The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

The Formation and Evolution of the Ideology of Domesticity: 1830-1915

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Abstract

This work splits the nineteenth century into three distinct periods concerning the formation, adoption and revision of the ideology of domesticity as presented through the medium of household manuals. Although a great deal of study has focused on how women interacted with these ideologies, little has been done on researching the way women's actions impacted the ideologies throughout the century. This work concentrates on the ways the ideology evolved over the course of the nineteenth century as female writers responded to different historical events and societal changes. It does not recommend that these ideologies be used in a prescriptive sense, but instead offers a descriptive analysis of nineteenth century household manuals ideological evolution.
The Formation and Evolution of the Ideology of Domesticity: 1830-1915

The 19th century witnessed immense change, brought on by immense political and ideological changes. During the early 1800's Americans faced a changing world; war broke out, immigration increased, work reordered to reflect the increased move away from agriculture, and after the passing of Homestead Act many moved farther west. Women's roles began to change as males and household production moved outside of the home. As people struggled with understanding their place in the world, utopian societies, religious awakenings and other movements began. Women joined reform movements, fighting against intemperance, slavery, exploitation, poor working conditions and poverty. Within the written medium women outlined an ideology to define womanhood, creating an ideal standard and a way to understand the female's place in the world. Writers like Sarah Josepha Hale and Catherine Beecher created an ideology of domesticity; constructing women as pious, pure, domestic and submissive. Focusing on traditional female roles, these women elevated housekeeping and other "female" occupations to a scientific study. The ideology of domesticity supported the concept of separate spheres, developed at the same time, which defined the arena of influence and respectable roles for females. While these ideologies prescribed the female role, they did not characterize the majority of 19th century women. Upper and middle class women were the largest followers of the ideology, and although many of them participated in activities outside of their sphere of influence they often justified their behavior by stretching the definition of the sphere. Modern historians no longer prescribe the concept of separate spheres or the ideology of domesticity to every female activity from the era, instead using the ideology as a framework for understanding how women understood themselves and as a tool for historical study.
The ideology of domesticity encompassed females who embodied the traits of piety, purity, domesticity and submissiveness, as Barbara Welter outlines in her landmark article on women in the 19th century. These four attributes develop throughout during the first incarnations of household guides starting in the early 1830’s. By the middle of the century the attributes have become the main characteristics of the ideal female and culturally accepted as the pinnacle of female perfection. Authors portray these ideals for females within their works and famous novels such as Uncle Tom's Cabin and The Scarlet Letter helped define the ideology of domesticity by creating good women who exhibited these traits and bad women who do not. Other forms of popular media, including magazines, lectures, newspaper articles, journals and plays, all reference these four major traits ascribed to the female gender. Culturally these traits permeated society until they were considered the ideal for all females. However, the ideology of domesticity evolved during the nineteenth century adapting and adopting different political and ideological advancements, creating a new formulation of domesticity that incorporated ideals of republican motherhood, the scientific and industrial revolution, religious movements, and the women's rights movement. Women's household manuals gradually became an area where females could engage the ideologies present in the world. These attributes describe the 19th century readers' ideal women and it was not until the late 1800's and early 1900's that these attitudes were challenged within popular culture.

I ideological shifts before 1830

2 See works written by Sarah Joseph Hale and Catherine Beecher for examples.
The foundation of the ideology of domesticity finds its roots in the ideologies and events before 1830, when domestic guides gained in popularity. The Revolutionary War, republican motherhood, and the Industrial Revolution impacted later ideals of domesticity and created a foundation for the new ideology of domesticity. The events of the eighteenth century displaced many hierarchical structures that previously kept women subservient to men. As democracy gained a foothold in society and ideas concerning the rights of man appeared, society became concerned with women's place in society. The ideological shifts present in the late seventeenth century upturned many traditional structures within society and the family, forcing American society to adapt. The combination of a new political structure, a new importance on mothers apious and a new structuring of feminine labor created a dilemma for American women. The impact of the Revolutionary War, republican motherhood and the Industrial Revolution, reordered women's lives and displaced women from traditional seats of influence. Women, therefore, acted to restructure their roles within society and reformulate the ideal woman.

Women adapted to survive the war, just as they adapted to the foreign world they immigrated to. The early settlers of North America brought with them a myriad of political, religious and economic ideologies; some of these ideologies contributed to post-revolutionary gender roles, particularly Puritan views of femininity, work ethic and education. During the American Revolution women helped support the revolutionaries, going door-to-door raising funds, making clothing for the soldiers, gathering food and running family plantations and farms, and generally stepping outside of the home. As women adapted to the situation presented by war they gained new skills, skills that would help them and their families in the coming decades. These women experienced a large upsetting of societal and intellectual norms and the changes

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created radical shifts not only in thinking, but in the ways people lived and conducted their lives. The war upset traditional formations of power and society started "a new struggle to restore 'normalcy,' or to re-create an acceptable version of it." While some aspects of Puritan social arrangements remained, women and men worked toward creating a new formation of society that incorporated philosophies introduced during the war. Women reshaped these philosophies to create their own place within a new society, one where ideals of individuality, patriotism and duty mixed with the values of the past.

After the Revolutionary War women were also recognized as intellectuals in their own right and these ideals combined with the values presented by the revolution to create the idea of republican motherhood. Republican motherhood concentrated on the duty of women to create the next generation of citizens. Women likewise began to be seen as mentally and morally able, instead of being physically unable to undertake intellectual studies. Carol Berkin notes that the reorganization of household production coupled with intellectual recognition created a "republican mother who would inscribe patriotism ... who would keep her husband virtuous by her example." Household manuals repeated this rhetoric later in the nineteenth century as they concentrated on the importance of women as moral and patriotic guides. In the fifty years after the Revolutionary war society added these ideals to the characteristics ascribed to women. Guide writers concentrated on the woman's morality and her "obligation to frame her conduct so as to render it at least irreproachable in the eyes of others, if not a model for imitation." Women became the moral guides of a family, the ones who produced intelligent and moral citizens for

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6 Mrs. William Parkes, *Domestic Duties; or, Instructions to Young Married Ladies on the Management of their Households, and the Regulation of their Conduct in the Various Relations and Duties of Married Life* (New York: Harper, 1838).
society. Instead of being the immoral beings presented by the Puritans, women were the foundation of family morality and citizenship. Although earlier guides consider mother's role in forming proper children, it is within the later guides that women gain critical roles in the shaping of citizens and more importantly voters.

Society after the Revolutionary war formed a new understanding of the female gender and the ideological remnants of the revolution became the foundation for 19th century gender construction. The immense social upheaval created by the revolution and the different roles women adopted during the war forced the new society to create a modified societal structure, one that could control the population as a new government form settled into place. The new philosophical ideals supporting Revolutionary ideals also supported the discussion of women's place and abilities. The Enlightenment idea that children were born "tabula rasa" or blank slate, situated mothers as the ones to inscribe morals upon their children, to the extent that pious behavior became a feminine necessity.7 The idea of women being highly moral in order to shape their children concentrated on women's influence on her family and the ways women affected society. Compared to Puritan ideology which presented all human beings as innately depraved and sinful, the idea of virtuous women effecting children appealed to the authors of household literature. Women wrote about females whose virtue corresponded with their roles within the home. One male author of a household guide dedicated his work "for those in whom the moral sense has been developed with the intellectual faculties, for those who feel and acknowledge the duties which grow out of their relation to God and their immortal destiny."8 Men began to view women in terms of intellectually capability and moral capacity, as society incorporated

8 The Young Lady's Friend (Boston: American Sationers' Co., 1837), 9.
republican motherhood into their understanding of feminine traits. Societal perception of femininity changed as women actively re-wrote humanity's concept of female and created a world where they were looked to as moral instead of base.

While societal perceptions of women's mental and emotional states slowly changed, early nineteenth century industrialization restructured and invalidated many forms of female production and knowledge. Skills and knowledge traditionally passed down generationally lost importance due to the industrialization, urbanization and the invention of household labor saving devices. Household production moved from within the home and into an industrial sphere, creating new duties for women who had more time to engage in leisure and complex household tasks like cooking, child-raising and cleaning. \(^9\) Urbanization began to remove the important tasks of flour and cloth production from the home. Families, who traditionally produced their own food, purchased their food for the first time as the country became increasingly urbanized. Household good production generally utilized female labor and men's household labor increasingly left the home as heating technologies moved outside of the home. The movement of labor from within the home to outside of it devalued the skills of weaving and sewing, as women increasingly were no longer needed for cloth production. For instance samplers, examples of sewing skill and embroidery talent, were no longer valued by the middle of the 19th century and one writer noted that her "sampler was a matter of curiosity, and sometimes of ridicule, to my children." \(^{10}\) Skills that were once valued no longer held their high status as anyone with money could have access to high quality cloth and food. As production of goods moved outside of the home, other expectations for females enter the public consciousness. The creation of labor saving devices elevated the state of cleanliness and quality required of a home

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while simultaneously nullifying previous knowledge. Inventions such as the cast iron kitchen stove, scrub boards, gas lighting, and preserving jars all originated during the late 1700's and early 1800's and brought new techniques and knowledge in order to use them.\textsuperscript{11} By necessity women needed to adapt to these items and incorporate them into their lives. Although these items made certain tasks easier, these works also created additional duties for the average female. Expectations for cleanliness and food quality expanded as more time could be dedicated to previously overlooked areas of the home. The knowledge necessary to maintain the new standards of household organization invalidated previous knowledge and required the formation of new knowledge for women.

Formation: 1830-1850

By the early 1830's female authors recognized the beginning of change within society and writers for the female audience started to concentrate on the formulation and maintenance of feminine mores. Earlier writers of cookbooks and household guides concentrated on simply recording traditional knowledge and the early 19th century domestic advice authors primarily continued with this traditional form. Early works followed the example of Martha Washington's cookbook, a handwritten manuscript passed or copied down for her daughters to use.\textsuperscript{12} However, unlike earlier household guides, the 19th century works were mass produced and contained more than just tips and hints on running a household. Often written by middle and upper class women, these guides contained useful information for those unfamiliar with keeping a home. Although later guides split into two formats, that of cookbooks and domestic advice literature, the early

and mid 1900's guides combined the two mediums often sparing the introduction for the dispensation of moral and philosophical knowledge. Within these spaces female writers concentrated on the issues that concerned them the most. Often women noted the major debates of the time, concentrating on female education and the importance of the family as citizens. These works, coupled with etiquette guides, concentrated on how to teach the next generation the skills needed for survival in a changing world. These works concentrated on teaching needed skills and "although their target audiences were the general public, these publications were often considered the precursors of 20th-century home management textbooks." These guides created a space where women could engage in intellectual discussion of women's place and purpose. Women concerned themselves with incorporating new philosophies into their works, creating their own ideology of gender roles and feminine places in society. As a space solely feminine, the guides presented an arena where discussion could take place and where writers could remain relatively anonymous. These works incorporated a multitude of ideologies, philosophies and other ideas formed in the previous century coupled with the changes and challenges created by industrialization.

At the same time that women began to engage philosophical ideas concerning their place in society, standards of education also moved away from earlier models during the time period between 1830-1850. Female education shifted away from only concentrating on sewing, dancing and other genteel arts, instead including focus on literacy and scholarly pursuits. Although debate flourished on the type of education given to women, generally American society supported the idea of educating upper and middle class women. One writer Abigail Mott asks,

"Have we not all talents, for the improvement of which we must be accountable? Have we not all duties to perform, for the neglect of which no excuse will be accepted?" While debate still flourished over what types of education and how much education females should receive, the general population promoted some form of education for females. Mott and other writers concentrated on feminine education, not for educations sake, but instead to benefit the family. Hannah More, wrote that "a lady studies, not that she may qualify herself to become an orator or a pleader; not that she may learn to debate, but to act ... The great uses of study are to enable her to regulate her own mind, and be useful to others." Household guide writers, unlike those fighting for women's rights, concentrated on education as a natural consequence of republican motherhood. In order for women to be effective mother's, the writers argued that females needed an education so they could instruct their progeny in matters of morality and intellect.

Early writers worked with the concept of republican motherhood to validate household guides as a literary genre, along with ascribing the piety associated with the republican mother to all females. The presentation of women as virtuous moral republican mothers endorsed the validity of household guides and turned a previously obscure and personal genre into a literary force. Women appealed to patriotism to authenticate the necessity of household guides as a means of instruction for young wives and mothers. Despite the evolution of societal structures and norms, the unchanging nature of domestic modes concerned many household guide writers. Many writers noted that women were ill prepared for their role as housewives and that "the information conveyed [in this book] is of a common kind; but it is such as the majority of young

housekeepers do not possess, and such as they cannot obtain from cookery books."\textsuperscript{19} However, authors also had little demand for the works they wrote and thus presented arguments on the validity of the genre. Women writers concentrated on society's concerns and appealing to the morality found in republican motherhood presented their works as necessary. Writers consistently referenced the necessity of women as the moral guides of the family, and concentrated on including morality as a justification for household guides.

\textit{Women: pious centers of the home}

The change from women as immoral, to women as being potentially moral and pious created different expectations of women. Writers concentrated on the importance of household morality in terms of female influence and power. A daughter could look up to a moral and virtuous women, who wielded power previously reserved for the religious leaders of the community. The consideration of women as virtuous allowed females authority within the home. Married women presided over the home and their influence would reform and purify society. Within the home a wife "may be here a corrective of what is wrong, a moderator of what is unruly, a restraint on what is indecorous. Her presence may be a pledge against impropriety and excess, a check on vice, and a protection to virtue."\textsuperscript{20} In a world that kept changing, the idea of a pious woman at home created an appealing picture to many writers. Writers wrote about women

\textsuperscript{19} Lydia Maria Francis Child, \textit{The American Frugal Housewife: Dedicated to Those who are not Afraid of Economy} (Boston: Carter and Hendee, 1832), 6.

\textsuperscript{20} \textit{The Young Lady's Own Book : A Manual of Intellectual Improvement and Moral Deportment} (Philadelphia: Key, Mielke and Biddle, 1832), 3.
who overcame their situations and brought their families back from immorality. Morality gave women power, the power to influence their family members and create a better world. Catherine Beecher, a well known writer of household guides, concentrated on women's superiority "in matters pertaining to the education of their children, in the selection and support of a clergyman, in all benevolent enterprises, and in all questions relating morals or manners." Women became the moral centers of the home, taking the place of the patriarchal husband found in Puritan morality. Female piety allowed women to play a part in regulating society; women gained control over the family and the family's morality. Moral women influenced those around them and helped to shape the next generation.

Piety, as a trait, extended beyond simply encompassing married women; instead writers expected unmarried women to also impact their families for the better. Piety took on additional duties for the unmarried woman. Writers told young woman, that in order to remain pure, she should remain obedient to her parents, respectful to the aged, and pure, both in spirit and body. A young woman's purity added supplementary regulations concentrating on the formation of a personality properly aligned with societal and Christian mores. One writer wished that society would "let every young woman aspire to high degrees of purity and excellence. Let her great aim be, to be personally holy... For every self-denial or self-sacrifice it involves, she will secure, as a general rule, manifold more in this present life, and in the world to come, life everlasting." Writers cajoled women of all ages to adhere to the tenant of piety, but also placed special attention on forming pious habits at a young age. Most household guides focused on women's

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23 Richard J. Ross, "Puritan Godly Discipline in Comparative Perspective: Legal Pluralism and the Sources of 'Intensity.'" *American History Review* (October 2008)
role in passing down piety to the next generation, whether through direct instruction or personal
examples. Writers believed that young women had particular influence on their siblings,
especially their brothers. Many writers portrayed a sister's influence as highly important in the
development of their siblings moral development. Young women's piety concentrated on
influencing the family for the better as an obedient daughter and attentive sister.

The women who wrote household guides concentrated on piety not only as a laudable
trait, but as a necessary one for the happiness of the family. Characteristics of piety created the
perfect woman, one who supported her husband and children in spiritual matters. Authors
considered a woman's happiness to hinge on certain traits: "purity of mind, simplicity and
frankness of heart, benevolence, prompting to active charity, lively and warm affections,
inducing a habit of forbearance, and the practice of self-denial, which the comfort or good of
their human ties may demand." These traits, similar to those professed in the Bible, gained
acceptance as uniquely feminine and required women to actively sacrifice themselves for the
happiness of those around them. Female piety concentrated on matters associated with the home,
religious teaching and hospitality. A woman's habits within the home created an arena where
piety could form in all family members. Women fed their families good food, sewed their
clothing, and kept the house clean; this along with a correct doctrine and instruction constituted
the female sphere of morality and the arena of influence. Pious women created a happy home,
where males retreated from the hectic world. Women influenced their families, by keeping them

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26 Mrs. William Parkes, Domestic Duties; or, Instructions to young married ladies on the management of their
households, and the regulation of their conduct in the various relations and duties of married life (New
moral, happy and healthy, women believed they could use subtle advice to change the world.\textsuperscript{28} Virtuous women reformed their families and in the process made their homes attractive places to be.

Household writers viewed women who did not embrace the trait of piety as dooming themselves and their entire families to immorality. Piety, encompassing both religion and morals, became required for societal acceptance. A remnant from Puritan religious mores, acceptance into society required religious involvement. Women who did not subscribe to the strict piety recommended by guide writers faced condemnation by their churches, communities and families. The Second Great Awakening encompassed the time period of the early household guide writers and most writers strongly condemned women who deviated from religious mores. One male author considered piety as the most important of all feminine traits as "a deficiency in other respects may indeed occasion you much inconvenience in the world; but a radical deficiency here must extend its influence beyond the grave."\textsuperscript{29} Piety, constructed as innately feminine, required all women to ascribe to its mores and women who refused to follow moral behavior harmed not only themselves, but the people around them. If a wife refused to enact morality within her home, household writers considered her a failed woman.\textsuperscript{30} Immoral women received condemnation not only in the present life, but also in the Christian afterlife and their legacy affected the people around them. Household guides portrayed impious women as affecting their

\textsuperscript{28} Mrs. William Parkes, \textit{Domestic Duties; or, Instructions to young married ladies on the management of their households, and the regulation of their conduct in the various relations and duties of married life} (New York: Harper, 1838), 351.

\textsuperscript{29} \textit{The Daughter's Own Book: or, Practical Hints from a Father to His Daughter} (Boston: Lilly, Wait, Colman, and Holden, 1835), xiii.

\textsuperscript{30} Mrs. William Parkes, \textit{Domestic Duties; or, Instructions to young married ladies on the management of their households, and the regulation of their conduct in the various relations and duties of married life} (New York: Harper, 1838), 359.
homes and their families negatively. Writers viewed morality and piety as allowing women to effectively contribute to their homes in positive ways.

Domestic: New Skills, New Roles

Women enacted pious behavior not only in the ways they interacted with their families and religion, but also in the ways they kept their homes. Domestic efforts constituted a major role in the traits assigned to women. Domesticity, one of the four traits outlined by the ideology of domesticity, became integral in the construction of woman. Early 19th century understandings of piety intertwined with understandings of domesticity and as household production left the home, domestic undertakings gained critical importance. Writers believed in the importance of women's domestic attitudes and placed domesticity as a natural offshoot of piety. One writer believed that "the plan of the Creator most certainly does require that these household duties should, as a general rule, be performed by the mother." Writers believed that domestic endeavors performed by women, with help from children, gained spiritual acceptance. The move of males from the home minimized the amount of chores he performed around the house, leaving the female to do all of the household work. As males work left the home the importance of female household labor increased. Likewise the amount of labor expected of women also increased as advances in technology and science created higher expectations of women's work. Although the increased availability of low paid immigrant servants eased women's workload, the

31 Wm. A. Alcott, The Young House-Keeper, or Thoughts on Food and Cookery (Boston: Waite, Peirce, 1846), 21-25.
32 Wm. A. Alcott, The Young House-Keeper, or Thoughts on Food and Cookery (Boston: Waite, Peirce, 1846), 30.
added necessity of management skills contributed to the list of new skills women needed to learn.

Women who followed the ideology of domesticity needed to learn additional skills on top of traditionally feminine skills such as cooking in order to be considered domestic. Cleaning standards rose as more time became available to dedicate toward cleaning and decorating. Middle class men expected their wives to know more skills and middle class women's education rose to include piano and other entertaining arts. Domestic skills also gained recognition as women undertook complicated recipes, complex sewing projects and large diner parties.34 Writers noted that for a woman "it cannot be beneath her dignity to learn anything which contributed to the comfort and happiness of those around her. Home is the especial providence of woman, and it should be her delight to feel that she has the power of administering to the wants and pleasures of her circle."35 Energy devoted to domestic endeavor led women to the fulfillment of pious behavior along with domestic glory. Writers considered women to be content when a home was well cleaned and ordered. Many authors looked at the households around them and noted that those who were not happy in their roles as housewives had disordered and messy homes.36 Regardless of the validity of the observation, early 19th century guide writers believed that female happiness depended on the domestic skills she had or had not acquired. Household guide writers believed that domesticity blessed women and their families. In order for women to gain ultimate happiness they required domestic skills.

34 Mrs. William Parkes, *Domestic Duties; or, Instructions to Young Married Ladies on the Management of their Households, and the Regulation of their Conduct in the Various Relations and Duties of Married Life* (New York: Harper, 1838), 89-106.
35 Sarah Stickney Ellis, *Mrs. Ellis's Housekeeping Made Easy: or, Complete Instructor in all Branches of Cookery and Domestic Economy, Containing the most Modern and Approved receipts of Daily Service in all Families* (New York: Burgess and Stringer, 1843), 9.
Writers advocated domestic behavior as one way to achieve harmony within society. Major changes within society created a desire for order and domestic order depended women's ability to keep a home. Women created sanctuaries from an increasingly changing world and as tension rose over slavery and other issues the idea of a rest from chaos became increasingly attractive. Writers compared domesticity with pious behavior and the majority of works written in the period between 1830 and 1850 concentrated on instructions for domestic skills. One writer compared a domestic home to heaven stating that, "A pleasant, well ordered home, is perhaps the most perfect representation of the felicity of the heaven above, which the earth affords...it is a source of very great happiness; and woman, when she is what she should be, is thus made a conspicuous agent in communicating that happiness." Domesticity became one area where women influenced society and created a place of rest for her family. Closely connected with religious ideals, domestic behavior concentrated on forming women who contributed to the household while still remaining at home. Constructing domestic work with religious mores allowed women to justify their regulation to the home, while still having an impact on family life and maintenance. Women's combination of religious ideals and feminine labor created one way women could remain active in societal issues while still remaining in the home. Religious validation allowed women to justify separate spheres and accept 19th century societal ordering.

*Submissiveness: Submission as piety*

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Submissiveness, another trait supported by the ideology of domesticity, also advocated an acceptance of 19th century social order and intentionally supported it. Submission of women, as a religious ideal, surfaces multiple times in the Bible the most blatant being in Ephesians 5:22 "wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord." The Biblical support of submission allowed household writers to connect submission with piety and advocate that every woman submit to the authorities within her life. Writers persuaded readers to always submit to their husbands, although the submission within arguments is the most common type of submission discussed. One woman recollected her first argument with her husband and recommended young wives to "watch well the first moments when your will conflicts with his to whom God and society have given control. Reverence his wishes even when you do not his opinions."\(^{38}\) She goes on to comment on the difficulty in giving up freedom and independence, but mentions nothing of her husband doing the same. Household guide writers embraced submission as it supported the goal of glorifying the home and the female role.\(^{39}\) Submissive women followed conventional ideals and added an additional religious justification to the fledgling ideology of domesticity.

Submission, a distinctly feminine trait, advocated women submitting not only for the perceived peace of the family, but the betterment of the nation. Women who submitted to their husbands and authority not only followed religious principles, but also contributed to maintaining societal order. Authors considered feminine submission as an example for others in society to replicate. Submissive women created an example for others to remain in their place and not question societal structure. Writers believed women should subordinate themselves in


\(^{39}\) Mrs. William Parkes, *Domestic Duties; or, Instructions to young married ladies on the management of their households, and the regulation of their conduct in the various relations and duties of married life* (New York: Harper, 1838), 353-355.
order to keep society running smoothly and keep the world balanced. Catherine Beecher advocated submission as a natural consequence of a well ordered nation. In order for the United States to survive, traditional forms of authority should be maintained, starting with a wife's submission to her husband. Women's submission modeled the larger societal need for respecting authority. Female submission, writers posited, would create a proper example for others in society to emulate. If a child grew up with a submissive mother, writers believed that he or she would be more likely to submit to the authority within society.

19th century society values of obedience and submission necessitated the idea of an innately submissive woman. Ideals of submission moved from patriarchal standpoints with the father as head of the family and the government the head of the fathers. While some authors concentrated on the social necessity of submission other writers justified subjugation by referencing nature and religion. These household writers concentrated on the religious and pseudoscientific justifications for submission and subjugation. One author concluded "that in whatever situation of life a woman is placed, from her cradle to her grave, a spirit of obedience and submission, pliability of temper, and of humility of mind, are required from her; and the most highly-gifted cannot quit the path thus pointed out by habit, nature and religion, without injury to her own character." Society constructed reasons to keep women within the home and under the authority of men. Writers kept women in the submissive roles found in highly patriarchal societies and explored reasons to justify this move. Within household guides writers created examples of women who were naturally submissive and from their birth submitted to authority. Examples of women who defied authority and followed their own desires reveal the

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41 The Young Lady's Own Book: A Manual of Intellectual Improvement and Moral Deportment (Philadelphia: Key, Mielke and Biddle, 1832), 347.
women as coming to ruin, and portrayed their actions as harming their fortunes and the happiness of those around them. Submission became intertwined with piety and domesticity and writers portrayed the obedient wife as a boon for her husband and family.

Adoption: 1850-1880

The period from 1850 to 1880 offered readers a chance to adopt the ideology of domesticity. Writers accepted the ideology created in the previous two decades and used the traits within their literature to create a picture of an idealized woman. Household guides during this time concentrate more on creating a formula for the readers to become the ideal woman and less time on creating what she should be. The ideal woman of the ideology of domesticity focused on the private sphere and concentrated on creating a welcoming home environment. Unlike earlier incarnations, the later 1850's to 1880 ideal woman concentrated more on decorating and cleaning the home than simple upkeep. The advent of readymade clothing, highly available canned goods and other modern household labor saving inventions at the end of the Civil War created time for women to focus on different avenues of domestic endeavors. The earlier works created a foundation for the later household guides to emulate and writers used earlier formats to display information for a changing audience. Guides written between 1850 and 1880 often concentrated on giving women practical suggestions, along with creating an idealized role model for women. Writers presented an ideal woman for readers to emulate and some offered a type of woman that starkly contrasted with the active woman who involved herself in

society. Writers often focused on two different aims for their works, either presenting a radically different model of living based on hard work or a guide to housekeeping in a middle class society that demanded certain rules of etiquette.

Guides generally offered information primarily for the middle class; however, certain guides during this time period gave information aimed for families heading out west. Although most household guides included advice applicable to the pioneer woman, other guides presented information tailored specifically for those endeavoring to become move away from the East Coast. Sarah Joseph Hale's work *Mrs. Hale's Receipts for the Millions* dedicates entire chapters to advice on farming, house building, animal husbandry and basic medical care.44 Catherine Beecher's *The American Woman's Home* also concentrates on providing information in these fields along with including instruction on building houses and the formation of "Christian neighborhoods" centered around the family, church and school in undeveloped areas of the United States. Beecher does not focus solely on the settling of the west, but instead also includes practical ideas for those planning to live in the South and other climates outside of New England.45 These two guides and others present information specifically tailored to women unfamiliar with basic farm upkeep and housekeeping without servants.46 Instead of specifically aiming their works at homesteaders, these works concentrate on providing some information every woman could use while still including advice specifically for those moving outside of traditional middle class areas.

44 Sarah Joseph Hale, *Mrs. Hale's Receipts for the Millions: Containing Four Thousand Five Hundred and forty-five Receipts, Facts, Directions, etc. in the Useful, Ornamental, and Domestic Arts, and in the Conduct of Life* (Philadelphia: T. B. Peterson, 1857), 179-202,265-318,431-484.
Previous household guides often concentrated on a single trait; however, later works combined the three major traits ascribed to adult females to create a cohesive ideology. Although some works within this time period still concentrated on presenting only recipes, the majority focused on presenting household advice as a way to support accepted behavior and create true women. Household writers concentrated during this time on raising female educational standards, adding scientific household management to literacy, creating new standards of cleanliness and teaching women how to use new technologies. Writers also changed the format of their works, creating story based teaching guides, encyclopedias, textbooks and treatise style works. These guides often included all traits associated with the ideology of domesticity, with intense concentration on one. Unlike earlier works that concentrate on creating the idealized woman, the guides published in this period focus on presenting women with ways to become the idealized woman. One guide described the aim of their work to produce "a work which, by embodying the ethics of the New Testament, and the progressive spirit of the nineteenth century should meet the demands of public opinion and relieve the wants of society." Guides in this period presented the ideology of domesticity as a given part of society, and presented systematic ways for women to achieve their goals. Guides presented ways for women to create healthy, stable homes for their families. Information on religious piety, domestic endeavors, relationship


49 William Hosmer, The Young Lady's Book : or, Principles of Female Education (Auburn, N.Y.: Derby and Miller, 1851), v.
advice, manners, child raising and health care all centered on the ideological traits presented by earlier guides.

The debate over education started in the previous two decades continued through the period between 1850-1880 and household writers added their opinions to the debate. The role of women within society and their education formed an intense debate throughout the nineteenth century and the type of education to give young women became a focus of many debates. Many household writers believed that female education should start and end in the home. Any schooling outside of the home should be applicable within the home. Writers questioned the goals of education and valued education focused on etiquette and society, but considered that girls should "also [be] sedulously taught - by a system of training- to perform the homely duties which make home the abode of comfort." Household writers concentrate on what they believe the end product of education to be, the formation of good housekeepers and mothers. Guides during this time period continuously reference child raising and education as the job of mothers and create examples of how to morally and intellectually educate children. Writers viewed women's education as a mixed blessing, while most commended women for being literate and well-read, many believed that educational standards of the time period focused more on producing women adapted for high society than good wives. While earlier guide writers concentrated on the formation of domestic values, later works focused on formal instruction of the ideology of domesticity. Catherine Beecher hinted at institutionalizing domestic education in her 1846 *Treatise on Domestic Economy* stating that she wrote the work "as a text-book for

50 Mrs. E. F. Ellet, *The New Cyclopaedia of Domestic Economy, and Practical Housekeeper: Adapted to all classes of Society, and Comprising Subjects Connected with the Interest of Every Family* (Norwich, Conn.: H. Bill, 1872), 15.

51 William Hosmer, *The Young Lady's Book: or, Principles of Female Education* (Auburn, N.Y.: Derby and Miller, 1851).
female schools." Works written later in the nineteenth century echo this sentiment and there are multiple works intended for feminine schooling, both formal and in the home. While not all cover domestic endeavors all advocate some version of the ideology of domesticity.

Piety: Moving From Religion to Appearance

By the mid-1800's writers accepted the idea of feminine influence and superiority in matters of piety as an accepted fact. Unlike previous works, which concentrated on creating an ideology of women as innately moral, later works accepted women as the pinnacle of moral perfection. The 1875 *Ladies' Book of Etiquette, and Manual of Politeness* connects Christian piety to social politeness and etiquette. The work then discusses different examples of etiquette based advice concentrating on the innate pious behavior of the reader and the proper ways that piety should be expressed publically. The guides during this time period concentrated highly on the social aspects of piety, behavior and charity, instead of the private acts of piety espoused by earlier works. Many of these guides concentrated highly on matters of etiquette and politeness as a facet of moral behavior. Instead of concentrating on religious instruction, guides focused


on feminine influence as central to women's piety. These works focused on influence as a physical indications of internalized piety.

Pious behavior described in household guides between the 1850's and 1880's concentrated more on the actions, influence and morals of the reader than their religious background. Writers' adoption of the ideology of domesticity led them to ascribe piety to all honorable females and allocate women the role of moral advisors. The private sphere's notion of piety concentrated on the power of women to create happy and moral homes, not necessarily religious ones. In order to maintain the home and produce moral citizens for future generations women needed to develop their ability to influence. Sarah Joseph Hale declared that "amusements, accomplishments, elegant arts, manners, modes of conduct in society; all these are necessary knowledge. And to crown the whole, those indispensable rules and maxims of moral improvement, which are the foundation of good in the character and life of rational, immortal beings, must be made familiar."56 Women's traits constituted the social graces, but also the moral foundation to govern a home. The interconnected traits of the ideology of domesticity combined to create an arena where religious affiliation did not constitute the foundation of piety. Instead a household guide written by a Jewish woman could be published and writers no longer focused on the differences between Catholics and Protestants.57 The ideal of the mother setting out daily devotional readings from the Bible, private biblical study and constructing morality lessons for their children began to transform into an ideal of outward signs of piety concentrating on deportment, feminine influence, charity and avoidance of vice as the main markers of the

56 Sarah Josepha Hale, *Mrs. Hale's Receipts for the Million : Containing Four Thousand Five Hundred and Forty-Five Receipts, Facts, Directions, etc. in the Useful, Ornamental, and Domestic Arts, and in the Conduct of Life* (Philadelphia: T.B. Peterson, 1857), 4.
pious woman. Women gained influence and prestige as they concentrated on presenting the trait of piety to the world.

The presentation of piety allowed women the opportunity of having a visual representation of the ideal woman; however, the move from religious piety to public piety preserved the belief of women protecting the virtue of the household. The shift moved women away from formalized instruction in piety, instead placing women as influencers who cajoled and led by example. A woman gained power by influencing those around her. Sarah Joseph Hale believed that women's work was multifaceted and that "freedom from painful pecuniary anxieties, comfort, health, peace, and joy all depend mainly on her wise use of the power entrusted to her. Even future generations may be influenced for good by her care, or evil by her indolence and neglect." Nineteenth century women's presentation of piety ideally would influence the world and people around her. A women ideally would influence her family and community in socially acceptable ways, creating a haven that encompassed a woman's sphere. Although writers warned of women wanting to have careers, they did not advocate against charity work within their communities. One writer stated that although a "woman's influence in her own home, although concentrated, is not confined there. Like the sunlight, it goes out into the community in which she dwells." Piety took place both inside and outside of the home, complicating the ideology of separate spheres as women moved outside of the arena set for females.

Domestic: Technology and the Home

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Domesticity during the 1860's to the 1880's evolved from earlier representations as new information and technology entered the domestic sphere. Although the sentiment involved remained steady, housekeepers' implementation and concerns adapted to the evolving household equipment and the impact of the Civil War. The Civil War removed men from their homes, creating temporary changes in household formation, but also brought new technologies to the general public. By 1850 the readymade clothing industry became widespread and the Civil War introduced canned food to the general public. Many writers also adapted to advances in nutrition and health, although some writers adopted inaccurate information.

In these latter days of science and the general diffusion of all useful knowledge, it may be presumed that every housewife will be acquainted with those primary and fundamental laws of health which regulate to food, clothing, ventilation and cleanliness. Ignorance of the laws of nature on these subjects is a radical defect, for which she may suffer the loss of health herself, or the loss of lives dearer than her own.

The household arts evolved to include not only traditional knowledge, but new information that incorporated scientific advancements. The work of Florence Nightingale and others created different expectations on cleanliness and household upkeep. The implementation of the trait of domesticity evolved with new technology and knowledge of the era.

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62 Sarah Joseph Hale, Mrs. Hale's Receipts for the Million: Containing Four Thousand Five Hundred and Forty-Five Receipts, Facts, Directions, etc. in the Useful, Ornamental, and Domestic Arts, and in the Conduct of Life (Philadelphia: T.B. Peterson, 1857), 3-4.
Although the implementation of domesticity evolved with technology, the attitudes surrounding women's domestic energy remained steadfast. Writers still assumed women would remain in the private sphere and argued for retention of household skills, labor and knowledge. Similar to guides written in the previous decades, the guides created between 1850 and 1880 concentrated on the necessity of women mastering the necessary skills for household upkeep. Domestic skills taught in previous works became important to household work, such as the different ways to wash, dry and treat laundry, gained entire chapters in later works. The importance of domestic activity and the positive slant on female labor gave writers a means to justify a limited female education, if only for the purpose of having women who could keep household accounts. However, domestic skills kept precedence and as one work stated "it is not alone the wife and mother who should be skilled in domestic affairs; every girl who has emerged from childhood, is liable to be called on to take charge of a house." Domesticity endeavors became the hallmark of womanhood and writers expected all women, whatever their age, to have the ability to keep a home. The idealization of domesticity continued within the 1850's to 1880's guides and the works strengthened the importance of domestic economy and knowledge in the household.

Domesticity during this time period fashioned a concrete response to women seeking employment outside of the home. Although briefly touched upon in earlier guides, women's rights did not appear as an issue within household guides until the late 1860's. After the Civil

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64 William Hosmer, *The Young Lady's Book : or, Principles of Female Education* (Auburn, N.Y.: Derby and Miller, 1851), 86-91.

War women's rights activists reentered the public arena and started to advocate for equal rights, setting themselves against the ideology of domesticity. Writers of household guides promptly crafted responses to the perceived threat stating that "Home is the center of love, -- woman's paradise regained. ... What folly, what madness, then, to abandon it for the poor rewards again presented to her aspirations." Domesticity became a way to combat the beginning of the women's rights movement and counteract ideas that women needed the vote in order to change society. Instead women were expected to use their domestic influence in order to create change within their proper sphere. Writers declared that a women's cheerful domestic work would influence her family to good deeds, while an unhappy disposition would influence them for the worse. Women gained recognition and power, not from any public endeavor, but instead from faithfully constructing a happy home.

Submissiveness: Weathering Domestic Storms

Female submissiveness took on a practical application during the time period between 1850 and 1880. Unlike earlier guides which concentrated on religious justification for female submission, guides written in this period focused on the role of submission in disagreements and arguments between spouses. Although Christianity still constituted an premise supporting feminine submission, the majority of guide writers concentrated on the ability of submission to keep peace in a home. Catherine Beecher declared that "when differences arise, the husband has

66 Mary Mason, *The Young Housewife's Counsellor and Friend: Containing Directions in Every Department of Housekeeping, Including the Duties of Wife and Mother* (New York: E.J. Hale, 1875), 103.
the deciding control, and the wife is to obey." The duty of ending an argument and keeping the peace fell to the wife instead of the husband or the couple. Regardless of the argument in question, or the validity of her claim, writers believed that she should always submit to the male. Companionate marriages led to more marriages based on love; however, the work of keeping a marriage together often fell only to the woman. The trait of submission kept women under the control of men, women who otherwise might desire a different power distribution within a marriage. Submission kept women in the same relational role found in previous centuries. Offering submission as a way to create a happy marriage let household guide writers the opportunity to present submission in a positive light.

Writers also depicted submission as a concrete way to keep a home peaceful place instead of only relying on religion to justify women's position. A woman's power of influence gave her some power; however, society still expected her to submit to male authority. Within the home, writers reconciled these two ideals by offering a spiritual approach to submission. Although women could exercise some amount of authority the proper women follows this writers advice, "While she knows her position and keeps it willingly and faithfully, she will not fail to accomplish the highest purpose of her being, not to receive all the honor due her nature." References to submission concentrated on the almost mystical way submitting to her husband removed a woman's every problem. One manual stated that "Domestic troubles will arise, and domestic storms may sweep over the home, but the cheerful wife will possess the power to rise

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above them all; and a quiet, meek, submissive spirit, will bring her to a safe harbor."\(^{72}\)

Regardless of the truth of the statement, writers and readers believed that submission could stop household and relational troubles. The above example reveals the peace writers believed came from submission and cemented an ideal that no longer gained acceptance from religion alone. Instead of being supported merely by religious the argument for keeping submission as a trait included in the ideology of domesticity gained support as a way to better family relations and keep the home a haven.

Resistance, Adaptation & Revision: 1880-1915

The move into the 1900's brought distinct changes to society and many of people began to question the worldview created by the ideology of domesticity. The early 1900's saw the strong emergence of the women's rights movement, charity movements and the question of women's higher education. Household manual writers and other female authors began to question the ideology developed over the previous century as new concerns and movements formed. These new challenges, along with the emergence of the working woman, challenged female writers' conception of the world.\(^{73}\) Writers chose between three responses to these challenges to the ideology of domesticity. Some writers firmly debated the challenges, holding steadfastly to the earlier tenants of the ideology of domesticity.\(^{74}\) Other writers adapted to these challenges

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\(^{73}\) *The Woman's Book: Dealing Practically with the Modern Condition of Home-life, Self-Support, Education, Opportunities, and Every-Day Problems* (New York: C. Scribners, 1894), 1:1-78.

\(^{74}\) The majority of works from this time period included in the bibliography fall under this category, although other forms of literature reflect the later two tendencies.
amending their beliefs, often including different incarnations of domesticity within their works.\textsuperscript{75} Finally other writers adopted the ideals presented by opponents of domesticity, rejecting the traits of domesticity that contradicted new ideals.\textsuperscript{76} The last two responses to societal shifts concentrated on making sense of the world by either creating new ideals or adapting older ideals to fit within a new era. Similar to the ideological shifts present at the beginning of the nineteenth century that led to the creation of the ideology of domesticity, the ideological and societal shifts present at the beginning of the twentieth century forced writers to defend and adapt their ideologies to the world’s challenges.

The time period between the mid 1880's and the early 1900's witnessed a great deal of change in the ways society viewed women. The Seneca Falls conference in 1848 led to an increased interest in the question of women's rights.\textsuperscript{77} Women's rights became the largest challenge to the ideology of domesticity, as the ideas of equality espoused by the women's rights movement clashed against the notion of separate spheres and complimentary genders. The women's rights movement required writers to defend the ideology of domesticity and forced women in general to question the basis of their ideal woman. Regardless of how writers responded to the women's rights movement, many realized the impact it had on society. For example one authors notes that "The relation of husbands to wives is not the same as it was before the feminist movement. Whether we are feminists ourselves or not, we must admit that."\textsuperscript{78} Although this writer supports the ideology of domesticity, she realizes that feminism deeply impacted society. Likewise other authors recognized the impact of women’s rights on the general

\textsuperscript{75}A good example of this principle can be found in the essays on work and housekeeping in the \textit{Woman's Book}.
\textsuperscript{76} Obviously the majority of these writers were involved or eventually joined in the women's rights movement.
\textsuperscript{78} Dorothy Canfield Fisher, \textit{Mothers and Children} (New York: H. Holt, 1915), xi.
public; however, these writers radically opposed suffrage.\textsuperscript{79} These women insisted on the continuation of the ideology of domesticity and declared that women should remain within the home. The very presence of the movement impacted society and forced Americans to question and defend their beliefs.

While some writers refused to adapt and other amended their beliefs to fit a new era, others embraced a new ideology about women. These writers supported the women's rights movement and often advocated for complete reform of marriage, laws and societal structures. They appealed to the public on the behalf of women and requested readers to question the internalized structures of gender. Similar to modern writers in gender studies, these writers began to question the basis of gender and decided that society, not nature, creates gender norms. The editor of \textit{The Morality of Marriage}, a collection of essays on women, notes that "so long as men have the disposal of the lives of women... men will make and women will echo them. It will continue to be taken for granted that the accident of sex shall alone be held sufficient to fix the destiny for life; the ever-serviceable plea of 'nature' being adduced in the support of the doctrine."\textsuperscript{80} Writers throughout the period questioned older beliefs about women's place and the natural traits of females. Were women innately pious, pure, domestic and submissive; or was it a societal construction? Household guide writers dealt with this question as they resisted, adapted or revised their understanding of the ideal female.

\textit{Piety: Non-religious morality and behavior}

\textsuperscript{79} For an early and comprehensive work on the subjects see, Jane Jerome Camhi, \textit{Women Against Women} (New York: Carlson Publishing, 1994).
\textsuperscript{80} Mona Caird, \textit{Morality of Marriage and Other Essays on the Status and Destiny of Woman} (London: G. Redway, 1897), 6.
The time period between the mid 1850's and the early 1900's connected piety to social behavior and spirituality. The highly religiously charged atmosphere of the Second Great Awakening lessened by the 1850's and by the mid 1880's had disappeared. Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* lowered religions power substantially and many writers concentrated on outward morality as the measure of piety instead of concentrating solely on religious involvement. Charity and good manners constituted a large portion of piety during this period and piety remained a special realm of females. Women's influence is still focused on and examples of women influencing for good and for bad are examined. Writers ascribed piety to mothers in particular and as one put it: "One would think that whatever religious or moral outlook a person has, the work of creation and procreation must have in it an element of the divine. Therefore all mothers should be on the side of the gods." Mothers gained completely innate piety in this later period, often concentrated on the act of raising children. The focus of piety as a trait focuses on the fact that women raise the next generation and contribute to society in their progeny. Household writers no longer concentrated on women raising religious children, but on women raising moral and well behaved children.

Mothers as moral beings constituted a large segment of feminine morality during this time period. Motherhood became the measure of morality and well behaved children became the sign of a moral woman. Shifting greatly from Puritan views of morality, women occupied the role of most moral, with men taking the subservient role. As one guide notes, "A good woman can compass far greater good than the best man that ever lived, just as an evil woman can

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Women, due to their childrearing role, gained immanence in morality matters because their actions affected future generations. During this time period guide writers concerned themselves heavily with the actions of mothers and many guides became aimed strictly on those with children. Mothering guides became important as families became smaller and emphasis on children as individuals came to the forefront of society. A woman's interaction with her children revealed her piety and as writers believed that a good mother raises moral and just children, many concentrated on giving mother's advice on raising their children. Instead of concentrating on proper religious training, in the forms of Bible study, mother's constructed morality as an innate skill that needed to be passed on to their children.

Writers supported the concept of feminine piety with the concept that morality concentrated on practice and instruction. While all guides concentrated on instruction of morality, the focus of late nineteenth century guides did not center on religious instruction and biblical study. Later works instead often constructed moral instruction as merely good manners and being courteous. This incarnation of the trait of piety considered piety something taught by women and a trait of external implementation. Writers believed that "when the mind has been trained to habitual right thinking, the result is instinctive right action." Morality echoed women's instruction and if one did not receive proper instruction piety would not be the result. Instead of focusing on religious instruction, writers believed that good habits and polite behavior constituted piety. Many writers believed that good manners were the result of thinking and acting kindly. Piety encompassed the realm of behavior and instead of focusing on the religious

connotations of personal behavior, women concentrated on their behavior in light of societal desires.

*Domesticity: encompassing more than a clean house*

The end of the nineteenth century brought radical changes to the trait of domesticity as women developed it into a scientific art. While manuals written previously had approached scientific progress, manuals written within this time period focused on placing domestic endeavors firmly into the realm of science. Women's work within the home expanded as sanitary and nutritional science evolved and many products invented during the nineteenth century became common place.  

88 Writers expected woman to learn many new skills and home economics developed. Writers constructed the ideal woman as a scientist and one writer stated that "the scientist of the home must largely be the mother; and it behoves her to see that if home has become the last place where science promises to make conditions better, brighter, easier, more effective and less expensive, then homekeeping in this generation shall make up for lost time."  

89 Domesticity became regarded as a scientific endeavor and domestic workers created rules for hygiene, nutrition, and nursing based on scientific principles. The necessary knowledge for a good housekeeper expanded during this period and the ideal woman needed a wide range of knowledge. As health standards increased women started to apply scientific principles to keep

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their homes healthy.⁹⁰ Writers used scientific methods of housekeeping to try and legitimize women's work as a worthwhile occupation creating the beginning of home economic study.

The extension of science into domesticity mirrors another change in regards to the trait of domesticity, the rise of intellectual fields being applied to domestic labor. While the endeavor to connect science to domesticity concentrated on creating new methods of labor that embraced science, the rise of intellectual fields in the domestic sphere adopted previously masculine skills to household labor. For instance *Family Living on $500 a Year* concentrates on teaching women budgeting, accounting, and bartering skills along with parsimonious behavior.⁹¹ Many writers advocated women gaining skills in multiple fields and declared that "a good housekeeper is an executive officer, an accountant, a chemist, a sanitary officer. She possesses more than an elementary knowledge of hygiene. She is a household physician, and possesses, either as a gift or as the result of training, or both, the elementary knowledge, at least, of a trained nurse."⁹² Women's skills encompassed a large swatch of skill previously only taught to men. Writers encouraged women to learn skills that would make housekeeping easier and create a better run family. In this way a wife could apply her childhood education to the upkeep of her home.

Although many writers continued to value domesticity, other writers critiqued the effects a woman obsessed with only keeping a clean house could have on the family. After over fifty years where the ideology of domesticity idealized women's household labor, many authors felt that women focused more on keeping a house clean and functioning than on enriching family life. One writer declared that "the lowest form of human living is accomplished by her who is a

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Some household writers believed that those who obsessed solely on keeping a home missed out on the important aspects of life. Writers believed that women needed to concentrate on more than simply cleanliness and economy as the focus on appearing domestic often revealed hypocrisy in other areas. Writers began to question the premise that domesticity creates innate happiness and proposed that women embrace additional ideals to create truly happy homes. Throughout this time period writers attempted to create another type of domesticity, one that elevated housekeeping to an art and allowed women roles outside of being the model housekeeper.

Submissiveness: Challenged by Changes in Marriage

The advent of the 20th century saw a great change in the form and function of marriage relationships. The changes wrought by the women's rights movement, along with romantic ideals, created the concept of companionate marriages. The late 1800's saw the relationship between husband and wife move toward love based relationships and respect for one another. This shift created a challenge for the trait of submissiveness as women began to expect a say in a marriage relationship. Writers started to discuss a husbands duties and on top of outlining the perfect wife they created the idea of a perfect husband "who never, even by accident, hurts the feelings of his wife; one who is always ready to praise and never quick to blame what goes on in

the house."96 Household guides began to write about husbands in terms of how they treated their wives critiquing those who were "despotic" in their treatment of their wives.97 Although submission in important decisions remained implicit, writers often critiqued relationship structures they found intolerable. Other writers demanded a total abandonment of the patriarchal system, instead advocating totally companionate marriages based on equal status and respect.98 These writers saw the shifting formation of marriage as indicating progress and the advent of women's rights. Instead of allowing submission to exist, these writers demanded the total obliteration of submission for either spouse.

While some household guides focused on advocating love based relationships, others remained concerned with keeping hierarchical marriage relationships. These guides idealized patriarchal, hierarchical marriages; however, they also used romantic language to praise these types of relationships, often edging into the poetic. An example can be found within The Home Builder, a written monument to the ideology of domesticity. Within the works discussion of marriage the author declares that the bride "wishes, not to submit a reluctant will to his, but to make his will her own. She wishes a sovereign and is glad to have found him-- no! to have been found by him."99 Like earlier works this type of language creates an emotional bond to submission, creating almost religious undertones to a non-religious piece. In stark contrast to the writers who rejected the idea of an intrinsic inequality between husband and wife, these writers celebrated submission, keeping the trait as part of the ideal woman. While not using religious language to support the trait of submission, many household guides advocated submission, often in order to create happy homes. Those who advocated submission regularly used household

96 Margaret Sangster, The Mother Book (Chicago: A.C. McClurg, 1912), 60.
happiness to support the trait. Like those who wrote in the mid-nineteenth century, writers in the early twentieth century advocated submission as a method of keeping the peace. However, these writers also advocated submission in all matters, not only in case of arguments. Household guides revised the trait of submission to include creating the appearance that there were no household ills at all. Writers cajoled women "to have everything smooth and in order against your husband's return from business. You must not only dispose of all your domestic difficulties, but also banish all traces of them from yourself." Advocates of quiet submission often required readers to remove all annoyance or strife from her person as soon as her husband returned home. Writers during this time period lessoned interest in submission, concentrating more on reacting to the women's rights movement by focusing on the traits of piety and domesticity instead of defending women's submission directly.

Conclusion

The slow evolution of the ideology of domesticity reveals the changing nature of gender conceptions throughout the nineteenth century. It is important to remember that although the ideology of domesticity is an important tool for historians, human beings are not formulaic and instead adapt to societal changes. The ideology of domesticity gave female writers a socially acceptable arena to discuss the changes in society and present their strategies for coping with a changing world. As the society changed around them, women created distinct changes to the

ideology, presenting new combinations that gave women control over their world. The ideology of domesticity created a persuasive and pervasive role for women, and remnants of the ideology are still present in modern day society. Like other ideologies supported during the nineteenth century, effects of the ideology of domesticity can still be seen in the modern era. The ideology of domesticity created the framework for twentieth century gender constructions. Modern household gurus like Martha Stewart represent the legacy of the ideology of domesticity and reveal how women have adapted historical trends to fit a new society. It is within the study of these gender conceptions that historians can better understand the importance gender played in nineteenth century America and explore the lives of nineteenth century women who were not involved in the women's rights movement.

Historical study of the ideology of domesticity reveals that like any other ideology it evolved with the society around, writers reacted to common concerns of their eras and adapted a loose set of feminine traits to their society. Gender roles are constantly changing and society's ideal of a given gender can change drastically throughout the centuries. Analysis of historical understandings of gender allow a modern reader to better understand the ways society and historical events have created present understandings of what it means to be male and female. Exploring historical trends and developments in gender conceptions allows scholars to better understand the context of their own perceptions of gender. Without this area of historical study historians are left with an incomplete picture of the history women.
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