faced with a woman "out of her place" the masculine

response is fear. Fear of what? Reprisal, perhaps? But Lancelot, in all his manly wisdom defines the Lady of Shalott as having “a lovely face,” (170), again relegating her to a position of object, of subject to the male gaze, the place where a woman should be. Then, in a turn that seems somewhat out of place, Lancelot says, “God in his mercy lend her grace” (170). Victims do not need mercy or grace. Lancelot defines her in that line as a fallen woman that needs saving by God. Her journey to Camelot brought shame upon her for not staying within her assigned space, and not only did she lose her life, but she possibly lost her soul.

The Lady of Shalott’s fall, while not literally sexual in nature, it certainly suggests one. She is driven by her desire for a man, leaves her pure position within her private sphere, takes her life into her own hands, and pays the ultimate price for it. Her story mirrors the Victorian fallen woman’s story to the letter. However, its definition of a woman’s place defined by the patriarchy, and her desire to be fully part of the patriarchy, in body and voice, instead of behind a vel of alienation gives rise to how her legacy may apply to social praxis within modern history.

In 1998, Monica Lewinsky was a private citizen who had fallen for a married man. In any other scenario, that may have caused a stir, but considering she was a young intern working in the White House and the married man was the President of the United States, it became much more than a quiet divorce in the suburbs. While there were already rumors of Clinton’s infidelity stretching back to his time as governor in Arkansas, Monica Lewinsky was a wide-eyed, naive 22-year-old who could not help but get caught up in the Camelot of Washington politics. Again, a woman had to face the patriarchal—and political—system. Of course, Lewinsky’s “trial” played out in the media more so than Holbrook’s victims or Anita Hill. She would not have any unbiased help from a powerful group; in fact, those who she thought she could trust would betray

her instead. Furthermore, she became a willing player, first by having a consensual relationship with a married man, and then perjuring herself to protect him.

In Lewinsky's story, the affair was only the tipping point toward her fall that led to a ten-year seclusion to regain her private life after having it all dragged out in public. Just like the Lady of Shalott, she left the confines of her private sanctuary to become a cog within the patriarchy, Lewinsky's affair with President Clinton cast her into the public sphere where she would face the shame hurled upon her by the burgeoning twenty-four hour newscycle.

While the big newspapers were still somewhat "in charge" of the media, smaller outlets began to pop up in the corners of the internet. In fact, "The relationship between Clinton and Lewinsky was one of the first times the mainstream media was forced to follow a story scooped by an Internet source. Matt Drudge's website, *The Drudge Report*, … posted online allegations of an affair between the president and intern" (Everbach 271). The firestorm that resulted led to Cinton's impeachment and Lewinsky's fall. In her study of two prominent newspapers, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times*, Tracy Everbach outlines how the news media framed women during the Lewinksy scandal. She explains,

> "The cultural representations of women in mass media are important because they reflect shared meaning and understanding of women's roles in society. Therefore, the ways women are framed in news coverage are significant because these representations may fuel myths about gender differences and allow these falsehoods to be constructed as reality, subsequently affecting public policy decisions and other social structures." (274)

From the 175 articles she studied, a very negative view of Lewinsky emerges. Everbach notes, "Not one of the stories that speculated on her character featured any perspectives from Lewinsky," but they were quick to label her as "starry-eyed," "love struck," "infatuated,"

"slutty," "flirty," a "nuisance," and a "sexual predator" (277). In fact, the public's obsession with the scandal only fueled the conversion from daily news to minute to minute reporting. As Brooke Gladstone pointed out in an NPR interview nine days after the story broke, "[M]istakes happen when the news cycle is hurried … [R]eaders may rely on the editorial judgment of news organizations they already know, like the *Times* or NBC, but news groups or one-man services like *The Drudge Report*, which started the ball rolling on President Clinton, don't undergo the same editorial scrutiny" ("All Things Considered"). Combined with Kathleen Parker's editorial in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* in February 1998 that "[b]eing distracted by other people's lives, whether tragic or salacious, puts our own in perspective and gives us relief from the mundane" (A-23), the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal playing out online gave every citizen a front row seat like never before. They were a part of the story, piecing the "facts" together in an effort to make a judgment on their own. At the center of it was a woman the media and the White House would define and redefine as the scandal continued to unfold.

One such person involved in framing Lewinsky negatively was Sidney Blumenthal, a senior Clinton advisor. He admonished Clinton in private meetings that he should abstain from helping "troubled people" and stay away from "anyone remotely crazy." The idea of "troubled people" surfaced after Hillary Clinton, then first lady, explained the scandal away as Clinton having a pension for "helping troubled people," and Blumenthal expressed that he understood Lewinsky to be one of those "troubled people." This narrative first frames Lewinsky as the "sexual predator" and Clinton as a "compassionate person" who "helped troubled people in the past" because of his "religious convictions" ("Senate Session" 6:56). His deposition would mirror her image playing out in the media. One source explained, "Junior staff members … said she was known as a flirt, wore her skirts too short, and was 'a little bit weird.'" In fact, the story

went on to explain that a "White House source made unsolicited calls offering that Ms. Lewinsky was the 'troubled' product of divorced parents [and] the mother claims … to have had an affair with Placido Domingo" ("Unnamed Sources Discredit Lewinsky"). If true, the White House began early on laying the groundwork to discredit Lewinsky, and the story would only be bolstered in Blumenthal's testimony.

Ironically, Clinton admitted to Blumenthal that he "felt like a character in a novel … like someone surrounded by an oppressive environment that was creating a lie about him" ("Senate Session" 18:50). Of course, it was Lewinsky that was more like a character in a novel. The seduction and her subsequent fall parallel Tennyson's "The Lady of Shalott" leaving the perceived safety of her weaving—which was created by the patriarchy—and pointing herself toward Camelot, only to bring calamity and death to her reputation in the process.

Historically, the Anita Hill Hearings helped to lay the groundwork for the Clinton-Lewinsky Scandal; however, where Hill was an alleged victim who rejected sexual propositions, Lewinsky was a willing participant. As already mentioned, Hill's character was questioned relentlessly, but because she never succumbed to the sexual advances, some aspects of her purity remained. After all, she was only falling; she never fell. Her stalwart behavior and testimony to the Senate Judiciary Committee, according to some scholars, sparked a third-wave feminism across the country, where women's choices, even if they seemed to fly in the face of feminism, were still choices, and therefore empowering modes of agency. However, Lewinsky did not feel part of that wave. She hoped for "[s]ome good, old-fashioned, girl-on-girl support … none came" (Lewinsky 7). Instead, notable feminists participated in the "culture of humiliation, one that Phyllis Chesler recognized in her book *Woman's Inhumanity to Woman*: that women themselves are not immune to certain kinds of misogyny" (9). Perhaps it was that she was the

"other woman," or it was the betrayal by Linda Tripp who secretly recorded her, proving that she was a part of the cover up, or it was because Clinton was a president friendly to women's issues despite his infidelity. No matter the reason, Lewinsky's fall was not broken by anyone of any gender and "was made a scapegoat in order to protect [Clinton's] powerful position" (4), making the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal a boundary for what feminist theory could accommodate. Instead, her exile served to "cleanse" society.

Although there was plenty of denial at the beginning, it became abundantly clear that *something* happened between Clinton and his young intern, thereby dropping the guise of innocence and releasing the media storm that would lampoon Lewinsky's character, as if her actions gave permission for the "moral" American citizens to cast a judgmental gaze in her direction, and by the end, she would need Sir Lancelot to proclaim that "God in his mercy lend her grace." After leaving Washington, Lewinsky spent the next ten years attempting to fade into obscurity, living out Braun's "live burial." Then, in 2014, *Vanity Fair* published a piece written by Lewinsky. In it she "decided, finally, to stick [her] head above the parapet so that [she] can take back [her] narrative and give a purpose to [her] past" (10). Unlike the Lady of Shalott, Lewinsky is getting the final say in her fall, but it would take another feminist wave to give her to momentum she needed to make such a bold choice.

CHAPTER 4

CHRISTINE BLASEY-FORD AND *THE SCARLET LETTER*

Nathaniel Hawthone's *The Scarlet Letter* is the quintessential American fallen woman tale. Considering it takes place after the heroine's fall, it is also a different take on the archetype. Hester Prynne's life after a fall offers social commentary on women's issues in 1850s America. Of course, since Hawthorne's work is widely read, Hester's story has become timeless as it is told and retold in Junior English classes around the nation. Because of its timelessness, it is easy to take it out of the backdrop from which it was written, and place it in any era to dissect its meaning, compare it to modern contexts and theories, and find themes that may not have existed or been intended when it was written.

At first glance, there are many differences between *The Scarlet Letter* and the drama played out in the media and on television during the 2018 Senate Judiciary Committee Hearings with Christine Blasey-Ford and Brett Kavanaugh. The most obvious is that Ford and Kavanagh did not have a consensual relationship or a baby. Ford was not living in exile, and Kavanaugh was not a man of the cloth. These surface level differences may immediately dismiss the comparison. However, like many other scholars, I wish to approach the work in more symbolic terms in relation to feminism and the #MeToo movement.

Hawthorne's version of the fallen woman is less wilting victim and more sexless independent by the end of the novel. At the beginning, she had all of the trappings of beauty, however, she was strong within her beauty. She is described as having "the feminine gentility of those days; characterized by a certain state and dignity, rather than by the delicate, evanescent,

and indescribable grace" (Hawthorne 34). As she faces her rite of humiliation after her fall, she stands upon a "pedestal of shame" (42) in the middle of the market and "sustained herself as best a woman might, under the heavy weight of a thousand unrelenting eyes, all fastened upon her, and concentrated at her bosom" (36). Even within this harsh environment, Hester holds on to her dignity, remains unrelenting and stalwart against those who hurl insults at her and insist she confess the name of the father of her baby. Even when Arthur Dimmesdale, the father of her baby and a symbol of the patriarchy as a leader in the Puritan church, admonishes her "to speak out the name of the fellow-sinner and fellow-sufferer," Hester has great power. Power to bring down Dimmesdale to "stand there beside [her], on [her] pedestal of shame." However, "Hester shook her head" (42) showing in that moment that she is complicit in bolstering the patriarchy and accepting herself as the Other. Ironically, her fall and her experience upon the scaffold would give her the strength to face future ostracism and learn to stand on her own. In fact, "a woman's fall is imagined as almost the only avenue through which she is allowed to grow" (Auerbach 38).

Upon facing life marked by her past sin, "she is able to change the meaning of the mark" (Haviland 421). As she adapts to life as a single mother, Hester begins to use her needlework skills to her advantage to provide for her and her daughter, Pearl. In the town, "there was a frequent and characteristic demand for such labor as Hester Prynne could supply" (Hawthorne 50). Furthermore, "she needs to find a way of telling her life story that incorporates her adultery but is not defined by it" (Haviland 421). In a way, she becomes indispensable to the township, to the point where they begin to say the scarlet A on her chest "meant Able; so strong was Hester Prynne, with a woman's strength" (97). Therefore, it is through her fall that Hester is able to gain independence and strength, however still submitting to the rules of the patriarchy.

Later, when Hester and Arthur make plans to run away together while they secretly meet in the forest, Hester, in the light of being once again accepted by the patriarchy (Arthur),

> "undid the clasp that fastened the scarlet letter, and taking it from her bosom, threw it to a distance among the withered leaves … By another impulse, she took off the formal cap that confined her hair; and down it fell upon her shoulders, dark and rich, with at once a shadow and a light in its abundance, and imparting the charm of softness to her features [to reveal] a radiant and tender smile, that seemed gushing from the very heart of womanhood" (123).

Hester once again transforms into a woman, feminine and beautiful, because of Arthur. She takes on the "masquerade" of femininity (Zupancic 55) to meet Arthur's definition of Woman. In his presence, she is able to throw off her shame and embody womanhood. After all, "Hester is the 'very token of shame,' isolated by and away from her community for the commission of a socially disruptive sin" (Haviland 421). With Arthur, who is the other half of her shame, she is free to come out from under the weight of shame. Also, outside of the bounds of society, in the forest, unseen by any judgmental eye, Hester is able to throw off her shame. However, this transformation would cause a break between Pearl and her mother "[s]ince … another inmate had been admitted within the circle of her mother's feelings, and so modified the aspect of them all, that Pearl, the returning wanderer, could not find her wonted place, and hardly knew where she was" (127). Hester has to return her scarlet letter and return to her fallen self to put on her "want of true womanly feeling" that Sanger cites when women choose the shame of fallenness over purity. Hester's shame prohibits her from being feminine. This break elucidates Pearl's feminist position against Arthur's patriarchy and Hester's acceptance of the patriarchal definition of her womanhood and femininity.

Pearl's first description is that “[t]he child could not be made amenable to rules” (55). This propensity for rule-breaking is explained away as being the child of a fallen woman. Her mother could not follow “rules,” therefore the child will be the same. However, I suggest Pearl is unable to follow “rules” because she was raised outside of the umbrella of the patriarchy where she would learn how to be lady-like, quiet, demure, and obedient. In her exile, Pearl is able to experience true freedom. Where her mother’s “scarlet letter was her passport into regions where other women dared not tread” (122), Pearl tags along to receive the bounty without the shame Hester endures. In a way, Pearl was raised as a boy would have been raised. Nature “recognized a kindred wildness in the human child” (125) when she leaves Hester and Arthur to speak in the woods together, and she fits in better with “a group of mariners, the swarthy-cheeked wild men of the ocean … [who] gazed wonderingly and admiringly at Pearl” (147). Not only does Pearl fit into these masculine situations, but they recognize her as an equal. What makes Pearl especially different from her mother and the other women in the story is the inability of the men to control or silence her. She will say and do as she pleases, not because she is evil, but because she is capable of independent thought outside of the patriarchal rules placed upon other women of her society. And for that, the men believe that Hester is not fit to be her mother. Governor Bellingham, upon seeing Pearl’s behavior and speaking with others about her upbringing, suggests that she “be taken out of [Hester’s] charge, and clad soberly, and disciplined strictly, and instructed in the truths of heaven and earth” (67). In other words, Pearl needs to be taught the rules for women and their place within a patriarchal society. Of course, having a strong-willed opinionated woman around could certainly cause commotion in the leadership. The Governor's reaction to Pearl is reminiscent of the knight’s reaction to the Lady of Shallot, fear, not mutual

respect, because she is a possible threat to the status quo. Even Hester recognizes what Pearl could become:

> "In the little chaos of Pearl's character there might be seen emerging—and could have been, from the very first—the steadfast principles of an unflinching courage, —an uncontrollable will, —a sturdy pride, which might be disciplined into self-respect, —and a bitter scorn of many things, which, when examined, might be found to have the taint of falsehood in them." (108)

It is likely that Governor Bellingham and the other powerful men also saw how Pearl could tear the whole system of society down to be "built up anew" (99). Pearl is not subject to the patriarchy because of her mother's fall. With no shame and no rules, Pearl is incredibly dangerous. And this is where *The Scarlet Letter* helps us understand why women who accuse men of sexual assault, harassment, and rape are so dangerous. They have Pearl's power. They are breaking the "rules" of the patriarchy by refusing to stay quiet, stay in line, stay in their place.

In 2006, Tarana Burke, a woman of color, coined the term "me too" in an effort to help women in New York find their voice and unite against sexual assault. Eleven years later, Alyssa Milano encouraged victims of sexual assault to tweet about their experiences using #MeToo after the allegations against Harvey Weinstein surfaced. Ignorant about Burke's campaign years earlier, Milano would eventually apologize. However, #MeToo has helped women across the country and world channel their anger to speak out against sexual assault. Against the backdrop of #MeToo, Christine Blasey-Ford would testify against her attacker in yet another public hearing in front of a Senate Judiciary Committee.

Lesley Goodman compares Ford's testimony to Christina Rosetti's "No, Thank You John" in which she compares Ford's polite testimony to the speaker's polite rejection of

unwanted advances from John, the silent listener to the speaker's dramatic monologue. Most striking from the hearings was Ford's testimony when compared to Kavanaugh's. Goodman describes the differences:

> "[Ford] was unflinchingly polite to those at the hearing who doubted her veracity and motivations. Kavanaugh, on the other hand, used outrage as a rhetorical weapon, repeatedly and loudly expressing offense at the entire enterprise as well as at specific questions" suggesting that "anger does not mean the same thing for men and women." (183)

Goodman's recognition of Ford's polite manner in her circumstances reflects Hester's position as the fallen woman "allowed to live" on the outskirts of society, thankful for such an opportunity, despite the unfairness. Even when combating against the patriarchy, women should remain polite, demure, and accepting of what she is handed, and never growing to anger. However, reframing a woman's anger as righteous instead of hysterical is necessary within the discourse of sexual harassment and assault. Given that one of the defenses against Hill's allegations was that she was an angry woman scorned, which motivated her to bring forth the charges against Thomas, speaks volumes to how a woman's anger can be used against them. Meanwhile, a man can yell and interrupt others and be considered justified because of the unfair situation he finds himself in when accused of sexual assault. In fact, Doggett eluded to this particular justification in the Hill hearings when he said that Hill's allegations "are going to result in us feeling that it is inappropriate for us to be human beings with people if they happen to be women" ("Thomas Second Hearing Day 3, Part 5" 1:39:24), and even "Vice President Mike Pence said 'the movement has gone so far that men are afraid to be in the same room as women'" (Heck 104). Perhaps their fear is justified. Turning toward literature, it seems the fallen woman, while mostly

depicted as "a groveling figure," may also offer an "argumentative voice to her longing to reign rather than serve" (Auerbach 29-30). In other words, when women throw off the badge of shame and typify their agency, they are powerful—and dangerous—combatants against the walls and ceiling of the patriarchy.

Senators Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) and Patrick Leahy (D-Vermont) must have been feeling déjà vu on September 27, 2018 when Ford walked into the chambers of the Dirksen Senate Office Building with charges of sexual assault against President Trump's Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh. Although the room was different, the scene looked a lot like the one that played out in front of them twenty-seven years ago when Anita Hill testified against Judge Clarence Thomas prior to his confirmation in October of 1991. During the opening statements, the senators on the committee mentioned Hill five times drawing an indelible parallel between the two hearings. To the American public, if Hill's testimony offered a baseline of where women stood in relation to men with regard to sexual harassment and assault, then Ford's testimony offered a benchmark assessment of America's progress with victim shaming and blaming, character assassination, and negative press when a survivor comes forward against a powerful man. Close analysis and comparison of the senators' questioning techniques and contemporary media coverage surrounding the hearings prove that while strides have been made over the last twenty-nine years to shrug off the residual shame of the fallen woman, it has been at a great cost not only to the women accusers but also to the men they accuse.

At first glance, there are several striking differences between how the hearings were conducted. First, although the committee had three of the members from the Hill hearings, the Democratic side looked distinctly different than it did more than twenty years ago, while the

Republican side looked identical. Feminists who touted the Hill hearings as the emergence of third wave feminism to argue the inclusion of women of color within the feminist movement could look no further than the Democratic side of the bench, which included three Democratic women, and three Democratic people of color. One of the women, Senator Diane Feinstein (D-California) may even owe her seat on the committee to Anita Hill since she rode the third wave straight into the Senate. Sen. Feinstein said, "Twenty-seven years ago … I saw an attractive woman in a blue suit before an all-male judiciary committee speaking of her experience of sexual harassment. She was treated badly, accused of lying, attacked, and credibility put to the test" ("Supreme Court Nominee Brett Kavanaugh Sexual Assault Hearing, Professor Blasey Ford Testimony" 00:17:00). Although she asserted this idea as if she thought this at the time, it is difficult to know if her point of view was a contemporaneous reaction or whether her point of view on the hearing has changed as our culture has become more accepting of diverse groups. By 2018, the media did notice that one side of the aisle had not changed in the intervening years. *MSNBC* ran a story headlined "Dr. Christine Blasey Ford Would Face All White, Male Republicans on Senate Judiciary Committee" five days before her testimony. The story related how the Republicans wanted to avoid the optics of questioning her since the Hill hearing stood as an example for how badly it could go.

Considering the precedent from the Hill hearings, it was those bad optics that led Sen. Grassley to hire Rachel Mitchell, an Arizona prosecutor who specialized in interviewing sexual assault victims to interview Ford. During Ford's interview, only Grassley spoke to her directly and it was only to explain the hearing, never to ask his own questions. Instead, all of the Republican senators' time was ceded to Mitchell. There were some opinions in the media that mocked the Republicans, calling them too scared to question a woman witness. A *New York*

Times opinion column called for Grassley to "man up" and that he was "cowardly and sexist" (Bazelon). Considering the tactic was to avoid the bad optics of the Senators asking her questions and bringing up memories of the Hill hearing, in some cases the choice backfired and made them look weak. In fact, the choice of a prosecutor was "the most sinister" because Ford "was bringing information forward about the appropriateness of a Supreme Court Justice nominee" not facing trial herself (Heck 104). This shift from direct questions to ceding time to another "more qualified" person demonstrates that "[t]he perception that things have changed is key to how patriarchy, as a structuring force underlying the judicial nominee process, continues to go unaddressed" (105). However, when it came to Kavanaugh, they had no trouble asking him questions. Although Mitchell began questioning Kavanaugh, she was eventually ignored in favor of the Republican senators asking their own questions and using their time to explain how unfair the proceedings were to him. Once they dispensed with Mitchell, she was never shown on camera again during the hearing.

The committee's treatment of Ford allowed them to position her as a fallen woman with an incredible story *and* pretend she was a victim worth listening to. When Mitchell questioned Ford, her questions seemingly focused on the facts of the case and pulled out memories from the incident. However, they still, at times, attempted to poke holes in Ford's version of events to point out inconsistencies and invalidate her story. For example, Mitchell asked Ford about her fear of flying, which she first used as a reason why she would not be able to go to Washington D.C. to testify in front of the committee. By the end of her questions, it seemed that Ford flew all around the country for business and pleasure ("Supreme Court Nominee Brett Kavanaugh Sexual Assault Hearing, Professor Blasey Ford Testimony 1:43:02). Also, Mitchell used blown up maps to question whether it was feasible that Ford would not remember how she got home after the

alleged get-together. When Mitchell asked, "Would it be fair to say that somebody drove you somewhere either to the party or home from the party?" Ford responded that that is true. Mitchell's follow-up question, "Has anyone come forward to say 'I drove you home?'" which Ford has to admit the negative (1:28:18). This line of questioning implies that since the drive from the party to home would have been twenty minutes, it is very difficult to imagine that she walked all the way home. Although Mitchell never comes out and offers a reason for her questions, the audience and the senators are able to make the connections on their own and draw their own judgements about her credibility, or lack thereof, while Ford occupies the "pedestal of shame." This protects the senators from seeming overbearing or attacking the witness like many were accused of after the Hill hearing where the questioning tactics were quite the opposite, showing the "optics of false progress" (Heck 107).

As for Ford's credibility, everyone in the room claims to believe her. Even Kavanaugh said, "I am not questioning that Dr. Ford may have been sexually assaulted by some person, in someplace, in some time. But it is not who I am or not who I was. I am innocent of this charge" ("Supreme Court Nominee Brett Kavanaugh Sexual Assault Hearing, Judge Kavanaugh Testimony" 15:22) In this statement, he is able to both support Ford *and* claim innocence. He can have it both ways, so to say. Although upon further scrutiny, it may seem that he believes otherwise. When Senator Cory Booker (D-Pennsylvania) questioned Kavanaugh, he pressed him to answer whether he believed Ford to be a "political operative" (2:33:32). Kavanaugh never answered the pointed question, but in his opening statement he claimed that "this whole two-week effort has been a calculated and orchestrated political hit fueled with apparent pent-up anger about President Trump and the 2016 election, fear that has been unfairly stoked about my judicial record, revenge on behalf of the Clintons, and millions of dollars of money from

opposition groups" (10:06). Sen. Booker's question brings the point home about whether Kavanaugh believed the claims or whether he believed Ford had been put up as a barrier to his confirmation. His inability to answer the question with a simple yes or no, which frustrated Sen. Booker, stemmed from the very near possibility that he could perjure himself if he said no and alienate himself from the committee and the American public if he said yes because it will be admitting Ford is lying about the incident, which in the midst of the #MeToo movement would be difficult to recover from. He will again be in the position of a white man indicating that a woman is spinning lies to take him down like the senators did during the Hill hearing. Although Kavanaugh is unable to answer, Senator Thom Tillis (R-North Carolina) points to "one of the websites of the groups attacking [Kavanaugh] to create fodder has already acquired a URL for the next judge" (2:30:41). His comment reveals that the Republican senators on the 2018 Senate Judiciary Committee hold the same beliefs about the accuser as the senators on the 1991 committee, showing that right-wing conspiracy theories are not new. Sen. Tillis waving around the website URL was reminiscent of Sen. Hatch questioning Thomas if "political philosophy is part of the problem" that Hill had with him. In both hearings, the Republicans insisted on a larger conspiracy as a way to explain how such charges could be lodged at the nominees. In this way, they undermine the stories told by the women, while in the next breath, support their allegations and hope for change in regard to sexual harassment and assault.

In 2018, with the internet at full steam and the twenty-four hour news cycle, Ford faced a different media whirlwind that would truly be her rite of humiliation. The Clinton-Lewinsky scandal would seem insignificant compared to the coverage of the Blasey-Ford/Kavanaugh hearings. And, no longer under the guise of "unbiased reporting," the media storm would only fuel the shame hurled upon Blasey-Ford. Anyone can post anything online, but focusing only on

the main news sources from September 24, 2018 to October 1, 2018 there were six headlines that questioned her credibility and only two that offered support. Most of the negative press either came from President Trump, Republican senators, or FOX News. The headlines focused on details that "raise eyebrows" (FOX News) and questioned whether her "lawyers represent her, or the Democrats" (Jarrett). President Trump called the hearings a "Big Fat Con" (Taylor) and a Senate candidate claimed her story was "sketchier than Kavanaugh's" (Turman). During the hearing, Ford said that she had "been the target of constant harassment and [she had] been called the most vile and hateful names imaginable" ("Supreme Court Nominee Brett Kavanugh Sexual Assault Hearing Professor Blasey Ford Testimony" 00:13). However, this is only partially reflected in the news media. Most of the online harassment she cited was from private citizens who gained access to her information in an effort to harangue her with negative comments. While it is impossible to say for sure, the people who did such a thing could have been spurred on by the media's negative reporting of her and her story. Also, because the headlines lean left or right, and because people typically choose the media outlets they favor using their political bias, the public's affiliations and beliefs about Ford were more likely to be politically driven. As a result, when prominent political leaders, say U.S. senators or the President, were quoted in a headline, that helped to sway people in their belief about Ford. As we have seen, even in recent months, some Trump supporters act on his words. So, those headlines could have motivated right-leaning readers to act on their disgust for Ford coming forward against a reputable judge. While the headlines seem tame in comparison to the abuse she described, it is not a stretch to believe that the headlines may have indirectly resulted in the comments.

In terms of positive headlines for Ford, most are framed in the context of the #MeToo movement (Gambino) and how she was an example for other sexual assault victims. None of the

headlines claim her story was true or offer investigative facts in her support; however, there was one headline explaining "How Trauma Affects Memory: Scientists Weigh in on the Kavanaugh Hearings" (Chatterjee). Although this news story is not directly about Ford, it does stand in to help people understand how she could have forgotten seemingly important facts, like how she got home that night or what specific date the incident happened.

The media coverage surrounding Kavanaugh was filled with such a negative tone that it is no wonder he commented more than once on the media's "breathless and uncritical (sic)" reporting ("Supreme Court Nominee Brett Kavanugh Sexual Assault Hearing Judge Kavanaugh Testimony" 9:37). From calling him a "pig" in the opinion pages (Goldberg) to "bitter" in the headlines ("Breaking News, World News & Multimedia") the media's treatment of Kavanaugh was as negative as the treatment of Ford. This shift from a single (somewhat) negative headline for Thomas to six for Kavanaugh[8] shows a crucial shift in the collective American mind that is reflected in the media, and that is to find every negative, harshly worded fact possible and run it for the purpose of reporting the news. While there was also support for Kavanaugh, most was from right-wing aligned news sources or from President Trump himself in quotes within more neutral sources, like NPR's reporting that Trump believed the hearing was a "Big Fat Con." Even while the headline technically supported Kavanaugh, it was at the detriment of his accuser, so it still relied on negativity and fueled the conspiracy against Ford.

In the end, Ford's coming forward embodied Pearl's fight against the "rules" of the patriarchy, but she approached it with Hester's reluctance. Of course, this is no fault of her own. As a woman, living in American society, patriarchal rules are hidden within every facet of our lives. It is inescapable. Without an unbiased power, like Lucy Patterson and the trial board, there is not much a woman can do to throw off the shame and claim true justice. Her reputation is

already stained just by speaking up. However, in attempting to change the landscape of how victims of sexual harassment and assault are treated, the Ford hearing proves all that has happened is for everyone involved to be treated badly: the accuser, the accused, the senators on the committee, the lawyers, the families of all involved, everyone and their grandmother is under the sights of the media and public opinion. The patriarchy's fear of being overturned has unleashed such havoc that it will retaliate against any and all players to hold on to its power. As *The Guardian* headline and byline point out, her "powerful testimony in the #MeToo era … highlights slow progress decades after Anita Hill's hearing" (Gambino). All of this negative press surrounding scandals such as these only works to drown out the voices of survivors, which may be the point. It reminds them that there are consequences to their speaking up. In those situations, it should be the accused that has to focus on consequences, not the victim, but this is the nature of sexual crimes locked in a "he said, she said" battle. While Pearl's power offers hope to women to throw off their shame and embody their agency against the patriarchy, it is not without a fight from those on the other side. Hill, Judge Thomas, and the senators on the committee in 1991 hoped the hearing would stop something like that from ever happening to anyone else, it seems not only will it continue to happen, but it will only get worse for everyone involved.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Returning to George Watt's statement that the fallen woman's "destruction is part of the cleansing of the society which produced them," we must come to terms with how the fallen woman was created. Turning to literature and history, it becomes clear that she was made from Man's fantasy. A shadow Woman created out of the search for object (a), an counterpoint to the lady-like, demure, motherly perfection brought about through regulation and relegation of women since society began; a warning to young women everywhere about purity and feminine performance. In that way, Watt is correct in arguing the fallen woman was created by society; however, the Victorian idea that her destruction will cleanse society only creates more fallen women, because, after all, that object (a), that perfect Woman is really ~~Woman~~, a fantasy. No woman can become Woman because she does not exist. If she does not exist, then neither does the fallen woman. Therefore, what needs to be destroyed is not the fallen woman herself, but the myth of the fallen woman. But that is easier said than done.

On the top of one of Lucy Patterson's speeches, she asked two questions: "Do we as Christian women have an obligation?" and "Do we as black, Christian women have an even greater obligation?" She admonished her audience "to give themselves of their families and their communities to make a solid base, a secure world for all" ("Lucy Patterson Papers" Box 1, Folder 11). In that way, each wave of feminism begets the next, until eventually, we are all like Pearl, ready and willing to enter into the patriarchal society and tear it down from the inside out, no longer wilting flowers, cursed by our position to watch and wait for scraps of power to be

handed down, or mired in shame from our inability to meet the definitions thrown upon us. Patterson, the first Black woman to sit on the Dallas City Council, was Pearl. Never afraid to face scrutiny, answer hard questions, share her ideas, or strengthen herself against negative press, she offered a few women some justice because she ignored their shame, saw them as human beings, and did not shirk from her responsibility. She did not buy into their fallenness. Just as historians have shown in their studies of prostitution, the women have gained independence and freedom as a result of their perceived fall. Although the side effect of that freedom is ostracism, that is only because society is complicit in misogynist ideas about purity and femininity. Trollope's hope to educate young women about the consequence of a fall through his novels only perpetuated patriarchy's definition of them. Dickens' effort to "save" fallen women, only reeducated them to serve the hegemonic forces in reshaping them into the perfect Victorian woman, as defined by the male gaze. However, "if and when a woman could overcome her shame and speak what was on her mind, she would have as fair a hearing as would a man" (Haviland 426). Carolyn Seay, Anita Hill, Monica Lewinsky, and Christine Blasey-Ford faced the choice between silent shame or bravery to disrupt the social order. In all cases it took time for them to throw off the mantle of shame and enter the world with their story. But is that enough to bring about ontological equality with Man? Raymond Williams believes "[t]his notion of hegemony as deeply saturating in the consciousness of a society seems to me to be fundamental. And hegemony has the advantage over general notions of totality, that it at the same time emphasizes the facts of domination," which cannot "be simply ended or withdrawn" (1342). Therefore, when analyzing the hegemonic forces of a male-dominated society, the sexual differences are not something that we can just "throw off." When considering Zupancic's understanding that "there is something about sexuality that appears only as repressed … That is

to say that the relationship between the unconscious and sexuality is not that between some content and container: *sexuality pertains to the very being-there of the unconscious, in its very ontological uncertainty*" (11-12, emphasis hers). In this way, while the ideology of fallenness may change, the performative effect of femininity remains a part of culture because sexual difference is ontologically stable.

In each iteration, feminism has become more diverse, more inclusive, and arguably more powerful. Meanwhile, patriarchal ideas have become more binary, more hegemonic, more fearful of the Other. Women who accept themselves as Other, inherently accept the definition the patriarchy has divined for them instead of presenting her own agency. Perhaps, the rejection of that definition is the fall. Women who fail to adhere to the patriarchy are ostracized, branded with a scarlet letter, forced to accept their worthlessness, not because they are worthless, but because they are powerful because those who step outside her properly submissive role are a danger to the social order (Haviland 425). The fallen woman is power against the patriarchy because she refuses to abide by rules that break her spirit. In that way, perhaps Feminism can offer justice for the fallen woman, but the nuances of equality still remain unanswered.

NOTES

1. New Historicism theorizes that cultural texts are best understood within their context. For more about New Historicism read Stephen Greenblatt's article. Greenblatt, Stephen. "Resonance and Wonder." Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, vol. 43, no. 4, 1990, pp. 11–34. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/3824277. Accessed 18 Mar. 2021.
2. Only Carolyn Seay's arrest report is marked with a "B" in the race box, standing for Black. The others are all marked "N," presumably to mean "Negro."
3. Because the Wayback Machine only goes back to 1996, and the Hill hearing took place in 1991, I used Google tools to search for news stories that would be contemporaneous with the hearings. I focused on the headlines from prominent news sources published between October 7, 1991 until October 13, 1991. While many of the newspapers would have still been publishing on paper, there were some that were put online as well. From these sites, I pulled the headlines to determine how their diction reflected their attitude toward Hill and Judge Thomas.
4. In Hallam Tennyson's biography of Alfred Tennyson, he explains "The new-born love for something, for some one in the wide world from which she has been so long secluded, takes [the lady] out of the region of shadows into that of realities" (qtd. In Hallam Tennyson 1:117). McSweeney explains "the lady … is a figure of the human soul or self emerging into the world of human experience, the two dominant components of which are sexuality and death" (38). In this interpretation, which could be argued the closest to the poet's intention, given the source, the lady then represents all of humanity who must undergo the bridge between youthful innocence and accept their place within human existence and condition.
5. McSweeney cites Edgar Shannon's reading that "the poem examines conflicting attitudes toward art and life" (207), along with Dwight Culler's reading that "[t]he poet cannot participate directly in reality and must view it through the mirror of the imagination and weave it into the tapestry of his art" (46). She explains that both scholars argue that "the figure of the nineteenth-century poet for whom isolation from the public sphere is an enabling condition of imaginative activity" (38). This interpretation makes the poem an analogous to Tennyson's own understanding of himself as a poet, and possibly attempts to come to terms with his own otherness.
6. McSweeney cites Lynne Pearce to explain the "circumstances of [her] imprisonment, her gender-specific occupation, the nature of her 'curse', the psychological oppression [and] the crisis of subjectivity" of middle-class Victorian women (72).
7. Joseph Chadwick brings together theories of gender and artists for a "reciprocal identification … in both cases there is the same split between the private world (domesticity and aesthetic activity) and the public world of useful social activity and economic and sexual exchange" (Chadwick 27; McSweeney 38).
8. From September 24, 2018 to October 1, 2018

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