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**Gothic Heroines and Their Dualities: Exploring the American Gothic Heroine in  
Southworth, Alcott, and Jacobs**

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By

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# GOTHIC HEROINES AND THEIR DUALITIES

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EXPLORING THE AMERICAN GOTHIC HEROINE IN SOUTHWORTH, ALCOTT, AND  
JACOBS

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## ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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During the nineteenth century, the mass market serial novel began to grow. With this came many women writers in Europe and the United States who wrote in different popular genres. One of these genres was the gothic genre which started in the eighteenth century. Two of the most common gothic tropes were the gothic heroine and her rival, the Other Woman. For years critics have studied the Female Gothic in relation to these two tropes. However, using three texts, E.D.E.N Southworth's *The Hidden Hand* (1859), Louisa May Alcott's *A Long Fatal Love Chase* (written in 1866, published in 1995), and Harriet Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861), I argue that these writers created the Dual Heroine who shared traits with the traditional Gothic Heroine and the Other Woman. By analyzing the Dual Heroine I will explore the development of the American Gothic Heroine in a time of change and the rise of First-wave feminism.

## INTRODUCTION

For four centuries the gothic genre has influenced authors and critics alike with tales of romance, mystery, and terror. Beginning in the eighteenth century, the gothic originated in Europe with men and women defining the common tropes which others would use for years afterward. These famous tropes, especially the character-based tropes, remained popular well into the twenty-first century; the brave hero, the tortured villain, the rival woman, and the protagonist damsel in distress. These aspects of the gothic, especially the female protagonist, were eventually developed into a more feminist character by the nineteenth century. Authors such as Charlotte and Emily Brontë becoming inspiring writers of women's fiction during the time when novels by both men and women were mass-produced and sold across Europe and the United States.

The rise of the mass market novel gave way to various writers and soon a collection of women writers in Europe, and especially in the United States, began to try their hand at writing and publishing their own stories; most notably in sentimental fiction and domestic fiction. These authors have been discovered by critics within the last two centuries. Critics such as Elaine Showalter, who wrote about the rise of British women writers in her book *A Voice of Their Own* and American women writers in *A Jury of Their Peers* in the late 70s and early 2000s, and Nina Baym's *Woman's Fiction a Guide to Novels by and about Women in America, 1820-70* which furthered the discussion on the novels, poetry, and short stories that were read, published, and adored by women in America. Critics in the twentieth century also wrote about the feminist aspects of these popular women's novels since the rise of first-wave feminism started in the late eighteenth century and grew throughout the nineteenth century. The exploration of women's writing, especially by gothic writers, coined *The Female Gothic*, by Ellen Moers, has created

some of the most well-known criticisms of women's literature. Critics Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar influenced other critics to explore the Female Gothic as both literature of the nineteenth century and as feminist commentary in their 1979 book *The Madwoman in the Attic: the Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* in which they explored authors like the Brontës and Jane Austen as feminist writers who dealt with the struggles of nineteenth-century European women. Later, other critics such as Juliann E. Fleenor and Diane Hoeveler continued the critical view of the Female Gothic as a feminist form in the 1980s and the 1990s, focusing primarily on the European gothic throughout the ages since its inception. These critics and others have opened the discussion for a large collection of authors who, despite their popularity in their lifetime, would have been lost today. While these critics often focused solely on the women writers whose works are already canonized, they have paved the way for lesser-known works to be explored further as creators of a popular genre.<sup>1</sup>

Critics focus on the gothic, especially in regards to how popular and influential Charlotte Bronte's novel *Jane Eyre* was for the nineteenth century populous, has led to the discovery of novels which copied the basic formula of a young woman who falls in love with a tortured soul and has to help him become a better person, escape the place she is imprisoned in, and best her more mature and more sexually aware rival.<sup>2</sup> The gothic heroine and her rival have been studied as aspects of the same person, a duality in the nineteenth century and well into the twenty-first where women are idealized into roles of either a Madonna-like virgin who is good and sexually

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on the popularity of Gothic fiction see *The Gothic Romance Wave: a Critical History of the Mass Market Novels, 1960-1993* by Lori A. Paige.

<sup>2</sup> For more information on the gothic formula see "The Radcliffean Gothic Model: A Form for Feminine Sexuality." by Cynthia Griffin Wolff.

inexperienced, or a Whore who is desirable physically but tempting and is destroyed by the end of the novel since her wicked ways cannot be allowed to continue.

The complex of the Madonna and the Whore appeared in nineteenth century fiction, especially in gothic novels, written by both men and women and is still a popular concept in fiction today.<sup>3</sup> However, even in the nineteenth century, some women writers noticed this formula for the gothic novel and decided to make their female characters more versatile and complicated than the two-dimensional portrayals would allow.<sup>4</sup> The drive to create young women as more layered than the Madonna-Whore Complex, especially in novels written by American women writers, is a quality of nineteenth-century gothic fiction which needs to be studied further since the desire for more realistic or at least female characters that do not fall into archetypes has greatly increased in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. For this thesis, I will explore the development of the dual heroine in American Female Gothic literature during the nineteenth century which seeks to combine elements of the traditional virginal and meek gothic heroine who is always good and the more assertive and atypical woman who is characterized as an evil or antagonistic force. Within the three texts, I will use to examine this popular complex, each of the gothic heroines has aspects within them that would place them on the Madonna side of the scale and, while none of the heroines in any of the novels are “whores”, each one has aspects of her personality that could be considered farther away from the traditional gothic heroine. Along with deviating from the simple Madonna-Whore complex, Southworth, Alcott, and Jacobs also use the duality of their heroines to deviate from the ways that gothic novels

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<sup>3</sup> For additional information on the Madonna-Whore aspects of gothic literature see *Woman and the Gothic: An Edinburg Companion* by Avril Horner and Sue Zlosnik.

<sup>4</sup> For more information about the development of nineteenth century heroines see *Perils of the Night: A Feminist Study of Nineteenth-Century Gothic* part II: Boundaries of the Self in *Woman's Gothic* by Eugenia C. DeLamotte.



depicted romances between the protagonists by either giving each female protagonist her own love triangle or moving away from any romances at all.

Starting in 1859, in chapter one I will discuss the novel *The Hidden Hand* (or, *Capitola the Madcap*) by E.D.E.N Southworth, a nineteenth century American author who was one of the most prolific and most popular authors when American nineteenth century women began to write about their own experiences and lives through fiction. As a writer often mentioned in various texts when discussing the plethora of nineteenth-century women writers, Southworth creates a young orphaned protagonist named Capitola Black who is an anomaly as a gothic heroine and as a nineteenth century protagonist. Capitola is adventurous and has been considered one of the first tomboys written in the United States. Along with the atypical Capitola, *The Hidden Hand* also has the more traditional Clara Day, who appears to be a normal damsel in distress. However, both Capitola and Clara are portrayed as young women with positive attributes who appreciate each other as equals, instead of rivals, and possess a great friendship which makes both characters fall in between the spectrum of the usual gothic heroine and the Other woman, showing both girls as characters with complex traits that make them more interesting than the roles they would normally have been assigned.

In chapter two, I will expand on the dual heroine as an individual character as well as continuing the theme of heroines dealing with traumatic and abusive situations by discussing the protagonist of *A Long Fatal Love Chase*, an unpublished novel written in 1866 by acclaimed nineteenth century domestic fiction author Louisa May Alcott. Discovered and published in 1995, this sensational gothic thriller was intended to be published before the famous *Little Women*. Heavily inspired by Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, *Love Chase* tells the tale of a young girl named Rosamond who flees her abusive husband after discovering his deep dark secret.

While *Love Chase*, and Alcott herself in her earliest writing, was inspired by the Brontës like many other women writers were, and still are today, Alcott uses her novel to allow Rosamond to grow as a character who begins as a sheltered innocent girl to a strong independent woman who refuses to allow herself to be dominated by a cruel and manipulative older man who uses his status and Byronic charms to control everyone around him. Alcott's commentary on the effects of abusive relationships addresses women's rights issues during the nineteenth century in American society where women were trying to make their wants and voices heard. Through Rosamond, Alcott delivers a gothic horror story with a heroine who changes throughout and is both a capable woman without being a seductress and a fragile girl dealing with trauma, realistically in need of assistance to escape her stalker, without being a weak damsel in distress waiting to be rescued by a male love interest. As Alcott's final venture into the gothic genre, Rosamond provides an interesting protagonist whose struggles would later be transformed into the beloved Jo March in 1868.

For the final chapter of my thesis, as a foil to Southworth and Alcott, I will examine the dual heroine by using the slave narrative *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* by Harriet Jacobs, published in 1861, as viewed by a young woman forced to endure the horrors of slavery. Jacobs' novel, as a slave narrative meant to depict the injustice of enslavement, utilizes a fictionalized version of Jacobs' own life as an enslaved person until her freedom. Jacobs, well versed in the gothic genre which was popular with women during the time, uses the tropes of the gothic heroine and the Other seductive woman to describe the psychological, emotional, and sexual abuse she endured at the hands of her enslaver. Her fictionalized self, Linda, begins as an innocent teenage girl who, in order to escape her abusive enslaver's lust, seduces and has children with a white man to try and free herself. Jacobs' understanding of gothic tropes and her

ability to portray her fictional self as a complex heroine who still has the desires and ambition of a regular woman challenges the tropes written by white men and women during the time while giving more concrete evidence of the horror women in slavery were forced to endure.

By focusing on these three texts, I will show how the gothic heroine evolved throughout the nineteenth century in America when women began to write and publish more works as the beginnings of first-wave feminism and the Civil War brought many changes for the United States. By exploring the dual heroine, whether she is written as two characters or is one character sharing traits with the traditional rival woman, these texts mark the changes of female heroines by creating characters that are not one dimensional and attempting to make each heroine unique. Exploring this over the nineteenth century will reveal the beginnings of women's desire for characters that speak to them and feel like characters that are at least two dimensional and move beyond the stereotypes of prior centuries while creating stereotypes novel to their own time period.

## CHAPTER ONE

### **Between Femininity and Feminism: The Dual Gothic Heroine in Southworth's *The Hidden Hand***

Discussion of the Female Gothic, especially during the nineteenth century, is generally centered on the British and European works. Especially when discussing the gothic heroine, a classic protagonist of gothic fiction as a whole. While many gothic writers were also creating well-renowned works during the nineteenth century in America, the focus has been primarily on the male gothic with authors such as Hawthorne, Poe, and Melville. When E.D.E.N Southworth began writing in 1844, she was one of many prolific women who became famous and was read by many readers. Along with writers such as Harriet Beecher Stowe, Southworth was one of the many “scribbling women” that dominated the American nineteenth century publishing industry. One of Southworth’s most well-known novels was *The Hidden Hand*. When *The Hidden Hand* was published, many women writers published sentimental novels and domestic fiction. Along with these genres, the gothic novel was popular as well. Former critics who have studied Southworth within the Gothic Romance and as a woman writer in general, and *The Hidden Hand* specifically, have focused upon the novel's main heroine and her subversive nature. Jordan H. Landry in his article “Of Tricks, Tropes, and Trollops: Revisions to the Seduction Novel in E. D. E. N. Southworth's ‘The Hidden Hand’.” states: “Southworth’s interest in promoting the female hero opened up an alternative critical tradition. . . .Southworth’s subversions lay in her championing of women’s masculinity and criticism of sentimental fiction as well as normative femininity” (Landry 32). Landry’s statements about how critics focus on Capitola’s more subversive masculine traits is reflected in how the novel and Capitola as a character were perceived by the public, giving critics a deeper understanding of women writers during this time.

Most critics focus solely on Capitola as an anomaly for the time period and portray the other young heroine, Clara, as a contrast to Capitola, despite both characters being portrayed positively throughout the novel. Along with their positive portrayals, both characters also share traditional and atypical traits. In *The Hidden Hand*, Southworth explores the dual gothic heroine, one a more traditional European heroine and the other a newer, more American tomboy heroine. By using these two types of heroines, Southworth creates a connection between traditional gender roles seen in the European Female Gothic and the feminist rhetoric written by American women during the nineteenth century.

For the British women writers in the nineteenth century, they had a history of writing and criticism similar to the American writers they influenced. According to Elaine Showalter in her book *A Literature of Their Own*: “To their contemporaries, nineteenth-century women writers were women first, artists second. A woman novelist, unless she disguised herself with a male pseudonym, had to expect critics to focus on her femininity and rank her with the other women writers of her day, no matter how diverse their subjects or styles” (73). These expectations of writers being women first and then writers whose works were determined by their feminine qualities, ignoring the styles and diversity of the genres that these women wrote in also happened to the budding American women writers as well, even those who gained massive appeal during their lifetimes and helped produce the mass-market novel as it is known today. The expectations also applied to women who wrote in popular genres like the gothic, women like Emily Brontë, whose work was deemed a “romance” after her gender was revealed, or women like E.D.E.N Southworth in America, a successful nineteenth-century writer.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> For additional information on Southworth and her influence on the mass market see *Must Read: Rediscovering American Bestsellers from Charlotte Temple to The Da Vinci Code* Chapter 4 by Sarah Churchwell and Thomas Ruys Smith.

One of the most influential gothic novels to come to America during this time was Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. In her book, *A Jury of Her Peers*, Elaine Showalter addresses the "Jane Eyre mania." She states: "Brontë's novel was avidly read by American women of all ages and classes" (88). With the influence of the Brontë sisters, Southworth also capitalized on the gothic genre within plenty of her novels, including *The Hidden Hand*. Like the protagonist of Charlotte Brontë's bestseller, and in a similar vein to another popular British contemporary of Southworth's, Charles Dickens, the heroine of *The Hidden Hand* is orphaned at a young age and is taken in by a distant relative where she encounters various dangerous trials as she makes her journey throughout the novel. However, unlike the domestic gothic fiction that was popular within America and Europe because of the Brontës, Capitola did not spend the majority of her perils trapped inside of a gothic mansion. As in Dickens, most of Capitola's troubles come from her adventures outside of her home in Hurricane Hall.

Before the nineteenth century made any subversions to the gothic heroine, the eighteenth-century established what a gothic heroine is and how this popular feature of the gothic novel was conceived. In her book, *The Handbook of Gothic Literature*, Marie Mulvey-Roberts describes the gothic heroine, especially the heroines during the early years of the gothic novel in these terms: "She may suffer imprisonment and cruelty at the hands of her pursuer, above all, she is a potential victim of his desire. Portrayed usually in relation to contemporary notions of the proper lady, the heroine demonstrates a passive courage in the face of such danger, and her behavior is sometimes a clear contrast to the more energetic machinations of other women in the text" (116). The notions of the gothic heroine as a young woman who is passive, in constant danger, and is a reflection of what a proper lady should be within the time period the novel was written were aspects that persisted even into the nineteenth century.

## CAPITOLA

When the reader is first introduced to young Capitola Black, she is, in fact, not a teenaged girl at all but disguised as a boy. Capitola encounters Old Hurricane, a war veteran who is looking for her in order to keep her safe from her villainous uncle, and insists on helping him out of his carriage and carrying his luggage to wherever he is staying in New York. When Old Hurricane gives Capitola a whole dollar for her work, her honest nature comes out when she insists on giving it back and warning him that others would take advantage of his generosity. Capitola is pleased with the kind offer and she does not encounter the kind old man again until she is caught by the police for disguising herself as a young man. She then explains her life story and how she lived until her guardian passed away. The young woman then explains how she had to take refuge in her abandoned and crumbling home, almost starving to death while she attempted to find work, while still looking like a girl. When Capitola recounts her tale of hardship she emphasizes the disadvantages that girls have when finding work during the nineteenth century.<sup>6</sup> Capitola states: “Sir, I was trying to get jobs every hour in the day. ... And, so sir, while all the ragged boys I knew could carry little jobs to earn bread, I, because I was a girl, was not allowed to carry a gentleman’s parcel or black his boots, or shovel the snow off the shopkeeper’s pavement, or put in coal, or do anything that I could do just as well as they” (Southworth 32). Capitola’s predicament with being orphaned and having to find ways to take care of herself because of the limitations of her gender are common tropes within the gothic genre even Southworth’s British contemporaries such as Charles Dickens used the idea of the orphan protagonist within many of his works.<sup>7</sup> However, as opposed to most gothic heroines who

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<sup>6</sup> For more information on Women’s poverty see Margret Fuller’s *Woman in the Nineteenth-Century*.

<sup>7</sup> For more information on the orphan trope in Nineteenth-Century American literature see chapter VI of *Sensational Designs* by Jane Thompkins. For further reading see *Disciplining Girls: Understanding the Origins of the Classic Orphan Girl Story* by Joe Sutliff Sanders.

are forced to live with a tyrannical male figure once they are orphaned by the death of their fathers, Capitola, like the young boys in Dickens' novels, had to survive by her wits on the streets of New York City and even defied gender roles and risked getting arrested in order to live her life by her own terms and still holding onto her virginity. These traits, not caring if she had to go against the established norms of her assigned gender, her determination to survive any dangerous event, and her tomboyish nature, continue to aid Capitola when she encounters more dangers after Old Hurricane adopts her, and rescues her from being sent to jail unjustly.

Giving an orphaned heroine a new life was common for nineteenth-century literature. Southworth uses this trope to place Capitola in more peril. Capitola is grateful for her new life with good food, education, and wealth and soon begins to explore her new house. The housekeeper shows Capitola her bedroom and introduces her to her personal servant, an enslaved person named Pitapat.<sup>8</sup> While investigating her room Capitola and Pitapat discover a hidden trap door that leads, seemingly, to nowhere. The trapdoor, like the hidden room or staircase in earlier gothic novels, plays a significant role in the narrative at the climax when Capitola has to outwit a dangerous opponent. Eventually, Capitola is introduced to the first threat to her life and is warned about the nefarious Black Donald, an infamous thief and murderer who was hired by her evil uncle to kill her. Capitola's first brush with a threat to her life, and daring escape from said threat, places her in an interesting opposition to her British contemporaries and even other American heroines written at the same time.

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<sup>8</sup>Southworth's depictions of slavery is problematic and characters like Pitpat and Wool are written in a stereotypical way. Southworth also is nonpartisan about slavery throughout the whole novel. For additional information on Southworth's treatment of slavery see "Southworth and Seriality: *The Hidden Hand* in the *New York Ledger*" by Christopher Looby.



When discussing the gothic heroines that dominated the nineteenth century, in her article within *The Female Gothic* by Juliann E. Fleenor, praising Emily Brontë's Catherine as a new type of heroine, Sydney McMillen Gonger states: "Submissiveness is a key personality trait of the persecuted gothic maiden well into the nineteenth century. ... Only when the gothic heroine is confronted by dastardly behavior does she offer positive resistance, but it typically takes the puerile form of empty threats, unanswered prayers, or unheard shrieks" (Fleenor 93). The image of the passive young maiden whose response to a dangerous situation, ultimately, amounts to no avail, nor gives her much protection, gives Capitola, much like the wildness of Catherine Earnshaw as a child, a sort of refreshing view of the gothic maiden that Southworth became synonymous with. It also highlights what many women in both England and America were looking for when writing gothic novels, a sense of adventure and a sense of womanhood that can be expressed more freely.

Capitola's sense of self-preservation and her lack of feminine ideals of sensibilities and submissiveness are consistently stated throughout the novel. In one particular scene, when Old Hurricane discovers that Capitola's estranged and wicked uncle, Gabriel Le Noir, is living next door and plans on using any means necessary to kill his niece, he discusses Capitola's less than ideal feminine traits with the minister Goodwin, at Goodwin's suggestion that Capitola be restricted to Hurricane Hall, he states:

"Demmy, she'd jump out the window and break her neck! or hang herself with her garters! or starve herself to death! You don't know what an untamable thing she is. Some birds, if caged, beat themselves to death against the bars of their prison. She is such a wild bird as that. ... but Cap evidently thinks that the restriction of her liberty is too heavy a price to pay for protection and support." (Southworth 127-128)

Major Hurricane's analysis of Capitola and her need for freedom was a common issue within nineteenth-century America. This is especially true in regards to the upcoming Civil War, the Abolition movements, and the start of the Women's Suffragette movements that finally gave women the right to vote in 1920. Margaret Fuller, a feminist writer and activist during the 1800s in the United States wrote her own essay addressing a woman's, or even a young woman like Capitola's, need for freedom and a rejection of being kept inside a domestic space. Fuller wrote:

Much has been written about woman's keeping within her sphere, which is defined as the domestic sphere. As a little girl she is to learn the lighter family duties, while she acquires that limited acquaintance with the realm of literature and science that will enable her to superintend the instruction of children in their earliest years. It is not generally proposed that she should be sufficiently instructed and developed to understand the pursuits or aims of her future husband; she is not to be a help-meet to him in the way of companionship and counsel, except in the care of his house and children. (Fuller 178)

Fuller's observations about the expectations of young women like Capitola is an interesting commentary when paired with the women's writer movement which strived to write about the feminine which had gone underappreciated within literature before then. It is also interesting that Capitola does find herself in a place to get an education and even excels in all of the family duties she learns.

Southworth makes Capitola appear to be the opposite of the traditional heroine on the surface while also giving her a duality that exposes her more feminine side as a young woman. Despite her subversive nature, Capitola is still related to other British heroines in that: "The feminine writers were thus looking for two kinds of heroines. They wanted inspiring professional role-models: but they also wanted romantic heroines, a sisterhood of shared passion and

suffering women who sobbed and struggled and rebelled” (Showalter 103). These heroines, which inspired the creation of the tomboyish Capitola, were seen in various gothic romances and seduction novels where women writers could discuss the feminine aspects of their lives and also create dynamic female characters for young girls to look up to, even in a genre which was primarily written to be entertainment. Fuller’s commentary on how young women were expected to stay in their homes and forced to be perfect and submissive without ambition or aspirations apart from marriage and children also speaks to heroines like Capitola, and Catherine Earnshaw. Both characters go against the expectations that were placed upon young women of good standing and upper-class society in both The United States and England. These expectations were written about frequently within gothic novels, even those written by women, and for every character such as Capitola, who subverts the traditionally feminine roles yet still is a subject for the feminine writer, is another female character who is her opposite. In *Wuthering Heights*, this character is Heathcliff’s wife Isabella, and for Capitola, that character is a young girl around her own age named Clara Day.

## **CLARA**

When the reader is first introduced to young Clara Day, she lives with her father, a doctor, a maid named Marah and her adopted son Traverse. Clara’s introduction also has her meeting Traverse for the first time and the audience is treated to a vivid description of Clara. “There had been for him only a vague, dazzling vision of a golden-haired girl in a floating white raiment, wafting the fragrance of violets as she moved, and with a voice sweeter than the notes

of the cushat dove as she spoke. Now he saw that golden hair flowed in ringlets around a fair, roseate face, soft and bright with feelings and intelligence” (Southworth 95). Clara’s countenance and her angelic appearance also give her a more classic gothic aesthetic. Clara’s father quickly passes away, leaving her in the guardianship of Gabriel Le Noir, a friend of Doctor Day who was entrusted to watch Clara until she comes of age, like how Old Hurricane looks after Capitola. Clara is then moved into the Le Noir household, truly Capitola’s, which is supposedly haunted (160-173). These plotlines were typical in both gothic literature during its conception in the eighteenth century and still appear in twenty-first century writings as well. Unlike Capitola, Clara’s gothic plot, and her character, are common gothic tropes written by many European writers. These elements place a distance and stark distinction between Capitola, who gets to find danger, and escape it with little to no assistance, and be a girl with more masculine traits, than her lovely and more traditionally feminine foil, who will, presumably at that point in the narrative need to be rescued, most likely by Traverse. The foil between the two young women would ordinarily make Capitola an antagonist, or, like Catherine Earnshaw, a troubled and sinful young lady. Yet, although she is atypical and mischievous, Capitola and Clara are both shown to be well-rounded and genuinely good people throughout the novel. The differences between Capitola and Clara could also be a difference in women who follow a more traditional path in nineteenth-century life, in a similar way that British women were also expected to do, and a more independent woman who does not follow societal rules or norms, traits that can be seen a dysphoric way toward England.

The dysphoria between Europe and America also influenced the way Southworth wrote Clara and Capitola. In his book *The Importance of Feeling English*, Leonard Tennehouse discusses the Dysphoria that America has felt toward Britain since gaining its independence. One

of the ways in which Tennehouse focuses on this phenomenon is through gothic literature. Tennehouse describes the American gothic, especially that of eighteenth-century writers as: “The American gothic refuses the sentimental gesture towards an ideal unity and culturally coherent nation. . . . Thus, each locale has its own history that unifies the local group as a whole body and an entire to which everyone else by definition is a stranger until he or she embraces that history as his or her own” (Tennehouse 103-4). Tennehouse’s thoughts on American gothic literature being unified and steeped in local histories that differ from their British and other European counterparts can be observed in *The Hidden Hand*, in the way that only certain characters know about Capitola’s true background, or in the case of Clara’s more traditional gothic plotline, know how wicked a man her new guardian truly is. The lack of a sentimental nature can also be observed in Capitola as a character in comparison to Clara who is a more fragile young lady, who never had to worry about anything in life until her father died, but was still raised to be a kind and gentle person. However, Clara being a more traditional heroine does not make her helpless. Clara demonstrates her own subversions and lack of helplessness even when she is involved in a traditional gothic plotline.

One traditional plotline that Southworth uses and subverts through Clara is the forced marriage plotline where the heroine typically waits for someone else to rescue her. Gabriel and Craven Le Noir take on the roles of villains who attempt to woo Clara into marriage, in order to get her inheritance and Hidden House as well. When Clara remains resolute and refuses Craven’s advances, because she loves Traverse and because she finds Craven an insulting and dishonest man, Gabriel Le Noir, having been an antagonist who usually loomed in the background while others, namely Black Donald, did his dirty work, reveals his true colors when Clara still refuses to marry his son in his presence.

“You are in my power, and I intend to coerce you to my will.” ... “Now I am going to the county seat to take out a marriage license for you and my son. I shall have the carriage at the door by six o’clock this evening, when I desire that you shall be ready to accompany us to church, where a clerical friend will be in attendance to perform this marriage ceremony.” All this time Clara had neither moved nor spoken nor breathed. She had stood cold, white and still as if turned to stone. “Let no vain of escape delude your mind. The doors will be kept locked; the servants are all warned not to suffer you to leave the house.” (Southworth 219)

Clara’s terrible fate, while harkening back to the plotlines of British gothic novels, including those of eighteenth century’s Ann Radcliffe, also create imprisonment for Clara that Capitola never is forced to deal with in the same way due to having a gruff, but loving, guardian. These differences also provide some commentary on the traditional gothic novel plotline, which typically involves the heroine being placed into the care of an ill-fit guardian who will marry her off to another wicked person, like Clara, and a guardian who encourages his young ward’s freedom but also has the sense to try to protect her from danger. In her book *Perils of the Night: A Feminist Study of Nineteenth-century Gothic*, scholar Eugenia C. DeLamotte describes the commonality of this captivity in which Clara finds herself. DeLamotte states:

And those institutions were all too contemporaneous with the lives of the women who wrote and read Gothic romance in the 1700s and early 1800s: the patriarchal family, the patriarchal marriage, and a patriarchal class, legal, educational, and economic system. Wollstonecraft protested the virtual enslavement of daughters to parents, who she said thus prepared them for ““the slavery of marriage”” (Rights of Woman 232). She attacked as well the civil and political inequality that kept women”” immured in their families

groping in the dark” (Rights of Woman 26)—a plight that assumes a literal form in most Gothic fiction by women. (DeLamotte 152)<sup>9</sup>

The issues that DeLamotte brings up that plagued young women throughout the eighteenth and continued into the nineteenth century, which is emphasized by the use of Mary Wollstonecraft’s feminist piece, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, further highlight the differences between *The Hidden Hand*’s two female protagonists. While Clara is caught in the “slavery of marriage” and stuck with the force of a patriarchal society which deems her wants and needs irrelevant due to her money and status, Capitola, while scolded by some on her demeanor, usually is allowed to do as she pleases and her guardian is only worried about keeping her happy, healthy, and safe from Gabriel Le Noir’s grasp and less about marrying her off and entrapping her in a separate, more womanly, domestic sphere.

Despite Clara’s predicament, she quickly frees herself with Capitola’s help. When Capitola learns of Clara’s plight, at first, she believes it to be romantic and exciting that Clara is being held prisoner, in a childlike way. Once she realizes the gravity of the situation, Capitola decides to be Clara’s salvation and the two form a plan. The plan involves the girls switching places, so Clara can be free and Capitola can expose the Le Noirs (Southworth 220-221). While the plot point is inspired by the European gothic Nina Baym explains in her book *Woman's Fiction a Guide to Novels by and about Women in America, 1820-70*, that, being self-reliant as both girls have had to do, despite coming from different walks of life that would, in most novels make them enemies, states: “They asserted that women had to be prepared for both economic and emotional self-support, but promised that the sex was equal to the challenge, even that

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<sup>9</sup> For more information about Southworth’s commentary on marriage laws and the depictions of marriage in Nineteenth century Gothic novels see Marissa J. Homestead and Pamela T. Washington’s *E.D.E.N Southworth: Recovering a Nineteenth Century Popular Novelist* chapter IV.

challenge could be an opportunity” (33). Baym declaring that many American women writers took it upon themselves to inspire young women who read their works to be self-reliant, is a stark contrast to the older heroines that found their way to America during the nineteenth-century where, the heroines were inspired to be moral, like Capitola and Clara are, but also find a proper marriage. Even with the trope of the good heroine and her foil still being used in American Female Gothic literature, seeing an early example of women’s feminist theory on self-reliance appear for not one, but two heroines pushes Southworth’s narrative about protecting oneself and differs her from her British counterparts. Both Capitola and Clara have these traits during the escape plan.

“There! It is full time you should be off! Be calm, be cool, be firm, and God bless you, Clara! Dear girl! If I were only a young man I would deliver you by the strength of my own arms, without the subjecting you to inconvenience or danger!” ...

“Oh, may the Lord in heaven bless and preserve and reward you, my brave my noble, my heroic Capitola!” said Clara, fervently, with the tears rushing to her eyes.

“Bosh!” said Cap. “If you go on doing the sentimental you won’t look like me a bit, and spoil it all.” (Southworth 222)

Capitola’s dialogue in this exchange concludes with a reminder on how to be just like her before she pushes Clara out the door, knowing that her friend will be safe once she is out of the house. By making Clara action-oriented, Southworth gives her a chance to subvert her role as a damsel in distress and thus make Clara more of an independent person than she appeared during her introduction. Her strive for independence is seen throughout the rest of the novel. After escaping, by successfully becoming Capitola, Clara returns to Marah Rooke’s home and



demands that the two of them go to the Orphan's Court in order to rescue herself and give Clara her freedom from her evil and false guardians. As a more traditional heroine, Clara is able to use her reputation and status to protect herself from further harm. Clara's actions in court make her equal to Capitola in outwitting villains Clara just does so using the social norms and advantages available to a woman of her status. Clara is also determined to make her own living with Marah by being a shirt maker. When Marah is surprised by this, Clara defends her decision: "Why should I not taste of toil and care as well as others a thousand times better than myself? Why should not I work as well as you and Traverse? I stand upon the broad platform of human rights and I say I have just as good a right to work as well as others" (Southworth 234). In the end, Clara does not have to do labor because she re-inherits her fortune, her determination to be seen as equal to other girls and fend for herself is a testament to her character beyond the traditional wealthy gothic heroine who does not worry about any sort of struggle after being rescued.

Southworth not only uses Clara to change the traditional gothic heroine, but she also expands Clara's role in the novel by making her an amateur detective. Clara hears strange noises in her house during the night. She immediately attempts to investigate and, even when she is trapped within her bedroom, she continues to demand answers regarding the screams and cries during the night. When her captors attempt to calm her down with lies, saying two cats were fighting and that was the strange noises she heard, Clara steadfastly refuses to believe this. "These answers failed to satisfy the young woman, who shrank in terror and loathing from that woman's presence, and sought the privacy of her own chamber, murmuring: "What has happened? What has been done? ... some dreadful deed has been done in this house to-night" (Southworth 212). Even though Clara is frightened by the possibility that someone has been murdered by her guardians, she is determined to discover the truth and is perceptive enough to

tell when Dorcus Knight and the Le Noirs are creating a ridiculous story. Clara's perceptive nature, along with her determination, gives her a more mature outlook than the romantic Capitola and also gives Clara a small detective role that, while common in European gothic novels, makes Clara more active than just a girl being held captive. Ordinarily, the gothic heroine would investigate a strange noise in her large castle or mansion but then be too frightened to investigate further, assuming whatever made the noises were supernatural in nature until the end of the novel proved otherwise. Clara, however, demands to know what has happened and does not shrink from making observations such as the blood on Dorcus' hands and making connections that would be more common in a straight-forward mystery novel. While, near the end of the novel, Clara doesn't realize that the woman she heard being dragged away was actually Capitola's mother, she tells Traverse all about the occurrences at Hidden House. He uses Clara's discoveries to find out that one of his mental patients is actually the woman Clara heard and Capitola's long lost mother, all by means of exposition. It is because of Clara's suspicions that the main mystery is solved. Clara's intuition and more rational demeanor, especially compared to Capitola's romantic and reckless nature, makes her a candidate for a nineteenth-century girl detective. In her book *The Web of Iniquity: Early Detective Fiction by American Women* Catherine Ross Nickerson comments on the traits that the feminine gothic heroine and the detectives in domestic mysteries had in common. Nickerson states: "With every physical sense aroused, she must evade and outwit her captors, ... and she must take a careful measure of her abilities and resources to undertake the dangerous work of investigation" (14).<sup>10</sup> While Nickerson also mentions that gothic heroines rarely succeed in learning or solving any of the

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<sup>10</sup> In Chapter One, Section one of *The Web of Iniquity*, Nickerson explores how the Female Gothic and the domestic novel molded and inspired the Nineteenth-century detective novel as a whole. In addition, chapter two of *Women Writers and Detective in Nineteenth-Century Crime Fiction* gives a broader overview of the female detective in American literature.

mysteries, these traits apply directly to Clara when she attempts to foil Gabriel Le Noir's plans for her and is able to rationalize away the idea that her home is haunted.

## **DUALITY**

Through Clara and Capitola, Southworth gives some commentary to what writers in the women's sphere were attempting to portray in their own works when discussing women as Showalter explores with the British feminist writers during the Victorian Era: "Yet in their insistence on exploring and defining womanhood, in their rejection of self-sacrifice, and even in their outspoken hostility to men, the feminist writers represented an important stage, a declaration of independence, in the female tradition" (Showalter 31). Capitola's constant comparisons to masculinity, despite being quite feminine herself, show how many American women writers, like their European contemporaries, were discussing how to represent womanhood in different and even in similar ways to men; especially when no men are around to rescue their heroines like Clara and Capitola face so often throughout the novel. Because of this both Capitola and Clara are able to pretend to be each other, and rescue themselves without the assistance of a man and explore their own way to become a woman. These differences between dual heroines are also explored in the way Southworth handles friendship and romance in *The Hidden Hand* as well.

Southworth establishes a duality between Clara and Capitola from the beginning of the novel, especially when they interact with each other. Differences between the two women can be seen when Clara and Capitola meet for the first time. When the two girls meet Southworth draws direct parallels between them yet also details why the two young women could become good friends toward one another, other than being heiresses and around the same age.

As they spoke, the eyes of the two young girls met. They were both good physiognomists and intuitive judges of character. Consequentially in the full meeting of their eyes they read, understood and appreciated each other. The pure, grave, and gentle expression of Clara's countenance touched the heart of Capitola, the bright, frank, honest face of Cap's recommended her to Clara. The very opposite traits of their equally truthful characters attracted them to one another. (Southworth 204)

The immediate friendship between the polar opposite girls is a subversive development for the narrative. In many gothic novels, young girls like Clara are typically the protagonists and damsels in distress of the novel. While a character like Capitola, who is the opposite of Clara in temperament and looks, would be a rival of sorts in many stories even in the nineteenth century and would be punished for being proactive and mischievous. In their renowned literary text, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, scholars Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar discuss this common literary trope, which is still seen in novels and other media today and how nineteenth-century women writers dealt with it in their own works. They state: "... the images of "angel" and "monster" have been so ubiquitous throughout literature by men that they have also pervaded women's writing to such an extent that few women have definitively "killed" either figure" (Gilbert and Gubar 17). The angelic woman, who can be rescued from danger, and the monstrous woman who creates danger for the heroine and therefore must be killed are tropes but through the immediate friendship between Capitola Black and Clara Day, a friendship that grows stronger and never waivers and, does in fact "kill" the trope that British women writers such as Emily and Charlotte Brontë, and even Jane Austen, used in many of their popular works. By making Clara and Capitola friends from the beginning Southworth has subverted the usual dynamic of the stereotypical "good" girl and the "bad" girl by making Capitola and Clara girls

who are both good and kind but have different and conflicting personalities, one of which is more accepted in nineteenth-century society while the other is not.

The ability to play a role like Clara for Capitola, that is, being a more traditional reflection of Victorian standards regarding the female gender, is not the only time Capitola uses such tactics to save her own life. Capitola herself does not desire to become a man, nor does she dislike being a woman. As with her rescue of Clara and her need to survive the streets of New York City alone by dressing up as a newsboy, Capitola still contains many aspects that young women were supposed to have, while also subverting many others, especially in terms of temperament and personality, in order to protect herself and other women. In her article, “Launching a Gender B(l)acklash: E.D.E.N Southworth’s *The Hidden Hand* and the Emergence of (Racialized) Tomboyism” Michelle Ann Abate, discusses this combination of gender traits within the rambunctious Capitola. She claims: “Even the young woman's seemingly most daring acts of boyish bravery can be seen in gender-appropriate ways. ... Capitola's manly bravery is precipitated not by her own inherent mannishness but by the cowardice of men. By refusing to protect their female dependent, they force her to protect herself” (Abate 52). Like Abate mentions, quite correctly, all of Capitola’s heroic actions are both due to her personality but mostly happen because she finds herself in dangerous situations where either no man decides to help her (such as the duel between herself and Craven) or no one else is around to help her so she must save herself and any other woman around her. Within the article “The Cult of True Womanhood” Barbra Welters details the books given to young women like Capitola in order to instruct them on how to act and see herself within her society. Welters writes about one of these many books, stating: ““It is, however, certain, that in whatever situation of life a woman is placed from her cradle to her grave, a spirit of obedience and submission, pliability of temper, and

humility of mind, are required from her.” Woman understood position if she was the right kind of woman, a true woman. ““She feels herself weak and timid. She needs a protector.”” (Welter 139). Since Welter wrote on the expectations of women to be submissive and need a protector, Capitola and Clara, fending for themselves throughout the novel, would be against such an idea that a girl needs to be weak or timid and in need of a male love interest to protect them.

Critics of gothic literature have also discussed the contrast between feminism and traditional women’s roles within the genre. Diane Hoeveler in her book *Gothic Feminism* discusses this possible duality through victim feminism. Hoeveler states: “... an ideology of female power through pretended and staged weakness. Such an ideology positions women as innocent victims ... The gothic feminist always manages to dispose of her enemies without dirtying her dainty little hands” (Hoeveler 6). Hoeveler’s statements about staged victimhood do fit with Capitola and Clara in some ways, but neither needs to stage weaknesses around their respective love interests. For Capitola, this is displayed in her last encounter with Black Donald, who throughout the novel has tried to assassinate, kidnap, and possibly assault Capitola through various trickeries and disguises. When the encounter begins Capitola finds Black Donald in her bedroom, and while frightened and shocked at first, she quickly regains her composure and the two have a pleasant chat together, complete with Capitola feeding him supper and requesting that he treat her like a lady. Afterward, Black Donald informs her that her former tricks will not save her from him this time and Capitola, in order to escape beseeches him to redeem himself in the eyes of the Lord and they discuss the concept of death and redemption.

“Black Donald will you leave my room?” Capitola cried, in an agony of prayer.

“No!” answered the outlaw, mocking her tone.

“Is there no inducement that I can hold out to you to leave me?”

“None!”

Capitola raised herself from her leaning posture, took a step backward, so she stood entirely free of the trapdoor, then slipping her foot under the rug, she placed it lightly upon the spring-bolt, which she was careful not to press; the ample fall of her dress concealed the position of her foot. (Southworth 282)

As Capitola, regrettably, prepares the trapdoor hidden in her room to ensnare Black Donald she tries to appeal to his conscience and reminds him that if he expresses forgiveness for his sins and leaves her be that God will have mercy on his soul in death. Black Donald laughs off Capitola’s suggestion and her pleas for his soul since he has finally captured her and holds dominion over her fate. Capitola triggers the trap door while pleading with Black Donald to repent and save his soul. Her pleas are the most passive she has been for the entire novel. Capitola’s desperate, but courageous, act goes against the notion that Hoeverler states that most gothic heroines possessed. Capitola, by tricking Black Donald and allowing him to fall down her trapdoor, to what she feared would be his death. She would be getting her hands dirty and it is a sign of pure aggression, in a similar way that she dealt with any danger head-on, just with more extreme results. For Capitola, even though she has remorse for having to resort to such a violent way to dispatch of her main adversary, she still mourns this action and is thankful when Black Donald is alive because Capitola admits many times throughout the novel that she loves him and his wild nature.

Along with having dual heroines, Southworth also creates a duality with each heroine’s individual love interests. Capitola’s adoration turns Black Donald from a mere antagonist into a

Byronic Hero, which was also popular in nineteenth-century gothic novels. However, along with her love of Black Donald, Capitola mentions that she is in love with her childhood friend Herbert Greyson near the end of the novel, but this relationship is barely touched upon and Herbert and Capitola spend most of the novel apart, going on separate adventures than truly moving their relationship beyond its initial friendship. In opposition to this, and while their relationship is a fairly stereotypical love at first sight affair, Clara and her fiancée Traverse spend a large portion of the novel getting to know one another before Clara's father passes away, and after Clara is free from the Le Noirs, she frequently contacts Traverse and the two continue to admire and express feelings for one another throughout the novel. Because of the relationship Traverse and Clara have, she does not fall for any of Craven Le Noir's attempts to woo her, and unlike Capitola who adores Black Donald's dangerous ways, Clara sees through Craven's seduction and surmises that he has no power of his own and only wants her fortune because his evil father wants to control it and, by extension, her.

Just as authors of the nineteenth century Female Gothic had gained popularity with readers in America, Southworth's *The Hidden Hand*, was popular with British readers as well. Capitola, as a character, being the main factor in the novel's popularity outside of it being a gothic romance. Despite being massively popular, Southworth was not without her critics with harsh opinions, especially regarding her female characters. Linda Naranjo-Hueb, in her article "The Road to Perdition: E.D.E.N Southworth and the Critics" recalls early critics of Southworth's reprinted works:

Amy Hudock, in her study of Southworth's early fiction, argues that 'Southworth could explore common female stereotypes, challenge the image of sacred motherhood, question the control of husband over wife, and still appear, on the surface at least, to be



writing traditional, conventional “ ‘moral’ lessons to young girls.’ ”According to Hudock, Southworth contests “true womanhood” by juxtaposing it with “real womanhood” and illustrating how cultural ideals of women’s submission, passivity, and husband worship made the protection and promotion of women’s virtue impossible. (Naranjo-Hueb 131)<sup>11</sup>

Naranjo-Hueb, while mentioning what past critics had said about Southworth’s popular mass-produced novels and their female heroines that critics at the time refused to take seriously, still illustrates the change as one of America’s first major Female Gothic romance writers that Southworth was, changing the expectations of a gothic heroine into a heroic and brave young girl, creating two in fact, without taking away either girls’ femininity, revealed a change in how other women writers would portray their own gothic heroines, or their young women in their writings overall, in a similar, but more extreme way, than their European contemporaries like the Brontës or even their British predecessors like Ann Radcliffe.

With the changes Southworth made to the gothic romance novel and her own heroines by creating two characters who are defined by duality, she still followed the traditional gothic romance ending for her own novel. After Capitola believes she has killed the nefarious Black Donald, she is thrilled to know that he is indeed alive but becomes sad again when she learns that he will be executed for his numerous crimes after he is arrested. During this time, Capitola also receives news that Herbert Greyson, a young man who helped unite Capitola with Old Hurricane is coming home from war and that Gabriel Le Noir died from his injuries in battle, leaving Capitola as an heiress to The Hidden House, and heir to Hurricane Hall, after Old Hurricane’s death. During this time, Clara and Traverse had located Capitola’s biological mother and the

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<sup>11</sup> For more critical views on Southworth see Elaine Showalter’s *A Jury of Her Peers* Chapter 5.

two reunite, after being separated by Gabriel Le Noir since Capitola's birth (330-342). The ending of the gothic romance novel, where the heroes triumph, the heroine gains her inheritance, learns about her past, and is reunited and married to her young lover, is a gothic trope that had persisted since the creation of the Female Gothic with Ann Radcliffe and was popular in the nineteenth century with similar circumstances happening to the titular protagonist of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. Even Southworth's British contemporary, Charles Dickens, used this ending as well for some of his novels, namely, *Oliver Twist*. While this style of happy ending was popular when Southworth was publishing *The Hidden Hand*, some differences about its effects on Capitola stand out. Southworth writes: "I wish I could say "they all lived happily ever after" ... And I know for a positive fact that our Cap sometimes gives her "dear, darling, sweet Hebert" the benefits of the sharp edge of her tongue. Which he deserves. But notwithstanding all this, I am happy to say all enjoyed a fair amount of human felicity" (349). Capitola's personality, not changing even within the domesticity of a happy marriage, prevails in subverting the passivity of the British gothic heroine but also reflecting the changes that women writers in the nineteenth century craved in their role-model heroines. In the ending Clara also receives the spotlight and Southworth comments that she, like Capitola, also appears to be in charge of her marriage despite societal norms for the nineteenth century, especially in gothic novels. With Capitola and Clara, Southworth gave the American nineteenth-century Female Gothic two non-stereotypical protagonists to look to when writing about young girls.

## CHAPTER TWO

### The Gothic Heroine in Romance: Alcott's Transition from *Jane Eyre* to *Jo March*

After the publication of *Little Women* in 1868-9, Louisa May Alcott became one of America's most well-known female authors. Critics have studied *Little Women* for years, and scholars of Alcott found various novels, short stories, and nonfiction pieces that she had written and published before and after her most famous novel. Some of these new works were dubbed "gothic thrillers" and were primarily short stories or novellas published under a male pseudonym. In 1995, Kent Bicknell discovered an unpublished manuscript by Alcott called *A Long Fatal Love Chase*. The manuscript was similar to Alcott's gothic thrillers but it was novel-length and published by Dell after Bicknell had found it. After its publication, critics such as Elizabeth Lennox Keyser briefly mention the novel in her book *Whispers in the Dark*, which details the many works that Alcott wrote before and after *Little Women*. Christie Doyle also mentions *A Long Fatal Love Chase* in her book *Louisa May Alcott & Charlotte Bronte: Transatlantic Translations*, in which she mentions the similarities and differences between *Love Chase* and the influential *Jane Eyre*. Recently articles have been written about *Love Chase* discussing its relationship to *Jane Eyre*, its connections, if any, to *Little Women* and the other gothic thrillers Alcott published.<sup>12</sup> They also mention its feminist messages. Critics such as Holly Blackwood with her article "Chasing Amy: Mephistopheles, the Laurence Boy, and Louisa May Alcott's Punishment of Female Ambition." and Elena E. Sottilotta have taken these routes when discussing the influence *A Long Fatal Love Chase* has on the rest of Alcott's work. Louisa May Alcott's gothic novel *A Long Fatal Love Chase* has many similarities to *Jane Eyre*, however,

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<sup>12</sup> Christie Doyle's research provides evidence that Alcott had read *Jane Eyre* due to the "Jane Eyre fever" during the time. Alcott herself references the novel in *Work: A Story of Experience*.

Alcott drifts away from Jane and creates a heroine who is similar to Jo March of *Little Women* and makes Rosamond grow from a naïve young girl and by the intense ending of the novel, has to wrestle with the reality of becoming her own independent woman who faces the harshness of abusive relationships and the danger of an obsessive stalker. Alcott also provides commentary on the Byronic Hero, a popular nineteenth-century trope by making him the antagonist. In addition, Alcott gives Rosamond other romances that fail to come to fruition. By subverting common Brontë tropes, and by establishing her own tropes, Alcott's last gothic novel provides the foundations to her domestic novels in the future.

## **HEROINE**

Like *Jane Eyre*, Rosamond endures a lonely life and grows up sheltered and naïve. Alcott creates a traditional dark setting on an isolated piece of land by the sea somewhere in England. The start of the novel describes a fierce storm outside with crashing waves and howling winds with a fancy mansion where a rich elderly man and his young granddaughter, the protagonist of *Love Chase*, have lived for years. During this violent storm, Rosamond Vivian tells the reader the backstory to her relationship with her grandfather and quickly makes her desire for freedom and her restlessness and loneliness known. "I tell you I cannot bear it! I shall do something desperate if this life is not changed soon. It gets worse and worse, and I often feel as if I'd gladly sell my soul to Satan for a year of freedom." ... "The knowledge that you care nothing for me makes me wretched" (Alcott 1-2). While Rosamond's declarations appear to be overdramatic, and in some ways are since the gothic tends to veer toward the melodramatic, these spirited words reveal her passionate and driven nature as a gothic heroine. It also gives Rosamond a bit of a spoiled streak as well, unlike her inspiration *Jane Eyre*. Jane lived most of her life with a

horribly abusive aunt and cousins, before being forced to attend an abysmal religious school where she is mistreated further, Rosamond's life has been one of boredom and general solitude with an, admittedly, gloomy and gruff guardian who at first glance cares about the money he could gain by taking her in. Rosamond's words also show just how innocent she truly is since she honestly believes that giving up her soul for adventure would be preferable to a boring but healthy lifestyle. By giving her protagonist a simpler life than Charlotte Brontë's, or Southworth's, while also making her more emotionally vulnerable and lonely than the heroines of the previous centuries who spent their childhoods in an idealistic bliss before being orphaned as teenagers, Alcott creates the image of a bright young girl who, while vibrant and innocent, has a hint of an adventurous and rebellious streak that can make her into a more mature woman later on in the story.

Rosamond's development begins when she is introduced to Phillip Tempest, a mysterious older man, and his ward Lito. Rosamond is immediately infatuated with Tempest and once she demonstrates that she is not afraid of her seducer, despite evidence that she should be, Tempest and Rosamond's grandfather gamble repeatedly until Tempest finally bests his mentor. Rosamond, while observing admits to not understanding what the gambling is all about, but quickly learns the truth. At first, Tempest lies and tells Rosamond that he wants her as a charming companion, like the one he promised to find for her. Even going as far as to ask her if she would have him as a master. She is, of course, delighted but when he mentions that he bought her for a price, she demands to know what he means. "Did you play for me?" suddenly asked the girl with a frown of shame and pain. "Yes, he would have it so. ... That is the truth, forget it and be happy, dear" (Alcott 56). Rosamond's horror at being tricked and essentially bought and abducted are understandable. Along with this, her refusal of Phillip's dismissal of the

whole matter, even when Rosamond is trapped and away from her childhood home, reinforces her own inner strength. While she is fascinated by the dark and seductive nature of Phillip Tempest, she refuses to be wooed or manipulated into accepting wrongs done to her. In the end, she even threatens to throw herself overboard if Tempest does not do right by her, in this case marrying her as opposed to making her a lover or companion.

Even with all of the evidence that is presented to her, Rosamond, out of loneliness and devotion continues to deny that Tempest could truly be a bad person. While her naivety could be frustrating, it helps to show Rosamond's characteristics at the beginning where she is more childlike. Lori A. Paige in her book *The Gothic Romance Wave: A Critical History of the Mass Market Novels, 1960-1993* describes the stereotypes and process the gothic heroine endures. Paige states: "Clearly, the popular image of the gothic ingénue as a stereotyped Pollyanna wailing for rescue in the villain's dungeon misrepresents both character and genre. The heroine of any romance, most certainly including the gothic, maintains a complex relationship to (the presumed female) reader as both Other and Self" ( Paige 98).<sup>13</sup> The trope, even if it does not apply to the entire genre, is seen heavily in terms of romance, especially with novels like *Jane Eyre* and the beginning of *A Long Fatal Love Chase*. Just like Jane, Rosamond has escaped a house where she had been mistreated in some way. The heroine is wooed by a dark and dangerous man and is determined to fix his wicked ways with her good nature. The optimism that love can save anyone which Paige references. For Rosamond, this means living a life of freedom and bliss. It is the stereotypical happy ending for various gothic heroines. Alcott has taken the expectations that readers usually find in a gothic romance and placed the seemingly triumphant happy ending at the start of the novel intentionally. With her own subtle commentary,

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<sup>13</sup> See Jane Tompkins's *Sensational Designs* chapter VI for a more in-depth look at the tropes for female characters.

Alcott is revealing that a union between two people who are in love, or rather the heroine marrying a man she is convinced must love her, does not mean that that is the end-all-be-all of any woman's life or troubles.

In her book *Literary Women*, Ellen Moers creates her own sketch of the stereotypical gothic heroine. Moers states: "The Gothic heroine was quintessentially a defenseless victim, a weakling, a whimpering, trembling, cowering little piece of propriety whose sufferings are the source of her erotic fascinations" (Moers 137).<sup>14</sup> While Moers limited description does indeed apply to some traditional heroines, especially in the beginnings of the genre, and some of these traits could even be applied to Rosamond herself; seeing as she is also a victim in a power struggle where she suffers greatly and feels defenseless in the face of her fearsome and dangerous stalker. For Rosamond, who had been aware that Tempest was, in fact, a bad person but chose to ignore this, she now possesses an awareness of his many faults and becomes a strategist and even a sleuth. The disappearance of poor Lito has made a gothic heroine, who even in some of the most progressive novels of this genre is guilty of, turn from a passive character who is led by the whims and protection of others, into an active one. After finding a freshly dug grave, in horror and revulsion, Rosamond attempts to sneak back into the villa to either accuse her husband of murder or to leave him, when she overhears a heated argument between Phillip and his wife, Marion.

In a similar way to other plot points within *Love Chase*, the secret first wife was a factor in the ending of *Jane Eyre*. The revelation shocks and enrages Rosamond to her very being. Automatically believing this woman whom she has never met based on her husband's previous

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<sup>14</sup> Juliane E. Flenoor's *The Female Gothic* discusses how Female Gothic evolved from these origins but also still adheres to them well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

actions alone. “Not another day or hour would she remain, ... To go instantly, and forever was her only thought, ... she dropped again from the balcony and hurried away to the station by a little path which lead through the vineyard and lessened the distance materially” (Alcott 130-131). Rosamond’s escape from Tempest is both similar and different than *Jane Eyre*, as a character and plot point. Like the Brontë heroine, Jane left Rochester after discovering that he was committing the crime of bigamy with her.

Unlike Jane, however, Rosamond is quicker in her attempts to flee from her dishonest lover and knows that she must sneak away to avoid exposure, where Jane simply announced her intentions and left the following day. Part of Rosamond’s escape plan is also foreshadowed earlier in the novel when Tempest asks his new wife what she would do if she ever found out that he had done something so reprehensible that she could not bear to be associated with him any longer. When she begins to state that she would leave, he taunts her. “He interrupted with a triumphant laugh, “Die as heroines always do, tender slaves that they are.” “No, live and forget you,” was the unexpected reply” (Alcott 63). Alcott’s commentary on the usual actions of passive gothic heroines and Rosamond’s determined and unexpected reply reveals changes that would serve her well as her ex-husband stalks her throughout Europe. It is also a brief hint at another departure from the Brontës where Jane, after fleeing from Rochester, nearly dies all while thinking that she should possibly go back to him, or Catherine Earnshaw who dies of madness and a broken heart in *Wuthering Heights*. Tempest’s cruelties are similar to Rochester and Heathcliff’s as well. However, these actions encourage Rosamond to flee because they are not endearing to her. Since the Brontës’ novels had such a strong hold on the popular consciousness, Alcott goes beyond the Brontës and statements from Rosamond about moving on with her life.



Rosamond also deals with the real struggles that a single young woman would have faced in the nineteenth century, especially one traveling all alone with no family to call upon for help. When Rosamond flees her husband's villa, she at first stays with a friend that she met when she had traveled to France with Tempest the year before. Her friend, fortunately, believes her and agrees to assist her in finding employment by sewing. While Rosamond admits that she is not a fan of this profession, it gives her some money since there aren't many types of employment for single women available and she believes that she has found a safe haven from her husband who has not come to look for her yet. Sadly, coming home one day she enters the house in the dead of night with a startling gothic vibe. "It was dark when she returned, and wearily groping her way up the long unlighted stairs she unlocked the door, entered and groped for a match. Turning with a candle dimly burning in her hand she uttered a loud cry and rushed to the door, for there seated in her one chair was Phillip Tempest" (Alcott 136). The coincidence and type of tense atmosphere appear throughout the rest of the novel and builds on the danger Rosamond is in every time he appears. The trope of a lone woman with a single burning flame turning around to see a monster, or human antagonist, about to ensnare her is a classic in both gothic literature and modern horror as well. What gives this trope strength in *Love Chase* is not just how frightened and surprised Rosamond is but how realistically her hopes are dashed by the sudden appearance of her ex-husband who consistently attempts to make her return to him, by seductive methods or by force if needed. Phillip offers Rosamond an ultimatum, an illusion of free will and choice: she can come back to him and the life he claims she loved, or she can be physically dragged away so she cannot escape. Within this unfair situation, where there is truly no direct way for Rosamond to benefit, she chooses a third option. She once again sneaks away and spends her life on the run, living under false identities and under false pretenses.

In one such instance, Rosamond comes across a corpse with the name “Madeline Constant” by a suicide note. In desperation, and knowing that Tempest would follow her, Rosamond ties her own ribbon around the corpse’s neck and replaces her name with the unfortunate woman whose resemblance to her, even in death, would be enough to fool anyone who might come looking for her. She seeks a life as a nun, wanting some kind of penance for, unwillingly, aiding Tempest in his deception and as a way to hide from her own pain and rage. Rosamond’s acts of deception could potentially be alarming to the Victorian audience. Alcott not only forces her heroine to commit fraud on multiple occasions but even allows her to take the place of a dead woman, claiming to have ended her own life. Her fears and desperate acts, while not the noblest actions a young Victorian girl could make, are some of the only ways to fully move on to a better life, while also protecting herself from going back to a relationship she no longer desires. It is also the beginning of Rosamond’s development as a gothic heroine since after this point, she spends most of the novel trying to find employment for herself and live a new life away from her abuser. While doing all of this is indeed frightening for Rosamond who had grown up isolated from people but also lived a comfortable life, she is determined to find a life for herself on her own terms and become an independent adult woman.

In her 2011 article, “Chasing Amy: Mephistopheles, the Laurence Boy, and Louisa May Alcott's Punishment of Female Ambition”, Holly Blackford compares Alcott’s conflicting portrayal of Rosamond as an innocent girl and a runaway ambitious master of disguise with the transformation Amy March undergoes between childhood and adulthood. When speaking of these comparisons Blackford states:

The passages found in both *A Long Fatal Love Chase* and *Little Women* suggest Amy’s kinship with Rosamond, whose “innocence” Alcott works too hard to preserve. The

narrator's representation of Rosamond results in an uneasy paradox. Rose is simultaneously a swashbuckling woman of the world, donning various disguises and even faking her own death, and a whiny child pleading for protection from various characters, such as Mrs. Tempest. ... Similarly to the narrator's uneasy insistence on Rosamond's innocence, the narrator of *Little Women* paradoxically asserts Amy's coquettishness and innocence, characterizing her as a polished social sculpture, yet " 'the baby' " or " 'unspoiled' " child. (Blackford 5)<sup>15</sup>

Blackford's comparisons between Alcott's unease when making both Amy and Rosamond paradoxical figures as they mature, while at first appearing to be a negative aspect of both characters; especially in regards to Rosamond, actually works well for the narrative Alcott is trying to tell. While Rosamond's fear and need for protection can at first appear similar to that of a whiny child since she continually fails to entirely protect herself on her own, the fact that she still makes an ambitious attempt to flee from a man who has far more influence and power than her reveals her hidden strength in spite of, or perhaps because of, her consistent trauma and fear which grows with every encounter she and Tempest have. These strengths in her character, while Blackford relates them more to Amy, actually enable Rosamond to grow into a more determined and free-spirited person. Rosamond is unwilling to let anyone stop her from pursuing her goals of a new life or hinder her independence. These factors make her become more like the fiery and passionate Jo March than her youngest sister who grows from a little child and into a perfect Victorian woman. Rosamond's ability to ask for help, despite becoming self-assured enough to face Tempest alone, actually gives her a more mature personality than Amy's perfection because

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<sup>15</sup> Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar discuss the repression of female aggression and the depiction of women writers making female characters that are perfect but also have a duality to them in *The Madwoman in the Attic*. In her article "Louisa May Alcott: New Texts and Contexts" Christie Doyle also acknowledges Rosamond and Jo as active heroines.

she is now self-reliant enough to know when she needs assistance. Her realization does give Rosamond a duality as a character but it does not make her inconsistent or contradictory.

Her duality is seen the most when Rosamond finds some true satisfaction in her life when she arrives in Paris and is engaged to a wealthy widower, and is almost the stepmother of his beautiful young daughter. With her fiancé, Rosamond realizes that she can be free of Tempest and have a sweet loving family, something she never had aside from her close friendship to Lito. This would not only give Rosamond some of the independence to control her own life that she has craved since fleeing from Tempest, and in a more childlike way, living with her grandfather, but help her be more mature by being a mother to a little girl. Sadly, the week before Rosamond can be married to De Luniece, she is accosted by Phillip once again. Instead of the usual trickery, bribery, and begging he had used on Rosamond previously, he is filled with a possessive rage that was seen when he had threatened to harm Lito earlier in the novel. When the two are face-to-face, Tempest attempts to remind Rosamond of the so-called promise she made to never get engaged during their chase. In her own rage, Rosamond deftly reminds him that she made no such ridiculous promise and the two engage in a power play. “You have no right to forbid me anything.”

...

“I warn you to beware, Rose, I am in earnest, and I *always conquer*.”

“I am in earnest, and I *never yield*” (Alcott 220).

While Phillip had given Rosamond warnings about his nature throughout the novel, and warnings about how much power he had over her, he finally uses threats and even violence in order to make Rosamond his once again. He even threatens to kill her new fiancée and her future

stepdaughter if she won't submit and when she still refuses but attempts to plead with him for mercy, he is unmoved and treats the whole affair as though it is her fault and that he is simply reacting to her unreasonable behavior. Despite these manipulations, Rosamond steadfastly refuses to change her mind about Tempest, nor does she allow him to turn the blame onto her when she had every right to abandon him, even within a society that encouraged women to stay with the men that they marry. Rosamond's psyche can no longer take the abuse and psychological torture that Tempest places upon her and she shoots herself in the side. Her act, not only emphasizes her mental exhaustion at being chased and forced out of every home she finds but also is another way for Rosamond to take control of her own life. The fact that she shot herself in the side may not have been a true suicide attempt but merely a way to scare Phillip into abandoning her somewhere or trick him into believing she is dead. While Rosamond's actions are extreme, it shows her growth into a more mature person. Rosamond is unwilling to give up control of her own life to anyone. Rosamond's stress and tribulations not only foster her independence but also makes her able to take any action she needs to in order to survive. Rosamond's actions have successfully bewildered her oppressor who still wants her to be a submissive person.

Along with Rosamond's maturity, and another aspect she has in common with Jo March is that Rosamond discovers new ways to escape Tempest after demanding that he leave her alone and running away doesn't work. Rosamond is willing to be cunning and combine her new independent self with the docile girl Tempest wants her to be. When Tempest commits Rosamond to a women's insane asylum where she will be forced to stay until she fully submits to Tempest and his demands. Alcott's descriptions of the asylum are frightening and give the novel a sense of isolation and bleakness that had been absent from the narrative. "The windows

were barred, the fire burned behind a tall, wire screen, and on the wall hung a shapless garment with many straps and buckles. . . . Strange sounds met her ears, loud laughter, discordant singing, incoherent voices, and now and then, a terrible, shrill cry as one of mortal pain” (Alcott 245). The brief description of the barren room and the obvious torment of the other women in the asylum, or madhouse as it is referred to in the novel, is disturbing and creates despair in Rosamond, who, even when vowing to stay resolute and prove herself not “mad”, is quickly losing her resolve as she is subjected to psychological torment by her doctor who is determined to make her “well” again and a cold nurse who pities Tempest because he appeared worried for Rosamond’s health, even though he is the one who locked her away and declared her “a pitiful madwoman”. In a similar way to how De Luniece viewed Rosamond as “mad” for her emotional and desperate attempt to save his life, Rosamond’s doctor and the other people in charge of the asylum are easily manipulated by Tempest or work under him to ensure that Rosamond’s independent spirit eventually breaks. The other women inside the asylum, even as they are described as “lunatics” are pitiful in their lonely lives and serve to represent the horrible way women who are called “insane” are treated in nineteenth-century European asylums. Even with all of her strength, Rosamond, like the women in the asylum, mentally breaks down under the entrapment. Her experience is what fuels Rosamond’s ability to create a duality for herself. She is both a mature woman who keeps her own sanity in adversity and also pretends to be humbled and passive in order to escape. Rosamond no longer fights against him with her anger or her words, but with silence and empty stares while she berates herself for almost falling for Tempest’s tricks while she recovers and for falling in love with him in the first place.

Interestingly, when Rosamond almost falls back into temptation, she never brings up her sexual status nor is this information ever given to the reader. The potential audience could

assume that Rosamond is not innocent in a sexual way, as the typical gothic virgin. But she is innocent of any wrongdoing in the narrative and was manipulated by Tempest like every other character. However, since she and Tempest were married, Rosamond's feelings of shame, anger, and guilt could have come from regret for not preserving her virginity as much as it comes from being a naive woman who ignored her husband's dangerous nature. By refusing to portray Rosamond as a hopelessly romantic girl who can save her tortured lover with her innocence and girlish nature, nor as a deceptive or seductive girl who delights in getting her own way and causing harm to others, Alcott chooses another path for Rosamond's characterization. Alcott never mentions Rosamond's sexuality in the novel.<sup>16</sup> Because of this, Rosamond's innocence in a moral sense gives her an emotional and psychological struggle against her rushed marriage and her own former naivety. This provides a different kind of weight that relies on the heroine's strength of will and her personality rather than letting her character's sex appeal define how she is supposed to be viewed by the reader.

Even with the absence of sexuality to define her as either a pawn who is damaged sexually or as an unearthly angelic virgin, Rosamond's battle with desire for Tempest gives her a strong duality similar to her complex nature as both a victim of abuse who constantly needs assistance from others and an independent young woman who is clever enough to flee her stalker ex-husband on her own. Rosamond's complexity gives her a different relationship to Marion, Tempest's first wife.

When Marion is first introduced she acknowledges that Rosamond willingly played no part in Tempest's fake second marriage, and yet, because Rosamond is the one Tempest wants,

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<sup>16</sup> For more on Alcott's views on the obsession with sexual purity and its negative effects see Patricia Bizzell's "Chastity Warrants for Women Public Speakers in Nineteenth-Century American Fiction".

helping the girl could easily place Lito and herself in danger. Marion, even though Tempest is an abusive man, could have also felt jealous of Rosamond's youth and gentle nature like many other gothic novels do. Yet, Marion assists Rosamond and Ignatius in their escape efforts by hiding them and tricking Tempest when he comes looking for Rosamond. The bond between the two ex-wives is refreshing and places an emphasis on friendship and women helping one another through abusive marriages which Alcott clearly has established as the opposite of romantic throughout all of *A Long Fatal Love Chase*. By giving Marion and Rosamond a brief but decent relationship makes both women likable and complex in their personalities where one is not good or evil. Marion is also not a wise-sage type mentor to Rosamond, giving her advice and helping her grow as a person. Despite needing assistance to break free of Tempest and go back to her grandfather for protection, Rosamond grew as a determined young woman on her own and spent months battling for her personhood alone.

Along with these solo battles against Tempest, Rosamond through her own need for independence and out of desperation changes from a slightly outspoken but mostly sweet young lady into a more tomboy-like character similar to Jo March. Just like Jo, as Rosamond continues to have a battle of wills with her ex-husband, she begins to no longer care about society's views on gender norms. In her constant defiance against Tempest, Rosamond rejects the idea that he has any control over her autonomy simply because they were "married" and Tempest is willing to get a divorce just for her. Rosamond's situation making her bolder and grow into a more independent person is also reflected in her traveling alone to find safety when she argued with her grandfather that she couldn't leave her childhood home because she needed a companion or an employer before she could do so. Rosamond's earlier interactions with her grandfather are echoed in a different, yet similar way in *Little Women*, where Jo feels that she can only



accomplish her dreams by adhering to her strict Aunt March before traveling to New York and becoming an author by her own means. For both Rosamond and Jo, gaining independence and control over their adult lives means breaking away from traditional gender roles which state that women can only be successful by marrying or by being a companion.

In a similar way to other gothic heroines, Rosamond even gets the chance at another, more suitable romance when she befriends and even falls in love with a young priest named Father Ignatius. Ignatius is trusting, gentle, and kind to Rosamond and she feels as if he is one of the only members of the Covenant that she has been a part of whom she feels that she can trust with her secret. In a way that could have been reminiscent of St. John in *Jane Eyre* or, for a more appropriately romantic relationship, Jo's closeness with Laurie versus Rochester and Bhear respectively. Rosamond, even with her strong feelings for him and vice versa, knows that she and Ignatius can never experience a true adult relationship because of his vows and his occupations. In this way, Alcott does make Rosamond suffer more, as Mores suggests many other gothic heroines suffer, by not allowing Rosamond to give in to either a sweet and simple love affair with a young priest who would treat her with respect nor her darker but more intriguing sexual affair with Phillip Tempest.

Rosamond grows from her mistakes at the beginning of the novel and develops into a stronger and more independent woman in spite of the patriarchal society, because of this, Alcott uses *Love Chase* to express her own views on real issues that women faced and experimented with progressive elements that would be further developed in her domestic fiction. The separation from heroines such as Jane and Catherine make Rosamond have more in common with the heroines in the "blood and guts" potboilers written by a young Jo March in Alcott's

*Little Women*, where the brave and passionate girl defies a wicked man who attempts to ensnare and seduce her, but is also closer in personality and strength of will to Jo herself.

## **BYRONIC HERO**

In her book *The Byronic Hero in Film, Fiction, and Television*, Atara Stein discusses the appeal that the dark brooding loner has on both a nineteenth-century and contemporary audience. “Each audience is well aware of its own powerlessness in the face of institutional authority and the combination of wealth and power. Thus, the heroes’ defiance, if only temporary is a most important aspect of their appeal” (Stein 10).<sup>17</sup> This audience appeal is why characters like Heathcliff and Rochester are still popular romantic heroes and this combination of wealth, power, and rebellion is what draws heroines to Byronic heroes.

All of these traits are what draws Rosamond to the novel’s antagonist Phillip Tempest, a former student of her grandfather who also is introduced within the first chapter. As the two continue to talk Rosamond is obviously enraptured with Phillip’s freedom to go wherever and whenever he chooses by way of his personal yacht, and with his charming demeanor. When Rosamond finally goes onto his yacht with him, she meets a young boy named Ippolito. The meeting is another plot point found in *Jane Eyre* when Jane meets Rochester and his ward by accepting a position as a governess. During this introduction between Ippolito and Rosamond, he makes a sly comment regarding Rosamond staying on the yacht and sailing away with his master. Their actions give both the audience and the protagonist their first glimpse into Phillip as

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<sup>17</sup> The rest of Stein’s book not only discusses Lord Byron himself but also looks at the impact of the Byronic Hero into the 21<sup>st</sup> century as a popular character archetype. Peter L. Thorslev Jr.’s *The Byronic Hero: Types and Prototypes* is a useful source for discussing the changes to the Byronic Hero as well.

a cruel and manipulative figure. “A hand on his mouth silenced the boy and Tempest swung him over the boat side, holding him there with one strong arm while he emphasized his words with the other. . . . She clung to Tempest’s arm and implored him to take the culprit out of danger, till, with a relenting smile, he complied,” (Alcott 34). Rosamond’s naivety, and Phillip’s harshness, are emphasized by Alcott, not only because gothic heroines of the past were traditionally passive and innocent, but also to criticize both characters, which Alcott will continue to do for Tempest as Rosamond’s character develops. Once he is out of danger Phillip asks Rosamond if he frightens her. She replies that he does not and that if he refuses to take her back, she will throw herself overboard because she will submit to no one, just like he won’t either. The scene, while showing Rosamond’s clear love for Lito and has her confidently showing her independence, is still problematic since she retains an interest in Tempest after he has demonstrated a willingness to physically harm those who disobey or even annoy him in any way.

Tempest’s dangerous nature and Rosamond’s naivety directly cause the beginning and end of their relationship. For Rosamond, her happy bliss of a stable marriage and a happily ever after is quickly interrupted by a simple plot device, a mysterious letter sent to Lito when the trio is in Greece. At first, Rosamond dreamily assumes that this letter was given to Lito by a young girl around his age that he had been flirting with, but when Tempest, in an effort to torment and tease his young ward reads the contents he is in a rage, once again showing off his temper and his violent nature toward those he deems weaker than himself. After many threats, he orders Rosamond to leave him alone with the boy, which she does reluctantly. When he returns, Rosamond is alarmed since Lito is not with him.

“I shall never see him anymore?” Rosamond cried, aghast at the sudden separation.

“Never.”

Her tears and her silence annoyed Tempest, and he said in a tone he had never used with her before, said empathetically, “Rose, remember one thing. I am master here, my will is law, and disobedience I punish without mercy.” (Alcott 100-101)

Tempest’s actions make him have more in common with the stereotypical villain in a gothic novel than the brooding but often patronizing Edward Rochester or even the pitiful but cruel Heathcliff from the Brontës who inspired Alcott. Tempest’s frightening tone and acts, while it should frighten Rosamond into keeping quiet and subservient to her, as he calls himself, master, only fuels her suspicions that he has murdered the child and forces Rosamond to truly reflect upon the kind of man she has married, and how safe is she with him, and more importantly, when and how could she break away from her abusive and monstrous husband. Rosamond, at this point in her narrative, has gone from a happy naive young girl to a concerned, but determined young woman who is desperate to find out what her husband did to his little ward.

Just like his predecessors, Tempest has appealing characteristics which fooled Rosamond in the beginning and other characters as well. Not only is Tempest seductive and mysterious, making him a sort of popular bad boy trope who just needs someone to love, he also frequently excuses his horrible treatment of Rosamond by both the narrator and Tempest himself claiming to love Rosamond. While Tempest’s declarations appear romantic on the surface, his actions and callous treatment of the other characters deconstructs and contradicts a more sympathetic view of his character. Alcott, herself, even emphasizes how much Tempest is the villain and not a sympathetic hero, by having Rosamond’s nurse in the asylum wholeheartedly believe that he put Rosamond in such a horrible state out of affection. This is contrasted with Rosamond’s frustration and anger at the woman for doing what she once did, fall for Tempest’s Byronic nature and cast aside his more dangerous attributes.

Tempest becomes more villainous by stalking Rosamond and treating her like a prize. During her time inside an abbey, after stealing a confession that she still has some affection for him, Tempest reveals that continuing the game of cat and mouse, was not the only reason he had for seeking her out. Phillip states his other motivation, hoping for a positive response:

“Marion has consented to a divorce ... Then, Rose, will you become my wife in solemn earnest?”

“No.”

“Why not, most capricious of angels? Did you not confess that you loved me, longed for me, and desired to save my soul.”

“No; the wish was a weak and wicked one, the answer false and I reject it” (Alcott 193).

Rosamond’s rejection of Tempest, even when he attempts a new tactic, by using the truth as a manipulative force, reveals how much Rosamond has grown from the girl who had told Phillip that she would stand by him and attempt to save him from his corruptive and devilish nature with her kindness and pure heart. Like Rosamond’s rejection of dying of shame like a heroine should do, she also remains resolute in her decision to never willingly return to the man who refuses to give her peace of mind or freedom to create her own future. After being lied to and stalked multiple times at this point in the novel; she also can see through Phillip’s new tactical abuse by using her own former beliefs against her and, even when Phillip admits to liking the cat and mouse game the two have played until this point, Rosamond once again escapes, not to give Phillip Tempest the hunt that he wants, but to make a pleasant life for herself without having to be fearful of her ex-husband’s every move.

The lack of a love interest for Rosamond begins at the start of the novel when Tempest, who at first appears to be an embodiment of the Byronic Hero, is revealed to be a malicious liar who stops at nothing to track Rosamond down. By destroying Rosamond's stereotypical romance of the wild dangerous man and the innocent, but strong, good girl, Alcott not only deconstructs nineteenth-century gothic stereotypes by showing how awful marriage to a dark brooding man with violent tendencies is, she leaves Rosamond opportunities to have love triangles between the wild Phillip Tempest and whomever Rosamond could fall in love with throughout the novel.

Rather, this would have occurred if Alcott had followed the popular structure of a gothic romance during the time. However, by subverting the gothic romance encompassing the Byronic Hero, she deviates from other romantic subplots as well, even if she appears to adhere to them at first. When Rosamond sees Phillip for the first time, he is standing, symbolically, above a portrait of Mephistopheles from Goethe's play *Faust*, which Rosamond, in a bold fashion quickly notices out loud. "Why, you are the very image of Meph-" (Alcott 5). Rosamond's observation, which causes Tempest to change his facial expressions from a dangerous and fiery one to one of melancholy and weariness after her almost completed statement, forces her to apologize and admit that since her grandfather is a strange and resolute man she has never been socialized nor does she know how to "behave like a proper young lady". Since the novel begins by copying the formula by the Brontës it is appropriate that she would make Tempest appear dangerous at first glance but then quickly make him sympathetic in order to make him appear romantic. By setting Tempest up to be a world-weary hero in search of romance Alcott successfully plays upon the readers' expectations, just like Tempest does to Rosamond.

Alcott's subversion of expectations appears at the end of the novel when Tempest is reduced to an obsessive abuser. In the final chapter of the novel, Rosamond and Ignatius have rented a large boat and attempt to sail their way back to Rosamond's grandfather. Tempest, following the pair and determined to both have Rosamond and dispose of Ignatius whom he sees as a rival for Rosamond's love, rams their boat head-on after he believes Rosamond has gone to the lower deck so that she will not be spotted by her stalker. Soon after this, the boat Ignatius and Rosamond were on is washed ashore and neither of them can be found, causing Tempest to believe that he has won, that Ignatius is dead and Rosamond is in her grandfather's house waiting to finally admit defeat. Shockingly, both to the antagonist and Alcott's potential audience, this assumption is wrong. Rosamond is laying damp and lifeless on the couch where Tempest had first laid eyes on her with her grandfather grieving her loss and raging at Tempest for his actions

"Have you come to look upon your work? Here she is safe and free at last. You said you would hunt her to her grave and you have done it."

"Are you satisfied?"

"I thought her safe, I knew nothing of this, the boat came in last night. Oh! What killed my Rosamond?"

"You killed her, you wrecked her and left her to die in the cruel sea." (Alcott 343-44)

Rosamond's tragic death, as shocking and unusual for a nineteenth-century gothic novel as it is, not only reflects a change in the romantic side of the gothic by killing the heroine and thus allowing any romantic potential go unresolved, as well as subverting the traditional gothic where the heroine gets married and lives a happy life but also ends any potential romances for

Rosamond and brings her character arc full circle. Rosamond's death frees her, shocks the reader, and also punishes Tempest. In a way that is reminiscing of real-life abusive relationships, victims of abuse have been murdered either directly or indirectly by their abusers and with Rosamond's death, Alcott refuses to make the topic of abuse a lighter affair by providing a happy ending.

## **RELATIONSHIPS**

By leaving popular tropes, Alcott's focus on friendship and women's independence within Rosamond establishes clear themes which she will explore further in *Little Women* where the most well-established and interesting relationships in that novel are between the March sisters, their mother, their aunt, and their friendship with Laurie as opposed to the romance between three of the sisters and their respective suitors in the latter half of the narrative. These positive narrative aspects bring levity to the darker and more horrifying scenes in *Love Chase* and separate the gothic heroine from her usual focus on marrying or being reunited with a long lost lover. The friendships Rosamond gains, and the help she either makes for herself or receives from the kindness and love of others also makes the ending of the novel all the more tragic.

Despite some sexual tension and some outspoken declarations of love between Alcott's heroine and her two lovers, Alcott's focus is on the heart of the narrative: one woman's attempts to escape a nightmarish situation by any means necessary. The different suitors for the female protagonist are brought up again in *Little Women*, where critics also discuss Jo March's respective suitors and argue for or against her relationship with one or the other. In his book *Victorian Domesticity: Families in the Life of Louisa May Alcott*, Charles Strickland discusses Alcott's views on marriage and romance within *Little Women* and adds his own views to the debate on whom Jo should have married, which can apply to Rosamond's potential romances as



well. Strickland states: “One of Alcott’s more unfortunate creations is Professor Bhear, who figures predominately in her juvenile fiction as the man Jo March marries. ... One wonders what the lively and passionate Jo sees in Bhear, except as a substitute father figure who functions to restrain her impulsive moods” (Strickland 104).<sup>18</sup> In a similar way to Strickland’s views on the dynamic between Jo, Bhear, and Laurie, Rosamond has potential romantic connections with Ignatius, who is kind, gentle, and closer to her age, compared to Tempest and De Luniece, who are both older than her and had been married previously. Unlike Tempest, who is not a true love interest during the course of the novel due to his abuse of Rosamond, De Luniece is also not a real love interest for Rosamond because their engagement is similar to a business arrangement and not a commitment between two people who are in love. In a similar way to Bhear and Jo in Strickland’s observations. In her book *Louisa May Alcott* as a part of the Twanye’s United States Authors Series, Ruth K. MacDonald makes her own commentary when discusses how readers of *Little Women* reacted to the odd pairing of Jo and Bhear. She states: “The marriage might not be the most romantically advantageous, but it has other assets. It gives Jo the freedom to be more than just a housewife” (MacDonald 6).<sup>19</sup> Unlike Strickland’s views on the marriage between Jo and Bhear, MacDonald points out the positives in such an unconventional marriage that fit with Jo’s nature throughout *Little Women*. It is interesting that Bhear and Jo share intellectual interests and an almost-father daughter type love throughout the second half of *Little Women* in comparison to De Luniece and Rosamond. If Rosamond had, in fact, stayed with De Luniece then she would have been both a mother and a wealthy housewife in a manner that wouldn’t have been that different from her marriage to Tempest.

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<sup>18</sup> For further reading on Jo’s relationships see “Why Jo didn’t Marry Laurie” by Karen O’ Sands.

<sup>19</sup> Stephanie Foote’s article “Resentful Little Women: Gender and Class Feeling in Louisa May Alcott”, focuses on the relationships between men and women in Alcott’s work especially what opportunities are available for women. This is also related to their romantic possibilities.

Rosamond not seeing De Luniece as a love interest places the dynamic between him, Rosamond, and little Natalie in contrast with her similar situation with Tempest and Lito at the start of the novel. It is also in opposition to Jane Eyre, Rochester, and Rochester's ward (and possible daughter). The platonic relationship between Rosamond and her fiancé pulls her away from the toxic and controlling relationship she had with Tempest, showing that she could have a good life with an older man who treated her kindly and did not use his child as a bargaining chip or a servant. The affection between a passionate, brave, and bright young girl like Rosamond and an older gentleman, could also have been the basis for Jo's eventual relationship with Fredrich Bhear in *Little Women*, only with a happier result than *Love Chase's*. Because of the lack of romance between De Luniece and Rosamond, her only other love interest is Ignatius. Since he is a priest, and due to the tragedy at the end of the novel, Alcott gives Rosamond no romance at the end of her story, compared to *Little Women* that was published a year later, with both novels being in genres that usually resulted in marriages and happy endings. The tragic ending of *A Long Fatal Love Chase* turns what would have been a typical Brontë style romance into a horror story about abusers and the effects they have on their victims. Even when Alcott stopped writing her gothic novels, she managed to create her own nineteenth-century heroine with duality and character growth. The themes of non-romantic relationships between men and women and writing young women who stay determined in the face of adversity started with novels like *A Long Fatal Love Chase* and would continue in Alcott's later career.

## CHAPTER THREE

### The Gothic Heroine in Slavery: The Duality of Linda Brent

During the nineteenth century, along with many writers publishing novels, slave narratives were also being published. One of the most well-known slave narratives is the autobiographical *Narrative of the Life of Fredrick Douglass*. Along with slave narratives was the book that helped to instigate the Civil War, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* written by Harriet Beecher Stowe. These two books gained much attention when they were first published, and have been canonical texts, read by millions, after two centuries. While Fredrick Douglass wrote honestly about the hardships he endured during slavery and opened the eyes of those who would never have to face such trauma, and while Harriet Beecher Stowe created a fictional story to highlight slavery and its terrors that attracted a white audience, one author, African American and freed enslaved person, Harriet Jacobs, wrote about her real life experiences using a fictional platform. Jacobs, like Douglass, wrote about the specific hardships that women in slavery were forced to suffer that also needed attention. However, instead of writing a strictly autobiographical account of her life as an enslaved person, Jacobs used fictional names and used the incidents in her own life to craft a story that would be familiar in its delivery and tropes that it would be read by white women, especially, and provoke them into taking a stand for African American women. When critics focus on Jacobs' story, they acknowledge the autobiographical aspects and treat the novel like a slave narrative.<sup>20</sup> Recently, other critics have noticed the gothic elements within Jacobs' storytelling techniques and have discussed how using those elements makes her tragic tale more engaging for a female audience.<sup>21</sup> Along with these, critics have frequently cited Jacobs's

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<sup>20</sup> For focus on the slave narrative aspects of Jacobs novel see "Harriet Jacob's Narrative Strategies: *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*" by Thomas Doherty. Also see *A Jury of Her Peers* chapter six by Elaine Showalter.

<sup>21</sup> For additional information on Jacobs gothic conventions see The "Mysteries and Misereries" of North Carolina:

detailed account of the specific horrors women faced during slavery which has inspired later works in the twentieth century focusing on the same issues.

Specifically, in 1997, Teresa A. Goddu dedicated an entire chapter of her book *Gothic America* to discuss Jacobs' narrative, and other slave narratives, in conjunction with the gothic horror of slavery. Critics such as Casey Pratt had written an article detailing the novel as an American Romance novel and, most recently, Maisha L. Wester has written an entire book based around the African American gothic subgenre with Jacobs and other slave narratives included in the first few chapters. The female suffering that Jacobs and other women in slavery were forced to endure has been the subject of a number of articles and starting with Franny Nudelman, Mary Vermillion in the 1990s and Claudia Tate with a book discussing the more political sides of these issues in 1992. Critics such as Margaret Washington have continued this discussion and focus well into the 2010s. For years critics have studied the gothic elements within slave narratives from the nineteenth century and the subjects of female suffering in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Using these aspects of slave narratives and the Female Gothic, Jacobs continues the concept of the dual gothic heroine through her protagonist Linda. By making the dual heroine one person, as opposed to two, Jacobs depicts Linda as a young woman desperate to escape a dangerous situation, and as a woman who does not let her prior sexual relationships make her an evil or seductive character.

## **GOTHIC ARCHETYPES**

When the narrative begins, the audience is introduced to Linda as a young child, unaware of her life as someone's property due to her family being allotted more privileges than enslaved

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New York City, *Urban Gothic Fiction*, and *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*" by Jennifer Rae Greeson and *A Companion to American Gothic Part II: Origins of American Gothic* edited by Charles L. Crow.

people that worked in the field. After her father passes away, however, Linda is enslaved by a new family, and her life soon changes. Linda's new enslavers, Dr. and Mrs. Flint, assign Linda to be a caretaker to their daughter, thus disillusioning her on the idea of not being an enslaved person. Linda's idealistic childhood, while reminiscent of the picturesque childhood many of her fellow gothic heroines had, is made more sinister by the audiences' awareness that she is, in fact, not seen as a human being and even addresses the woman who enslaved her before Dr. Flint as her "master" in a happy, but unaware, manner. Linda's childhood differs from the European gothic heroines not only because of her race but because she is already trapped within an oppressive system, even without her knowledge. That creates a duality in Linda as a gothic heroine from the start of her story since the traditional heroine is naive in an endearing way but is eventually oppressed and forced to fend for herself. Linda, while having the happiest and most ignorant childhood her family could give her, is already within the clutches of people who would control and do her harm; and she learns this while she is still young. Linda herself states: "Two years had passed since I had entered Dr. Flint's family, and those years brought much of the knowledge that comes from experience," (Jacobs 17). Her knowledge, after describing incidents that Dr. and Mrs. Flint had inflicted on other enslaved people over the past two years during her slavery, is what makes Linda a more mature and aware protagonist than other heroines during her time due to their sheltered lives, while still maintain the goodness, hope, and moral dignity of her European counterparts.

Linda speaks of her first love Benjamin and his desire to be free while retaining his faith in God which keeps him going. During this time, Linda aptly tells the audience of the doctor's ill-intentions toward her. "For my master whose restless, craving, vicious nature roved about night and day, seeking whom to devour, ... When he told me I was made for his use, made to

obey his command in *every* thing; that I was nothing but a slave, whose will must and should surrender to his” (18). The paragraph is simply the first instance that the audience is introduced to Dr. Flint’s other forms of cruelty besides separating mothers from children or physical violence. Linda finds herself, even as a young girl, being coerced into an unwanted sexual relationship with an evil man. Since this occurrence is common for gothic heroines, the trope at first doesn’t appear to be surprising, however, unlike the young girls who are physically trapped, Linda is also reminded of her status within American society as property and thus she should not be able to refuse. Yet, she does so and will continue to do so throughout the novel. When discussing the traditional gothic heroine, Kay J. Mussel’s in *The Female Gothic* states:

The danger is located in a specifically domestic context, and the heroine’s motivation is the preservation of the family unit. She is forced to discover and neutralize the source of the danger, but she does not do so to punish the guilty. Her actions all serve to protect the innocent victims of the villain and her integrity of the family rather than to reinforce a concept of justice or retribution. Simultaneously, the heroine demonstrates that she is “better” than any other woman in the novel by performing most efficiently in a variety of domestic activities. (58)

While most gothic heroines were not directly supposed to be objects of sexual desire, or if they were, they were more innocent and sweet, the threat of sexual assault was often used. Sex, and the heroine refusing to have it, was another domestic necessity to make the heroine a worthier woman than any other character in the novel. Like other heroines, Linda is young and horrified by Dr. Flint’s subtle threats and unwanted attention, but unlike the white heroines who aren’t supposed to express bitterness or anger toward their enemies, Linda’s feelings, as well as her anger toward being treated as property due to her race, give her more duality as a gothic heroine.

It also provides her with depth as a character in a nearly hopeless situation since she is aware that her anger does not fit well within the Christian model of forgiveness but she cannot let go of her anger and her disgust.<sup>22</sup>

Along with her anger at her helpless circumstances, Linda is also self-aware enough to realize that her insistence on her brothers forgiving their enslavers of their trespasses and to trust in God, while she holds onto her outrage toward Dr. Flint is contradictory and might make her appear less like a traditional feminine icon. However, this is also understandable and Jacobs, as a narrator, continually stresses how her anger will help Linda survive and evade Dr. Flint's advances as the story continues. Linda's contradictory nature also saves her dignity later in the novel as Dr. Flint becomes more direct and bold in expressing his predatory desires for Linda's body and personhood. As Dr. Flint becomes more insistent, Linda becomes bolder as well and, like a traditional gothic heroine, refuses to give up her morals, or her virginity, or dignity, to a man who wishes to do her harm.

Jacobs also uses the traditional gothic convention of the rivalry between the heroine and another woman in order to emphasize injustices that young women in slavery endured. When Linda turns sixteen she is still pressured and threatened by Dr. Flint, who even threatens her with death if she tells anyone about what he says to her and, when he finds Linda teaching herself how to read, manipulates this access that could give her an education and thus a source of happiness and freedom, by writing filthy notes to her. Eventually, Mrs. Flint begins to notice that Linda is being called to spend more time with the doctor and, in her suspicion and jealousy, confronts poor Linda, accusing her of seducing her husband. The exchange between Linda and

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<sup>22</sup> In his article "'These things took the shape of mystery': *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* as American Romance." Casey Pratt illustrates Linda's unwillingness to forgive as not only a departure from her Grandmother but to show the differences in views on Christianity compared to other American Romance authors like Hawthorne.

Mrs. Flint occurs when Dr. Flint has his daughter sleep in his room in order to trap Linda alone with him at night since Linda technically belongs to her and not to him.

“Did you know you were to sleep in the doctor’s room?”

“Yes, ma’am.”

“Who told you?”

“My master.”

...

“Tell me then, as you hope to be forgiven, are you innocent of what I have accused you?”

“I am.” (Jacobs 30)

When Mrs. Flint makes Linda confess everything that Dr. Flint has said and done thus far, even going so far as to make her swear upon the bible, she is bereft but still suspicious of Linda, even though Linda is an honest and good person. Linda even fears for her own life when she discovers Mrs. Flint obsessively keeping vigil over her husband and even over Linda, trying to listen to her talk in her sleep to see if she mentions Dr. Flint at all. Using Mrs. Flint’s jealousy and suspicion, Jacobs makes some commentary on the women of the traditional gothic novel who are seductive and immoral to contrast with the pure heroine. Even though Linda is not guilty of any sort of crime, because of her race and her status as an enslaved person, she is immediately vilified by Mrs. Flint even though Linda has given her no reason during all those years to believe she is a liar.



In her book *Women and the Gothic: an Edinburgh Companion*, editor Avril Homer describes the typical fate of women who are supposedly the evil seducers or another kind of wicked woman in comparison to the brave virtuous heroine:

Women constantly flirt with madness, it seems as if madness and womanhood both define an idealized sensitive femininity and its opposite—the evil woman locked away in a covenant to expiate her crimes. ... The ambiguity of the Gothic madwoman in the Covent, as much as spectral as much angel as demon, blurs conventional representations of femininity through its contradictions, and evokes mystery and fear for the heroine and prompts readers to question such representations (34).<sup>23</sup>

The idea of the blurring of a woman supposedly gone mad, usually because said woman was driven to madness by love and/or desire, is seen both in Linda's feelings of entrapment when she cannot turn to her grandmother to help her out of a dangerous predicament, nor can she trust Mrs. Flint to help her, even when Mrs. Flint says she believes Linda and promises to do so under false pretenses. The madwoman who could be both an angel and/or a demon is seen in the torment Mrs. Flint inflicts on Linda along with her husband. By continuing to be suspicious and jealous, she unwittingly aids Dr. Flint in trying to ensnare Linda in a non-consensual sexual affair and demonizes Linda due to her otherness and forcing an innocent young girl to cope with the madness of one enslaver's desire and the other's wrath.

Dr. Flint also uses this rivalry that doesn't truly exist against Linda by reminding her that he has treated her better than his other enslaved people and threatens to sell her if she won't comply. When she responds that she would rather be sold and belong to another person than

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<sup>23</sup> For more information about Rivalries and female archetypes in American Literature see *Love and Death in the American Novel* chapter ten by Leslie A. Fielder.

endure his torture he acts like she has hurt him deeply and reminds her of how “kindly” he has treated her. “Have I ever treated you like a negro? I have never allowed you to be punished, not even to please your mistress. And this is the recompense I get, you ungrateful girl” (Jacobs 32). When his threats do not work, since Linda knows that he has his own reasons for not allowing her to be beaten, he changes to a gentler but still disturbing tactic. “I will make peace for you with your mistress. Only let me arrange it in my own way. Poor, foolish girl! You don’t know what is for your own good. . . . I would make a lady of you” (32). Dr. Flint’s promise to “make a lady” of Linda reflects the view of her being someone who is not fit for regular American society, someone who is wild and must be tamed in some way by an enslaver in order to be seen as a true woman. The horror of this promise not only coming from the idea that Linda already does not have what it means to be a lady but the fact that she is being coerced into an abusive relationship where she is, for all intents and purposes, Dr. Flint’s sexual object, and if she did accept his offer, would be seen by society and her family not as a proper lady but as a woman who was her enslaver’s mistress; a sinful position to be in. With this offer, Dr. Flint already views Linda in the same way his wife does, as the seductive young woman and someone ungrateful for her life of luxury-even when all of that is false. Linda knows that accepting Dr. Flint’s offer would make her life worse than it already was and make Mrs. Flint hate her even more, if not order her sold to another family or thrown in jail for being a typical “wicked” girl.<sup>24</sup>

The duality between being an innocent young woman who keeps to her virtues under different threats and also being viewed as the opposite due to her social status, skin color, and even her gender, is observed further when Linda, after considering the indecency of Dr. Flint’s

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<sup>24</sup> For further reading on depictions of slavery and the way slavery was portrayed by other writers see Toni Morrison’s “Romancing Slavery” in her essay collection *The Origin of Others*.

ludicrous proposal to “make a lady out of her”, takes her own actions against him since avoidance and being honest with Mrs. Flint has only made her harasser more sneaky and aggressive. Jacobs opens the new plan of action with questions for her audience since she has been asking for the Victorian readers to sympathize and attempt to understand why her heroine makes the choices she does, even when they might not appear logical or within her best interest. Jacobs asks: “Why does the slave ever love? Why allow the tendrils of the heart to twine around objects which may at any moment be wrenched away by the hands of violence” (33). Jacobs’s questions are the introduction to Linda falling in love, at age fifteen, with a young man who is a free man of color. While these questions seem obvious, because everyone has loved ones and it is natural that a teenage girl would fall in love, these two questions are meant to cause dread in the novel and remind the reader of all of the injustices that enslaved people are forced to endure. Typically, in a gothic novel, the young man who falls in love with the heroine would be a savior of sorts. A person who could rescue his lover from imprisonment and marry her. Linda, being in a horrible situation and wanting freedom from Dr. Flint and the cruelties of slavery, hopes that he can fulfill this role as well, even though she also realizes that this wouldn’t likely be the end of her trials. When Dr. Flint finally hears about this lover who would buy his victim’s freedom and wants to marry her, he is furious. “I suppose you thought more of yourself; that you felt above the insult of such puppies.” I replied, “It is right and honorable for us to love each other. . . . and he would not love me if he did not believe me to be a virtuous woman”. He sprang on me like a tiger and gave me a stunning blow. . . . “How I despise you” (Jacobs 36). Within this tense exchange that erupts into violence, Linda not only declares her intentions to marry her lover but also defends her honor as a virtuous person who should not have to suffer the torment Dr. Flint places upon her young shoulders. Linda’s fears that her first love will not be able to rescue her

from her predicament are proven to be true. Linda sneaks off to meet with him in private where he tries to persuade her to run away to Savannah with him, to see about some property he will inherit from his uncle. Although Linda considers going, she knows that he will be in danger if he doesn't leave alone. With great sorrow, she asks him to go on to the free states in the North and never return. After he has left, Linda knows that her girlhood, and her chance at a happy and loving marriage, are over.

The tremendous loss for Linda as a heroine, even if she still had her brother and her grandmother, leaves her more vulnerable and without any sort of romantic love interest or protector as she matures and her childhood ends. Linda's lover does not return for the rest of the story and subverts the romance subplot of other popular gothic novels during the nineteenth century. Along with no longer having a kind and gentle love interest, the only other man interested in Linda at this point is Dr. Flint who, despite the popularity of the Byronic anti-hero, is decidedly a villain and not written in a way that could give him any form of redemption. With no romantic elements to the story, Jacobs places her gothic heroine, who already has duality between the virtuous woman and the rumored seductive one, in a bleak ordeal without any way to freedom. In *The Female Gothic*, Sybil James states:

Unlike a nightmare, in the novel the heroine does elude and outwit her pursuers. Eventually, through a happy combination of beauty, brains, and character, she makes a passage into womanhood, is loved and respected, and receives status and security. The reader is permitted to live out her own terrors and desires vicariously, always secure in the knowledge that the author is in control. The author will wake her from the nightmare in time and make certain that her daytime perception of herself and her place in the world is reaffirmed. (156)

The summary of the journey of the gothic heroine which James provides is seen, in some ways with Linda, but is ultimately taken away. Victorian readers of *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* do not have the privilege that they would when reading a gothic novel about a white protagonist whose plight they can view as a fantasy since slavery occurred around them. Jacobs, by stripping away the traditional gothic passage to womanhood through marriage or potential marriage and replacing the terror with real-world events, gives her Victorian readers even more dread for Linda than the typical heroine trapped in a castle or an estate and begs her Victorian women audience to understand some of Linda's more questionable actions for the time period and in a world where her status and security are forcefully stolen from her due to her race. These elements come into play during the next section of the novel in which Linda makes a choice that, for many European gothic heroines, would make them no longer seen as innocent or even as victims of a horrible circumstance but corrupt and wicked.

Jacobs, as an author, and Linda as a self-aware character and narrator, acknowledges this particular trope and before continuing the narrative give a small prescience to the event. Jacobs, as Linda, writes: "I will not try to screen myself behind the plea of compulsion from a master; for it was not. Neither will I plead ignorance or thoughtlessness. ... I knew what I did, and I did it with deliberate calculation" (47).<sup>25</sup> As a young woman who, up until this point in the novel, has fought hard to maintain her dignity and purity in the face of emotional abuse and sexual assault, and being pushed into a desperate point in her life, it is interesting that Linda freely, though with remorse, admits that she cannot excuse the affair she has with another white man—Mr. Sands, as just a way to get away from her enslaver nor as an act done on impulse. Mr. Sands

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<sup>25</sup> Mary Vermillion in her article "Reembodying the Self: Representations of Rape in 'Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl and I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings.'" further discusses the trauma Linda goes through and how her relationship with Mr. Sands is a depiction of Linda taking back her own sexuality and autonomy.

heard about Linda's awful predicament, agreed to help her, and even allowed the sexual activities between them to commence. Yet, she is placing most of the blame upon herself. While the act was done with great care, it is also obvious that Dr. Flint has driven Linda to such a desperate place that one of the only ways she could escape is either by running away and risking imprisonment, torture, or death, or finding a way to convince another white man or woman to buy her and then set her free. Although it is brave of Linda to acknowledge that having an affair with a man she has no plans to marry, nor is she even in love with, is not what a stereotypically "good Christian girl" would do, the circumstances between Mr. Sands and herself are clearly not the acts of some evil young lady who is rebellious against society for the sake of it, nor an ungrateful person who callously tosses every moral she has ever learned aside for the temptation of sexual pleasure. Despite what many Victorian readers would possibly accuse her of being, Linda is still a morally upright teenager who has to use morally gray means to escape a life of abuse and sexual assault.

By acknowledging that her actions might turn her Victorian women readers against her since the heroines of the traditional gothic novel are supposed to be good white women who commit no wrongs so that they might be rewarded with marriage and good status at the end of their journey, Jacobs also comments on the perceived sexuality of women in slavery. As Eugenia C. DeLamotte describes these two opposing women in the Gothic novel:

...a staple of women's Gothic that takes two different but related forms. One is the discovery (in person, through another character's narrative, or in a first-person manuscript), of a Good Other Woman, long-suffering and angelic, whose imprisonment and/or death was unmerited. The other is the discovery of an Evil Other Woman, who got no more than she deserved and is now either dead or sorry for her sins and about to die.

The revelation of these sins usually implicates her as a bad (selfish) mother, a bad (undutiful) daughter, and/or a bad (sexual) woman (154).<sup>26</sup>

Instead of using the tropes of the Evil Other Woman, as DeLamotte calls this gothic trope, as a woman hidden away within the plantation, she is seen in the false image of Linda that Mrs. Flint has, in the foul way Dr. Flint treats her, and to an extent, because she admits that it is wrong, Linda herself takes on the role of a suffering sexual woman in her affair with Mr. Sands. However, unlike the eighteenth-century gothic that these tropes emerged from, and were used heavily by nineteenth-century women writers in both America and Europe, Linda combines the woman who should be punished for her sexual ways like what occurs in gothic and seduction novels and makes her reasons understandable. Like the pure heroine and the Good Hidden Woman, the Evil Other Woman is also imprisoned and subjected to imprisonment by the patriarchal standards in which she lives. Linda is indeed sexually active with a man who is not her soon-to-be husband, but she is not someone out to ruin the lives of anyone except perhaps the man who enslaves and torments her with his own evil desires.

Linda explains to the Victorian reader that, in order to keep her isolated from others, Dr. Flint had a little cottage commissioned for her, still within the town in which they lived, but away from the plantation so that his wife would no longer be around the focus of her jealousy. During this time Mr. Sands had heard the rumors going around about Dr. Flint trying to court a fifteen-year old enslaved person and in his sympathy wrote to her frequently. Linda explains her feelings toward these kind gestures: “It seemed a great thing to me to have such a friend. By degrees, a more tender feeling crept into my heart. ... There is something akin to freedom in

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<sup>26</sup> Cynthia Griffin Woolf describes the duality between the Good and Evil woman trope in her article “The Radcliffean Gothic Model: A Form for Feminine Sexuality”.

having a lover who has no control over you, except that which he gains by kindness and attachment” (Jacobs 48). These feelings expressed honestly by Linda are not only detailing the misery of most young girls in slavery but also allowing her to openly describe her feelings of affection and even sexual desire toward Mr. Sands who had shown her only kindness. As Linda, herself states, this consensual act, even if it would be seen in the eyes of society as wrong, gives her a personal feeling of power over her own fate and over her own body which she has truly never experienced before being sent to live in the Flint Plantation. Since the gothic heroine is ordinarily faced with sexual encounters by metaphorical means such as looming castle towers and eerie shadows, or pursued by either a wretched man out for her inheritance or a troubled but charming hero, having a gothic heroine attempt to escape a tragic fate by no longer suppressing her sexuality and fully taking control of herself, like the more wicked women in the gothic tend to do, gives Victorian female readers a shocking but exciting new perspective into Linda’s insight and troubles.

While Linda’s sexual relations with Mr. Sands could be considered a crime in nineteenth century America, and her grandmother even banishes her for a brief time when she hears about Linda being pregnant, she feels a mixture of triumph against her enslaver along with the shame of having lost her virginity to a man she is not married to. As an author, Jacobs uses Linda’s voice to ask for the Victorian reader’s pity and understanding. Reminding her white women readers that, as a girl thought of as nothing but chattel and with no laws to protect her, women condemned to slavery should not be judged by the same light as a white girl choosing to have a relationship with an unmarried man would due to these things. Even with her shame, Linda still continues to allow herself to be cowed or seek pity from Dr. Flint when he announces that the cottage is ready for her and when she declares herself with child. When the doctor attempts to



pity Linda and use her “crime” against God to manipulate her into living in the cottage and accepting his offer to care for them both, similar to how he attempted to coerce her into having sex with him, Linda is outraged at his audacity.

But when he spoke contemptuously of the lover who had always treated me honorably; when I remembered that if not for him I would be a virtuous, free, and happy wife, I lost my patience. “I have sinned against God and myself;” I replied, “but not against you.” ... He sprang upon me like a wolf and grabbed on to my arm as if he would have broken it. “Do you love him?” said he in a hissing tone. “I am thankful that I do not despise him.”  
(Jacobs 51-2)

Linda’s anger toward Dr. Flint, while obvious throughout the narrative, is strong here since not only is this when she truly becomes an active participant in her own story and fights against him, but she also defends her honor and that of Mr. Sands and her unborn child. Boldly telling Dr. Flint the identity of the father of her baby and not apologizing for her actions or her rebellion against him brings out Linda’s self-confidence which she had forced herself to keep hidden for her own personal safety. The heated exchange between Linda and Dr. Flint also gives her strength when she is isolated from the world. Throughout the novel, she had been afraid to speak out against him unless she was forced to, like when Mrs. Flint confronted her, but now, even with her shame at having gone against the morals she was brought up with, she finds the power to be defiant by protecting her loved ones. That becomes her motivation, especially when her illegitimate child is born.

## MOTHERHOOD

Going from childhood to motherhood is an interesting choice for a gothic heroine since, even in the nineteenth century where most women were expected to become wives and mothers, most stories ended with the heroine either married to her lover and gaining an inheritance or happily in love and free of torment. If mothers are a factor in the narrative they are usually innocent women like their daughters who have been held prisoner somewhere, or they are dead and are a reminder of the heroine's once-happy life. By making Linda a mother who clearly loves her children and wants to protect them, she arguably redeems Linda's characterization as an "Other Wicked Woman" in the eyes of Victorian readers and morphs her knowledge of the cruel adult world into a positive trait. As Kay J. Mussel mentions in the *Female Gothic*, typically women were seen in three ways when gothic novels were at their peak and read by many women. These roles were a wife, caretaker or mother figure. Mussel goes on to say: "Moreover, these three traditional areas imply the performance of services, conforming women's socialization as servant, nurturer, and sex object," (62). While all three of these conformed roles would, even in today's society, make women appear passive and without motivations of their own, Jacobs gives Linda enough complexity to perform all of these roles, whether she wants to or not, and become a stronger woman because of what she has to endure. Especially when she is seen as not just a servant as Mussel describes it, meaning more a servant to her husband, but an enslaved person with no rights at all. It also applies to being a sexual object for Linda since she is seen that way by her enslavers, and even her grandmother for a brief period, but holds onto her morals and uses the unfair views society had against women being unruly sexual beings to save herself and to, perhaps selfishly, have some sexual and romantic pleasure in her bleak life. All of these roles lead her to motherhood and make Linda more determined than ever to take great

actions to escape her evil enslaver who would, no doubt, bring misery and harm to her children as he does to her.

Motherhood also gives Linda more depth and motivation to run away. As the years go by, Linda's son grows up and Linda and Mr. Sands conceive a daughter who looks more like her father than her mother, much to Dr. Flint's anger and Linda's dismay since, in her opinion and experience, women experience worse conditions in slavery than men do. Once her daughter is born, Dr. Flint sends Linda and the children to his son's plantation and out of the cottage where all three of them would be treated the same way all the other enslaved people are. As though Linda and her children did not already suffer from the torment and violence of slavery. Once she is no longer directly within Dr. Flint's grasp is when Linda can form a plan to escape to the North with her children since poor Mr. Sands, like Benjamin, can do nothing to rescue them. "I could have made my escape alone, but it was more for my helpless children that I longed for freedom. . . . I would not have taken it at the expense of leaving them in slavery. Every trial I endured, every sacrifice I made for their sakes" (Jacobs 76). Linda's newfound determination to save someone other than herself brings another aspect to her duality. Her motherhood role that still makes her a gothic heroine.<sup>27</sup> Similar to other gothic heroines Linda needs to escape an oppressive situation. Being a mother makes her pursuits sympathetic to Victorian readers and noble even after her previous sexual encounters. Despite being a mother of two small children, she is still trapped in a vicious system that forces her, through violent means, to submit to a patriarchal standard of living. As a mother and as a grown woman, Linda's battles are still not won, despite all of the heartbreak and danger she was in, finally resolving to run away to start her

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<sup>27</sup> For further reading on slavery and motherhood see "On *Beloved*" from *The Source of Self-Regard* by Toni Morrison.

life over and flee from Dr. Flint and his family. Although Linda states that she is running away only for the sake of her children as a selfless gothic heroine would, and while that is true, she is also fighting back against oppression for herself too. After facing so much psychological warfare from her enslaver attempting to tarnish her relationship with anyone who would help her or manipulating the law so that no one could buy her, it is natural that Linda would reach a breaking point and see that arguing and trying to suffer quietly will not protect her or her loved ones.

Feminist and gothic writer Claire Kahane discusses the connections between femininity and motherhood within the gothic novel, especially in ideas of identity. In “Feminine Identity and Gothic Mirrors”, Kahane states: “Not only does a girl’s gender identification with her mother make it difficult for her to grasp firmly her separateness, but her mother frequently impedes the process by seeing in her daughter a duplication of herself, and reflecting that confusion” (48-9). Kahane’s observation about the complicated relationship between mothers and daughters could have easily applied to Linda and her children as well. Especially her daughter Ellen. Or, alternatively, Linda could have been completely consumed by her role as a mother and lost some of her more independent traits, making her unable to be a separate person aside from being a mother. However, Linda still has the same traits that she possessed at the beginning of *Incidents of the Life of a Slave Girl*, motherhood has just propelled her further into becoming a more mature person willing to escape slavery for good.

In order to escape the Flints, Linda allows herself to be temporarily separated from her children—since it would be harder for anyone to track them down if they aren’t together, and hides herself away in a close friend’s attic for months. Being hidden away is commonly associated with the Other Woman trope but since heroines are often isolated and in constant danger, the trope can apply to them as well. The smaller space, as opposed to the European castle

where the heroine is both trapped but also free to explore as she pleases, gives Linda both a sense of comfort because she is with someone who can help her, but the attic is tight and cramped, making her feel claustrophobic and this smaller space with fewer places to hide, would make it easier for her enslaver or any other person tracking her down, to find her. The attic creates a different sort of tension than the creepy castle or the threats that Linda endured on the plantation since she is both cornered yet closer to freedom than she has been for the whole narrative. Because of this, the scenes with Linda hiding away are some of the most intense within the story and this sort of physical entrapment and claustrophobic space is the most traditionally gothic element that Jacobs uses for suspense.

As I sat very still in my retreat above the stairs, cheerful visions floated through my mind. I thought Dr. Flint would soon get discouraged, ... Suddenly I heard a voice that chilled my blood. The sound was too familiar to me, it had been too dreadful to me, for me not to recognize at once my old master. He was in the house, and at once I concluded he had come to seize me. I looked around in terror. There was no way of escape. The voice receded. ... After a while, I heard approaching footsteps; the key was turning in my door. I braced myself against the wall to keep from falling. I ventured to look up, and there stood my kind benefactress alone. I was too overcome to speak and sunk down to the floor. (Jacobs 88)

Linda's terror of being discovered in this instance not only allows her to experience the stereotypical style of fear and writing that the European Female Gothic employed but also shows that even with her resistance and strength as a character, she is still a vulnerable young woman who has gone through horrific traumatic events that are all too real for women who attempted to escape from slavery or have had to survive instances of sexual assault. In her book *African*

*American Gothic: Screams from Shadowed Places*, scholar Maisha L. Wester details how slave narratives, and by extension, the gothic, deals with sexual abuse by making it unspoken. Wester states: “While the texts will define the rape and seduction of women as too base to be spoken, the texts do inevitably and repeatedly speak the transgressions. ... Rather, narrative’s uses of women’s bodies point to the unspoken question of black being and slavery’s destruction of identity” (45). Linda’s reactions, even when her benefactress appears and informs her that the doctor won’t find her because he is so convinced that she is in New York City, still holds a visceral image of what real life terror would be like in a Female Gothic setting. The terror also displays the unspoken results of sexual abuse that Wester discusses in regards to enslaved people and how it is discussed without being written about directly.

In Linda’s case, expressing worry and fear so strongly that she experiences a panic attack also fits into her duality as a heroine and a mother as well. If she is caught then not only will she be dragged back into the arms of her abuser, but her children would undoubtedly suffer an awful fate as a way to punish her for trying to flee. The scene could be interpreted as a more feminine aspect to Linda, that of a scared victim who is cowardly when cornered, like gothic heroines are stereotyped to be, however, even with the fear of being discovered and her anxiety about running face-to-face with Dr. Flint, Linda’s reactions are not over-exaggerated for entertainment but reflect a psychological struggle that stays with her but does not render her weak-willed or willing to give up escaping to the North with her children.

Although Linda escapes Dr. Flint, Jacobs addresses issues Linda endures in the North, something not typically seen in a gothic novel after the heroine escapes her captors. Linda is officially reunited with her children under one roof after many years and is finally free when she receives word of Dr. Flint’s death and Emily’s husband goes to New York City in order to ask

Linda to buy her freedom. Linda is resistant to this because she is a human and feels as though buying something that she is enabled to is beneath her and her dignity. Along with not wanting to buy herself or her children like property, Linda also cannot allow herself to forgive Dr. Flint for everything he had done to her. She reflects: “And I thought to myself that she was a better Christian than I was if she can entirely forgive him.... There are wrongs which even the grave does not bury. The man was odious to me while he lived, and his memory is odious now” (Jacobs 159). Linda’s admiration of her grandmother, who also went through many hardships because of Dr. Flint’s obsession over Linda reflects a still lingering Christian ideology even when she admits to herself that she cannot forgive her abuser for all of his wrongs and the idea that he is being buried and treated like a good man throughout his life angers her. Her duality also applies to her thoughts about Mr. Dodge buying her freedom. While Linda is offended by the idea of using money to buy her freedom, she also acknowledges that it would be the only way for her to be free. Linda’s ability to not forgive those who caused pain to her and her family for years is an understandable and human trait even if it is not as reflective of the Christian model Victorian women were supposed to follow at the time. At the same time, her struggles to save her family and her refusal to submit to oppressive patriarchal societies is admirable.

When Linda signs the papers freeing herself from the chains of slavery she feels relief but knows that there is still much work ahead for her to do for her family and to protest against slavery in the North. At the end of the novel she states: “Reader, my story ends in freedom, not in the usual way with marriage. I and my children are now free! We are as free from the power of slaveholders as white people of the north; and though, according to my ideas, that is not a vast amount, it is a great improvement in *my* condition” (Jacobs 164). These lines are some of the most well-known from the novel and speak a great deal to Jacobs as a gothic writer and for Linda

as a gothic heroine. Linda does not get married since marriage was constantly denied her by a cruel enslaver and she is indeed a free woman with her children at the end of the narrative having escaped various horrors as the Female Gothic predecessors before her. However, unlike the typical gothic heroine who, after being married, receives stability and wealth, Linda still faces trials because of her traumas from being an enslaved person and she must survive as a single parent. Despite this, because of Linda's duality as a woman who can be the Other Woman who is rebellious and determined, and the loving and patient heroine who grows into a mother with strong survival instincts, she finally gains her freedom. After becoming free, Jacobs, by using Linda, would no doubt continue to strive for the rights of enslaved women and encourage women such as Southworth and Alcott to be allies and speak up for enslaved women as well.



## CONCLUSION

When discussing how to define the American gothic, especially in its earlier stages, in her book *Gothic America*, Teresa A. Goddu states:

Combined with other literary forms and adapted to native themes, the American gothic consists of a less coherent set of conventions. Its more flexible form challenges the critically unified gothic genre and demands a reassessment of the gothic parameters. As a result, a definition of the American gothic depends less on the particular set of convections it establishes than on those it disrupts. (4)

Goddu's statements regarding the difficulty of the definition of the American gothic genre naturally applies to a plethora of male gothic writers such as Nathaniel Hawthorne and Edgar Allen Poe, who despite writing in the nineteenth century around the same time, take the American gothic in sharply different directions, but is the most interesting when it is applied to the rise in women writers in both Europe and America during the nineteenth century who created and expanded upon their own contributions to the gothic genre as a whole. The women writers of the nineteenth century American gothic have used a genre which had its tropes firmly established centuries before, and disrupted the common tropes to suit their own agendas and desires, especially regarding the gothic heroine, as I have established in my three chapters.

Along with disrupting the conventions that the gothic heroine and the Female Gothic that had been well established by other European female writers during their lifetimes, Southworth, Alcott, and Jacobs also grappled with the characterizations of the villainous, or at least antagonistic, women characters that also readily appeared in gothic fiction. With the dual heroine, all three of these women have disrupted the European gothic traditions in which they

were heavily inspired and created their own gothic narratives and stereotypes that are used in fiction today. For E.D.E.N Southworth, the creations of Capitola and Clara as individuals began combining aspects of the traditional gothic heroine and the bolder other woman who is a rival. For Capitola specifically, her tomboy nature, one of the first in American fiction, is balanced out by her trickster ways being more of a means to survive and giving her the desires of a happy domestic life and an idealistic romantic outlook on life. For Clara, at first glance, she appears to be the exact opposite of Capitola, and would ordinarily be the epitome of a classic gothic heroine. However, Southworth gives Clara more to do within the story than be a frightened girl in need of a brave hero and gives Clara great intuition and maturity as well as giving her the role of a detective who is a key figure in solving the biggest mystery within the novel. Along with making Capitola and Clara more than stereotypical female characters, Southworth subverts the gothic tradition and makes these two opposites friends instead of rivals. This, in turn, disrupts the popular love triangle between two women and instead gives each heroine her own love triangles to further her own narrative.

Although she is most famous for her classic book *Little Women*, Louisa May Alcott spent her early career writing sensational gothic thrillers. The final gothic thriller she wrote, *A Long Fatal Love Chase*, has many staples of the gothic novels written by the Brontë sisters, specifically drawing plot elements from *Jane Eyre*. During the start of the novel, the heroine Rosamond falls in love with, and quickly marries, the standard Byronic Hero Phillip Tempest. After two years of blissful marriage, even though Tempest clearly has done horrible deeds in his past, Rosamond is happy with her life until, in the popular Brontë fashion, Rosamond discovers that her husband is already married to another woman. While this basic plotline was common after the publication of *Jane Eyre*, Alcott soon deviates from it after Rosamond learns that she

has been lied to and spends the rest of the novel escaping her abusive ex-husband, who stalks her everywhere she goes, and as she does this, grows from a naïve young girl and into a bolder, more mature young woman who has more in common with the brash and independent Jo March than the quieter and love-struck Jane Eyre. Along with developing Rosamond into a childlike protagonist with hints of a more feisty nature into a woman determined to gain her freedom and independence at the cost of her own life, Alcott, like Southworth, also changes how the romantic aspects of her gothic novel develop. Since Tempest is the villain of the work, Alcott quickly strips him of any sympathetic traits that were used, especially by the Brontës, to make their Byronic Heroes appear to be good matches for the heroine. By deconstructing this trope, Alcott plainly reveals the toxic traits of the Byronic Hero and thus makes a character like Tempest no longer a love interest for Rosamond. Alcott gives Rosamond two other potential love interests instead, an older gentleman whose difference in age could be a prototype to Bhear and Jo in *Little Women*, but disrupts that love affair, as well as the love between Rosamond and a young priest who, while wanting to save her life, cannot be with her because of his position. Like Southworth, Alcott not only uses the dual gothic heroine to expand Rosamond into an archetypal female character into a more in-depth one but also like Southworth and Jacobs, uses the dual heroine and the changes it makes from the European gothic to deconstruct and reinvent the way romance is depicted in the genre as well. Though unlike Southworth, Alcott explicitly gives Rosamond a tragic ending and therefore, makes her more suitable love interests into deep friendships, a topic she will explore further in *Little Women*.

Harriet Jacobs, as a foil to Southworth and Alcott, created just one gothic heroine to express duality, instead of two separate heroines. While *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, is as the title suggests, a slave narrative based on Jacobs own struggles during her enslavement and

her fight for freedom, Jacobs intertwines the gothic tropes that were popular during the time she was writing her narrative in order to entice her female audience in the North to do their part in eradicating slavery. In giving her own slave narrative a gothic tone, Jacobs also makes Linda Brent, the fictionalized version of herself, a young traditional heroine to start with, who is innocent and sexually pure in the face of her evil enslaver who lusts after her. Once Linda becomes a teenager, and to save herself from her enslaver, Linda has an affair with another man to bear his children. While, in the traditional gothic for the time, this act would make Linda a villainous woman who is no longer the virtuous gothic heroine, Jacobs justifies Linda's actions while also acknowledging that what Linda did was not the morally sound action for the time period. Linda, however, regains her heroine status with her audience once she becomes a mother who runs away to freedom in order to save herself and her two children. The development in Linda's character goes far beyond the static European gothic tropes where the heroines have to remain virgins and any female characters who are sexually active are automatically wicked. By giving Linda realistic motivations for her actions and retaining her sympathy, Jacobs uses the dual heroine to her advantage and effectively uses and changes gothic tropes for her personal slave narrative.

While these three texts are not the only Female Gothic novels written in the nineteenth century, these three different women writers each make their own imprint on the gothic heroine by giving her duality in their writings. The idea of the dual gothic heroine could be further explored in gothic writings from the twentieth and twenty-first century.<sup>28</sup> For example, the works of Shirley Jackson are female-centric and her characters could be used to explore the dual gothic

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<sup>28</sup> For more general information about the Female Gothic in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century see *The Female Gothic: New Directions* by Diana Wallace and Andrew Smith. Also see *Femicidal Fears: Narratives of the Female Gothic Experience* by Helene Meyers.

heroine in a modern gothic horror. Twentieth and Twenty-first century works could also be used to explore how women writers have attempted to move away from binaries since the nineteenth century. The dual gothic heroine can also be used beyond the United States to the beginning of the Female Gothic as a whole to pinpoint when the dual heroine truly began. The three authors I have already examined could still be used to further explore the dual gothic heroine. Since E.D.E.N Southworth was a prolific author during her lifetime, her earlier works may have dual heroines as well, or provide the origins of Clara and Capitola's dualities. Also, Southworth's later novels may have taken the characterizations of Capitola and Clara even further than they already are.

Exploring the dual heroine through other works applies to Alcott as well, who wrote shorter gothic thrillers before the publication of *A Long Fatal Love Chase*.<sup>29</sup> For Alcott, the complexities of her female characters being more than simple stereotypes, or at least multi-dimensional characterizations of a certain stereotype, could be also explored in some of her later literature which might, despite the genres they are supposed to fit into, have dual heroines and gothic elements in them as well.

Since Harriet Jacobs only wrote one slave narrative, exploring the dual heroine through her influence could be applied to other slave narratives written by women during the nineteenth century such as Annie L. Burton, Mattie J. Jackson, or Old Elizabeth. In addition, fictional novels either during the nineteenth century or later that discuss women's ordeals in slavery could also be used to explore the dual heroine, such as Harriet Beecher Stowe's famous *Uncle Tom's Cabin* or Toni Morrison's classic ghost story *Beloved*. The dual heroine, especially for the

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<sup>29</sup> These thrillers were collected in *Behind a Mask: The Unknown Thrillers of Louisa May Alcott* in 1975.

gothic genre when women writers were beginning to vocalize women's rights and coming into the mass market, can be developed for various countries and novels, yet beginning with the United States, where the gothic is known to be disruptive and not have established rules, is a starting point for detailing how popular women writers have written female characters and created their own tropes in the process.

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