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Race, Slavery and the Expression of Sexual Violence in *Louisa Picquet, The Octoroon*

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Abstract:

Historically, victims of sexual violence have rarely left written accounts of their abuse, so while sexual violence has long been associated with slavery in the United States, historians have few accounts from formerly enslaved people who experienced it first-hand. Through a close reading of the narrative of Louisa Picquet, a survivor of sexual violence in Georgia and Louisiana, this article reflects on the recovery of evidence of sexual violence under slavery through amanuensis-recorded testimony, the unintended evidence of survival within the violent archive of female slavery, and the expression of “race” as an authorial device through which to demonstrate the multigenerational nature of sexual victimhood.

Keywords: slavery; sexual violence; violence; race; gender

In 1860, Reverend Hiram Mattison, a New York Methodist minister and abolitionist, recorded the life story of a formerly enslaved woman, Louisa Picquet. Through distributing her story, Picquet had wished to gather funds from sympathetic northern churchgoers in order to purchase the freedom of her mother, still enslaved in the South. Picquet was the daughter of an enslaved seamstress and her married “masters”; she had suffered sexual harassment from a young age, lived under sexual slavery from the age of 14, but was then emancipated by her abuser after his death. With her “fair complexion,” “rosy cheeks,” and a “flowing head of hair with no perceptible indication to curl,” Mattison described her appearance as that of an “accomplished white lady”; indeed, he hinted at the possibility that she was the granddaughter of the infamous “John Randolph of Roanoke.” Mattison used

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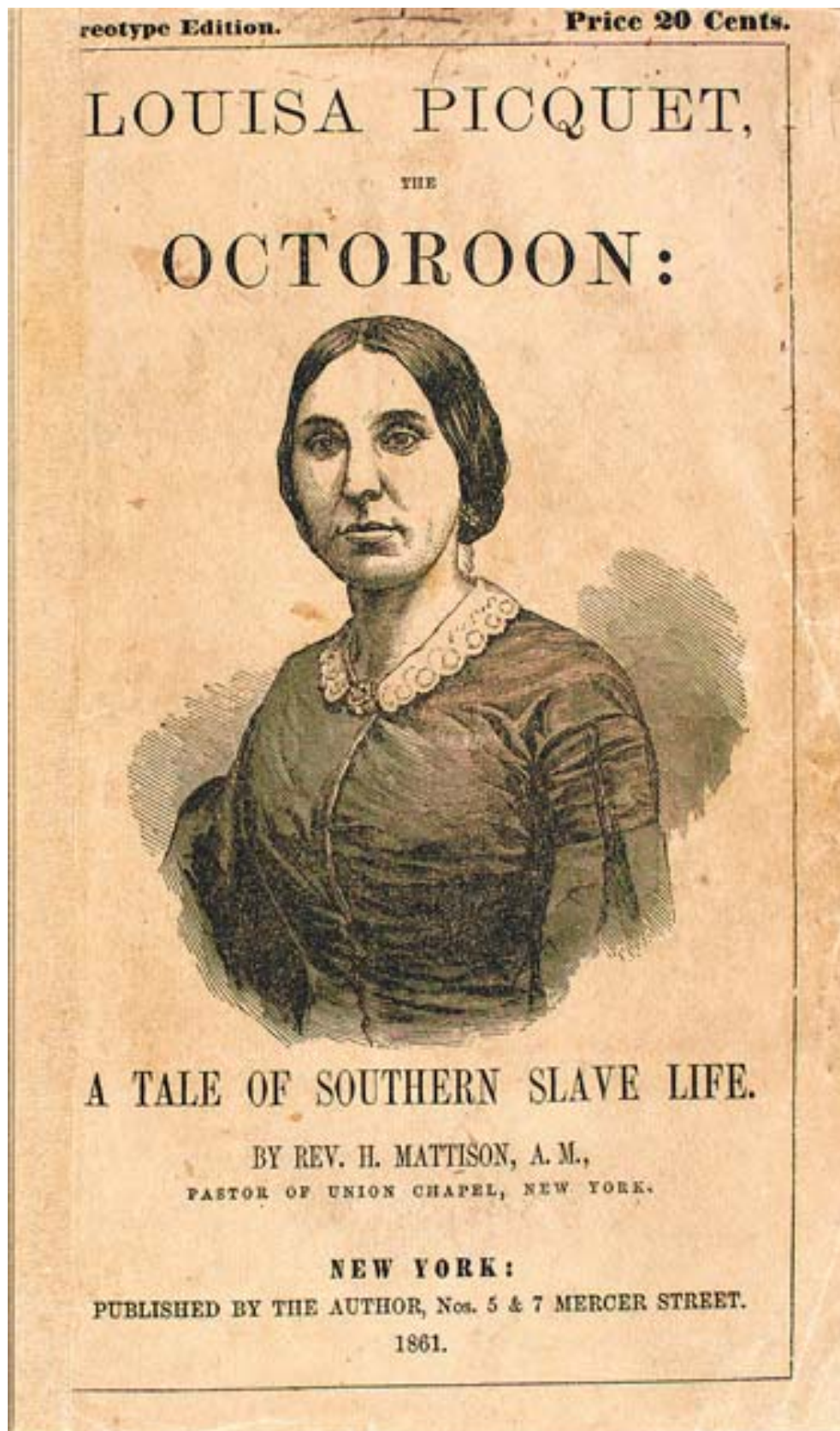


Figure 1. The front cover of *Louisa Picquet* (1861). From docsouth.org.

Picquet's light skin and noble blood to convey the extent that sexual violence had permeated slavery in the South. Mattison's belief in measurable blackness was reflected in the description of Picquet as an "octoroon," and the layers of generational sexual violence that Picquet's skin chronicled was his evidence that sexual violence had become part of everyday life in the South.

Enslaved women, as Marisa Fuentes has written, have so often taken their place in the archive through the condition of "mutilated historicity," a remnant of a violent act through which archival documents reduce the enslaved female body to the manner in which they lived, "spectacularly violated, objectified, disposable, hypersexualized, and silenced."¹ In recent years, historians of the enslaved female experience have signalled the need to revisit sources that reveal the most brutally exploitative parts of the enslaved experience. The work of Emily West, Stephanie E. Jones Rogers, Rose Knight, and Daina Ramey Berry, amongst others, has highlighted the way the maternal body took on a financial-reproductive value under slavery.² This essay contributes to this trend by exploring the intersection of enslaved female financial-reproductive value and white male rape. Enslaved women who were kept in sexual slavery could give birth to daughters in possession of lighter skin who could be passed into the formal or informal "fancy trade" with a high purchase price on account of their mother's rape by a white man.

As well as providing evidence of the embeddedness of sexual violence within the infrastructure and ideologies of slaveholding society, Picquet demonstrated how enslaved women attempted to represent their abuse and their resistance within the linguistic terms prescribed by their cultural context. Therefore, through the "mutilated historicity" described by Fuentes we are able to recover at least part of the experiences of some enslaved women who may not have made it into the archive had their abuse not aligned with the arguments against slavery preferred by white abolitionists. Sexual violence, as Mattison declared, "turns up as naturally, and is mentioned with as little speciality, as walrus beef in the narrative of the Arctic expedition, or macaroni in a tour in Italy."³ The frequency that enslaved light-skinned women in the American South experienced sexual violence is commonly referred to in abolitionist material and the later historiography, but this narrative illuminates the intergenerational nature of that abuse: Picquet announced vulnerability to sexual violence through the increasing whitening of skin over generations of women who had been raped by white men. The frequency that women enslaved domestically as

“housekeepers” or “seamstresses” were linked with sexual violence provides an access point to the culture of slavery that accepted sexual violence as a legitimate social and economic right of enslavers. Taken together, the skin color and occupation of enslaved women provides an insight into the codified language used by enslavers to indicate potential for abuse within a legitimized sexually violent slaveholding culture, and provides a methodological tool that can be applied to the recovery of sexually violent experiences within other source material.

Additionally, Picquet revealed the extent that sexual violence affected the immediate victims as well as their friends and family. She was connected to an extended network of light-skinned enslaved people both during slavery and after. Pain that was both physical, emotional, or both, was a constant feature of their lives. Family separations, physical punishment, and psychological abuse signal the extent that the wider implications of sexual violence shaped the experience of enslavement for its direct victims and secondary victims.

The life of Louisa Picquet

Picquet passed through the ownership of three sexually violent “masters” from the time of her birth in Columbia, South Carolina, in 1828, until she was freed sometime in her late twenties by her final “master” in New Orleans. The first of these men was Picquet’s father, John Randolph, a married white enslaver who fathered Picquet by his 15-year-old enslaved seamstress, Elizabeth. John Randolph’s wife had a baby who was just two weeks younger than Picquet, and Picquet informed Mattison that she looked so similar to this baby that Madame Randolph “got dissatisfied,” and she and her mother were sold to Mr. Cook, another married enslaver in Georgia, when she was around two months old.⁴ During their time with him, Mr. Cook fathered three children with Picquet’s mother, though only one brother survived. At this point Picquet introduced readers to “Lucy,” a light-skinned enslaved “seamstress” who had given birth to enslaved children by multiple free white men and who also worked as an enslaved seamstress within Cook’s household. Picquet, her mother, and her brother later migrated with Mr. Cook to Mobile, Alabama.⁵ While they were residing in a boarding house, Cook began to pursue the teenage Picquet, yet because of a subtle intervention by Mrs. Bachelor, the white boarding house owner, she narrowly escaped sexual violence at this point. She did, however, endure the psychological attack of having lived with the constant threat of rape and survived violent physical

attacks through whippings with the “cowhide” when she refused to submit to her would-be rapist.

When she was approximately 13-years-old, financial trouble forced Mr. Cook to sell Picquet and her family. Her mother was sold to Mr. Horton, who lived in Texas, to live under sexual slavery for the third time at just age 28, and Picquet was sold to Mr. Williams in New Orleans. Williams, who had “parted” with his wife some time previously, had three white sons. After a painful goodbye to her beloved mother and younger sibling, Picquet was informed by Mr. Williams of her new role: “He said he was getting old, and when he saw me he thought he'd buy me, and end his days with me. He said if I behave myself he'd treat me well: but, if not, he'd whip me almost to death.”⁶ In the following years she had four children by Mr. Williams, whilst throughout praying “that he might die.” Williams eventually allowed for Picquet’s emancipation after his death through his will.⁷ After Williams died and his brother threatened to re-enslave Picquet as he had originally lent the money to purchase her, she quickly moved as a free person to Cincinnati, Ohio. There, she married Henry Picquet, who was also the son of an enslaver and an enslaved woman. Louisa Picquet began working to free her mother and brother, who were still enslaved in Wharton County, Texas. She was eventually successful in securing the funds to buy her mother’s freedom, but at the time of publication of the narrative she remained unsuccessful in convincing the same enslaver to sell her brother.

In total, the narrative sets out the experiences of six enslaved women who lived under sexual slavery, usually disguised as “seamstresses” or “housekeepers.” In addition to Picquet, her mother, and “Lucy,” Picquet introduced readers to her husband’s mother, and his first wife. As will be discussed later in this work, Henry Picquet’s mother was an enslaved woman who had given birth to three children by her “master” in Georgia; she was then freed and sent to Cincinnati with her children when the white man married a white woman. Additionally, Henry Picquet’s first wife, a woman who had been enslaved in Georgia, was sold away from Henry and into sexual slavery. Henry Picquet was able to borrow money from his white father with the intention of purchasing his wife’s freedom from her new “master,” but when he arrived in her new home of Macon, Georgia, “he found he could not have her any more for his wife. You see, the gentleman had bought her for himself.” The enslaver told Mr. Picquet that he could buy his child, so he did, and he and Louisa raised the child together. Picquet described the girl as the “smartest one” and the “darkest one”

in the house, although she did betray her white ancestry through her straight hair that was “only a little bit wavy.”⁸ The enslaver was not willing to part with the woman whom he had purchased specifically to sexually assault, though he was willing to separate her from her child. The new enslaver had little respect for the marriage between the enslaved black woman and the free black man.

The sixth direct victim of sexual violence mentioned in the narrative is an unnamed woman, referred to as a “very light girl” from Charleston. The girl’s owner was also the “master” of an unnamed light-skinned enslaved man who Picquet, for anonymity, referred to as “T.” Picquet had once planned to marry “T.” “T”’s owner kept the “very light girl” in separate quarters, and it was the job of “T” to bring the woman living under sexual slavery to the “master” whenever he wanted her. Picquet told Mattison that the time came when another dark-skinned male, jealous of favoritism shown by the “master” towards the lighter-skinned enslaved man, indicated to him that the “T” and the “light girl” were in a relationship. The owner believed it and “whipped him [T] awfully” and then sent the woman “off to New Orleans.”⁹

The six women in the narrative had different experiences, but all lived under sexual slavery for an extended period. Historians of slavery are continually revising their vocabulary to more accurately reflect the brutally exploitative nature of the institution. Sexual violence against enslaved women has at times been partially obscured, if not romanticized, by use of the term “concubine” by historians. In 1802 James T. Callender reported that Thomas Jefferson for many years had “kept as his *concubine*, one of his own slaves” [emphasis added], and this term persists in twenty-first century scholarship.¹⁰ The term groups enslaved women with other women in various times and places who were more able (because they were not enslaved) to consent to such an arrangement. “Sexual slavery” better describes the experiences of such women, though like all sexually violent practices it cannot be considered a discrete category. Sexual slavery consisted of elements of rape, coercive sex, sexual harassment, domestic violence, and forced reproduction. Women who lived under sexual slavery in the South were long-term victims of rape by the same man over an extended period. These women lived inside family homes or in separate living quarters, on the slaveholding unit or elsewhere, and none of these living arrangements depended on the marital status of the man involved. Women living under sexual slavery often gave birth to the offspring of their abuser, but, as was the case in the

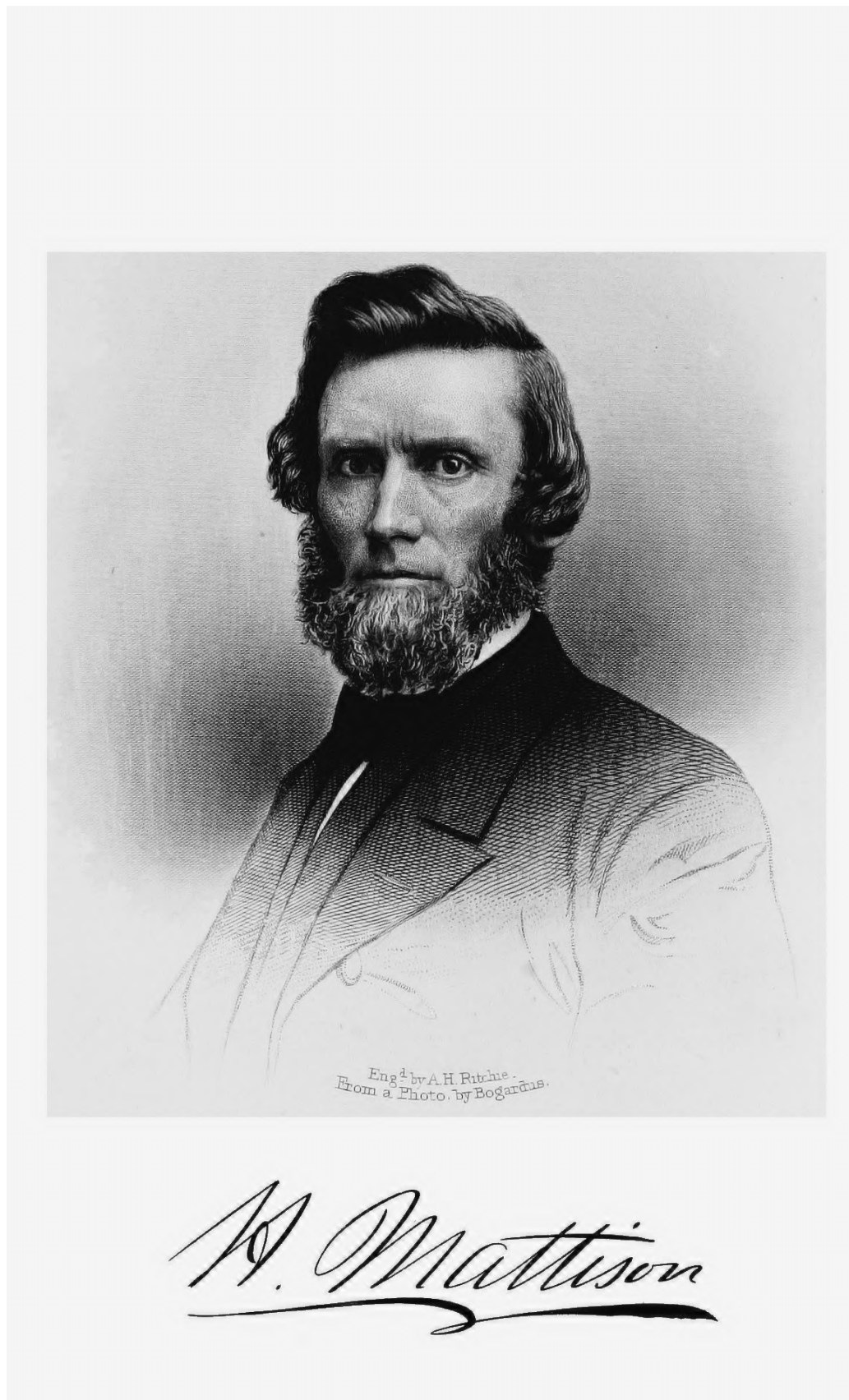


Figure 3. Reverend Hiram Mattison from N. Vasanr, *Work Here, Rest Hereafter: or, The Life and Character of Rev. Hiram Mattison* (1860)

experience of three of the women mentioned by Picquet, there was no guarantee that their children would not be sold like those of any other enslaved person.

Enslaved women and amanuensis-recorded testimony

Aside from the Federal Writers' Project interviews conducted in the 1930s, historians of slavery in the United States have little first-hand testimony from women who themselves lived under slavery. The lack of representation of the female voice within the genre of the "ex-slave narrative" highlights the need to find new ways to recover the experiences of enslaved women from indirect testimony. The frequency that sexual violence was discussed by nineteenth-century writers: white male, black male and white female, offer historians both possibilities of recovery, and some very different methodological challenges.

At the time of publication of Picquet's narrative, sexual violence had already been established as a prominent theme in abolitionist literature. After the 1830s, the themes of power, violence and family disruption became increasingly intertwined with the theme of sexual violence in both the popular genre of the ex-slave narrative, and in the writings of such prominent abolitionists as William Lloyd Garrison, Theodore D. Weld and Lydia Maria Child.¹¹ Even earlier than this, the scandal that revolved around the sexual relationship that enslaver Thomas Jefferson had with Sally Hemings would have prompted contemporaries to consider the links between sexual behavior, morals, and status; and in 1855 the debate over the rights of enslaved women to protect themselves against sexual attacks came to the public's attention with the court case of Celia, an enslaved woman who had eventually clubbed her "master" to death after suffering five years of repeated rape.¹² The common interest in the topic of sexual relationships between enslaved women and slaveholding men converged with Victorian-era ideas of sexual morality and scientific attempts to come to terms with "race" to form cultural expressions of the "tragic mulatta" in a literary genre that would last into the nineteenth century, and on the stage.¹³

Eighteen months before the publication of *Louisa Picquet: The Octoroon*, a play also entitled *The Octoroon* debuted at the Winter Garden theatre (just a few blocks from Mattison's church) in Buffalo, New York State. The play was written by famous Irish playwright, Dion Boucicault.¹⁴ Set in Louisiana, the central character was an "octoroon" who was born an enslaved child of her white "master" and father. She was treated as one of the white family, and her father attempted, but subsequently

failed, to grant her freedom. The play followed the endeavors of the three central white male characters to claim Zoe the “octoroon” as their mistress, and ended with Zoe’s dramatic suicide by poison, a choice made over the prospect of life under sexual slavery. The play was described in a New York newspaper as “a success of curiosity,” and another review from 1861 read, “at the present time we know no more interesting theme.”¹⁵

The recurrence of the “tragic mulatta” theme in the antebellum period demonstrates that this was indeed an avenue through which sexual violence against enslaved women could be addressed and impressed on the US readership, but Picquet was more than simply a literary device. She exercised both resistance and resilience within the confines of her enslaved status without, as far as we know, an attempt to escape. She had no support from white family, was always aware of her enslaved status, and experienced sexual violence from a young age. The few book-length narratives by formerly enslaved women available to scholars, such as those by Harriet Jacobs and Sojourner Truth, did confront the issue of sexual violence, but Picquet addressed this explicitly throughout her narrative and demonstrated the way that this violence was experienced on a community-wide level rather than as an individual – in doing so she moved Mattison’s depiction of her away from a solitary “tragic mulatta.”¹⁶

Understanding the motivations of the amanuensis is crucial to a workable methodology for historians concerned with amanuensis-recorded testimony. Mattison’s name regularly appeared in New York newspapers through the mid-1850s and until the Civil War. In 1859 he described slavery as a “terrible crime against humanity,” and a special part of his outrage was the involvement of churchmen, like himself, in slaveholding.¹⁷ In *The Liberator* Mattison wrote that church’s tolerance of slaveholding pastors was “a disgrace to Methodism and our common Christianity, and a stumbling block to unbelievers,” and that the church should be absolved of the “great sin.”¹⁸ The account of the physical and sexual abuse of Louisa Picquet reinforced Mattison’s previous sermons that explored the emotive topics of forced reproduction, sexual violence, and the burning alive of enslaved people. In 1860 it was reported that his antislavery sentiments caused him to be looked down on as an “alien” and a “heretic” within the church.¹⁹

In this particular narrative, Mattison took great care to construct a link between the immorality of slavery and the tolerance of the church. He made sure to

ask about Picquet's non-attendance at church when she was enslaved and exposed the hypocrisy of the church when she was spoken to as a "wife" after Mr. Williams had died. Picquet told Mattison that the minister in New Orleans acted as though he knew her as Mr. Williams's wife and "talked about the vows I had made to the Lord about my husband."²⁰ Mattison was keen to point out that this occurred in a Southern Methodist church and that Picquet's church in the North did not commune with enslavers. Additionally, when Picquet revealed that the Texan slave-owner who had bought Picquet's mother 20 years previously for \$600 now demanded \$900 for her "old and calloused flesh," and moreover he was a member of the Baptist church, Mattison exclaimed, "[m]ay Heaven save the heathen from the curse of such a Christianity!"²¹

It is precisely because of Mattison's involvement as amanuensis that the narrative has failed to be included in influential studies such as Frances Smith Foster's *Witnessing Slavery*.²² While some studies have commented on the Picquet narrative, the majority of interest has been her relationship to Mattison. Historical works have paid little attention to the significance of the scale of sexual violence in the Lower South that Picquet described and her important comments on how she coped with it.²³ Readings of *Picquet* rest much on questions of authenticity when an amanuensis is involved. Nell Irvin Painter has written that in a system of "spoken knowledge," authorship is more complex than when the thinker and the scribe are one; the author of the text must be considered as the "knower" and speaker. This mode of authorship was used by Sojourner Truth when she dictated her autobiography to Olive Gilbert in the late 1840s.²⁴ However, while Gilbert used license to manipulate the knowledge dictated by Truth, Mattison appears to have recorded much of his conversation with Picquet verbatim, clearly demarcating Picquet's words and his own analysis. He included the moments during their conversation where Picquet refused to divulge more sensitive information. When Picquet was asked by Mattison to relay more details on her punishment by Mr. Cook, Mattison wrote "[Here Mrs. P. declines explaining further how he whipped her...]."²⁵ Some popular nineteenth-century narratives, such as that of Solomon Northup, actively pursued a sense of authenticity through the addition of claims such as "written by himself" in the title, but formerly enslaved women clearly had to use alternative strategies to make their voices heard.²⁶

Mattison's desire to expose sexual violence under slavery as a threat to Christian morality, coupled with Picquet's clear interjections when Mattison's questioning over-reached the limits of her own willingness to divulge details of her abuse, make this an important text for understanding the recovery of enslaved female voices and their shaping of the "violent archive." Additionally, it is a significant resource for historians attempting to understand the fraught and arduous relationship between white chroniclers of the enslaved experience from the nineteenth century, through to the vast archive of interviews with the formerly enslaved from the 1930s.

Language as a cultural code: race, occupation, and sexual slavery

Language reflects the culture in which it was developed, and it is because of the various ways that references to sexual violence were obscured and codified within the southern slave system that the scale of sexual slavery is difficult to quantify. Louisa Picquet's testimony demonstrates that women who lived under sexual slavery were commonly referred to as "seamstresses" and "housekeepers," though these two terms are likely to just scratch the surface of the sexually violent lexicon employed by enslavers. Through the course of Picquet's narrative, she revealed the details of the experiences of five enslaved women, all of whom lived under sexual slavery. All but one of these women was specifically described as light-skinned, none had a black partner, and all worked under the veneer of domestic slavery.

Picquet's association of "seamstresses" with sexual violence could add further intricacy to what we know about victims of sexual violence and the cultural mores of the South. Enslaved women living under sexual slavery were sometimes known by job roles that masked their sexual labor, and so the link between occupation and sexual violence, unlikely to have been alluded to in documents written by southern whites because of the façade of paternalism, was embedded in the southern mind-set and slaveholding culture.

The sexual violence in the Picquet narrative began with the conception of Louisa, who was born to a 15-year-old enslaved "seamstress," Elizabeth. Invoking the well-known words of Mary Boykin Miller Chesnut that "the mulattoes that one sees in every family exactly resemble the white children," Picquet told Mattison, "Mother's master, Mr. Randolph, was my father. So mother told me. She was forbid to tell who was my father, but I looked so much like Madame Randolph's baby that she got dissatisfied, and mother had to be sold."²⁷ The slaveholding woman in this

case demanded that the young victim of abuse was sold along with the infant Picquet, a child born of her husband's rape. Picquet's mother, a light-skinned domestic "seamstress," was sold with her light-skinned child in the slave market.

Mr. Cook purchased Elizabeth Randolph and fathered an additional four children by her, though only one boy survived. Cook was obviously aware from the outset that the teenage Elizabeth had been a past victim of white male-perpetrated sexual violence, as evidenced by the presence of the very light-skinned Louisa. When the enslaved children were lighter in skin tone than their mother, this was likely to have had an effect on the way they were viewed by potential purchasers. The marketing of the darker-skinned mother with the lighter-skinned child would have been a visible sign that the woman had previously had a sexual relationship with a white man. Evidence for enslaved children with white fathers can be found in Louisiana newspapers. In a sample of advertisements from four Louisiana newspapers in which a "seamstress" was mentioned, just 3 percent of women were described as "black" with almost half (48 percent) listed as either "griffe" or "mulatto."²⁸ Most seamstress advertisements fail to specify the skin color of the child for sale with their mother, but in the sample just mentioned, there were two exceptional cases in which the skin color was specified, the mothers were described as "dark mulatto" and "griffe," whereas the two children were both listed as "mulatto." One of these cases was in an advertisement by J. Levy & Whiting, which states that "*Ann or Nancy*, a griff aged 20 years has been 6 years in this country, is an excellent seamstress...*Mary Ann* her child, a creole, aged 6 years, a bright mulatress speaks French and English and very intelligent."²⁹ Like *Ann or Nancy*, Elizabeth was twice sold with her light-skinned children, and both times she began a new life of sexual slavery.

Intergenerational sexual exploitation emerged as an embedded, systemic, and self-replicating feature of American slavery. Picquet was quizzed on the skin color of every person she brought into her story: "[w]as your mother white?"; "[w]ere there any others there white like you?"; "[w]ere your children Mulattoes?"; "[w]ho was this Lucy?...[w]hat was her color?"; "[i]s she as white as you are?"; "[i]s he a white man or colored?"; "[i]s she as white as your children?." The linking of the words "as" and "white" reflected Mattison's acceptance of the graduated nature of race. Proslavery theorists had sought to deepen white anxieties that the abolition of slavery would lead to intermarriage and the degeneracy of the "races," but here Mattison demonstrated a

point he had already made in the *New York Herald* a couple of years earlier, that “[s]lavery is the foster parent of fornication and adultery,” not abolition.³⁰ Louisa was asked about her mother’s previous “masters” and implied sexual violence in order to establish the “whiteness” of herself, her mother, and her younger brother. Peculiarly, Mattison also asked if her mother was “white,” an interesting choice of words, considering Mattison was aware that she was living under slavery at that time. Picquet replied; “yeah she was pretty white; not white enough for white people. She have long hair, but it was kind a wavy.”³¹ By trying to determine the extent of her “whiteness,” Mattison attempted to layer the discrete moment of interracial sex and implied sexual violence.

Nowhere were “blacks” and “whites” seen more as binary opposites than in the intellectual and legal culture of the nineteenth-century slave South. Scientific racism, especially through the “American School” of ethnology, advanced a biological argument for black inferiority based on real or imagined physiological and anatomical differences. In a culture in which privilege was based on skin color, to minimize the visible differences between the “races” was a threat to inequality. The work of Mattison and other abolitionists, after the Dred Scott case in 1857 that denied American citizenship to all non-whites, was in effect to reverse the view of whites and blacks as polar opposites.³² In this pamphlet, Mattison cast a new theory of race where people were not categorized, but put on a spectrum. Mattison encouraged readers in the North to think about race in a similar manner to whites in the South who were very aware of gradations and implications of skin tone.

The next light-skinned woman that readers are introduced to is “Lucy,” an enslaved woman living under sexual slavery who had “light hair and blue eyes.” Lucy was another “seamstress” in Mr. Cook’s family. She was remembered as having six or seven “right white” children, fathered by white men, but no husband.³³ Picquet told Mattison that “she sew in the house all day, and then go to her room, off, at night.” And when asked if slave women like Lucy usually have husbands, Picquet responded, “some of them do; but some of them do not. They can’t have any husbands, because their masters have them all the time.” Lucy and her children were sold in New Orleans at the same time as Louisa Picquet, and some of her children were purchased by their respective white fathers.³⁴ Through the description of Lucy as “white” with “blue eyes” Picquet layered experiences of sexual violence in a slave system where sexual slavery had become normalized, legitimized, and endemic.

Picquet and her amanuensis were keen to impress upon the reader the significance of the light-skinned persons encountered, and then to intricately link this skin tone to the intergenerational nature of sexual violence.³⁵ Skin color and occupation interacted to form a special potential for abuse, which was created and sustained in an entire culture.³⁶

Fancy trade

In the descriptions of the slave market Picquet offered insight into how light skin and occupation converged and fed into the knowledge system of male enslavers who supported the “fancy trade.” In the New Orleans slave market, Louisa Picquet was clearly marketed for sexual slavery, despite being sold under the guise of domestic servitude.³⁷ The auctioneer told potential buyers that Louisa was “a good-lookin' girl, and a good nurse, and kind and affectionate to children; but I was never used to any hard work. He told them they could see that. My hair was quite short, and the auctioneer spoke about it, but said, “[y]ou see it good quality, and give it a little time, it will grow out again.”³⁸ Though there was no explicit description of Louisa as a “fancy,” the slave trader described her in terms that implied the role for which she was destined. Her outward appearance of light skin was first pointed out to the potential buyers. Maurie McInnis, through her research of abolitionist art and the American slave trade, wrote that slave traders took care to point out the gradations in skin tone in order to imply the popularity of lighter-skinned women in the slave market, especially in places such as Natchez and New Orleans.³⁹ The auctioneer added to this a description of Picquet as having little experience of “hard work,” and projected a special image of Picquet out onto the buyers who were fluent in the language of the domestic slave trade and could deduce Picquet’s fate through her skin color and implied familial history of sexual slavery.

The letters of James Franklin, a New Orleans slave trader, to his business partner Rice C. Ballard demonstrate that white men spoke in their own culturally determined code. In 1832 Franklin wrote to Ballard regarding a woman described as a “fancy white maid and excellent cook.” According to Franklin “to my certain knowledge she has been used & that smartly by a one-eyed man about my size and age, excuse my foolishness.” Franklin wrote that she “carries her funds in her lovers purse.” The discussion of the “one-eyed man” was a thinly veiled boast of his sexual encounter with a woman whose value lay in her sexual potential, her “lovers purse.”⁴⁰

This extract from a private letter demonstrates the fundamental link between language and culture. Creating and interpreting meaning is done within a cultural framework, and in the same manner that Franklin and Ballard communicated in the private medium of letter-writing, in public the language used by the auctioneer tapped into the way that he and his buyers saw the world.⁴¹ Picquet had “every appearance” of a white lady, but in the slave market there were “plenty” of “white” girls like her who underwent physical examination before being purchased for their sexual labor.⁴²

While the discussion of fancy women in the Picquet narrative was focused in New Orleans, the discourse on sexual violence did not center solely on Louisiana. This is significant as Louisiana, and particularly New Orleans, has long been associated with interracial sex and violence. Numerous studies have documented experiences of sexual slavery in the state through traveller accounts, records of slave traders, antislavery literature, interviews with the formerly enslaved, and even in probate cases brought to the Louisiana Supreme Court where enslavers had attempted to free enslaved woman by will after their death and this had been challenged by “legitimate” heirs.⁴³ The mythologization of sex with light-skinned black women in Louisiana has recently been confronted by Emily Clark, who described New Orleans as an imagined space in which Americans could neatly “quarantine” the threat that the quadroon posed. As Clark has written, “[a]nxiety over the destabilizing potential of procreation across the color line was assuaged as America ignored its own interracial population and practices, preoccupied itself with the migrant quadroon, and found a way to cordon off the newcomer from the nation.”⁴⁴ The sexual expectations put on enslaved women who worked domestically further illuminates the link between all patriarchal Atlantic slaveholding systems where women were expected to endure sexual as well as domestic labor.⁴⁵

Michael Tadman found evidence for the fancy trade elsewhere. He discovered that slave traders in the markets of Charleston and Richmond frequently referred to the trade in “fancies,” and that light-skinned women there sold at around 30 percent more than the price of “No.1.” field girls of the same age.⁴⁶ Cultural knowledge thus contained interracial sex in New Orleans in order to create the impression that this was not occurring elsewhere, whereas we know from the work of Tadman, in addition to Joshua D. Rothman (Virginia) and Cynthia Kennedy (Georgia) that this sexually violent culture extended throughout the South.⁴⁷

The experiences of the women living under sexual slavery listed in Picquet's narrative all differ slightly, though all indicate a sexual relationship with their "masters" that was coercive, violent, and psychologically distressing; women were abused from an early age and separated from their children and other loved ones. Picquet's narrative tells us that the sexual abuse of black women of all skin tones was not limited to elite white men. The institutions that developed in New Orleans in the antebellum period allowed men of all socio-economic backgrounds sexual, exploitative and abusive access to free women of color and of enslaved women. While rich men could afford a more permanent arrangement with a free woman of color, for whom they could provide a house and security for any children produced, men with more limited resources, such as Mr. Williams, could borrow money to purchase a woman who served the dual purpose of keeping his house and becoming his sexual partner. Picquet told Mattison "[e]verybody knew I was housekeeper, but he never let on that he was the father of my children."⁴⁸ Historian Emily Clark wrote that one of the mainstays of the "mulatresse" identity in Haiti maintained by the refugees who landed in New Orleans was that of the role of the "menagerie" or housekeeper. The free woman of color who took on this role could be expected to be a housekeeper and a sexual partner. This arrangement could last a few weeks or until the white man married a white wife. It evolved into what became known in New Orleans as "plaçage."⁴⁹

Evidence points to sexual relationships with enslaved women as a sinister part of the life cycle for slaveholding males in the pre-Civil War South. Mr. Williams borrowed money from his brother, indicating that abuse was open, naturalized, and morally permissible amongst southern males.⁵⁰ Mr. Williams had four children, all boys, and while Picquet did not mention her relationship with these children, they were doubtlessly aware that they lived with four half-siblings of enslaved status. There is no indication that they maintained contact with the woman who took the place of the mother in their household, and the reader is left to speculate on the effect this had on their future behavior, especially relationships with women, black or white. From this, however, we can deduce that young southern males were culturally educated in the practice of sexual slavery that had been legitimized by their forebears: the ideas, language, and practice of sexual slavery were passed from generation to generation of white males. This life cycle model can also be recognized in Picquet's husband's family history.

In a section of the narrative tellingly entitled “Another Southern Household,” Mattison introduced Henry Picquet, Louisa’s husband, and the son of an enslaver and an enslaved woman. Picquet told Mattison that Mr. Picquet’s father “bought my husband's mother, and live with her public. She had four other children, but he never uses them as slaves. They are his children.... when he got married [to a white woman], he sent them all to Cincinnati, the mother and five children.”⁵¹ While Mr. Picquet’s father had lived with his mother “in public,” he also cast her aside when the time came for him to marry a white woman. In the 1850s antislavery journalist James Redpath asserted that “not one per cent of the native male whites in the South arrive at the age of manhood morally uncontaminated by the influences of slavery... I do not believe that ten per cent. of the native white males reach the age of fourteen without carnal knowledge of the slaves.”⁵² Young white men, therefore, learnt from an early age that non-consensual sexual relationships with enslaved women were a legitimate part of their lifestyle. Thomas Jefferson recognized this psychological and emotional slaveholding technology as “the most boisterous passions” and “the most unremitting despotism” in slave-owners. According to Thomas Jefferson, “our children see this and learn to imitate it [the violence]; for man is an imitative animal.” Southern children, according to Jefferson were “nursed, educated, and daily exercised in tyranny.” The process described by Jefferson in this instance was how direct violence (“boisterous passions” and “unremitting despotism”) became normalized as part of the enabling structures of slavery.⁵³

Many forms of violence that underlie sexual violence

Through the discussion of pain in the narrative, it is possible to recognize the extent to which sexual violence shaped the enslaved experience for its direct and indirect victims. Picquet described both opportunistic and calculated violence. When Picquet reached the age of 14, Mr. Cook began to sexually harass her. She recounted an instance where Cook had asked her to come to his room to see him and she remembered him telling her “if I didn't he'd give me hell in the morning... I promised him I would, for I was afraid to say any thing else... Then I came to conclusion he could not do any thing but whip me--he could not kill me for it; an' I made up my mind to take the whippin.’ So I didn't go that night.”⁵⁴ Cook carried through with the punishment. She remembered he “whip me with the cowhide, naked, so I 'spect I'll take some of the marks with me to the grave. One of them I know I will.”⁵⁵ In order

to convey to the reader the pain of the violence to which she was subjected, Mattison asked "Did he whip you hard, so as to raise marks?" She responded, "Oh yes. He never whip me in his life but what he leave the mark on, I was dressed so thin. He kept asking me, all the time he was whippin' me, if I intended to mind him."⁵⁶

The violent episodes served to remind the enslaved girl that her sexual potential, like her laboring potential, was not her own. That this violent episode was linked to a sexual desire for Louisa is significant for thinking through the domestic nature of the physical and sexual violence experienced by enslaved women. She remembered that Mr. Cook would often be violent when intoxicated: "[h]e had two or three kinds of drunks. Sometimes he would begin to fight at the front door, and fight every thing he come to. At other times he would be real funny."⁵⁷ The intimate terrorism in the use of physical violence for sexual control would have been experienced by both black and white women in the South – the conditions of enslavement, however, transformed domestic violence into something with additionally sinister qualities. The physical marks on the skin of enslaved people served as a visual reminder and proof that extreme violence was always a real threat.⁵⁸ Threats of death such as Mr. Williams's warning to Louisa that if she did not "behave" then he would "whip her to death," served as a psychological reminder to enslaved people of the disposability of the enslaved body.⁵⁹ Picquet was repeatedly whipped for sexual insubordination, thus highlighting the way that sexual and non-sexual violence became linked in the subjugation of enslaved people -- there was no avenue for appeal or escape.

The coupling of race and physical pain is significant in its historical context. Mattison placed Picquet's descriptions at odds with contemporary medicalized belief about skin color and susceptibility to pain. Additionally, he ended the piece with a chapter entitled "slave-burning" that included numerous newspaper accounts of the burning alive of enslaved people, and not just those who possessed light skin. "Pain" had become ever more racialized as the slavery debate gained fervor. Theories that deemed Africans insensitive to pain had been around since at least the sixteenth century when male travellers to Africa wrote that African women suffered little during childbirth.⁶⁰ In one New Orleans medical journal in 1851, physician Samuel Cartwright described a condition called "Dysaesthesia Aetiopis," where African American victims were insensitive to pain when subjected to punishment.⁶¹ Through stressing the intense pain felt by the narrative's subjects, Mattison fostered sympathy

in the audience and condemnation for the brutal institution of slavery. Through simultaneously demonstrating the barbarity of slavery and the humanity of black people, he sought from his audience sympathy for all enslaved people, dark and light-skinned alike.⁶²

Pain was not just limited to the physical, and the psychological and emotional impact of slavery emerges strongly. The narrative detailed the constant threat of violence or sexual violence from an early age, the associated separation from loved ones, and ritualized humiliation. The slave market was used as a rhetorical device both by Picquet to express the emotional pain of separations, and the enslavers she discussed used it as a threat. Picquet told Mattison that Mr. Williams would often threaten to put her “in his pocket” and it was also used as punishment in the case of the “light girl” whom the slave-owner suspected was having a relationship with Louisa’s friend “T.” Picquet and “T” were separated through this episode, as “T” was forced to run away in order to avoid punishment.⁶³

Threats of the slave market represented the power that enslavers had over the bodies of enslaved people, and their willingness to assault the emotional wellbeing of the enslaved that was formed through familial relationships. Once Louisa Picquet had been separated from Elizabeth, her mother was then helpless as the child conceived through rape was stripped and examined in the market’s inspection room. Elizabeth would have been long aware that Louisa’s light skin gained through Elizabeth’s rape by a white man increased her chances of falling into the “fancy trade.” Picquet described her humiliation as “[t]hey began to take the clothes off.” This was the second time in the narrative, after her violent whipping, that Picquet had been ordered by white men to remove her clothes.

Young girls under slavery were, however, likely to have been aware of the risks of sexual violence and this kind of humiliation from a young age.⁶⁴ As sexual violence was so endemic in the southern United States, it was unlikely to be “incompatible” with established worldviews. Louisa’s mother became a victim of sexual violence before she was 15; Picquet herself was a product of the practice, and she grew up in an environment with at least two other women who had experienced it (Lucy and her mother). As a young girl, before her sexual harassment started, she even had conversations with Mrs. Cook, her mistress, regarding her animosity toward “Lucy” – the light-skinned seamstress with “seven or eight children” by white men. In the chapter of her narrative entitled, “Inside views of another Southern family,”

Mrs. Cook told her that “when folks had children that way they must be married like she was to her husband. It was adultery to stay with anyone without bein' married.”⁶⁵ Sexual violence against enslaved women was a part of Picquet’s worldview from a very young age.⁶⁶ In the section entitled, “Intrigues of a Married ‘Southern Gentleman’” she remembered, “I was a little girl, not fourteen years old. One day Mr. Cook told me I must come to his room that night, and take care of him...I was afraid to go there that night.”⁶⁷ Sexual violence against young girls had become embedded in slaveholding culture and Louisa’s mother saw her abuse replicated in the experiences of her daughter.

“Surviving” sexual slavery

Louisa Picquet and her mother Elizabeth Randolph both lived lives of sexual slavery from their young teenage years, yet they were able to go on to form loving families and maintain a close bond. Deborah Gray White, in her important work on enslaved women, described the functions of enslaved female networks. She wrote that few women would have been able to survive sexual harassment or exploitation “without friends, without female company.”⁶⁸ The friendships and familial networks that Picquet was able to maintain, with black and white women alike, allowed her a sense of emotional wellbeing and ensured that she was somewhat emotionally and psychologically resilient in the face of the inevitable sexual violence that lay ahead.

A white Scottish woman, Mrs. Bachelor, who ran the boarding house, tried to protect Picquet against Mr. Cook’s persistent advances. She hid Louisa when Mr. Cook sent for her and told the cruel “master” that perhaps she “had gone out with some children, and got to playin,’ and didn't know it was so late.” This tragic element of the narrative is a direct acknowledgement that Picquet was still a child, even by the standards of nineteenth century sexual maturity.⁶⁹ Harriet Jacobs described the age of fifteen as a “sad epoch” in the life of a slave girl when her “masters” began to whisper “foul words” in her ear.⁷⁰ Picquet, like Jacobs, was not a rape victim at this stage, but was nonetheless the victim of sexual harassment as a child.

Picquet demonstrated, however, that even young enslaved girls found ways to protect their physical and emotional wellbeing. As well as using avoidance strategies by limiting the time spent in Mr. Cook’s company and hiding from him when he searched for her, Picquet maintained a psychological strength in other ways. She made fun of Mr. Cook, telling Mattison that when Cook asked her if she would “mind

him” while he was whipping her, “of course I told him I would, because I was gettin’ a whippin’.” She was both resilient and strong in this instance.⁷¹

In another example of childhood resilience, there was an incident where Mr. Cook, after drinking alcohol, gave her some money in return for her sexual submission. As he was drunk at the time, she managed to get away, and bought a dress with the money. While she knew that Mr. Cook wanted the money back, she told Mattison that she “had sense enough to know he would not dare tell anyone that he gave me the money, and would hardly dare to whip me for it.”⁷² The dress that she purchased became a symbol of her resistance to sexual violence. After Picquet was sold to Williams, she recalled, “I wanted to go back and get the dress I bought with the half-dollars.... Then I thought mother could cut it up and make dresses for my brother, the baby...I had a thought, too, that she'd have it to remember me.”⁷³ She transformed it to an item that demonstrated the close bond of family, in spite of the sexual violence endured by multiple generations of their women.

Mattison’s desire to include details that may shock his audience provides evidence of the survival of emotional bonds despite the disruption of sexual violence. “T” reappears later in the narrative; he had passed into white society and married a white woman who was unaware of his racial status. Louisa did not mention his real name as she was afraid that he would be discovered; Mattison declared, “if only the public knew!” By this point in the narrative it is clear that Picquet and her mother were not isolated cases but part of an oppressed community of light-skinned enslaved people. Louisa Picquet was also connected to a mainly light-skinned network of people who were either children born of rape or had lived lives of sexual slavery. Louisa’s mother was a rape victim, as was her future husband’s mother and first wife. Picquet’s intricate knowledge of the abuse suffered by her husband’s female family members clearly demonstrates that sexual abuse under slavery had been discussed openly amongst the couple. Historians have argued that enslaved people may have undergone a form of “soul murder” whereby they were rendered unable to form attachments and relationships, yet Picquet remained loyal to her mother, had a healthy marriage to Mr. Picquet, and also aided fugitives who were escaping slavery when she was in Cincinnati.⁷⁴

In demonstrating an everyday psychological strength and ability to survive the violence that she suffered, Picquet subverted the aims of slavery’s violence and undermined the mechanisms on which its subjugating structures were built.⁷⁵ Walter

Johnson has highlighted the relationship of “everyday” forms of resistance to “revolutionary” forms of resistance that have misleadingly been put in opposition. There is opportunity to explore how Picquet maintained some emotional resilience to her abuse. Sociologist Liz Kelly has listed “willing submission” to rape as a cognitive measure that allows women a sense of agency when the risk of direct physical resistance is too high.⁷⁶ Picquet twice demonstrated control over her body through opting to submit to her inevitable abuse. The first time she demonstrated this cognitive resistance strategy was when she was a young teenager and staying with Mr. Cook at the boarding house. Picquet told Reverend Mattison that “when he [Mr. Cook] was whippin' me so awfully, I made up my mind 'twas of no use, and I'd go...I saw he was bent on it, and I could not get Mrs. Bachelor to protect me anymore.”⁷⁷ In this instance, Picquet opted to submit to avoid further physical punishment and repercussions for the white lady who had tried to protect her. She did this again with her next “master,” Mr. Williams. Picquet recalled that Mr. Williams told her that he would “blow my brains out” if she dared to escape his abuse. Picquet thought to herself, “if that be the way, all I could do was just to pray for him to die.”⁷⁸ In neither case was Picquet simply a passive victim, by choosing to submit she refused to allow her potential rapist complete control over events.⁷⁹

There are signs that Picquet suffered adverse mental health. She told Mattison that Mr. Williams was so disagreeable that she wished he would sell her, as she “had no peace at all” and said that she would “rather die than live in that way,” but even in her account of unimaginable distress, there is an unintended rupture that allows the reader an insight into her emotional resilience. This, coupled with the overwhelming frequency of sexual violence reveals how enslaved people had to find a way to survive this violent culture through familial and extra-familial support networks and friendships.⁸⁰

Picquet’s experience adds to an existing body of evidence that reveals the inner structures of slavery, the mechanisms of subjugation employed by enslavers, but also the emotional tools that enslaved people utilized in order for them to strive for their own space within the institution of slavery. This space could be forged through family, religion, or another cultural form, or outside of slavery, through making practical plans for freedom through emancipation or escape. Picquet cared deeply for both her family and friends; she had a deep knowledge of the similar experiences of her enslaved friends, but also sacrificed herself to a whipping in order that Mr. Cook

did not cause trouble for Mrs. Bachelor, the white boarding house owner whom Picquet considered “the best friend I had.”⁸¹ The range of violences that she had experienced did not stop her from sacrificing herself to save another, even a white woman.

The narrative poses additional lines of inquiry for scholars. Deborah Gray White and Sergio Lussana have done important work on intra-gender friendships, but the role that men played in helping enslaved women through sexual violence has yet to be fully probed. The close knowledge of sexual violence that “T” and Henry Picquet related to Louisa Picquet indicates that men might have played a closer role in aiding the emotional survival of enslaved women, especially when their close female friends or family members had been victims. As a narrative authored by a woman who had been a long-term victim of slavery’s sexual violence, the narrative complicates an existing literature that has conflicting representations of light skinned black women who had sexual relationships with black men, and is a rare conveyance of the emotional experience of being sold as a “fancy” in the domestic slave trade.⁸² The sexually violent lexicon which linked physical appearance and occupation to sexual victimhood was being developed in the slave market in order to gain a higher price for women such as Louisa Picquet, and the presence of women who lived under sexual slavery alongside children in abusive slaveholding households meant that the language was learned and the cycle of sexual violence was perpetuated. Picquet aptly communicated that sexual violence was just one part of a number of broadly conceptualized violences that had become a deeply embedded and toxic element of the culture of the slaveholding South.

Picquet and her extended family experienced sexual violence on a spectacular scale, but Picquet takes her place in the archive as more than just a “mutilated” figure. This narrative demonstrates the entrenchment of sexual violence within southern slaveholding culture, but Picquet – even through an amanuensis – was able to resist attempts to reduce her to a one-dimensional victim. She resisted, she mocked her abuser, she maintained an ability to form friendships and romantic connections in spite of her abuse, and finally, she asserted authorial control when confronted with a white male abolitionist agenda.

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¹ Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives*, 5

² West & Knight, “Mothers’ Milk”; Jones-Rogers, “[S]he could...spare”; Ramey Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh*.

³ Picquet, *The Octoroon*, 6, 51.

⁴ Ibid., 6.

⁵ For discussion of the movement of enslaved people by planter migration see Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves*, 228-36.

⁶ Picquet, *The Octoroon*, 18.

⁷ Ibid., 6.

⁸ Ibid., 27.

⁹ Ibid., 8-10.

¹⁰ *The Recorder; or, Lady's and Gentleman's Miscellany*, September 1, 1802, accessed at encyclopediavirginia.org.

¹¹ See Weld, *American Slavery*, L. M. Child, *The Quadroons*.

¹² McLaurin, *Celia, a Slave*.

¹³ For discussion of mid-nineteenth century scientific racism see Stanton, *The Leopards Spots*.

¹⁴ Dion Boucicault (born 1820) was a famous Irish actor and playwright who was most commonly known for writing melodramas. He moved to the United States in 1850 living in both New Orleans and New York. For further discussion of *The Octoroon* see Roach, *Cities of the Dead*.

¹⁵ *The New York Herald*, Nov 13 1861.

¹⁶ Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*; Truth, *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth*.

¹⁷ *The Liberator* August 29 1856 (Boston, MA), in "An Appeal To All Members of the Great Methodist Family, Affiliating with the Methodist Episcopal Church, Throughout the World."

¹⁸ *The Liberator* July 29 1859 (Boston, MA).

¹⁹ *New York Herald* October 01 1859, 26 October 1860 (New York, NY).

²⁰ Picquet, *The Octoroon*, 24.

²¹ Ibid., 6, 24, 29, 33.

²² Foster wrote in the introduction to the second edition of her book that her decision to exclude all third-person accounts, along with other sampling decisions, left her study with only one female slave narrative, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Foster, *Witnessing Slavery*, xxi-xxii.

²³ Fulton, *Speaking Power*, 22, 26, 40-43; Barthelemy, *Collected Black Women's Narratives*, xli.

²⁴ Irvin Painter, "Representing Truth," 469.

²⁵ Picquet, *The Octoroon*, 17.

²⁶ In the 1960s scholars began to reject many aspects of Ulrich B. Phillips' work, which had described abolitionists as needless "fanatics." Despite this, there was still a tendency to focus on the abolitionists attempts to absolve themselves from a "morally corrupting proslavery culture," rather than on their forcing that culture to change. See discussion in Harrold, *American Abolitionists*, 3-9. Abolitionist exploitation was a prominent theme in proslavery propaganda. On December 5 1859, *The New York Herald* printed an article which implied that abolitionism was not an altruistic activity, "...the topic of slavery was seized upon by some of the new school sensation preachers, whose idea of preaching Christ and Him crucified consists in making the largest amount of money in pew premiums. The cross they bear is stamped with the Mintmark. They are martyrs who are well known in Wall Street..." in other words, the abolitionists were catering to a public demand for their own pecuniary profit, rather than out of a humanitarian enthusiasm for antislavery.

²⁷ Boykin Miller Chesnut, *Mary Chesnut's Civil War*, 29; Picquet, *The Octoroon*, 6.

²⁸ This sample was put together from the *Times-Picayune*, *New Orleans Gazette and Commercial Advertiser* and *Louisiana Advertiser* from 1803 to 1865. 61 per cent of advertisements in the sample listed the skin color. Other skin tones described as "negro" 36.4 per cent, and "creole" 12 per cent.

²⁹ *Louisiana Advertiser*, March 29, 1828.

³⁰ Picquet, *The Octoroon*, 8, 16, 19- 20, 25-27; H. Mattison, sermon reprinted in the *New York Herald*, Dec 12 1859.

³¹ Picquet, *The Octoroon*, 7-8.

³² Dred Scott was an enslaved man in the United States who unsuccessfully sued for his freedom and that of his wife and their two daughters in the Dred Scott v. Sandford case of 1857. The Supreme Court ruled that 1. No black person could be a citizen of the United States and 2. Slavery could not be constitutionally prohibited in American territories. Introductory studies to the Dred Scott decision and the increased polarization of race after this see Graber *Dred Scott*, and Konig, Finkelman & Bracey (eds.), *The Dred Scott Case*.

³³ Picquet, *The Octoroon*, 50.

³⁴ Ibid., 21.

³⁵ The precise contemporary readership of Picquet is unclear. Frances Smith Foster, in her book-length study of slave narratives, wrote that they were likely to have been written for three types of reader:

“those who seek improvement, those who seek entertainment, and those who seek both amusement and entertainment.” Foster, *Witnessing Slavery*, 64.

³⁶ See Rothman, *Notorious in the Neighborhood*, esp. 92-129 where the role of time and place in the formation of the link between black women and sexual availability is discussed. See also Baptist, “Cuffy,” “Fancy Maids”; McInnis, *Slaves Waiting for Sale*, 139.

³⁷ Michael Tadman, Edward Baptist, Walter Johnson, and more recently Maurie McInnis, have all written on the subject of “fancies” in the internal slave trade. Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves*, 125-27; Johnson, “The Slave Trader”; Baptist, “Cuffy,” “Fancy Maids”; McInnis, *Slaves Waiting for Sale*, 139.

³⁸ Picquet, *The Octoroon*, 17.

³⁹ McInnis, *Slaves Waiting for Sale*, 139.

⁴⁰ For further discussion of the exchanges between Franklin and Ballard see Baptist, “Cuffy,” “Fancy Maids,” and “One-Eyed Men,” and C. Schermerhorn, *Unrequited Toil*, 118-21.

⁴¹ Kramsch, *Language and Culture*, see especially 6-8; 17-19; 25-32.

⁴² Picquet, *The Octoroon*, 3.

⁴³ Schafer, *Slavery, the Civil Law*, 180-200.

⁴⁴ Clark, *The Strange History*, 9.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁴⁶ Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves*, 126.

⁴⁷ Rothman, *Notorious in the Neighborhood*; Kennedy, *Braided Relations, Entwined Lives*.

⁴⁸ Picquet, *The Octoroon*, 19.

⁴⁹ An enslaved “housekeeper,” such as Louisa, could have been purchased in the early nineteenth century for \$1500 to \$5233. Clark, *The American Quadroon*, 63, 164-65.

⁵⁰ In spite of the demand for light-skinned women in the slave market, sexual slavery was not entirely reserved for women with lighter skin. Walter Johnson has written that “whiteness” and “blackness” was mapped onto bodies in the slave market according to imagined coordinates; certain “lightening” or “darkening” characteristics, such as occupation and dress indicated to slave buyers that a woman was destined for a life of sexual slavery. Johnson, *Soul by Soul*, 139.

⁵¹ Picquet, *The Octoroon.*, 26.

⁵² Redpath, *The Roving Editor*, 222-23.

⁵³ Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1785), 298-9.

⁵⁴ Picquet, *The Octoroon*, 12.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 14-15.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁵⁸ Silkenat, “A Typical Negro”.

⁵⁹ Picquet, *The Octoroon*, 18.

⁶⁰ See Morgan “Some Could Suckle”, especially 187-192. Morgan discussed the discourse created by travellers on both the fecundity of African women and their capacity to bear children without pain.

⁶¹ See Dormandy, *The Worst of Evils*, 295.

⁶² For further discussion on racialized/gendered perceptions of the pain of others see Pernick. *Calculus of Suffering*.

⁶³ Picquet, *The Octoroon*, 19.

⁶⁴ Livesey, “Conceived in Violence”.

⁶⁵ Picquet, *The Octoroon*, 19-20.

⁶⁶ According to cognitive theories, an individual has sets of pre-existing beliefs and models of the world, of others, and of themselves, which are products of prior experiences. Vees-Guilani, *Trauma and Guilt*, 30.

⁶⁷ Picquet, *The Octoroon*, 10.

⁶⁸ White, *Aren't I a Woman*, 141.

⁶⁹ Picquet, *The Octoroon*, 15.

⁷⁰ Jacobs, *Incidents in the life*, 44.

⁷¹ Picquet, *The Octoroon*, 12.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 13.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁷⁴ Emotional survival means the ability to reconstruct one’s life in order that the sexual attack does not continue to have a lasting and negative impact. Sociologist Liz Kelly has defined “survival” as “continuing to exist after the life threatening experience that is a part of many instances of sexual violence”: survival can be emotional or physical Kelly, *Surviving Sexual Violence*, 162-3.

⁷⁵ See also, Lussana, “No Band of Brothers.” Recent studies have shown that supportive and reassuring responses when sexual abuse is reported can significantly reduce feelings of shame, guilt, anxiety or depression and also aid the maintenance of close relationships with both men and women Campbell, Ahrens, Sefl, Wasco, & Barnes, “Social reactions to rape victims”; Ullman, “Social reactions, coping strategies and self-blame”.

⁷⁶ Burgess and Holstrom, “The Coping Behavior,” 413-18.

⁷⁷ Picquet, *The Octoroon*, 10.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁷⁹ Kelly, *Surviving Sexual Violence*, 181.

⁸⁰ Picquet, *The Octoroon*, 19.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁸² Recently reemerging debates on the broader changes occurring in the rapidly modernizing economy of the South have linked the commodification of enslaved women to other financial behaviors of slaveholding men. Enslaved women living under sexual slavery were not just sexual partners for white men, they were commodities on which they had speculated. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told* 243; Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams*, 195; Kaye, *The Second Slavery*, 627-50.