

**MIDWESTERN ANARCHIST WOMEN WRITERS OF THE
NINETEENTH CENTURY**

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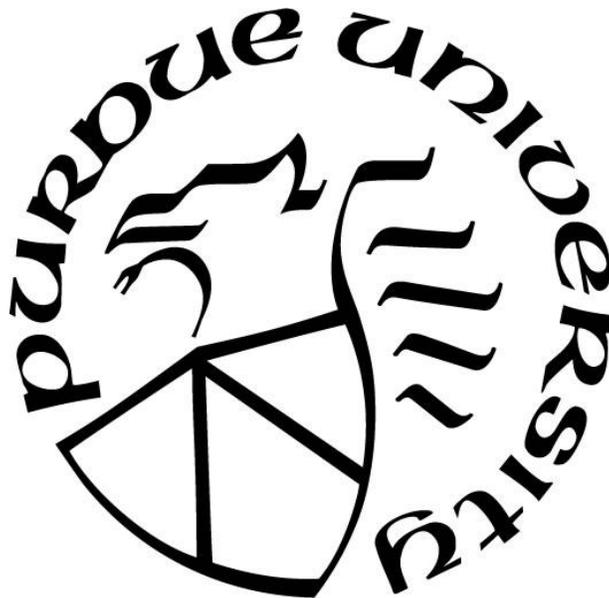
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To Rueben, who makes sure I don't take myself too seriously

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ABSTRACT

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Through examining the common themes in the writings of five anarchist women writers, I argue their writings are representative of ideological regionalism, or the convergence of factors that give rise to a political ideology that is then expounded through the literary production of a particular time and place. I analyze the economic, sexual, and “religious” politics across fiction, non-fiction, and poetry, connecting arguments about class, individualism, feminism, and anarchism to a foundation of Midwestern cultural ideology. Ultimately, I argue that economic, political, and historical conditions promulgated an exceptionalist American anarchism rooted in settler anti-statism.

Keywords: Anarchism, Feminism, Midwestern Studies, Nineteenth Century Print Culture

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION: GENUINE STUDENTS

“There are millions of theoretical
socialists and anarchists,
and a handful who stand ready to
sacrifice life and liberty if necessary,
and who do sacrifice time, energy,
and money every day of their lives.”
-Lizzie Swank Holmes, “A Genuine Student”

On the last day of October in 1885, *The Alarm*, an infamous anarchist newspaper, published a conspicuous announcement. Titled simply “Lizzie M. Swank,” it read:

The assistant editor of *The Alarm*, May Huntley, has laid aside her *nom de plume* and assumed her real name, Lizzie M. Swank. Readers of the labor press throughout the country, who have been instructed and entertained by the writings of this lady for years past, will be delighted to learn that she will hereafter devote the powers of her trenchant pen to the cause of the social revolution through the columns of the *Alarm*. (1)

Less than a year later, *The Alarm* and its editor, Albert Parsons, would be embroiled in what has come to be called the Haymarket Affair. Lizzie Swank Holmes participated in the events leading up to the bombing in Haymarket Square, Chicago, including using her “trenchant” pen to argue for the use of force by the working class against capitalists. Swank Holmes was jailed along with Albert’s wife, Lucy E. Parsons, and their two children on the day of his execution when they tried to visit Albert’s jail cell to say their final farewells. Not dissuaded by the execution of her colleagues and associates, Swank Holmes continued to write for the “cause of the social revolution” after the executions, becoming a special contributor to *The Alarm* after its editorship was taken up by anarchist comrade Dyer D. Lum. After the events of 1887, she penned at least thirty more biting insightful pieces for *The Alarm*, which were often given first-page, top column priority.

Yet, history rarely remembers Swank Holmes as more than an assistant editor to Albert or good comrade to Lucy and the children, outshined by both the dashing and outspoken martyred editor and his firebrand and eventually embittered widow.

Until now, nineteenth-century anarchist women writers have been given little attention. Lucy E. Parsons and Voltairine de Cleyre, in recent years, have enjoyed a kind of resurgence as recovery work has been done to show their writings and ideologies are still timely and prescient. Like Swank Holmes, Lois Waisbrooker and Florence Finch Kelly appear infrequently in anarchist or feminist recovery work or scholarship. Unlike the other four, Waisbrooker's work has not aged well. Because her radicalism lies at the intersection of anarchism, feminism, spiritualism, free-love, and eugenics, her theories of science seem almost incomprehensible to many today. Similarly, Finch Kelly's work, on the whole, has remained relatively ignored by radicals and feminists because she abandoned her anarchist tendencies mid-life, going on to enjoy a long career in the newspaper business. These five women, whom comprise the scope of this project, all have something else in common besides their time and political tendencies: they are Midwestern.

The Midwest, or the Middle West, is both a geographic region and a historical and cultural assemblage. The Midwest, broadly defined geographically, consists of states in the middle of the United States from Ohio on the Eastern edge of the region to Nebraska and Kansas in the West. Harder to define is the ways in which history and political decisions, including at the local, state, regional, and federal levels, impacted the cultural heritage of the Midwest. A driving force of this project is the mission to fight back against the contemporary stereotypes of the Midwest as conservative and *featureless*, both in terms of its landscape and the character of its people. To the contrary, anti-statism, anti-capitalism, and feminism have deep roots in both the urban and rural Midwest. In fact, the nineteenth century Midwest had major anarchist epicenters in Chicago,

Detroit, and Topeka. Midwestern anarchism was not just urban. Anarchist print culture in periodicals like *Lucifer the Light-Bearer* left an indelible mark on the rural farming populations of these middle states, sowing anarchist seeds in the bucolic fields while also encouraging foment in urban factories. In part, this project is about re-defining the narrative of the nineteenth century Midwest through the writing of five radical Midwestern women whose lives, writing, and activism are *Midwestern*.

I will argue throughout this dissertation for the recovery and inclusion of a complicated and nuanced Midwestern nineteenth century radicalism, specifically one demonstrated through anarchist women's writing. For too long, studies of the Midwest have neglected radical women as nothing more than a blip in an otherwise normative pioneer and industrial progressivist, expansionist narrative. Likewise, the nascent field of anarchist studies has lacked regionally-specific scholarship and has much further to go to ensure gender parity among the recovery and representation of nineteenth century American anarchists. In other words, nineteenth-century Midwestern anarchist women writers were examples of, and ran counter to, Midwestern and anarchist cultural narratives. These women were fully Midwesterners *and* anarchists; they joined the Midwestern ideals of agrarian individualism, the "pioneer spirit," and the sanctity of labor to the anarchist values of anti-statism, anti-capitalism, and feminism. I tease out these relationships in the following chapters.

In addition to arguing for this nuanced exploration of radicalism, I seek a revision of the Midwestern mnemonic cultural community. In *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past*, Eviatar Zerubavel develops a "sociomental topography of the past," explaining not only how we think about the past, but how it influences our present relationship to individuality and communality. For various reasons, most clearly the threat to institutional and statist authority,

anarchism and leftist radicalism has been *erased* from the historical cultural consciousness of the Midwest through cultural productions (e.g., literature, music, film, art) and mythic narratives resulting in the promotion of statist and industrial capitalist narratives of expansion, manifest destiny, and the American Dream. Could the heartland, the very middle of middle America, be anything but the forward-looking center of a national myth? Anarchists' cries against the destructive forces of the state and industrial capitalism, not to mention religion and patriarchal traditions, were an inconvenient and dangerous voice because their solution was not reform, but complete abolition of these root causes of injustice.

Anarchists argued the root cause of injustice was illegitimate authority from the state and capital. Anarchism was a counternarrative to the one supported by the state and industrial capitalists, namely the narrative of progress. Zerubavel characterizes narratives of progress as a “highly schematic backward-to advanced evolutionist narrative” (15). In particular, this progressionist narrative is a conventional, optimistic narrative that “emphasize[s] the themes of progress *improvement* with regard to the ‘development’ of our brain, level of social organization, and degree of technological control over our environment” (15). A revised Midwestern mnemonic cultural community includes narratives about the radical past of the Midwest and grounds radicalism as an outgrowth of, not foreign or counter to, the ethos of Midwestern cultural ideology.¹

Revisions to regionally-specific narratives require a methodological theoretical framework that supports the recovery, interpretation, and explorations of relevancy of cultural artifacts. Like an anthropological archaeologist who recovers physical artifacts *in situ*, a literary archaeologist is

¹ Perhaps most interesting is that most nineteenth-century Midwest anarchists, especially the writers included here, did not disagree with this narrative schema and, in fact, co-opted it. If progress was to be achieved, then only anarchist social organization could provide it.

as much concerned with literary artifacts' positionality vis-à-vis historicity. I agree with John Brannigan's definition in *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism* in that "For new historicism and cultural materialism the object of study is not the text and its context, not literature and its history, but rather literature *in* history. This is to see literature as a constitutive and inseparable part of history in the making, and therefore rife with the creative forces, disruptions and contradictions of history" (3). A clear example of "literature as constitutive and inseparable part of history in the making" is the role that *The Alarm*, and specifically Parsons and Swank Holmes, played in advocating that tramps and the working classes use force to retaliate and assert their authority against the capitalist class. In reality, the argument in favor of force against the state and capital was much more nuanced (I discuss this in further depth in Chapter 2); nevertheless, fiction and non-fiction narratives penned by these writers and others contributed to a reputation of "violent anarchists" in Chicago who were a threat to national security and peace. As a result, anarchists in Chicago and around the United States endured repeated violations of their civil rights, especially following May 1886.

I define literature broadly. This dissertation makes use of what I call "literary artifacts," which consist of both traditional and non-traditional forms of literary output. For example, domestic sentimental novels from Waisbrooker and Swank Holmes and realist novels from Finch Kelly and poetry from de Cleyre are representative of traditional nineteenth-century American forms of literary output. Likewise, cutting and incisive essays and speeches-turned-essays by Parsons and de Cleyre are favorites with historians and cultural studies scholars who find clear explications of Gilded Age radicalism, most of which still rings true today. Non-traditional forms of literary output include many of the imaginative "fable" writings by Swank Holmes, such as "The Giant" and "The Ogre," which were published in *The Alarm* and depict labor and capitalism

as mythical and monolithic creatures. I would also include here the various spiritual and sex-radical tracts published by Waisbrooker, such as *The Sex Fountain*, which presents a scientific and spiritualist anarchist-feminist argument for free-love and women's rights. My aim is not to judge the craft of these texts or their successful deployment of genre or argument; rather, I use these literary artifacts to help explicate broad themes of concern for Midwestern anarchist women in the nineteenth century, such as the use of force in economic revolt, the possibilities of free-love and eugenics, and the function of martyrdom and spiritualism within anarchist communities.

I am convinced that recovery work of non-dominant narratives in literary and cultural studies will continue to grow because of institutional and scholarly commitment of sharing and preservation. This project would have been impossible without interlibrary loan and the Internet. I relied heavily on microfilms, scans, and reproductions of *The Alarm*, *Lucifer the Light-Bearer*, *Liberty*, and *Foundation Principles*. Digitized versions of Finch Kelly's books and some of Waisbrooker's books were only accessible because of diligent digitization by some librarian somewhere. Without these unnamed preservationists, I would have had to purchase editions from rare book sellers or travel to far-flung archives. Through a book project with Hastings College Press to publish the first-ever stand-alone edition of Swank Holmes' serialized novel *Hagar Lyndon*, I was able to access scanned versions of *Lucifer the Light-Bearer* microfilm. With the novel came priceless historical context, such as the letters, editorial columns, announcements, and advertisements published alongside the chapters. Collections are helpful, and Parsons and de Cleyre each have a selected works that made understanding the bulk of their most valued writing easier. Only Finch Kelly wrote an autobiography. Although the bulk of her autobiography follows her career in the newspaper business, she reflects very critically on her time as a radical, including

some reminisces about her time as an anarchist. There was more material to consider than I dreamed possible.

The wealth of the material available also meant that a judicious approach to the current project was warranted. As I started realizing how much bulk these women had produced, I had to pick and choose what I could include. Each of these chapters could have easily been double the length they are in their current form, but I tried to represent the best examples from each woman to prove my theses. Waisbrooker and Swank Holmes were especially prolific. Waisbrooker deserves much closer study than I have been able to provide here, and I am confident that site-based archival work will produce more issues of the radical papers she edited (and often printed herself!). Her numerous novels and psycho-biological spiritualist tracts, like *The Occult Forces of Sex*, need much more historical context to be less nonsensical to a contemporary reader. To be frank, I chose the works included here for their representativeness, accessibility, and appropriateness to the themes at hand. Each writer deserves several critical volumes of her own.

Scholars committed to culturally materialist methodological frameworks within radical studies must have a firm and personal understanding of the radical tendencies that affected and were espoused by the authors they recover. Like Swank Holmes who warned against scholars who study socialism and anarchism without “receiving the truth into their heart of hearts,” I believe researchers need to know and practice radicalism to produce exceptional scholarship (“A Genuine Student” 3). Today, just as in 1888, “There are millions of theoretic socialists and anarchists, and a handful who stand ready to sacrifice life and liberty if necessary, and who do sacrifice time, energy, and money every day of their lives” (Swank Holmes, “A Genuine Student” 3). Anarchism, in particular, has been treated unfairly across the many disciplines of the academy. It has suffered from ignorant assumptions, incomplete analyses, and, perhaps most damaging of all, pure neglect.

While one does not necessarily need to identify as an anarchist to do good anarchist scholarship, it is important to have a well-informed and widely read understanding of its past and current history and philosophical attributes. More importantly, one must have a firm commitment to anarchism's basic tenets, such as self-critical frameworks of social justice, unabated equality, and a healthy skepticism of all forms of authority.

That is not to say that any social or cultural legacy, such as anarchism or Midwesternism, should be treated uncritically. There are two particularly fraught anarchist views examined in this dissertation. The first view is the advocacy or justification of the use of force by the working class against capitalists and the representatives of the state (i.e. police). Despite frequent, popular caricatures of anarchists as violent, bloodthirsty radicals (who were also not coincidentally depicted as foreign and anti-American), anarchists in the nineteenth century had healthy and nuanced debates about whether or not force was an acceptable tactic, and, if so, what kind, to what or whom, and when. The second view is the ways in which "scientific" eugenics principles were used to undergird arguments for free love relationships. Placed into a socio-historical context of working-class poverty, domestic abuse and servitude, and abhorrently unsanitary working and living conditions, these views are not only recognizable but understandable. Yet, understanding does not necessarily translate to right, especially in a contemporary socio-historical context. Many of the texts included in this project still speak to contemporary concerns as they did in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Many of their arguments aged well; many did not.

Rather than a genre-based or individual-based organization schema, I have taken a thematic approach. Chapter Two provides background information regarding both anarchist and Midwestern history and scholarship in order to illustrate the intersections between them. The other three chapters each focus on a particular theme. Chapter Three focuses on anarchist economic

analyses and the ways in which anarchist thought was undergirded by Midwestern cultural values. Chapter Four explores the intimate connection between anarchism, free love, and eugenics, particularly in the novels of Waisbrooker, Finch Kelly, and Swank Holmes. Chapter Five details the complexities of how commitments to martyrdom and spiritualism by anarchists replaced religious orthodoxy, developed in-group cohesion, and flourished as a result of nineteenth-century print culture, much of which was focused on the Midwest. These three thematic chapters are united in their use of writings by all five anarchist women and incisive connections between nineteenth century anarchist and Midwestern ideological values.

Waisbrooker, Parsons, Swank Holmes, Finch Kelly, and de Cleyre are not regionalist writers by our contemporary literary or historical definition. When they do comment on the people and events of the Midwest, it is not to give us a sense of their lives. In other words, they fail miserably at attempts of local color, and their works of fiction are not necessarily realist. Often the texts veer into the genres of didactic sentimentalism or romantic propaganda. With that being noted, these five writers serve as exemplars of another dimension of regional literary study: ideological regionalism. Economic, political, and historical factors of a region converge to give rise to a political ideology I call ideological regionalism, which can be expounded through the literary production of a particular time and place. What makes ideological regionalism different from other regional modes of analysis is that the people or the place is not a significantly overt factor in the literary production or in the elucidation of the political ideology; yet, themes or motifs of the ideology in question can be tracked through a narrative genealogy by the region from which the author or the literary writing is produced. Although there were numerous other sites of anarchist thought in the late nineteenth century, their textual productions were affected by the underlying principles of their Midwestern milieu.

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CHAPTER 2. POLITICS AND PLACE: WHAT IS ANARCHISM? WHAT IS THE MIDWEST?

“Poverty plus confidence equals
pioneers. We never doubted.”
-William Stafford, “American Gothic”

Anarchism is a narrative with many beginnings, many middles, and many ends, all overlapping, lasting for a short moment, or for a long while. The narrative of the individualist tradition of explicitly anarchist thought in the United States begins with Josiah Warren, who became radicalized in the individualist tradition in the Owenite commune of New Harmony, Indiana in 1826-1827. An individualist and anti-statist tradition can be found in the earliest colonized histories of the Americas; indeed, the indigenous people who were killed, enslaved, and colonized on this very land were as vehement critics of empire and capital as the anarchists of the nineteenth century. The early nineteenth century presented a range of challenges and opportunities, such as the reconceiving of liberty and individualism through anti-slavery critiques, the “opening” of the frontier to pioneers from the east coast, a proto-feminist movement including the rise of the idea of republican motherhood, and industrialism that reshaped the role of the individual as an economic resource. All of these challenges and opportunities helped to shape anarchism, especially as it formed in what we consider as the Midwest today. Whether examined as a philosophy, a political ideology, a tendency, or a mode of praxis, anarchism is, at center, anti-authoritarian. For all anarchists, this means anti-state; that is to say that anarchists find the power and authority of the state to be illegitimate. Most anarchists also agree that capitalism, or what has morphed today into global neoliberal capitalism, is also an illegitimate authority. For anarchist women in the nineteenth century, and many anarchist men for that matter, this anti-authoritarian critique was applied to institutions and traditions that limited the freedom of women much more than that of

men. This chapter presents a short historical overview of anarchism in the United States, a review of scholarship about the Midwest as an ideological and historical region, and biographical descriptions of the anarchist women writers included in this study. I argue that the intersection of the historical forces of anarchist tendencies and the culture that arose from the colonization of the Midwestern United States created unique conditions for the rise of anarchists who have fused both anarchism and Midwestern culture into their systems of belief and practice as evidenced by their literary production. In order to illustrate this fusion in more detail, the later chapters of this project will look at the themes of economic emancipation, eugenics and free love, and the rhetorical and cultural role of spiritualism and martyrdom as they are imagined through literary and cultural artifacts of five Midwestern anarchist women writers.

2.1 Anarchism in the Nineteenth-Century United States

In general, there are two distinct strains of anarchism: communal and individualist. Historically, most European anarchists, and those influenced by European anarchism subscribed to a communal sense of anarchism, and many American anarchists, especially those who were born in the US and did not emigrate from Europe, tended toward the individualist strain of anarchist thought and practice. With the exception of Lucy Parsons and the early activist life of Lizzie Holmes, the women examined in this work fall within the limits of individualist anarchism. Both Parsons and Holmes were part of the Chicago chapter of the International Working People's Association (IWPA), an American branch of the European-born International movement that focused on labor and workers as the means to revolution. Lucy Parsons was also an inaugural member of the International Workers of the World (IWW) Chicago chapter in 1905, another radical international worker association that is still operational today. Although Parsons remained committed to a communal strain of anarchism, Holmes' novel *Hagar Lyndon* and some of her

other non-fiction writings point to a transformative or latent penchant for individualist radicalism. Holmes' protagonist, Hagar Lyndon, struggles for independence not with, but in spite of, her community. Still, the communal tendencies represented by Parsons throughout her life and in Holmes' early career in Chicago tend to be referenced and included in contemporary scholarship as representative of their beliefs. Much of this is due in part to the fact that Parsons became much more well-known than Holmes and their successful strikes and marches, which led to the eight-hour work day, and at the turn of the century, regulations that limited children's labor, especially in dirty and dangerous factories. Individualist traditions, on the other hand, tend to be associated with movements like free love and individual economic emancipation that focused on the self. Nonetheless, each strain of anarchism was still dedicated to creating an anti-statist and anti-capitalist future. In the following sections, I define anarchism in two broad and artificial categories for ease of understanding. While these categories did exist, they were not (and still are not) clearly delineated in theory or practice.

2.1.1 Communalist Anarchism

Communalist anarchism, which during the second half of the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century was based in Europe and in some large cities in North America (New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago, for example), was, for a time, indistinguishable from what was branded as socialism. In his decisive history of the first international movement *We Do Not Fear Anarchy, We Invoke It*, Robert Graham defines anarchism (as it related to the First International) as "a view that rejects coercive authority, the state, and participation in existing systems of government, and that advocates federalism (or voluntary association), libertarianism, and direct action. This is consistent with Proudhon and Bakunin's conceptions of anarchism and [. . .] the views of those members of the International who came to identify themselves as anarchists and to create an

international anarchist movement” (4). Although the First International represented many different views along the spectrum of radical left thought, the core tenets of this philosophy advocated voluntary associations that often took the form of organizational structures arranged by labor, or syndicates. The tendency to organize individuals by their labor came to be known as anarcho-syndicalism, or anarchism through labor unions and other associations.

The International Working People’s Association in Chicago was one such group, and Lizzie Swank Holmes, for example, worked for many years organizing the garment workers in Chicago. In a 1909 letter to Caro Lloyd, Lizzie Swank Holmes writes,

I wrote, talked, organized the sewing women of Chicago, indeed I did some of the pioneer work in teaching the working women of Chicago the principles of trade unionism, when they knew nothing at all of organized effort and were deeply prejudiced against it. It is upon the hard, strenuous work of myself and a few other devoted women that the present thorough organization of working women in Chicago has been built, though we have never received any credit for it. (2-3)

Although they championed labor and encouraged organizations such as trade unions, communalistic anarchists were not Marxists, nor were they communists, although the distinction between “anarchism” and “communism” would not be delineated until the end of the nineteenth century. Even though communists and anarchists broadly share similar critiques of capitalism, government, and social relations, their methods for achieving liberation vary: even anarcho-syndicalists rejected the idea that the governmental structure needed to go beyond federated syndicates, and certainly would not have advocated for a centralized government, even if its purpose was purportedly to manage the affairs of the syndicates. Thus, local control, particularly through the social machinery of organizations such as trade unions, was to remain at the fore, even

if these local organizations were loosely federated into national or international associations, such as the IWPA or IWW.

2.1.2 Individualist Anarchism

Although some scholars have engaged with American anarchists and American anarchist tendencies, the “default” setting of anarchist discussion tends to focus on European anarchist writings and histories. James Joseph Martin argues against a Euro-centric anarchist history in his book *Men Against the State: The Expositors of Individualist Anarchism in America, 1827-1908*. Much anarchist scholarship tends to start with the “classic” European anarchists like Proudhon and Bakunin; yet, Martin argues, “Not only is [individualist anarchism] the only part of the radical movement native to America with a propaganda, but it has depended on natives for its promotion. Furthermore, it is unique in that members of the group actually attempted under practical conditions to try out its theory” (6). Martin differentiates American anarchism from European anarchism by its “individualistic rather than collectivistic dynamics,” and one of Martin’s “major concerns” in his study is American anarchism’s “evolution from the practical stages as a frontier experiment in individual sovereignty and ‘equitable commerce’ to the theoretical and intellectual pamphleteering of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries” (6). Even though Martin notes the individualist, anti-government tendencies during the Colonial period, he is taken up with the project of the “major phase” of American anarchism and begins his study with Josiah Warren, and argues that Warren’s “forthright amalgamation of individualism, fear of the state and economic mutualism has left its mark on the labor and cooperative movements in America and abroad” (13). For Martin, Warren represents the first coming together of the tendencies and philosophical thought that would later inspire the anarchist movement as it ascended in the American political consciousness in the late nineteenth century.

According to his biographer, William Baillie, Josiah Warren was born in Boston in 1798, and in early adulthood, became a proponent of the socialist theories of Robert Owen, a Welsh manufacturer and social reformer. Warren joined the Owenist “utopian community” at New Harmony, Indiana with his wife and children in 1825 along with “nine hundred enthusiasts gathered from all parts of the country on the Rappite estates, hoping to take part in the formation of the ideal community which was to usher in a millennium of peace and plenty, brotherhood and happiness, ultimately to embrace the whole of mankind” (Baillie 4). The colony at New Harmony catalyzed an unexpected but decisive shift in Warren’s world view. Instead of finding the ideal situation for societal relations predicted by existing theorems, he found that a society based on communalism had failures in practice that were not revealed in theory. Almost thirty years later, Warren expounded on his time and experiences at New Harmony:

Many a time while in the midst of them did I say to myself, Oh! If the world could only assemble on these hills around and look down upon us through all these experiences, what lessons they would learn! There would be no more French Revolutions, no more patent political governments, no more organizations, no more constitution-making, law-making, nor human contrivances for the foundation of society. And what a world of disappointment and suffering this experience might save them! But they could not get our experience, and so they have kept on organizing communities, phalansteries, political parties, and national revolutions, only to fail, of course, as we did, and to destroy by degrees the little hope that existed of making the world more fit to live in. (quoted in Baillie 5)

The solution to this failed communistic experiment, at least for Josiah Warren, was a turn toward an individualist philosophy, one in which personal liberty, freedom, and responsibility was to be protected at all costs against demagoguery, authority, and immunity from one’s actions. From

these experiences, “Warren believed that the chief causes” of New Harmony’s failure to thrive “were the suppression of individuality, the lack of initiative and responsibility. What was everyone’s interest was nobody’s business” (Baille 6). Because, as Baille points out, “All the affairs of the community were decided either by Owen as proprietor, or by the will of the majority,” Warren and others found that “personal liberty was at a discount incentive to sustained individual effort was lacking, and each was inclined to ascribe the faults of the system to the shortcomings of his neighbors” (Baille 6). In short, Warren believed that New Harmony failed not in spite of its communal nature, but precisely because of it. The communal structure enabled responsibility to be shirked and direction was supplied through the authority of Robert Owen or through majority democracy, thereby preventing minority dissension. The authority required to sustain a communalist society, Warren and individualists after him would conclude, was not worth the restrictions it required for personal liberty and freedom. Thus, for individualist anarchists, instead of community, the individual became the center of anarchist practice.

After New Harmony, Warren opened up “Time Stores” in Cincinnati and several other cities over the next forty years in order to put his theory into practice. Warren’s time stores encouraged people to trade their time for other services, such as an hour of carpentry for thirty minutes of clothes washing, or whatever was agreed upon by the two parties. This system relied on Warren’s argument that the worth of a good or service was not in its demand, but rather in how much effort (labor) and time it took to create an object or complete a service. This revolutionary idea, completely opposite to the economic principles upon which capitalism is founded, was at the core of Warren’s individual anarchist practice. In addition to his economic philosophies, Warren knew how his anarchism would work, both in theory and in practice. Baille’s extensive study of

Warren and his life experiences enabled him to give a succinct, big-picture view of Warren's political philosophy:

Warren formulated the idea of modern Anarchism,--'each being a law unto himself' without violating the like freedom of any other person. Neither Warren nor his disciples, however, have held that all men are at present developed to the degree that none will consciously invade another's rights or abridge his liberty. They declare rather that the ideal law should always be upheld as the guide and rule of social conduct; meanwhile admitting that voluntary organization will still be necessary to defend the individual against aggression or invasion by unsocial and criminal members of society. It is true that this protective function is now assumed by the State, but its police and punitive machinery has all the defects of antiquated institutions which have survived both in spirit and in fact from the distant past. (Baille 102-103)

In fact, sovereignty of the individual came to be known as one of the two pillars upon which a revived form of radical American individualism stood in Benjamin Tucker's landmark individualist anarchist periodical *Liberty*.

2.1.3 *Liberty* and *Lucifer the Light-Bearer*

There were two important radical English language individualist periodicals in the late nineteenth-century United States that we know of: *Liberty* and *Lucifer the Light-Bearer*.² First published in Boston, Massachusetts on August 6, 1881, *Liberty* came to be known as the dialogic exchange for individualist anarchism, and, through a long tenure ending in 1908, brought together

² This is not to say that *Liberty* and *Lucifer* were the most widely read or most influential as a whole (there is currently little scholarship that can provide such answers), but they are two of the most instructive and longest running individualist anarchist periodicals that still remain (largely intact) from this time period.

various voices and opinions. Much of what is expressed in the pages of *Liberty* center around or follow from two major tenets of individualist anarchism: the sovereignty of the individual and the economic philosophy known as the labor theory of value. According to Wendy McElroy in her book *The Debates of Liberty: An Overview of Individualist Anarchism, 1881-1908*, the labor theory of value was “often expressed through the phrase ‘Cost the Limit of Price.’ Adherents of the labor theory of value claimed that all wealth is created by labor and usually implied that, therefore, all wealth belongs unquestionably to the laborer” (4). In the first number of *Liberty*, Benjamin Tucker outlines the purposes and perspectives of his nascent publication: “It may be well to state at the outset that this journal will be edited to suit its editor, not its readers. He hopes that what suits him will suit them; but, if not, it will make no difference” (1). Tucker continues in this vein with a warning for readers and writers alike, “No subscriber, or body of subscribers, will be allowed to govern his course, dictate his policy, or prescribe his methods. *Liberty* is published for the very definite purpose of spreading certain ideas, and no claim will be admitted, on any pretext of freedom of speech, to waste its limited space in hindering the attainment of that object” (1).

A little over a month after its inaugural issue, Tucker made clear in the pages of *Liberty* that his philosophy of individualism advocated not only for the rights of man, but the rights of women as well. In number 4 published on Saturday September 17, 1881, Tucker refutes an editorial comment in *The London Truth*:

The London “Truth” thinks that “the best use to which a woman can be put is to be made the honest life of some good man, and the judicious mother of healthy children.” It is high time that Editor Laboruchere, who claims to be a radical, found out that woman is not here to “be put” to any use whatever. Like man, she has her capacities and her preferences, and, like him, she also has the right to *put herself* to the uses most in accordance with them.

Propagation is an important function in which man and woman are factors equally necessary, but one whose usefulness is entirely incident and subordinate to the rest of life. Its value depends wholly upon its power to produce human beings good for something more than the mere perpetuation of the race. The man who should be told that the best use to which he could be put would be to be made the honest husband of some good woman, and the judicious father of healthy children, would consider himself insulted, and with reason. Why should not woman, too, feel the insult of being degraded in others' estimation to the level of a mere sexual animal, with no brain to speak of above her cerebellum? (italics and quotes in original, 1)

Tucker's pro-woman bent when it came to treating women as thinking agents certainly helped his periodical become a place where both men and women could engage in dialogue and debate about the role of the individual and the destruction of the illegitimate and unjust authority imposed upon her by the state, capitalism, and religion.

It is no surprise then that Waisbrooker, Parsons, Holmes, Finch Kelly, and de Cleyre were all referred to or published in *Liberty*. Florence Finch Kelly's involvement with *Liberty* began when her co-editor of *The Globe*, friend, and eventual husband, A.P. Kelly, joined Benjamin R. Tucker as the Associate Editor of *Liberty* beginning with Volume II, No. 16 on Saturday, May 17, 1884. Issues had been erratic, and the infusion of a new consistent editorial view surely gave the paper the boost it needed to remain in mostly regular bi-weekly publication for the next several

years.³ It was in this atmosphere that Finch Kelly began her contributions to *Liberty*.⁴ Besides her novels, Finch Kelly's articles in *Liberty* are the best characterizations of her radical beliefs that have been recovered to date.

A second important periodical for the nineteenth century individualist anarchist movement in the United States was Moses Harman's *Lucifer the Light-Bearer*. Unlike *Liberty*, which was published on the East Coast, *Lucifer* was always a Midwestern radical periodical. Headquartered for most of its life in Kansas, first in Valley Falls and then in Topeka, Harman moved *Lucifer* to Chicago in 1896. In 1907, *Lucifer the Light-Bearer* became *The American Journal of Eugenics*, further narrowing the focus from sundry radical and fringe ideas, specifically to health and reproduction. Nascent eugenics sentiments are apparent in *Lucifer* even before the turn of the century, and they grew out of Moses Harman's interest in reproductive freedom.

³ Tucker wrote about A.P. Kelly joining the paper in an article titled "Taking a Fresh Start": "My readers, when we parted last December, I told you that I should try to meet you next in a twelve-page weekly. I find that at present I cannot compass that. But from this forth *Liberty* will greet you fortnightly, in form twice as large as of old, [. . .]. Better than all, I shall henceforth have the earnest co-operation of A.P. Kelly, a young journalist whose brilliant articles in some of the most prominent daily newspapers of the country have attracted attention far and wide. For two or three years he has been studying the philosophy of *Liberty*, and, as a natural result, has become an enthusiastic believer in it. To its support he now brings a finely-equipped brain, a noble heart, and a blistering pen. Do any of you remember "Max," whom I used to quote so frequently in *Liberty*? "Max" and Mr. Kelly are on and the same. But I need not introduce him further. His articles in this issue speak for him much better than I can." (4)

⁴ Although scholars have noted that Finch Kelly's contributions in *Liberty* were signed "F.F.K.," I believe that before her marriage to A.P. Kelly, she contributed to *Liberty* under her initials "F.F.". Additionally, for about a year after her marriage, I believe that she contributed other pieces under just her first initial "F." Throughout the years, the signing conventions of *Liberty* differed greatly, including those from Tucker himself; yet, I during the time directly after her marriage to A.P. Kelly, the signing conventions of the journal were to use just one initial—usually the last name (T for Tucker, and K for Kelly, for example). But Finch Kelly had a problem: Her husband was "K.," and to sign her articles also with her new last name would be confusing; therefore, I believe that before her marriage in December 1884, she signed her *Liberty* articles with "F.F.," for almost a year after her marriage, she signed with simply "F.," and, finally, she used the signature other scholars have ascribed to her: "F.F.K."

Harman's interests in reproductive freedom included the free love movement and newly emerging science that suggested new genetic and biological discoveries could help to improve individual health and intelligence. Lizzie Swank Holmes' 1893 serialized novel *Hagar Lyndon; Or A Woman's Rebellion*, written under the pseudonym May Huntley, is illustrative of the ways in which Harman and the greater *Lucifer* readership saw the intersection of radical individualist politics, free love, eugenics, and reproduction. In the novel, Holmes' protagonist, Hagar Lyndon, grows up in a religious and restrictive family, and her mother dies from too much labor and having too many children. Hagar witnesses her older sister enveloped in the same type of patriarchal and abusive marriage to which her mother was sacrificed. Hagar wants a different life for herself, a life that involves rejecting the subjugation of Christian marriage and purposefully having a child out of wedlock. The novel in effect explores the issues detailed and debated in the pages of *Lucifer* in various forms, including editorials, letters, essays, poems, short stories, and novels. Although *Lucifer the Light-Bearer* was one of a handful of important radical individualist periodicals important to the dissemination and dialogue of anarchist and anarchist-adjacent radical beliefs in the late nineteenth century, it was one of many such periodicals that called the Midwest home.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there was a relatively robust periodical print culture in the Midwest. In Chicago alone, between approximately 1880 and 1920, there were at least thirty-seven different explicitly anarchist periodicals, both individualistic and communal, published in at least eleven languages, including German, Italian, Swedish, and Czech (Zimmer "Anarchist Newspapers and Periodicals, 1872-1940"). Although Chicago was certainly the epicenter of anarchist publication, and arguably anarchist action, in the late 1800s, other explicitly anarchist periodicals popped up around the Midwest, including, but not limited to: Detroit, Michigan; Cleveland, Ohio; Saint Louis, Missouri; Clinton, Iowa; and Minneapolis, Minnesota

(Zimmer “Anarchist Newspapers and Periodicals, 1872-1940”). Anarchism, a purportedly European, immigrant, and un-American ideology, was firmly imbedded in the heartland, and in the hearts of those who lived there.

2.2 Theories of the Midwest and Midwestern Literature

The Midwest as a colonial formation of the new United States was made official on July 13, 1787 with the ratification of *An Ordinance for the Government of the Territory of the United States, North-west of the River Ohio*, otherwise known as the *Northwest Ordinance*. The *Northwest Ordinance* is both a literal text-based map of territorial and governmental expansion and a document mapping the idealism of the new nation.⁵ The articles of the *Northwest Ordinance* predate those of the Bill of Rights, which was created in 1789 and eventually ratified in 1791. The articles provide for religious freedom, the writ of habeas corpus, the encouragement of education, the rejection of governmental interference in legal contracts and business, the equality of the hoped-for states with that of the original states back East, and the rejection of slavery and involuntary servitude. The *Northwest Ordinance* is the founding document of what would become the Middle West (Midwest), and it is, arguably, where a fledgling sense of the culture, identity,

⁵ While there is much debate as to what exactly comprises the Midwest with regard to the inclusion of states, I define the Midwest liberally, identifying the core Midwest as the Great Lakes states of Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin, but also including the more Western states of Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, and North Dakota. Although there is variation from state to state, and even within the states themselves, their collective identification as the Midwest yields some commonalities, namely a history of pioneer settlement in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and, as David D. Anderson points out, the ability to identify itself as the first truly authentic American region. Notwithstanding, most of what we believe to be true (or not) about the Midwest comes from contemporary conceptions of the region, most often promulgated by media, literature, and stereotypical assumptions. One thing that all these have in common is the assumption that a people is characterized by a region, or vice versa; that where we live and with whom affects who we are. Or to put it more succinctly: we are what we live.

and literature of the colonized Midwest begins.⁶ The residents of the Old Northwest would, in the 1840s and 1850s, begin to create their own narratives about “a linear narrative of unimpeded progress” and economic development, but as Cayton and Gray note, this narrative exaggerated and smoothed over the problems and nuance of easily identifiable historical events (11). This narrative of progress “was a story that extolled benefits without reckoning their costs” (Cayton and Gray 11). What was left out was “The blood and treasure expended on conquest of land and native peoples, the grinding poverty of frontier life, the damage done to nascent commercial networks and transportation systems by two national financial panics and economic depressions” (Cayton and Gray 11). What was also left out, I would add, is the radicalism that arose out of the promises made by settler colonialism brought to bear on the realities of violence, poverty, and isolated communities.

There is much scholarship on both Midwestern history and literature, and particularly good scholarship tends to fuse both history and literature in an attempt to answer (or even just to being to ask): What is the Midwest? This question is an attempt to identify and categorize a region that everyone knows about but finds it a herculean task to even describe one small corner of its purported existence. There is more to Midwestern studies than simply identifying its geographical boundaries and then using careful and judicious analysis to pin it down and put it in a smart, tidy box. Even established and esteemed Midwestern studies scholars, such as Frederick C. Stern and Andrew R. L. Cayton, put forth queries as to whether the Midwest is even a region at all, or simply

⁶ By “colonized Midwest,” I mean the official construct and settlement of the Northwest/Middle West as an American territory. The Middle West has a long history that predates European settlement, as well as a detailed intermediate history of first contact and trade. Because my interest is in the 19th century construction of the Midwest by immigrants and Americans of mostly European descent, I will not explore the indigenous history or literary culture of the Middle West here.

a geographical area cordoned off by the East Coast, the West Coast, and the South of the United States by history and modes of economic production. Inherent in any claim of regional studies is a claim that the region at hand has coalesced into a readable and interpretable entity. Although colloquially the Midwest is an identifiable region, Midwestern studies scholarship has debated whether or not the region has an identity, beyond just the geographical proximity of its states, to justify a study of the region as a whole.

Several scholars have worked to define the Midwest. In “What is ‘Regionalism,’ and If You Know That, Where Does the Midwest Begin and End?” by Frederick C. Stern in *Exploring the Midwestern Literary Imagination: Essays in Honor of David D. Anderson*, Stern asks: “The notion of a regional literature has about it several problems having to do with definition—what is the Midwest; and with limitation—what constitutes a ‘midwestern’ literature, and how can we delineate and define it?” (15). Stern raises several issues as to why the Midwest and its literature have trouble with definition: 1) there is no proof that Midwestern writers use specialized language, 2) scholars of Midwestern literature have yet to challenge the canon of American literature (like feminist or African American scholars have done) or form their own canon, instead seeking inclusion and representation of Midwestern writers in the canon, and 3) scholars have not yet grappled seriously with what Stern calls “the issue of ‘mimesis,’” or whether or not “the reality which is region is reflected in the writing that the region produces, or that the region describes, and that we can find a relationship between the text and the reality which we can describe” (16-17). In an answer to these three concerns, Sterns posits two arguments in favor of a regional approach that undergirds Midwestern studies. First, that if regionalism is to be a valid field of study as “a critical construct,” it means that the field is established “in part out of a sense of ‘opposition’ to the ‘hegemonic rule’ of a putative Eastern (with a far Western branch) ‘establishment’”; second,

“the argument for region suggests that somehow regional history must give some special characteristics to writers who have shared it in their biographical lives or who have studied it or used it as a ‘locale,’ and that it must be reflected in the psychologies of the characters they create” (Stern 19). Ultimately, Stern argues that using region as a category is unsystematic, yet still useful, within limits.

Whereas Stern cautiously endorses the idea of regional study, historian Andrew R. L. Cayton troubles the idea that the Midwest is really a region at all. In his essay “The Anti-Region: Place and Identity in the History of the American Midwest,” Cayton observes, “The challenge for regional scholars is not to suggest that what happens to people differs in different places but rather to insist that they construct their understandings of their relationships with other peoples and their environments in different ways” (143). With this in mind, Cayton suggests that the Midwest is an anti-region, which is to say that “Midwesterners and their historians tend to talk and write in universal terms. [. . .]. What is different about the Midwest is more implied than developed, more assumed than explained” (144). Rather than being homogeneous, he argues, the Midwest is atomized, comprised of countless identity groups based on heritage, nationality, race, gender, or organized affinity groups, such as the Knights of Labor or the Farm Holiday Association (Cayton 145-146). A lack of a regional discourse lends itself further to Cayton’s argument that the Midwest is an “anti-region”; recent scholarship, according to Cayton, “does not really confront the notion of a regional consciousness. In virtually all of the recent work on the Midwest, it remains a setting, not a particular constellation of attitudes or behaviors” (147). More importantly, “the imagined and historical literature that deals with life in the Midwest almost never deals with the region as a formal phenomenon,” and, try as scholars might, by examining regionalism through the lens of subjects like “landscapes, food, immigrants, crops, the transition to capitalism, the organization

and relationship of cities and their hinterlands,” scholars “cannot force people, living or dead, into identities that they never constructed for themselves” (Cayton 148). To do so would be ahistorical and anachronistic and of little use to a serious study of a regional identity or literature (or the lack thereof).

Another important issue Cayton raises in support of his “anti-region” argument is that, if region is defined through Benedict Anderson’s concept of “imagined community,” which Cayton utilizes, then, “regional identity—the creation of an imagined community—requires a strong sense of isolation. And the Midwest is not, strictly speaking, isolated. It is in the middle” (149). Yet, just a few paragraphs later, Cayton admits that the Midwest’s strong sense of localism, that is to say “pride in family, town, and state,” lends to Midwesterners wanting to be left alone “in worlds of their own making” (150). He identifies this isolation as one of the causes for a lack of a coherent regional identity. At the end of Cayton’s piece, he indulges the reader in an anecdote about a speaking engagement in Rapid City, South Dakota that exemplified the concept of Midwestern niceness. He notes that inhabitants of the Midwest possess “the peculiarity of a culture that makes a fetish out of being nice. Perhaps what is most distinctive about the Midwest is a tendency on the part of many of its citizens to be uncomfortable with the whole idea of being distinctive,” and perhaps, he concludes that nothing is more interesting “than the conspicuous efforts of many of its white, middle-class citizens to render themselves inconspicuous” (159). Here, Cayton paints Midwest ideology, or at least the ideology to which he has easy access, as mainly a white, middle-class ideology, one that largely leaves out other elements of race, class, and gender as well as experiences of capital and property, further illustrating his point of the atomization (rather than homogenization) of the inhabitants of the Midwest. Although in this particular essay Cayton seeks

to destabilize a coherent identity of the Midwest, in the introduction to the volume in which this essay is included, he explores the dominant narrative of the Midwest with Susan E. Gray.

Because the essays in *The American Midwest: Essays on Regional History*, including Cayton's aforementioned piece, serve to question and trouble dominant narratives in Midwestern studies, Cayton and Gray admit their introduction serves as a "foil" to the contributed chapters in the collection that mostly deal with counter-narratives. Regionality in the United States begins for Cayton and Gray when certain groups of people are left out or are disempowered to help create the national discourse. In other words, "alienation from the center engendered regionality. Regionality was a cultural and political expression of peripheral status transformed into boasts of moral superiority and demands for a greater, territorially specific voice in national government" (Cayton and Gray 8). Because the Northwest Ordinance has prohibited slavery and indentured servitude, part of the emerging narrative of progress was the "sanctity of labor, as if the exclusion of slavery ensured the dignity of work" (Cayton and Gray 12). Through the second half of the nineteenth century, however, as Reconstruction led to a boom of northern industry and the Gilded Age, middle-class and working-class criticism came to abut these values from the regional story about linear progress (for both the region and the individuals who lived there) as well as the dignity and sanctity of hard work. Cayton and Gray note that although there were some violent movements, such as the Haymarket Square Riot, the Calumet Strike, and the Pullman Strike, "For the most part, however, dissenting citizens sought reform, not revolution. To one degree or another, they deplored what many Midwesterners saw as the injustice of the economic and political structures of the United States as a whole and the Midwest in particular" (18-19). But this consciousness of socio-political structures that brought about criticism were not founded on class consciousness, according to Cayton and Gray; rather, the overall focus of Midwesterners became trying to "find

a way to redress their grievances, to restore a sense of fairness, and to make regional identity more inclusive” because they were “driven by a strong sense of exclusion from both public life and private prosperity” (18-19). While historical or cultural studies scholars of the Midwest look to the people and politics of a region to establish a sense of regionality, literary scholars look to the development of characters, landscapes, and commentary in order to theorize the Midwest and the literary production by and about its inhabitants.

In his introduction to the *Dictionary of Midwestern Literature Volume One: The Authors* titled “The Origins and Development of the Literature of Midwest,” David D. Anderson argues that out of the fusion of time and place and people, “writers attempt to extract not the meaning of place or natural or social environment, but the meaning of human experience as it is manifested in that place, which is often the place out of which the writer has come and to which he returns in his work, if not his life” (9). Anderson’s assertion that it is not place manifested through writing, but the meaning of the human experience as it is manifested through place that undergirds a literary work, especially, he says, for Midwestern writers. In tracing the development of the Midwest as a region, Anderson details what he identifies as “three factual observations [that] are fundamental to a discussion of the Midwest as an authentic American region with a history, a myth, a psyche, and a culture that produces and, in turn, is shaped by its literature” (11). Anderson’s factual observations are 1) that the Midwest is a truly American creation, rather than European or indigenous; 2) that the Midwest rests on a solid foundation of eighteenth century rational philosophical thought; and 3) that the Midwest holds “a unique geographical position as the American Heartland,” as it was the primary space through which Manifest Destiny was promulgated at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and is neither the old world of New England nor the new world of the Pacific. Thus, Anderson argues, Midwestern literature cannot

simply be characterized as regional literature, but its literature is “at once regional, national, and universal” (11).

In his regionally comparative study of Southern and Midwestern literature titled *A Certain Slant of Light: Regionalism and the Form of Southern and Midwestern Fiction*, David Marion Holman claims it is not the “facts” of the region that matter, but rather the myth that its writers are responding to. Because of the comparative nature of his study, Holman’s observations drawn from literature are constructed on the differentiated mythos of the South and the Midwest, bringing into sharp focus the differences of each region through their literature. He demarcates the Midwest as “the region that defines itself most as a nation and is accepted as such by other regions of the country. The South is a particular place; the Midwest is ‘the Heartland’” (Holman 17). Departing from other Midwestern studies scholars, Holman argues for the “Midwestern mind,” which is defined by a very specific world view: “its belief in the possibility that the promise of the past can be realized in the future, and the present is thus a constant reminder of the region’s and the nation’s failure to keep faith with the ideals of the past and with the promise of the future” (17). This is unlike the Southerner, whose past is “both heritage and a trap,” and in dealing with she or he must simultaneously use and reconstruct the past” (Holman 20). But what exactly is the mythos to which the Midwestern writer is responding? According to Holman, it is “the myth of the farmer and pioneer,” it is the myth of the “Midwesterner [who] comes out of the East, the world’s melting pot, looking for something better, and finds it in the land that blossoms from the sweat of his brow”—in essence, the myth of Jeffersonian agrarianism (19). That myth is also created through Midwestern literature. Holman writes, in Midwestern literature, “Here are the true people of Carl Sandburg’s *The People*, Yes; here is America, the bastion of democratic values, the Heartland, the home of simple, moral folk. This is the myth—the Kansas of *The Wizard of Oz*. [. . .]. Yet it is the

myth that is important” (19). And this legacy presents particular difficulties when looking backward and responding to the mythic tradition of the region. Holman reads modern literature as a response to these myths. Thus, “For the inheritor of the pioneer legacy, the world is now too confining, too organized, too conformist” (Holman 21). But there is danger in characterizing any region, its people, and its literature, without the context of time.

Midwestern literary scholars have a tendency to, on the whole, begin their study of Midwestern literature in the early twentieth century. Canonical names, such as Willa Cather, Theodore Dreiser, Sherwood Anderson, Edgar Lee Masters, published and developed reputations as Midwestern and national writers in the early to mid-twentieth century. One of the most important tracts of Midwestern scholarship in the last decade, William Barillas’ book *The Midwestern Pastoral: Place and Landscape in Literature of the American Heartland*, is emblematic of a further popular narrowing of the study of Midwestern literature. In his book, which examines the lives and writings of Willa Cather, Aldo Leopold, Theodore Roethke, James Wright, Jim Harrison, and other more contemporary writers, Barillas sets out to “relate these writers to their local geographies and to explain the terms by which they counter the placelessness, despair, and abstraction of much mainstream literature and literary theory” (9). For these particular writers, Barillas continues, “the aim of writing is not merely intellectual, aesthetic, or even spiritual, but democratic and ecological” (9). It is these writers’ topophilia, or love of the land, which is what interests Barillas to use their texts as the foundation for his theory of the Midwestern pastoral, a theory that bisects Midwestern literature into two genres: social realism or pastoral literature. Consequently, the study of Midwestern literature as a regional literature has, over the past several years, focused mainly on twentieth and twenty-first century writers who illustrate a clear connection with land or landscape in their texts or who can be read as social realism.

2.3 Nineteenth-Century Midwestern Anarchist Women Writers

The anarchist authors to be addressed were born or spent a good deal of time in the Midwest. Their writings do not necessarily align with previously established literary traditions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Midwest; however, I argue in the following chapters that these authors' writings illustrate themes that are particular to both anarchism and Midwestern culture. These five women's anarchism flourished because of, not in spite of, the region in which they lived and wrote. This section details historical and biographical information about the five women included in this project: Lois Nichols Waisbrooker (1826-1909), Lizzie Swank Holmes (1850-1926), Lucy E. Parsons (1853?-1942), Florence Finch Kelley (1858-1939), and Voltairine de Cleyre (1866-1912).

A spiritualist and so-called sex radical, Lois Waisbrooker is probably one of the most prolific radical American women of the nineteenth century in both writing and as the editor of several periodicals. Although Lois Waisbrooker was not born in the Midwest, nor did she die there, she spent a good number of years, including many of her golden years of publishing, in Iowa and Kansas. According to Joanne E. Passett in her book *Sex Radicals and the Quest for Women's Equality*, "between the 1868 publication of *Suffrage for Women: The Reasons Why* and her death in 1909, the itinerant lecturer and author wrote twelve novels and pamphlets, edited three periodicals (*Our Age*, *Foundation Principles*, and *Clothed with the Sun*), and served for a year as the acting editor of the sex radical weekly *Lucifer, the Light-Bearer*" (Passett 115).

Waisbrooker spent the most time in the Midwest between 1883 when she "settled among longtime friends in the small Iowa community of Clinton" and 1896. For a time in the early 1890s, she had also lived in Topeka, Kansas and served as the acting editor for *Lucifer* while its editor, Moses Harmon, was serving a sentence for violating the Comstock Law (Passett 117). During her time in Topeka, she also published several novels, including *A Sex Revolution* through the

Independent Publishing Company, which she had established that year. According to Pam McAllister in her 1985 introduction to *A Sex Revolution*, “Waisbrooker was almost doomed to obscurity by her dedication to the odd integration of anarchism, feminism, free love and spiritualism” (3). Not only was she “all but dismissed by the mainstream anarchist movement of her day for her insistence on women’s superiority and devotion to the cause of women’s freedom,” Waisbrooker was also “none too popular with the suffrage-minded women’s movement for her advocacy of spiritualism and anarchistic free love” (McAllister 3). Unlike many of the younger up and coming American radical women of the Gilded Age, Waisbrooker was sixty-seven when *A Sex Revolution* was published in 1893, but, as McAllister notes, “though she never fit neatly into either the anarchist or feminist movements, Waisbrooker clearly had an enthusiastic if not large following” (3).

Less is known about Lizzie Swank Holmes, who also wrote under the name May Huntley.⁷ She was an extremely prolific author whose works ranged from fiction to non-fiction accounts of labor, class, justice, equality, and revolution. Shawn E. Wilbur and I are currently working to recover the work of Swank Holmes, and we have found nearly two hundred separate articles, letters, and stories published in newspapers around the United States. Hal D. Sears, in his intimate look at the free love movement in the United States in the book *The Sex Radicals: Free Love in High Victorian America*, notes that Lizzie Swank Holmes came from a family much involved in the free love movement. Her sister, Lillie D. White, took over the publication of *Lucifer the Light-bearer*

⁷ Naming women writers in the nineteenth century can be a challenge; Lizzie Swank has been no exception. Not only did Lizzie Swank Holmes write under a pseudonym (May Huntley or “M.S.”), she also published under several versions of her given name. Both before and after her marriage to William Holmes in late 1885 (see “Our Congratulation” in *The Alarm* 12 Dec. 1885), she published under “L.M.S” or “Lizzie M. Swank.” It is notable, even for an anarchist woman, that she kept her maiden name for publishing after her marriage. It is not until sometime around late 1888 that we see her using an amalgam of her maiden and married names, identifying herself as “Lizzie Swank Holmes” in *The Alarm* (for example, see “The Law of the Land” in *The Alarm* 15 Dec. 1888). For the sake of consistency, I have referred to her throughout this project as “Lizzie Swank Holmes.”

in 1892 due to Lois Waisbrooker's failing health. Waisbrooker had become the periodical's interim editor while its founder Moses Harman was in jail for violating the Comstock Law. Holmes' mother and brother also contributed to the periodical in which her only known novel, *Hagar Lyndon*, was serialized (Sears 245).

In the only scholarship devoted solely to Swank Holmes and her writing, "Free Love and Domesticity: Lizzie M. Holmes, *Hagar Lyndon* (1893), and the Anarchist-Feminist Imagination," Blaine McKinley traces Holmes' journey from rural Ohio to burgeoning Chicago where "she became involved in the fledgling Working Women's Assembly 1789 of the Knights of Labor in the early 1880s" (55). McKinley contends that, after her marriage to English-born William Holmes, that Holmes and Parsons "form[ed] the nucleus of Chicago's English-speaking anarchist movement," and Lizzie Swank Holmes "led a parade of 300 or 400 women through Chicago's streets demanding the eight-hour day" on May 3, 1886—only a day before the Haymarket bombing (55). Holmes was the assistant editor of the Chicago-based anarchist periodical *The Alarm*, and she was arrested alongside Lucy Parsons and numerous other radicals and anarchists during the Haymarket Affair, although both were later released without being charged (Marsh 108).

According to Margaret Marsh, Lizzie Swank Holmes had experience as a school teacher, as well as did Lois Waisbrooker and Voltairine de Cleyre, and that enabled her to write an anarchist critique of education in her 1892 work *Twentieth Century* (118-119). She also wrote the 1893 serialized novel *Hagar Lyndon; or, A Woman's Rebellion*, which appeared in twenty-two installments in the radical periodical *Lucifer the Light-bearer*. After the Haymarket Affair, according to James Green in *Death in the Haymarket*, Swank Holmes and her husband left Chicago and moved to Denver, and, as the fin de siècle neared, she doubted that her anarchist ideals would soon come to fruition (299). Green explains, "Holmes admitted that the anarchist buried at

Waldheim no longer had a known following and that their lives and their ideas no longer held deep meaning for working people” (299). Even though Holmes had a radical career in her own right, she is often discussed only in the context of her famous counterpart, Lucy Parsons.

Much of the information we have from Lucy Parsons comes from two sources: Carolyn Ashbaugh’s biography, originally published in 1976, and esteemed anarchist scholar Paul Avrich’s two volume series *The Haymarket Tragedy*, published in 1984.⁸ Parson’s life is more often cited than her writings, which tended to be speeches or lectures turned essays, collected only relatively recently in *Lucy Parsons: Freedom, Equality & Solidarity: Writings and Speeches, 1878-1937*. The historical contention is that Parson’s career as a radical activist was launched by her husband’s trial and execution for his purported part in the Haymarket bombings in 1886; however, Albert and Lucy were both integral parts of the growing anarchist movement in Chicago in the 1880s: together, with their children in hand, they led a march of “several hundred thousand workers” on May 1, 1886 for the eight hour work day through the streets of Chicago (Ashbaugh 72-73). It is true, however, that Lucy’s radical career in her own right did not take off until after her husband’s execution in November of 1887, and event that she would continue to bring the fore even half a century later in the hopes that the hanged anarchist men would not have died for naught.

⁸ Recently, Jacqueline Jones published a new biography of Lucy Parsons titled *Goddess of Anarchy: The Life and Times of Lucy Parsons, American Radical* (New York: Basic Books, 2017). I cite Jones’ biography in Chapter 5 when discussing the executions of the Haymarket martyrs. I cannot, however, cite it here in good conscience, even though it presents new and revelatory information on Parson’s life, such as the probability that she was born into slavery before being moved to Texas as a child. In my personal and scholarly opinion, Jones’ book has too many mis-readings and possible citation errors to be considered credible without all source information being corroborated, which I have yet had the time to do. One example of such an error is her complete misreading of *Hagar Lyndon* (she confuses the protagonist Hagar with her sister), from which she draws incorrect claims about the lives and beliefs of Lizzie Swank Holmes and Lucy Parsons.

Cited by the Chicago Police as “More dangerous than a thousand rioters,” and described by her biographer Carolyn Ashbaugh as “a colorful figure whose style was to capture headlines” and “a firebrand who spoke with terrifying intensity when the occasion demanded it,” Lucy Parsons (1853?-1942) was an enigmatic anarchist activist and writer who struggled for the improvement of labor and living conditions for thousands of Chicago’s poorest people (Ashbaugh 9-10). Lucy Parsons was foundational in the creation of the International Workers of the World (IWW), and one of her most famous quotes that women are “the slaves of slaves” who are “exploited more ruthlessly than men,” came from a speech she gave at the founding convention of the IWW in the afternoon session on June 28, 1905 (79). More famously, she was the wife of Albert Parsons, one of the Haymarket Martyrs, who was subject to judicial murder after being found guilty (in a publicly recognized sham trial) of throwing a bomb resulting in a riot that killed both Chicago policemen and unarmed protestors in May 1886. Critics of Lucy Parsons blame her for what are considered several missteps, including the forced commitment of her son to a psychiatric institution for the rest of his life after he joined the armed forces, her outspoken criticisms of those inside and outside of the radical movements of Chicago, and, most prominently, her perceived use of her husband’s death to propel her own career. This is evidenced by the “Editors of the Radcliffe *Notable American Women*” collection, who “consigned Lucy Parsons to their discard file on the grounds that she was ‘largely propelled by husband’s fame’ and was ‘a pathetic figure, living in the past and crying injustice’ after the Haymarket Police Riot” (Asbaugh 9).

But these are only the reported criticisms of Lucy Parsons, filtered by history, lack of documentation, and the changing socio-political attitudes of scholars. Lucy Parsons was likely born into slavery in Waco, Texas, before the Civil War. She was a woman, and a working class

woman, and she was married to a white man, with whom she had two mixed-race children. Moreover, while Parsons believed in the fundamental unit of the family and the importance of monogamy (or at least she argued against her contemporary's pro-free love views), she was, what we would consider today, a feminist. She believed that emancipating workers, especially women, from the bonds of capitalism, was the way in which the workers of the world would be able to lift themselves up out of ignorance, poverty, and the low quality of life and frequent death that marked being an abused worker at the end of the 19th century in the industrial center of the Midwest: Chicago. It is not difficult to imagine the everyday struggles and micro-aggressions Lucy Parsons must have encountered on account of her gender, race, and socio-political views.

A surprising inclusion in this project is the name of Florence Finch Kelly, a journalist and writer who worked at the *New York Times Book Review* for over thirty years. She grew up in rural Kansas, graduated from the University of Kansas, and moved to Chicago to pursue a career in newspapers. She finally left the Midwest altogether in early adulthood when she moved to Boston (Marsh 23). Kelly is much better known as an early feminist and suffragette than a radical anarchist; yet, like many radical women writers in the late nineteenth century, Kelly contributed to the formation of early anarchist feminist thought. Her two "radical" books are *Frances: A Story for Men and Women* (1889) and *On the Inside* (1890). In addition to these novels, which advocate for free love, including the ability for both men and women to begin and end relationships as they please, she was a contributor to the radical periodicals *Liberty* and *The Independent*, sometimes signing her contributions with her initials, F. F. K. Margaret Marsh argues that anarchist women, like Finch Kelly, were attracted to anarchism more because of "the nature of its rebelliousness than by class, education, or ethnicity" (21). It was not that these women were not anarchists necessarily; rather, they were looking for personal liberation, and Marsh notes, "These women—adventurers,

bold sexual experimenters, determined convention-breakers—came to anarchism not because of its social and economic philosophy but because the movement seemed to offer them a chance for psychological liberation under the guise of political radicalism” (21). By her thirties, she had left Benjamin Tucker’s *Liberty* circle and had turned to journalism, writing about everything from how to furnish a bungalow to interview people to find out if life was worth living. Yet, Finch Kelly’s later abdication of anarchist ideals does not denigrate the value of her early radical works, which remain an important example of how anarchism and sex radicalism were translated into literary forms.

Besides Emma Goldman, Voltairine de Cleyre is likely the most well-known anarchist woman writer of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. According to her biographer Paul Avrich, Voltairine de Cleyre was born in Leslie, Michigan in 1866, de Cleyre lived in Grand Rapids, Michigan, settling in Philadelphia for much of her adult life with a short year-long stint in Enterprise, Kansas, and then returning to Chicago near the end of her life. After her death in Chicago in 1912, “two thousand mourners attended [the funeral], among them representatives of the Workmen’s Circle, the Bohemian Bakers’ and Turners’ Unions, the Jewish Cabinetmakers’ Union, the Women’s ‘Progress’ Society, and the English, Hungarian, Czech, and Italian branches of the I.W.W” (Avrich 236). After being radicalized by the Haymarket affair in 1886, and the subsequent execution of the anarchist men implicated in the plot, including Lucy Parson’s husband, Albert, de Cleyre championed an atheistic free-thought philosophy, which morphed into anarchism, and eventually individualist anarchism of the school of Josiah Warren and Benjamin Tucker. In his introduction to her *Selected Works*, Hippolyte Havel writes of de Cleyre, “Born shortly after the close of the Civil War, she witnessed during her life the most momentous transformation of the nation; she saw the change from an agricultural community into an industrial empire; the

tremendous development of capital in this country, with the accompanying misery and degradation of labor” (7). Her writings reflect both these changes and a hope for the future founded in a sense of justice and faith in the individual.

Voltairine de Cleyre was often hailed as the artistic genius of the anarchist literary movement, and she produced poems, essays, biographical sketches, and short stories that celebrated anarchist thought and decried the injustices of capitalism, religion, the state, and the strict moral codes of Victorian America. In a biographic sketch that introduces a collection of her writings entitled *Exquisite Rebel: The Essays of Voltairine de Cleyre –Anarchist, Feminist, Genius*, Crispin Sartwell writes of de Cleyre, “Her essays are most forceful, of extreme clarity of thought and original expression. And even her poems, though somewhat old-fashioned in form, rank higher than much that now passes for poetry” (44). Her essay “Anarchism and American Traditions” argues for a return to the promises of the past that were inculcated in the very founding of the nation, but spoiled by the leeching forces of capital and organized religion. Similarly, her essay “Sex Slavery” adroitly traces the shame and obscenity that has arisen from codes of sexual purity and the institution of marriage at the service of capital and religion. Her poetry often showcases the personal effects of systematic issues, such as the black laborers who died building “beautiful roads” in her poem “The Road Builders,” or a Soul conversing with a personification of Death, who paints a none too rosy picture of life as constant struggle and pain in “Life or Death.” Voltairine de Cleyre’s writing spans genres, topics, and traverses a public/personal divide unlike the other four women included in this project.

These women existed in a cultural milieu that promoted individualist principles that arose out of a deep suspicion of governmental authority, commitment to truly democratic principles, at least in theory (for dominate groups), and a colonial space that was rich with possibilities for labor

and capitalism. No longer would the anarchist women of the Midwest need propriety to “protect” them, religion to give them false hope, the government to rule their bodies, bosses to treat and pay them worse simply because they were women, and, most of all, husbands to control them, rape them, and force them to bear children they did not want nor could not take care of. The late nineteenth century radical Midwestern cultural milieu gave these women hope: hope that the laboring individual could finally get her fair share, both in the workplace and in the domestic realm, and more importantly, a hope and faith in the wisdom of the individual, that she could become a full human in her own right. She was to be more than just a sister, a wife, a mother, or a laborer; she could have choices, ambitions, and dreams fulfilled, fueled by equal opportunity, inclusion, and economic self-sufficiency.

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CHAPTER 3. SPHERES OF OPPRESSION: SOCIALIST AND INDIVIDUALIST ECONOMIC EMANCIPATION

When Florence Finch Kelly decided to move away from Kansas to Chicago to pursue a life in the newspaper business in the early 1880s, she did not realize she was embarking on a career path not especially open to women at the time. In her autobiography, *Flowing Stream*, Finch Kelly explains, “When I prepared to set forth upon my career from my farm home in Kansas, I had not the least feeling that I was doing anything unusual, that it was not as much a part of the eternal fitness of things for me as it would have been for a young man to go confidently to Eastern cities in the expectation of earning a livelihood and perhaps winning some measure of fame” (445). But Finch Kelly was met with “disapproving comments,” particularly when she went to find work in Boston, resulting in her becoming “greatly surprised and hotly resentful” at the newspaper men who turned her down (445). Perhaps owing to her upbringing on the Kansas prairie frontier where “there was neither occasion nor desire to ignore or minimize the part taken by the women,” she muses, she had grown up a feminist, and considered entering the newspaper business a natural and rightful career (445). Like Finch Kelly, many women in the mid to late nineteenth century were striving for livelihoods and careers outside of the domestic sphere. Anarchist women were among some of the most outspoken that these livelihoods must provide living wages and safety and labor protections.

Economics are a troubled arena when talking about nineteenth-century Midwestern anarchist women writers. On the one hand, economic inclusion and security are the path to individuality for anarchist women; on the other hand, economic systems as configured by industrial capitalism and propped up by government are violent systems of oppression designed to rob the working class of their labor, dignity, and life. Women like Lucy E. Parsons and Lizzie

Swank Holmes argued for the use of defensive force in the form of dynamite to fight back against economic subjugation, which they viewed as inherently violent. The anarchist women examined in this project wanted the abolition of capitalism, but they also realized that full economic emancipation, even within the current capitalist structure, would also yield improvements that would then affect the social realities of their lives. These effects, in the short term, looked like the release of women from marriage and the domestic sphere, control over sex and therefore childbearing, and equitable wages. Anarchist women argued for economic equality as a path to social equality and the development of a new socio-political reality for all. The economic question, for nineteenth-century anarchist women, was at the very heart of *The Sex Question*.⁹

In this chapter, I make two claims about the relationship of nineteenth-century Midwestern anarchist women writers to their contemporary ideological economic analyses. First, some anarchist feminists ideologically foregrounded the claim that industrial economic systems were inherently violent against the working class. Lucy E. Parsons and Lizzie Swank Holmes share this claim, as did the men and women who were steeped in working-class socialist analysis in *The Alarm* circles. In their view, the capitalist system enabled the labor of workers to be stolen, their dignity and humanity to be crushed. Even more striking, they argued that the capitalist system promulgated labor practices that directly led to death. Grinding physical conditions, starvation, unsafe working conditions, and the use of police violence to quell worker uprisings were all threats to the health and life of nineteenth-century industrial workers in the Midwest and beyond. Because

⁹ Here, I use Donna M. Kowal's definition of "The Sex Question" from her book *Tongue of Fire: Emma Goldman, Public Womanhood, and the Sex Question*: "'The Sex Question,' also known as 'The Woman Question,' implies a sense of epistemic uncertainty about the nature of womanhood, or the 'proper' place of women in society" (1). The Sex Question was the spark that ignited the international fire of feminist analysis and praxis in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

violence was an inherent and embedded systematic outcome of industrial capitalism, force on the part of the working-class and anarchists was a justifiable albeit hotly debated protective and defensive tactic.

Second, other anarchist feminists ideologically foregrounded the claim that for women to be fully recognized individuals, they must have economic inclusion, even if capitalist economic systems were inherently violent against the working-class. In other words, individualist anarchist women saw economic inclusion tied strongly to individualist conceptions of anarchist feminism. Voltairine de Cleyre, Lois Waisbrooker, and Florence Finch Kelly propounded this view because they were more grounded in individualist discourses than the likes of Parsons and Swank Holmes. In this analysis, economic self-sufficiency is the only way for women to be free. Even under a violently antagonist capitalist economic order, women can still achieve significant gains by moving away from traditional gender roles, marriage, and the domestic sphere. Such gains follow from economic inclusion, they claimed. Importantly, these two very different ideological relationships to economics produced competing visions of future economic models, and both are illustrative of Midwestern regional ideals, particularly the sanctity of labor and rural individualism.

In order to illustrate these two mutually exclusive ideological stances, I will first examine how the Chicago group anarchists interpreted capitalist industrialism as inherently violent toward the working class and deserving of defensive violence in return. In doing so, I will explain how defensive violence by the working class was a tactic to protect the sanctity of labor, a Midwestern cultural value. Then, I will examine the individualist analysis predicated on assumptions of the social freedom and development of the individual to women who have economic inclusion. Finally, I will offer two ideologically distinct visions of the future, one from Lizzie Swank Holmes and the other from Voltairine de Cleyre.

Besides Voltairine de Cleyre and references to Lucy E. Parsons, the nineteenth-century Midwestern anarchist women in this project are rarely upheld in anarchist, historical, or philosophical scholarship as having contributed to anarchist economic critiques or solutions. Here, I offer my analysis of these two strains to illustrate how economic concerns were the foundation of their socialist or individualist conceptions of the Sex Question and what was to be done about it. In fact, nineteenth-century anarchist feminists had visions of an economically and socially just future, for women and for men. These writers and their writings deserve scholarly time and attention for their thoughtful, nuanced, and artful anarchist critiques and solutions of nineteenth century industrial capitalism.

3.1 Economics as Violence

Lucy E. Parsons and Lizzie Swank Holmes both wrote about economic violence in the pages of *The Alarm*. A favorite theme for their fiction and non-fiction writings centered on how economic violence affected the women and children of 1880s Chicago. For example, Parsons vividly illustrates how the rich leech off of the poor and the rhetoric that hides this simple truth in “The Rich A Blessing to the Poor; Or, who Paid for the Astor Wedding.” This November 1884 narrative in *The Alarm* opens with a doctor (appalled by the sight of the poor) making a house call to “a very dilapidated house” in a “dilapidated alley of poverty” (1). He is met by hungry children, and he pushes past them to attend to their sick father, in whom the doctor “notes a decided change for the worst” (1). The man’s wife tells the doctor that they could not fill the prescription the doctor ordered because they did not have enough money: they spent all the money on rent because “the agent says Mr. Astor, who is our landlord, is to extra expense just now; that his daughter Miss

Carrie is getting married to day, and that he is to extra expenses, and his tenants must be on time” (1).¹⁰ The next scene describes a similar predicament.

In a tenement house, a mother is preparing a “frugal meal” and coffee that “strongly savors of a sixth steeping” in a “dingy” backroom. The mother laments that she needs to wake her children from sleep essential to their “youthful development” in order to send them to work because “we must have the rent, for Mr. Astor says he will is [sic] out if we don’t have our rent on time” (1). The scene then jumps to a boy and girl, supposedly those whose poor mother we met in the previous scene, walking to work at six in the morning. The girl, Mary, is crying because her “hands and feet are sore from that hard work yesterday,” and her brother, John, tells her that “Mr. Astor has increased our rent and Ma says we must work harder and longer now” (1). Just then, the impoverished child laborers pass by a grand house, and the boy says to his sister, “And here is that fine house that Mr. Astor gave Carrie yesterday,” and his sister responds matter of factly, “Ma says we have to pay for it because he is going to increase all his tenants’ rents” (1).¹¹ The final line of the narrative, which harkens back to the title, belongs to John who offers this final statement to his sister: “Mary[...] you know our Sunday school teacher told us it was a sin to find fault with the rich, for they are a blessing to the poor” (1).

John’s final statement is an exemplar of Parson’s wit, and it can be read it two contexts. For an uninitiated reader, John seems as if he is chiding his sister for her dig at the Astors, but for

¹⁰ The Astor family was the pinnacle of society in 1880s New York City. Parsons is referring to the marriage of Mr. William Astor’s daughter, Ms. Caroline Schermerhorn Astor, to Mr. Marshall Orme Wilson on the afternoon of Tuesday, November 18, 1884. The wedding was surely the event of the season, and no expense was spared. According to the *New York Times*, “As the guests entered the house their eyes were dazed by an extraordinary display of floral decorations” in the Astor mansion in New York City, and Mrs. Astor’s dress was “literally” covered in diamonds (“A Wedding Amid Flowers” 5).

¹¹ The house Mr. Astor gave his daughter and her new husband was on Fifth Avenue in New York City (“A Wedding Amid Flowers” 5).

a critical anarchist, John's statement is a wry commentary on the conspiracy between the church and industrial capital to keep the working class in servile position funneling money to the monied classes, of which Mr. Astor is only one of many. Read sarcastically, as Parsons surely intended it, the reader should understand that it is not the rich who are a blessing to the poor, but the poor who are a blessing to a rich. The poor like Mary and John, are the children whose childhood and health have been stolen from them by lack of sleep, inadequate nutrition, and body-crushing work so Mr. Astor can pay for his daughter's wedding. The squalor in which Mary and John live literally make Miss Carrie's grand house possible. While Mary, John, and their mother are dying a slow death because of poverty inflicted by rich men like Mr. Astor, Parsons shows us, working-class men are literally dying because they cannot afford the medicine they need. The money, instead, going into the pockets of Mr. Astor in to fund a grand wedding and a mansion on Fifth Avenue in New York City. The contrast between the poverty and impending death of the working-class who fund the glamorous weddings and grand houses of the economic elite is stark and heart-rending. For *The Alarm's* working-class readership, "The Rich A Blessing to the Poor" illustrated a clear anecdotal, causal connection between the poverty of the working-class and gross decadence of the economic elite.

Another piece that illustrates the inherent violence in the industrial capitalist system supported by rape culture and patriarchy is Lizzie Swank Holmes' "Mary Smith. One Story from Many—The Trials and Hardships of a Working Girl" published about seven months after Parson's "The Rich a Blessing to the Poor" in *The Alarm*. The narrative opens with a policeman scraping a drunk woman off the street. The policeman realizes she is quite sick, and he sends the woman with "the pale, haggard face, with its delicate, pinched features, small, bluish mouth, and closed eyelids" to the hospital (4). We learn of Mary's backstory, and the narrator tells us, "She was one of many;

and you, and you gentle reader who sit in your cozy arm chair after the day's business is over, with your comfortable family about you, never actually *realize* for one moment what is going on about you" (4). Still stinging from this chastisement, the reader learns that Mary Smith was one of many working girls who was raised in a comfortable, but financially insecure home. When she came of age, Mary traveled to the city to work in a factory where she was able to scrape by making button holes for garments.

But Mary Smith's situation quickly changes for the worse when her employer decides to reduce her wages. Swank Holmes wittily characterizes the logic behind Mary's employer's decision: "One Monday morning her employer reduced the wages. He had subscribed \$500 to a charitable institution for fallen women, the day before, and therefore felt the necessity of being economical. (and of filling the institution we presume.)" (4). Already on the brink, Mary "felt that she could not endure much more," and she "grasped her bonnet and staggered from the room" (4). In her moment of desperation and weakness, "One of the foreman was watching her. He followed her—looked into her sad blue eyes, and whispered strange words to her. She was desperate, weak, tired to death, and alone" (4). The narrator questions, "Does one wonder at the result?" (4). The result would have been clear for reader of *The Alarm*: Mary, faced with certain economic privation, has, instead, "chosen" to sell her body. For a time, Mary Smith is kept relatively comfortably by the foreman, but he eventually leaves the city and her.

Mary is back at square one. Even though she tries various honest employments, "step by step she followed the road so many unhappy victims have trod before her" of economically-forced sex work. Mary was "happy never, but dulled to suffering by wine and other strong drink," which ruined her health (4). Thus, poor Mary Smith, a girl who came to the city to find a factory job to support herself and send a little money back home each month ends in "drunk and disorderly" on

a hospital wagon (4). Swank Holmes ends Mary Smith's story with an outright analysis and declaration to her readers. She writes, "And still the system goes on day after day, grinding prostitutes and criminals out of fair young girls, dwarfs, idiots, thieves, out of innocent children, and beggars and tramps out of strong, willing men! Are we going to let it grind on forever? I mean you, reader, and you, and you!" (4). In her call to action, Swank Holmes reminds readers, "You may think you are safe from the grinding wheels, but you do not know what you may come to, and your children are almost sure to be crushed sooner or later if the grind goes on" (4). Swank Holmes' purpose is rouse her readers in their "cozy armchairs" to get up and "*change the system!*", but her literary craft clearly exemplifies the imbedded violence within the capitalist industrial economic system and how it works in tandem with patriarchy to ruin the lives of young women who come to the city looking for economic freedom (4). The story of Mary Smith typifies the forced choice many young women had to make between starvation and sex work. Given that Parsons and Swank Holmes organized the working women and men of Chicago, they knew how the story played out for them: poverty and hard labor, whether it was in the home, the factory, or in rented rooms, would grind down men, women, and children until they died. And, for Swank Holmes, the state was complicit in both explicit and implied violence against the working class.

In an August 1885 article in *The Alarm* simply titled "Force," Holmes argues that very few people think about the constant threat of violence from the state—a threat that is often hidden and unspoken, but implied. It is this implied normalcy of "respectable" and "legalized" threats that Holmes seeks to disrupt and counter. She asks, "Who grows horrified at the 'incendiary' attitude of the law and its tools? Very few. We go on hugging our phantom of liberty with placid minds, undismayed by all this array of systemized violence" (2). Seeking to overturn the belief that government is peace and safety, and anarchists are harbingers of chaos and violence, Swank

Holmes points out that “liberty” under governmental rule is only an illusion, and it is this illusion that prevents most people from seeing the “array of systemized violence” perpetrated by the state every day through law (2). She also counters the belief that laws are innately good, or for the good of the people. The government and the legal system are founded on the needs and desires of the economic elite who seek to maintain a system by which they retain the power over the working-class, and “The power and influence of wealth make these materialized threats respectable, the government [. . .] makes them legal.” (“Force” 2). Systemized violence undergirds the capitalist economic order that creates untenable conditions for the working classes.

Swank Holmes illustrates how materialist necropolitics undergirds the capitalist economic order in “Force.” Violence is perpetrated on the working classes through “slower, less conspicuous methods actually taking our lives,” Swank Holmes argues, like the man who could not afford his prescription because the rent must be paid to Mr. Astor for his daughter’s wedding and her new house (“Force” 2). The money itself is tainted, as are the materials and products purchased with it to guild the lives of the rich. For example, the construction materials and decorations of the houses of the rich are linked to the mortality of those who created them: “The marble palaces of the rich are built on the crushed lives of miserable toilers; the very flesh and bones of defrauded children are worked into the cement and stones; the magnificent decorations scarce hide the tears of unhappy women whose toil-shortened lives made possible” (“Force” 2). This image of the bodily suffering infused in luxurious materials housing the rich is not Holmes’ alone. In fact, this scene is similar to an image described by Lois Waisbrooker’s protagonist Mabel Raymond in *Perfect Motherhood; or Mabel Raymond’s Resolve* in which after reading a newspaper description of the exorbitance of the Czar’s Winter Palace, she laments, “over, under, and through it all is blood. Hearts are ground and mixed with the gold; brains bespatter the walls, and infants’ skulls harden

the glass and marble floors” (337). For both Swank Holmes and Waisbrooker’s Mabel Raymond, working-class death is enmeshed within the very architecture produced by and through industrial capitalism.

In the face of systematized economic violence, Holmes explicitly argues, workers have the right to defend themselves. At the end of “Force,” she explains that if people wait for “agitation, education and the ballot,” then they very well might be “corpses or idiots by that time,” essentially defeating the predicate for economic justice (2). The bottom line is this: “Whoever believes in the workingman’s right to defend whatever idea he may conceive of his rights, with any force he can command rather than to tamely submit to slavery, believes in the revolution as we do” (“Force” 2). Notably, Swank Holmes does not define the working-classes rights through law or contemporary conventions. The working-class as the innate right to defend their rights as they conceive of them, not how they exist in the late nineteenth-century. For Parsons and Swank Holmes, defense of the rights of the working-class against the inherent violence of industrial capitalism included concrete actions and disagreements about tactics.

3.2 Economics as Violence: A Response

Lucy E. Parsons’ inaugural article “A Word To Tramps” in the first number of *The Alarm* is an infamous example of anarchist calls for violence. In it, she tells tramps, or men who were forced to “tramp” across the country because of a lack of work, that if they wanted to do something about their current situation, it would serve them well to learn the art of dynamite. It is true that anarchists were often depicted as violent marauders, out for blood and revenge. This is part caricature and part truth, at least for some anarchists. The question of violence, and its justifications, were much debated in the 1880s. For many, the argument for force hinged on the implicit violence of the capitalist economic order; the counterargument against advocating violence tended toward

perceptions of the public. *The Alarm* was known for advocating the use of violence, even going so far as republishing articles translated from Johann Most's German language New York City-based anarchist newspaper, *Freiheit*, about the virtues and technical aspects of dynamite.¹² Lizzie M. Swank Holmes, the assistant editor for *The Alarm*, was no exception.

Like many other anarchists of her time, Swank Holmes argued for a justified response of violence toward the physical, emotional, and economic violence of the state and capital. The arguments both for and against violence as a tactic to ensure economic justice is personified in "A Reverie," published in May 1885 in *The Alarm*. In this pseudo futuristic narrative, Holmes depicts a daydream of what the world could look like in the future once economic security was assured for all. Her future dreamworld includes beautiful land and buildings, plush and luxurious rooms that were both comfortable and aesthetically appealing, and a population who only works an hour each day and spends the rest of their time in worthwhile pursuits, such as studying and reading. The narrator realizes that, although she is in this perfect dream world, the current world still exists with miserable, despairing workers. She asks her comrades what is to be done about the current world, and she is met by responses from the personification of *The Alarm*, the personification of Science, and a character named "Zeno."

While *Alarm* argues that Science's dynamite is the only meaningful redress, Zeno argues that violence is not the solution. Because "the people are suffering and dying," *Alarm* insists, "there is no time to wait," and at this moment, "a calm, grave personage named Science stepped up and disclosed a box labelled 'Dynamite'" ("A Reverie" 3). The people's enemies, namely capitalism

¹² For example, see "Explosives. A Practical Lesson in Popular Chemistry" (April 4, 1885), "Explosives. The Power of Dynamite as Illustrated by Blasting Exercises" (April 18, 1885), "Bombs! The Manufacture and Use of the Deadly Dynamite Bomb Made Easy." (May 2, 1885), and "Dangerous Explosives. How to Manufacture Pyroxyline or Gun-Cotton, and Also the Fulminates of Mercury and Silver" (May 16, 1885).

and government, will listen to the argument of violence, Alarm insists; yet, Zeno steps forward and disagrees. The problem is not violence itself, but the perception of it. Zeno tells the group, “You cannot kill these shadowy monsters with dynamite, and if you try the people will think you are willfully aiming at their cherished rights, as they see Free Institutions, Ballot box, Protection under the Government, etc., and so will blame instead of joining us” (“A Reverie” 3). Capitalists who perpetrate violence against the working-class through industrial capitalism are “shadowy monsters” because they cannot be perceived in their true light, at least not by those who have yet to understand anarchist critiques of the capitalist industrial system. These shadowy figures are just that, shadows that are impossible to catch. Unless there is a direct connection between the impoverished working-class and the economic elite, such as the one Parsons illustrates with Mr. Astor and the factory children in “The Rich A Blessing to the Poor,” it is difficult to convince a good majority of people that the economic elite are to blame for working-class poverty. Instead, as Zeno points out, any kind of violence against the bad elements of society will only be interpreted as against “cherished values,” like voting and property owning—values that the economic order has upheld as people’s power, but only really serves to uphold an entire system of poverty and inequality. Zeno concludes his statement, “Even if we succeed in destroying our enemies, we cannot lift the masses over the gulf with ‘Dynamite’” (“A Reverie” 3). Dynamite is a destructive force, not a constructive force. While violence may be able to play a part in the revolution, it cannot be the totality of it.

The dialogic exchange in “A Reverie” typifies the radical arguments over the use of force. Those in favor of force argue that economic violence is already and continuously perpetrated against the working-class; therefore, any force on the part of the working-class would simply be defensive, not offensive, against the harm they already endure through their economic subjugation

by capitalists. Economic subjugation is then reinforced by the arms of the government. Arguments against the use of force, such as those provided by the character Zeno, were widely considered and were based in larger critiques of tactics used by radicals at the time. There was a real fear that because many working-class people had not yet understood the real economic relations between capitalism, government, and the working-class, they would see force by working-class activists and anarchists as an attempt to destroy a system that they loved and protected them. As Zeno puts it they might perceive violence as “willfully aiming at their cherished rights” and they will “blame instead of joining” the anarchist cause.

Another valid critique of using force is that harming or killing individual capitalists or government officials does nothing to change the system itself. These men were “shadowy monsters” who were only cogs in a systematic institutional machine, tied together by legal precedent and tradition weaved into the foundation story of the nation, that had been built by powerful men and money over hundreds of years. If a robber baron or president is maimed or killed, would capitalism or government come crashing down? No, the critique goes, ten more men would be waiting in the wings to step into his place because the institutions of each have cast their systems in iron: if one screw was to come loose, the structure would still stand.

Notwithstanding, Swank Holmes argues that the economic subjugation of the working-class is no small trifle of ‘inconvenience’; rather, people are wasting away and dying each day. Therefore, she argues, “Let us go on teaching the people, but at the same time let us place this [dynamite] in their hands and teach them that whenever they feel a hurt to use it on whatever is directly hurting them. Let us teach them it is right for them to resist” (“A Reverie” 3). Swank Holmes’ two-pronged tactic allows for the progression of members of the working-class as feeling, thinking beings through education (one method of which arguably would be through the pages of

The Alarm itself), but in doing so, teach them also the possibilities of dynamite as a response to “whatever is directly hurting them.”

Defensive violence against the industrial capitalist classes and the government that cements their economic rule can be understood as an outgrowth of Midwestern cultural ideals. Because of the long history of industrialism in the Midwest and the rural pioneer spirit of building something “out of nothing,” the sanctity of labor, and by extension the laborer, is held in high regard. As is illustrated in “The Rich A Blessing to the Poor,” and many other narratives about the violence inflicted upon the laboring class to support the economic elite, this ideological stance sees the worker by virtue of their labor as the primary and core economic engine upon which the system is build. The working poor are the ones from whom wealth is being stolen by the economic elite; it is the worker who deserves credit, respect, and celebration for building up American economic supremacy, not the capitalist who leeches off these workers and sends them to an early grave after he has robbed them of their productive power. In this ideological framework, the worker is the nearest thing to a God, and to use her up and kill her, in whatever way possible, is vile and sacrilegious. Not only that, it is, in some opinions, deserving of force, and destruction, even death to those who benefit from and promulgate this heinous violence. In this context, violence was seen as protecting the sanctity of labor and the laborer.¹³ In contrast, the individualist stance, which is explored in the next section, is undergirded by different Midwestern cultural value: individualism.

¹³ Labor is only sanctified when it is performed as a means toward independence and self-sufficiency. Anything less denies the promise of hard work: it is only work for others; it is only a means of servitude. Thus, sanctified labor under industrial capitalism is impossible because it only serves to create surplus value, not independence for the worker. Yet, industrial labor is all that is left for many in the Midwest by the late nineteenth century. This creates a double-bind: To sustain a pioneer identity, the Midwesterner must take pride in the selfsame work which denigrates him as an individual. This plays out time and again in Midwestern realist novels, such as Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle* (1906) and Theodore Dreiser’s *Sister Carrie* (1900), just to name a few. This Midwest ethic is also captured in Jack London’s *In the Valley of the Moon* (1913), where the main

3.3 Economics as Freedom: Individualist Views and Economic Freedom

In contrast to the Chicago group women associated with the International Working People's Association, other Midwestern anarchist women took a less systematic and more individualist view when it came to economics. The development of the individual and the assumption that a more developed individual, in terms of education and morals, were at the fore for these anarchist women. They believed that the individual was at the center of the economic system, and focusing on the individual would be both the way in which woman would gain equality with man and also the way in which the working classes would transform the world's social and economic relations. For the authors who represented this view in this chapter (de Cleyre, Finch Kelly, and Waisbrooker) the focus on the individual was the pragmatic path toward total societal revolution.

Margaret Marsh has theorized how individualism impacted anarchist-feminists in the nineteenth century. In *Anarchist Women*, Marsh argues that anarchist women in the nineteenth century “place[d] fundamental importance on the economic independence of women less for financial reasons than because it would allow women to function as fully developed human beings—intellectually, emotionally, and not least erotically—outside the confines of the nuclear family” (167). The implication of such an analysis of systems of oppression, Marsh notes, is that anarchist women centered domestic oppression as the core of their ideology and action (168). This, in turn, created a certain short-sightedness when it came to the contradiction that the same capitalist economic structures that would free women from domestic wretchedness were also the one in the same that created class strife and poverty in the first place. As I detailed above, Marsh's claim is not necessarily true for Parsons and Swank Holmes who attended to a more structural analysis in

characters are inspired by a moving picture depicting a Midwestern farm to leave the city to strike out on their own (eventually settling in the Sonoma Valley).

their writings in *The Alarm*; however, Voltairine de Cleyre, Florence Finch Kelly, and Lois Waisbrooker viewed economic emancipation in this way, arguing that in order for women to be “fully developed human beings,” they must first have access to economic participation in order to be free from the domestic sphere. Then, unlike their socialist counterparts, individualism is at the center of their economic ideology as both feminists and anarchists for these three individualist anarchist women writers.

Voltairine de Cleyre, in her essay “Anarchism,” explains the relationship between anarchism and economics as she sees it. Anarchism does not necessarily imply any particular economic program she asserts. In fact, “Anarchism, alone, apart from any proposed economic reform, is just the latest reply out of many the past has given, to that daring, breakaway, volatile, changeful spirit which is never content” (98). She traces the history of the workshop and artisans to arrive at a comparison between old economic relations and present day, and the difference, she argues, is that the individuality of the man is no longer recognized within the present economic relations.¹⁴ De Cleyre writes, “The individuality of the workman was a plainly recognized quantity: his life was his own; he could not be locked in and driven to death, like a street-car horse, for the good of the general public and the paramount importance of Society” (99-100). But with the industrialization of the world and the ability of employers to amass great amounts of wealth, the relationship between master and man (or capitalist and worker) fundamentally changed so that the capitalist sees the worker as a thing “to be reckoned with as he does his machines, for the most part despising them” (100). The solution to these economic relations then, for de Cleyre is not

¹⁴ Romanticism plays a large part in de Cleyre’s view of the past. I investigate the link between romanticism and anarchism further in Chapter Four.

necessarily to fundamentally alter the economic system but rather the relationships of power and privilege on which the present capitalist economic system is built.

For de Cleyre, the relationship between master and man must change to ensure “individual dignity of the worker” and add “freedoms as may properly accrue to him as his special advantage from society’s material developments” (100). Thus, de Cleyre proclaims that anarchism is not an economic system, but a theory of relations that can be applied to the economic sphere. Anarchism “simply calls upon the spirit of individuality to rise up from its abasement and hold itself paramount in no matter what economic reorganization shall come about” (101). The organizing principle of Anarchism in light of economics is this for de Cleyre: “Be men first of all, not held in slavery by the things you make; let your gospel be, ‘Things for men, not men for things.’” (101). Yet, de Cleyre also recognizes that other anarchists do not share her keen analysis. Anarchists throughout the spectrum believe, justly, that anarchism will require a new economic system (102). The details of that economic system, however, differ depending on the particular anarchist tendency to which an individual subscribes.

Individualism is important to an anarchist conception of feminism because it creates an argument that begins from the position of woman as equal, not as an inferior being. This inherent equality-as-individual was the foundation for the anarchist arguments of individual liberty and women’s liberty because it essentialized the argument for both. De Cleyre roots her arguments for individual liberty, and thereby extending it to women as a natural fact, in two institutions well-known by her audience: Protestantism and the founding of the United States of America. Nineteenth-century anarchism can all be traced back to one source according to de Cleyre: “He who will trace the course of literature for three hundred years will find innumerable bits of drift here and there, indicative of the moral and intellectual revolt. Protestantism itself, in asserting the supremacy of

the individual conscience, fired the long train of thought which inevitably leads to the explosion of all forms of authority” (“Anarchism in Literature”140). But de Cleyre herself, just like many nineteenth-century anarchists, was not religious. Although she had spent a few years in a convent in Sarnia, Ontario as a teenager getting an education, it made her reject religion and its illegitimate authority over her own individuality. It was after this experience that she became a free thinker, and eventually an anarchist at the Haymarket Affair, which reverberated across the Midwest and the United States in 1886-1887. Instead of Protestantism being her religion, she treats individualism with the religiousity normally reserved for religious ideas: “I have chosen mine own allegiance, and served it. I have proved by a lifetime that there is that in man which saves him from the absolute tyranny of Circumstance, which in the end conquers and remoulds Circumstance,-- the immortal fire of Individual Will, which is the salvation of the Future” (94). Although Protestantism “fired the long train of thought which inevitably leads to the explosion of all forms of authority,” it is not religion, but “the immortal fire of Individual Will, which is the salvation of the Future.” Imperatively, Individual Will becomes an immutable quality of human beings, not bestowed upon them by a divinity nor rights bestowed or enforced by a nation state; rather, Individual Will is an “immortal fire” that comes from within the individual, both in men and women.

Not only is individual will at the core of Voltairine de Cleyre’s anarchism, but so too is the development and assertion of the individual as the core of sociality. For example, in “In Defence of Emma Goldman and the right of Expropriation,” Voltairine de Cleyre proclaims, “Anarchism, to me, means not only the denial of authority, not only a new economy, but a revision of the principles of morality. It means the development of the individual, as well as the assertion of the individual. It means self-responsibility, and not leader-worship” (217). De Cleyre’s focus

on the “development of the individual” is also one of the hallmarks of Midwestern individualist thought. Following in the radical American individualist tradition, De Cleyre places her individualism in “the American tradition of non-meddling,” arguing that “Anarchism asks that [the tradition of non-meddling] be carried down to the individual himself” (“Anarchism and American Traditions” 137). Individualism is a key component in American political theory, Midwestern historical and literary theory, and anarchist feminist theory.

Florence Finch Kelly shared similar views with on the relationship between individualism and economics when it comes to women. Part of the individualist *Liberty* circle, Finch Kelly was greatly influenced by Tuckerite individualism as well as her own experiences breaking into the Chicago and Boston newspaper worlds as a woman in the 1880s. In a February 1888 article in *Liberty* titled “The Economic Freedom of Women,” Finch Kelly contends that economic parity between women and men is a prerequisite for sexual equality. Woman must first be “a self-supporting, independent creature who has ceased to beg alms of [man] and who can and does support herself as easily and with as much comfort as he does” (Finch Kelly 4). When woman has achieved her economic independence and is secure it, then (and only then), man will “respect her as his equal and lose the last remnants of that old spirit of tyranny which made him get everything under his thumb that he could” (4). Finch Kelly continues, “For woman herself this condition would bring unnumbered goods. It is the only escape for her from the bondage of conventional marriage, which, according to the confessions of women themselves, is a condition which could have given Dante points for the Inferno” (4). Economic freedom, that is to say women’s inclusion in the labor market and financial institutions, will liberate women from needing to get married for economic stability. Men and women simply cannot be equal “until at least relative economical freedom for women is realized,” and, without financial equality, “the separate individual existence

of the man and the woman is an impossibility” (Finch Kelly 4). Importantly, Finch Kelly notes that economic freedom is essential for both women and men to become full-fledged individuals. Because she believes that men cannot be fully developed individuals while oppressing women, men’s development is linked to and dependent upon the equality of men and women. Economic freedom is the predicate upon which individualism lies for both men and women according to Finch Kelly.

Lois Waisbrooker also illustrates how important economic freedom is for women. In her novel *Helen Harlow’s Vow* (1870), Waisbrooker’s protagonist Helen Harlow is a fallen woman who has been tricked into having sex with a man she loves before they are married. Instead of marrying her, the man marries a rich woman, and a pregnant Helen Harlow is left to bear the brunt of the social shame and economic destitution her situation implies. After the death of her mother, Helen moves into town and opens a “fancy-goods” store in order to support both her and her son. Helen’s store was “no very large establishment; one that was imply calculated to meet the wants of a country village” (99-100). In writing an open letter to the women of the village explaining her situation and imploring them to not avoid her store because of how they might feel about it, in which she asks “will you aid me, by your confidence and your patronage, to support myself and child honorably? Or will you turn away, thus planting thorns in my path?” (101). Happily, Helen’s letter, the patronage of a trustworthy towns person, and her good taste attract the village women to the store.

Helen’s small business affords her financial security and relative freedom from the moralizing of the village women. Even though Mrs. Grant, her former lover’s wife who violently bullies her throughout the novel, tries to deter other women from her store, “Helen’s shop continued to be the resort of the ladies of Lakeside; and Helen continued to furnish them with what

they needed in her line” (Waisbrooker 143). Not only is Helen able to live off of her small business, she is able “to educate her boy” with a good private education “instead of sending him to the public school, as people thought she ought to do” because he is illegitimate (Waisbrooker 143). She is also able to honor “Crazy Jane,” a fallen woman who dies in Helen’s arms after telling Helen her pitiful life story. Helen honors her by erecting a marble tombstone over her grave of the same make Helen erected over her own mother’s grave (Waisbrooker 143). While Helen’s past “transgression” is not necessarily forgiven, her financial freedom allows her to be dependent upon no one. Unlike Crazy Jane, who serves as a foil to Helen, Helen does not have to marry a man who abuses her in order to eat and have her child raised within the bounds of marriage as a “legitimate” child. She also does not need to beg off of the women of the town in order to support herself and her child. In *Helen Harlow’s Vow*, Waisbrooker shows how economic freedom leads to social equality for women who have been tricked and abused by patriarchal systems of domestic oppression that create moral strictures for women like Helen and a living hell for women like Crazy Jane who are forced to marry abusive men to cover up their moral transgressions.

All three writers’ ideological stances align with the Midwestern cultural ideal of rural individualism. Consider that one of the main tenets of rural individualism, or as some put it the “Midwestern pioneer spirit,” is self-reliance. In order to be self-reliant, an individual must be developed enough in terms of skills and have enough will-power in order to complete the tasks at hand. To fail would be financial ruin, and possibly death. The stakes are just as high with individualist Midwestern anarchist feminists. Without self-development and reliance on oneself, a woman must remain submissive and oppressed by a man (her father, husband, or coercer) for economic subsistence. Just as pioneers removed themselves from the developing factories and workshops of the East coast to homestead in the Middle West, these anarchists argue that women

must set out from the economic subservience of the oppressive domestic sphere to build a new life in the economic sphere. Both were driven by de Cleyre's "Immortal fire of Individual Will," to build a new world in purportedly virgin territory. Yet, for both nineteenth-century Midwestern pioneers and anarchist women, who were political pioneers, the individual did not exist in isolation, and the territory they sought to conquer was not welcoming nor virginal.

Individualist Economics: A Response and Exception

While de Cleyre, Finch Kelly, and Waisbrooker's ideologies are based in the development of the individual through economic inclusion and self-sufficiency as it relates to individualism, they do not account for certain stumbling blocks, like woman's willingness to hold on to the cult of domesticity even in the face of her newfound individual development. Lizzie Swank Holmes points out this flaw in her 1905 piece "A Woman's Club" published in *The International Wood-Worker*. In her narrative piece, Holmes depicts a woman's club formed by women "not belonging to the upper four hundred, and not by any means drudges in the lower ten thousand" (12-14). These women "were sufficiently intellectual and aspiring to carry on a literary and social club which should vie with Capitol Hill organizations in point of interest and well conducted functions" (12-14). Holmes' quick wit emerges as the ladies of club consider papers on whether or not wives should "give up lap dogs at the request of their husbands" or study a piece of fluff domestic literature by Edward Bok, the editor of *Ladies Home Journal* (12-14). The message is clear: these are the developed women have only used their individuality and opportunities to further entrench themselves in the domestic sphere.

When a minister arrives to the club meeting to ask the women to assist with a newly released prisoner and his children, they balk at the idea and agree that instead of aiding him in finding employment, they should run him out of town "before he had a chance to corrupt the youth

of the community.” Mrs. Ford, known for her regularly uncouth and embarrassing commentary, embodies Swank Holmes’ main thesis:

The wealth of the world, instead of doing good and making life comfortable and happy for all is tossed from one speculating capitalist to another in a game of ‘frenzied finance,’ and the victims are thrown up like so much driftwood on the great wreckage pile. These terrible problems are here, they confront the civilization of the twentieth century, yet they are entirely ignored by the organized, emancipated women of the country; they are put aside as not worth discussing or as unsuitable to the feminine mind. (12-14)

Mrs. Ford’s point is blunt. The “organized, emancipated women of the country” are failing. Instead of using their education, emancipation, and organization to better the world’s problems, like help the poor or work to tear down the capitalist institutions that create poverty in the first place, they are spending their cultivated energies on frivolous pursuits and trivial matters. Mrs. Ford asks the women assembled, “What could be more suitable to the feminine mind than the welfare of our fellow-creatures—our brothers and sisters?” (12-14). It is not the welfare of others these women are concerned with, though; while they could be really making a difference in the world, they “fritter away their time discussing embroidery patterns, art which would cause a true artist to blush, literature that a child would laugh at, the care of cats, dogs and monkeys” (12-14). These are “petty questions that do not matter one way or the other,” Mrs. Ford concludes, and these petty questions do not need time or attention now because they will likely “be readily settled when once these great economic and social problems are settled” (12-14). The women are caught off guard by this speech, and the meeting is adjourned.

Some of the women agree with Mrs. Ford that they should be doing just what she is proposing, but not all of them. That in of itself is Swank Holmes’ point. Even once women are

emancipated, without a strong commitment to understanding the structural problems of industrial capitalism and the violence it perpetrates on the working class, they will simply turn their education and energies back to the safety of petty, trivial domestic concerns. Swank Holmes ends the story by asking “And women all over the land will do well to pause and think if they are improving their time, their minds, their efforts in the right direction. Are they making the most of themselves and their powers?” (12-14). In an interesting moment of doubt, she also questions whether it really is best for women to be emancipated, or whether emancipation and education actually create a situation where women are “sacrificing something to leave home, home duties, the seclusion and peace of the domestic circle” in order to organize (perhaps unsuccessfully) outside of the home. But the narrative does not end on a hopeful or positive note. The final line asks, “Will the work they are doing outside be worth it all?”

In addition to her critique of the ability of the individual to truly transform the relationship of the working class to industrial capitalism, Lizzie Swank Holmes was perceptive enough to understand the double ideological bind individualist anarchist women created for themselves when they looked to the capitalist economic system to free them from their domestic oppression. Her analysis of the late nineteenth-century economic system includes looking back to previous days when the individual still retained dignity. In “Woman in Economics” Swank Holmes balances what the expanded economic sphere has done for women with how it has also hurt them. Holmes begins by praising the inventiveness and production of the industrial age in which “new wants came up and inventive genius exerted itself to meet them and to stimulate further demands” (245–247). Such production and advances were a mark of “the elaborateness of a higher civilization,” which “called for a greater and better variety of productions than had ever before been in use” (245–247). At the same time, industry and its need for more workers freed women from the

confines of the domestic sphere and kick-started woman's emancipation, a boon to both women and the development of the race of humanity. Holmes suggests, "if the race was really to progress it was full time that woman came up and out from the petty confines which checked her growth. How, as ever, was the sweetest place for women, but not the only place," and this "exodus of women from the homes to the field of labor has been in many respects beneficial to the whole race" (245–247). Women learned important attributes for furthering their own emancipation, like independence, self-reliance, wisdom, courage. In doing so, their character became "more attractive," which not only made them better humans, but "better mothers than the mild, meek, obedient, fanatical, tricky little women who languished through life in the last century" (245–247). But these advantages were not to last long. As industrial capitalism ramped up production and as women flooded into the market, their labor, along with the labor of other marginalized groups enabled capitalists to depress wages, increase requirements on workers, and make owners and bosses less responsive to issues of health and safety.

Here is the double bind for Swank Holmes along with other anarchist feminists: Industrial capitalism freed them from the home and the constrictions of domestic sexism only to bind them in the chains of abuse in the industrial world. Women may have been freer in certain respects, and their special relationship to the social and physical world had certainly altered, but they simply traded one set of chains for another. Perhaps, more specifically, women loosened one set of chains in order to be burdened by another: women were doubly bound by sexism and capitalism. Swank Holmes explains this situation experienced by women:

The very necessity which at first called woman out of her seclusion for her own good is now weaving a chain around her, and through her brother, worse than those which the old institutions placed upon her. At first she simply stepped into the easier places deserted by

man when new industries were being created which demanded him. But as machines kept doubling their capacity and pouring the proceeds into the hands of a few owners instead of into the pockets of millions of workingmen, thus reducing their purchasing power, the evils of a disjointed, haphazard industrial system began to be keenly felt. Men, women and children suffered and are still suffering. (245–247)

The economic emancipation women experienced when they first entered the labor force en masse, Swank Holmes points out, is no longer emancipating women. Instead, increased productivity without increased wages are simply enriching capitalist owners while at the same time depressing purchasing power. Not only were both women and men producing more, they were able to buy less.

While Swank Holmes does not exactly lay out an economic thesis at the end of “Woman in Economics,” she does offer a few guidelines. First, she explains, it is important not to be distracted by red herrings: while “some are enraged against the machine” and others blame women’s emancipation from the domestic sphere, she brazenly proclaims that both these diagnoses are wrong. Rather, knowing how to use both “labor saving machinery” and the “wisdom, skill, fine intuitions, [and] keen perceptions of free womanhood called into highest activity” for the good of humanity rather than in order to enrich a few men at the top is the real quandary. A perfect organization of economic relations should be determined by science and should be waylaid by “statesmen” who do not like to “disturb the established ‘order’ of things” (245–247). Thus, she lays out her conditions for a just and equitable economic system as follows: “every man, woman and child shall find an opportunity to exert all their faculties as they choose, and never to the point of exhaustion; whereby the results of labor shall accrue to the laborer, and no man shall fatten in

idleness from another's toil; whereby there shall be no more kings or subjects; no masters or servants, and no starving poor in all the civilized world" (245–247).

3.4 The Future Economic Order

By focusing on the relationship of nineteenth-century women to capitalist economic systems, both approaches created disparate analyses for their contemporary moment and for the future. Both Lizzie Swank Holmes and Voltairine de Cleyre provide clues through their writing to what they believed a successful anarchist revolution would yield in terms of a new, more just, economic order. Published in *The Rebel* in 1896, Lizzie Swank Holmes' "World's Exposition in the Year 2,000" is a sketch in a similar vein to Edward Bellamy's utopian novel *Looking Backward* (1888). In this sketch, Swank Holmes imagines a future economic order ruled by international syndicates and a "Great Exposition of the World's Production" dedicated to the worker and the working class, not to the splendor of capitalism or the strength of the nation-state.

The scene opens with dawn over the lake and descriptions of buildings waiting to be filled with the attendees of the Exposition. Aesthetics are a common theme for Swank Holmes in her pieces that depict ideal conditions or hopes for the future (for example, see "A Reverie,"), and beauty and cleanliness are an integral component to and subsumed within a larger social and economic justice in a perfect society. Holmes describes the lake (as this is mostly like Chicago on Lake Michigan one hundred years from Holmes' dear Chicago) as "sparkling," and the city as "glittering" and "smokeless" (67). The city itself also seems to "spring out of the water itself and stretch far away toward the western sky," the direction of progress, expansion, and manifest destiny (67). Music filled the air and banners adorn "white, dazzling buildings," and the pleasing colors of the dawn seemed to be an added decoration to the man-made ones that outfitted this brilliant display (67). Importantly, the city is not decorated for just its own citizens, municipally

or nationally, but a “vast auditorium” is “fitted up to receive the peoples of all nations” (67-68). This international component is crucial to Swank Holmes’ vision of the future.

In the future, people are not organized by countries, and there is no partnership between the state and industrial capitalism. In fact, neither exist. In Swank Holmes’ future, “Very little attention was paid to boundary lines, so widespread and general had grown the spirit of internationalism and fraternity. There were no monarchies or empires and only one or two distant divisions that still called themselves “republics”” (67-68). Instead of being organized by countries or under monarchies or empires, “People belonged to societies, groups, industrial associations, etc., and these constituted the principal organization of general society” (67-68). Swank Holmes even made room for the individualists in her future because she recognized that not everyone would want to belong to a society or association. Instead, in the anarchist year 2000, “Here and there were individuals who refused to join anything and so long as these invaded no one, they were left alone in their glory” (67-68). And because there are no presidents or kings in this anarchist future, there was no state power to enforce the industrial capitalist economic order. As a result, “There were no taxes, no cornered and controlled ‘mediums of exchange’ and all the producers of the earth freely and equitably exchanged their productions” (67-68). Without the state and industrial capital to keep down wages and grind healthy bodies into poverty, most people lived in beautiful homes, with ample opportunities for exercise, intellectual development, and recreation. In this world, it is not money that is honored and praise, but labor. At the exposition, “A great audience next assembled in a glorious auditorium where an ode to labor was sung by a magnificent chorus of voices, and addresses in honor of industry were given. Inventive talent, managing ability, designing powers were not forgotten; every creature who had performed some useful act in creating the marvels about them, was honored by appreciative mention” (67-68). Labor is the

center of Lizzie Swank Holmes' imagined future, both socially and economically. In contrast, Voltairine de Cleyre's future world is a romantic re-conception of American's past based on individualism and localism in "Anarchism and American Traditions."

Voltairine de Cleyre finds the anarchist future in the rebellious past. The American colony and its subsequent culture and traditions helped to shape the means by which anarchist thought became possible. American culture is rooted in "religious rebellion, small self-sustaining communities, isolated conditions, and hard pioneer life," all of which were the norm between the settling of Jamestown and the Revolutionary War. (de Cleyre 118). She draws interesting similarities between what once was, both on the East coast and in the Midwest, and what she hopes can be again. De Cleyre keenly finds apt parallels between anarchism and those she calls the "Revolutionary Republicans." Both groups "took their starting point for deriving a minimum of government upon the same sociological ground that the modern Anarchist derives the no-government theory; viz., that equal liberty is the political ideal" (de Cleyre 120). Moreover, both recognized "that the local must be the basis of the general; that there can be a free federation only when there are free communities to federate" (de Cleyre 121). This is why, according to de Cleyre, the early nation was so strong: it relied on equality and localism, not stratification and federalism.

The problem for de Cleyre and anarchists like her is that the founding fathers did not stay true to notions of independence and equality through localism and self-sufficiency; rather, she explains, "the sin our fathers sinned was that they did not trust liberty wholly. They thought it possible to compromise between liberty and government, believing the latter to be a 'necessary evil,' and the moment the compromise was made, the whole misbegotten monster of our present tyranny began to grow" (131-132) The solution to this tyranny, to regain the promise of the past in the future, is by cutting through "interdependence" to regain independence through self-

sufficiency and isolation, and returning to a state of the past.¹⁵ But because de Cleyre understands that the industrial revolution cannot be reversed, and an agrarian pioneer life of the past is just that, of the past, she projects that if the manufacturing conglomerations break up, the “population will go after the fragments, and there will be seen not indeed the hard, self-sustaining isolated pioneer communities of early America, but thousands of small communities stretching along the lines of transportation each producing very largely for its own needs” (134). These small communities will be “able to rely upon itself, and therefore able to be independent. For the same rule holds good for societies as for individuals,—those may be free who are able to make their own living” (de Cleyre 134). Whereas Lizzie Swank Holmes envisions forgotten borders and grand celebrations identifying laborers as heroes, de Cleyre’s future harkens back to self-sustaining individual communities. One economic system relies primarily on the sanctity of labor and the other on the individual, both somewhat compatible, yet different in a futuristic landscape where so much is at stake.

While economics were at the very heart of nineteenth century Midwestern anarchist feminist critiques of the present and dreams of the future, economics were tempered by a more deeply seated ideological framework: socialism or individualism. Parsons and Swank Holmes saw the industrial capitalist world of 1880s Chicago as inherently violent, and worthy of a violent response from the working-class who felt the brunt of its necropolitical push to “grind up” every healthy, beautiful, and living thing it could find in the service of extravagance and greed. De Cleyre,

¹⁵ The solution for the future is found in the past: “We have said that the spirit of liberty was nurtured by colonial life; that the elements of colonial life were the desire for sectarian independence, and the jealous watchfulness incident thereto; the isolation of pioneer communities which threw each individual strongly on his own resources, and thus developed all-around men, yet at the same time made very strong such social bonds as did exist; and, lastly, the comparative simplicity of small communities” (De Cleyre 132)

Finch Kelly, and Waisbrooker's economic ideology was informed by a stalwart individualism that argued for women's economic inclusion in the market as a method of freeing them from domestic oppression at home. De Cleyre and Finch Kelly ultimately saw this as the development of the individual (woman) and the avenue to parity in sexual relations between women and men. Waisbrooker would not have necessarily disagreed, but she would have provided additional support to individualist economic claims: women must have economic inclusion in order to prevent forced sexual relations and other emotional and bodily abuse, especially during pregnancy. The moral future of the race, Waisbrooker thought, was at stake. In Chapter Four, I examine this underlying eugenics tendency in the novels of Waisbrooker, Finch Kelly, and Swank Holmes.

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CHAPTER 4. **FREE WOMEN AND FIT CHILDREN: ANARCHISM, FREE LOVE, AND EUGENICS**

“...for it is in the novel particularly,
the novel which is the special creation
of the last century, that the
new [anarchist] ideal is freest.”
-Voltairine de Cleyre, “Anarchism in Literature”

What does it mean for a woman to rebel? For Lizzie Swank Holmes, rebellion means following one’s heart, even if it means following it outside the institution of marriage. In her 1893 novel *Hagar Lyndon; or A Woman’s Rebellion*, serialized in *Lucifer the Light-Bearer*, Lizzie S. Holmes writes about a young girl turned woman who dearly wants to have a child, but cannot submit herself to the abusive institution of marriage, especially after seeing her mother die from it and her sister unhappily entrapped within it. Hagar decides to bear a child out of wedlock from a free-love relationship, or a sexual relationship outside of the bonds of marriage. Yet, it was not enough for Holmes’ protagonist to successfully engage in a free love relationship; Hagar’s child is truly exceptional not in spite of her mother’s transgression, but because of it. Hagar’s doctor tells the judgmental and nosy conservative women of the town where Hagar lives with her son, “Let any one of you show me a child welcomed, born of loving, healthy parents, whose mother knows how to take care of herself, and I’ll show you another such a beauty. Such a child is truly ‘well born,’ an aristocrat among babies” (July 28 1893 p. 1). As an anarchist who had been intimately involved in labor organizing and the Haymarket Affair in Chicago, Lizzie S. Holmes was careful in describing Hagar’s son as “an aristocrat among babies”: the baby is not an aristocrat because he is the inheritor of a dynastic blood line or capitalist riches; rather, Hagar’s baby has won the genetic lottery. He is proof that free love produces healthy, superior children. Hagar’s son is the result of, and thus the argument for, an eugenics underpinning of free love relationships in

which women get to choose how, when, and with whom they have children. Free love relationships, their advocates argued, are independent and free of the terror men can inflict, such as then-legal marital rape, during their pregnancies.

This chapter interrogates six novels by three anarchist women, Lois Waisbrooker, Florence Finch Kelly, and Lizzie Swank Holmes to understand the ways in which nineteenth-century anarchist women connected anarchism, free love, and eugenics through fiction. Although scholars such as Hal D. Sears, Joanne Passet, and Wendy Hayden have explored these connections from sociological, historical, and rhetorical standpoints, work has yet to be done examining how fiction, in particular domestic fiction, dealt with the intricately complex and controversial subject matter. My argument is threefold: 1) I further Wendy Hayden's argument that free love feminists used contemporary science to argue for a re-examination and abolishing traditional marriage by illustrating how anarchist-feminist free love arguments would not have been possible without a comingling of contemporary scientific principles and a perfectionist social theory upon which both anarchist and eugenics were based (55); 2) The three main authors of my examination, the anarchist-feminists Lois Waisbrooker, Florence Finch Kelly, and Lizzie Swank Holmes utilized known genres, particularly domestic fiction, in order to appeal to and recruit women to their causes; and 3) Through these novels, Midwestern ideals, such as localism, agrarian individualism, and Manifest Destiny, are brought to bear on anarchism, free love, and eugenics. Robustly interrogating both what we see today as appealing and appalling features of past radicalism can ensure a more nuanced and fair recovery project. Such an investigation helps us to take authors as they are, rather than lifting up what we consider to be the positive radical attributes and denouncing the unsavory ones; instead, we can begin to see how both work together to form a cohesive whole, even if that cohesive whole seems confounding today.

4.1 Defining Eugenics and Free Love

I use Alison Bashford and Philippa Levine's definition of eugenics from their introduction to *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics*. They define eugenics as a movement and series of practices to "affect reproductive practice through the application of theories of heredity" (Bashford and Levine 3). The aims of eugenics generally fit in four categories: 1) "to prevent life"; 2) "bring about fitter life"; 3) "to generate more life"; and 4) "at its most extreme, it ended life" (Bashford and Levine 3). As Bashford and Levine note, "Eugenics always had an evaluative logic at its core. Some human life was of more value—to the state, the nation, the race, future generations—than other life, and thus its advocates sought to implement these practices differentially" (3-4). Of particular note for this chapter is that although "one of the more striking aspects of eugenics is that its presuppositions and premises frequently did feed state policy," this did not take root in the United States with regard to official law until the turn of the century (Bashford and Levine 11). Of course, racist, sexist, and ablest policies were enacted by governmental agencies, especially toward indigenous and enslaved people, since colonial times, yet eugenics as defined in the nineteenth century with regard to hereditary genetics and new "scientific" principles did not develop until the turn of the century. Thus, it is important to note that although the two authors examined here were anti-state, the way in which they used eugenics rhetoric or advocated for eugenics practices was not in direct conflict with their anti-statist views at the time their novels were published.

The term "free love" might just as well be renamed "the freedom *from* love." Tainted by an anachronistic "free love" movement of the 1960s and (usually male) libertine notions of sexual intercourse at the turn of the century, the concept of free love used here refers to the radical practice of choosing to have sex outside of the bonds of marriage primarily by women. Although free love was not a radical practice dominated by only anarchist women, many anarchist women, such as

Florence Finch Kelly, Voltairine de Cleyre, Emma Goldman, Lizzie S. Holmes, Lois Waisbrooker, and many others associated with *The Word* and *Lucifer the Light-Bearer* were advocates for a free love lifestyle.¹⁶ In her book *Sex Radicals and the Quest for Women's Equality*, Joanne Passet encapsulates free love into a more comprehensive term: sex radicals. Passet defines sex radicals as “the broad range of nineteenth-century women and men who did not always call themselves free lovers but who nonetheless challenged customary beliefs about sexual relationships, the institution of marriage, and women’s lack of economic, legal, and social rights” (2). Free love can be a problematic term, Passet notes, because “Mainstream newspaper editors and clergy, free love’s most vocal critics, called anyone who deviated from customary ideals of proper behavior a ‘free lover’” (2). While I acknowledge both the historical and contemporary problematic nature of using the term “free love,” I use it here because the anarchist authors I focus on in this project are best described as those who wanted love, both erotic and platonic, to be free from the strictures of the Church, State, and tradition. Moreover, they themselves did not view free love to be a particularly radical stance, especially since they viewed “love compelled,” to use Florence Finch Kelly’s words, as unnatural and promulgating obscenity and degeneracy.

Wendy Hayden, in her book *Evolutionary Rhetoric: Sex, Science, and Free Love in Nineteenth-Century Feminism*, helpfully contrasts free love as propounded by feminists versus a male-centered free love philosophy in the nineteenth century. She explains, “Free-love feminists differed from male free-love philosophies because it placed women’s emancipation as its central

¹⁶ Foundational to the understanding of late nineteenth century free love in the United States is Mary Gove Nichol’s semi-autobiographical text *Mary Lyndon; or, Revelations of a Life: An Autobiography* (1855). Another anarchist-feminist and free-love advocate, Lizzie Swank Holmes, likely named the protagonist of her free-love novel *Hagar Lyndon* (serialized in 1893 in *Lucifer the Light-Bearer*) after the semi-fictional Mary Lyndon, which means it is likely that *Mary Lyndon* was read, or at least know by, some in the anarchist-feminist free love community.

tenant” (Hayden 22). In journals like *The Word* and *Lucifer the Light-Bearer* free love was a conversation had by both men and women. As expected, “Male free-love philosophies championed the rights of the individual, but free-love feminists distinguished women’s specific oppression from the more general oppression people faced under government strictures on marriage and family” (Hayden 22). Importantly, “Therefore, free-love feminists foregrounded the role of women, whereas ‘free love’ itself merely included the emancipation of women under its mantra” (Hayden 22). The anarchist authors examined here all foreground the role of women as well as intensely examine women’s specific oppression as it relates to marriage and the family.

The well-known anarchist feminist writer Voltairine de Cleyre, who herself had a child outside of wedlock, gives us an extraordinary coherent explanation and argument of free love. In her 1895 speech turned essay “Sex Slavery,” Voltairine de Cleyre adroitly reasons, “And that is rape, where a man forces himself sexually upon a woman whether it is licensed by the marriage law to do it or not. And that is the vilest of all tyranny where a man compels the woman he says he loves, to endure the agony of bearing children that she does not want, and for whom, as is the rule rather than the exception, they cannot properly provide” (*Selected Works* 345). Because women had no redress from sexual authority and forced pregnancy within marriage, De Cleyre and other anarchists argued for a variety of solutions, chief among them free love.¹⁷ Like her

¹⁷ De Cleyre’s talk is addressing men, and she makes a smart rhetorical move in addressing the reasons why women will not or, more aptly, could not leave an abusive marriage. She explains in *Sex Slavery*: “The man who deceives a woman outside of marriage (and mind you, such a [man] will deceive *in* marriage too) may deny his own child, if he is mean enough. He cannot tear it from her arms—he cannot touch it! The girl he wronged, thanks to your very pure and tender morality-standard, may die in the street for want of food. *He* cannot force his hated presence upon her again. But his wife, gentlemen, his wife, the woman he respects to much that he consents to let her merge her individuality into his, lose her identity and become his chattel, his wife he may not only force unwelcome children upon, outrage at his own good pleasure, and keep as general cheap and convenient piece of furniture, but if she does not get a divorce (and she cannot for such cause) he can follow her wherever she goes, come into her house, eat her food, force her into the cell, *kill*

counterparts do in their domestic fiction, De Cleyre draws a line between children born of a free love relationship, and children born of a forced sexual relationship when it comes to health, a particularly eugenics argument:

It is to have Tyranny as your progenitor, and slavery as your prenatal cradle. It is to run the risk unwelcome birth, 'legal' constitutional weakness, morals corrupted before birth, possibly a murder instinct, the inheritance of excessive sexuality or no sexuality, either of which is disease. It is to have the value of a piece of paper, a rag from the tattered garments of the 'Social Contract,' set above healthy, beauty, talent or goodness; for I never yet had difficulty in obtaining the admission that illegitimate children are nearly always prettier and brighter than others, even from conservative women. And how supremely disgusting it is to see them look from their own puny, sickly, lust-born children, upon whom lie the chain-traces of their own terrible servitude, look from these to some healthy, beautiful 'natural' child, and say, "What a pity its mother wasn't virtuous!" Never a word about their children's fathers' virtue, they know too much! Virtue! Disease, stupidity, criminality! What an obscene thing "virtue" is! (de Cleyre 347)

Here, De Cleyre is drawing on the science underlying eugenics in the late nineteenth century, namely that disease and degeneration can be inherited, not only through genetics, but also through the environment to which the fetus is exposed. Her argument is that children who are born within marriage, where a woman has no right to resist or defend herself from abuse, as well as a child born of lusty copulation, that is to say sex that is forced upon a woman by a man simply because

her by virtue of his sexual authority! And she has no redress unless he is indiscreet enough to abuse her in some less brutal but unlicensed manner. I know a case in your city where a woman was followed so for ten years by her husband. I believe he finally developed grace enough to die; please applaud him for the only decent thing he ever did." (*Selected Works* 345-346).

he thinks of her as *his property*, affects children. The solution both for de Cleyre and other free love anarchists is to free the woman from her servitude so that her child will not only be “prettier and brighter than others” but also so they will be healthy, beautiful, talented, and good (347). If a woman remains in servitude, her child risks being born puny, sickly, with a murder instinct, or with too much or not enough of a sexual drive. Near the end of “Sex Slavery,” de Cleyre drives home the point that how sex, and therefore the production of children, was to be practiced should be left up to each individual woman because it could change over time; however, making sure that women have access to free love, or the right to choose when and with whom to have sex, was a eugenics matter:

As for the final outcome, it matters not one iota. I have my ideal, and it is very pure, and very sacred to me. But yours, equally sacred, may be different and we may both be wrong. But certain am I that with free contract, that form of sexual association will survive which is best adapted to time and place, thus producing the highest evolution of the type. Whether that shall be monogamy, variety, or promiscuity matters naught to us; it is the business of the future, to which we dare not dictate. (de Cleyre 356)

Free love for Voltairine de Cleyre, and as we will see for other anarchist women in the postbellum nineteenth century, is as much about the freedom of women as the “highest evolution” of mankind. In a world where it was difficult to separate sex from reproduction due to limited prophylactic equipment and knowledge and no hormonal birth control, women’s rights to their own bodies, their own income, and their choice of sexual partner was reinforced by the scientific anxiety over the degeneracy of humanity. Because de Cleyre believed, like other free love anarchist women, that the plight of the mother could affect the unborn child, both in terms of genetic inheritance and

exposure to a servile and abusive climate, arguments for women's individuality and equality were bolstered and overshadowed by eugenics and perfectionist arguments.

4.2 The Rhetoric of Free Love

At the core of the matter, free love was both a movement and an extremely personal way of living that these anarchist authors *argued for* through domestic fiction. While advocating for the advantages of free love for women, they also argued, like Voltairine de Cleyre did in *Sex Slavery*, that the practice of free love was an evolutionary advantage for humankind. In some cases, eugenics arguments were used to support the ultimate aim of the emancipation of women from sexual slavery. This is the case with Finch Kelly; however, for Waisbrooker, at least in some of her novels like *Perfect Motherhood* women's emancipation was a condition that undergirded a larger eugenics project.

The rhetorical relationship between eugenics and free love is elucidated by Wendy Hayden. She argues that there are three ways in which science was linked with free love through rhetorical claims:

First, science provided the language to discuss sexuality, more powerful than the language of Enlightenment rhetorics of natural law and individual sovereignty favored by male free-love advocates. Second, science change the rhetorical situation of discussions of sexuality; rather than discussing sex as within the bonds of the marriage institution, free-love feminists discussed it as a key element of human evolution. Furthermore, free-love feminists responded to several exigencies provided by scientific discoveries, such as the discovery of the extent of venereal diseases in married women. Third, their logic reveals how they used warrants, or the assumptions linking the data to the claim, from science. Interestingly, science produced not only arguments that would later warrant feminist claims

but also axioms that free-love feminists could use to warrant their existing arguments. That is, scientific discoveries produced arguments that would provide new warrants refreshing existing arguments and setting them in a new context. (Hayden 8-9)

Hayden's argument is crucial in understanding how and why free love and eugenics became linked, especially for the anarchist authors in this chapter. Anarchist thought developed out of Enlightenment rhetorics, which can be seen clearly in proto-anarchist texts, like William Godwin's *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* published in 1793, in which he advocates for a more individual-centered (rather than state or religion centered) political system, specifically through reforms like education for all, regardless of class or standing. Because the anarchist authors here are women who had experienced oppression and injustice based on social constructions of their gender and sexuality, they intimately understood how scientific discoveries and language could provide new avenues to liberation. Hayden's second point is perhaps the most important: by attaching claims of evolution to women's sexual emancipation, free lovers linked the very survival of humanity (particularly white heteronormative humanity) to the emancipation of women. The message was clear: women's continued sexual oppression means the end of the world as we know it.

This message was backed by science. As Hayden notes, it was not until research showed the staggering numbers of married women with sexually transmitted diseases along with the possibilities offered by new fields of scientific inquiry, like embryology, which focused on the embryo and the fetus, that eugenics caught on. Hayden explains that with embryology came "the emergence of the concentration on producing 'better children' when women started arguing for rights using improvements to the next generation as support. The "Republican motherhood" arguments popular with earlier feminists regenerated into a different kind of rhetoric of

responsibility: women needed rights to secure the most helpful conditions for molding new life while pregnant” (Hayden 13). Hayden’s third point is particularly useful in understanding some of the more outlandish arguments made by these authors. For example, in *Perfect Motherhood*, Mabel Raymond’s mother reads tracts from the Quaker Founder George Fox, and when Mabel becomes a social justice activist in her local community, her mother reasons that not only did the Quaker ideals become part of her daughter’s personality through the texts she read while pregnant, but also, as a spiritualist, her mother believes that she was visited by Fox’s ghost during her pregnancy, further influencing her daughter’s social justice-focused personality. In essence, in *Perfect Motherhood*, Waisbrooker uses scientific principles of embryology (in this case, an extension of the nurture argument applied to a fetus) and warrants, or unstated assumptions, about the existence of ghosts (spiritualism) and their ability to interact with living and in-utero subjects to argue that potential mothers need to have perfect conditions for their maternity. In order for potential mothers to have perfect conditions for their maternity, they need emancipation in all its forms to truly have individual control over their own lives and the future lives of humanity.

4.3 Domestic Fiction and Individualism

The novels examined later in this essay were written in the genre of domestic, and sometimes sentimental, fiction. That is to say that the plot and characters revolve and interact with ideas of the home, marriage, and family. Especially important to this analysis is the idea of domestic individualism, a concept coined and explicated by Gillian Brown in her book of the same name. Domestic individualism is the seemingly paradoxical cohabitation of domestic ideals and possessive individualism within the physical and social domestic space. In this sense, the American ideal of possessive individualism, which is associated with the public sphere and indicated by values such as property rights, self-determination, selfhood, and self-integrity, is brought to bear

on the values, individuals, and activities of the domestic sphere resulting in the implementation of the values of domesticity through possessive individualism. Waisbrooker, Finch Kelly, and Holmes do not shy away from domesticity in their novels; rather, they utilize the genre of domestic fiction to show how domesticity can change when the domicile, and the bodies within it, are solely possessed by women emancipated from marriage and conventional ideas of reproduction and family. Waisbrooker was especially aware of the power of domestic sentimentalism, comparing a tract written by her characters at the end of *Perfect Motherhood; Or Mabel Raymond's Resolve* to Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* with regard to the effect in "freeing" women and children in the same way Stowe's famous anti-slavery novel was the literary catalyst that helped turned public attitude toward abolition after its publication in 1852. The genre of domestic fiction was especially important for these women to spread their ideas of free love and anarchism because it was a familiar genre for women readers in the nineteenth century and it enables radical ideas to be embedded within familiar plots, scenes, and tropes in order to make them more appealing to a wide-ranging female readership.

4.4 Waisbrooker: *Helen Harlow's Vow* (1870), *Perfect Motherhood* (1889), and *A Sex Revolution* (1893)

A spiritualist and so-called sex radical, Lois Waisbrooker is one of the more prolific radical American women of her cast in the nineteenth century with regard to both writing and as the editor of several periodicals. Although Lois Waisbrooker was not born in the Midwest, nor did she die there, she spent a good number of years, including many of her golden years of publishing, in Iowa and Kansas. In addition, the Midwest figures prominently in some of her novels, including in *Perfect Motherhood* where her poor patrons are resettled on farm steads in Kansas to carry out their task of pursuing the conditions for perfect motherhood. According to Passet, "between the

1868 publication of *Suffrage for Women: The Reasons Why* and her death in 1909, the itinerant lecturer and author wrote twelve novels and pamphlets, edited three periodicals (*Our Age*, *Foundation Principles*, and *Clothed with the Sun*), and served for a year as the acting editor of the sex radical weekly *Lucifer, the Light-Bearer*,” which was based in Kansas (Passet 115).

Lois Waisbrooker is an important thinker and author in tracing less well-known, and perhaps unsavory, lines of flight nineteenth-century anarchists. Although she published regularly before intersecting with the *Lucifer the Light-Bearer* radical community, she became one of the familiar voices through which *Lucifer the Light-Bearer* and other authors argued for free love principles, which advocated for the emancipation of women from marriage, from economic dependency, and from tradition. Here, I focus on three of Waisbrooker’s novels: *Helen Harlow’s Vow* (1870), *Perfect Motherhood; Or Mabel Raymond’s Resolve* (1889), and *A Sex Revolution* (1893). Each of these texts has been selected for their focus on women’s emancipation, although each argues for it in very different ways, thereby exemplifying different threads of the anarchist-feminist tradition in the nineteenth-century United States.

Helen Harlow’s Vow is a sentimental and didact bildungsroman detailing the life of its eponymous character Helen Harlow. Helen becomes a disgraced woman when she becomes pregnant by a man who promises to marry her, but then discards her for another, rich woman. Helen bears the child and raises him with a sense of dignity and justice, even when the community shuns her because she does not act the part of a repentant sinner. Her son grows up to be a good, healthy, and honest man, who becomes a Major in the Civil War for the union. Although she proclaims in the early years that she must martyr herself for the cause of bringing dignity to women by remaining alone forever, she eventually marries her son’s father after his evil wife dies and she has gained full respect from the community.

Perfect Motherhood; Or Mabel Raymond's Resolve is a more explicitly instructive work of didactic fiction. Similar to *Helen Harlow's Vow*, *Perfect Motherhood* is a bildungsroman that follows the character of Mabel Raymond from her childhood until death in middle age, but with many detours that include very detailed rational dialogues on everything from economics to the evils of the Catholic Church. The overarching theme of the novel is the search for "Perfect Motherhood," or as Mabel Raymond herself puts it, "to find and remove all that stands in the way of the best motherhood" (Waisbrooker 298). In other words, the task of perfect motherhood is creating good, healthy conditions for women during pregnancy because things like bad thoughts, poor diets, hard labor, and "unnatural" behavior, like marital rape, could irreparably harm the fetus and cause her or him to become a natural born criminal or other unsavory type. The path to discovering perfect motherhood, at least for Mabel Raymond, twists and turns through mesmerism, anti-capitalism, anti-Catholicism, spiritualism, eugenics, and a critique of the usury system in the nineteenth-century United States. At the end of the novel, Mabel, her husband, brother, and others of their small group resolve to write a book outlining how perfect motherhood can save humanity, comparing its hoped-for effect to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

Like *Helen Harlow's Vow* and *Perfect Motherhood*, *A Sex Revolution* analyses the current conditions for women and argues for women's emancipation from systems of oppression and for full inclusion in what Waisbrooker calls "the machinery of society." In contrast to these other two texts, however, it is dialogic, not sentimental work. It begins with an introduction of the narrator, Margaret Mulgrove, whose husband died in the Civil War (for the Union Army), and whose only child died soon after. Her aunt, an infidel, decides to come stay with her for a while, and the two begin a friendly tête-à-tête about religion. Margaret's Aunt gives her a book entitled *The Strike of A Sex*, and when Margaret sits down to read it, "page after page was scanned, becoming more and

more interesting as [she] progressed,” and she reads it all the way through (Waisbrooker 66). Margaret falls asleep, and in her dream, she happens upon a scene between Lovella, “the embodied spirit of motherhood” and “womanly beauty, dignity, and power” and Selferedo, “the embodied spirit of the love of power, of selfishness” (Waisbrooker 67, 73). Selferedo is getting ready to blow his horn to “summon the warriors of the nation to defend its honor and prevent its disruption,” but Lovella asks him not to because war “for the sake of a false standard of honor” and to retain governmental control “would make thousands of widows and orphans” (Waisbrooker 67). She pulls out “a trumpet of wonderful workmanship upon which was inscribed ‘The Power of Mother Love,’” which is “composed of myriads of hearts closely cemented by intertwining fibers” (Waisbrooker 68). After the women protest the coming war, Selferedo agrees to Lovella’s “sex revolution”—women will lead the nation for fifty years to “demonstrate [their] fitness for leadership,” and, if at the end of the fifty years they have not done so, they must resign their experiment (Waisbrooker 96).

At their core, all three novels advocate for the emancipation of women from the church and its traditions, like marriage, and the full inclusion of women in the operations of the state and the economy. For certain sex radicals like Waisbrooker free love was not about having multiple partners or embracing hedonism; rather it was about the emancipation of women from marriage bonds, or sex slavery as it was often referred to by nineteenth-century radical feminists. In *Helen Harlow’s Vow*, Helen takes in an old homeless woman named Crazy Jane who tells Helen her story about marrying a man she was not in love with in order to cover up the fact she was pregnant by another man who had tricked her. Crazy Jane tells Helen, “it would have been [better] to have accepted public disgrace than to do as I did. To escape the consequences of a weakness, a folly, I plunged into crime: to escape the name of being vile, I made myself, or permitted others to make

me, vile indeed; for what great pollution is there for woman than to take vows upon her lips from which her heart rebels? to bear children to a man that she hates?" (141). The crime, of course, was not against the state, but against nature. Crazy Jane illustrates perfectly how the crime of unnatural but legal marriage figures into Waisbrooker's eugenics project. While many feminist analyses would stop here and use Crazy Jane as an example of free love doctrine, the reason why Crazy Jane comes to realize her marriage is "unnatural" is because her son inherits her hatred while in utero. In adulthood, her son starts to exhibit criminal behavior, like stealing, which she identifies as a result of her poverty and malnourishment while pregnant with him—Crazy Jane's husband did not provide the food she craved, and she had serious thoughts of stealing the household money to buy food for herself. Crazy Jane tells Helen, "My unborn babe had been the recipient of that feeling," and her son, in adulthood had murdered his father, stolen his money, and had purchased his mother the exact food she had been craving years earlier while pregnant with him (140). Therefore, if Crazy Jane had never married her husband to cover up her "disgrace," and had instead had conditions for perfect motherhood at hand, her child probably would not have been a "born" criminal.

This argument, with a spiritualist twist, is put forth almost thirty years later in *Perfect Motherhood*. Mabel Raymond's mother, Mrs. Raymond declares, "'Embedded criminality' is as true of children so begotten, and so gestated, as of any other, no matter how good the conditions and surroundings otherwise; for enforced motherhood, and enforced so-called marital rights are the greatest crimes against nature" (Waisbrooker 232). In the same dialogue, Mabel's husband George furthers this critique, bringing religion in to play. George explains, "If I understand the religions of the world, Christianity included, they are all of them branches of the tree whose root is a masculine God, with masculine domination. They are all systems in which motherhood is

dishonored unless regulated by masculine rule, unless woman pledges herself to be obedient to man during life” (Waisbrooker 232). Therefore, orthodox Christianity, and other religions of the world are complicit in crimes against nature, namely enforced motherhood and marital rights, a critique that aligns with feminist, anarchist, and spiritualist sensibilities. Not only that, Waisbrooker argues that conditions outside of the womb, including spiritual conditions, can affect the unborn child. Mabel herself is supposed to be indicative of this belief. During her pregnancy with Mabel, Mrs. Raymond, a hereditary Quaker, read the works of George Fox, the founder of the faith. Mrs. Raymond reasons, “If those who are called dead really can make themselves felt, and can control certain organizations, they can affect the character of the child by their influence upon the prospective mother” (Waisbrooker 273). She continues to tell Mabel, “the summer before thee camest to my arms, I read the life of George Fox and I admired his character very much, and I have thought that reading had its effect upon thy character; but it may be true that George Fox himself was present, thus giving thee that devotion to humanity that has so far marked thy life” (Waisbrooker 273). Mabel, whose cause in life is to spread the work of perfect motherhood, is not only the activist for its cause, but an example of its effect as well, both thanks to her mother’s happy marriage, good thoughts, *and* probably a little help from the spirit world to boot.

For Waisbrooker, women’s emancipation, which includes the eugenic project of perfect motherhood, hinges upon economic inclusion. Once her mother dies, Helen Harlow’s respectability and some of her income is derived from opening a shop and selling fancy goods to the local women. It is economic self-sufficiency and the marketplace that enable Helen to interact with the other women and begin to enter in to society again. Mabel Raymond is a judge’s daughter and comes from the upper echelons; however, she uses her money to fund the writing and advertising of a woman’s emancipation novel designed to create sympathy for perfect motherhood.

But inclusion in the capitalist economic system could also do damage. At the root of the capitalist economic system are surplus labor, property rights and charging interest, all practices which are railed against in *Perfect Motherhood*. Mabel and her mother visit urban tenements where they find women cramped together in turgid rooms sewing cloaks and wonder how any good can come from it. Mabel understands that surplus labor from the poor goes to fund the lifestyle of the rich. Upon reading a description of the Czar's lavish winter palace in the newspaper, Mabel says, "Over, under, and through it all is blood. Hearts are ground and mixed with the gold; brains bespatter the walls, and infants; skulls harden the glass and marble floors," and she covered her face with her hands to shut out the awful sight" (Waisbrooker 337). During a public meeting, Mabel's brother, Walter, says of property laws that make the rich richer and the poor poorer: "To hell with such laws, and with the governments that uphold them," and later, when asked what to do about unraveling the tangles of the capitalist system, Mabel's husband George responds, "why try to unravel all the tangles? When it is done they are only ropes to tie us up with. An entirely new system is the only remedy" (Waisbrooker 305, 324).

In *A Sex Revolution*, Margaret narrates an equally important the scene analyzing how capitalist economic systems disenfranchise the poor, and especially women: Evil "is rooted in our false system of property and relations. Those whose toil produces the wealth of the world do not get their share" (Waisbrooker 98). Lovella tells the group "The rich cannot escape the results of the conditions imposed upon the poor. People [. . .] fail to recognize the equally important truth that moral disease can be communicated in the same way, and that in some cases it may thus become a hereditary endowment for evil" (Waisbrooker 101). Thus, for Waisbrooker, not only is the abolition of enforced marriage critical to her eugenics project, but so is her anti-capitalist critique. Taken at face value, Waisbrooker's critiques read as anarchist, feminist, and, in the case

of undermining the authority of the Church, spiritualist, and she did circulate in all of those radical communities; however, the foundational rationale behind all of these critiques comes from a eugenics project of racial and evolutionary progress through emancipated women, the only individuals she trusts to ensure the perfect conditions for motherhood, and therefore the perfect conditions for the further progress of humanity.

All three of these novels begin the domestic sphere and breach the private/public divide. In particular, *Helen Harlow's Vow* illustrates that domestic sphere is not always a place of safety when other women enforce religious and patriarchal ideas of the sexuality of women. In effect, Helen is “hunted” by the other women of the community, particularly in her home. She has close brushes with being murdered twice, once when she still lives in the country, and once when she lives in town. In the first case, her beau rescues her, in the second case the ghost of a shamed woman thwarts the would-be murder attempt. In *Perfect Motherhood*, the home is represented as a place of control and nurturing: in order for women to have full control over their maternity, the home must be under the control of the potential mother. Moreover, Mabel Raymond and her mother continually go into the slums to “rescue” mothers and children from unhygienic and impoverished conditions and bring them into their well-appointed and clean home. At the end of the novel, the characters look to settle plots in Kansas in the hopes of creating healthy and independent domiciles. Finally, although *A Sex Revolution* covers a lot of territory spanning from the private to the public, it is imperative to remember that the entire novel takes place in Margaret’s head, as she’s dreaming in the home. For Margaret, the home is the epicenter of revolutionary dreams.

Waisbrooker brings many Midwestern tropes, including agrarian individualism and localism, to bear in her fiction. Agrarian individualism figures most prominently in *Perfect*

Motherhood where the men and women Mabel lifts out of poverty are given homesteads in rural Kansas as part of a radical resettling of the west. What is particularly notable about Waisbrooker choosing Kansas for Mabel's resettlement project is that Kansas was also the home of the sex radical periodical *Lucifer the Light-Bearer*, which would later move to Chicago and, in 1907, become *The American Journal of Eugenics*. Midwestern ideas of localism, or the focus on the local instead of the national or international, are dealt out in two ways. First, in both *Helen Harlow's Vow* and in *Perfect Motherhood*, there is an intense focus on the role of community in both disgracing women as well as preventing conditions of perfect motherhood. It is not the State that Helen is worried about, it is the middle-class women of the village, who work to oppress and try to physically harm Helen for retaining her dignity. But it is localism that can be liberating as well, which is shown when Helen uses her economic success as a shop owner to win over the women of the village. Second, all three books show how the idea of localism as well as individualism, is brought to bear on women's emancipation, for Waisbrooker simply applies arguments about local concern and control to women's bodies themselves and projects the rationale back out to the nation: Midwestern settlers moved to the Midwest to have control over their own labor and economic conditions in an effort to create upward mobility, and thereby enriching the nation state to further its project of manifest destiny. Similarly, Waisbrooker women need to have control over their own bodies in order to produce healthy children, which then comprise a healthy race. In both cases, arguments for individual freedom are undergirded by dangerous empire-building and racial beliefs in the complimenting projects of manifest destiny and eugenics.

4.5 Finch Kelly: *Frances* (1889) and *On the Inside* (1890)

Florence Finch Kelly is much better known as an early feminist and suffragette than a radical anarchist; yet, like many radical women writers in the late nineteenth century, Finch Kelly

contributed to the formation of early anarchist feminist thought. She was an early resident of Jane Addams' Hull House in Chicago, and she was very involved with working conditions for textile workers. Her two "radical" books are *Frances: A Story for Men and Women* (1889) and *On the Inside* (1890). In addition to these novels, which advocate for free love, including the ability for both men and women to begin and end relationships as they please, she was a contributor to the radical periodicals *Liberty* and *The Independent*, sometimes signing her contributions with her initials, F. F. K. One of the first women to be a reporter at the *Boston Globe*, Finch Kelly writes in her autobiography *Flowing Stream* that driven "by the spirit of adventure, the desire to see what would happen, and perhaps an imp of perversity," she and the other editorial writer, Allen Kelly (her future husband), often "introduced into editorial articles commenting on economic and social matters ideas that were taken bodily from socialistic, communistic or even from Tucker's anarchist philosophy, but without ever using any of these controversial words" (193). Although Finch Kelly later moved on to a more main stream political consciousness, her later abdication of anarchist ideals does not denigrate the value of her early radical works, which remain an important example of how anarchism and sex radicalism were translated into literary forms.

Frances: A Story for Men and Women opens with Eva Collquitt arriving home in Boston unannounced after caring for her sick father. As her carriage passes by a saloon, she sees her husband Harris Collquitt canoodling with another woman. When he comes home in the morning, she confronts him, and he declares that they should separate because they do not actually love each other—in her upset, Eva "absent-mindedly" picks up their crying baby, "and, unthinking, perhaps ignorant of what the result might be, put it to her breast. An hour later it lay dead in her arms" (17). Not knowing his child is dead, Collquitt returns to Frances, the woman he had been with the night previously, and find that her previous lover, the business man Malquam is terrorizing her. After

an exciting scene involving a lot of exclamations and a revolver, Malquam apologizes to Frances at gunpoint and leaves—but this only fuels his rage and need to possess her, and he vows to get revenge. Collquitt, who is a well-known newspaper man, goes away on a detective mission to find a murderer, and Malquam fixes for him not to return for a good long while in the hopes he can induce Frances to return to him. When Collquitt does not return, Frances is heartbroken, and she soon realizes she is pregnant with Collquitt's child. Alone in the city with no one, Frances has her own past to contend with. We learn that Frances has a backstory. Although she was educated at a good school in Canada, she had found, upon returning to Boston after her mother's death only a few months previously, that her mother was the mistress of a house of ill-repute and she herself was an illegitimate child. Eventually, she goes to seek out her father, a well-known preacher, in New York City, and a scandal emerges whereby the public begins to think Frances is her father's mistress. He comes clean, but loses it all, and takes Frances and her baby to live in North Central Illinois. By this time, Collquitt has been given up for dead, but another boisterous newspaper man, Bill Hefty, finds him in upstate New York, apparently the victim of an attack by Malquam's man leading to amnesia. Collquitt looks for Frances, but gives her up for dead, but again Bill Hefty, finds Frances and brings Collquitt to her on a train, which crashes because of a prairie fire that weakens the railroad bridge. While Collquitt is rushing to Frances, their baby falls down a well, which is witnessed by Collquitt's ex-wife, Eva, who had fallen under the passions of Malquam. Of course, Malquam didn't really love Eva, it was just all part of his plan to get back at Frances and Collquitt. Malquam had induced Eva to go to Illinois to steal Frances and Collquitt's baby, but instead she sees the baby fall down the well, and she could have prevented it. It is only Collquitt's arrival that pulls Frances out of her trance-like depression over the death of their child, and Eva returns to New York where she finds Malquam who had just committed suicide because of his

ruined fortunes. She kills herself while laying in his arms. Frances and Collquitt move to a ranch in the Bay Area, have more children, and live happily.

Finch Kelly's second book, *On the Inside*, follows Isabelle Fairmont, a young woman from Illinois, who has just arrived in New York City to work as a typist. Isabelle is an aspiring poet and an innocent girl yet craves new ideas and wants to see how things really work "on the inside" of society. She is pulled into the circle of Helen LeStrange, her sister's school girl friend who, unbeknownst to Isabelle, is the mistress of one of the richest men in New York. Isabelle also meets Henry Reberfell, an unenthusiastic anarchist whose best friend is Brokken (or Brozy), and the man with whom Helen LeStrange is in a relationship. After Brokken tries to rape Isabelle, she realizes that Helen is a "disgraced" woman, and that her circle of friends, all influential capitalists, radicals, or artists in the city, all believe that Isabelle is a "disgraced" woman as well by virtue of her friendship with Helen. Because Isabelle believes very much in her reputation, she leaves their circles and instead begins to attend a small "symposium" at her employer's house, which has a membership of respectable women who have careers and are interested in women's liberation. The circle includes a female doctor who is also an anarchist. The plot thickens when Brokken is accused of killing his business partner, but he is acquitted after Helen lies about his alibi. One of the key pieces of evidence in the murder trial reveals that Brokken has been forging railroad securities certificates and he is immediately re-arrested; Helen also goes to jail for perjury. The end of the story finds Isabelle and Reberfell happily together and taking care of Brokken and Helen's two beautiful children, with a hint that Reberfell and Isabelle may become active in the anarchist movement.

The bottom line for Finch Kelly is that free love must be part of the reinvention of sexual relations. "Love compelled is not worth having" is the very last line in *Frances: A Story for Men*

and Women and definitively ground Finch Kelly's radicalism in the free love movement. There are multiple examples of "love compelled" throughout the narratives, from Eva and Collquitt to Malquam and Eva to Brokken and his wife in *On the Inside*. Not only is love compelled not worth having, it has disastrous consequences. Malquam kills himself. Eva kills herself, and Brokken goes to prison. It is the characters whose relationships have real love—Collquitt and Frances and Reberfell and Isabelle that end up happily ever after. Like other free love radical fiction, Finch Kelly's characters illustrate that relationships without love bring out the worst in people; in fact, they sometimes reveal an unbridled animalistic nature that causes characters to do horrible things, like let other people's children fall into wells.

Like Waisbrooker's novels, Finch Kelly's works illustrate that children born of a "free love" relationship are more "perfect" than those born of a marriage of convention. Brokken's "legitimate" children are sickly: "They seemed to have no definite, settled ailment. They were simply weaklings, destitute of physical stamina, ready to be made ill by every unusual happening. They took cold in the slightest draught, they had indigestion if the strictest care were not exercised over their diet, they almost died with each one of the usual childish ailments" (81). In contrast, his children with Helen LeStrange are "sturdy" and "dainty" (54). In fact, Helen visits Mrs. Brokken under the guise of being a Mrs. Brown checking the references of a servant. Helen compares her children with Mrs. Brokken's, "She gathered their round, fat cheeks into her hands and pinched their solid, rosy flesh, thinking triumphantly all the time of those skinny, flabby little ones whom she had just seen. She frolicked with the children, laughing immoderately at their childish sayings, exultant and glowing with her sense of health and strength and power" (Finch Kelly *On the Inside* 82). Similarly, Eva ends up killing her own child in her marriage with Collquitt (the child was healthy because Collquitt brought some love to the relationship, but Eva, who did not love Collquitt, eventually

becomes the child's demise). In contrast, Frances' child with Collquitt "seemed to reciprocate intelligently all the love [Frances] bestowed upon it, for if she but smiled at it," it would "climb upon her lap, and lavish soft baby caresses, with cooing and gurgling accompaniments, upon her face, and hair, and hands" (Finch Kelly *Frances* 189). Characterizing "illegitimate" children born of free love relationships as physically and socially superior to those from "legitimate" but loveless relationships is a prominent theme of other radical fiction during this time. In fact, for women like Lois Waisbrooker, free love and women's emancipation was the only way to attain eugenics principles of "good generation," or encouraging the birth of the fittest children, as a way to improve and progress the race of humanity. Although Finch Kelly is not as explicitly endorsing a eugenic project like Waisbrooker, it is clear that the most fit, best children are born from relationships of love rather than convention.

Finch Kelly expands the idea of domesticity from traditional domestic novels. Many of her characters interact in domestic spaces: apartments, the receiving parlors of well-appointed houses, but also in brothels and rented rooms. The action, at least for the women in Finch Kelly's novels, happens in the domestic sphere, although not always in their own homes. These novels read differently than what is generally considered domestic fiction, and I argue it is because they also include elements of realism and naturalism; however, the narrative still resides mostly within the domestic sphere. This is particularly important because a large theme in both of these novels is individualism, particularly for women, and how individualism within the domestic sphere can be healthy or not. Because Eva is not able to be an individual in light of her husband's affair, she kills both herself and her baby. She kills her baby by seemingly smothering it while breast feeding, a domestic act that should be nurturing, yet is deadly in this particular situation. Similarly, she kills herself in Malquam's apartment in his arms, signifying that relationships devoid of both love and

individuality on part of both the man and the woman are deadly to the individuality of each. In *On the Inside*, Isabelle Fairmont is introduced into the capitalist and artistic society at the apartment of her friend, Helen LeStrange. Helen is the mistress of the capitalist Reberfell, and she has borne him illegitimate children. Isabelle, unaware of Helen's "disgrace," develops relationships within Helen's circle through her apartment get-togethers. When Isabelle discovers Helen's true self, she instead goes to intellectual "symposium" at her employer's house, which is where she learns about radical politics and women's liberation. For Helen, her growth, and her eventual triumph, takes place in the domestic space.

Although both *Frances* and *On the Inside* are mainly set in large cities on the east coast of the United States, they still contain traces of Midwestern ideals. Rather than illustrating how localism can lead to productive lives and good relationships, the characters in these two novels are lost in big cities, cities too big to elicit the kind community solidarity required to temper total individualism. It is no mistake that Malquam commits suicide, and then Eva dies in his arms. Malquam is the embodiment of capitalistic individualism, and Eva is the woman who lacks her own individuality. It is Frances and Collquitt who live happily ever after because they have found their own sense of self, not through each other. Frances moves back to Illinois as an attempt to start a new life outside of the city, a new life where she and her baby can be happy and healthy.

On the Inside gives readers a chance to look into not only the lives of the rich and famous, but also the contrarians, who are the heroes of the novel. Finch Kelly asserts through her characters that anarchism is better than socialism for women because it treats them as individuals. Two of the characters in *On the Inside* are avowed anarchists: Isabelle's love interest Reberfell and a doctor who is a woman who she meets at her employer's symposiums. Reberfell is questioned about his beliefs at Helen's gathering of men, and, although he sticks to his guns, socialism seems to come

out on top in the debate; however, later in the novel when Helen attends her employer's symposium, Dr. Bayforth tells the women "anarchism seems to me to be entirely just because it makes woman dependent on herself and responsible only to herself, just as it does man, and gives her entire freedom, social, economic, personal, on the same terms, that of bearing its cost and its consequences herself, that it does to man. What more or better could we want?" (Finch Kelly *On the Inside* 131). At the very heart of anarchism's appeal for women is its emphasis on liberating the individual, including women. Another woman in the room, Mrs. Mittleston, agrees and adds, "And now-a-days, with the business and professional freedom that women are gaining, it will be a distinct material advantage to women to be willing to walk at a rather rapid gait. The woman who would rather be liked than respected by men is the one who will get, not only friendship, but a helping hand whenever it is possible, from her masculine acquaintance, and she is the one who, in the sharp competition, will come out decidedly ahead." (Finch Kelly *On the Inside* 132). In the book, it is anarchism, not socialism, that is endorsed, in order to show both men and women that for any radical philosophy to work, it needs to take into account the material conditions for the individual, and not necessarily for society as a whole. Here, Finch Kelly ties individualism to anarchism, and to the successful protagonists of the novel. For individualism used for greed and self-centeredness leads one to jail; individualism used for growth and political good leads to happily ever after.

4.6 Swank Holmes: *Hagar Lyndon* (1893)

Lizzie Swank Holmes's novel *Hagar Lyndon; Or a Woman's Rebellion*, written under her pen name "May Huntley" was published in twenty-two installments in *Lucifer the Light-Bearer* in 1893. *Lucifer* was one of the premier anarchist-feminist and free love journals in the United States and was a child born of the Midwest. Its editor, Moses Harman, was a free love radical, and as his

politics and practices evolved over a thirty-year period, so too did his journal. In 1893, *Lucifer* was produced in Topeka, Kansas. A few years later, Harman would move himself and the periodical to Chicago where, in 1907, it became *The American Journal of Eugenics*. There is still much to be studied as it pertains to *Lucifer*, but *Hagar Lyndon* is perhaps the most important free love novel as it pertains to the anarchist community. There is no way of knowing how many people read Waisbrooker's novels (although she was prolific, and certainly was not shy about promoting her own writings, especially in the pages of *Lucifer*), nor is there any way of knowing how popular Florence Finch Kelly's first two "free love" novels were—even she "deleted" their existence from her autobiography, *Flowing Stream*. *Hagar Lyndon*, however, was circulated in *Lucifer the Light-bearer*, which, according to Kenyon Zimmer's digital resource *Anarchist Newspapers and Periodicals 1872-1940*, had an approximate maximum circulation just over 1600 subscribers. *Lucifer*'s own pages that published letters and commentary from readers show that the readership extended all over the United States, not just in the Midwest or urban east coast that is usually most associated with anarchist politics. Moreover, *Hagar Lyndon* exists within a network of free love literature that was helped along by periodicals like *Lucifer*. On page four of the March 17, 1893 edition of *Lucifer*, where the first chapter of *Hagar Lyndon* is continued, there are advertisements for both Waisbrooker's novels *Helen Harlow's Vow* and *Perfect Motherhood*, but also Voltairine de Cleyre's *Sex Slavery* under the byline "Ignorance is not Purity." These are advertised along other well-known nineteenth century authors and texts, like *The Law of Population* by Annie Besant and various works by Hamlin Garland. It is at the intersection of radical thought, free love, anarchism, and midwestern literature that *Lucifer the Light-Bearer* bears perhaps the most important Midwestern anarchist free love novel.

Hagar Lyndon opens not with a description of the eponymous protagonist, but of the small Midwestern village in which the first part of the story is set. Chapter One, subtitled “The Sanctity of the Home” is both a wish for the domestic sphere to be truly sacred, but is also a statement meant to provoke situation irony: the home of Hagar Lyndon, a young girl, is everything but a sacred space for the women and child who inhabit it, nor is the home in a bucolic and welcoming village. Holmes describes the scene as follows:

A little, common place village stood on the banks of a pretty stream in one of the middle states; a village which contained the usual “post-office, store and blacksmith shop,” two or three rival churches, one principle street and several small cross streets; whose inhabitants were of the ordinary village type—people strongly addicted to old customs and habits, with set opinions, deep prejudices and tendencies toward intense condemnation of all things wicked. (p. 1 March 17 1893)

The opening scene of the novel involves Hagar’s older teenage sister, Lucy, who has been off talking with a village boy outside at dusk. Enraged by his daughter’s improper behavior, Mr. Lyndon beats his daughter and locks Hagar’s mother in the pantry overnight for aiding and abetting this forbidden encounter. This initial event sets the scene for the rest of the novel: men, especially those who espouse the morality of the church, are dangerous and not to be trusted. Lucy, unable to resist the attentions of the village boy, is caught by her father in a compromising situation, and is made to marry her lover, a young man himself. This forces Lucy into the same situation as her mother’s: she becomes a mother at a young age, resents her domestic oppression, and her marriage gradually falls apart into an emotionally and physically abusive relationship. At the same time, Hagar’s mother gives birth to her final child, and both she and the child die in labor because “she had endured just all she could” (p. 1 My 5, 1893). After her mother’s death, Hagar takes her

mother's place as "domestic servant" and cares for her brothers and sisters. Eventually, however, she leaves home to live with her Aunt Clive, her mother's sister who has been banished from the family for her disgraceful past of having a child out of wedlock. Before she leaves, she has a discussion with Paul Deane, a village boy who loves her and wants to marry her. Hagar explains to Paul why she will never marry: "it is not in you *knowingly* to wrong a single living thing. But we would wrong each other. We would no longer be two individuals, with two free, independent characters. We would drag on each other. And, to the best man living, the wife is more or less, a slave: the nature of the marriage institution, custom, the church, their inherent tendencies of men themselves through ages of rulership, all go to make her so. I would never be a comfortable salve, to myself or my owner" (p. 1 June 1, 1893). Instead, Hagar moves away and becomes a well-regarded seamstress. She finds, however, that her urge to be a mother is strong, and she has an idea—she asks Paul Deane to father a child with her, purposely outside of the bonds of marriage. Paul acquiesces to her request, and Hagar raises the child in the cottage in the country with a close female companion. As detailed earlier, their child is extraordinarily healthy and "truly well-born." Moreover, Hagar is a devotee of her child:

On the altars of her home, a shrine had been built, and before it, she and her one true friend were daily worshipers. The small god was a constant wonder. She kissed its pink soft skin, on the cheek, brow, lips and hands, and gazed in awed rapture and surprise; that tiny, lovely creature was part of herself. Surely every birth is a miraculous conception. Everything necessary to be done for the child, as a religious rite at which she and the elder lady were high priestesses. And in the performance of these mystic ceremonies, in adoration and quiet happiness, Hagar almost forgot the world. She wrote to Paul Deane only at long intervals, and then briefly with a shyness that told him little. Paul's answers she hardly allowed

herself to read, but kept them ear her heart to be vaguely happy over; she dared not think of him too often. (p. 1 July 28 1893)

Paul and Hagar still love each other, but it is not until their baby comes down with life-threatening sickness and Hagar calls for Paul to come to them that their love is able to fully blossom. Not wanting to give up her independence, but wanting the stability that comes from a relationship with the man she loves, Hagar asks Paul: “Supposing in our feeling of freedom, one of us should sometimes love another. Will not the other grieve and die?” (p. 1 September 8, 1893). Paul responds to Hagar with hints of an open relationship, “We do not know what may happen—we cannot pledge ourselves. Vows would not avert such a fate, if it is to come to us. It does not seem possible now. I hope we may both enjoy many sweet friendships, even loves” (p. 1 September 8, 1893). Paul continues, “Between people who are equally strong in character, in power to love, in self-reliance, who are independent financially and socially, there is much more likelihood of a mutual love that is lasting than if one is clinging and dependent, the other masterful and strong” (p. 1 September 8 1893). Thus, the novel ends with Hagar and Paul together, in what can be interpreted in an open marriage that leaves room for other relationships, but with a main commitment to each other.

Like *Frances* and *On the Inside*, descriptions of the “well-born” and “aristocratic” baby who is worshipped as a small god because of his miraculous nature reveal a eugenics undertone to Holmes’s free love novel. Hagar experiences what Waisbrooker would call “perfect motherhood.” She had complete control of the conception and maternity leading to the birth of her child. De Cleyre’s eugenics theorem in *Sex Slavery* that “illegitimate children are nearly always prettier and brighter than others, even from conservative women” is born out in *Hagar Lyndon*, and is supported by a literary tradition that includes Mary Gove Nichols, Lois Waisbrooker, Florence

Finch Kelly, and others. Unlike Waisbrooker, Holmes' eugenics argument is not the reason for, but a fortunate result of, her free love practice. Unlike Finch Kelly's novels where we see sickly children, the other children in *Hagar Lyndon* are not necessarily sickly or deformed, but they are numerous and nondescript. In other words, Hagar's planned pregnancy resulted in one child, and it is the fact that she had only one child that gives her the ability to worship him and nurture him as she does.

When the women of the village in which Hagar is staying are gossiping about her with the doctor, a scene reminiscent of the gossiping village women in *Helen Harlow's Vow*, the doctor defends her actions. When the women decry her "fall," the doctor retorts:

It's my opinion she never did 'fall,' and she certainly does not look 'ruined' in any sense that I can perceive. She is an independent, self-supporting woman and I presume had prejudices against being a married one, for which I don't blame her if she has lived with her eyes open. And being fully capable of rearing and caring for a child, she has assumed the responsibility, and I don't know, since society is not likely to be burdened, that it is any of society's business. (p. 1 July 28 1893)

The message here is clear, an independent, mature, and financially stable woman should do as she wants if she is not asking society to support her in any way. Thus, for Holmes, society and humanity in general, would be much stronger by empowering women to be financially independent and practice free love, both from a feminist and eugenics standpoint.

Hagar Lyndon is written in the mode of sentimental domestic fiction. The main goal of the text itself is to elicit both pity and anger for the situation of oppressed women by pointing out the injustices perpetuated against women by the state, the church, tradition, or patriarchy. Every woman in the story is wronged in some way that could easily be avoided if women were able to

emancipate themselves from marriage, both in terms of individual rights and fiduciary responsibilities. Hagar herself is constantly harassed for having a child out of wedlock, even though her child is healthy and she chose that path for herself (versus other female protagonists in other works that may have been tricked with a future promise of marriage or raped). The novel is also situated in the home, and we move from domestic sphere to domestic sphere, namely Hagar's childhood home to her own series of dwellings. Holmes shows us how Hagar's mother was unable to survive the enforced servitude, both in terms of domestic tasks and maternity, that is required of a virtuous Christian woman. But she also shows us possible alternatives, like living and raising a child with a female companion,¹⁸ or as the narrative ends, living in an open marriage with the love of her life. In this way, the female readership of *Lucifer* was given a practical roadmap for how a woman can regain her independence, even if she was raised in a conservative and oppressive family, and it leaves the male readers with a sense of what kind of "slavery" they're demanding when asking a woman for marriage.

Hagar Lyndon is not only set in "one of the middle states" but its underlying ideals are Midwestern. To begin, Hagar is the embodiment of agrarian individualism. She set out from home to the new frontier of the city to make her way in the world. From there, she not only cultivated her own livelihood, but she also rejected the influence of the state, the church, tradition, and patriarchy, and instead crafted her own idea of what a home should look like. The sanctity of labor plays an important part in *Hagar Lyndon*: the laboring that Hagar does for her child both in terms of physical maternity and nurturing is rewarded with a healthy and happy child. On the other hand, Hagar's mother's labor was not considered sacred, and this led to oppressive conditions within the

¹⁸ Although the text does not clearly elucidate a queer relationship between Hagar and her female companion, I believe there is rich material for a fruitful queer reading of this text.

home, eventually leading to her death from overwork. In a very individual and private way, Hagar's "rebellion" is a reflection of manifest destiny. The rise of women's liberation, which for Holmes includes free love, is a struggle, but an inevitable progression of current oppressive practices. The penultimate paragraph of *Hagar Lyndon* suggests this feminist manifest destiny:

All society is heaving, struggling, feeling the throes of pain for the birth of a new idea. As yet, but the suffering, the tumult, the apparent chaos which comes with a great change—the clash and danger and sacrifice wherever progress moves onward over an old corrupt, deeply-embedded wrong, the seeming confusion, and agony in the breaking up of old customs that have festered and grown into the vital parts of humanity—all these, as yet, are what we *see*, rather than the promise of a sweet, wise, peaceful delight that is to come in the future. (p. 4 September 8 1893, italics original)

Although women like Hagar, her sister Lucy, and their mother suffer, there is light ahead. Holmes does not hedge her verbiage; rather she writes of the "peaceful delight that *is* to come in the future," and that "progress *moves onward* over an old corrupt, deeply-embedded wrong." (italics mine). It is not a question of if women will have emancipation and control over their own lives, but merely a question of how much longer. It is women's sacred destiny to be emancipated, to colonize their own subjectivity, and to own themselves.

In this chapter, I set out to prove three arguments: 1) Furthering Wendy Hayden's argument that "Free-love feminists fought for changes that would free women from the constraints and repression of the marriage system, and the discoveries of science were their weapons in that battle," these three authors' arguments would not have been possible without a comingling of contemporary scientific principles and perfectionist social theory (55); 2) As anarchists, Waisbrooker, Finch Kelly, and Holmes utilized known genres, particularly domestic fiction, in

order to appeal to and recruit women to their causes; 3) Through these novels, Midwestern ideals, such as localism, agrarian individualism, and Manifest Destiny, are brought to bear on anarchism, free love, and eugenics. Waisbrooker, unlike Finch Kelly and Holmes, clearly utilized women's emancipation as a means to a eugenics end. That argument is clearest in *Perfect Motherhood*. Finch Kelly and Holmes, on the other hand, used the image of "well-born" and healthy children to illustrate the benefits of free love, and, in Finch Kelly's case, used sickly children as an argument against "love compelled." All three women utilized some form of domestic fiction, that is fiction that appeals particularly to a female readership, focuses on women's experiences, and, mainly revolves around the domestic sphere. Finch Kelly diverges the most by inserting realism and some naturalistic themes into her novels, mainly to illustrate that individualistic but greedy characters have no place in a successful and healthy modern world. The use of this familiar and popular genre would have help to make these author's radical ideas more palatable: although the ideas were radical, the packaging was familiar. Moreover, all three authors show how domesticity can change when the domicile, and the bodies within it, are solely possessed by women emancipated from marriage and conventional ideas of reproduction and family. Finally, the authors champion Midwestern ideals in their narratives, most clearly agrarian individualism, but also other ideals, like the ability of localism to tear down but also build up and temper women and individualistic impulses, manifest destiny as it relates to women's ownership over their own bodies, and the sanctity of labor brought to bear on maternity and the domestic sphere. All of these Midwestern ideals undergird a regionally-specific version of anarchism, not only feminist, but individualist, that is important in understanding not only these anarchist free love novels, but anarchist feminism in the nineteenth-century Midwest.

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CHAPTER 5. MARTYRS AND GHOSTS: PROPAGANDA OF THE DEED, SPIRITUALISM, AND PRINT CULTURE

“Is this thy word, O Mother, with stern eyes,
 Crowning thy dead with stone-caressing touch?
 May we not weep o’er him that martyred lies,
 Slain in our name, for that he loved us much?”
 -Voltairine de Cleyre, “Light Upon Waldheim,” 1897

In her 1897 poem, “Light Upon Waldheim,” Voltairine de Cleyre enscribes the lines, “May we not weep o’er him that martyred lies/ Slain in our name, for that he loved us much?” (66). Without context, these lines perfectly emulate the Christian scene of Jesus Christ’s crucifixion; in actuality, these lines refer to the five anarchist men who were hanged by the State of Illinois in what was deemed the Haymarket Affair. After their execution, the bodies of the men were buried at Waldheim Cemetery on the outskirts of Chicago; later, their burials were marked with a monument and the quote “The day will come when our silence will be more powerful than the voices you are throttling today.” In virtually all leftist and radical writings of the time, and even now, the five men are referred to as “martyrs.” And they were not the only ones. The anarchist movement in the nineteenth-century had a fascination with martyrdom, a direct result of the philosophy of propaganda by the deed. Those who died at the hands of the state or through extrajudicial violence were often “canonized” in the radical print culture of the time. In an anarchist movement that was particularly atheistic, or at least agnostic, but still romantic and seeking a sense of identity, the symbol of the anarchist martyr played an important role in solidifying beliefs and acted as a rhetorical tool: not only were these men and women martyrs as the result of propaganda of the deed, they too became part of that propaganda.

As the image of the anarchist martyr rose on the horizon of anarchist rhetoric and print culture, so too did a separate but equally powerful belief: spiritualism. For Lois Waisbrooker,

spiritualism, also known broadly as the Occult, was an important component of her radical politics. Her beliefs in the spiritual world influenced not only her political philosophy, but ghosts and spirits of the dead also played important roles in her fiction. Like the image of the martyr, spiritualism influenced and solidified the radical beliefs of infidels who were not ready to give up the idea of God or a world beyond the physical realm. Those who gravitated toward spiritualism tended to be people who could no longer take to heart Christianity's misogynistic traditions and some Christian denomination's ready acceptance of capitalism.

In this chapter, I will explore the phenomena of martyrdom and spiritualism, both nineteenth-century beliefs that appealed to anarchist tendencies and were used by anarchists and their movements. Through an examination of various meditations and literary uses of martyrs and spirits, I argue that although both tendencies had much in common, they were mutually exclusive. Both were outgrowths of anarchism's Romantic roots, they created new reverent and mystical structures for anarchists to refer to in place of orthodox religion, and they played an important part in cultural cohesion, especially through nineteenth-century print culture. Of particular note is that none of the women included in this project were proponents of spiritualism *and* used anarchist martyrs for rhetorical purposes. In essence, if an anarchist believes in spiritualism, then martyrdom is not that big of a sacrifice, namely because then they would believe that physical life is not the only life. Physical life is only one manifestation of consciousness. On the other hand, if an anarchist believes in martyrdom, either for self-legitimizing purposes or propaganda of the deed, then spiritualism negates their belief that sacrificing life for radical beliefs is of importance. In other words, if there is an afterlife, then sacrificing a corporeal existence is not as big of a deal as if it is the only shot at a conscious existence.

5.1 The Romantic Roots of Anarchism

The reverence of the martyr figure and the Occult both served as nodes of belief that helped anarchist and radical communities center their practice and ideological aims in a non-orthodox but quasi-religious system that grew out of the Romantic roots of anarchism. Anarchism as well as martyrdom and spiritualism are the outgrowth of and harken back to a Romantic vision of loss, melancholic nostalgia, and a quest. Scholars such as George Crowder in *Classical Anarchism: The Political Thought of Godwin, Proudhon, Bakunin, and Kropotkin* trace anarchist ideas back to Enlightenment ideals. One example is William Godwin in *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*, in which he criticizes the state, capital, and organized religion for their negative effects on the health, happiness, and ability of citizens to become fully actualized individuals in society. Enlightenment ideals quickly faced a romantic turn in the early nineteenth century, and these two intellectual and aesthetic movements influenced the core of classical anarchism.

Although Romanticism as an aesthetic movement or set of ideas within a broad cultural imaginary is hard to pin down, Michael Lowry and Robert Sayre in their book *Romanticism Against the Tide of Modernity* give a particularly compelling definition and explanation of Romanticism's various arms. Lowry and Sayre define Romanticism as representing, "a critique of modernity, that is, of modern capitalist civilization, in the name of values and ideas drawn from the past (the precapitalist, premodern past)," and it was characterized by a duality of revolt and melancholy (17-18). Both romanticism and anarchism formed in response to capitalism, and both treasured the idea of revolt.

The Romantic tendency to critique modernity (and thus capitalism) through the ideas of the past are particularly apparent in Voltairine de Cleyre's writings. For example, in "Anarchism and the American Tradition," de Cleyre goes back to a pre-industrialized, revolutionary American scene that is representative of individualism, localism, and freedom from oppression in order to

prove that these fundamental values or ideals have been compromised in the late nineteenth-century Gilded Age. The solution to her critique?: a future society must *return* to and *restore* these values, through anarchism, to create the ideal society. Indeed, de Cleyre's biographer, Paul Avrich, said of her anarchist ideas that "Her emphasis on the natural and spontaneous, on the individual and personal, set her against the whole centralized, hierarchical, and bureaucratic structure of modern industrial society" (165). Thus, her alternative to modern industrial society "was a romantic, backward-looking vision of an idealized rural past inhabited by sturdy artisans and homesteaders who lived in harmony with nature, joined by the ties of voluntary cooperation" (Avrich 165). But the problem with any "backward-looking vision" is that the original has been lost—or perhaps never existed in the first place—and it may not be retrievable.

Lowry and Sayre further define Romanticism and the Romantic vision by classifying the permeating sense of loss that accompanies it. As a result, Romanticism can be nebulous because its basis is in a negation rather than in what Lowry and Sayre identify as "positive values." The Romantic vision is founded on something missing or lost, but, as they point out, loss engenders opportunity. Lowry and Sayre explain:

A rejection of contemporary society, an experience of loss, a melancholic nostalgia, and a quest for the lost object: such are the chief components of the Romantic vision. But precisely what has been lost? We still have to address the question of the content of alienation; or, turning the question around, we have to ask about the positive values of Romanticism. Here we find a set of qualitative values, as opposed to exchange value. These are concentrated around two opposite though not contradictory poles. The first is often experienced as loss, but it actually represents a new acquisition, or at least it is a value that can develop fully only in the modern world: the subjectivity of the individual, the

development of the richness of the human personality, in its full affective depth and complexity, but also in the full freedom of its imaginary. (24-25)

As Lowry and Sayre suggest, the real loss of a person in death (to judicial or extra-judicial murder) or the loss of a loved one to the hereafter is experienced as a loss of life. Yet, it also represents a new acquisition in the modern world: The corpse of the martyr becomes a glorified image of propaganda of the deed, but the memory of the person becomes a spirit who transcends the physical world but also one who can still influence and guide it. Martyrdom, as a particularly effective instance of propaganda of the deed, in turn, played an important part in cultural and in-group cohesion, especially through print culture while also helping to create a historical justification for radical beliefs and actions. Before I turn to that, however, I will give some brief background and examples of the phenomena of anarchist martyrs and anarchist spiritualism.

5.2 Anarchist Martyrs

The language of anarchist martyrdom was an integral component of American and international radical politics. Before the Haymarket Affair in 1886, the language of martyrdom was alive and well in Benjamin Tucker's individualist anarchist periodical *Liberty*. In the very first volume and number published in Boston, Massachusetts on Saturday, August 6, 1881, the center column on the first page was devoted to Sophie Perovskaya, with her likeness and a poem titled "Liberty's Martyred Heroine" by Joaquin Miller. Perovskaya, an aristocrat turned radical, helped to assassinate Tsar Alexander II of Russia. The fifth stanza of the poem in her honor reads, "And did a woman do this deed? Then build her scaffold high,/ That all may on her forehead read/ Her martyr's right to die!" (*Liberty* Vol 1. No. 1, 1). Not only was Perovskaya a radical, but she was a woman who deserved extra credit for her propaganda by the deed, and thus, not her punishment, but *right* to die. Although there are examples here and there of martyrs like Perovskaya, whose

visage decorated the pages of radical and anarchist publications, it was not until Haymarket that anarchist martyrdom would capture the attention of a nation.

Known as the “Haymarket Affair” and “Haymarket Riot,” the events of the May 4, 1886 in and near Haymarket Square in Chicago, Illinois and the resultant trial and state execution have been a subject of controversy since the day they began. The bare facts are these: Days after a massive May Day march through Chicago calling for labor reforms, including an eight-hour work day, there was another labor rally in Haymarket Square. Multiple notable anarchists spoke there, including Albert Parsons attended by his wife Lucy Parsons, and, in some narratives, their two children, Albert Jr. and Lulu. After poor weather, the crowd had somewhat dispersed as Samuel Fielden addressed the crowd. Cultural historian Timothy Messer-Kruse describes the scene from there:

Nearly two hundred police officers poured out from the Desplaines Street station and marched the hundred yards to where Chicago’s anarchists were holding a protest meeting. Captain William Ward stopped a few feet from where Samuel Field was just concluding his speech and loudly ordered the crowd to disperse. At that moment, someone partially sheltered by a stack of fish crates left on a nearby curb threw a round leaden bomb, slightly bigger than a softball, into the police ranks. The resulting explosion threw dozens of policemen to the ground, leading to the deaths of five cops. Gunfire erupted as police fired indiscriminately into the crowd and some protesters answered in kind. Two more policemen and at least three civilians were shot and killed. (1)

Anarchists were rounded up, especially those associated with the anarchist periodical *The Alarm* and the German-language newspaper *Arbeiter-Zeitung*. According to Messer-Kruse, “Orders were given to arrest all the men who had spoken from that wagon, and the following morning the police

raided the offices of the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* and arrested all twenty-three editors, writers, printers, typesetters and ‘devil boys’ they found there” (2). Albert Parsons, the editor of *The Alarm*, fled Chicago, only to return the next month to stand trial with seven other men—not for the bombing itself but for conspiring to inflict violence on government agents and the ruling classes as his publication and his own public addresses had been advocating in the past.¹⁹ The jury found all the men guilty and sentenced seven of the eight men to death, the exception being Oscar Neebe who was less connected to the bombing than the other seven. Eventually, Michael Schwab and Samuel Fielden’s sentences were commuted after they confessed in writing. That left five: Albert Parsons, August Spies, George Engel, Adolph Fischer, and Louis Lingg. Lingg, a recent German immigrant and a purveyor of explosives, managed to cheat the hangman: he sneaked explosives into his jail cell and “he had reclined on his cot and lit an explosive like a cigar, leading to his death a few hours later” (4). Parsons, Spies, Engel, and Fischer were hanged on November 11, 1887 at the Cook County jail in Chicago. The following Sunday at noon, “A huge cortege started won Milwaukee Avenue, stopping at the homes of the dead anarchists to add their bodies to the procession of an estimated 6,000 marchers,” and they were buried at Waldheim cemetery, “a non-denominational German burying ground located in a nearby suburb” after a grand procession through the city through which “the train had to inch its way forward because of the crush of people lining the tracks” (Jones 204-205). Lucy E. Parsons would, almost immediately, begin work to ensure that her husband and the other men’s legacies would not be forgotten. She would publish and sell copies of her husband’s book *Life of Albert R. Parsons* until her death in 1942.

¹⁹ For a more in-depth discussion of the arguments for violence, particularly through *The Alarm*’s Associate Editor, Lizzie Swank Holmes, please see Chapter 2.

In a November 1912 retrospective article published in Emma Goldman's anarchist magazine *Mother Earth* titled "The Causes of the Chicago Martyrdom" Alexander Berkman lays out the background of the Haymarket Affair for readers. Berkman begins with the often-stated thesis that, "An impartial analysis of the events that culminated in the hanging of the Chicago Anarchists compels the unbiased mind to the conclusion that our comrades were the victims of a judicial murder, the direct result of a conspiracy of privilege and authority" (60). For Berkman, even though the anarchist men were innocent, their fate was teleological: "The gallows of 1887 was no accident" he writes (60). The growing social and political movements by and for the worker constantly butted up against capital and their government-sponsored enforcement unit, the Chicago police force. Through fights for greater safety and sanitation in the work place and the eight-hour work day, the Chicago police became acutely aware of Chicago's radical socialist and anarchist communities, especially the men and women associated with the International Working People's Association (IWPA) and its newspapers, *The Alarm* and *Arbeiterzeitung*, which shared office space in Chicago. Because working men and women stood up and fought back against the capitalist and ruling classes, especially after the bomb at Haymarket killed and injured several policemen, Berkman explains, "The beast of Law and Order thirsted for blood. The fury of the masters knew no limits. [. . .] Our Chicago Comrades were the chosen victims" (62). Berkman's retrospective illustrates the importance the men's fates as martyrs, through propaganda of the deed, was crucial in the story of radicalism in Chicago and beyond.

Haymarket was a radicalizing force for progressive and free-thinking people across the United States. In fact, some of the most well-known anarchists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were radicalized by the trial and subsequent hanging of the anarchist men

accused of planting a bomb in Haymarket Square, Chicago on May 4, 1886. Voltairine de Cleyre pin points the events of 1886-1887 as the radicalizing force for her:

This, I am sure, is the ultimate reason for my acceptance of Anarchism, through the specific occasion which ripened tendencies to definition was the affair of 1886-7, when five innocent men were hanged in Chicago for the act of one guilty who still remains unknown. Till then I believed in the essential justice of the American law and trial by jury. After that I never could. The infamy of that trial has passed into history, and the question it awakened as to the possibility of justice under law has passed into clamorous crying across the world. (“The Making of an Anarchist” 156)

For De Cleyre, the fact that the anarchists of Haymarket were so outspokenly anarchist was the most compelling injustice that led to their important role as martyrs and agitators, even from beyond the grave.

Florence Finch Kelly, too, engaged with ideas of martyrdom. In her early articles in the individualist anarchist periodical *Liberty*, she notes that martyrs are part of the anarchist cause. In her 1884 article “To the Doubters,” she describes receiving letters from people who generally agree with the principles of liberty, but who express consternation about the idea of anarchy, which she believes are one in the same. Of one letter, in particular, Finch Kelly says, “Its author is a man of unusual liberality and openness of mind, who has a large perception of natural justice, who is full of enthusiasim [sic] of humanity and who has a deep sympathy for the disinherited of earth” (4-5). Importantly, she continues, “and such a man, in short, as Anarchists and possible martyrs are made of” (4-5). Finch Kelly’s analysis of the “doubter” letters reveal a particular kind of hope for anarchism and its possibilities at a time when its definitions and reputation were quickly changing. Like in the man’s letter she references in her article, she knew that liberty was a deeply held belief

for many. If only she could convince others that anarchism and the ideal of liberty were really one in the same (as they were for her), she believed they would be willing to call themselves anarchists, and perhaps even die for the cause as martyrs. At the end of “To the Doubters,” she calls upon martyrs again, but this time she references those who have already died for their beliefs, rather than martyrs-to-be. Finch Kelly concludes her arguments by the readers of *Liberty* to simply think for themselves:

Anarchy asks men of liberal and just ideas to keep their minds open with generous sympathy to what she has to say. Listen, question, consider. After you have weighed it well, reject it, if that seems to you right. But, in the name of all the martyrs to the world’s slow progress, do not put it aside as “nonsense” and call the Anarchist “A crank, spiritually sick, his sickness a symptom of a serious social disease,” until you thoroughly understand that it is he wants and how he expects to get it. (5)

By invoking “the name of all the martyrs to the world’s slow progress,” she asks the readers to take anarchy as seriously as they would for religious change or scientific progress. While the image of the martyr was a powerful rhetorical device in arguing for a serious consideration of anarchism, over fifty years later, Florence Finch Kelly argued that it might behoove anarchists to be a little subtler about labeling themselves with titles that had been vilified by most of society.

In her memoir *Flowing Stream*, Finch Kelly, with a much more experienced and less idealistic view of the world, lamented the “human herd-mind” (194). As an individualist, Finch Kelly believed that the “human herd-mind” was the phenomenon that “persecutes, crucifies, sends the innocent to death, sets the world mad with fury and clamor—because of words whose meaning it does not understand” (194). Nearly fifty years after Haymarket, and a decade before the publication of *Flowing Stream*, the Italian-American anarchists Sacco and Vanzetti were

electrocuted after being rounded up for distributing anarchist literature and were purported to be the perpetrators of a shoe factory robbery. Some, however, interpreted their trial and subsequent execution as another Haymarket affair in which the men were presumed guilty because of their politics, not for the crime for which they were accused. Finch Kelly explains, “If, for instance, Vanzetti and Sacco had been content to cherish their economic and social convictions without labeling themselves with a descriptive term about whose meaning, apparently judges, juries and university professors were as ignorant as the shouting multitude, they might still be alive and walking their humble paths in peace, happiness and security” (194). Her final summative thought on labeling anarchist ideas as anarchist: “Perhaps the Q.E.D. is, don’t throw your hat at a bull when he is pawing the earth” (194). Although it is impossible to go back in time to test Finch Kelly’s hypothesis, the purpose of propaganda by the deed was to agitate, not to walk “humble paths in peace.” Regardless, neither a revolutionary figure nor martyr who inspires or is vilified by others can be made from someone who has walked Finch Kelly’s “humble paths in peace.”

5.3 Anarchist Ghosts

Of the five women I follow in this project, only Lois Waisbrooker was officially connected with and advocated for spiritualism. Waisbrooker’s spiritualism permeates her fiction, with ghosts showing up in her early novels like *Helen Harlow’s Vow* to provide a little beyond-the-grave surveillance. In *Perfect Motherhood; Or Mabel Raymond’s Resolve*, the protagonist Mabel Raymond is purportedly influenced by the spirit of George Fox while in utero, and his spiritual presence is credited for her social justice activist nature as an adult. During her pregnancy with Mabel, Mrs. Raymond, a hereditary Quaker, reads the works of George Fox, the founder of the faith. Mrs. Raymond reasons, “If those who are called dead really can make themselves felt, and can control certain organizations, they can affect the character of the child by their influence upon

the prospective mother” (Waisbrooker 273). She continued to tell Mabel, “the summer before thee camest to my arms, I read the life of George Fox and I admired his character very much, and I have thought that reading had its effect upon thy character; but it may be true that George Fox himself was present, thus giving thee that devotion to humanity that has so far marked thy life” (273). Mabel, whose cause in life is to spread the work of perfect motherhood, is not only the activist for its cause, but an example of its effect as well, both thanks to her mother’s happy marriage, good thoughts, *and* probably a little help from the spirit world to boot. In *A Sex Revolution*, also by Lois Waisbrooker, the philosophy of psychometry, or the idea that objects carry with them the energy of those who have possessed or touched them in the past, plays an important role. In a cinematic depiction, Waisbrooker illustrates how the harsh labor conditions under which impoverished nineteenth-century textile workers toiled to make fashionable clothing for upper and middle-class women. In one scene, the protagonist, Margaret, sees tiny iridescent threads connecting pieces of her clothing to the textile workers who created them. Psychometry, an attendant component of spiritualism, helps Margaret and Waisbrooker’s readers understand the horrors of industrial capitalism.

At first glance, spiritualism and anarchism seem to be odd bedfellows, yet, Waisbrooker had the capacity to advocate for and theorize them together along with other contemporary radical ideologies like feminism and anti-capitalism, which was explored in Chapter 2, and free love and eugenics, which was explored in Chapter 3. What accounts for Waisbrooker’s ability to absorb all these radical ideologies into a mostly unified theory she advocated for in her fiction and non-fiction writings? For Waisbrooker, it hinged on the connection between radicalism, individualism, and feminism, which she found in both anarchism and spiritualism.

While both had roots in previous political and religious philosophies, both anarchism and spiritualism were products of the nineteenth century. In *Radical Spirits*, religious historian Ann Braude defines nineteenth-century spiritualism as, “a new religious movement aimed at proving the immortality of the soul by establishing communication with the spirits of the dead” (2). The belief turned into a movement because “For some it provided solace in the face of bereavement, for some entertainment, for some a livelihood earned from the credulous. For many it provided evidence of the immortality of the soul that formed the basis of a sincere religious faith. For iconoclasts and nonconformists it provided an alternative to the established religious order” (Braude 2). The reason it appealed to women like Waisbrooker was because of its underlying individualist sensibility and the focus on women as leaders within the spiritualist movement, a movement which lacked an official organizational structure. Braude adroitly connects spiritualism and individualism:

Because Spiritualism asserted that divine truth was directly accessible to individual human beings through spirit communication, the new faith provided a religious alternative that supported the individualist social and political views of antebellum radicals. Spiritualists in turn adopted a radical social program based on the same individualist principles that supported its unconventional religious practice. If untrammelled by repressive social or religious strictures, Spiritualists believed, individuals could serve as vehicles of truth because each embodied the laws of nature in his or her being. Such individualism laid the foundation for Spiritualism’s rejection of male headship over women—or indeed of any individual over any other—whether in religion, politics, or society. (6)

Individualism is the thread that connected many attendant political ideologies in the American postbellum scene. Not only was spiritualism predicated on the sanctity of the individual, it was

also what I refer to as a social perfectionist theory. Similar to anarchism, eugenics, and scientific developments in general, spiritualism was seen as a progressive forward-looking force that would, one day, result in the perfection of social relations in the United States and, presumably, around the world. Like nascent anarchism, which was a tendency or critical lens of economic and social relations that was born out of Enlightenment ideals, spiritualism shared similar critiques, goals, and methods. Braude explains that “Spiritualists believed that the advent of spirit communication heralded the arrival of a new era, one in which humanity, with spirit guidance, would achieve hitherto impossible levels of development,” and “While other radicals struggled to reconcile their commitment to individualism with their belief in the sovereignty of God, Spiritualists found in their faith direct divine sanctions for advancing social change” (6). Waisbrooker was heavily invested in spiritualist ideologies, anarchism and spiritualism were both outgrowths of her individualist tendency.²⁰ Because spiritualism heralded women as the interpreters of the spirit world without the intervention of men, spiritualism became an essentially individualism and woman-centric religious tendency. This, in turn, brought with it a particular authority that Waisbrooker found lacking in her contemporary political age, namely that of women’s emancipation from sex, marriage, and social restriction. The Occult reinforced Waisbrooker’s individualist anarchist and feminist sensibilities.

5.4 Replacing the Orthodoxy

Whereas spiritualists believed in God and the “life forces” that affected both the living and spirit worlds, anarchists tended to believe in the sanctity of the worker, or at least the broad idea of labor. Like spiritualists, non-spiritualist anarchists like Swank Holmes, de Cleyre, and Finch

²⁰ For more on Waisbrooker’s individualist tendencies, please see my discussion in Chapter 2.

Kelly believed that if only the laboring masses, including women who toiled in the domestic sphere, were to realize their collective power, they could herald the arrival a new era in which the worker dictated the rules for economic and social development. This new era, according to them, would result in a complete reformation of personal life and advance society in never-before imagined ways. Both anarchist martyrdom and spiritualism enabled new, reverent structures by which to organize beliefs, practice, and people.

Lizzie Swank Holmes, a friend of Albert and Lucy E. Parsons and the assistant editor of *The Alarm*, was an ardent supporter of the Haymarket men. She was involved in the events leading up to the Haymarket Affair and was a constant support, along with her husband William Holmes, to the men who were tried and convicted. In a November 2, 1889 issue of the anarchist periodical *Free Society*, she remembers the men she knew and worked with in an essay titled “Revolutionists.” She begins, “our martyred comrades were revolutionists. They never denied it and they worked, hoped and died for it. It was part of their lives, a religion, in a sense, and they carried it to that last moment when Fischer cried, ‘This is the happiest moment of my life!’” (*Haymarket Scrapbook* 179). Holmes argues against those who say that revolutionists are not needed because the new science of evolution will solve all problems; on the contrary, she argues, “That fiercely, desperately, earnest soul who is ready to die that the truth may be uncovered from the weight of thousands of years, is a necessary factor in development. We dread his disturbing influence; so do we dread the furious storm which clears and purifies the air, but it must come” (*Haymarket Scrapbook* 179). Not only are revolutionary martyrs needed to create change, but they are particular and special individuals who can do such work. Holmes assures readers that although martyrs are necessary, it not necessary that everyone becomes a martyr to stay true to their ideals:

It is not in us all to be revolutionists. Many of us are not made of that stuff which can rise above the present, troublous danger and live and die for a coming glory. We have not that terrible courage which demands justice though the heavens fall. It is not necessary, perhaps. Planners and builders are wanted; cheery souls who can conserve the possibilities of happiness until all can enjoy them, sweet natures who will live beautifully, as we all wish to do sometimes, and who preserve the ideal. The art of living must not be forgotten while we are struggling for the opportunities to learn it; the poetry of life must be cherished by someone, while others are fighting for a place for it. (*Haymarket Scrapbook* 179)

Even if not everyone can or should be a martyr for the anarchist cause, Holmes does caution that it is up to everyone to keep both their spirits and cause alive. She encourages readers to not to forget nor to judge the Haymarket martyrs for their actions, and closes with the statement, “The martyrs of the race have been its saviors” (*Haymarket Scrapbook* 180). Like Voltairine de Cleyre’s poem “Light Upon Waldheim,” Holmes paints the men involved in Haymarket as devoted and gladly willing to sacrifice and die for their anarchist ideals, and as saviors who had to die for the cause of anarchism to which they were devoted.

Anarchist and other radical propaganda depicted the men as literal martyrs who had died for the radical cause. The *Haymarket Scrapbook* originally published in 1896 by Charles H. Kerr and reprinted in 2012 by AK Press is a striking anthology of illustrations, contemporary radical articles, scholarly articles, and other reproduced ephemera of the Haymarket Affair. While all the historical sources are available in archives around the world, the *Scrapbook* serves as an assemblage for workers and scholars unable to travel. This book, in of itself, is an example of the successful propaganda still popular with readers today based on an event that happened over 130 years and six generations ago. Reproduced in its pages are some of the most convincing pieces of

propaganda that illustrate how the Haymarket Martyrs took on a quasi-religious sainthood. For example, the *Scrapbook* reproduces an image of the men titled “The Martyrs of Anarchy.” The image is of a young, strong male worker with a pick axe raised above his head in an upswing, behind him the sun setting over the water with lightning coming out of the clouds. At his feet are four half-destroyed objects: a cannon, a book of laws, a bag of money, and a Christian monarch’s crown. The border that surrounds this scene depicts the visages of the five men killed and the three others who spared that fate and later pardoned watching over the worker as he succeeds in striking down the symbolic representations of the state and capital. The caption on the image is in Italian: “I Martiri dell’Anarchia. Chicago, 11 Novembre 1887.” The *Scrapbook* editor’s caption reads: “Reproduced as hand-colored lithographs (“suitable for framing”), as post cards, and on the covers of countless periodicals, pictures like this one from Italy were the late nineteenth and early twentieth century anarchist movement’s ironic equivalent of religionists’ ‘holy cards,’ saints’ pictures and other devotional images.” (106). Through print culture and memorabilia, anarchist martyrs were kept alive in the hearts and minds of radicals and the working-class. New, reverent structures arose out of propaganda of the deed, and helped to organized radical causes internationally.

From Generation to Regeneration: Three Pamphlets on the Occult Forces of Sex published in 1890 is an excellent example of how Waisbrooker’s branch of spiritualism constituted a religion in of itself. Her philosophy is clearly spiritualist, but it is also tinged with various other radical ideas. As a self-learned theorist, Lois Waisbrooker published extensively on her theories of spiritualism, anarchism, sex, and eugenics. For example, Waisbrooker argues that not only is God in all things, but that all things are connected in a transcendental ideal that makes occult forces possible. She explains, “Is it not true that all matter contains latent spirit—is not God everywhere?”

And being everywhere is not the soul which connects him with matter everywhere? Psychometry [sic] connects us with ‘The *soul* of things’” (26). Similarly, Waisbrooker calls for a marriage of both intellectual faith and religious faith. In the marriage of philosophy and religion, which for Waisbrooker would be an anarchist tendency and occultism, the best outcome is possible. She writes, “Speculative or positive philosophy is good for the head; the warmth of a religion that kindles the emotions is good for the heart; but when united they are better for both, for each tempers the other; and only through such union can the sex fountain become the savor of life unto life” (Waisbrooker 35). The “sex fountain,” made possible through the co-mingling of thought and emotion, becomes the ultimate concern for Waisbrooker.

In this schema, the “sex fountain” is at the heart of generation and regeneration: sex is literally the means through which the human race is perpetuated, and it is to be treated with the sanctity it deserves—not to remain unused in celibacy, but also not to be used without the correct intentions or simply for animalistic desire. In direct opposition to orthodox religion, in this case Christianity, Waisbrooker reasons that “religious interference has destroyed the finer generative forces, or rather, has prevented their being generated through mutual sex-love” (129). And because generative “mutual sex-love” is at the very foundation of all physical and spiritual health and growth for humanity, “the result is, the race has been robbed of the soul-force that comes from that which would, otherwise, have given those in the earth-sphere life in abundance” (Waisbrooker 129). The natural life-force that human beings would otherwise retain if not for industrial capitalism and poverty, “would have lifted the masses out of the slough of degradation, and, at the same time, have so enriched the spirit world that it would not have been necessary for spirits to rob us in order to live” (Waisbrooker 129). In this philoso-religious framework, spirits can steal generative forces from the living if they do not acquire them while they are in the womb (i.e.

attached to a body), and, if they do not have enough from either source, they can eventually perish, dying a second death (Waisbrooker 126). Waisbrooker illustrates this pseudo-scientific theory in *Perfect Motherhood*.

Mabel Raymond's first child, a boy, dies soon after he is born. The baby "had not vitality enough to live" and Mabel admits that in her "earnestness to prepare the way for coming generations" through her ardent activism, she "used up the life-force that should have been his" (Waisbrooker 293). In contradiction with her theory in *Generation to Regeneration*, however, Mabel Raymond and her husband, as Spiritualists, believed the baby would have "continued life" in the spirit world, and "would be cared for and unfoled in a higher condition of life than he could have had here under existing conditions" (Waisbrooker 293). Apparently, a second death was not a concern for Mabel Raymond, and she considers her child a martyr for the world and her work for the world. Because she used his life-force for her own activism, he literally gave up the chance to live so that she could continue to improve the lives of others. Mabel Raymond remarks "I have given my only son for the world, but I have not worked up the lives of other mothers' sons to gain wealth, and I am glad that I have not" (Waisbrooker 294). While this pseudo-science might seem far-fetched today, Waisbrooker's Occultist beliefs arose out of a combination of individualist anarchist ideals, sex-positivism, eugenics, radical Christianity, and her contemporary understanding of science, including electricity, genetics, and physiology. In any case, her beliefs pushed against and replaced an orthodox Christianity, and she shared her views with readers of her novels, books, pamphlets, periodicals, and articles placed in various publications.

5.5 Martyrdom and Spiritualism in Nineteenth-Century Anarchist Print Culture

Because anarchism was an international endeavor, print culture was the primary means of communicating, arguing, and updating far-flung anarchists about what was happening in other

parts of the world. Although there were developed anarchist communities in urban centers, especially those with burgeoning immigrant populations, such as New York City, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, and, later, San Francisco, rural anarchists have yet to be studied in depth. There were, however, anarchists even in Midwestern places today that seem surprising, such as Columbus Junction, Iowa, where the periodical *Age of Thought* was published from 1896-1897, and included contributors like William B. Greene and William T. Holmes. These periodicals, however long or short lived they were (and many had short runs and would later be resurrected in new locations when their editors moved), served as beacons of radical hope and intellectual stimulation for thousands of men and women across the United States, especially in the Midwest.

The relatively robust anarchist print culture of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries illustrates how martyrdom promoted cultural and in-group cohesion among disparate factions of anarchist tendencies. The best example of this was the dispute between Benjamin Tucker's Boston-based *Liberty* and Albert R. Parson's Chicago-based *Alarm*. In the mid-1880's, Tucker identified his anarchism as centered around the liberty of the individual. Parsons, on the other hand, represented a faction of anarchism that was more closely aligned to socialism. This faction thought anarchist aims could be best achieved through syndicates of workers. In a letter to the editor published in the May 1, 1886 issue of *Liberty*, John McLaughlin lays out the disparate views of the factions. He writes, "The Communists of Chicago who call themselves Anarchists have not correct ideas; the revolutionists of Denver, who do not know whether they are Anarchist, Socialist, or Communist, but believe they are a mixture of all three, are as far from correct as the Chicago fellows; and the Socialists of San Francisco, who are now busy fighting the poor, harmless Chinaman, badly need the light of Tucker's *Liberty* to dispel their gloom" (1). But, in the end (and probably why his letter was published in *Liberty*), McLaughlin sides with Tucker's individualist

camp: “Revolutionists who desire correct ideas, and are honest in their desire for a state of society founded on Justice, should read Liberty, the only paper in America that advocates the *complete* emancipation of Labor (the “Alarm” to the contrary notwithstanding), the only paper that advocates the abolition of *all* government of man by man, --perfect Individual Sovereignty,-- peaceful, harmonious, pure, unadulterated Anarchy” (1, italics original).

Tucker, too, kindled the flames of discontent among other factions and editors. On page five the same issue in which Mclaughlin’s letter was printed, Tucker prints an article by Dyer D. Lum that was rejected by “The Alarm.” Lum’s article is titled “The Beast of Communism,” and in it he denounces a recent break between Justus H. Schwab and *Freiheit*. Lum calls for a revision to the narrative that Schwab has “broken with the ‘Freiheit’ from moral cowardice or desire to please the police” (5). In his article, Lum stands up for Schwab, arguing, “Mr. Schwab, as I understand, has made no public accusation; as an Anarchist he has imply asserted his right to sever association with men whose methods he disapproves” (5). In a note following Lum’s article, Tucker accuses *The Alarm* of taking the side of *Freiheit*’s editor, Johann Most, against Schwab. Tucker uses this supposed tacit support (in not printing Lum’s article defending Schwab) to swipe at the anarchists he considers communists. To Tucker, the anarchist men associated with publications like *The Alarm* or *Freiheit* are not anarchists: “The criminals in question, whatever they may call themselves, are not Anarchists, inasmuch as they do not believe in liberty, but are Communists, inasmuch as they believe in common property. [. . .] but as they have never been taught Anarchy and know nothing about it, Anarchy cannot be held responsible for their misdeeds” (5). This is certainly a prescient prediction. Just a few days after the publication of this issue of *Liberty*, anarchist men and women around the city of Chicago, especially those associated with *The Alarm*,

were rounded up and implicated in the Haymarket Square bombing. According to the police, the state, and public opinion, they were dangerous anarchists.

Tucker also participated in robust and contentious criticism of his competitors. Later in the same issue as Lum's "The Beast of Communism" is printed, Tucker accuses Johann Most of stealing his content. Most, the editor of *Freiheit*, a New York City-based anarchist German language periodical, apparently reprinted the installments of the novelette "The Wife of Number 4,237" by Sophie Kropotkine that Tucker published in *Liberty*. For this, Most and his periodical receive a quite direct insult. "Freiheit" is not only a firebug organ," Tucker writes, "but a humbug organ" (1). Tucker's disagreements with the political views of *The Alarm* and *Freiheit* are just two examples of the disparate and contentious nature of American anarchist print culture in the late nineteenth century.

Indeed, anarchist tendencies in the 1880s that coalesced in print culture were generally separated into different factions that were at ideological and pragmatic odds with one another.²¹ The figure of the martyr was a particularly appealing symbolic and rhetorical tool that could bridge such factional divides. Because nineteenth century anarchist thought and its modern moment were grounded in Romanticism, martyrdom greatly appealed to anarchists. It was martyrdom a divided anarchist coalition got just over a year later on November 11, 1887, when the anarchist men, including Tucker's counterpart at *The Alarm*, Albert R. Parsons, were executed. On November 19,

²¹ It's important to note that examining anarchist tendencies and "factions" through print culture may yield a vision of anarchism that is clearer and more simply divided than what actually existed. Because men like Tucker, Most, and Parsons were considered "big names," and the newspapers have survived to the present, they are often cited as examples of the factions of the anarchist movement. Yet, recent arguments and scholarship on the intellectual history of anarchism by pre-eminent scholars such as Shawn Wilbur and Nathan Jun illustrate that even the idea of anarchism as a coherent, mutually accepted "ism" in the nineteenth century may not have existed.

1887, just days after the men had been hanged, *Liberty* ran a different first page. With the exception of the masthead, the first page proclaimed these lines in exceptionally large type:

They never fail who die
 In a great cause: the block may soak their gore;
 Their heads may sodden in the sun; their limbs
 Be strung to city gates and castle walls—
 But still their spirit walks abroad. Though years
 Elapse, and others share as dark a doom,
 They but augment the deep and sweeping thoughts
 Which overpower all others, and conduct
 The world at last to freedom. (*Liberty* V.8)

The lines, although not attributed by Tucker, are from Lord Byron's poetic tragedy *Marino Faliero*. Tucker's message is that even though the men have been hanged, they did not die in vain. As the poem predicts, "still their spirit walks abroad" in the form of articles, speeches, and devotional materials. The death of these Chicago Martyrs "augment[ed] the deep and sweeping thoughts" of freedom by stoking the anger of radicals around the world.

Although Tucker only printed this portion of the *Marino Faliero*, these lines are preceded by the lines: "We must forget all feelings save the *one*—/ We must resign all passions save our purpose—/ We must behold no object save our country—/ And only look on death as beautiful,/ So that the sacrifice ascend to heaven,/ And draw down freedom on her evermore." (444 *The Complete Works of Lord Byron from the Last London Edition*). Not only did Tucker draw on the works of one of literature's most celebrated *romantic* poets, in doing so he bridged the gap between anarchist factions. Tucker continued to celebrate the Haymarket men as *martyrs* for freedom. Just

a year and a half earlier, Tucker was calling out Albert Parsons for his un-anarchist radical politics; yet, here he reproduces words meant to signify that the anarchist men hanged did not die in vain. Cementing this argument in his editorial, he suggests that the execution will lead to an anarchist uprising.

In his editorial column in the same issue titled “To the Breach, Comrades!” Tucker muses on the death of the Chicago anarchists and reveals he is ready to join with other anarchists in action. With great passion, Tucker rallies his readers: “All of us, I am certain, will from this time forth face the struggle before us with stouter hearts and firmer tread for the examples that have been set [for] us by our murdered comrades. If we add to these a clearer vision, the result will not be doubtful” (4). Tucker compares the hanging of the men to another tragic but important moment for radical change in the United States: “And when it is achieved and history shall begin to make up its verdict, it will be seen and acknowledged that the John Browns of America’s industrial revolution were hanged at Chicago on the Eleventh of November, 1887. The labor movement has had its Harper’s Ferry; when will come the emancipation proclamation?” (4). Tucker was sure that an anarchist revolution was on the horizon, and that it was the Chicago martyrs, who, through propaganda by the deed, would become the propaganda by which the masses could be rallied. It was the right time, Tucker reasoned, for “The drum-tap has sounded; the forlorn hope has charged; the needed breach has been opened; myriads are falling into line; if we will but make the most of the opportunity so dearly purchased, victory will be ours” (4). Time tells us that the Haymarket Affair was an important moment of awakening for radicals all over the United States, and the men’s sacrifice, “so dearly purchased” is still being celebrated and used as propaganda by radicals today; but, their deaths did not precipitate “myriads. . . falling into line,” and victory, at least with a capital “V,” did not come, or, at least, has yet to come.

Similarly, Lois Waisbrooker utilized nineteenth-century print culture to communicate her beliefs with a wide range of people over decades. One of her periodicals, *Foundation Principles*, was a feminist, anarchist, and occultist monthly periodical that ran on and off between 1884 and 1894. It was published in various locales, including Clinton, Iowa; Antioch, California; and Topeka, Kansas. Clearly associated with women's emancipation and concerns of reproduction, the masthead reads: "Foundation Principles: The Rock upon which MOTHERHOOD Must rest. Search for them." The majority of the publication features Waisbrooker's own novels, political tracts, opinions, and reviews of her previous books alongside some letters and columns written by others in her political sphere. *Foundation Principles'* run, especially between 1893 and 1894 (published in Topeka), is one of the most comprehensive examples of the depth and breadth of a truly complex intersection of anarchist feminism, spiritualism, science, and eugenics in the late nineteenth-century United States, which is exemplified through both the fiction and non-fiction writing in her radical periodical.

The December 1893 issue of *Foundation Principles* is a prime example of how print culture enabled the dissemination and cultivation of the Occult, particularly in the Midwest. As was standard in many issues, Waisbrooker peppered the pages of the periodical with letters from various people commenting on her work or asking questions. For example, on page three, couched between an advertisement for her new book *The Fountain of Life, or the Threefold Power of Sex* (for only fifty cents, or for a dollar, *Occult Forces of Sex, A Sex Revolution* and *The Fountain of Life!*) and a notice about back issues of *Foundation Principles*, Waisbrooker reprinted a short letter and a reprint of a quote from *Lucifer the Light-Bearer*. The first was a letter from Reinhold Starke from Junction City, Kansas, dated September 11, 1893. Starke wrote: "Dear Mrs. W.:--After reading your books, (recently purchased) Mrs. S and I declare they are the best part of our library,

and we have benefitted very much by reading of them. You are doing a great work” (3). Below Starke’s letter is a “quoted” letter from *Lucifer the Light-Bearer* from an A.A. Gratigny of Barnesville Ohio dated September 5, 1893. Gratigny’s quoted letter reads, “Books ordered received. The world is hungering for just such literature as ‘The Occult Forces of Sex.’” (3). On the next page is a letter from “one of the leading men of Topeka” (according to Waisbrooker), a Mr. F.P. Baker. Mr. Baker writes:

Mrs. Waisbrooker,

Dear Madam:--I have read your last book, “The Fountain of Life, or the Threefold Power of Sex,” with a great deal of interest. I suppose that I was pretty well posted on the subjects of which it treats, but I find that you have opened up a new field to me, one that I had never even dreamed of. It is a work that should be in the hand of everyone, and more especially of women. I hope you may succeed in getting a wide circulation for it.

Yours Truly,

F.P. Baker,

Topeka, Kansas (4)

Whether or not Waisbrookers books ever got wide circulation is difficult to know, but if they did not it was not for lack of trying. Her letters and advertisements abound in radical publications, and she was very much a self-promoter of her own work and ideas. On the final page of the December 1893 issue of *Foundation Principles*, a more formal advertisement for *The Occult Forces of Sex* appears in the bottom left-hand corner. The advertisement consists mostly of endorsements by various individuals, including a personal letter for the editress of the *Woman’s World* (who was in 1893, Ella Hepworth Dixon, succeeding Oscar Wilde who had handed the magazine off to her only a few years before), the periodical *Mind and Matter*, and others: Pliny Smith of Fredonia, New

York; Mrs. N.J Landon, Piqua Ohio; O.H. Wellington, M.D. of Boston, Massachusetts, Dora S. Hall, M.D. of Riverside, California; Mrs. M. M. Egli of Caton, Dakota; and Mrs. M. Baker of Tama City, Iowa (8). All of these men and women had read and *endorsed* Waisbrooker's ideas—Occultist, anarchist, and feminist—and encouraged others to do the same. Although it is mostly impossible to know the circulation of Waisbrooker's books and how many people attended her lectures, it is fair to say that her career and theories of life impacted many men and women through the United States, even in small but burgeoning out-of-the-way Midwestern towns like Piqua, Ohio, Tama, Iowa, and Junction City, Kansas.

The belief in martyrdom and spiritualism both grew out of anarchism's Romantic roots. Anarchism, on the whole, was both a critique of and a response to Modernity. Both ideas came out of what Lowry and Sayre call "the full freedom of the imaginary," and they were creative and acquisitive responses to the Romantic loss of a pre-industrial, pre-capitalist world. The martyr, in many ways, is the quintessential radical Romantic figure. Martyrs were murdered by the state for their hope in a new, more righteous world. Yet, in the loss of life, their image as a martyr was destined to represent the fulfillment of an ideal toward freedom and the possible in the radical public imaginary.

Both the martyr and the spiritualist theory of life force as represented by Lois Waisbrooker created quasi-religious structures that replaced, and even fought back against, orthodox religion in the Midwest. In particular, the Haymarket Martyr's narrative and propaganda and Waisbrooker's *Generation and Regeneration*, also known as the *Occult Forces of Sex*, served as ideals and guideposts for followers interested in a different life. As evidenced by the still-common propaganda (such as the *Haymarket Scrapbook* republished by AK Press in 2012), the ideals men stood for, namely freedom from the tyranny of government and the sanctity of the worker, are still

sought after today. In the same vein, Waisbrooker's appeal for the right of women to their own bodies and her philosophy based on the health and sanctity of the individual still are being fought for by feminists and sex-positive activists today. While parts of her theories have not aged well, her underlying concern for women and their children, both in spiritual and bodily health, still matters. And, to say that spiritualism, or the Occult, is dead would be to give a gross mischaracterization of our contemporary moment: all one needs to do is turn on a television show such as *Ghost Adventures* or *Unsolved Mysteries*, or even visit theatres to witness the numerous horror movies all based on and acting out Occultist beliefs.

Martyrdom and spiritualism were themes ubiquitous to nineteenth-century anarchist print culture and promoted cohesion among far-flung radicals. One only needs to look to the rift that was mended between Tucker's individualist faction and *The Alarm's* anarcho-syndicalist factions through Tucker's call to join the fight in *Liberty* to see how vital print culture was to communicating differences but also joining forces, if only for a short while. For Waisbrooker, letters in *Foundation Principles* illustrate just how wide of a reach, particularly in the burgeoning Midwest, her Occultist and sex-positive work had. From small towns in Iowa to "big" cities like Topeka, Kansas, Waisbrooker did her best to promote her work to everyone and anyone who would listen (and buy copies of her printed materials). While it can certainly be said that a book can be written on either of these two subjects (and should someday), I hope what I have shown here is that martyrdom and spiritualism should not and cannot be overlooked as important assemblages through which anarchists expressed themselves and their ideals in the late nineteenth-century. While neither survived as the "meat" of contemporary analysis or fused into a post-anarchist pragmatics, and although they are often looked at as simply quaint constructions of the nineteenth-

century, they served important purposes and left indelible marks not only on the heart of radicalism in the nineteenth-century United States, but also on the people of its heartland.

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CHAPTER 6. CODA: RETURNING HOME

In the previous chapters, I have offered brief glimpses of connective thematic tissue, traced by time and place and shadowed by literary output. I believe these connective tissues were generated through what I have referred to here as ideological regionalism, or the idea that time and place can fuel independent instances of similar ideological stances without overtly common influences. Anarchist economic ideologies, free love, eugenic science, martyrdom, and spirituality are common themes among the authors, and I have shown these themes can be connected back to Midwestern cultural ideologies.

During the conception, research, and drafting of this project, several events occurred that assured me this project was timely and needed. First, several books and articles about anarchism and anarchists have been published since I began this journey in 2016. For example, AK Press, a radical anarchist publisher, produced new editions of both *Selected Works of Voltairine de Cleyre* (2016) and *An American Anarchist* (2018). Jacqueline Jones' *Goddess of Anarchy* (2017), a new biography of Lucy Parsons, debuted to much excitement in scholarly and radical circles. Anarchism and anarchist women continue to be a topic of much interest.

Even 150 years later, anarchists, anti-fascists, and other radicals are still fighting the same fights and dying for the same causes championed by the women I have written about here. The election of Donald Trump as the President of the United States in November 2016 marked a turning point in national discourse. Trump's campaign slogan of "Make American Great Again" paired with his racist, xenophobic, capitalist, and sexist rhetoric and actions signaled to racists and fascists they were free to move out of the shadows and into public discourse. The "Unite the Right" rally held August 11-12, 2017 in Charlottesville, Virginia, where hundreds of white supremacists demonstrated their collective power, was a glaring effect of Trump's victory. During the rally, one

of the white supremacist demonstrators, James Alex Fields, murdered anti-fascist activist Heather Heyer by driving his car through a crowd of counter protesters at the rally. Heyer's mother, Susan Bro, told media reports that her daughter, "died fighting for what she believed in" ("Heather Heyer"). Heyer, who was only a few years older than me at the time, instantly became a martyr for an anti-fascist, radical generation.

It is my hope that more recovery work is done that focuses specifically on anarchist women and Midwestern anarchism as well as the combination of the two. My project is the very beginning of an extended recovery project that may never be complete. Yet, it will surely yield delight and surprise at every turn, as it has for me and those who have chosen to ride along with me on this exploration. From this project, I have developed a deeper interest in Lizzie Swank Holmes and Lois Waisbrooker. It is astounding to me that Swank Holmes has such an extensive oeuvre (over one hundred articles and stories and counting!). She was the Assistant Editor of *The Alarm*, and she held a front row seat to some of the most important US-based radical events of her lifetime. Yet, she remains a background character in most accounts of the nineteenth-century American anarchist movements. Even more heartbreaking is that her literary legacy has been virtually untouched. Swank Holmes' creativity and rhetorical acuity rival that of Voltairine de Cleyre, who has been dubbed the poet of nineteenth-century anarchists. Waisbrooker suffered a similar fate to that of Swank Holmes, but not for lack of trying.

During her lifetime, Waisbrooker was a shameless self-promoter. She stirred the pot across anarchist, free love, and spiritualist print culture, but she always tried to stir it in her favor. Evidence of this can be found in the many issues of *Lucifer the Light-Bearer* and her own *Foundation Principles*. Waisbrooker, too, had a robust oeuvre consisting of over a dozen book-length works, three journals, and other copious ephemera. Unlike Swank Holmes, Waisbrooker's

writings did not age well for the most part; yet that is precisely why her writings are so important for recovery. Her unique blend of anarchism, spiritualism, feminism, eugenics, free love, and contemporary scientific knowledge (however nonsensical it may seem to us today) represents an unlikely melding of major currents of late nineteenth-century thought. Waisbrooker wove together seemingly disparate ideological stances to create a coherent tapestry of truth. However, more work still needs to be done to unravel that tapestry and discern her arguments, methods, and foundation principles.

Rarely did any of these anarchist writers draw a clear, causal connection between identity and place. Yet, there is one letter from de Cleyre to *The Boston Investigator* that has always intrigued me because it is one of the few places she explicitly writes about her connection to place. Like de Cleyre, I grew up in Michigan. In fact, I was born and raised a mere 60 miles from where she was born and raised. After traveling around the Midwest and living in Kansas for some time, de Cleyre returned to her hometown, St. Johns, Michigan, in the late summer of 1891. There she penned a poetic and incisive letter to the *Investigator* detailing her time in Enterprise and Chicago. For someone like me studying the relationship between place and identity, her final paragraph has seemed like a boon beyond imagination. De Cleyre closes her letter with this final thought:

I am back in my own Michigan again; it is two years since I saw her in her dress of green, beautiful in the September sunlight. The papers have put me in nearly every place in the Union where I didn't belong. I have been dubbed a Pittsburger and a Chicagoan when I had not been in either place for a year. I never thought it worth contradiction, deeming the world my home; but some way, down in a corner of men, there is a peculiar affection for the lights and shadows, the green hills and the yellow, dusty road, even the anthills and the

ugly, red barns of my own Michigan. Let who can, explain it; I am no believer in patriotism.

(2)

For all her analytical reasoning, De Cleyre felt what she could not reason: that place irrevocably holds us in ways we can only begin to imagine. Place, as a physical, social, and political space, holds our identity and sense of belonging, and it shapes our sense of justice, our hopes and ideals. Here, I have tried to explain it. Like de Cleyre, I am no believer in patriotism; I am a believer in place.

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EDUCATION

Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana

Doctor of Philosophy in English, May 2019

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Central Michigan University, Mount Pleasant, Michigan

Bachelor of Arts in English with a minor in Political Science, December 2010

PUBLICATIONS

PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES

- ❖ Campbell, Michelle M. "Time is the Fourth Dimension of Space: Paul Gruchow's Theories of Time and Place." *MidAmerica*. 2016. Print.
- ❖ Campbell, Michelle M. "The Freedom to Try: Voltairine de Cleyre in Postmodern Pedagogy." *MidAmerica*. 2013. Print.
- ❖ Campbell, Michelle M. "Voltairine de Cleyre and the Anarchist Canon." *Anarchist Developments in Cultural Studies. Special Edition: Blasting the Anarchist Canon*. 2013. Web.

CHAPTER IN EDITED COLLECTION

- ❖ Campbell, Michelle M. "What Things Could Come? Xenogenesis and Post-Anarchist Feminism." in *Specters of Anarchy: Literature and the Anarchist Imagination*. Editor Jeff Shantz. Algora. 2015. Print.

BOOK REVIEW

- ❖ Campbell, Michelle M. [Reviewing] “Joseph Conrad Among the Anarchists: Nineteenth Century Terrorism and The Secret Agent.” *Anarchist Studies* (26)2. Autumn 2018.

EDUCATION MATERIALS

- ❖ Campbell, Michelle M. & Vicki R. Kennell. *Working with Graduate Student Writers Faculty Guide*. Online Writing Lab (OWL) at Purdue. Fall 2018.
- ❖ Online Writing Lab (OWL) at Purdue. Various ESL curriculum materials. January 2014-Present.

OTHER

- ❖ Campbell, Michelle M. Ed. *Anarchist Developments in Cultural Studies. Special Issue: Anarchism and the Body*. 2018. (Guest Editor)
- ❖ *Toward a Theory of Post-Anarchist Feminism*. Master’s Thesis. Defended March 2013. Available via ProQuest.

WORKS IN PRODUCTION

Scholarly introduction to a first-ever reprint of the anarchist feminist novel Hagar Lyndon by May Huntley (Lizzie S. Holmes) through Hastings College Press, originally serialized in the periodical *Lucifer the Light-Bearer* (Topeka, Kansas) in 1893. Expected Spring 2019.

GRANTS & AWARDS

- ❖ Purdue Research Foundation Summer Research Grant, \$1600, June-July 2017.
- ❖ Purdue College of Liberal Arts PROMISE Award for scholarly endeavors, \$750, May 2017.
- ❖ David Diamond Prize for the Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature, \$500, October 2012.
- ❖ Michigan Humanities Council Grant , \$15,000, for a documentary about Native American sharpshooters during the American Civil War. Grant directed by Dr. Ronald Primeau and project managed through the Clarke Historical Library at Central Michigan University, Fall 2011.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- ❖ Lois Waisbrooker's Foundation Principles: Lessons in Nineteenth-Century Anarchist Feminism, Spiritualism, and Eugenics. Society for the Study of American Women Writers, Denver, Colorado, November 2018.
- ❖ “Reading Time into Place with Literary Naturalists Paul Gruchow, Elizabeth Dodd, and William Stafford.” Western Literature Association. St. Louis, Missouri. October 2018.
- ❖ “Graduate Student Positions to Offer WAC/WID Support to Graduate Students.” Consortium for Graduate Communication Institute, Ann Arbor, Michigan. June 2018.
- ❖ “Memory, Place, and Ecology: Reimagining Environmental History and In the Watershed.” Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature, Lansing, Michigan. May 2018.
- ❖ “Scholarly Writing for International Graduate Students Workshop.” International Writing Centers Association, Chicago, Illinois. November 2017.
- ❖ “Teaching Sex Radicalism: The Didactic Free Love Novels of Florence Finch Kelly.” Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature, Lansing, Michigan. June 2017.
- ❖ “Black Anarchists in the Midwest.” Midwestern History Association, Grand Rapids, Michigan, June 2017. Co-authored with Wesley R. Bishop.
- ❖ “Lois Waisbrooker and Those Free Love Radicals.” American Literature Association, Boston, Massachusetts. May 2017.
- ❖ “Time is the Fourth Dimension of Space: Paul Gruchow’s Theories of Time and Place.” Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature, Lansing, Michigan. June 2016.
- ❖ “A Frenchwoman in the City: Jenny P. d’Héricourt in Chicago, 1863-1873.” Midwestern Historical Association. Grand Rapids, Michigan. June 2016.
- ❖ “Lucy Parsons: A Midwestern Anarchist Writer.” Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature. Lansing, Michigan. June 2015
- ❖ “Women’s Roles in Black Liberation in Francis Harper’s Iola Leroy.” Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature. Lansing, Michigan. May 2014.
- ❖ “Overcoming the ‘Imposter Syndrome’: Opening Professional Paths for Graduate Students.” (Co-Presented Workshop) Conference on College Composition and Communication. Indianapolis, Indiana. March 2014.

- ❖ “Toward a Practical Anarchist Literary Theory.” American Philosophical Association (Radical Political Association Panel). Chicago, Illinois. February 2014.
- ❖ “Theodore Roethke: A Poet of Place and Space.” Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature. Lansing, Michigan May 2013.
- ❖ “You Didn’t Build That: Post-Anarchist Feminism and Subjectivity.” North American Anarchist Studies Network. New Orleans, Louisiana. January 2013.
- ❖ “The Freedom to Try: Voltairine de Cleyre in Postmodern Pedagogy.” Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature. Lansing, Michigan. May 2012.
- ❖ “Classroom Queeries: Graduate Students Respond to the Call for More GLBTQI Inclusion within the Classroom.” Conference on College Composition and Communication. St. Louis, Missouri. March 2012.
- ❖ “Stereotyping Non-Traditional Students in the Writing Center.” East Central Writing Centers Association Conference. Kalamazoo, Michigan. March 2011.
- ❖ “The Conquest of Anarcha-Feminism: An Examination of the Viability of Gender Equality in an Anarchistic Ideology.” Michigan Women’s Studies Association Conference. Grand Rapids, Michigan. March 2011.

TEACHING AND INSTRUCTIONAL EXPERIENCE

Current position

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Communications Consultant & Instructor, Graduate Communications and Intercultural Programs/Graduate Communications Center, Pratt School of Engineering January 2019-Present.

Previous positions

Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana

- ❖ Graduate Assistant for Intercultural Learning and Research, Center for Intercultural Learning, Mentorship, and Assessment (CILMAR), August 2017-December 2019.
- ❖ Tutorial Instructor, Oral English Proficiency Program (OEPP): English 620: Classroom Communication for International Teaching Assistants, January 2014-December 2019.

- ❖ Instructor, Intensive Writing Experience for Dissertation Writers, funded by a Bilsland Fellowship from the Purdue Graduate School, May 2018-July 2018.
- ❖ Graduate Studies Writing Workshop Facilitator, Purdue Writing Lab, August 2017-August 2018.
- ❖ ESL/PLaCE Coordinator, Purdue Writing Lab, August 2016-August 2017.
- ❖ Teaching Assistant, English 350: Survey of American Literature from Its Beginnings to 1865, Fall 2016
- ❖ Instructor, Introductory Composition at Purdue (ICaP): English 106: First Year Composition, August 2014-May 2016.
- ❖ Instructor, GRE Writing Test Preparation for Summer Research Opportunities Program (SROP), primarily for underrepresented minority undergraduate students, through the Purdue Graduate School, July 2015, July 2016, & July 2017.
- ❖ Instructor, Communications 114: Presentational Speaking, August 2013-May 2014.

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- ❖ Instructor, English 101: First-Year Composition, August 2011-May 2013.
- ❖ Consultant, Central Michigan University Writing Center, August 2010-May 2011.

Other Instructional Experience

- ❖ Instructor, Subaru Advanced ESL Class for Japanese speakers for LTC Language Solutions, July 2017-June 2018
- ❖ Instructor, NKH Seating Tutorials for Japanese speakers for LTC Language Solutions, May 2018-August 2018.
- ❖ Syllabus and Curriculum Review Administrator, Introductory Composition at Purdue, January 2015-August 2018.

LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE

- ❖ President, Graduate Student English Association. April 2017-May 2018.
- ❖ Committee Member, Campus Safety Relations Committee at Purdue. October 2016-June 2018.
- ❖ Senator, Purdue Graduate Student Government. September 2015-May 2017.

- ❖ Committee Member, Introductory Writing Committee at Purdue. September 2015-May 2016.
- ❖ ICaP Syllabus Approach Leader (“Writing your Way Into Purdue” Approach) and Pedagogical Initiatives Committee Member (PIC). August 2015-May 2016.
- ❖ Organizer, Purdue Social Justice Coalition. Fall 2014-Present.
- ❖ Organizer and Host, Anarchism and the Body Conference. Purdue University, June 2015.
- ❖ President, Graduate Student Union at Central Michigan University. May 2012-May 2013.
- ❖ Vice President, Graduate Student Union at Central Michigan University. August 2011-May 2012.
- ❖ Executive Board Member, Academic Senate at Central Michigan University. January 2012-December 2012.
- ❖ Senator, Academic Senate at Central Michigan University. September 2011-December 2012.
- ❖ Director of Operations, Temenos Journal. August 2011-May 2013.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

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Society for the Study of American Women Writers

North American Anarchist Studies Network