

INTRODUCTION

“A THOUSAND DETAILS, ANECDOTES, STORIES”

Mining the Discourse on Black Womanhood

The quintessential differences, blackness and femaleness, provide the stuff of fantastical narratives and allow French male literati, directors and their audiences, and scientists to weave them out of and into “a thousand details, anecdotes, stories.” Black females are perpetually ensnared, imprisoned in an essence of themselves created from without: Black Venus.

—T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, *Black Venus: Sexualized Savages, Primal Fears, and Primitive Narratives in French*

The phrase “discourse on black womanhood” sums up a set of ideas and practices, including ways of gazing—from the unreflected taken for granted to the intentionally critical interventional. It denotes conflict, namely that between black female flesh as overdetermined<sup>1</sup> by colonizing epistemologies and as determined to self-designate within contexts of thriving and/or oppression. It calls attention to the “pernicious editing” that black feminist Kimberly Wallace-Sanders writes about in *Skin Deep, Spirit Strong: The Black Female Body in American Culture* (2002). And it notes the reinvention, recoding, and manipulation of subjects, signs, and phenomena that black feminist Hortense Spillers articulates in her essay “Changing the Letter: The Yokes, the Jokes of Discourse, or, Mrs. Stowe, Mr. Reed” (2003). Moreover, it provides the framework for mining and theorizing what black feminist T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting postures as “‘a thousand details, anecdotes, stories’ . . . created from without.”<sup>2</sup>

The discourse on black womanhood recognizes the sociopolitical and cultural work of race-sex-gender-class-specific mythology as an essential American and diasporic project. It foregrounds the cross-penetration of meta-narratives on black venus, jezebel, and black-woman-as-whore/ho/thot (that ho over there)<sup>3</sup> as indispensable to white Western and global dominion, and, in some instances, North American black patriarchy. It notes the ways in which discourse intricately connects to power, producing knowledge and constructing narrations on “truth.” And it attends to what has been thought, said, and communicated, placing emphasis on who is doing the speaking, against what historical backdrop, in what context, to what audience, utilizing which technologies, producing what knowledge, and deploying what language—epistemic, ideological, discursive, visual, representational, and otherwise. It holds that *what* is communicated is just as significant as *who* is doing the communicating, particularly as the “who” helps frame what becomes knowledge, and thus what can be known, or at least what we think we know to be true. Finally, the discourse on black womanhood understands that once knowledge and/or truth is linked to representation, said knowledge and representation, combined, become regulating.<sup>4</sup>

The discourse on black womanhood, propagated across every possible avenue of culture and society—language, images, poetry, photography, print, philosophy, art, science, education, politics, theology, literature, magazines, film, media, news reporting, fashion, advertising, religious teaching, and preaching—sets the terms for how identities get re/presented, exhibited, and treated, shaping not only lives and interpersonal relations but institutions and sociopolitical praxis. Yet discourse is not fixed. Discourse, a source of both power and knowledge, though at times seemingly calcified, controlling, and irrepressible, is constantly in flux and can be deployed for either oppressive or productive aims, or both. Moreover, its oppressive yoke can be (at least) loosened through collective unapologetic, unwavering, forceful, and mass-mediated strategic intervention. To be clear, the discourse on black womanhood names an inordinate collection of operative racial and gendered tropes carefully, ceaselessly, injudiciously, and vapidly “written” into history, thus affecting black women’s and girls’ lives. Nevertheless, the collective of ideas and images pivotal to the discourse are not a final destination.

The discourse on black womanhood, and its ubiquitous trope and ideology, jezebel (a.k.a. black venus), circulating within and between black religion and black popular culture, informing our reading of and conduct toward the black female body, is the subject of this book. Many have written

about jezebel and how she shows up in popular culture, typically covered as one-third of the jezebel-mammy-sapphire trinity or as the infamous biblical whore. *Jezebel Unhinged* takes a different course, placing jezebel and her lineage front and center. In 2013, black feminist author of *Sister Citizen: Shame, Stereotypes, and Black Women in America* (2013), Melissa Harris-Perry wrote about the political and cultural anxieties around Michelle Obama's body as a site of jezebelian fodder. Of particular interest to Harris-Perry was the *Salon* essay by Erin Aubrey Kaplan, a black woman, "First Lady Got Back" (2008).<sup>5</sup> Harris-Perry notes the essay as "one of the most profane." Yes and no. In short, Harris-Perry misses the messy shades of gray between signification, projection, thingification, representation, presentation, interiority, and identification.

I happened to respond to Kaplan's essay back in 2008 in an article titled "Is It Wrong to Talk about Michelle Obama's Body?" published with *Alternet*. While there is a necessary critique about First Lady Obama being "a subject—more than a body, and, more than a butt," and how that kind of projection is dangerous, the connection between Obama and Sir Mix-a-Lot's hit song "Baby Got Back," requires further nuance. I wrote,

To be sure, the mass production of "Baby Got Back" via radio and television took ongoing essentialist discourses about black female hypersexuality to new dimensions. The constant reproduction of the gyrating images became a source of social studies on black female sexuality. This was obviously deeply problematic. However, as stereotypically reductive as this song and video was, in its own way, it also celebrated black women's bodies . . . many black women, including myself, strangely found a sense of pride in our bodies, specifically our butts. Thus, while Sir Mix-a-Lot (and others) reassigned mythical legacies to our behinds, some black women were re-imagining themselves as subjects with beautiful bodies.<sup>6</sup>

Truth is, Obama made many black women and girls beam with pride every time her beautiful body sashayed center stage. She looked like kinfolk; like "one of us." Fully human and wonderfully made. Still the constant fragmenting and sexualizing of her body was exhausting. This book holds these gazes in balance. Unhinging jezebel means loosing her from black women's and girls' bodies and black-and-white binary interpretations. It means unscrewing the symbolic bolts that clasp her together and letting her fall while also exploring and making sense of what keeps holding her together in the first place. And it means doing this work while still managing to celebrate our

gorgeous bodies—not from a deficit of personhood or historical knowledge but from a profusion of self-recognition and self-actualization.

Harris-Perry, along with other black feminists such as Toni Morrison, Audre Lorde, Hortense Spillers, Beverly Guy-Sheftall, Angela Y. Davis, Patricia Hill Collins, T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, Kimberly Wallace-Sanders, Saidiya Hartman, Hazel V. Carby, Michele Wallace, bell hooks, Jacqueline Bobo, Valerie Smith, Wahneema H. Lubiano, Joy James, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Patricia J. Williams, and others, provide a robust critical discourse on race, gender, sexuality, and representation. However, their works predominantly place emphasis on black women in history, politics, culture, science, law, and literature. Though Harris-Perry and a few others have taken up religion, there is no book-length black feminist study on the powerful functionality of race, gender, and representation within black religion. And there is no study that critically underscores the significant and collaborative work of discourse, which includes a range of speech acts such as talking and modes of writing and representation, circulating between black religion and black popular culture.

Womanist scholars in religion<sup>7</sup> (also “womanists” or “womanism”) developed a significant paradigm in religious and theological studies for examining black women’s experiences with sexism in black churches and for reimagining them as thinking and feeling moral agents with experiences worthy of academic inquiry. Pivotal to their discourse is demythologizing black womanhood and its variety of cultural representations. Kelly Brown Douglas and Emilie Townes, mentioned earlier, are of particular import. Both open up space in black theo-ethical (theological studies, theological ethics, the study of ethics in theology) studies for problematizing and theologizing harmful racial and gendered stereotypes, thus expanding the critical work of black feminist cultural criticism. However, though Douglas and Townes, in their seminal texts *Sexuality and the Black Church: A Womanist Perspective* (1999) and *Womanist Ethics and the Cultural Production of Evil* (2006), respectively, construct a necessary template in theo-ethical studies for examining black women’s experience, black female cultural representations, and the Black Church, each place primary emphasis on white supremacy and white cultural production.

*Jezebel Unhinged* reveals a need for theoretical studies on race, sex, gender, sexuality, and representation, and how they collectively produce meanings about black womanhood and girlhood that are circulated within and between religion and culture, and more specifically black religion and black

popular culture. And though I am well aware of how whiteness<sup>8</sup> functions as an oppressive marker of difference in both religion and culture, this book is not about white folk. The initial historicizing of the white/European gaze in chapter 1 is not an intervention on how white always already determines black. While the white gaze is forcefully mass mediated, it is not incontrovertible. There is an ongoing struggle between previous existence—black existence prior to the activity or knowledge of racial and gender signification—interiority, contact/conquest/projection, appropriation, resistance, and negotiation. Consequently, meaning making in black religion and black popular culture is never merely a reflection of the white/European gaze. It is preceding/already, active, inherited, collaborative, and visionary.

Hence this text is most interested in how sex and gender oppression enables a taken-for-granted reappropriation of stereotypic ideas about race, sex, gender, and sexuality in black cultural spaces, to include the black religious and the Black Church. Ergo, what follows the initial historicizing is an exploration of the ways that historical ideas function not only “out there” but “in here.” The aim of such a project is emphatically not to give antiblack white supremacist capitalist patriarchal misogynoirist—male and female—phallogocentric gazes and praxis a pass. It is to note language and representation as everyday instruments of oppression and power for black women and girls—beyond white ideological bias. And it is to locate these instruments of oppression and power in both black religion and black popular culture.

Black feminists and womanists have done well in articulating sexism and white racism in cultural production. Black feminist scholarship on race, gender, and the politics of representation within and beyond black popular culture is masterly and foundational. Simultaneously, womanist scholarship on black women and the Black Church is groundbreaking and at the very least virtuosic. To these ends, this book is indebted to, brings together, and builds upon black feminist and womanist scholarship. At the same time, it challenges these lines of thought and holds three pertinent theories in tension.

First, womanist cultural criticism, namely the works of Douglas and Townes, provides a cornerstone for reading and critiquing cultural production and representation, black women’s experience, and the Black Church. Notwithstanding, there is a dependency on controlling analyses of black women’s experiences as well as methodological and conceptual limitations. What is needed to move that discourse forward in black religion is a nuanced examination of the manner in which the force of representational epistemes like jezebel operate *within* black religion and black popular culture

to overdetermine contemporary black women's and girls' identities and experiences within a pornotropic gaze<sup>9</sup> (which they in turn negotiate). The turn toward the study of black women's experiences in black religion marks a shift toward the study of signs, symbols, significations, representations, and meanings, which enables a more complex reading of black women's and girls' lives—a reading unrestrained by tradition, canon, or institution.

Second, though black feminist cultural criticism offers useful tools for critically analyzing black women's and girls' experiences and cultural production, what is needed to move that discourse forward in cultural criticism and in terms of its relevance to a significant percent of black women and girls who are largely religious and Christian, is an informed, critical, sustained, collective, and foregrounded engagement that explores the significance of Christianity, and specifically the Black Church, in black American and diasporic women's and girls' lives. Such foregrounding in black feminist studies requires centralizing theories and methods in the study of religion as a pivotal discourse therein and marking black religion as being as essential to black feminist thought as it is to black women's and girls' lives.

Third, these moves call forth an alternative field for critical inquiry, research, reading, and writing: a black feminist study of religion, which is a theoretical study on religion and culture and the marking of and exchanges between signs, symbols, significations, representations, and meanings and race, sex, gender, and sexuality therein. A black feminist study of religion, a distinctive blend of womanist, black religious, black cultural, and black feminist criticism, opens out into a range of entry points, including black feminist theology, black feminist religious thought, black feminist religio-cultural criticism, and so on. "Black feminist theology," to my knowledge, was first coined by black feminist Brittney Cooper in a Facebook post in 2010 where she and I exchanged ideas in response to her likening Beverly Guy-Sheftall's *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought* (1995) to a black feminist bible and Patricia Hill Collins's *Black Feminist Thought* (1990) to "black feminisms' systematic theology."<sup>10</sup>

It notes a womanist/black feminist theoretical engagement on theological phenomena, categories, and interests. That is, in addition to a study of religio-cultural signs and meanings, black feminist theology deploys womanist and black feminist tools to examine "the statement of the truth of the Christian message"<sup>11</sup> in black women's and girls' lives. It does this work through critical discourses invested in accounts of God's existence and/or activity and concepts such as belief, good news, and faith, with hopes of broadening, deepen-

ing, and complicating black women's and girls' theological parameters and religious identities, interpretations, and experiences. This book places emphasis on black feminist religious thought and black feminist religio-cultural criticism. Black feminist religious thought denotes a (re)structure(ing) of philosophical and theoretical concepts. Black feminist religio-cultural criticism distinguishes itself from black feminist religious thought only in that the former places emphasis on theoretical moves.

I should pause here and say a few words about terminology. My interpretation of the *religious*, *religion*, and *religio-* is irreducible to traditional religious assumptions, concepts, or institutions. Religion is an aspect of *culture*. In the broadest sense, culture points to a matrix of ideologically loaded signifying systems<sup>12</sup> through which a social order is communicated, reproduced, experienced, and explored.<sup>13</sup> However, as cultural theorist Stuart Hall notes in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (1997), culture "is never merely a set of practices, technologies or messages, objects whose meaning and identity can be guaranteed by their origin or their intrinsic essences." It is instead a signifying system that is simultaneously reflexive and lived, and that emerges from integrated cultural stimuli, practices, utterances, and interpretations. Pivotal to "lived culture" is cultural production, reproduction, and representation, each explored through language, customs, and practices of resistance, negotiation, accommodation, appropriation, and consent.

Religion, then, is an arbitrary sign that has been stabilized through the consistency of language, practices, and representation over time. It is cultivated within, not without, culture. As such, religion is an ideologically loaded, socially constructed interpretive concept deployed for the purposes of decoding, analyzing, and theorizing legitimate modes of expression within the human experience. Concomitantly, it is a distinctive form of culture and signifying system, negotiated through a variety of acts, objects, meanings, and practices in human culture. It is both signified and a signifier. And both the signified and the signifier mark a multiplicity of human behaviors.<sup>14</sup> What may be deemed religious, however, depends on the hermeneutics of the signifier. On that account, the religious/religion has several profiles, to include but not limited to black religion.

In *Significations: Signs, Symbols, and Images in the Interpretation of Religion* (1986), religious philosopher Charles Long articulates religion as the way one comes to terms with one's ultimate reality in the world. Holding the histories of religion, black religion, and black people in tension, Long notes religion

as a movement, motivation, and/or expression that precedes yet influences thought and manifests in a variety of ways. Black religion, then, is an innately plural signifying system and interpretive concept that refers to a multiplicity of black cultural forms, factions, motions, inspirations, articulations, and encounters deemed “religious” by black diasporic peoples making sense of their lives. Accordingly, there is a continuous dialogue between black religion and black culture, with each being pollinating and reflexive. Simultaneously, while black religion transcends institutional religion, structures, and presumptions, it includes the Black Church. And although this study resists conflating the plurality of black religion with the historical Black Church, it refuses the urge to diminish or erase the Black Church’s cultural importance as a significant site of black religion.

This study invites the reader to turn toward culture, to explore black religiosity as it is produced in black popular culture, for example film, texts, athletic stadiums, and television. Because black religiosity as presented and cultivated within black life and black popular culture is significantly Christ- and Black Church–centric, this text accents Black Church–centric communicative acts such as preaching, writing, performance, and speaking, as a lens for decoding and theorizing modes of expression, meaning making, and signifying practice. I should note, this is neither a gratuitous conflation nor a traditional theological investigation. It is religious criticism, more precisely, a black feminist religio-cultural study that interrogates black women as the objects of cultural and religious texts, to include black religion and black popular culture, and as the subjects of womanist and black feminist texts—and the social, cultural, and psychosexual implications of each.

The latter requires sometimes locating gray space between theoretical and theological inquiries and analyses. A black feminist study of religion is sure to blur boundaries—both intentionally and unintentionally, particularly a study that places emphasis on jezebel, a biblical figure and racial trope. With this in mind, though black feminist religious thought and black feminist religio-cultural criticism place primacy on religion and religious criticism, namely how religion operates in the world to produce meanings, each is also concerned with how jezebel shows up as a detailed theological concept. This necessarily forges a discourse with womanist and black feminist theology. Still, though complimentary, theology and religious criticism are distinct.

Black feminist religious thought and black feminist religio-cultural criticism hold that culture informs religion in normative ways and vice versa. The hyphen between “religio” and “culture/al” (“religio-cultural”) explicitly



signifies this relationship, with religion as an aspect and function of culture, and in consequence, black religion an aspect of black diasporic culture, religious criticism an aspect of cultural criticism, and black religious criticism an aspect and function of black cultural criticism. The latter provides the context for the former. This collective and intentional way of “looking” allows for more nuanced readings of cultural forms by highlighting complex interrelationality as opposed to incommensurability. This interpretation of religion—as an aspect of culture—may cause anxiety for some, particularly those readers with the understanding that religion is “not of this world” and thus stands outside of it, or that religion is always already the counter to cultural deviation. This is not always the case. For example, I argue that black religion, and specifically the Black Church, is a recurrent site of antiblack and sexist stereotypic cultivation and pornotropic gazing. This is sure to incite righteous indignation for some.

Meanwhile, my reading of jezebel may have some readers seeing red. To those responses I want to make it clear that *Jezebel Unhinged* does not begin with binary notions of church and world/state, Christian ideologies around absolutism, or race-only assumptions that prioritize the needs and place of black men and boys whilst erasing those of black women and girls. Nor does it present jezebel in a nice neat little package. Au contraire, it draws attention to the host of “details, anecdotes, stories” holding the discourse on black womanhood together, thus calling to consciousness the epistemic violence—the systemic political and legal use of mass codification, circulation, and closure as a tool and strategy for demonizing collective and individual identities—of an essentialist black womanhood. In addition, it blasts the representational strategies and habits of language (linguistic and representational) therein: its internal signals, inferred ideologies, encodings, and operation, in religio-cultural phenomena.

Also, that I center *discourse* when writing about jezebel may raise a few questions, especially with the study of “representation” being a much more conventional route already meticulously taken to task within cultural studies. The discourse on black womanhood, more specifically jezebel, comprises talking, writing, and representation. It presents an opportunity to engage the complex and intersectional work of cultural production, including language, speakers, audiences, the production of knowledge, and how certain imagistic speech acts get written in and woven together—chosen over others—over time. Additionally, the emphasis on religion and culture calls for more than a representational reading. Representations of the black female body can be

found in texts such as religious-based films, photos, and even advertising, but they are also spoken, written, read, preached, sung, exchanged, reported, and more, compelling an emphasis on discourse/power/knowledge that includes representation.

*Jezebel Unhinged* begins with the premise that the discourse on black womanhood circulating and maintained between religion and culture was reappropriated and reproduced in the Black Church and black popular culture, which in turn churned out a simultaneously normative and dangerous jezebelian “ho” discourse that imagines black women and girls and black female sexuality as quintessentially different, hyperlegible, illegible, and the opposite (and absence) of ladydom, the latter of which may be achieved through effort.<sup>15</sup> These discourses create an essential black womanhood from without, producing a signifying object *plus*, vital to preserving gender hierarchy, black patriarchy, and heteronormativity in black families, communities, cultures, and institutions. Three major methodological moves frame this book: (1) historicizing and theorizing the discourse on black womanhood, and more specifically jezebel, circulating between religion and culture through a reading of writers and cultural workers invested in essentializing black femininity and black female sexuality and through a reading of black feminist and womanist writers invested in revising racist and sexist history and ideologies; (2) positing a way to reread black women’s and girls’ complex—intersubjective—multipositionality through a less pornotropic lens in black religion and black popular culture; and (3) performing a revisionist reading of black women and girls by exploring the pornotropic gaze in the discourse on jezebel and its determinacy within contemporary religio-cultural phenomena.

A quick word about structure. This book begins with critical cultural historical analysis, drawing attention to select cultural texts most illustrative of low and high modern thinking on race and gender to critically map and engage the discourse on jezebel circulating between black religion and black popular culture, and to more sufficiently target select contemporary texts where jezebelian discourse is pervasive. Hall posits that contrary to some thinking postmodernity does not eradicate modern forces. Meaning it does not provide an entirely new “moment.” Instead, moments are conjunctural, a mixture of the past and the present. Therefore, modernity, its influences, peripheries, and determinants are always continuously reappearing and interfacing with postmodern forces.<sup>16</sup> To this end, we can seek only to loosen the yoke of the omnipresent, totalizing and oftentimes harmful, representational

force of the discourse on jezebel that regulates social action and normalizes historical ideas of difference. A way to do this is by interrogating and unsettling old and new texts and embedded epistemes. As a consequence, this book, which is part critical historical contextualization and part critical contemporary cultural analysis, does genealogical and theoretical work on the front end to make reading more productive on the back end.

That is to say, the critical cultural historicizing and theorizing of early texts on race, sex, gender, and representation helps explore, name, disrupt, reconfigure, and unhinge the pornotropic gaze in the latter chapters of this study, which turn to the productions of Bishop T. D. Jakes and Tyler Perry, arguably two of the most prominent contemporary cultural producers of jezebelian-centered religio-cultural texts. These chapters are written with Hall's idea of conjunctural moments in mind, and with the firm belief that Jakes and Perry demand specialized black feminist religio-cultural treatment. Such an engagement requires a complex and interrogative study of previous moments, influences, and peripheries that creatively and vigorously contour jezebel's numerous points of departure, including the white/European gaze, the biblical narrative, and black cultural appropriation.

Chapter 1, "Black Venus and Jezebel Sluts: Writing Race, Sex, and Gender in Religion and Culture," sets the stage by turning briefly to the white/European gaze, noting the history of projection as well as the voyage from Europe to America and the significant transmogrification between black venus and jezebel. Chapter 2, "'These Hos Ain't Loyal': White Perversions, Black Possessions," turns away from the white gaze toward black possession in black religion and black popular culture. The chapter deploys Rev. Jamal Bryant's use of singer Chris Brown's song "Loyal" as an opening to examine the biblical narrative of Jezebel and the significance of jezebelian discourse in the Black Church sermonic moment. Chapter 3, "Theologizing Jezebel: Womanist Cultural Criticism, a Divine Intervention," explores the work of the cultural reader and the unique position of womanist cultural critics for critically reading jezebelian sexual theologies produced in the Black Church and for holding the Black Church and the black preacher accountable.

Chapter 4, "'Changing the Letter': Toward a Black Feminist Study of Religion" continues the conversation, beginning with Stuart Hall's question, "What sort of moment is this?" As with Hall, the moment presents new models of black cultural production and thus demands new strategies for critical reading. Unhinging jezebel means lessening the force of her yoke in black women's and girls' lives. This comes not by way of redeploying the

master's tools but by what Paulo Freire calls "critical literacy,"<sup>17</sup> the rigorous reading of both discursive and nondiscursive texts and the power relations therein. And, as I argue within the following pages, it comes by "changing the letter": mapping, disorienting, and dispossessing old narratives and creating space for constructing and mass mediating new ones. Chapter 5, "The Black Church, the Black Lady, and Jezebel: The Cultural Production of Feminine-ism," brings the conversation full circle with an engagement on jezebel and the black lady as not only "the stuff of fantastical narratives" but also an antibiosis of cultural texts in the Black Church for producing the mytheme of the black "nuclear" family, each of which is foundational to religio-cultural big business and Jakes's and Perry's success.

Chapter 6, "Whose 'Woman' Is This?: Reading Bishop T. D. Jakes's *Woman, Thou Art Loosed!*," utilizes black feminist religious thought and black feminist religio-cultural criticism to examine Jakes's representational strategies, pornotropic optics, feminine-ist messaging, and what I articulate as jezebelian "ho" theology. Chapter 7, "Tyler Perry's New Revival: Black Sexual Politics, Black Popular Religion, and an American Icon," asserts that Perry produces female-centered works that create narratives of hope, survival, and triumph on one hand, and revive Jakes's feminine-ist paradox of ho-dom and ladyhood on the other, compelling exploration of Perry's location as a faux feminist pop cultural pastor. The epilogue, "Dangerous Machinations: Black Feminists Taught Us," returns to "Woman, Thou Art Loosed," the conference, after fourteen years and urges the Black Church, Jakes, Perry, and others, to turn toward and place value in the lessons of black feminist foremothers.

I am aware that much of this book is densely theoretical. Looking at jezebel as a central ideology in the discourse on black womanhood requires a variety of simultaneous critical gazes. Black women and girls, including this author, continue to fall under the logic of pornotropic gazing daily. And black religion and culture do not always provide person-proof safety netting. It is imperative to cast *our* nets wider and deeper and keep the conversation going—because the reverberations of our silences could be deadly. Finally, the analyses here are meant to provide tools for intervening on interpretations that further marginalize black women and girls. They are not here for romantic nostalgia. They are here for losing jezebel from the hinges that hold her together, and black women and girls from the screws that twist them up with her.