

## Sur/Rendering Her Image: The Unknowable Harriet Tubman

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Volume 30, numéro 1-2, 2005

The Portrait Issue  
La question du portrait

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1069660ar>  
DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/1069660ar>

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### Éditeur(s)

UAAC-AAUC (University Art Association of Canada | Association d'art des universités du Canada)

### ISSN

0315-9906 (imprimé)  
1918-4778 (numérique)

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### Citer cet article

Gibson, C. N. & Silverman, M. (2005). Sur/Rendering Her Image: The Unknowable Harriet Tubman. *RACAR : Revue d'art canadienne / Canadian Art Review*, 30(1-2), 25–38. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1069660ar>

### Résumé de l'article

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Tubman accepte de poser et de projeter l'image de *la* femme victorienne. Pourtant, c'est la même Harriet Tubman qui portait pantalons et fusil lorsqu'elle servait de guide aux esclaves évadés le long d'un chemin de fer clandestin, cherchant la liberté au Canada. C'est la même Harriet Tubman qui jouait le rôle d'infirmière, d'éclaireuse, de blanchisseuse, d'espionne, de cuisinière et de guide des troupes durant la guerre de Sécession, et que ses collègues masculins blancs appelaient « général », lui reconnaissant l'habileté de se déplacer et de traverser les frontières sans se faire repérer.

La photo séduit l'observateur et le supplie de la prendre pour la réalité. Mais les restrictions fallacieuses qui persistent entre le moment capté et l'image bidimensionnelle, représentent un abîme que l'on doit franchir par le biais de l'intelligence critique. Dans la photo intitulée *Standing Portrait of Harriet Tubman*, l'examen de certains entrecroisements pose un défi tout particulier. Les contradictions et les chevauchements que révèlent ces différentes perspectives sont succinctement mis en évidence lorsque l'on reconnaît la disparité entre la photographie et le vécu de Tubman.

La photographie de Harriet Tubman sert de modèle métaphorique à la structure du présent article. Elle offre une image composée d'attributs conflictuels, de refoulements et de contraintes propres à l'image victorienne, qui se juxtaposent à la connaissance historique d'une femme et de ses accomplissements extraordinaires. À la limite, la photographie est aussi subversive que les femmes qui en constituent les sujets.

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## Fixing the Subject

A photograph shows a woman standing, hands atop a chair (fig. 1). Dated between the late 1860s and mid-1870s,<sup>1</sup> this cabinet card bears the photographer's name and his studio's stamp.<sup>2</sup> As an albumen print, the image may have been reproduced as a carte de visite, a cabinet card, or a boudoir card. Although the reason for its original production is not known, the image was and continues to be widely reproduced and circulated; its many permutations and uses parallel the mobility and shifting form of its subject, Harriet Tubman. Tubman's photographic portrait represents her refusal to embody Victorian notions of blackness and of womanhood. She is enigmatic and unknowable. She escaped America, but is also not Canadian.

Both countries have sought to appropriate her for their own national mythologies. A legend in her time, this famous American is lionized in Canadian history.<sup>3</sup> Almost a century after her death in 1913, she is still "wanted" on both sides of the border. A close reading of the photograph challenges our understanding of her identity, her subjectivity further obscured by race, gender, and geography. Her photograph conceals more than it reveals, and thus the image can serve any reader's or any nation's needs. The photograph is Harriet Tubman's *Standing Portrait*.<sup>4</sup>

Her first known photograph,<sup>5</sup> this visual record of the elusive freedom fighter, above ground with a bounty on her head, could not appear until her freedom was secure. It is the most widely reproduced of her photographs, crossing and bridging academic and popular discourses from African, American, Canadian, abolitionist, and Civil War histories, to women's

histories and children's literature. Like the woman, the photograph has agency. It moves. The mutability of the photograph reflects Tubman's capacity to navigate and occupy physical, temporal, and social spaces simultaneously.

Portraiture served two functions in the nineteenth century: it described the individual while inscribing a social identity. Both purposes help explain the grip of the genre on the national imagination. The portrait was the intersection of complex and varied interactions, gendered, raced, and classed. In order to recognize the agency manifested by Harriet Tubman, we must acknowledge the complications of representing women – especially black women – in post-Civil War America, and the expectations of Victorian viewers. In doing so, we expose portraiture's subversive nature, the way it obscures this woman's representation even while photography works to convey it. Only then can we begin to explore the choices she made and the boundaries she crossed before sur/rendering her image.

Unable to read or write her own life story, Tubman recounted and re-enacted her experiences to captive audiences. Those incidences were recorded and interpreted by fellow abolitionists and supporters. Beginning with Sarah Bradford's 1868 biography, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*,<sup>6</sup> we meet a second-person Tubman, a saintly, self-sacrificing protagonist, one who is once removed from herself. Through extensive research, writers and historians can describe the events surrounding Tubman's above ground life with some accuracy, but due to the covert nature of her underground work much of her life story is unknowable.<sup>7</sup> No matter who tells it, her story is always a construction.

Recent scholarship has produced three Tubman biographies. Catherine Clinton's *Harriet Tubman: The Road to Free-*

Figure 1. H.B. Lindsley, *Harriet Tubman*, ca. 1865. Carte de visite, 11.5 × 16.5 cm. Auburn, New York, Cayuga Museum of History and Art (Photo: Cayuga Museum of History and Art).



dom (2004), Kate Clifford Larson's *Bound for the Promised Land: Harriet Tubman, Portrait of an American Hero* (2004), and Jean M. Humez's *Harriet Tubman: The Life and the Life Stories* (2003) all endeavour to shed light on Tubman's life. The biographies present narratives created by writers. In particular, however, Humez makes a concerted effort to locate Tubman's agency within the structure of her written and spoken words. She argues that Tubman is implicated in the construction of her image. Aware of her legendary status, she did much to manipulate and control how she was seen.<sup>8</sup>

Much attention has been afforded Tubman's story in print. Not so her visual representation. Here we interrogate her ability to transform, disguise, and mask herself, and to negotiate myriad social networks. We explore her agency and her power over her own narrative, as it emerges potently in the *Standing Portrait*. Through an analysis of her clothing, we, like Humez, afford

Tubman that same agency in this discussion. Tubman contributed to her photographic representation, her clothing purposeful and worn for its emblematic value. This carefully crafted self-image both met social expectations and allowed her to remain elusive.

The woman in the *Standing Portrait* was born Araminta "Minty" Ross, a slave, in Maryland in ca. 1820.<sup>9</sup> Primarily a field worker and unable to leave the boundaries of her master's property, she preferred and was permitted to do the work of men.<sup>10</sup> She changed her name to Harriet at the time she married free man John Tubman, around 1844.<sup>11</sup> Desiring freedom, she escaped alone to the northern United States in 1849, quickly finding political allies, black and white, to support her campaign to deliver her family from bondage. Between the passing of the second Fugitive Slave Law<sup>12</sup> in 1850 and the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, legend tells us that Harriet Tubman, acting alone and as part of the Underground Railroad<sup>13</sup> network, made thirteen trips into the South to lead scores of fugitives to freedom.<sup>14</sup> Tubman led her wards beyond the slave catcher's reach, into the northern states and on to St Catharines, Canada. This was her safe haven until she permanently relocated to Auburn, New York, around 1858.<sup>15</sup>

After her third trip into American slave territory, Tubman was disheartened not to be able to lead her husband to freedom.<sup>16</sup> She considered abandoning the Underground Railroad work. Soon after, she reported that God directed her to lead more people to freedom, saying, "The Lord told me to do this. I said, 'Oh Lord, I can't – don't ask me – take somebody else.'" In response, God stated: "It's you I want, Harriet Tubman."<sup>17</sup> Tubman's choice to recount her conversation with God aided her appearance as a biblical agent. The positive reception she received, as a recognizable living legend or biblical icon, must have confirmed her purpose. It would have also placed her story into Victorian Americans' shared religious narratives. Having a highly developed sense of her supporters' expectations and imaginings, she accepted the role of "the Moses of her people." As a devout woman, she shared their religious values and was at times rewarded with financial and political support.<sup>18</sup>

During the Civil War, Tubman's roles varied from nurse, scout, and laundress, to spy, cook, and troop leader. Although she was not officially enlisted, she carried out a number of military tasks for the Union Army.<sup>19</sup> She was able to collaborate with and work alongside the white men who respected her competence and ability to move undetected. Abolitionist and admirer John Brown would introduce her as "General Tubman," "one of the bravest persons on this continent,"<sup>20</sup> and "the most of a man, naturally, that I ever met with."<sup>21</sup> In the company of men, her efforts were defined as man's work, which required skill, intelligence, bravery, and knowledge unexpected in a woman.

Tubman's extraordinary ability to cross geographical, gendered, and raced boundaries undetected was key to her mythic status. But her humility and undistinguished appearance puzzled even the people closest to her. As Underground Railroad stationmaster Thomas Garret said, "The strangest thing about this woman is, she does not know, or *appears* not to know, that she has done anything worth notice."<sup>22</sup> Described by a black colleague as "one of the most ordinary looking of her race, unlettered, no idea of geography, asleep half of the time,"<sup>23</sup> she passed as unremarkable. To whatever degree Tubman was aware of or concerned with her legendary status, she was certainly mindful of remaining amorphous when necessary. Perhaps most remarkable is Tubman's ability to be renowned and virtually invisible at the same time.

At the end of the Civil War, Tubman returned north by train to her home in Auburn. Although she was a war hero carrying a government pass, the conductor looked at her ticket, announced, "We don't carry niggers for half fare," and had her violently thrown into a baggage car.<sup>24</sup> As Humez states, "The railway car incident clearly signaled the beginning of a new set of challenges for the celebrated heroine and war veteran – social and economic challenges that were in some respects more difficult for her to meet than the dangers and obstacles she had encountered in her Underground Railroad and war service."<sup>25</sup> Before the Civil War, North meant freedom, independence. For Tubman, the end of the war brought insecurity and a continued need to be adaptable, as her Underground Railroad community was unnecessary and her affiliation with the Union Army disappeared. Now in Auburn, she was a property owner who could not afford to pay her mortgage. Displaced, General Tubman exchanged her military duties for domestic labour.

In the late 1860s, supporters promoted and circulated the story of the freedom-fighting Harriet Tubman. In the fall of 1868 they organized a "Harriet Tubman fair," a fund-raising bazaar based on the familiar model of the anti-slavery fair. In 1868, Sarah Hopkins Bradford was recruited to write the first extensive biography of her. The book-length narrative originated as a fund-raising project that could be sold at fairs, conventions, and other gatherings of the anti-slavery network. The proceeds were devoted to Tubman's household support and to paying her mortgage.<sup>26</sup> To gain the backing of her predominantly white audience, and to open their pocket books, Bradford represented Tubman as a sympathetic character, a kind of suffering saint. While this benign image may have been more attractive to a white audience, Tubman, now free, still found herself under the control of white Victorian values. So too does the woman in the *Standing Portrait*. Dated around the same time as the fair and the biography, this photograph could have been taken, used, and circulated to support Tubman's fund-raising efforts.<sup>27</sup>

Photographs have utilitarian function, but they are not resistant to the imposition of meaning by the reader/viewer. Signs surround us. Played out in photographs, they support or defy existing power structures and beliefs. Using Barthes's insights to unravel the Tubman portrait, we play the role of mythologist to expose signs as artificial, and to reveal that what may seem "natural" is in fact determined by the *re*/telling of history. Tubman's image becomes part of American and Canadian histories, within and against multiple landscapes: geographical, textual, mythical.<sup>28</sup> The photograph draws boundaries as it crosses them; it splits narratives. *Standing Portrait* inhabits popular Canadian historical contexts and African Canadian women's scholarship. Readings of blackness selectively punctuate Canadian history.

Tubman was aware of the practical value of the photograph and its representational applications. Although illiterate, she had the capacity to interpret, or "read," photographs. She carried carte de visite portraits of Underground Railroad agents on her journeys in order to determine the identity of the supporters she met along the way. By asking strangers to identify the people in the photographs, she checked names against the faces of those who were unknown to her, thus ensuring their credentials and her own safety.<sup>29</sup> Photographs became a lie detector or litmus test to determine identity.

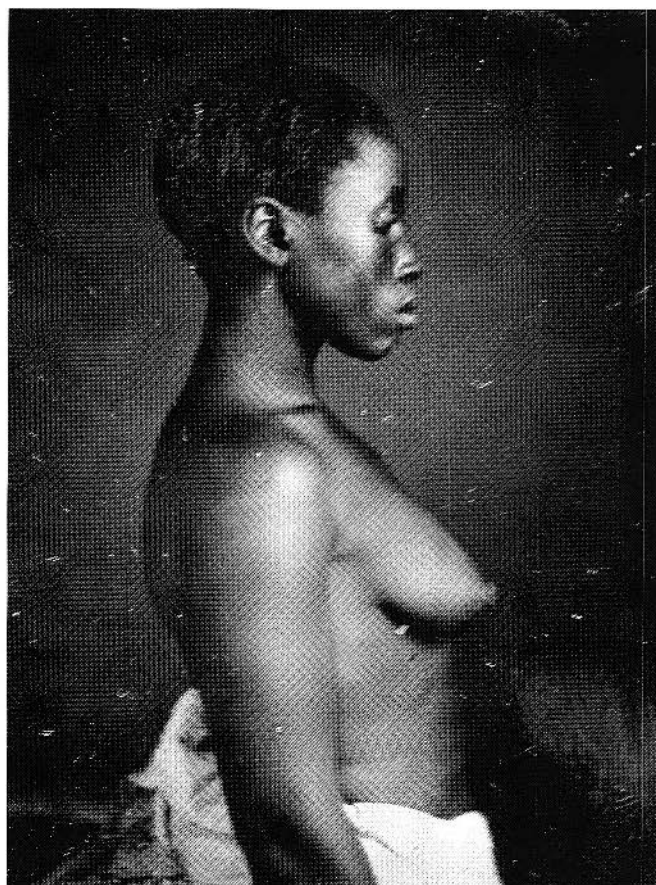
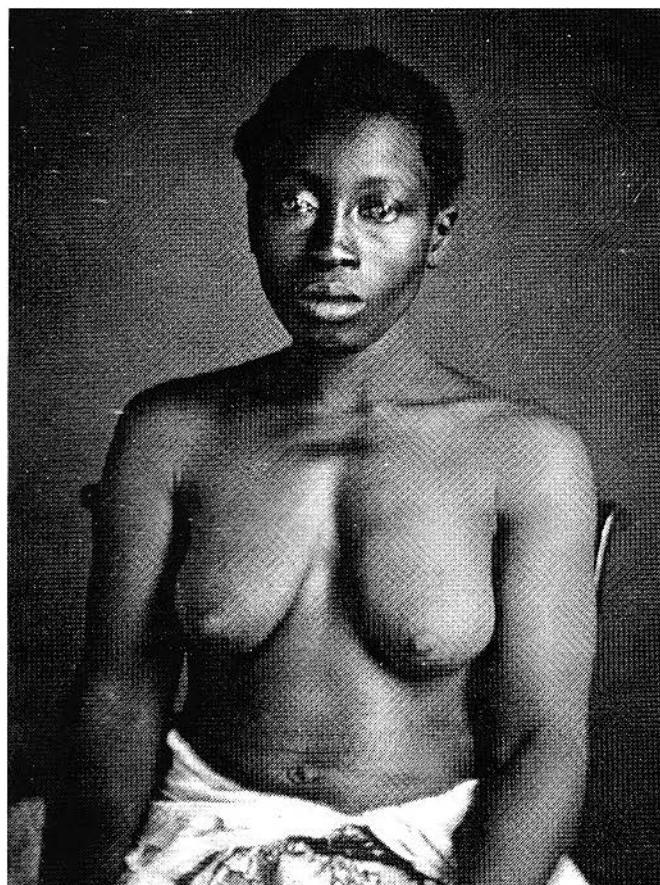
Beyond issues of veracity, Tubman's understanding of photography and its ability to construct reality is reflected in her *Standing Portrait*. She was aware that her own image could be captured, reproduced, and circulated over time and space, that it would be scrutinized and discussed, and that its truthfulness would be judged. With one click of the shutter, history begins. We can see Harriet Tubman, her image evidence of her existence. But meaning is more than text, written or photographic, and more than words, spoken or heard.<sup>30</sup> By exploring the gap between the personal and the photographic, we engage the interpretive flexibility needed to "read" a photograph.

#### Framing the Woman

In the nineteenth century, black womanhood was consistently linked to slave, sexual, and service economies and associated with moral deficiency, sexual deviance, and intellectual inferiority.<sup>31</sup> Theorist bell hooks has written, "The systematic devaluation of black womanhood was not simply a direct consequence of race hatred, it was a calculated method of social control."<sup>32</sup> Sexualized images were not the only representations of black women. Forced into spectral extremes, black woman typically represented a "sexualized mythology or a neutered anomaly."<sup>33</sup> Their photographic images contribute to these representations.

During and after slavery, ethnographic images fascinated Victorian viewers. The images appeared in exhibitions, albums,

Figure 2. Joseph T. Zealy, *Delia, Country Born of African Parents, Daughter of Renty, Congo*, ca. 1850. Daguerrotype, each 11.9 × 9.7 cm. Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology (Photo: Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology).



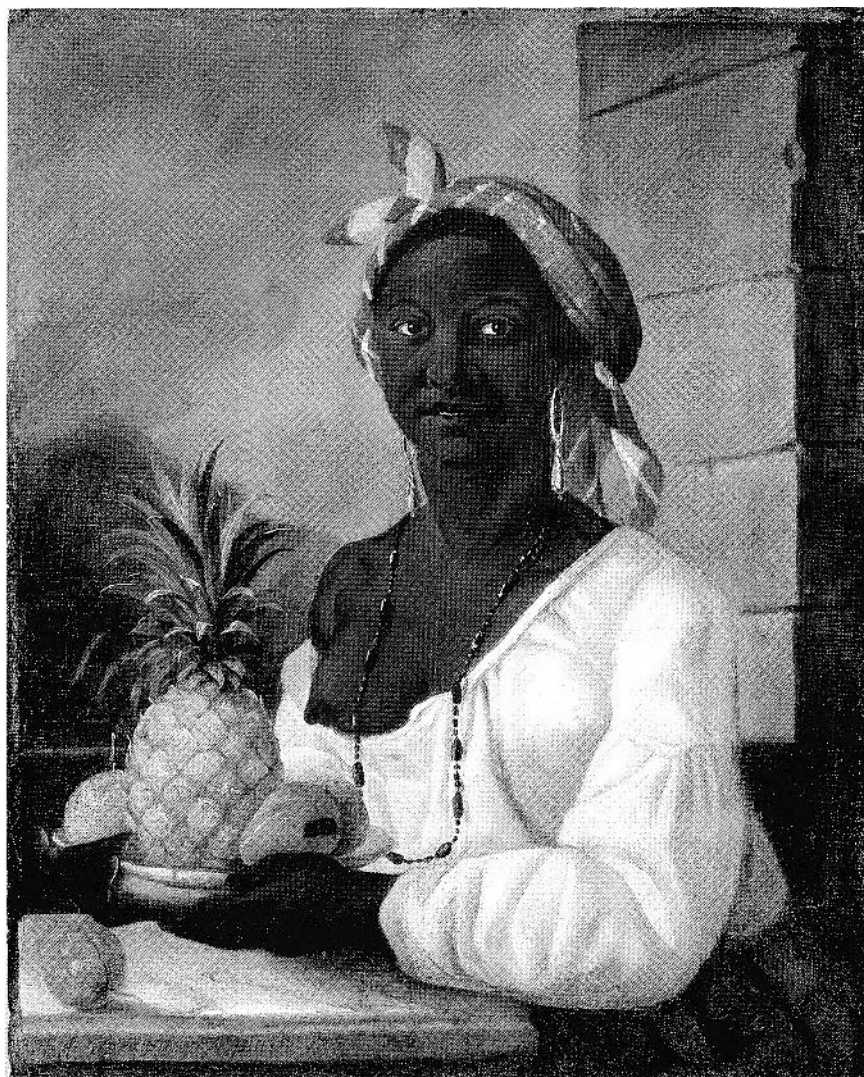
and private collections. The intersection between contemporary science, racist ideas, and fears fascinated white audiences. The now infamous photographs by Joseph T. Zealy were commissioned in 1850 by zoologist Louis Agassiz in order to support his belief that blacks were innately inferior. The photograph entitled *Delia, Country Born of African Parents, Daughter of Renty, Congo* (fig. 2) is one of fifteen surviving images, their front and side views signifying their “scientific” nature. The photographs expose the body for inspection, measurement, and categorization. At the same time, they challenge the viewer to interpret the subject while applying their own value system. While nudity or partial nudity might be culturally appropriate for some of the peoples subjected to the ethnographic lens, Delia has had her clothing partially removed in order to satisfy ideological demands of the dominant culture. Additionally, in the Western tradition, the difference between being naked and being nude is very meaningful. Where the “nude” is aesthetic, the “naked” is realistic and therefore not idealized. For a Victorian viewer, seeing Delia’s clothing falling around her waist, seeing her nakedness, was more revealing and exploitative than nudity. At the same time, it suggested her disregard of feminine virtue.

Furthermore, images like Zealy’s reinforced the belief that physical differences illuminated essential differences among people. White Victorians might have seen in these images not merely a record of appearance but a sign of the inner self, of the subject’s personality and character. The inhabitants at the margins of the social order were fixed in immovable moral boundaries by white hegemony and white uniformity, their physical difference, their blackness, manifesting their inner difference. Stripped of their clothes, black women were stripped of their identities, clothed in stereotypes, and doomed to difference and powerlessness.

While oil paintings represented those with status and wealth, the photographic portrait, cheaper, reproducible, and easily circulated, fulfilled a new democratic expression within the culture. Still, revolutionary medium though it was, many of the formal elements and cultural presumptions of the oil painting carry over to the photographic portrait.<sup>34</sup> These conventions can be tied to a tradition of the wealthy commissioning paintings of their property. *Portrait of a Negro Slave* (1786) (fig. 3), an oil painting by François Malépart de Beaucourt, depicts a slave woman, named Marie-Thérèse, who had been brought to



Figure 3. François Malépart de Beaucourt, *Portrait of a Negro Slave*, 1786. Oil on canvas, 72.7 × 58.5 cm. Montréal, McCord Museum of Canadian History (Photo: McCord Museum of Canadian History).



New France.<sup>35</sup> Like the plate of fruit at her breast, this West-Indian woman is a desirable commodity. She is doubly objectified as de Beaucourt's slave and the subject of his work. The headscarf signifies her humble domestic status, yet its rich red and gold colour suggests she is as exotic as the fruit she embraces. She wears a clean white blouse, gold earrings, and a necklace. These accessories signify her master's means as he owns the earrings, the necklace, the blouse, and the body inside. Like the photograph of Delia (fig. 2), Marie-Thérèse's clothing is displaced, exposing her breast, to satisfy the demands of the genre. At once her nakedness suggests she is fertile, like the land of her origins and the fruit it bears. Overtly sexual, smiling, she is offered to the viewer. Although surrounded by signs that denote femininity, the subject of de Beaucourt's portrait ceases to be a woman, an individual. She is simply property. Posed, static before her master, Marie-Thérèse bears all the marks of degra-

ation and dominance that Harriet Tubman's *Standing Portrait* resists one hundred years later.

The naked savage and domesticated slave were not the only photographic representations of black womanhood that circulated in the United States in the nineteenth century. In *Father, Daughters, and Nurse* (1848) by Thomas Easterly, a black woman is seated next to the white children she cares for (fig. 4). She wears a simple gingham dress with a crisp white shawl draped around her shoulders, and a fresh white headscarf covering her hair. As a house servant working in close proximity to the master's children, she is dressed in clean, presentable clothes, the ideal Mammy.<sup>36</sup> The words of former slave Melinda Pollard help to clarify how clothing defined a slave's work and place in relation to the master. She illustrates that fine clothes signified her status:

I nebber libed inde slave quarters 'cause I wuz nussmaid for my mistiss two chillun ... Dat caused me to lib in de big house wid de w'ite folks ... my close wuz nuthin; fine but dey didn't have no holes in dem, dey wuz jes' spun close but I wuz 'bout de bes' lookin' slave on de plantation.<sup>37</sup>

This description demonstrates the elevated status associated with the big house.

In contrast to formulaic representations, Tubman, always aware of her image and how she needed to reinvent herself to achieve her goals, stands facing the camera, hands crossed atop the back of a chair. Her presentation – stance, dress, and expression – contradicts expectations of the ethnographic savage or the domesticated Mammy. As a fugitive she sought her freedom by employing multiple identities. To do this she sometimes cross-dressed, and she bore both female (Aunt Harriet, Mother Tubman) and male (General Tubman, Moses) identities. The pose, set, and props of the *Standing Portrait* mimic the formal and aesthetic elements of painting. It avoids stereotypical representations and instead suggests Tubman's character and not just her appearance.

Sitters were well aware that their portrait was an object for posterity. Every effort was made to present the female subject as demure, submissive, and pious. Although the ideals of true

Figure 4. Thomas Martin Easterly, *Father, Daughters, and Nurse*, ca. 1850. Daguerreotype hand-colored, 7.2 × 8.9 cm. Los Angeles, The J. Paul Getty Museum (Photo: The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles).



womanhood did not apply to working class women, new immigrants, rural women, or ex-slaves, they nevertheless informed cultural norms of propriety. The *Lady's Almanac for 1854* offered suggestions for the photography session, including choice of hairstyle, dress, and accessories to draw attention to the sitter's best features. "Prearrange dress and drapery in your most tasteful and graceful manner," it advised, but beware that "the most terrible enemy the Daguerreotype has to contend with is human vanity."<sup>38</sup>

One need only look at Mathew Brady's portrait of Clara Barton (fig. 5) to understand how this tenuous balance was achieved. During the Civil War, Barton achieved some celebrity after organizing relief efforts for the wounded through the United States Patent Office and nursing the injured on both sides. She went on to found the American Red Cross and was a popular speaker on lecture circuits. Brady captured the serious-

ness of Barton's nature while managing not to make the subject look dour. Certainly, he avoided any sense of Barton's being vain, even though she is well-dressed, coiffed, and accessorized. Barton conveys Victorian female virtues – modesty, seriousness, and devotion – simply by sitting there.

In the *Standing Portrait*, Tubman is wearing simple clothes. Like Barton's, Tubman's clothes are neither fancy nor embellished. They connote moral stature without suggesting vanity. The difference inheres in class and race. While one woman sits and the other stands, both face the camera, open to being seen. Both women wear high-collared, buttoned jackets fitted through the bodice. Barton's dress is unadorned and suggests her competence and professionalism. Pulling slightly at the hips and breast, Tubman's dress works hard to suggest status. Her lace collar works against the dress's limitations. Difference is also seen in the women's accessories. Barton holds gloves intended to pro-

Figure 5. Matthew Brady, *Clara Barton*, ca. 1866. Albumen print. Washington, D.C., Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division (Photo: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division).



fect her genteel hands. The gloves in hand suggest her civility and her social position. Tubman reveals the hands of a labourer, yet displays them in a ladylike manner, cupped on the back of the chair. Barton's skirt dominates the frame. Its reflective surface suggests comfort without opulence. Tubman's skirt is slightly too short, exposing tattered boots. The fabric falls in such a way as to suggest that it is worn, tired, lifeless. The skirt appears to have strips of material added to the bottom, perhaps as a means of mending the damaged garment. Photographed in the most appropriate dress that she can manage, Tubman seeks to meet Victorian ideals of womanhood, in just the same way Barton does.

While Tubman's clothes do not impress by virtue of their cut, fabric, or style, they meet a standard of propriety quite different from her former slave clothing. Typically, clothing for slaves was made from "the cheapest, meanest" fabric, and was often ill-suited to the demands of the work.<sup>39</sup> Women who worked in the fields like men often wore pants, pantaloons, or

bloomers, their genders doubly distanced. Tubman's contemporary, abolitionist speaker and women's rights advocate Sojourner Truth, made her dislike of bloomers clear:

Ef women want any rights more'n dey's got, why don't dey jes' tak 'em, an' not be talkin' about it? Some on 'em came round me an' asked why I did n't wear bloomers. An' I told 'em I had bloomers enough when I was in bondage. You see ... dey used to weave what dey called nigger-cloth, an' each one of us got jes' sech a strip, an' had to wear it width-wise. Them that was short got along pretty well, but as for me ... 'Tell you, I had enough of bloomers in them days.<sup>40</sup>

Truth's comments recognize that clothing could function as a tool of degradation, negating her womanhood and exercising control over black women's bodies.<sup>41</sup> Despite the degrading signs of maleness, Tubman often consciously disguised herself as a man in order to avoid capture. Transcending the conventions of gender, she often chose to wear pants or bloomers, finding them easier to wear during her expeditions.

The difficulty of negotiating her multiple identities through dress was real for Tubman. In a letter to Boston abolitionist

Franklin Sanborn, she articulates a conflict with her clothing during an Underground Railroad expedition:

I want a bloomer dress, made of some coarse, strong material, to wear on expeditions. In our late expedition up the Combahee River, in coming on board the boat, I was carrying two pigs for a poor sick woman, who had a child to carry, and the order "double quick" was given, and I started to run, stepped on my dress, it being rather long, and fell and tore it almost off, so that when I got on board the boat, there was hardly anything left but shreds. I made up my mind then I would never wear a long dress on another expedition of the kind, but would have a bloomer as soon as I could get it.<sup>42</sup>

In asking for the bloomer dress, Tubman may have been familiar with the dress reform movement, and the feminists "who criticized the showy, expensive, and unhealthy fashions of mid-



dle-class ladies.”<sup>43</sup> The portrait of Mary E. Tillotson (fig. 6), a charter member of the American Dress Reform Association, illustrates a reformist’s choice of clothing.<sup>44</sup> Tubman had to negotiate her image carefully. At the very least, she required greater comfort and mobility from her clothing.

After the Civil War, when Tubman attended the photographer’s studio in a skirt, she was not making an overt political statement.<sup>45</sup> She could have worn pants, as she did prefer them on her expeditions. Clothing is another boundary. Pants signify both the degradation of black womanhood and the progress of white womanhood. When we examine this photograph we see her struggle to articulate a meaningful identity at a moment when dress spoke volumes about female intentionality.

In the *Standing Portrait*, Tubman wears a dress slightly shorter than the norm.<sup>46</sup> Was it second-hand, or shortened by Tubman for comfort and mobility? We cannot know. None of this is revealed in the photograph, and yet we do know that she agreed to wear these clothes, and to be immortalized in them. Just as slaves made quiet statements about their individuality, identity, and preferences, Tubman contributed to her image-making by wearing this pair of boots, this expression, this posture.<sup>47</sup> These seemingly quotidian choices contribute meaningful cues toward her self-definition as they function in opposition to external expectations.

Tubman stands surrounded by props, furniture, and a backdrop, all of which confirm the Victorian viewer’s experience of the photographer’s studio. The chair is adorned with tassels and is stuffed and ruched to suggest luxury and comfort. The table behind Tubman and the details on the backdrop imply a private sitting room where contemplative conversations might be enacted. The setting confirms that her status affords her this moment and that she willingly participates in and contributes to the construct of middle-classness – a true escape from slavery.

The technical requirements of the *carte de visite* presented limited options for sitters, although the sitters tried to convey status and respectability through an austere and dignified demeanour. Lengthy exposures, limited depth of field, the need for reliable, strong and constant light, virtually demanded that sitters pose in positions that they could sustain throughout the exposure. As a result, the casualness of the twentieth-century portrait was beyond the nineteenth-century photographer’s grasp. The effect was a conventional aesthetic, which persisted even when exposure times became briefer. Models continued to sit on or stand next to props that supported their bodies and restricted their movement. The stiff bodies and the studied facial expression typical of these portraits is due in part to the uncomfortable braces employed by the photographer in order to support the body of the sitter.

By assuming this posture and by wearing a costume of

Figure 6. Artist unknown, *Mary Tillotson*, ca. 1866–70. *Carte de visite*. Collection of Deborah Fontana Cooney, Silver Spring, Maryland (Photo courtesy of Deborah Fontana Cooney).



propriety, Tubman acquiesces to the limitations of the medium and to social convention. By contrast, other black women of means did pose in fancier dress. Feminist lecturer Frances Ellen Watkins Harper (fig. 7) assumes the same pose as Tubman, but her garments signify a luxury not seen in Tubman’s simple clothing. Harper and Tubman required their photographs to function differently. Tubman’s photographic representation needed to be consistent with her pious and humble “story” and her economic realities. The representation mattered, as her mission was vital. We suspect at least two possible interpretations of her stance and clothing: either she would not want to appear above her station and lose her credibility with supporters both white and black, or she deliberately rejected all the genteel expectations by refusing fancier dress. Tubman herself

Figure 7. Artist unknown, *Portrait of Frances Ellen Watkins Harper*, ca. 1892. Photographic print. Special Collections Library, Pennsylvania State University Libraries (Photo: reproduced from Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, *Iola Leroy*, 1893, courtesy of Pennsylvania State University Libraries).



Figure 8. Artist unknown, *Harriet Tubman*, ca. 1869. Woodcut. New York, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library (Photo: reproduced from C. Woodson, *The Negro in Our History*, 1922, courtesy of the Schomburg Center).



never spoke directly to this issue so we can only speculate. Humble or defiant, Tubman's silence frustrates our ability to know.

A woodcut,<sup>48</sup> ca. 1869, shows another representation of Tubman (fig. 8). The formal elements depict Tubman standing, leaning on a rifle, her gaze toward the viewer. This is a common motif for the period, as many soldiers were represented in similar poses. The *Standing Portrait* discloses nothing of the woman captured in the woodcut, where Tubman is pictured in Civil War attire – headscarf, bloomer dress, and gun. The woodcut illustrated Sarah Bradford's biography.<sup>49</sup> The biography would have appealed to an audience already well-disposed to Tubman's cause: the Underground Railroad network, abolitionists, and at least some unionists. For those sympathetic to Radical Reconstruction,<sup>50</sup> the woodcut might have invoked the martial image of the black soldier, an image that became unacceptable by the mid 1870s. The woodcut would not support a post-Civil War society actively trying to build a unified national

identity. To secure financial support, Tubman abandoned the clothing and trappings that defined General Tubman so that Aunt Harriet could emerge.

Just as Aunt Harriet domesticated General Tubman, so too does the *Standing Portrait* obscure the injuries Tubman sustained as a slave. At ten, an overseer threw an iron weight at her head, crushing her skull and causing the headaches, seizures, visions, and the narcoleptic episodes she suffered the rest of her life.<sup>51</sup> We do not actually see her naked body, her physical body, which bears the scars of slavery on her neck and back. We do not see evidence of the effects of her childhood injury. The photograph only shows the surface, not the lived experience, and certainly not this woman's interior life.

The photographic act required Tubman to be above ground, recognizable and traceable. More than a representation of Tubman, the *Standing Portrait* is a symbol of her shifting identity. She is no longer a slave, no longer a fugitive, no longer an Underground Railroad conductor, and no longer a Civil War

leader. She can be seen, recognized, and pictured. Her days of being covert, hidden, and invisible arc over. She can be still.

Formally, the *Standing Portrait* follows all contemporary conventions and yet this representation suggests a multitude of variations on one life, one narrative. It tells and re-tells several stories beyond the details of who or what appears in front of the camera lens. The “point of view of the photograph itself” is where all interpretation and understanding rest. The camera contributes to formulating impressions, and yet these impressions are just as hidden to us as they are visible.<sup>52</sup>

Within the boundaries of her photograph, Tubman’s multiple identities are played out in the framings of nineteenth-century portraiture. The portrait “not only imitates but also reveals, making manifest something hidden. It is both a public document of fact and an agent of private revelation.”<sup>53</sup> Portraiture is a compelling social act because it conjoins the representation of the sitter with the knowledge we have of that individual, the personal with the public, the individual with institutions. One’s own portrait was an object to contemplate. Offering it to others to view secured the illusion that the individual pictured was one coherent identity or entity. Portraits and myths became yoked. Viewing photographs today, we are acutely aware that there is always something outside the frame, outside the sign, perhaps something missing or intentionally omitted, that points to the ultimate incomprehensibility of the past and the difficulty of representation.<sup>54</sup>

### Exposing the Myth

According to African Canadian historians, Canada began to develop a reputation as a safe haven for blacks around 1778 during the American War of Independence, when some 3,500 black loyalists arrived in Canada, as well as 1,500 slaves in the company of their white loyalist masters.<sup>55</sup> That reputation grew during and after the War of 1812, when thousands of black refugees crossed the border, most settling in the Maritimes, especially Nova Scotia, while others moved to communities scattered throughout Ontario and Quebec.<sup>56</sup> During both wars, blacks were promised freedom, equality, and land in Canada, if they remained loyal to Britain. The passing of the first Fugitive Slave Law in 1793 saw black Americans, free and fugitive, looking to the North Star. Abolitionists on both sides of the border began to establish the informal network of “safe houses” and secret routes that would become known as the Underground Railroad. Between 1815 and 1860, approximately 50,000 fugitive slaves escaped to Canada via the Underground Railroad.<sup>57</sup>

When Tubman entered Canada, Moses entered the Promised Land. The stories and myths of her crossings inscribed *freedom* into a young and unstable Canadian narrative. Often

cited as Canadian, African-Canadian or a Black Canadian, Tubman and her story have earned a place in multiple Canadian histories. Tubman’s story and the strategic use of the *Standing Portrait* complicate the (re)telling of Canadian history, providing evidence of a Canada that offered refuge for escaping fugitives. Cultural theorist Rinaldo Walcott argues, “Canada’s continued forgetfulness concerning slavery here, and the nation state’s attempts to record only Canada’s role as a place of sanctuary for escaping African-Americans, is part of the story of absencing blackness from its history.”<sup>58</sup>

Harriet Tubman – the fugitive slave, the freedom fighter, the Moses of her people – captures the national imagination. Although Tubman’s stay in St Catharines was short, her heroic crossings into what would become known as the Promised Land have earned her a prominent place in Canadian history. Tubman and the Underground Railroad evidence Canada’s early support of the plight of the refugee, but, according to African Canadian scholars, there is a price to pay for their selective representation. According to historian James Walker,

The Underground Railroad era was a positive moment in Canada’s past, for Canada did indeed offer a haven to American slaves for more than seventy-five years. The Underground Railroad also fostered a myth: that the North Star led not just to freedom, equality, and full participation in Canadian life, that the Promised Land was fulfilled in Canada.<sup>59</sup>

Tubman’s story is often used to promote the idea that a life for blacks in Canada was a fulfilling one. Tubman was an American slave, and her crossings to Canada reified Canadian freedom. But the Promised Land, in reality, was not fulfilled, as most black immigrants, segregated, jobless or given the lowest forms of employment, had great difficulty re-defining themselves north of the border and casting off their slave status.<sup>60</sup> In his book *Black Like Who?* Rinaldo Walcott states,

Crossings to Canada represent an ambivalence for any Canadian who must simultaneously grapple with the absented presence of slavery in official national discourses and the instances in nation-state narratives which argue that Canada’s only relation to slavery was as a sanctuary for escaping African-Americans – via the Underground Railroad. This dilemma is important because the crossing has been appropriated by the nation as the source of its denial of an almost five-hundred-year black presence.<sup>61</sup>

For Walcott, the Underground Railroad underlines the absence of blacks in Canadian history, forgetting Canada’s own history of slavery and racism. Early slavery in Canada and the image of

struggling refugees are part of the black experience in Canada. But these facts, not suitable for public consumption, are not part of the myth-making machine.

Currently, Canadian viewers need only watch television to witness re-enactments of fugitive slaves crossing to freedom. The long-running series *Canadian Historical Minutes*, framed as “dramatic 60-second ‘mini-movies’ where exciting and important stories from Canada’s past are presented to Canadians,”<sup>62</sup> invites viewers to witness the heroic efforts of famous Canadians like Jacques Cartier, Emily Murphy, and Nellie McClung as they change the Canadian landscape. The first *Historical Minute*, “Underground Railroad,” debuted over ten years ago. The short film presents a young, black woman and her siblings safe in Canada, awaiting the arrival of their father. Fearing the worst, the hysterical woman is comforted by a white female supporter. Soon a horse and carriage enters the scene, carrying a wooden coffin. When the woman’s father emerges alive, his daughter cries, “Pa, we’s in Canada!”

Viewers can also access the mini-movies on the *Historical Minutes* website, where each episode is framed by a written synopsis. The Underground Railroad synopsis begins, “Between 1840 and 1860, more than 30,000 American slaves came secretly to Canada and freedom.” It continues with a testimonial by Martin Luther King, who stated that for American blacks “Canada was the north star.” The synopsis concludes with mention that “[t]he old spiritual, ‘Follow the Drinking Gourd,’ gave slaves the hidden advice to keep their eyes on the Gourd [the Big Dipper], which pointed the way north to ‘heaven,’ in this case Canada.” Although Tubman is not featured in the mini-movie, the signs that make up the North Star mythology are all at work.<sup>63</sup>

A recent depiction of Tubman and the Underground Railroad can be seen in the award-winning CBC television series *Canada: A People’s History*. One episode, entitled “The Great Enterprise,” features a segment on the Underground Railroad. Framing the title is the *Standing Portrait* of Harriet Tubman. The narrator informs the viewer of the Fugitive Slave Law, stating, “American slave owners are on the hunt,” and “northern cities are no longer safe havens.” The viewer is further informed that “slavery has been illegal in Upper Canada for half a century.” This segment goes on to qualify blacks being welcome in Canada, stating, “sympathy for new arrivals only goes so far” and “curiosity and support fade.” We are told that many Canadians want an end to black immigration. The feelings of disgruntled Canadians are encapsulated in the following quote: “Let them be free in their own country. Let us not countenance their further introduction among us. In a word, let the people of the United States bear the burden of their sins.”<sup>64</sup>

Although this episode attempts to shed light on the complexities surrounding black immigration to Canada, to point

out that freedom did come with a price, the final quote is problematic as it suggests that slavery was an American institution, a product of American immorality. Without any reference to slavery in Canada, other than its abolition in 1833, Canadians are left with a cursory reading of Canada’s own practice of black enslavement and the inhumanity of its more “benevolent” form.

The use of the *Standing Portrait* in this context is double-edged. It is meaningful in that it says nothing and everything about the black experience in Canada. There is nothing Canadian about the photograph, or in the photograph. The woman with hands atop the back of a chair, stands free in Auburn, New York. Used in the television series, the *Standing Portrait* underlines the absence of blackness in Canadian historical discourses. Minimizing detailed readings of the lived experiences of slaves in Canada has caused historians to suggest that Canadian slavery was more humane than the American institution.<sup>65</sup> While the majority of enslaved Africans in Canada were domestic servants, unlike their field-working, American counterparts, the effects of being property were no less dehumanizing.

In the book *‘We’re Rooted Here and They Can’t Pull Us Up’: Essays in African-Canadian Women’s History*, African-Canadian women writers argue, “The history of Black people in Canada and of Black women in particular is missing from the pages of mainstream Canadian history. Black people in Canada have a past that has been hidden or eradicated, just as racism has been deliberately denied as an organizing element in how Canada is constituted.” The book aims to “scratch the surface and begin the debate about the nature of a truly Black feminist women’s history in Canada.”<sup>66</sup> As it seeks to integrate black women, resurrect their histories, and subvert mainstream assumptions about gender and race, *We’re Rooted Here* leans heavily on Harriet Tubman and her *Standing Portrait*. The bold title of the book comes from a famous Tubman speech denouncing the nineteenth-century movement to relocate African Americans back to Africa. Inside, Tubman’s *Standing Portrait* is the first photograph the reader sees. Footnoted by the mainstream historical narrative, Tubman is instead situated at the forefront of a feminist reading of Canadian history, which includes black women.

A myth is a story and more. A myth is defined by the way it attempts to encapsulate, express, and justify a cultural group’s place in the world, its origins, beliefs, values, and relationships to others. Myth can be born of transgression and survives over time in the utterances of those who subscribe to it.

Harriet Tubman’s crossings were acts of transgression. Her crossings altered Canada’s view of itself as a place of freedom, but myth also demands the transgressor take a back seat in her own story. The myth has its own work to do. Double-edged, myth works to essentialize, to bring communities together, as it splits, divides, and separates them in the process. Over a century



after her death, Tubman's story continues to promote discussions around the roles race and gender play in the multicultural Canadian identity.

The *Standing Portrait* is, in a sense, underexposed. A photograph can only capture what lies in front of the lens. It can never tell an entire story. This absence makes the *Standing Portrait* easy to appropriate for the purpose of history telling and mythmaking. Photography leaves all portraits susceptible to appropriation. Unable to capture the whole story, photography and its conventions fail to articulate the complexities surrounding Tubman's identities and her movements. If we don't come to the image with an agenda, we simply see the woman standing with her hands resting atop the back of a chair.

#### Notes

- 1 Institutions holding the photograph date it differently. This may be because they have the object in differing forms – some cartes de visite, some cabinet cards. It is noteworthy that Tubman's many biographers all date the photograph differently.
- 2 Census research places photographer H.B. Lindsley at the Sunbeam Studio in Auburn, N.Y., between 1871–74. Additionally, the Cayuga Museum (the source for this version of the image) attributes the photograph to Lindsley. Therefore the authors attribute the portrait of Tubman to this photographer. It is notable that Humez records the spelling of the photographer's name as H.R. Luidley; the signature on the carte de visite discussed herein is difficult to decipher.
- 3 Tubman is cited as one of Canada's "Memorable Canadians" on Library Canada's website: "Towards Confederation," <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/confederation/h18-2055-e.html> (accessed 10 January 2005).
- 4 This carte de visite of Tubman appears in several collections, but it is catalogued under different names. Additionally, the biographers who include the image in their books describe the photograph variously. The authors have chosen to refer to the photograph as the *Standing Portrait* in order to differentiate it from other images of Tubman in which she is generally seen seated. We also hope that by naming it, the image will be perceived as an object worth contemplation and reflection.
- 5 Jean M. Humez, *Harriet Tubman: The Life and the Life Stories* (Madison, 2003), 3. Humez notes that the famous woodcut image of Tubman may have been based on a photograph taken during the Civil War, which would date earlier than the *Standing Portrait* discussed here. If this earlier photograph ever existed, its whereabouts are unknown.
- 6 Humez, *The Life and the Life Stories*, 149. Bradford began work on the biography in 1868 and it was first published in 1869. Humez notes that Bradford rewrote the biography in 1886, "systematically [taking out] all of Tubman's politics," and titled it *Harriet Tubman, the Moses of Her People*. The final edition, published in 1901, included stories Bradford collected between 1886 and 1901.
- 7 Tubman's life above ground can be traced through official documents and letters, but her life underground as a fugitive necessitated living without a trace.
- 8 Humez, *The Life and the Life Stories*, 6. Humez advocates that Tubman played an active and self-conscious role in "shaping her legacy."
- 9 Catherine Clinton, *Harriet Tubman: The Road to Freedom* (New York, 2004), 4. Although Tubman believed her birth date to be 1825, and her death certificate states 1915, her birth date is most often cited by historians as 1820, 1822, or ca. 1820. The author writes, "Circa" affixed before a birth year is one of the most common legacies of slavery."
- 10 Adrienne Shadd, "'The Lord Seemed to Say 'Go': Women and the Underground Railroad Movement," *We're Rooted Here and They Can't Pull Us Up: Essays in African-Canadian Women's History*, ed. Peggy Bristow (Toronto, 1994), 48. Adrienne Shadd notes that 80 percent of fugitives were men between the ages of 16 and 35. Women in the same age group were in their childbearing years and likely unable or unwilling to leave or travel with their children. Also, the sexual division of labour allowed slave men the opportunity to work outside the plantation, whereas slave women lacked knowledge of the outside world.
- 11 Kate Clifford Larson, *Bound for the Promised Land: Harriet Tubman, Portrait of an American Hero* (New York, 2004), 301.
- 12 Clinton, *The Road to Freedom*, 54. The second Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 protected slaveholders' rights and allowed slave catchers to "remand captives back south from the furthest reaches of the northern cities and ... render a verdict without trial by jury." The law maintained the capture and return of runaway slaves, thus preventing fugitives from settling legally in free states, forcing them to escape to Canada and beyond.
- 13 The Underground Railroad was an organized secretive network of people, routes, transportation, and safe houses that helped runaway slaves find freedom in the northern states and Canada. A metaphor for the actual railroad system, participants were known as "passengers," "agents," "conductors," and "stationmasters."
- 14 Larson, *Bound for the Promised Land*, 100. Larson writes that Tubman made approximately thirteen trips into the South, directly guiding seventy to eighty fugitives to freedom and gave detailed instructions to fifty or sixty more.
- 15 Humez, *The Life and the Life Stories*, 25. Humez writes that Tubman owned a home in St Catharines with her two brothers but returned to Auburn around 1858–59.
- 16 Humez, *The Life and the Life Stories*, 15. Due to Tubman's long absences relating to Underground Railroad work, John Tubman remarried. As a free man, he chose to stay south of the border.
- 17 Clinton, *The Road to Freedom*, 83.
- 18 Clinton, *The Road to Freedom*, 87.
- 19 Clinton, *The Road to Freedom*, 147. In May 1861 Tubman worked along side Massachusetts troops. Her efforts anticipate the huge enlistment of blacks in the Union Army.
- 20 Clinton, *The Road to Freedom*, 103.
- 21 Humez, *The Life and the Life Stories*, 32.
- 22 Clinton, *The Road to Freedom*, 95. Emphasis our own.
- 23 Clinton, *The Road to Freedom*, 77.

- 24 Humez, *The Life and the Life Stories*, 71. According to Humez, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper used Tubman's "experience to exemplify a pattern of insulting and discriminatory treatment of black women in a speech at the Eleventh Women's Rights convention sponsored by the National Woman's Suffrage Association."
- 25 Humez, *The Life and the Life Stories*, 73.
- 26 Humez, *The Life and the Life Stories*, 83.
- 27 During the same period, a portrait of Sojourner Truth was widely circulated and sold to promote Truth's lecture tours. This leads us to question whether a parallel may exist between Tubman's *Standing Portrait* and Truth's portrait.
- 28 Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (New York, 1998), 109. Barthes reveals myth as a message defined "by the way in which it utters this message."
- 29 Clinton, *The Road to Freedom*, 88–89.
- 30 We apply the works of photographic historians like Alan Trachtenberg and John Tagg, who work in the Barthesian tradition.
- 31 Lisa Collins, "Economies of Flesh: Representing the Black Female Body in Art," *Skin Deep, Spirit Strong: The Black Female Body in American Culture*, ed. Kimberly Wallace-Sanders (Ann Arbor, 2002), 103.
- 32 bell hooks, *Ain't I a Woman: black women and feminism* (Boston, 1981), 59.
- 33 Deborah Willis and Carla Williams, *The Black Female Body: A Photographic History* (Philadelphia, 2002), 2.
- 34 Barbara McCandless, "The Portrait Studio and the Celebrity: Promoting the Art," *Photography in Nineteenth-Century America*, ed. Martha A. Sandweiss (Fort Worth, 1991), 49. The practice of taking, viewing, and collecting photographic portraits of well-known Americans conformed to the prior value placed upon representations of persons with status through paintings. It was also believed that by viewing photographs of America's social and political elite, "the great and the good, the heroes, saints and sages," the populace might be inspired by "the noble traits." "Implicitly, viewing portraits of the nation's elite could provide moral edification for all its citizens who needed to learn how to present themselves as good Americans in a quest for upward mobility."
- 35 New France, in this context, refers to what is currently the province of Quebec.
- 36 But by the early twentieth century this same accoutrement would morph the Mammy into the fat, asexual Aunt Jemima of the 1920s, whose virtuous grin characterized the master/servant relationship as a warm, familial one. After slavery, the codes and signs of slavery – the headscarf, the starched dress, the tattered clothes – are turned against the black woman to keep her forever marginal.
- 37 Helen Bradley Foster, *New Raiments of Self: African American Clothing in the Antebellum South* (Oxford, 1997), 141. No efforts were made to translate or transcribe this passage.
- 38 Portions of "Suggestions to Ladies who sit for Daguerreotypes" by Albert S. Southworth (1854), which originally appeared in the *Lady's Almanac for 1854*, can be read on The Daguerreian Society website: <http://www.daguerre.org/resource/texts/ladies/html> (accessed 20 December 2004).
- 39 Phyllis G. Tortora and Keith Eubank, eds, *Survey of Historic Costume: A History of Western Dress* (New York, 1998), 293. Slave women were dressed in one of two styles: "There was a frock or robe with a simple, sleeveless and collarless bodice joined to a skirt. If the bodice had sleeves, they would be short. The other type had a semi-fitted bodice with round neckline, long loose sleeves and gathered skirt."
- 40 Sojourner Truth, *Narrative of Sojourner Truth* (New York, 1998), 112. No efforts were made to translate or transcribe this passage.
- 41 Foster, *New Raiments of Self*, 170. The author includes narratives of women forced to wear pants for one year as a humiliating punishment.
- 42 Humez, *The Life and the Life Stories*, 60.
- 43 Humez, *The Life and the Life Stories*, 61.
- 44 Joan Severa, *Dressed for the Photographer: Ordinary Americans & Fashion, 1840–1900*. (Ohio, 1995), 275. Although Tillotson's clothes appear masculine, they are not as extreme as they might be as her tunic might be worn with any skirt, and her dainty lace collar is very feminine.
- 45 Tortora and Eubank, *Survey of Historic Costume*, 303. Early dress reform efforts were initiated by feminists who hoped to change the clothing they found "confining and impractical." Lucy Stone, a leader in the movement, said, "Women are in bondage; their clothes are a great hindrance to their engaging in any business which will make them pecuniarily independent."
- 46 Severa, *Dressed for the Photographer*. For visual comparisons, see pp. 185–371, passim.
- 47 Tortora and Eubank, *Survey of Historic Costume*, 294. "Whenever possible, slaves decorated their clothing and tried to personalize them. Baumgarten (1992) notes that this was done by trimming and dyeing clothing for individuality, by making some of their own clothing, and by purchasing extra clothing or accessories with money earned through tips and sale of farm products that they grew."
- 48 The woodcut discussed in this paper appears as a print that originated in C. Woodson's *The Negro in our History*, 1922, part of the collection of the Schomburg Center at The New York Public Library. The Schomburg Center's catalogue does not attribute an artist to this piece. The woodcut also appeared at the end of the introduction to Bradford's 1869 biography, where the author states that the image was "furnished by the kindness of J.C. Darby." Humez also uses the woodcut; the caption attributes it to J.C. Darby, although it is unclear if Darby is the artist or a lender. Humez also states that the image appeared as the frontispiece to the biography, which is not consistent with the information provided by the Schomburg Center. The authors have elected to represent the woodcut as the Schomburg Center has done.
- 49 Humez, *The Life and the Life Stories*, 150. Bradford was not explicitly political in nature, although she was interested and moved by Tubman's achievements. She likely had religious motivations for supporting anti-slavery efforts.
- 50 Historians describe Radical Reconstruction as a movement within the Republican party, which sought extreme change in the post war South.

- 51 Larson, *Bound for the Promised Land*, 43. The author argues that Tubman suffered from temporal lobe epilepsy.
- 52 Alan Trachtenberg, *Reading American Photographs: Images as History, Matthew Brady to Walker Evans* (New York, 1989), xiii-xiv. Trachtenberg discusses camera vision and its resulting authoritative voice. He quotes poet Paul Valéry, writing, "The camera overcomes our predisposition 'not to see some of the things before us, and to see others which are not there.'"
- 53 Susan Williams, *Confounding Images: Photography and Portraiture in Antebellum American Fiction* (Philadelphia, 1997), 5, 6. Williams discusses the etymology of portraiture, writing, "It stems from the Latin word *protrahere*, to draw forth, reveal, extend, or prolong, and from the French *pourtraire*, to fashion or represent." Williams goes on to apply Baudrillard, stating that the portrait can refer either to an actual likeness of a person or to an image that typifies or idealizes something else, be it a person or a more generalized "scene" or "sight." Jean Baudrillard's theory of simulation is the creation of the real through conceptual or mythological models that have no connection or origin in reality. The results become the determinant of our perception of reality, or an idealized real. Boundaries between the image, the simulation and the reality break down and what results is a hyper-real state where the distinctions between the real and unreal are blurred.
- 54 Lisa Quinn and Monique Silverman, "Converging on the 'Real': Photographs and Literature of the American Civil War," paper delivered at Society for Photographic Education conference, Newport, R.I., 26 March 2004.
- 55 Ken Alexander and Avis Glaze, *Towards Freedom: The African-Canadian Experience* (Toronto, 1996), 41.
- 56 Alexander and Glaze, *Towards Freedom*, 42.
- 57 Alexander and Glaze, *Towards Freedom*, 58.
- 58 Rinaldo Walcott, *Black Like Who?* (Toronto, 1997), 44.
- 59 James W. Walker, *Racial Discrimination in Canada: The Black Experience* (Ottawa, 1985), 6.
- 60 Alexander and Glaze, *Towards Freedom*, 56.
- 61 Walcott, *Black Like Who?*, 22.
- 62 *Historica* (2005), <http://www.histori.ca/minutes/minute.do?id=10166> (accessed 14 May 2005).
- 63 *Historica* (2005), <http://www.histori.ca/minutes/default.do?id=10166> (accessed 14 May 2005).
- 64 "The Underground Railroad, Chapter 7 of The Great Enterprise (1850-1867)," *Canada A People's History Series 2*, vol. 5, DVD, produced and directed by Jim Williamson (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 2001).
- 65 Robin W. Winks, *The Blacks in Canada: A History*, 2nd ed. (Montreal, 1997), 50. Winks states: "on the whole, slaves appear to have been well treated," and the relatively small Canadian slave population "eliminated the need for overseers, the brutal effects of slave breeding, and controls arising from fears of armed Negro rebellion."
- 66 Bristow, *We're Rooted Here*, 3.