

**T. C.
ANKARA ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
BATI DİLLERİ VE EDEBİYATLARI
(AMERİKAN KÜLTÜRÜ VE EDEBİYATI)
ANABİLİM DALI**

**Domesticity, Slavery, and Abolitionism in Nineteenth-Century Women's
Writing in the United States: Harriet A. Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave
Girl*, Lydia Maria Child's *A Romance of the Republic*, and Frances E. W.
Harper's *Iola Leroy, or, Shadows Uplifted***

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Tez Jürisi Üyeleri

Adı ve Soyadı

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Tez Sınavı Tarihi

**TÜRKİYE CUMHURİYETİ
ANKARA ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜNE**

Bu belge ile, bu tezdeki bütün bilgilerin akademik kurallara ve etik davranış ilkelerine uygun olarak toplanıp sunulduğunu beyan ederim. Bu kural ve ilkelerin gereği olarak, çalışmada bana ait olmayan tüm veri, düşünce ve sonuçları andığımı ve kaynağını gösterdiğimi ayrıca beyan ederim.(__/__/2016)

Tezi Hazırlayan Öğrencinin

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İmzası

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To My Dearest Mom and Dad,

And

To My Precious Daughter,

INTRODUCTION

I have heard much respecting the horrors of slavery; but may Heaven forbid that the generality of my color throughout these United States should experience any more of its horrors than to be a servant of servants, or hewers of wood and drawers of water!

Maria W. Stewart, *Lecture Delivered at the Franklin Hall, 1832*

Thine for the oppressed in the bonds of womanhood.

Sarah M. Grimké, *Letters on the Equality of Sexes, and the Condition of Women, 1837*

The nineteenth century introduced various social as well as cultural changes for the people of the nascent American nation. The whole century presented the coexistence of cultural values such as domesticity and true womanhood for white middle class women and the conflict that the issue of slavery created on the sociopolitical agenda of the American nation. The nineteenth century was also a time of nation building when the United States was going through a social turmoil due to the institution of slavery and the Civil War (1861-1865). While a sense of construction flourished for the burgeoning American nation with the promotion of

such cultural values among white people, enslavement of thousands of black people and the Civil War were destroying and dividing the same nation. The process of enculturation provided by the concept of domesticity introduced the ideology of separate spheres (domestic versus public) based on gender, which became a hallmark of the nineteenth-century United States in both cultural and literary terms. Domestic sphere, alienated from public spaces that were assigned to male authority according to the ideology of separate spheres, was construed as the mere domain on which to build new ideals for womanhood and family life. The notion of domesticity became a fundamental principle of quotidian female experience and a life style for the white middle-class people and in particular women of mainly British or European descent. Nevertheless, the problem was rooted in the fact that domestic ideals and slavery cohabited throughout the nineteenth century in the slave plantation households, and that domesticity as a cultural norm helped maintain slavery in its institutionalized form. The implementation of slavery nurtured the rapidly disseminating sentiment of racial prejudice that was entrenched deeper into the minds and manners of both Southern and Northern communities. While entertaining themselves with their roles as great homemakers and dutiful mothers, and glorifying their position at homes as a holy profession in the service of the American family and the nation, white middle-class bourgeois American women accommodated women of African descent in their houses as their servants. It was in these households that the plight of slave women stood in marked contrast with the fashionable lives of white women.

This conflict revealed that the notion of domesticity rejected any inclusion of women of color in the American houses as homemakers or owners. As critic Joseph

A. Conforti remarks, domestic slaves in either urban or rural settlements were “typically cramped into attics and small back rooms” (160) where they could enjoy no domestic comfort. Nevertheless, this segregation and unequal condition based on racial slavery brought along the collapse of the slave plantation households in various ways: white sexual coercion, physical violence, psychological torture, separation of slave families by either public or private sale, and homelessness all worsened the condition of black people, pushing black people or the crusaders for abolitionism to alternate polities so as to remedy this social ill. The critical point of domestic life as a social and political question lied in the fact that the concept and applicability of domesticity were in a serious conflict with the homelessness and nationlessness of the enslaved people in both the antebellum and postbellum United States. Historian Elizabeth Fox-Genovese contends that the struggle of the abolitionist movement and the defiance of slave women, “who embodied the core psychological dynamic of all resistance” (329), provided promising paths of equality and liberty for the colored people to tread although these paths would be thorny and toilsome. Making their own policies and composing counter-discourses to the conservative façade of domesticity and the cruel practices of the institution of slavery, abolitionists as writers or activists became the crusaders for freedom for the enslaved thousands living amidst the paradoxical social climate of nineteenth-century American society.

Given the impact of all of these social alterations and tribulations in the nineteenth-century United States, this dissertation aims to analyze the convergence of nineteenth-century cultural and sociopolitical conceptions of domesticity, slavery, and alternative abolitionist polities offered in works by Harriet Ann Jacobs,

Lydia Maria Child, and Frances Ellen Watkins Harper. Harriet Ann Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861), Lydia Maria Child's *A Romance of the Republic* (1867), and Frances Ellen Watkins Harper's *Iola Leroy, or, Shadows Uplifted* (1892) unearth the ways in which nineteenth century domesticity in the United States functions in a variety of ways. This study argues that these works disclose the limitations of the popular middle-class ideology of domesticity in relation to the colossal problem of slavery in American houses and social life. Covering a span from the antebellum period till the end of postbellum United States, these texts are replete with problems caused by slavery and racial injustices. Jacobs, Child and Harper all subvert, challenge, and surpass the ideology of separate spheres, conjuring up novel literary spaces through publicizing and politicizing both domestic and private constituents of the American houses. In doing so, they expose both political implications and social repercussions of domesticity by uncovering the dehumanizing nature of slavery within the domestic sphere, and envision alternate polities for the ills of slavery within the nascent American nation throughout the long nineteenth century.

Hence, this study discusses diverse forms of challenges to the idea of domestic order and explores the ways in which the strict distinction between the private and the public, personality and polity, subjection and freedom is inherently merged in personal and social affairs in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861) by Harriet Jacobs, *A Romance of the Republic* (1867) by Lydia Maria Child, and *Iola Leroy, or, Shadows Uplifted* (1892) by Frances E. W. Harper. In view of these concerns, this dissertation poses further queries on the significance of the intersection of these two socially related spheres – the private and the public- that

are deeply problematized by the social question of slavery. The question as to why these texts are suitable for analysis can further be answered in relation to their exploration of women's and more specifically female slaves' conditions and sentiments intrinsic to the peculiar institution of slavery. In the nineteenth century, race or racial oppression as the crux of the issue of slavery evoked the criticism of the value of the self and the meaning of the nation with reference to the national politics of the United States. The parallelism between the injustices in the field of the individual rights for the people of the United States and the unfair policies of the nation are portrayed illustratively in these writers' texts, which defended and spoke on behalf of abolitionism, freedom and equality. Given the legislative inequalities and social discriminations of the African American people within the exploitative organization of slavery, which forms a larger part of the African American labor force since the inception of the United States as a new nation, these texts can well be regarded as epitomes of subversion of the conventionalized middle-class bourgeois ideals of domesticity and the institution of slavery.

This study argues that these texts expose the complacent nature of the cult of domesticity and womanhood in order not to conform to them, but instead to destabilize their idealistic façade and values. For Jacobs, Child and Harper, domesticity is inherently a supremacist concept created by white people. Furthermore, these writers reveal in their narratives that though domesticity as a term is related to the private household questions, it is in essence saturated with the political issues of the nation. They address the paradoxes of domestic ideology, dissolving the lines drawn between white and black communities. If domesticity points largely to domestic comfort and happiness of women and family life, then it

is clear in these works that it functions one-sidedly and only for white people. Seeing this fallacy, Jacobs, Child and Harper critique the lack and invalidity of domesticity for racial minorities, underscoring the need for black people to settle down in their own houses as citizens of the United States and enjoy the constitutional freedom given to the people of the nation.

All of these writers contest the idealized norms of domesticity in different ways and in different time periods of the nineteenth century. They enable their readers to explore the genuine meaning of domestic life by presenting their works in light of references to ideologies of domesticity, a stance which highlights the very undomestic points such as the absence of family life, home and nation for black people in the antebellum and postbellum American life. Jacobs's autobiography was published in 1861, but the period of her narrative covers the timeline between 1813 and the 1850s, the years she gained her freedom. Her work reflects the most vivid times of sociocultural change and Jacobs's reaction to them during the antebellum era. Jacobs makes use of the advantages of the first person narrative and its credibility in her direct narration and sentimental appeal to the reader. She explores the dysfunctional nature of southern houses of slavery in her autobiography and the perils awaiting the female slave in the hands of a cruel master. Child's novel introduces the vision of a reformed nation that can be made possible with new kinship ties formed beyond racial borders. The events in the novel take place both in the antebellum time and during the Civil War, a period that shows characters lose their freedom and regain it under miserable conditions by means of defying authority and forming new non-kin relations that prove more genuine than bloodlines. Child exploits the romantic conventions of domesticity

and the romance pattern to display the houses and families shattered by slavery and racism. Her characters depolarize the idealized conventions of domesticity and womanhood by regaining their freedom after a period of distress. Harper's novel takes place during the Civil War and the postbellum United States where Reconstruction becomes a growing sociopolitical concern. Harper creates open and public discussions that make up a heteroglossic world that is defiant of the restrictive and inhuman practices of racial slavery and domesticity. Harper's heroine Iola achieves racial consciousness after a period of perplexity and then practices activism to help progress the black race as a Reconstructionist policy.

Pointing to the critical cultural and sociopolitical formations in the nineteenth century, all these women writers chronicle the hardships in the lives of women of color and characterize enslavement in relation to domesticity's failure to compensate for the losses the institution of slavery caused. These narratives reveal the nation's unequal conditions regarding the drawbacks of the ideals of domesticity and womanhood in the lives of black female slaves. The aim of these writers is not to downplay the idea of home; instead, they contend that it should be possible for black people to build up their own houses and enjoy the idea of domestic contentment in a free nation. Jacobs, Child, and Harper make use of such ideals in ways that take on a functional quality by introducing alterations to the perception of domesticity as a new political and spatial entity that safely accommodates black people.

In light of the textual commitments of these women writers, Chapter I will analyze Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* as a text that becomes a venue

for criticism of a visible discrepancy between the ideals of domesticity and the institution of slavery. Chapter II will center on slavery's violation of the domestic sphere of a Southern family in Lydia Maria Child's *A Romance of the Republic* (1867). Chapter III will examine the questions of racial slavery and Reconstruction with regards to abolitionism in Frances Ellen Watkins Harper's 1892 novel *Iola Leroy, or, Shadows Uplifted*. All of these works can be taken as texts that document the accounts of nineteenth-century domesticity in the context of slavery as testimonial archives of the time. They share the common aim to influence their readers with alternate abolitionist politics that could remove enslavement and remedy its injuries. In the following chapters, all of the works under analysis will be explored in relation to their objectives, and methods. Before the analysis of the main texts, it is essential to review selected women's writings that are illustrative of domesticity, slavery and abolitionism in the nineteenth century in order to examine the representative quality of women's writing in different forms and place the three texts in a wider literary and cultural context of the time.

Chapter I. Cultural and Historical Background

I.I. The Rise of Domesticity in the Antebellum United States

Domesticity as a cultural notion in the antebellum United States was the outcome of the ideology of separate spheres. As historian Catherine Clinton remarks, since women were “segregated from men by confines of a new ideological order” (41), which was called domesticity, they created a subculture in which they mythicized an ideal woman who behaves “within the limits prescribed by male authority” (41). The idea of domestic woman was a “cultural myth” (Clinton 40) that typified what an American woman should be like in accordance with the religious tenets and political principles of the American nation. At the same time, there was an ongoing process of enculturation and mythicization on the part of the white middle-class women, which progressed in line with the advancing nation building. Furthermore, the social and political forces of the American nation failed to address and acknowledge the issue of slavery together with the ensuing violations of human rights at home and the Constitutional promises of freedom and democracy.

This “cultural myth” (Clinton 40) of womanhood was an idealized notion according to which a woman should act. In her seminal essay “The Cult of True Womanhood” (1966) scholar Barbara Welter argues that there were “four cardinal

virtues - piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity” (152) that defined ideal standards of antebellum womanhood. Welter claims that the antebellum American woman was “the hostage in the home” (151) as a consequence of these strict tenets. Elaborating on the implications of the ideology of the separate spheres, Welter remarks that women remained at home as domestic hostages and the men were at work building public spaces, realms inaccessible to domestic women. Welter asserts that no matter how much change took place in society, a woman was expected to remain as a “true woman” (152), and “if anyone, male or female, dared to tamper with the complex of virtues that made up True Womanhood, he was damned immediately as the enemy of God, of civilization, and of the Republic” (152). Welter maintains that these virtues together “spelled mother, daughter, sister, wife – woman” (152), and without these virtues, “no matter whether there was fame, achievement, or wealth, all was ashes. With them she was promised happiness and power (152).

The formula to be true mothers, daughters, sisters, or wives was a readjustment of gender roles and religious views in a newly founded nation. Virtues that were related to religiosity and submissiveness were seen as the strongholds of the cult of true womanhood that defined the antebellum American home life. The meaning of the cult had its source in such dominant nineteenth century social or political structures as religion and republicanism. Yet, as historian Linda K. Kerber notes, “republican ideology primarily concerned a single sex rather than an American community of both sexes” (7), according to which “women were thought to make their moral choices in the context of the household” (7). Thus, idealization of womanhood within the domestic sphere was nothing less than a construction of

women's social roles and competencies as part of a patriarchal project. It, hence, becomes obvious that domesticity and true womanhood seemed to suggest more than these "four cardinal virtues" (Welter 152): they preached a conservative cultural ideology for women to abide by and built homes as private spheres to stay within. Subordinating women by teachings of subservience and domestic confinement, all of these idealized concepts such as piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity were in essence of patriarchal nature and addressed only white middle-class women. Designing restraining boundaries that limit social interaction of women in the public areas, the cults of domesticity and true womanhood functioned as patriarchal surveillance devices for the white antebellum women.

Historically speaking, sexual division of labor or the birth of a cultural value like domesticity in the early United States was embedded in the progress that took place in the public arena: industrialism was forging ahead in the northern states, and a sense of improvement was accompanied by the westward expansion that was thought to be an emblem of national glory. Territorial expansionism and industrial employment opportunities opened new work areas for men out in public and denied women's labor in the industrial or communal places. Hence, an influx of industrialization influenced gender roles "both in the work force and in family" (Smith-Rosenberg 12). Once men were determined as the employees of work places, women became housekeepers "with the rising importance of the family as a spiritual unit" (Westerkamp 5). This arrangement of the social structure caused American women to form an idea of domestic culture with a focus on ideal womanhood and motherhood, and of family as the fundamental part of the American nation.

Central to the purpose of this study is the exploration of the meaning of the concept of domesticity, and the cultural and historical elements that triggered and precipitated its rise and widespread use in the antebellum American social life. It is similarly essential to review the locale of this sociocultural term at the same time within the scholarship to better perceive its development and consequences. Scholarly research on nineteenth-century women's literature and culture substantiates that the perception of organization of social life was predicated on the ideology of the separation of spheres based on gender norms. Domesticity as an ideology of quotidian home life and true womanhood stood as an antithesis of the public sphere that was occupied by working class men. However, it is critical to observe that this division generated a type of conservative ideology of womanhood that was fashioning the notion of domesticity in relation to the American nation and even an expansive domestic imperialism. This parallel between women's domestic roles and the national sentiments further appointed white middle-class women as impeccable homemakers and dutiful mothers of the new republic and as paradigms of citizenship and moral authority. Obviously, nineteenth-century print culture played a major role in the dissemination of these ideas that were previously unavailable in the absence of the print. Rapidly thriving mass magazine culture and the popular domestic or sentimental fiction in particular in the antebellum period became the medium that enabled the establishment of a sentimental domestic culture among its target populace, white middle-class women.

Domesticity denotes home and home life; nevertheless, with the separation of spheres, cultural implications of home multiplied and identified home to be the

mere office of American women. That house became an officialized space was associated with the idea of housekeeping as part of nation building performed by white American women. Women's social roles such as motherhood gained a civic character and a civic duty to raise children for the American nation. Since the American Revolution and establishment of the new nation, as Linda K. Kerber evaluates, "righteous mothers were asked to raise the virtuous male citizens on whom the health of the Republic depended" (10). The health of the nation was based on the education of the home and household, and the decades following the Revolution "witnessed a great expansion of educational opportunity, an expansion sustained by the belief that the success of the republican experiment demanded a well-educated citizenry" (Kerber 189). While male perspective ignored the female gender in the active involvement of citizenship in social life, it added political responsibility to women's daily tasks at home. This inclination paved the way for cultural production of "ideals" of what Kerber calls the "Republican Motherhood" (36):

The vision of the Republican Mother owed a debt to the Enlightenment and to the Revolution. To the mother's traditional responsibility for maintenance of the household economy, and to the expectation that she be a person of religious faith, were added the obligation that she also be an informed and virtuous citizen. She was to observe the political worlds with a rational eye, and she was to guide her husband and children in making their way through it. She was to be a teacher as well as a mother (235).

This growing faith in women's domestic duties defined the idea of home as a microcosm of the expanding American nation. It is through the efforts of patriotic Republican mothers that the nation would expand to endless territories. Accordingly, "the canon of domesticity" necessitated women to "sustain the milieu of task-oriented work that had characterized earlier family organization" (Cott 71). Home is transformed to a civic academy with a patriotic purpose. Besides, the notion of family with men in the public sphere and women in their domestic circle performing patriotic tasks is perceived as an allegory to the nation. The sacrifices in the family were compared to the sacrifices made for the nation. Since women's sacrifices to educate their offspring were made in the name of the nation, women's new service to the public sphere in their political duties seemed innocuous.

Another element that boosted women's sound position at home is the print culture of the time. In particular, the antebellum period witnessed the rapidly thriving print culture and establishment of female seminaries and their publications that became the most effective tool both to maintain the control designed by men over women at home and to expand women's patriotic roles nationwide. Education denied to minority cultures was made possible for white women who read popular magazines, manuals, diaries, memoirs, sermons, or annual reports of female seminaries written only for women. The need for female education as a site of raising citizens also occasioned the establishment of female seminaries mostly in the New England area. For instance, to name a few, New-Hampton Female Seminary, "the Troy Female Seminary (founded by Emma Willard in 1821), the Hartford Female Seminary (founded by Catherine Beecher in 1823), and Mount Holyoke (founded by Mary Lyon in 1837) offered women the equivalent of a

college education” (McMahon 167). Nonetheless, female education was under the guard of the cult of domesticity and religion. Without religion and domestic duties, it was impossible and profane to pursue education.

In 1836, the corresponding secretary of the New-Hampton Female Seminary, Martha Hazeltine, in her “Corresponding Secretary’s Digest and Circular” (1836), remarks that “the obligations accompanying moral and mental culture” were the abilities to “discipline and govern our [their] evil propensities, making our [their] animal feelings subservient to moral ones, and enabling us [them], not only to be more agreeable companions, but to please God and to be useful to others” (25). True epitomes of conservative domesticity, Hazeltine’s words underscore the same praxis of education, religion and domesticity by positioning “the importance of female education” (26) in relation to the females’ commitment to God. She articulates,

... woman is regarded in the relation she sustains to her *Creator*, as an intelligent, moral being; to *man*, as his companion and helper; to *herself*, as moral possessing equally with man the sacred and inalienable right of pursuing her own happiness; to the *present generation*, as controlling the intellectual tastes, and graduating the moral tone of society; to the *coming generation*, as absolutely determining its character, and molding it at her will; a through, extensive and highly finished education, is of the first importance (26).

In her preference of the words, Hazeltine's text, which seems to be a sort of a reply to *the Declaration of Independence* (1776), becomes a new declaration for women in the guise of religion and domesticity. She foregrounds the civic role of women as man's "companion and helper" (26) and defines a woman "as an intelligent, moral being" (26) as well as an arbiter of "intellectual tastes" (26). Hazeltine contends that a woman achieves such mental abilities by elevating the "moral tone of society" (26). Hazeltine therefore centers women's position in the process of enculturation on her abilities to regulate and mold the character of next generations by help of women's efforts in the field of education. However, this intermediary position of women between the domestic sphere and the civic duties gives rise to the conflicting ideas between domestic ideals and aspiration for education. Hazeltine asks for the improvement of female education in a tone of incredulity. M. Hazeltine interrogates,

How adore him with elevated affections, unless she is able to apprehend and distinctly to contemplate his attributes? How obey his laws, unless she is able to discover those laws? That God does consider such a knowledge of himself, and of the principles of his administration, essential to our highest happiness, is evident from the ample means he has provided for the attainment of this end (26-27).

Fraught with contradictory remarks, Hazeltine's text shows the conservative inclination that officiates women's service to God and the public sphere or the formation of the nation. Hazeltine concludes from her suggestions about woman's relation to religion and her educational rights that a woman, "as an individual,

permitted by the right, and bound by duty, to pursue her own happiness” (27) should “bestow the highest possible attention upon the development of her mind” (27), since the “very element of happiness consists in the exercise of the several faculties with which Creator has endowed us [them]” (27). Hazeltine places this endowment of happiness on the woman’s shoulders as individual, familial, and social responsibilities. Nevertheless, she suggests, “the most exalted element of woman’s happiness lies in her power of communicating happiness to others” (27). And, didactically she adds that if women were deprived of this “privilege”, they would be “miserable indeed” (27). For Hazeltine, it is “cruel then to rob her of the chief and only certain means of securing this blessedness, - a highly wrought and beautifully polished soul” (27). Stating that the “whole face of society receives its impress from the character of woman” (27), and that it is “her peculiar province to form the rising mind” (27), Hazeltine connects women’s own happiness to her duties in society.

Hazeltine’s speech is of great consequence mainly because it illustrates the conflict between domesticity’s conservatism and the advancement of the female education that constructs the selfless image of women in the education of the coming generations of the American nation. She becomes more instructive and even didactic in her attempt to propagate her ideology. Presenting the “subject of female education with exclusive reference to the practical duties of life” (28), Hazeltine encapsulates the domestic ideology by integrating women’s duties at home into their service to God and social life:

Drawing, music, and poetry, are preeminently calculated to refine the taste, and to afford pleasure of the most innocent and ennobling kind; and even the less exalted arts of fancy needlework, and trifling parlor decorations, have their beneficial effects in cultivating a chastened elegance of taste, and a practical sense of the beautiful. The only danger in relation to the pursuit of these branches is, lest we appropriate them an undue share of our attention. Although they have a value, they must give place, in point of utility, to many other claim; and it becomes our duty scrupulously to inquire for what pursuits Providence has specially designed us as individuals, and to shape our education accordingly. We should never forget, however, that as a sex, it is our peculiar province to please. This is unquestionably one design of the Creator, in relation to ourselves, and should not be overlooked by us (28-29).

As is obvious in Hazeltine's speech, female seminaries sowed an image of selfless, obedient, subservient, pious, but patriotic American women. Education of women in the service of God and the American nation promoted a sense of domestic duties that are to be served for the whole nation and its progress. Feminine influence, which is previously believed only to belong to the domestic sphere, did in fact effect a privatization of the public sphere. In more conservative women's writings, women's domestic duties took the shape of a reconfiguration of notions of the polity, of civic belonging and virtue, of national solidarity and patriotic feelings in sentimental expressions. Women were seen to be the guardians of not only the American home but also of the American nation. All of these attempts can well be considered what literary critic Ann Douglas calls "the Feminization of American

Culture” (1977) in her book of the same title. Douglas claims that religious middle-class women “wished to exert ‘influence’, which they eulogized as a religious force” (8). The fact that white middle-class women became “the prime consumers of American culture” is due to the “triumph of the ‘feminizing,’ sentimental forces that would generate mass culture redefined and perhaps limited the possibilities of change in American society” (13).

Educational reforms in the female seminaries were merely the indications of further fractures that were to crack deeper in the private/public dichotomy via the magazine culture of the time. Domesticity’s one-way direction began to take different roads that had been previously unfamiliar to women. Reforms in the field of education brought separate spheres closer, and caused domesticity to affiliate with public issues rather than solely becoming contingent on its traditional meaning. With the increase of the print materials and their circulation, women writers “exerted their ‘influence’ through literature which was just in the process of becoming a mass medium” (Douglas 8). The print allowed them to expand their influence not only on the nearby neighborhoods, churches, and seminaries, but across the nation as well. Since their circulation was quick, magazines consolidated the conservative feminism by focusing upon tips and treatises on housekeeping, decoration, domestic organization, home cooking, embroidery, sewing, tailoring, new fashion displayed on fashion plates, and issues on religiosity, female education, and reading practices.

The magazine culture of the antebellum time powerfully validates that white middle-class American women were culturally associated with domestic qualities,

and that these features are to be extended for the good of society without any violation of the public sphere. On magazines' extensive and speedy influence on women since the 1830s, Nancy F. Cott indicates that magazines, "addressing an audience of "ladies" multiplied rapidly, carrying essays, stories, and advice of a similar domestic slant", (64) lay bare "a single canon—of domesticity" in a "rash of words" (64). Women's duty to house chores, moral virtues and education, which is only limited to reading and writing, would let them exert their influence on their children and shape their family life and the nation. For instance, "The Home Department" of 1844 January issue of *Ladies' National Magazine* (or *Peterson's Magazine*) edited by Mrs. Ann S. Stephens and Charles J. Peterson in Philadelphia featured an article entitled "Fancy Needlework" that claimed that "the education of no lady is considered complete until she has some knowledge of fancy needlework, embroidery, and netting and crochet" (34). Similarly, an anonymous writer, "a Philadelphian", in an "Essay on Education of Females" in *The Ladies' Companion* in June 1841 construed conservative womanhood as a civic office of female influence. Equating women's domestic duties with the principle of influence, this anonymous writer accentuated that "the most important female talent – and that for which woman will perhaps be especially accountable – is Influence" (1841 94):

As a Sister, Wife, and Mother, this talent [Influence] is unlimited, and its exercise happy or the reverse, must be productive of the greatest moral and political effects. It is in the domestic circle peculiarly woman is called to act – home is the bright center of all her sublunary joys and anticipations – in it are concentrated the energies of her very soul, and

from it must emanate those insensibly though infallibly operating principles, which will in time reform the world (94).

The blueprint for domesticity suggested in this paragraph clarifies that in each of their social roles as sisters, wives, or mothers, women were assigned to be the producers of “moral and political effects” (94) owing to their special talent “Influence” (94). It is important to consider that this influence solely appealed to white women and was proposed to support the white supremacy in line with the nation’s development. As though performing a religious ritual or a national ceremony, women were assumed to exert their influence both “in the domestic circle” (94) and in the transformation of the world. This blend of conservatism and empowerment of the white women in the reforms of the public sphere displays the change the concept of domesticity was going through, as it found a popular way of expression on the magazine pages.

Women’s magazines encouraged moral judgments entrenched in the ideal notion of womanhood, and invested white womanhood with a distinctive status and with certain moral norms in fictive or nonfiction works by a variety of famous and non-famous or anonymous authors. Mrs. S. Smith wrote in 1842 October issue of *Graham’s Magazine* that women should improve themselves in domestic virtues in her essay “Characterless Women”. By the adjective “characterless”, Mrs. Smith means, “a woman, too feeble to grasp at thought, too vapid for sentiment, too tame for mirth, too commonplace for enthusiasm, and too weak for passion, may be the ideal of those incapable of appreciating the higher characteristics of womanhood” (199). Mrs. Smith’s statement elucidates that any woman who would step out of the

instructions that Barbara Welter verbalized as “piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity” (152) is condemned or presented to be an abominable type of woman. Another magazine *The Ladies’ Companion* in November 1841 published the story “The Guilty Wife” by D. H. M. The main character of the story is Emily Russell, “to be Emily Chilton” (67), who pursued the example of her parents’ “blissful experience of wedded life” (67) at the age of fifteen, is said to have all the necessities of a true woman: she was “mild, gentle and pliable ... in proper hands” (67). Due to a quirk of fate, Emily meets Louis Chilton, a young American captain in the navy, at a party and struck him with her sweet face and simple manners. They get married and she becomes the young wife of a rich captain, enjoying all the wealth and easiness “amid the festive scenes of the gay world” (67). But her “occasional interviews with her husband” (67) formed “an aching void” (67) which she filled in with her new acquaintance, the young Count de L—. Unlike her husband, he is depicted as “gay, witty, and a devoted admirer of his fair hostess” (67). Despite his amiable character and because he is one of the subjects of adultery, the young Count’s full name is not given in the story. Emily, who was “so submissive, and so grateful” (67) to her husband, grows “listless and unhappy” (67) when the young Count was called away for a few months. After his return and on pouring forth “the treasures of his love” (67), “the lovely, gifted Emily Chilton sacrificed her honor and her duty at the shrine of guilty love” (67) and elopes with the young Count. Her still compassionate husband is portrayed to be praising the virtue Emily has lost by eloping. The letter he writes to Emily is indicative of these virtues:

MY STILL DEAR EMILY :—

Let me beg of you to see me once more, and persuade you to leave the paths of sin, before you feed upon the bitter fruits which you have garnered there. Let the past be buried in oblivion, return to America, and dedicate the remainder of your life to the fulfillment of those duties which my inattention has caused you to neglect, and I will endeavor to guard you with the pure devotion of *a brother's love*" (68).

For Emily, the problem is brotherly love, which "sounded cold on the ears" (68). Then, the Count leaves her and goes to Bordeaux to pursue his pleasure and follows circumstances "which induced him to marry a lady of much beauty and high birth (68). The narrator also criticizes the husband, as he did not reside in the domestic sphere to cherish his wife. The main residence for happiness and tranquility must be home, according to the narrator:

And where was he who had sworn at God's altar to protect and cherish her? Could he not warn her of her perilous situation? Alas! he thought not of her—he had long since ceased to seek his happiness in his domestic circle, and found attractions in the captivating round of pleasure to which his abundant resources gave him easy access, and left his young wife to the guidance of her own inclinations (67-68).

Emily is depicted as a woman who needs guidance in her domestic sphere as though she had no wisdom at all. Emily, who is American, in the story, is described as "a lovely flower he would transplant from the 'wilds of America~ to that hotbed of vice and fashion, Paris" (67). Whereas the fashionable France is portrayed to be

the source of sin, America is shown to be pristine. In consequence of her trespassing, Emily is punished as a warning to other women with exile in the South, New Orleans. The epigraph to the story reads, “Go – and sin no more” (67) which is more like an instruction for all women who may commit the sin of adultery. The story concludes with the repentant Emily asking for forgiveness from her husband.

All similar works in these magazines promoted the idea that as long as women remained faithful to these virtuous and pious guidelines of domestic life, they would become influential members of American family and society. Women’s historian Mary P. Ryan indicates in her *The Empire of The Mother: American Writing About Domesticity, 1830-1860* that this “new crop of ladies’ magazines” “singled out the female occupants of homes across America for special attention and invited them to join in a domestic crusade” (19). In addition to all these magazines, this domestic crusade was best maintained and even fueled by the most influential women’s magazine of the nineteenth-century, *Godey’s Lady’s Book*. With its publication span that lasted almost sixty-eight years, *Godey’s Lady’s Book* alone prompted the expansion of women’s magazine culture as the best selling magazine for the white middle-class women. The “most important arbiter of feminine opinion” (Douglas 51) of the day, *Godey’s Lady’s Book* encouraged true womanhood so much so that every piece of literary or nonliterary text included catered to religious and domestic cults. Initiated as *The Lady’s Book* by Louis A. Godey in the 1830s in Philadelphia, the monthly issues of the magazine was abundant with a repertoire of poetry, short story, serial novels, musical notes, fashion plates, interior and exterior architectural designs for typical American homes, and practical observations on subjects like dancing, riding, friendship,

beauty, and trendy fashion. A particularly interesting case about *Godey's Lady's Book* is that it was a leading women's magazine surpassing any other with its longest span of publication, and it enjoyed the biggest circulation in the pre-Civil War era (Finley 23). As Patricia Okker states, *Godey's Lady's Book* "claimed 150,000 readers" (13) in 1860 and its influence hence became far-reaching than other magazines due to its durable tenets on cult of domesticity and true womanhood.

Domesticity can be viewed as a process of enculturation that flourished the imperialist ideals of a country at the early stages of its national formation. In the first place, domesticity in the early nineteenth century was an inclusive term that idealized the idea of home and domestic happiness in the middle and upper-middle classes as an extension of national welfare. Domesticity, however, was also associated with the national affairs and the foreign policy of imperialism of the United States: as literary critic Amy Kaplan proposes, "the development of domestic discourse in America is contemporaneous with the discourse of Manifest Destiny" (583). This parallel between the domestic ideals and the national discourse reveals the ways in which the separate spheres ideology in antebellum period "contributed to creating an American empire by imagining the nation as a home at a time when its geopolitical borders were expanding rapidly through violent confrontations with Indians, Mexicans, and, European empires (Kaplan 583). Domesticity thus could not escape becoming an ideological notion into which politics is injected. A reading of the concept of domesticity as a symbol of the American home in comparison with the national affairs as an emblem of the public sphere uncovers the fact that the supposedly distinct spheres of the private and the

public turn out to be juxtaposed conceptual entities, and places the materially invisible but ideologically discernible borders among these spatial and political divisions in close proximity to one another. The slave, however, comes into this ideal but in fact pseudo domestic and national contentment from “a historical void, with no inheritance other than the legal determination that he or she is to be inherited by the master’s legitimate descendants” (Castronovo 203). No more than an object of the house, the slave observes that the American home is an inharmonious contradictory space that is sustained by whips and tortures. Critic Jeannine DeLombard stresses that slavery is a “national sin” (DeLombard 18) supported and implemented by the southern states. This relation between the national and the domestic problem of slavery point at the fact that the very source of the restlessness slavery caused in the entire nation is in essence slavery’s domestic tyranny. Thus, the conflict slavery led to within the nation is a direct reflection of each American home tainted with the oppression of enslavement.

Even more noteworthy than its impact on the construction of the mass market is the strong connection the magazine formed between domestic sphere and nation building. As Amy Kaplan suggests, its more than fifty-years of editress, Sarah Josepha Hale, seemed to “avoid the issue of slavery and race relations in her silence about the Civil War” (592) and made the expansionist claims of the magazine without ever mentioning an account of the war. As the war drew closer, her treatment of domesticity took on a “decidedly racial cast, exposing the intimate link between the separateness of gendered spheres and the effort to keep the races apart in separate national spheres” (Kaplan 592). Hale’s separatist and expansionist ideas were more in the same route with the notion of the Manifest Destiny. During the

same decades, in which Hale was busy drawing the analogy between housekeeping and nation building, the conception Manifest Destiny was making inroads into the American national consciousness. The creator of the phrase, the American columnist John L. O'Sullivan wrote in his article "The Great Nation of Futurity," in the 23rd November issue of *The United States Democratic Review* in 1839 that "the far-reaching, the boundless future will be the era of American greatness" (427). Just like Hale's use of religious views in the expression of the expansion of domesticity in a sentimental style, O'Sullivan combined the exceptionalist ideas he attributes to the United States with religious overtones and stated, "in its magnificent domain of space and time, the nation of many nations is destined to manifest to mankind the excellence of divine principles; to establish on earth the noblest temple ever dedicated to the worship of the Most High -- the Sacred and the True (427). O'Sullivan's words echoed on the political agenda of the time and caught a great deal of public attention. He linked "mission and expansion" (Johannsen 10) in the grouping of the phrase *manifest destiny* that underlined the idea that territorial expansion is America's mission or destiny and that more territories are to be annexed so as to enable the United States to become a great nation.

Hale was well aware of the expansionist policies and imperialist mission of the nation, and strained every nerve to expand these ideas to women's delicate sphere for American women to be the supporters of the American men who explored the frontier out in the wilderness. Therefore, Hale yoked the "mission and expansion" politics to her choices for the magazine and scattered these ideas in every section she designed for the magazine as part of formation of national enculturation. First, the noticeable devotion to the home and interior decoration

intensified the idea of domesticity with pictures of women in fashionable clothes at their well-decorated homes. Secondly, copious fashion plates were put on display to allow women to follow the up-to-date fashion styles. But the critical point is that these fashion plates were definitely not displayed for the sake of fashionable clothes only, but they transmitted a sense of collective duty on adequate etiquette and especially in the images showing women reading *Godey's* (Image 1). Women would apparently be expected to see this double image of women who were portrayed reading *Godey's* printed on the pages of *Godey's* (Image 2). These images enhanced the communal sense of women acting the way they are instructed by the magazine. Thus, *Godey's* did more than induce the cult of domesticity and true womanhood: it built a complicated relation with the public sphere by paralleling the home to the concept of the nation, and by creating a type of white female supremacy in its exclusion of other women of different ethnic or racial identities.



Image 1: *Godey's Lady's Book*, May 1847, Courtesy of the Library of University of Pennsylvania, Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts Library.



Image 2: *Godey's Lady's Book*, May 1838, Courtesy of the Library of University of Pennsylvania, Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts Library.

On the one hand, *Godey's* preserved its conservative ideas such as domestic happiness, womanhood ideals and rhetoric of advice; but, on the other hand, it emancipated itself from its spatial constraints. This dual approach of the magazine, however, proves a direct counterpoint to the rhetoric of the political and public issues, and has an intricate relationship with the burgeoning nation building. To better discern this case, it is essential to see how Hale actively contributed to the official acknowledgement of Thanksgiving Day as a national holiday. Adhering on the surface to her firm conviction in the separation of spheres, Hale promoted the idea of womanhood with great responsibilities for the formation and development

of the American republic in *Godey's Lady's Book*¹. Both in her Editor's Table in *Godey's* and in many of her works, she advocated the ideology of separate spheres and urged women to be productive in domestic chores at their homes. Her readers followed the most visible example of this for almost two decades throughout which Hale advocated the importance of the Thanksgiving Day for the collective sentiments of the nation. Believing in the role women perform in their domestic circles for the service of the nation through patriotic childrearing and education, Hale campaigned on *Godey's* pages for Thanksgiving Day to become a national holiday. In 1847 (March) edition *Godey's*, Hale wrote under the subtitle "Thanksgiving Day"

We ventured to suggest, in our "Book" for January, that the last Thursday in November would be the day best suited for the Annual Thanksgiving holiday throughout our Republic. The suggestion has been responded to in terms of approbation, and we trust the leading journals in the nation will give their aid to prepare for such a universal rejoicing next November. That month of gloom would then become the gladdest in the year (174).

Such national sentiments in Hale's conservative writings in *Godey's* helped privatize the public sphere instead of aiming at women's access to the public sphere. In Kerber's terms, Hale was the quintessence of the "Republican Mother" who encouraged "civic interest and participation" (283) of children and her female readers, and guided them "in the paths of morality and virtue" (283). Similarly, she

¹ The magazine is said to have different names, but beginning from the 1830s it took the name *Godey's Lady's Book* under its new editress, Sarah Josepha Hale, and

voiced the same connection between motherhood as an indispensable branch of womanhood and the women's public and even imperial mission in one of her poems "The Empire of Woman" in the July 1845 issue of *Godey's*. Hale defines women's empire as "holier, more refined" (12) against men's "outward World" (12) not because she simply prefers to say that domestic sphere is good enough for women but because she aims to idealize home for white middle class American women to excel in their capabilities as a reflection of the male imperialism. Not only does Hale articulate the principles of the cult of domesticity and women's roles as wives, daughters, sisters, and mothers in each section of her poem, but by communicating to her readers women's love that "sow flowers along life's thorny way;/Her star-bright faith lead up toward heaven's goal" (12), she also foregrounds women's role as active contributors to men's objectives in "outer World" (12). She further concludes her poem by praising the "wondrous power" of "the Mother's mind" (12),

Oh! wondrous power, how little understood,
Entrusted to the Mother's mind alone,
To fashion genius, form the soul for good,
Inspire a West, or train a Washington! (12)

Hale unwaveringly believed that the mind of the mother has immeasurable territories that extend to raising children of great power. Hale refers to the American painter Benjamin West and George Washington, the first president of the United States; since, for Hale, these two historical figures represent the power of the mother's capabilities to "fashion" (12) the "genius" (12) and the "soul" (12) of children who would glorify the American nation. As is clear in this poem, Hale

enabled her readers to imagine a “civic culture” (Kerber 283) as an essential part of their domestic roles as wives and mothers. More significantly, she reified the abstract notion of the nation by communicating to her readers the idea that civic duties performed within the family affect the formation of national politics and enculturation. Suggesting that this civic duty is to be an imperative part of national construction, Hale rendered the perception of nationhood as a sentiment that is to be communally felt, shared, and disseminated among people in American society.

All of Hale’s efforts translate themselves into the construction of the sentiment of the nationhood and relates a consciousness of polity to a sense of belonging to the nationalist feelings that will hold only white people together in the celebration of the Thanksgiving Day. In arguing for the Thanksgiving Day to become widespread in the whole nation, Hale reminds to her readers in 1854 (November) the still expanding frontiers of the American nation:

THANKSGIVING-DAY FOR 1854. -- For several years past we have discussed the subject of a general agreement on the time of this annual autumnal festival. We believe the people would be gratified to have this union of sentiment carried into effect. The last Thursday in November has been selected as the day best suited to the general convenience, when people from Maine to Mexico, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, might sit down together, as it were, and enjoy in national union their feast of gladness, rendering thanks to Almighty God for the blessings of the year.

Therefore we pray, on behalf of all friends of the “Lady’s Book,” that the Governors of the several States and Territories would issue their proclamations, each one for his own State, unanimously appointing Thursday, the 30th of November, as the DAY OF THANKSGIVING! Will not the Press throughout the Union join the “Lady’s Book” in this petition? (461).

In her “Editor’s Table” in 1860 (February), she similarly wrote in her article “The New National Holiday”,

Everything that contributes to bind us in one vast empire together, to quicken the sympathy that makes us feel from the icy North to the sunny South that we are one family, each a member of a great and free Nation, not merely the unit of a remote locality, is worthy of being cherished. We have sought to reawaken and increase this sympathy, believing that the fine filaments of the affections are stronger than laws to keep the Union of our States sacred in the hearts of our people... We believe our Thanksgiving Day, if fixed and perpetuated, will be a great and sanctifying promoter of this national spirit (175).

This “national spirit” (175) that Hale accentuates connects microcosmic familial celebration with a common spirit of national festival by purposely sketching a political context of communal sentiments. As philosopher Ernest Gellner describes, “nationalism is primarily a political principle” (1) in the most general sense of the word. This simple but expressive meaning of the word articulates that it is fundamentally a political principle “holds that the political and the national unit

should be congruent”, as can be spotted in the specific case Hale demonstrates in relation to the sentimental representation of the nation through communal feelings and duties. Moreover, the sentimental literary style of the period strengthened the national sentiments Hale put on the magazine market. Critic Janet Todd pinpoints, “the arousal of pathos through conventional situations, stock familial characters and rhetorical devices is the mark of sentimental literature” (2). Sentimental works endorse a “belief in the appealing and aesthetic quality of virtue” (Todd 2-3) and evoke an “assumption that life and literature is directly linked, not through a mimetic depiction of reality but through the belief that the literary experience can affect the living one” (Todd 4). Making “literary conventions become a way of life” (Todd 4) and emotions “exemplary” (Todd 4), sentimental writing teaches “its consumers to produce a response equivalent to the one presented in its episodes” (Todd 4) through “a kind of pedagogy of seeing” (Todd 4). Hale makes the best use of sentimentalism by promoting the celebration of Thanksgiving that is saturated with national sentiments, and that equally arouses the necessity of national feelings in the consumers of the magazine. Her determination to make it a national holiday also stimulates quite the opposite impression in the readers’ mind: if this day would not become a national holiday, there will be a lack or even the loss of a collective sense of duty and of the national sentiment that would keep people together. Her insistence on the celebration of a day evades the possibility of a national pathos for the community. To evade this potential pathos in “the month of gloom” (Hale 174), Hale does her best to provoke the “nationalist sentiment” (Gellner 1) through offering to transform the “month of gloom” (174) into the “gladdest” (Hale, “Thanksgiving Day” 174) one in the whole year. In this enterprise, Hale presents to her readers “the feeling of satisfaction aroused by its fulfillment” (Gellner 1).

Gellner states in his apt explanation, “a nationalist movement is one actuated by a sentiment of this kind” (Gellner 1). In line with Gellner’s elucidatory definition of the nation, it can be argued that Hale’s struggles to make the Thanksgiving Day a national holiday aimed at a homogenous concept of the nation that is only materialized in the inclusion of the white people in the United States. Her public views reinforced a cultural politics of nationalism by implying a definition of the nation as an entity that demands collective and political uniformity.

As years passed by, Hale’s energies overreached a veiled political agenda in her correspondence with the President Abraham Lincoln. She openly expressed her national wishes for an official day of thanks in a letter she addressed to the President Abraham Lincoln on September 28, 1863. She requested for a proclamation from Abe Lincoln, an immediate official declaration, which she thought was “the best, surest and most fitting method of National appointment” (Hale, *Letter*). Campaigning her speech in an even more political style, she states that “legislative aid” (Hale, *Letter*) would assist any “obstacles” (Hale, *Letter*), and concludes her letter with her emphasis on the “permanency and unity” (Hale, *Letter*) of the great American nation:

Now the purpose of this letter is to entreat President Lincoln to put forth his Proclamation, appointing the last Thursday in November (which falls this year on the 26th) as the National Thanksgiving for all those classes of people who are under the National Government particularly, and commending this Union Thanksgiving to each State Executive: thus, by the noble example and action of the President of the United

States, the permanency and unity of our Great American Festival of Thanksgiving would be forever secured (Hale, *Letter*).

Hale merely asked for “National recognition and authoritative fixation” for the Thanksgiving Day “only, to become permanently, an American custom and institution” (Hale, *Letter*). This was the time of the Civil War, but Hale attempted to avert the mention and the impact of the war through national feelings, fashion pages and idealized women images on *Godey’s* pages. She at last achieved her national project, when the President Abraham Lincoln issued on October 3, 1863 a proclamation and announced that the last Thursday of November would henceforward be “a Day of Thanksgiving and Praise” (Lincoln).

The fact that domesticity functions as an instrument of the expansionist ideas is effectively illustrated in the literary and nonliterary texts written by or selected for the magazine by Sarah Josepha Hale. The editress of more than half century of the most circulating women’s magazine throughout the nineteenth century, Hale campaigned on the pages of *Godey’s* for Thanksgiving Day to become a national holiday. For almost two decades, Hale advocated the importance of Thanksgiving Day for the communal sentiments of the nation. Likewise, the wide range of circulation of *Godey’s* enabled literary and nonliterary pieces included within the magazine to spread their influence. “Like television now” (Douglas 8), literature or magazine writing was a “new mass medium” (Douglas 9) that picked up the most suitable pieces to foster a collective sense to preserve the cult of domesticity along with sentiments of nationhood. Hale attentively selected stories, poems, or engravings to create a collective consciousness among her

readers through notions of domesticity, womanhood, family and nation. Through the high rates of circulation that created mass-production of a woman's culture in the antebellum time, *Godey's* helped identify the thematic ingredients of domesticity that lie in the ideas imposed on home as a blissful and appropriate sphere for women. Moral norms alike played a vital role in the cultural and political configurations of true womanhood. The home and the family were placed within a strict framework for the service of the nation. At the same time, with these new political roles attributed to women, the domestic sphere drew closer to the public sphere. Therefore, women's writings in the popular magazines did not mention domestic virtues as a side issue, but placed domesticity at the center as a major theme, and a concern in the contextual organization of each work. In these pieces, the conception of house and the maintenance of family are postulated as comparable or equal to national duties. Performance of housework encouraged women to develop a sense of duty towards nation building. Each attempt of the homemakers was thought to be contributing to the progress of the American republic. Thus, in spatial terms, the ideas of cult of true womanhood and domesticity, with which the nineteenth-century American woman is identified, did not only nurture the household of each home but also extended beyond the domestic borders in their conversation with the idea of nationhood and national expansion.

I. II. Slavery and Abolitionism

The popular women's writings of the time which produced the effect of a "mass medium" (Douglas 9) could not evade the impact of the abolitionist movement that sought to draw attention to the conflicts between the ideology of domesticity and the institution of slavery. While domesticity as a practice of enculturation aimed at leaving a collective impression on the whole nation, the antislavery crusaders viewed the idealistic representations of home life as problematic, as such illustrations did not include other ethnic or racial identities in the country. In this respect, it is useful to observe the ways in which domestic ideology had a complicated relation to race and gender in the nineteenth-century United States. In the first place, domesticity was but an intricate convention in the eyes of black people and, in particular, black women. Critic Claudia Tate asserts that it was principally because "the economy of slavery demanded slave women to be bearers of human chattel" (25) and "slave families existed outside legally secure and institutional constructions of marriage, motherhood, family, and household or home" (25). Furthermore, the "typical white family household of husband and wife, children, and kin" (Tate 25) was deconstructed, and a severe rupture of family relations and kinship ties took place under the slavery's dominance. Historian Drew G. Faust explains that since "white men and women of the antebellum South had defined and understood themselves in relation to a number of categories" (3) like race that "marked the difference between bound and free, superior and inferior" (3)

or gender that “was designed to distinguish independent from dependent, patriarch from subordinate” (3-4) and class that is “more subtle and more hidden in a society that rested within a democratizing America but present nonetheless in distinctions of wealth, power, education, and refinement, in claims to honor and gentility” (4), everyday lives of antebellum American people were shaped according to these artificial but dynamically working social mechanisms. Therefore, race, gender and class that are “evident in skin color, dress, hairstyle, language, and prescribed behavior” (Faust 4) became “both the markers and the principal determinants of power, as well as the stuff of self-definition” (Faust 4). All of these social categories identified both American homes and social life in ways that are alien to the ideal definitions of home, family, and society represented on the antebellum magazine pages. Whereas domestic ideology portrayed adorable pictures of family life and houses, early American nation witnessed domestic spaces that were vexed with agonies of female slaves. Domesticity defined as the blissful home life for the white women housed miseries of thousands of slaves who were living under physical and emotional chains.

Domestic ideology was essentially a patriarchal convention designed by men who organized social spaces and work places according to gender norms. Though white women’s lives and the American household were portrayed as filled with joy and harmony in the popular magazines of the time, restrictive rules of patriarchy were also valid for white women and reigned in the life style of the white communities. Similarly, slavery was also a patriarchal construct that influenced both racial and gender affairs structuring the nation’s sociopolitical agenda. Though slavery “took its toll on both men and women,” (Clinton 35) the problems of female

slaves and “the exploitation of female labor force” were quite “extraordinary” (Clinton 35) in terms of labor and sexual exploitation. Not unlike domesticity’s patriarchal characteristic, slavery as a patriarchal apparatus worked mercilessly against female slaves and produced domestic tragedies that led African American women to formulate strategies to attain freedom and equal life conditions just like their white peers. Whereas “house slaves broadened the gentry’s investment in domestic comfort and social privilege” (Conforti 176), the terms which are expressive of domesticity such as piety, purity or more general conceptual frames such as womanhood and motherhood failed to function in the lives of female slaves. The abuse, rape, sexual coercion, and violence performed by the slave masters brought various problems like childbearing that forced female slaves to become “breeders, like farm livestock” (Tate 25), while taking away from them their rights to get married, establish families or claim their womanhood and motherhood. Black women were but “public commodities of exchange whose market value was exclusively indexed as the production material wealth, whereas white women were private individuals who circulated in patriarchal society for producing heirs and regulating moral, spiritual, and emotional values” (Tate 25). In addition to sexual coercion, brutal torture and harsh working conditions multiplied the unrelenting plight of female slaves. Female slaves were thus regarded “as laborers, and their daily lives were shaped mainly by work, conditions that bred illness, and violence” (Lewis and Lewis xvii). In other words, the private sphere that was so dear to white middle-class women did not produce any cure for the black female slaves. Instead, it caused various physical and psychological damages: unbearable physical work on plantations, domestic chores like cleaning, sewing, cooking, childcare, breastfeeding, separation from families and offspring, and unavoidable sexual

coercion rendered slavery's houses dangerous domestic spheres for female slaves.

This visible discrepancy between these two social concepts also exposed the problems within political principles held dear in the American nation. Slavery was institutionalized through various laws and legal regulations, which toughened racial and gender relations in American society. Further, slavery negated all of the idyllic codes of domesticity and the constitutional principles of equality and liberty in a country that boasted of these virtues endowed its people legally with inalienable rights. As Ezra Tawil expresses, the Constitution offered “the importation of slaves by individual states before the year 1808; and the provision requiring that fugitive slaves be returned to their masters even across states” (28). What is more, the Constitution strikingly achieved this “without ever naming the institution in question” (Tawil 28). The people who are legally recognized were only white communities and those who were defined as “other Persons”, “such persons”, “all other Persons” or “Person held to Service or Labour” (The Constitution of the United States) in the U.S. Constitution were exempt from any constitutional rights and privileges. However, this fact, which is implanted in the first legal social contract of the United States with a euphemistic expression, signaled a division grounded on discrimination or eligibility for citizenship based on skin color. This was the point that stimulated the debate on the issues of freedom and liberty among a group of people called abolitionists who strained every nerve to make abolitionism possible for the enslaved people. The abolitionists came up with organized resistance to amend what legality failed to correct and rehabilitate in the lives of black slaves.

The resurgence of the abolitionist movement in the early nineteenth century introduced hopes of freedom in anti-slavery tracts, pamphlets, and meetings of anti-slavery societies despite the pessimism the social and political facts furnishing the minds of slaves. Robert Fanuzzi clarifies that the first abolitionists were “the free black members of an anti-colonization movement, which sought to debunk the colonization policy championed by so-called liberal whites as the best answer to the slavery question” (9). Accordingly, the abolition of slavery meant “an express alternative to colonization that entailed not just the liberation of the enslaved but also the coexistence of whites and blacks” (Fanuzzi 9). This idea of coexistence composed the key element of the abolitionist movement: the liberty of African Americans and the harmonious cohabitation of African Americans at their own homes as the neighbors of white American citizens. In a country established upon the principles of liberty and fraternity, the house was deemed as the foundation and metonymy of the nation that provides all basic humanitarian values for its entire people. However, the lack of housing and citizenship pointed to the biggest “*paradoxical* structure of independence and free will [...] announced in the founding document of the United States?” (Downes 15). In all of the public events or written records, nonetheless, abolitionists challenged the codes of freedom and equality in the founding documents of the nation, and believed that the American nation would provide shelter equally for its people so long as it includes the black population. Thus, the abolitionist movement became the most rapidly enlarging civil organization that confronted the paradoxical social implementations of the American nation. When white women’s efforts to empower home and the American nation were so widely illustrated and promoted in the popular print materials of the time, the abolitionists saw the urgent need to emphasize that the domestic ideology

was already a political system that on the one hand promoted the white supremacist ideas, and on the other enslaved black people as part of the nation's imperialist notions.

Abolitionism was a thorny yet productive path to female rights in the nineteenth-century United States. Rooted in a language free from divisions and restrictions, the abolitionist crusade went viral and spread among both white and black women who came together for the rights of oppressed female slaves debased by racial oppression. As historian Nancy F. Cott explains in *The Bonds of Womanhood: Woman's Sphere in New England, 1780-1835* (1977), since the 1830s, the rise of feminist activism which "attempted to remove sex-specific limits on women's opportunities and capacities" (5) aimed to contest the conservative and tyrannical façade of domesticity. Perhaps, more notably, as another historian Linda K. Kerber specifies in her book *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (1986), antislavery cause emerged as a more vigorous revolutionary movement when "women's abolitionist petitions" "flooded the Congress in the 1830s and forced confrontation of the slavery issue" (112-113). Literary critics Ruth Bogin and Jean Fagan Yellin in *The Abolitionist Sisterhood: Women's Political Culture in Antebellum America* (1994) note that women's antislavery organizations did not only work for white women's rights as conservative bourgeois white women did, but they "offered equal membership to both black and white woman" (10), and "created a gender-specific organizational structure that posed an institutional challenge to American racism" (10). Throughout long decades of struggle, black and white abolitionist women marched out of their private spheres, claiming that domesticity is in fact imbued with

political elements such as racism and slavery. Hence, both feminist and abolitionist movements flourished concurrently and homed in on political issues on the national agenda, shifting the traditional social boundaries that female gender was taught to belong to.

Abolitionists knew well that slavery is ultimately a problem of homelessness and nationlessness, and thus domestic ideology created, maintained, and reinforced by many white people was to be disputed so as to recuperate the losses black women and people were suffering in terms of identity, freedom, home and nationhood. The most effective tool abolitionists made use of was to go public, deliver speeches on their cause before the white people, and share their opinions on the fallibility of proslavery ideas which defended that racial slavery is righteous due to the assumed inferiority of the black race. It was a time when abolitionists Maria Stewart, Lydia Maria Child, Angelina Grimké and Sarah Grimké, Lucretia Mott and William Lloyd Garrison were spiritedly defending the rights of blacks through various communicative means. Carolyn Williams states that some “male abolitionists, like other men of this era, generally accepted the ‘cult of true womanhood,’ which prescribed separate spheres for each gender” (159). For this very reason, women were asked to attend anti-slavery meetings only as witnesses (Williams 159). Yet, active participation of women was the primary goal for these abolitionists who themselves pushed cultural limits placed on gender norms by encouraging effective involvement of women in the organized meetings.

Scholar Phillip Lapsansky maintains that the spread of the antislavery societies, active contribution of blacks to all sorts of activities in abolition groups,

and women's public participation in the antislavery struggle were new to the movement in the 1830s (202). The key figure of the abolitionist movement in the North, the co-founder and editor of the abolitionist newspaper *The Liberator*, William Lloyd Garrison initiated the publication activities of *The Liberator* with Isaac Knapp in 1831 in Boston. *The Liberator* became one of the primary vehicles of media that supported the abolitionist cause and women's active participation in it. The newspaper further contributed to women's resistance in the special column entitled "Ladies' Department", through which Garrison justified reasons for women's involvement in the cause and voiced the problems related to female slaves. On July 14, 1832 issue of *The Liberator*, Garrison wrote that the abolitionists should not "overlook or depreciate the influence of women in the promotion of this cause" (110), as he believed that "the cause of bleeding humanity is always, legitimately, the cause of woman" (110). Pointing to the need for assistance of women, Garrison maintained in his column that

A million females in this country, are recognized and held as property – liable to be sold or used for the gratification of the lust or avarice or convenience of unprincipled speculators – without the least protection for their chastity – cruelly scourged for the most trifling offences – and subjected to unseemly and merciless tasks, to severe privations, and to brutish ignorance! (*The Liberator*, July 14, 1832 110).

This reminder to his readers became the ground on which Garrison announced the establishment of the first "'Female Anti-Slavery Society' in New-England" (110), which he believed to be "the forerunner of a multitude of similar other

associations” (110). During a convention held in Philadelphia in 1833, Garrison helped found the American Anti-Slavery Society that became an organ to promote many other anti-slavery organizations such as Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society and Philadelphia Anti-Female Society in their abolitionist campaigns. Conventions of these women’s organizations were “principal agents in promoting women’s equal inclusion in the abolitionist campaign and in creating a women’s rights campaign” (Williams 160). Garrison’s determination in initiating a national society aimed to “bring together all abolitionists and all antislavery societies in the United States, allowing them to pool their resources in terms of money and talent and thus facilitate their collective ability to speak out against slavery with a unified voice” (Upchurch 31).

Resistance and perseverance were key concepts in both the development of the abolitionist movement and in slave women’s lives. While the antislavery activists made a noteworthy progress in their abolitionist campaigns in the North, they faced the threats of proslavery mobs that were determined to undermine the ground the abolitionist movement was gaining. Abolitionists were disappointed on the day when the Pennsylvania Hall was burnt down in 1838 by a racist mob during the Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women. The burning of the Pennsylvania Hall signified disenchantment in the first place, yet later it became a source of motivation for the abolitionists and a remarkable landmark in the antislavery activities. Beverly C. Tomek argues that the Pennsylvania Hall, which was called the Temple of Liberty, “symbolized anti-slavery and racial ‘amalgamation’ (mixing) to the attackers” (x). Since this amalgamation was perceived to be an extreme threat to the racial integrity of whiteness and because

“most white Americans saw abolitionists as dangerous radicals who recklessly threatened the security of the nation for an undesirable goal” (Tomek xi), the abolitionist activities were met by hatred and malice. The location of the Pennsylvania Hall was also critical in that the Independence Hall, where America’s first democratic foundation was laid and which was considered to be the symbol of freedom and free speech, was located only within a very short distance. Though anti-slavery activities raised abhorrence and violent responses among some white northerners, as historian David Grimsted contends, “the mobs against abolitionism in the mid-1830s influenced antislavery development and its relation to changing Northern attitudes and national tensions” (34). The burning of the Pennsylvania Hall was one of these incidents that fueled the desire for abolitionism: the event “contributed to an awakening of the Northern public that was essential to the defeat of slavery” (Tomek xvi) and helped overcome the lingering racist feelings left over after the abolition of slavery in the North.

Furthermore, growing resistance to proslavery thoughts and events sprang to life in publishing activities, anti-slavery societies and their meetings, and in these societies’ constitutions and pamphlets. William Lloyd Garrison was the leading figure in the organization of the meeting in the Pennsylvania Hall and publicized the abolitionist cause with an unprecedented zeal that encouraged many abolitionists to stick to their activities after the destruction of the Pennsylvania Hall. On June 1, 1838 issue of the paper, Garrison gathered together pieces of the abolitionist voices from other papers to boost the morale of the abolitionists, emphasizing that the freedom of speech and human rights were violated in the “mob-ruled and law-abandoned city of Philadelphia” (*The Liberator* 86) during the

destructive event in the Pennsylvania Hall in an excerpt entitled “The Voice of the People” from *the Pennsylvania Freeman*. Garrison himself noted that “the abolitionists, [...], are not the man, ay, or the women, to be deterred from holding their meetings, either in the day-time, or evening, by ‘the fear of a mob’. It is the mob who fear them, not they the mob” (*The Liberator* [June 1, 1838] 87). Garrison’s words kept the spirits of the abolitionists high and promoted all the public activities taking place in organized meetings of antislavery societies.

The resistance to slavery publicly materialized in the abolitionists’ persistence in the violation of the private/public dichotomy and in the struggle for slaves’ rights and freedom in the public sphere and in their zeal to produce activities and writings on recovering the lost rights. One of the striking turning points of these series of resistances began on the day of the first convention of the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1833 in Philadelphia. The Society declared its “Constitution” and “Declaration of Sentiments” through which the community stimulated followers of the cause. According to the “Declaration of Sentiments” (1833) of the American Anti-Slavery Society, it was affirmed that the Society and its organs would do their utmost to

overthrow the most execrable system of slavery that has ever been witnessed upon earth; to deliver our land from its deadliest curse; to wipe out the foulest stain which rests upon our national escutcheon; and to secure to the colored population of the United States, all the rights and privileges which belong to them as men, and as Americans—come what may to our persons, our interests, or our reputation—whether we

live to witness the triumph of Liberty, Justice and Humanity, or perish untimely as martyrs in this great, benevolent, and holy cause (Garrison 3).

For such ultimate purposes, the Society declared to “organize Anti-Slavery Societies, if possible, in every city, town and village in our land” (2), to “send forth agents to lift up the voice of remonstrance, of warning, of entreaty, and of rebuke” (2), and to “circulate, unsparingly and extensively, anti-slavery tracts and periodicals” (2). Similarly, the members jotted down the objective of the Society that aimed the “entire abolition of slavery in the United States” (3) in the “Constitution of the American Anti-Slavery Society”. The Society aimed to “convince all our fellow-citizens, by arguments addressed to their understandings and consciences that slaveholding is a heinous crime in the sight of God, and that the duty, safety, and best interests of all concerned, require its *immediate abandonment*, without expatriation” (Article II) (4). Expatriation is a key word in the formation of the immediate objective of the American Anti-Slavery Society. To expatriate meant to shun a harmonious living with black communities and to abstain from endowing them their rights to live equally with the white people. Yet, the American Anti-Slavery Society as the biggest national abolitionist organization sought ways to facilitate the cohabitation of the black and the white together, as is stated in the “Article III” of their Constitution, by elevating “the character and condition of the people of color, by encouraging their intellectual, moral, and religious improvement, and by removing public prejudice” (4) so that the black people “may, according to their intellectual and moral worth, share an equality with the whites, of civil and religious privileges” (4). And, the Society resolved to put all

the Articles of its Constitution into practice without ever countenancing “the oppressed in vindicating their rights by resorting to physical force” (4).

As can be observed in both the “Declaration of Sentiments” and the “Constitution of the American Anti-Slavery Society”, abolitionist resistance did not count on violence as a vehicle of expression or solution. Both of the documents of the American Anti-Slavery Society “laid out a laundry list of supporting reasons for the necessity of its creation that stemmed mainly from the Bible and the U.S. Declaration of Independence” (Upchurch 30). The principles adopted as constitutional beliefs of the American Anti-Slavery Society and the individual thoughts and deeds of abolitionists defended the establishment of equal rights and living conditions, the improvement of educational rights without ever considering expatriation to be a possible solution. “The Constitution of the American Anti-Slavery Society” evinces that housing Africans not as slaves but as members of the American nation with the Constitutional rights given to the white would be the primary purpose of the abolitionist cause.

All of these abolitionist ideas questioned the validity of the perception of cultural concepts such as domesticity and true womanhood, providing nineteenth-century public with distinct perspectives to evaluate the cultural shape American social structure took under such popular beliefs. Garrisonian abolitionism and literary abolitionism evolved normative approaches towards domesticity and womanhood, commencing a new era of evaluation of cultural norms taken for granted since the inception of the American nation. The hegemony of the terms like domesticity or true womanhood were questioned regarding the slave women’s

conditions and were viewed under critical light, whereas stereotypes of black femininity were defied, and the female humanitarianism rather than racial understanding of femininity was placed at the center of discussions. Such considerations formed what came to be known as the feminist abolitionism by both black and white women who were responsive enough to sympathize with the black women's enslaved condition. In this enterprise, as Anne M. Boylan argues, "the formation of women's anti-slavery societies in the 1830s brought black and white women together in an unprecedented fashion" (119). These women (and also although few in number men), who committed themselves equally to sexual and racial equality, were conscious that "ideals of feminine respectability" which were "very powerful in the antebellum North" where most antislavery societies were founded "took a toll on black women" (Boylan 120). The reason for this was that "unlike white women, who enjoyed the presumption that they were 'virtuous' until proven otherwise, free black women were uniformly slandered as "degraded" (that is, sexually promiscuous) because of their race" (Boylan 20).

Early in 1831, Sarah Forten of Philadelphia (the pen name Ada) and other African American women in the city became "the moving force behind the founding of the Female Literary Association", whose members, Julie Winch states, announced their duty "as daughters of a despised race ... to cultivate the talents entrusted to [their] keeping, that ... [they might] break down the strong barrier of prejudice, and raise [them]selves to an equality with those of [their] fellow beings who differ from [them] in complexion" (108). The Female Literary Association took further steps for the initiation of larger organizations with other women who were "at each other's homes once a month for a mental feast of moral and religious

meditation, conversation, reading and speaking, sympathizing over the fate of the unhappy slaves, improving their own minds” (Winch 104-105). All of these activities that shaped the educational opportunities available for the African American women became alternative cultural identifications in place of popular white bourgeois ideals of domesticity and womanhood. Improvement of one’s mind in societal activities and producing literary or non-literary works would mean to feel “not less but more womanly” (Winch 106). In a similar manner, the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, established in 1833 by black and white women, emphasized in its Annual Report “the dissemination of *truth* on the subject of slavery” (102) and “the improvement of moral and intellectual character of the colored population” (102) as the leading commitment of the Society. The Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society became further “involved in governmental affairs in 1836 by coordinating a multistate petition campaign among female abolition societies in New England” (Gold Hansen 51).

The Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society played the key role in the organization of the first Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women in New York City in 1837. All of the dialogues of women in the first Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women helped form women’s political culture, thereby underscoring the “extent to which antislavery activity in the United States carried women into new forms of political expressions” (Sklar 328-329). During the first Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women, Lydia Maria Child, Sarah M. Grimké, Angelina Grimké, and many other women were all vocal, though they received negative comments from the local press (Gold Hansen 52). They pointed to the sufferings of slaves and the discrepancy between slaveholder’s religiosity and

the pain they caused in the lives of slaves, and reached many resolutions that would be announced to the public. Angelina Grimké elucidated in the convention that women's concerns needed to shift from raising children for the internal imperial objectives of the American nation to a desire to defeat the implementation of human bondage in the United States by crushing the limits of the domestic sphere and by stepping out of the prescribed roles. As is later jotted down in the *Proceedings of the Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women* (held in the city of New-York, May 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th, 1837), this situation is resolved by a motion proposed by Angelina Grimké:

The time has come for woman to move in that sphere which Providence has assigned to her, and no longer remain satisfied in her circumscribed limits with such corrupt custom and a perverted application of Scripture have encircled her; therefore it is the duty of woman, and the province of woman, to plead the cause of the oppressed in our land, to do all that she can by her voice, and her pen, and her purse, and the influence of her example, to overthrow the horrible system of slavery (1837 9).

Grimké's words suggest that the new duty of women in contradistinction to the one proposed in the popular magazines should channel all the efforts of women to one cause, abolitionism. Signifying both the oppression of the female sex and the black race, yet never prioritizing the one over the other, Grimké, as a dedicated feminist abolitionist, declared that women did not "intend to allow their sex to restrict the sphere in which they moved" (Williams 171). Lydia Maria Child, likewise, offered the resolution that women should "stand pledged to each other and the world to

unite our [their] efforts for the accomplishment of the holy object” of the association “until liberty is proclaimed to the captive, and the opening of the prison doors to those that are bound” (18). Sarah M. Grimké’s thoughts on the role of women in the abolitionist cause were also well received and accepted as a recommendation to mothers who are now expected “to educate their children in the principles of peace, and special abhorrence of that warfare, which gives aid to the oppressor against the oppressed” (12). Child and the Grimké sisters’ contemplations symbolize the new phase the abolitionist sisterhood opened on the way to adoption of new ideas about the nature of womanhood and the meaning of domestic life that should be free from discrimination, prejudice, and oppression both in sexual and racial terms.

Sarah and Angelina Grimké and Lydia Maria Child were all key figures in the advancement of the abolitionist cause in the United States. They pictured the realities of enslavement without fear or favor in their public activism and writings. Like her sister Angelina, Sarah M. Grimké drew on the incongruity arising from the Christian beliefs of the slaveholders and the viciousness of the slaveholding practices as she says, “In Christian America, the slave has no refuge from unbridled cruelty and lust” (52) in her *Letters on the Equality of Sexes, or the Condition of Woman* (1838) too. Throughout her *Letters*, she openly interrogates the state of the female slaves whose condition stirred up “the deepest shame and sorrow” (51). She draws attention to the miseries of the female slaves and their physical as well as psychological degradation in the South, declaring, “Our southern cities are whelmed beneath a tide of pollution; the virtue of female slaves is wholly at the mercy of irresponsible tyrants, and women are bought and sold in our slave

markets, to gratify the lust of those who bear the name of Christians” (51). As a Southern witness to slavery, Grimké’s “written testimony against the horrors of slavery in the domestic circle is unique in antislavery literature” (Lerner xix). She voices the “intense” “physical and mental” “sufferings of some females” (52), and invites her audience to defy “authority” that must be “called into exercise by resistance” (88). Grimké is one of the earliest abolitionists who placed feminism and abolitionism within the same frame that highlighted the significance of resistance as a powerful tool in the struggle for women’s rights. Likewise, Sarah Grimké’s sister, Angelina Grimké was among those who followed her sister’s footsteps by linking the anti-slavery cause to feminism as she combined feminism and abolitionism “to explore slavery imaginatively from a woman’s perspective” (Yellin 31). Grimké “blazed a trail from abolitionism to feminism along which other women could proceed” (Yellin 31), a route where she identified herself as a white woman with the suffering of the black slave women in chains. Grimké sisters’ “consistent, quiet practice of public support for Blacks and their long-standing friendships with several African-American women expressed their convictions as eloquently as did their writings and convention resolutions against racism” (Lerner xix).

Another significant figure in the cause is the novelist, editor and founder of the children’s magazine *Juvenile Miscellany*, and the author of domestic manuals, Lydia Maria Child, who came to adopt the spirit and activism of abolitionism at the cost of losing many subscribers to the magazine and her fame. She became notorious for her abolitionist activism when she published her antislavery tract, *An Appeal in Favor of that Class of Americans Called Africans* in 1833. Child never

got regretful for her fall from fame due to her support of the cause after the publication of the tract. Even when she received letters of damnation for her criticism of slavery like the one she received from Governor Wise's wife Mrs. Mason of Virginia, she replied such letters in detail without retorting upon the damnations consigned to her. In her letter of 11 November, Mrs. Mason accuses Child and her antislavery writings of being hypocrite, concluding that "no Southerner ought, [...], to read a line of your composition, or to touch a magazine which bears your name in its list of contributors; and in this we hope for the 'sympathy,' at least of those at the North who deserve the name of woman" (17-18). Yet Child, who is harshly criticized for not being womanly enough to advocate slavery and who is intimidated and even threatened by a woman of her own sex that her publications would fall from grace, replied that she had "great satisfaction in the consciousness of having nothing to lose in that quarter" (252). For Child, as she maintains in her letter, her antislavery tract "influenced the minds of several young men, afterward conspicuous in public life, through whose agency the cause was better served than it could have been by me" (252). Her selflessness in the cause was apparent in her words, as she states in the same letter that "literary popularity was never a paramount object with me, even in my youth" (252) and "if I [she] cared for the exclusion you [Mrs. Mason] threaten, I should at least have the consolation of being exiled with honorable company" (252). As Child's biographer Carolyn L. Karcher indicates, the *Appeal*, which can be regarded as "the most comprehensive indictment of slavery ever written by a white abolitionist" (136) and "the first American book to call for immediate emancipation, an end to all forms of racial discrimination, and the integration of African Americans as equal citizens" (136), "propelled Child to the forefront of the abolitionist movement, elevating her

to a position of unparalleled political influence for a woman” (137). Child then moved to New York City and became the editor of the antislavery newspaper “the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, where she became a “consensus builder who sought to encourage any kind of political action that would aid in the destruction of slavery” (Cullen Sizer 34).

Of the free black women who contributed actively to the abolitionist cause, Maria W. Stewart, a black activist and abolitionist, delivered the first public speech by a black woman, making one of the initial efforts of female abolitionists when she spoke out against slavery on September 21, 1832, in Boston. Referring to the constrictive nature of slavery and racial prejudices in her speech “Lecture Delivered at the Franklin Hall”, Stewart cried out, as “one of the wretched and miserable daughters of the descendants of fallen Africa”, the strong “desire to rise above the condition of servants and drudges” (47) and to end the “miserable existence of servitude from the cradle to the grave” (48). For Stewart, if there is anything derogatory in the nature of the black soul, it is slavery that pushes black men and women to “continual hard labor” (47) that “deadens the energies of the soul, and benumbs the faculties of the mind” (47). Stewart asserts that it is under the condition of enslavement that “the ideas become confined, the mind barren, and, like the scorching sands of Arabia, produces nothing; or, like the uncultivated soil, brings forth thorns and thistles” (Stewart 47). As critic Marilyn Richardson stresses, Stewart’s “religious vision and her socio-political agenda were intrinsically bound together” (9) in her appeal to white Christian women whom she invites to respond to the cries of black people and take pity on them. Stewart challenges both the political and religious hypocrisy in her references to Christianity and the

Constitution of the United States. In “An Address Delivered Before the African American Female Intelligence Society of America” (1832), Stewart declares that when the abolitionist cause would reach its end, it will be “a day of terror and dismay to hypocrites and unbelievers” (50) for those Christians who “have too long slumbered and slept” (51) before the crime of human bondage. In a similar manner, she emphasizes the political basics of “the land of freedom” such as the liberty of the press and speech in her anti-slavery tract “Religion And The Pure Principles of Morality, The Sure Foundation On Which We Must Build” published in *The Liberator* on 8 October 1831. Reminding her readers of the fact that “according to the Constitution of these United States, he [God] hath made all men free and equal” (29), she accentuates that “it is not the color of the skin that makes the man, but it is the principles formed within the soul” (29). In her speeches and anti-slavery tracts, Stewart firmly believed that it is not the enslavement of the other race but the “resistance to oppression” (Richardson 9) that is “the highest form of obedience to God” (Richardson 9). Thus, Stewart manifested the abolitionist reaction to the discrepancy in political principles of the United States and the hypocrisy of the religious slaveholders by reminding her audience once again of the necessity to disseminate the legitimacy of resistance to slavery and racism.

During the antebellum period, the abolitionists’ vision of resistance was a marker of a promising future. The abolitionist movement on both local and national levels awakened the people of the North and the South by leading them to consider deeper meanings of slavery’s wrongs along with the nation’s promises of liberty and equality and the slaveholders’ hypocritical religious beliefs. Though democratic ideals and egalitarian social politics of the American nation failed to work

effectively due to slavery in the nineteenth century, women writers, activists and abolitionists of the time were the leading figures of reformations needed in American life. These antislavery crusaders articulated their mounting concerns about the political issues and led to social awareness in the minds and consciences of people of good sense. Not only did these abolitionists fight selflessly for the antislavery cause but they also illuminated the women of the time about the fact that women's mere concern is not the domestic life itself.

As the abolitionist movement gained more impetus day by day with the help of meetings held throughout the country, abolitionist crusaders grew stronger to disseminate and record their thoughts, arguments and experiences. Recording their confrontations with oppression in the form of fiction or nonfiction offered the chance for the abolitionists to give expression to repressed voices that previously remained hidden, unheard, denied, or unregistered. Antislavery activism or abolitionist writing in general became the most powerful tool to clearly illustrate and archive the unrecorded experiences of the oppressed. Eventually, the abolitionists' perseverance and their fight and cries for equality and freedom revealed that their efforts were not in vain as their activism and writings produced an increased sociopolitical consciousness and responsiveness.

Written in defiance of the harsh legal implementations of slavery and domesticity's false representations of blissful American homes, texts written in the abolitionist vein especially by women writers made a challenging breakthrough to precipitate change and reformation in society. All of the works analyzed in the following chapters intervene in the gap between domesticity's ideal representations

that only value a construction of white nation and slavery's implementations. Drawing their sources on the sociocultural issues of the time, these texts critique the conflict between these two social forces in different ways. In this respect, the methods used in the analyses of these texts vary in relation to their subjects and their presentations. In Chapter II, Jacobs's autobiography incorporates a criticism of the incongruity between domesticity and slavery as an overarching concern that invades the lives of slaves working as domestics or in the plantations in the antebellum time, a period when being a female slave, as is manifest in Jacobs's account, is far much harder than being a male slave. What makes Jacobs's text singular for such textual analysis is that it focuses on her life writing to uncover the social ills that slavery causes in the life of a slave girl. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861) is a work of autobiography written in the form of a slave narrative. Since autobiography is a work of memory, it is possible to view Jacobs's life writing as a practice of archiving that is in constant process of recollecting the past memories for the sake of reconfiguring both her personal and the national past through the lens of a suffering slave woman. An archival trajectory in which Jacobs unearths her testimonial archive in *Incidents* can well be considered a style of accumulation in an attempt to prove facts or truths in Linda Brent's life. Such an archival reading requires a critical investigation of the idea of the archive that can be found in Derrida's "Archive Fever: *A Freudian Impression*" (1995). Derrida's analysis of the word archive is useful for the analysis of Jacobs's text as it offers intriguing lexicological insights of the multivalent implications of the notion of the archive into the textual or conceptual problems of home and domesticity in *Incidents*.

It can be argued that this desire for the archive appears to be one basic drive to tackle slavery for Jacobs. Another is the power of affect or feelings as Jacobs's narrator Linda makes the most use of in her appeals to the reader in her justification of her righteousness to reject and escape slavery before the antebellum white readers from whom Linda expects to understand her miserable condition. Linda is acutely conscious that the reader bears witness to both the personal and the social history of the events told in her narrative, which would one day be read by the white population of the American nation. Considering this potential publication of her feelings and opinions one day as a slave narrative, it will be discussed in this Chapter that Jacobs's claim to build up a world of affect forms a venue of shared feelings and concerns with her readers. Affect, as is suggested in what is formulated as the affect theory in the field of cultural studies, aims to seek an emotional investment on the part of the reader to an extent where their feelings are expected to take on a responsive quality so that the sufferings of the oppressed would be heard, grasped, and felt by an affective community. In this Chapter, Lauren Berlant's views on the affect and Raymond William's elaborations on the social ramifications of feelings become relevant theoretical tools in the analysis of Linda's aim to create a sphere of affect in her appeals to the reader.

In Chapter III, Lydia Maria Child similarly positions slavery as an anomaly and a sort of uncanny effect within the domestic space in *A Romance of the Republic* (1867). Child suggests that due to the legal imperatives of the institution of slavery, slavery comes to figure as an impending doom for the two sisters, Rosa and Flora Royal. Child is severely critical of the rigidity of racial slavery in shaping the lives of black people who are thrown into a system of bondage because of their

skin color. Her novel displays that the popular ideology of domesticity is already saturated with politics and is therefore not free from the political problems of the American nation. It is intriguing to note that American domestic sphere, in Child's novel, seems to crown the very undomestic elements such as interracial relationships as the very central components of the nineteenth-century American home life and the sociocultural basis. Furthermore, the novel's ability to include a wide cast of characters help Child illustrate a life-like picture of American social life whose kinship relations are composed of miscegenetic structures. In consideration of such social elements, critic Homi K. Bhabha's ideas on narratives of a nation and the uncanny representations of the other become useful in the analysis of the novel's concern with the vision of a harmonious multiracial nation and with the distorted or uncanny illustrations of slaves. It can be argued that Child aims to illustrate the possibility of a narrative of a nation. As Homi K. Bhabha in his "Introduction: Narrating the Nation" (1990) contends, nations emerge from "traditions of political thought and literary language [...] as a powerful historical idea" (1). In line with Bhabha's idea, it is then possible to suggest that narratives may convey the power to claim or reclaim a community in the making of a nation. Bhabha's idea corresponds aptly to Child's claim to rights and liberty for black people under the American nation or the "*Republic*" as she calls in the title of her novel. Child also points to female objectification and uncanny depictions of blacks or mulattoes and their spectral presences within the American nation in her characterization of female protagonists. She, however, negates such distorted perceptions through depictions of carnivalesque scenes that can be aptly analyzed by M. Bakhtin's notion of the carnival.

Chapter IV examines the questions of racial slavery and Reconstruction in regard to abolitionism in Frances Ellen Watkins Harper's 1892 novel *Iola Leroy, or Shadows Uplifted*. *Iola Leroy* can be regarded as a reformist narrative that explores the significance of racial identity and racial Reconstruction in the postbellum United States. Covering a span of time from the Civil War to the Reconstruction period, the novel suggests that as long as racial preconceptions and proslavery opinions are not abandoned, the national Reconstruction will be dysfunctional and the nation cannot reach a harmonious political identity. Harper's Reconstructionist views challenge the antebellum organization of social spheres and gender norms that support slavery's cruel practices, while engaging with the public discussions that compose an abolitionist heteroglossia. Bakhtin's term heteroglossia is a functional theoretical frame that parallels Harper's purpose to portray a multiplicity of abolitionist voices that infiltrate into the most problematic levels of proslavery arguments. Harper bridges the divide between racial prejudices and an unbiased perception of the black race through heteroglossic dialogues that feature characters' powerful arguments against slaveholders' theories about the black race and human bondage. Thus, Harper emancipates her text from authoritarian views by constructing episodes of dialogic relations among the abolitionist discussions against the backdrop of the monologic arguments of racism and slavery. In light of Bakhtinian concept of heteroglossia, this Chapter will explore how abolitionist discussions in the novel serve to connect the characters in a dialogic affinity in venues for sociopolitical discussion on slavery and abolitionism as possible means of Reconstruction.

The following chapters will hence analyze the ways in which abolitionism for black people's freedom became the most effective vehicle to alter the public opinion about racial slavery in the antebellum and postbellum periods, when domestic ideology reached its peak in its attempt to privatize women's lives outside the public sphere by creating strict gender norms and gendered social spheres. While all of the works analyzed in this study engage with slavery in distinctive ways, they adopt similar perspectives about abolitionism in seeking to change public opinion about slavery. In this respect, the following chapters also examine the extent to which these texts introduce and offer a sense of a better order and future in their abolitionist arguments.

**Chapter II. An Abolitionist Archive of Social Documentation Against
the Patriarchive of Slavery in Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave
Girl* (1861)**

“This Empire State is a shabby place of refuge for the oppressed ...”
Amy Post, *Letter to Harriet Jacobs*, 1859

This chapter explores the significance and function of representations of subverted domesticity in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861) by Harriet Ann Jacobs. This chapter argues that Jacobs contests the notion of ideal domestic sphere and cultural morals of antebellum home life by exposing slavery's patriarchive and by her subversive experiment with domesticity during her stay in different houses in the course of her escape to freedom. Jacobs takes pains to portray slavery as a disruptive element in American homes and in the democratic and egalitarian ideals of the American nation, whilst proving the antebellum public/private dichotomy dysfunctional through conflating the strict borders between the private and the public. A private backlash against both public and domestic ills, Jacobs's narrative blends a renewed sense of commitment for a social documentation grounded on her autobiography. To put it more lucidly, Jacobs's life writing provides a critical lens

through which antebellum social life and mechanisms of slavery can be analyzed as specific social cases. In such an amalgamation of the private and the public, there exists in Jacobs's narrative a simultaneous line of exposition, or an archival collection, where she discloses antebellum social life at large behind the scenes of her own life and recollections. This chapter further aims to investigate the usefulness of an archival perspective for understanding the inner dynamics of a slave woman's narrative, and a life account written against the southern slavocracy. Jacobs's text can thus be thought to politicize and publicize the American home, the domestic space and the nation since the domestic elements in the narrative operate as vehicles to unearth the fact that problems at home correspond to problems in the nation, whereby the nation becomes a larger domestic area. This chapter then analyzes the ways in which Jacobs alters in this process of exposition what outwardly seems personal into public, historical, and political, and the ways in which she questions the role of the domestic sphere in producing the meanings related to nationhood in the antebellum period. Finally, it will be illuminating to discuss how Jacobs's effective strategy of affective address to the reader targets to transform the unfeeling antebellum white readers into a responsive and sympathetic public in communicating a slave woman's sufferings, struggle for freedom, and the urgency of the abolitionist cause.

II. I. Linda's Archive

Based on a true story of bondage, Harriet Ann Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861) is an autobiographical text that rebels against the annihilating and dehumanizing nature of slavery. Jacobs's autobiography recounts Linda Brent's

arduous tale of freedom. What makes Jacobs's autobiography distinctive is that her text is not only an account of Linda Brent's life but also a detailed account of the antebellum social scenery. Told through the eyes of Jacobs's narrator Linda Brent, *Incidents* centers on Linda's memories, her life and social stories, her victimization in the hands of her master Dr. Flint, her escape from slavery, and finally her efforts to live as a free woman in the North. Incidents in Linda's life are organized in a way that illuminates the domestic sphere as a space of preservation and archiving as opposed to the repressive function the domestic ideology takes in the hands of the institution of slavery. In contradistinction to the conventional overtones of the idea of home preached by the domestic ideology, Jacobs's text reveals that there is no place that can be called home mainly because home is where domestic oppression resides for black slaves at the time. The plot of *Incidents* develops in such a way that underlines the impossibility to found a home for black people in the nineteenth century. Even when Linda attains her freedom in the North, she feels sorry about the way she is purchased like an object in the free part of the country. Linda's narrative displays the ideal and real lives of slaves conspicuously to critique the entire system of domesticity. It becomes clear in Linda's choice of incidents that the notion of home which had been perceived to be an institutional foundation of and a metonymy of the American nation since the early settlements and which traditionally symbolized happiness and comfort became a space of oppression for the enslaved people in the nineteenth century. The content of her narrative and her frequent emphasis on the image of home clarifies that Jacobs's autobiography transforms the American household into a place where her autobiography serves to reveal its secrets through an archival passion. Her autobiography undertakes to

portray that the work of memory in the practice of life writing can help to archive the histories involved in the making of an individual and a nation.

Published in 1861 under the pseudonym Linda Brent, right before the Civil War, Jacobs's text was authenticated by historian Jean Fagan Yellin in the 1980s as a slave narrative written by an African-American woman in the nineteenth century. Before then, it was widely believed that the text was written by its abolitionist editor Lydia Maria Child under the pseudonym Linda Brent as a first-hand experience of a slave girl. Since its authentication, Jacobs's autobiographical work has caused a radical break in the genealogy of the canon that was shaped by white authors, and it has been added to the syllabi of English courses in U.S. schools and higher institutions next to Frederick Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (1845). Though this drastic revolution in the perception of the canon as well as American literary history has channeled most of the criticism on *Incidents* into a comparison with the sentimental fiction of the era, it is possible to argue that Jacobs's materials and narrative strategy upset the antebellum conceptions of domesticity along with the myth of ideal womanhood and motherhood by problematizing sexual and emotional exploitation of slaves in Southern houses and plantations. Jacobs's narrative stresses this complicated nature of the cult of domesticity by configuring her text as an affective abolitionist archive in lieu of such hegemonic normative social constructions. Hence, transcending "the established patterns of black male-authored slave narratives" and "the structures of white female authored fiction" (xxi), as Yellin contends, Jacobs's narrative unveils a radical "story new to American letters" (xxi), one which would otherwise have been kept unvoiced.

Many critics, especially after Yellin's groundbreaking archival work, tend to read the text in close relation to the nineteenth-century ideological tools of womanhood and motherhood. Though Yellin asserts that Jacobs's "narrator dramatizes the failure of her efforts to adhere to the sexual patterns she had been taught to endorse [...] and tentatively reaches toward an alternative moral code" (Yellin, *Text and Contexts* 270-271), some critics introduced a more romanticized claim that Jacobs sticks to antebellum ideals to make herself heard in her cause to depict slavery at full length and to evoke sympathy in her readers. Literary critic Valerie Smith, for instance, states that Jacobs "employed the techniques of the sentimental novel" that was "popular among the white women readers to whom her book was addressed" (xxxi). For Smith, this inclination in the form of the narrative enables Jacobs to "identify with both her readers and the protagonist of the sentimental fiction"; since, in some parts of the narrative, Jacobs "aspired to chastity and piety as consummate feminine virtues" (xxxi). An early influential critic of the text, Hazel V. Carby, however, contends that the traditional interpretation of the idea of true womanhood and "this particular definition of a woman's sphere did not exist for" (49) Jacobs; since, Jacobs confronts "an ideology that denied her very existence as a black woman and as a mother" (49) and thus invented "a set of meanings that implicitly and fundamentally questioned the basis of true womanhood" (47). Expanding what Yellin suggests as tentative in Jacobs's "alternative moral code" (271), Carby's critique introduces novel means of formulating black womanhood not as something tentative but "assertive" (Carby 184) and "away from the ideology of true womanhood" (Carby 184). Critic Gabrielle Foreman later offered yet another distinct interpretation of the work,

signifying that *Incidents* “challenges the supposed transparency of sentimental fiction and also appeals to and critiques its multiple readerships” (42). As can be overtly seen in the course of the narrative, Linda speaks to the ideals of northern women in her frequent addresses. However, it is also clear that Jacobs grants Linda, her autobiographical identity, the power not to take these ideals as a given but to subvert or destabilize them through a graphic portrayal of her oppressed condition and the nation’s status quo.

Centering upon the notion of home as the nation’s topographical as well as an ideological point of origin in her criticism of democratic ideals, Jacobs strategically juxtaposes the ideal domesticity and slavery’s cruel customs to decompose the antebellum conception of domesticity or home. The question of home, as in Linda’s desire to possess her own home, is one of the central tropes in *Incidents* that Jacobs persistently turns to in order to structure her discussion of the miseries of her own life and the loss of fundamental human rights for blacks in a divided nation. On the larger level, impossibility of ownership of a house for African slaves in the antebellum period critically corresponds to the political gridlock between the North and the South over slavery, and the question of citizenship, and loss of human rights as an ultimate impasse in this division. In this sense, it is possible to argue that Jacobs’s production of her private life account by accentuating the domestic tyranny of slavery at home and in the nation can be seen as an exploration of an embodied social archive, and that this personal/social archive is to be read against the social context of the antebellum United States.

Within slavery's houses and the nation's politics, Jacobs leads her readers through the historical archives of her own life and the nation. Offering a wealth of scenes and information about the history and the quotidian life of domestic and plantation slavery, the text is meticulously engaged with a cogent will to document almost each and all information that is stored in Linda's individual memory and the national memory. Jacobs's narrative offers an archival composition of a series of incidents in Linda's life that is inseparably connected to the social atmosphere of her time and her experiences of enslavement. Foregrounding the questions of domesticity and slavery, Jacobs's text also underscores the cultural/social and textual associations between the personal and social function of a slave narrative. Jacobs's slave narrative, which is also an autobiography, appears to create a collection of descriptive and argumentative social events, or an affective abolitionist archive against the patriarchal archive of slavery. Jacobs's narrative not only gives a private life account but also publicizes and politicizes the private experience to document social problems in detail and towards creating a particular emphasis.

Jacobs's criticism of the social problems surfaces right from the beginning, in the *Preface by the Author*:

When I first arrived in Philadelphia, Bishop Paine advised me to publish a sketch of my life, but I told him I was altogether incompetent to such an undertaking. Though I have improved my mind somewhat since that time, I still remain of the same opinion; but I trust my motives will excuse what might otherwise seem presumptuous. I have not written my experiences in order to attract attention to myself; on the

contrary, it would have been more pleasant to me to have been silent about my own history. Neither do I care to excite sympathy for my own sufferings. But I do earnestly desire to arouse the women of the North to a realizing sense of the condition of two millions of women at the South, still in bondage, suffering what I suffered, and most of them far worse. I want to add my testimony to that of abler pens to convince the people of the Free States what Slavery really is. Only by experience can any one realize how deep, and dark, and foul is that pit of abominations. May the blessing of God rest on this imperfect effort in behalf of my persecuted people! (6).

Harriet Ann Jacobs's literary figure Linda Brent expresses her purpose to document her life not peculiarly to "attract attention" to herself but in particular to enlighten a whole collective history of her "persecuted people" (6). Linda thinks of these people as much as her own life. She puts the lives of two millions of people next to hers, pointing to the idea of commencement of both her personal and the social collective history through her narrative. Linda's words accentuate that the personal is in essence social, historical, and political. Though Linda is humble enough to state that she is "incompetent to such an undertaking" (Jacobs 6) and that her efforts are but "imperfect", her "motives" (Jacobs 6) prove how resourceful her personal experiences and sufferings are in exposing a testimonial archive of slavery. To support this idea, she addresses the reader, "Reader, be assured this narrative is no fiction" (Jacobs 5) and posits her narrative as a confession to awaken her target audience, northerners, to the bitter facts of slavery. Prompted by a proleptic urge to elucidate in advance potential objections to the credibility of her autobiography,

Linda asserts that incidents in her text are “strictly true” (Jacobs 5). Linda insists that her “descriptions fall far short of the facts” (Jacobs 5), and she steps into her own narrative landscape where she recounts the horrible facts and their true expression. She only conceals “the name of places” (Jacobs 5) and gives “persons fictitious names” (Jacobs 5). At various points in the narrative, as in the *Preface*, Linda reiterates that she is willing to suppress her own history and would not voice it if it were not for the unblemished expression of a larger history of the nation and sentiments of those in bondage. Her faith in the idea that one’s personal sufferings can be a powerful means to bring the ignorant eyes to “a realizing sense” (Jacobs 6) on the conditions of those still in bondage and of those who were in a whirlwind of “suffering” (Jacobs 6) indicates a resilient will to record an autobiography that is inseparable from the social history transpiring in the antebellum United States.

The heap of details that Linda presents forms a documentary collection of events that can be regarded as her archival task she performs to reveal the cruelties in slavery’s houses. Derrida’s analysis of meaning of the archive is strikingly interesting in relation to Linda’s concern with personal and social documentation, for it clearly offers working connotations of the word in relation to the critical thinking of domestic problems in the text. Derrida states that the word archive originates from “the Greek *arkheion*: initially *a house, a domicile, an address, the residence* of the superior magistrates, the archons, those who commanded” (9) [italics mine]. The archive derives from the word *arkhē* that means “commencement” (Derrida 9) and commandment” (Derrida 9) at the same time. Commencement denotes a sequential order within the principle of nature or history whereas commandment refers to an authoritative order embedded in the principle of

the law. The lexicological investigation of the archive therefore uncovers different atoms within the word itself: it signifies “the *arkhē* in the *physical, historical, or ontological* sense, which is to say to the originary, the first, the principal, the primitive, in short to the commencement. But even more, and even earlier, ‘archive’ refers to the *arkhē* in the *nomological* sense, to the *arkhē* of the commandment” (Derrida 9).

The initial example of the Greek *arkheion* extends the meaning of the archive beyond a mere domicile when considered in relation to the citizens holding power and the right to make or interpret the law within that residence. Indeed, a house appears in Derrida’s formula as the space of archivization and the archive’s permanent dwelling. In other words, a domicile, an abode, or a house is the very location of production of the archive. This topology, however, gains a nomological sense when the official or legal documents filed and preserved in an abode are guarded by the archons that are competent to interpret the documents:

On account of their publicly recognized authority, it is at their home, in that *place* which is their house (private house, family's house or employee's house), that official documents are filed. The archons are first of all the documents’ guardians. They do not only ensure the physical security of what is deposited and of the substrate. They are also accorded the hermeneutic right and competence. They have the power to interpret the archives. Entrusted to such archons, these documents in effect state the law: they recall the law and call on or impose the law. To be guarded thus, in the jurisdiction of this stating

the law, they needed at once a guardian and a localization. Even in their guardianship or their hermeneutic tradition, the archives could neither do without substrate nor without residence (Derrida 10).

In the case of archons, or the archontic principle of the archive, the archive can then also be construed as an agency for the patriarchy, and becomes an entity as a patriarchive. Such topographical structures in archons' "guardianship" (Derrida 10) and "hermeneutic tradition" (Derrida 10) constitute archives as topo-nomological archival constructions that could "neither do without substrate nor without residence" (Derrida 10). Still more significantly emerges Derrida's idea on the shape a dwelling gives to the archival material in the process of its publicity: once the "house arrest" (10) where the archive is formed gains permanency, there appears the "institutional passage from the private to the public" (10). The prospect of permanency, however, poses a tension between the privacy and the very publication of the materials, cracking the boundary between the two spheres. If the archive helps record a variety of histories based upon localization and if it is a "house arrest" (Derrida 10), a "*domiciliation*" (Derrida 10) established on the principle of housing, this passage into the public readily produces an outside, a public adjunct to the inside of the house.

The interpretative power the archive gives to the interpreter or the archon is the power to control the law that keeps a tight reign on slaves. Interpreting the archive is then an equivalent to holding the sovereignty necessary to maintain any system of oppression. Establishing a link between the control of the archive and the political power, Derrida further remarks in a footnote discussion that there exists an

authoritative relation between the political power and the control of the archive itself, stating, “There is no political power without control of the archive, if not of memory” (11). And, in the political sense, Derrida uses the word “patriarchive” (11) as a neologism for a combination of patriarchy and the archive as a commanding force of the patriarchal ruling power over the ruled. This authority takes its source from holding the meaning, conventions, or the history in a commanding manner, and in the larger sense, from eliminating any potential threat that would penetrate or infiltrate into its hegemony. Ascertaining this essential correlation between the political process of democratization and the accumulation or preservation of the archive, Derrida is critical of the idea that power to access, protect, and interpret the archive is already conditioned by the patriarchal logic. This patriarchal entity, averting the power of democratization, plays a crucially determining role in the “writing of history” (Derrida 11) and in the intentional “repression of the archive” (Derrida 11) as the embodiment of patriarchal control of the “state over the historian” (Derrida 11). Thus, anyone who dares to go against imposing patriarchal logic will be repressed and isolated. However, this challenge to the patriarchive, for Derrida, is constitutive and forms a cradle of the desire for producing new, and perhaps heterogeneous archives, and for an aspiration for reinstituting meaning, tradition or history.

Derrida’s delineation of the archive as a domicile of commandment reverberates through the nomological organization of Dr. Flint’s slave house. Dr. Flint’s house features as the house of the master “from which the *order* is given” (Derrida 9) and “where authority, social order are exercised” (Derrida 9) in accordance with the codes of slavery. Linda illustrates Dr. Flint’s house, in

particular when she is defining her initial impressions of Dr. Flint's house, in his own prohibitive rules. For Linda, Dr. Flint constructs an empire of fear and subjugation that can be regarded as a psychologically repressive labyrinth within the borders of his plantation house by way of implementing a set of authoritarian actions. Linda's and her brother William's sale to Dr. Flint's daughter after her first mistress passed away introduces Linda to a new realm of oppression she had never gone through in her previous mistress's house. Now Dr. and Mrs. Flint's daughter's property, Linda feels astounded at the atmosphere of the slaveholding *house*: "when we entered our new home we encountered cold looks, cold words, and cold treatment. On my narrow bed I moaned and wept, I felt so desolate and alone" (Jacobs 17-18). The suppressive order in Dr. Flint's house further becomes "more dreary than ever" (Jacobs 19) after the news of Linda's father's death. With only her brother and her grandma, Linda is left desperate, captive in a house of slavery but still homeless, and far away from freedom in every act she is exposed to. That she is trapped within Dr. Flint's house of commandment becomes more painful once Dr. Flint prohibits her from going to her father's funeral that was only "within a mile" (Jacobs 18) and when he secondly forbids Linda from visiting her grandmother's house.

Dr. Flint's southern house of slavery is a representative of a patriarchal domicile of human labor and exploitation along with the abuse of the female slave's soul and body. An example of the archon that composed the patriarchal and "accorded the hermeneutic right and competence" (Derrida 10), Dr. Flint resorts to his own interpretation of slavery. His hermeneutic ability and house of servitude seem intact until Linda's resistance encounters it in subversive and destructive acts

such as her rejection of Dr. Flint's advances and her escape to the North. Dr. Flint's intimidations appear as a source of threat for his slaves. If slavery is a patriarchal institution based on the labor of the slaves, let alone citizenship in the specific case of antebellum slavery in the United States, Dr. Flint epitomizes the archon of the patriarchal institution of slavery. Hence, he can be viewed as the archon whose house turns into a nomological residence of oppression. Derrida presents the term archive in a philosophical reflection, yet substantially predicates his argument on the mediating role of the physical archives that claim a relation between the living and the dead, the private and the public, and accordingly emphasizes the role of the topology in the formation and maintenance of the archive. By prohibiting his slaves from going outside of his house, Dr. Flint attempts to keep his abode private. But, the more Linda frequents different places for temporary relief like that of her grandmother's house, the more she undoes this dichotomy of the private and the public. Linda's visits to other houses and her subsequent escape to freedom set the stage for the publication of Dr. Flint's evil treatment and proves that domestic slavery is in essence a public issue, and therefore its evils must be circulated throughout the neighbors and the nation. Dr. Flint is constantly evading this possibility of going public. Holding the hermeneutic power of interpretation of slavery's law and orders, he construes the text of slavery in accordance with his own wishes, regulating a system of slavocracy in his house. As an archon, he is the one who commands and interprets the law from within his abode. Dr. Flint's determination to keep his house intact without any outlet out of his slavocratic residence proves that he is determined to shun any act of violation into his hegemony. Linda's rejections of Dr. Flint's house as the sheer dwelling through her visits to the grandmother signifies the threat Dr. Flint feels in the face of Linda's

mobility and her wish to communicate with others. Dr. Flint's interpretative attempt to move Linda and other slaves' thoughts into his principles indicates his obsession to keep the slaves under his constant control. Linda states that she is "frequently threatened with punishment" (Jacobs 19) and if she ever visits her grandma, she only "stood at the gate" (Jacobs 19) and is detained from spending time with her.

Linda's early accounts and descriptions of the southern slaveholding houses displays that domestic ideology is never valid for black people. Both physical and psychological enslavement qualify all domestic spaces as houses of oppression rather than happy homes. Dr. Flint's house is not the first house Linda lives as a slave. Her descriptions of past memories show that Harriet Jacobs's approach towards slavery and slaveholders is not as pitilessly fixed and one-sided or unfair as the peculiar institution of slavery itself. Linda's account reveals that she does not differentiate people as slaves and cruel slaveholders, but depicts them neutrally. Linda remembers little periods of happiness in her childhood in cherished terms and as the most stable memory of her lifetime. Her narrative begins, "I was born a slave; but I never knew it till six years of happy childhood had passed away" (Jacobs 11). It was a time when all the family was living together in "a comfortable home" (Jacobs 11) though they were slaves. Right from the start, Jacobs pays close attention to an objective judgment that will render her narrative archive authentic in contradistinction to a biased and misleading account of her time. The emphasis on her early childhood and the transformation of her level of consciousness lead a naive little child to a knowledge that she was a "piece of merchandise, trusted to them [her parents] for safe keeping, and liable to be demanded of them at any moment" (Jacobs 11-12), an information that points to a separation from the limited

blissful moments in her life. The “unusually fortunate circumstances” (Jacobs 14) of her childhood were made possible by her caring grandmother and her kind mistress who were “almost like a mother” (Jacobs 15) to Linda after the death of her own mother at the age of six. She narrates that she would sit by her mistress’s “side for hours, sewing diligently, with a heart as free from care as that of any free-born white child” (Jacobs 14). This single merry memory of her childhood was exceptionally the result of her mistress’s permission for the family to live together, and of her capacity to value her slaves. Though Linda’s parents are slaves, they have the chance to live together unlike most of the slave families at the time. The sketch Linda draws is, however, multifaceted as at the end of it she recounts that every member of the family is sold on the auction block. When she faces the death of her mother and later of her kind mistress, she describes it as the “blight, which too surely waits on every human being born to be a chattel” (Jacobs 15), and as an event that inaugurated the gruesome conversion from a human being into a valorized chattel.

All of Linda’s early descriptions of inhuman treatment in slavery disclose that American slavery is essentially a product of racism. Linda marks the artificiality of race in her evaluations of the white characters as she develops in her text a resistance nourished by a polity of life, one that resists laws or regulations, and one that is, if anything, offering alternative ways of thinking of the sociopolitical conditions of her time. Presenting the artificial limits of the color line inherent in racism, she offers multi-layered characterizations without any iteration of stereotypes. She tells not merely her mistress’s kind treatment in her memories as “proofs of attachment” (Jacobs 15) that her mistress showed to Linda until she dies but also her “act of injustice” (Jacobs 16) when her mistress sold her to another

slaveholding family after her death. In doing so, Jacobs juxtaposes the religious and judicial terms to undermine the unfairness of slavery in the face of the Christian teachings held dear by slaveholders. With constant references to the Bible, Linda calls her first experience of the auction block “the great wrong” (Jacobs 16) as was revealed in her mistress’s will. Although it was her mistress who taught Linda “the precepts of the God’s Word” (Jacobs 15) through religious statements such as “Though shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” (Jacobs 15-16) and “Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them” (Jacobs 16), she could not evade the law of slavery. Linda is able to show the staunch fact that slavery recognizes no religious values but only its own law. She articulates that slaves or “these God-breathing machines” (Jacobs 16) are “no more, in the sight of their masters, than the cotton they plant, or the horses they tend” (Jacobs 16). Just as slaves are not even human beings but only “God-breathing machines” (Jacobs 16), Linda is her mistress’s slave, a fact that heavily accentuates how impossible it is for her to escape the auction block.

Linda’s first mistress’s kind treatment is a portrayal of an exception among slaveholders. As opposed to this relatively peaceful atmosphere in a house of slavery, Dr. Flint transforms his house into a patriarchive by stripping it off its idyllic domestic quality and adding a nomological superiority qualified by inviolable privacy as many slaveholders did. He secludes the household within the house and closes all means of outlets from within until the time when Linda plans and enacts her escape. When he begins his advances towards Linda, the house turns into a place of oppression where Dr. Flint reverses the ideals of domesticity such as chastity for his own sake, and demands Linda not to be virtuous in order to make

Linda his concubine. Linda simply says, “The felon's home in a penitentiary is preferable” (Jacobs 49). Dr. Flint does not allow her to have any “pride of character” (Jacobs 49) and deems it “a crime in her to wish to be virtuous” (Jacobs 49). Dr. Flint’s house of oppression displays that domesticity works on multiple levels when domestic sphere is politicized by codes of slavery. This social fact points to the idea of family that never existed for black people, because it was shattered by slavery and taken out of the idealized version of domestic ideology which was never valid for black people. Instead, the institutionalized form of slavery entailed black people’s labor as the crux of white domestic order and nation’s economic progress. Domesticity became a “value scheme for ordering all of life, in competition with the ethos of money and exploitation that is perceived to prevail in American society” (Baym 27). American historians Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene D. Genovese both stress the direct proportion between slave labor force and well-being of the white slave owners in Southern slavery: “since slaves produced the crops that afforded the primary source of wealth, the more slaves a family owned, the more highly educated its members were likely to be and the greater their leisure to read and think and write” (Fox-Genovese and Genovese 1). The indispensability of the family in “the republican South” (Fox-Genovese and Genovese 679) as “the fundamental institution of society” (Fox-Genovese and Genovese 679) took on an economic and political meaning as the slave’s labor produced circulation of the capital and an economics of slavery while contributing to the standard of living of the white masters at the same time. In this circulation of money and slaves’ production, slavery took the form of a domestic policy in southern households since the imperial mission of slave trade from Africa to the New World and was redesigned by southern masters as a form of domestic tyranny.

The role of houses in archive building in Derrida's formulation perfectly fits the microcosmic ideological construction of the American nationhood in the antebellum houses and the antebellum American imaginary. The Derridian conjecture is that the inner dynamism of the archive is rooted in its (locative) physicality: the physical security of the deposited materials is the primary condition for the generation of the archive. Yet, there emerges from Derrida's hypothesis that there is first patriarchal archive, patriarchive, composed of patriarchal law, as the documents guarded by the archons "in effect state the law" (10). Then secondly comes the material or the substance that appears as a counter-archive, a textual reaction, to the first nomological construction, which is illustrative of the ways in which Jacobs conjures her narrative as a challenging topological space against the patriarchal law. If the archive cannot survive without residence or substrate, it then faces the threat to be demolished once this house of the archive is grievously injured by another archival attempt, which is Jacobs's drive to record social facts. Against Dr. Flint's law of slavery, Jacobs officializes a slave woman's memories and traumas in the southern houses in her own inscription. She writes not only to produce the present time truths or sufferings but to leave behind her first-hand account of slavery for the future as well. Her will or drive to preserve her observations and memories in her own autobiographical repository promises an abolitionist archive of the lives of thousands of slaves.

Yet, this sense of promise and responsibility in archivization can be thrown into crisis by the "death drive" (Derrida 14) that targets to wash away the archive by instigating "forgetfulness, amnesia, annihilation of memory, as mneme or anamnesis" (Derrida 14). And, thus it "leaves nothing of its own behind" (Derrida

14). The element of repression in the formation of the archive contests the constitutive development of the archive. To remember the initial decoding of the lexical meanings of the archive, the word *archive* includes “two orders of order: *sequential and jussive*” (Derrida 9), a combination of different types of order denoting sequence and authorial command which are linked and mutually sustained, building upon the idea of order that is present in distinct meanings of the words commencement and commandment. Nonetheless, a schism emerges at this part of Derrida’s argument when inherent dynamics between remembering and forgetting within the archive is revealed: “the concept of the archive shelters in itself, of course, this memory of the name *arkhē*. But it also *shelters* itself from this memory which it shelters: which comes down to saying also that it forgets it” (9). Like the simultaneous existence of the commencement and commandment in the single structure of the archive, Derrida points to the concurrent actions taken by the archive to shelter an object and to repress it. Derrida draws attention to the struggle between remembering and forgetting in the *arkheion*, thus between sheltering memories in sequential order and avoiding those memories from its very abode (driven by the nomological sense). If the memory can be taken as an archival entity, whereby it safeguards memories, it then operates both as a locale of preservation of different experiences, events, or incidents, and as a domicile of forgetting through a synchronized process of repression. Whereas the memory itself regulates its ontological entity in pursuing the *commencement* of the lived incidents, it obeys the *commandment* of self-destruction imposed by the death drive.

Drawing on Freud’s psychic economy of the mind, Derrida’s procession of hypotheses reapproximates Freud’s death/aggression/destruction drive (all used

synonymously) to provide a closer insight into the operation of the archive and its relation to its own topographical positioning between the private and the public through its coexistent “institutive and conservative” (12) functions. Derrida emphasizes “the violence of a power (*Gewalt*) which at once posits and conserves the law” (12) which altogether refers to “the violence of the archive itself, *as archive, as archival violence*” (12). Since every archive is both “institutive and conservative” in Derrida’s terms, the archive’s inner operation is centered on a perpetual and simultaneous act of complying with the tradition and of arguing itself out of it by virtue of revolutions. This two-directional functioning or the revolutionary reactions to the traditional are arbitrated by the death drive that introduces a new function to the existing operation of the archive. The death drive, Derrida argues, is “mute (*stumm*)” (13) and is “at work”(13) to expunge first and foremost itself:

... [B]ut since it always operates in silence, it never leaves any archives of its own. It destroys in advance its own archive, as if that were in truth the very motivation of its most proper movement. It works *to destroy the archive: on the condition of effacing* but also *with a view to effacing* its own “proper” traces—which consequently cannot properly be called “proper”. It devours it even before producing it on the outside. This drive, from then on, seems not only to be anarchic, anarchontic (we must not forget that the death drive, originary though it may be, is not a principle, as are the pleasure and reality principles): the death drive is above all *anarchivic*, one could say, or *archiviolithic*. It will always have been archive-destroying, by silent vocation (13-14).

A “drive of loss” (Derrida 13), the death drive erases the archive that sets new stages for itself to be refashioned once again. Derrida maintains that because the archive “will never be either memory or anamnesis as spontaneous” (14), it “takes place at the place of originary and structural breakdown of the said memory” (14). Derrida further argues that the archive, which struggles back and forth between typographical existence fraught with inscription and the death drive filled with the instinct to annihilate, is “hypomnesic” (14); for, “*there is no archive without a place of consignment, without a technique of repetition, and without a certain exteriority. No archive without outside*” (14). Hypomnesia means impaired memory, and it is through these ruptures by the death drive and the archive’s constant refashioning itself through repetitions that the archive gets injuries. Jacobs’s consideration of her own history secondary to social documentation in her *Preface* reworks this cycling pattern of the destruction of the death drive and urges the archive fever to create a place of consignment against an outside. Linda’s silences, the parts she keeps only to herself due to the apprehension of detection, are the strongest impulse to silence some fragments of Jacobs’s personal archive. It is significant to reiterate the idea that Jacobs’s detailed narration of other people’s lives manifests an aspiration for a social documentation of slavery and the larger picture of antebellum life that overshadows the private accounts of the narrator. Still, Linda’s documentation of slavery’s injustices suggests the strong likelihood of some personal incidents that might have been concealed from readers. If the notion of the archive is a collection of sociocultural signification, Jacobs’s inclination to portray the social in the face of Dr. Flint’s injustices and inhuman qualities slavery imposes on black people can well be perceived as an attempt to produce her own

account of antebellum slavery, while paradoxically masking certain, perhaps unwelcome, parts of her own life. Among these might be Dr. Flint's sexual advances as the leading threat that shapes Linda's life. Linda tends to withhold from her narrative a larger part of Dr. Flint's advances and, instead, foregrounds her relation with a white man as a way to evade becoming her master's concubine. Dr. Flint's attempts lead Linda to repress this portion of her personal story and to tell more about his vices.

The more Linda conveys incidents in the lives of other slaves, the less she tends to voice the most private events in her life. Silences or repressions about her own life-writing function to destroy her personal archive that preserves all private incidents she would prefer not to articulate. In light of Derridean relation between repression and the archival impulse, Linda first destroys her perception of her self and foregrounds the social archive in more detail. What plays the leading role in this repression is fear for detection she verbalizes in her *Preface*. First, she masks the name of places and gives "persons fictitious names" (Jacobs 5). Then, as her editor Lydia Maria Child saw it necessary when she said, "Under the circumstances *your* name could not be used, you know" (Child's *Letter to Jacobs*, Sept. 27, 1860), Harriet Jacobs feels obliged to disguise her identity by using a pseudonym in the racist atmosphere of the time. This detail about the materiality of the text communicates the repression on the text by the public itself; nevertheless, it correspondingly unveils Linda's resistance to this censure in her insistence on divulging the secrets of Dr. Flint's house and details of social incidents. Storytelling or interpretation of the incidents endows Linda with supremacy in the credibility of her life-writing over her master's existing patriarchal archive and will remain as a text

defying it. In the master and slave's concurrent struggle to hold the control of the archive, Linda's repression of the private gives way to the urge to tell more about the social events or stories of other people. Each piece of silence becomes an act of repression, foregrounding the public experiences of slavery. Whether these silences can be considered informative and even more expressive of the social is indicative of both the content and structure of the narrative and commitment to its abolitionist context.

Furthermore, Derrida's discussion of repression and the death drive unfolds the similar venues the inner dynamisms of autobiography and the archive share. Modern critique of autobiography emphasizes the intersections between the personal and the social in the configuration of cultural memory. Jacobs re-describes the patriarchal culture from a slave woman's perspective in her attempt to recover her own memory as she is writing her autobiography in her forties. As critics Hirsh and Smith suggest, "cultural memory is most forcefully transmitted through the individual voice and body – through the testimony of a witness" (225) and it can "best be understood at the juncture where the individual and the social come together, where the person is called on to illustrate the social formation on its heterogeneity and complexity" (225). Jacobs's memory is the private archive transformed into a social text, an impression of her memory on a document that "serves as a challenge and a countermemory to official hegemonic history" (Hirsh and Smith 225). Arguing the limits of autobiography, critic Leigh Gilmore likewise discusses that autobiography "draws its authority less from its resemblance to real life than from its proximity to discourses of truth and identity, less from reference or mimesis than from the cultural power of truth telling" (3). Linda's archival

attempt to publicize and politicize the private experience points to the personal and social function of autobiography. Her critique of the institution of slavery and domesticity in her descriptions of the documented incidents evinces that the genre of autobiography can well go far beyond the quotidian, crystallizing a set of social facts or traumas to be passed on to the next generations.

Since the archive is essentially a word that points to a house or a shelter where things commence and which holds the authority, one can think of it as a space of preservation and collection. Linda knows that she has to challenge and decompose the previously existing accounts of slavery and enable its documentation in an organized narrative in her own terms. The perception of the archive's dependence on the house as a solid space of collection and authority renders Dr. Flint's efforts worthwhile in his attempt to preserve the slaves as well as maintain his slavocratic rules within his house. As opposed to Dr. Flint's superior position and authority, Linda collects her memories in spaces she stays during her escape, only to put them down later to guide others in bondage.

In line with Derrida's formula, the formation and preservation of the archive are equal to holding the authority and the power of hermeneutics that is likely to alter the perception of the archive by its reading public. Linda's style of accumulation in an attempt to prove realities in her life brings together multiple incidents or stories of family members or acquaintances, and deconstructs Dr. Flint's patriarchive through a lens to view the deplorable nature of slavery. First, exposing Dr. Flint's privacy into other houses that Dr. Flint perceives as potentially threatening places of the public or a means of publication of his privacy, Linda

portrays that Dr. Flint's home is not as heavenly as the idea of home culturally symbolized in the antebellum period. The slaves are dehumanized by Dr. and Mrs. Flint's harsh treatment and "little attention was given to the slaves' meals" (19) and clothes. Linda's "vivid recollections" (Jacobs 20) reminds her of the "linsey-woolsey dress" (Jacobs 20) given by Mrs. Flint, which she names "the badges of slavery" (Jacobs 20). Linda's archive, composed of these stigmas of slavery, expands from her own life and family to critical social events of the time in an organized fashion. The most striking figure of her life, her grandmother, further exemplifies Linda's need to publicize the slavocratic patriarchy. Her grandma's disappointment when her mistress does not give back her only money, her "hard earnings" (Jacobs 20) the grandma "trusted solely to her [her mistress'] honor" – "the honor of a slaveholder to a slave!" (Jacobs 13)— surfaces among Linda's memories as the initial legal *incident* that taught her that slavery's laws were reshaped viciously in the interpretative practices of slaveholders. Repeating the idea of loss of human rights for slaves, Linda constantly addresses the readers in her reminders of the one-sided laws of Southern slavery. Linda assumes that "the reader probably knows that no promise or writing given to a slave is legally binding; for, according to Southern laws, a slave, *being* property, can *hold* no property" (Jacobs 13).

Another equally overwhelming legal execution is the grandma's sale despite her old age. Dr. Flint's own interpretation of his legal power is filled with hypocrisy and shame, as he puts an advertisement on the paper for the grandma, announcing the "public sale of negroes and horses, &c." (Jacobs 20), although he tells her that he is "unwilling to wound her feelings by putting her up at auction, and that he would prefer to dispose of her at private sale" (Jacobs 20). Dr. Flint's reservation

appears in his unwillingness to go public in her sale, for Linda's grandma, "Aunt Marthy [...] was generally known, and every body who knew her respected her intelligence and good character" (Jacobs 21) besides her years of loyal service to the Flints. Aunt Marthy is "determined" (Jacobs 20) that the "public should know it" (Jacobs 20-21) so as to reveal Dr. Flint's hypocrisy. What seems unexpected in this sale is Aunt Marthy's courage and fortitude to be sold publicly. Linda seems sure that where legality is fraught with hypocrisy and corrupt power, there appears Dr. Flint's duplicity and total disregard for human rights and emotions. This auction, however, results in the genuine respect the public shows to Aunt Martha when they retort to the auctioneer by harkening "Shame! Shame! Who is going to sell *you*, aunt Marthy? Don't stand there! There is no place for *you*" (Jacobs 21), and by not bidding above Aunt Martha when she is on the auction block.

Linda gives minute details about Dr. Flint's plantation house, the patriarchal residence from which she decodes her own autobiographical narrative into a social account, thereby purging boundaries between the private and the public in personal, familial and sociopolitical forms. Living in Dr. Flint's house entirely alters Linda's perceptions of what home means. As days pass by, Linda narrates that she witnesses more incidents other slaves are exposed to and the distressing process from which they are transformed from human beings to mere chattels. Her evaluation of Mrs. Flint's treatment of slaves as the second executor of the law of slavery proves that it is not only Dr. Flint who perpetrates violence but also Mrs. Flint who contributes to them in the cruelest way possible. Linda exposes Mrs. Flint's hypocrisy in the contrast between her seeming feeble constitution in the management of "households affairs" (Jacobs 22) and her steely-nerved endurance while watching slaves being whipped "till the blood trickled from every

stroke of the lash” (Jacobs 22). Mrs. Flint is definitely dissimilar from those humble and well-behaved southern women depicted in domestic magazines of the time. Though she seems religious and is a “member of the church” (Jacobs 22), she acts in an uncharitable way in the management of the slaves and the household duties:

If dinner was not served at the exact time on that particular Sunday, she would station herself in the kitchen, and wait till it was dished, and then spit in all the kettles and pans that had been used for cooking. She did this to prevent the cook and her children from eking out their meagre fare with the remains of the gravy and other scrapings. The slaves could get nothing to eat except what she chose to give them. Provisions were weighed out by the pound and ounce, three times a day. I can assure you she gave them no chance to eat wheat bread from her flour barrel. She knew how many biscuits a quart of flour would make, and exactly what size they ought to be (Jacobs 22).

Mrs. Flint’s heartlessness overthrows the entire perception of domestic bliss for slaves and replaces it with racism enhanced by slavery’s institutionalization. That she makes her slaves starve to death by robbing them of conditions of human living reflects her racist attitude. Racism, as historian Thomas D. Morris indicates, led to the assumption that “a man could not be indicted for the cruel punishment of his slaves, and this meant that a beating for the purpose of correction was lawful” (191). Critic and judge Leon Higginbotham comparably explicates that slavery legitimized the idea of black inferiority based on the assumption that “the color of whites’ skin alone rendered them civilized, whereas the color of the Africans’ skin made them savages” (47), and thus “to be savage was to be fit for slavery” (47).

This unreasonable calculation caused discernment of Christianity in ways that favor superiority of the white. It was widely thought that “religious status” (Higginbotham 47) was key to this irrational reasoning in which Christianity is equated with civilization (Higginbotham 47). However, Linda undermines this predisposed conditional parallel between whiteness and Christianity, remarking the fact that “partaking of the Lord’s supper did not seem to put her [Mrs. Flint] in a Christian frame of mind” (Jacobs 22). Worse still, depending on the “precept of inferiority” (Higginbotham 50), Mrs. Flint makes her slaves “always feel hopeless, submissive, and docile” (Higginbotham 50) and confirms in her acts of cruelty that there seems no other way for her slaves but to “acknowledge the master’s total reign over punishment of the black slave, even to the point of killing the slave” (Higginbotham 51).

Punishment in Dr. Flint’s house is predominant in the relations between the master and the slave. Whereas Mrs. Flint makes her slaves starve to death, Dr. Flint crams pieces of meal to the slave’s throat until they choked (Jacobs 22) whenever a dish is not “to his liking” (Jacobs 22). Morris states that it was hard “to limit the power of slaveowners” (182); still, the masters had “a coherent purpose in punishment: it was one procedure used to ‘degrade and undermine’ the humanity of the slave” (182) and to “distinguish him from human beings who are not property” (182). Since there were no limits of the slavocratic law in Dr. Flint’s house, he implements any punishment as he interprets his own laws in his own archive. The punishment is then a crucial issue in the antebellum master and slave interaction: as “the legislature simply assumed that masters already knew how to control their slaves” (Higginbotham 51), what remained to do for slaves was to grasp that

“resistance was futile, and that any attempt to regain control over his life would be met with severe punishment and possibly death” (Higginbotham 50).

Most of Dr. Flint’s slaves were well aware of this fact and acted accordingly. They obeyed and consented to the punishment even if Dr. Flint himself was the persecutor. Linda further multiplies such vivid instances from the incidents on Dr. Flint’s plantation. For example, upon Dr. Flint’s compelling his cook to eat the dog’s meal and locking her up, “away from her nursing baby, for a whole day and night” (Jacobs 23), the cook did nothing but “endured many cruelties” (Jacobs 23). In another case, when the slave from whose wife Dr. Flint had children is whipped brutally, because “he quarreled with his wife, in the presence of the overseer, and had accused Dr. Flint of being the father” – as “they were both black and the child was very fair” (Jacobs 23) – Linda relates her horror, stating “Never before, in my life, had I heard hundreds of blows fall, in succession, on a human being” (Jacobs 23). Dr. Flint’s hermeneutic practice is theorized in his own principles that always place the blame on the slave no matter what he himself does. When this slave woman reminds Dr. Flint that he “*promised* to treat her well” (Jacobs 24), he replies, “You have let your tongue run too far; damn you!” (Jacobs 24). It is only that she forgets “it was a crime for a slave to tell who was the father of the child” (Jacobs 24). Dr. Flint’s inequitable interpretations of slavery’s laws are nothing more than signposts of slavery’s truths. Another instance of interracial sex between the master and a slave girl in a nearby plantation illustrates the mistress’s hatred and rage towards a slave girl due to the master’s sexual crime. Although there were slave codes and statutes that defined the “interracial marriage” as “illegal” (Higginbotham 43), the mistress’s interpretation of this illegal and illicit

act again points to the slave girl as the criminal. The mistress passes her verdict to the detriment of the miserable slave girl, exclaiming that she deserves “it all, and more too” (Jacobs 24) while she is standing by the slave girl’s suffering body after she gives birth to an almost white child. Linda’s preference to include such knowledge denotes both a desire to archive what is hidden from those ignorant of slavery’s practices and a need to problematize domestic customs of abodes of slavery, which give masters and mistresses alike the power to render slaves totally submissive to their violence and to justify their wrongs. Accumulating these incidents, Linda collects fragments of various slave experiences and presents them in her own way in contradistinction to the slave owners’ accounts. Jacobs is conscious that there is “no political power without the control of the archive” (Derrida 11) and thus configures her literary figure, Linda, as the archive fever who identifies the sources of slavery’s patriarchive and challenges the status quo. Jacobs’s archival endeavor as an author and her drive to destroy Dr. Flint’s archive while constituting her own denotes the possibility of access to the information not readily available in the antebellum period, introducing new perspectives of interpreting the social atmosphere.

Linda’s acute observation of the nearby plantation houses is almost identical to Dr. Flint’s house in the treatment the slaves received. In the ninth chapter entitled “Sketches of Neighboring Slaveholders”, Linda repeats that slaves’ “resistance is hopeless” (Jacobs 80) in an anonymous poem that reads, “The poor worm/ Shall prove her contest vain. Life’s little day/ Shall pass, and she is gone!” (Jacobs 80). While relating the unfortunate lives of slaves in comparison with the “poor worm” (Jacobs 80), she is conscientiously threading her own interpretation of the

slavocratic patriarchive in deliberate terms. Linda constructs this chapter as a case study that embodies the slaves' predicament and the slaveholders' immeasurable brutalities. Using again a pseudonym for the slaveholder – whom she calls Mr. Litch—, Jacobs elaborates on almost copious forms of punishment and oppression. A case in detailed study for Linda, “ill-bred, uneducated” but “wealthy” (Jacobs 71) Mr. Litch is one of the worst examples of southern masters. Yet, what qualifies Mr. Litch for Linda's thorough analysis is the manner he misuses his power in his peculiar way to exert and extend his punishments. Another thrilling patriarchal domicile, Mr. Litch's abode is furnished with a “jail and a whipping post on his grounds; and whatever cruelties were perpetrated there, they *passed without comment*” (Jacobs 71) [italics mine]. Similar to Dr. Flint's understanding, Mr. Litch holds the power to comment on his own archive by shutting all outlets from within and disabling all sorts of communication between his private house and the public. If something is ever heard, he is “so effectually screened by his great wealth that he was called to no account for his crimes, not even for murder” (Jacobs 71). That no other and distinct interpretation is possible for Mr. Litch's acts makes him the absolute archon with his unquestioned misuse and manipulation of slaves. And, this fact remains as the sole determiner of his actions and murders that are common in his plantation (Jacobs 72). Mr. Litch's plantation is the one where punishments are “various” (Jacobs 71). Linda demonstrates these penalties in graphic terms:

A favorite one was to tie a rope round a man's body, and suspend him from the ground. A fire was kindled over him, from which was suspended a piece of fat pork. As this cooked, the scalding drops of fat continually fell on the bare flesh. On his own plantation, he required

very strict obedience to the eighth commandment. But depredations on the neighbors were allowable, provided the culprit managed to evade detection or suspicion. If a neighbor brought a charge of theft against any of his slaves, he was browbeaten by the master, who assured him that his slaves had enough of every thing at home, and had no inducement to steal. No sooner was the neighbor's back turned, than the accused was sought out, and whipped for his lack of discretion. If a slave stole from him even a pound of meat or a peck of corn, if detection followed, he was put in chains and imprisoned, and so kept till his form was attenuated by hunger and suffering (Jacobs 71-72).

Linda's exposition of Mr. Litch's house unveils the bitter fact that this plantation house is a prison where the victim becomes the criminal. It seems that the southern plantation house is not a space of production but of tyranny. Mr. Litch reshapes the perception of home and plantation in the minds of the slaves as a threatening place of taming and domesticating them. What is added to these is the incongruity between slaveholder's cruel acts and their religious beliefs. Mr. Litch's "strict obedience" (Jacobs 71) to the eight commandments translates itself into his own comments, his own interpretation of the truth. The eighth commandment preaches that stealing is forbidden² and that truth must reign in Christian life. What seems to Mr. Litch as the animalistic instinct of stealing is nothing but the slave's starvation. His way of interpreting stealing only serves his own purpose of keeping slaves under control and having more money out of their labor without letting them live

² "The eighth commandment as communicated to Moses on Mount Sinai: 'You shall not steal.' (Exodus 20:15)" as explained by Joy Viveros in *Notes to Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*.

like humans. His interpretation needs no further comment as “no words were used” (Jacobs 72) in case of theft, but “a club felled” (Jacobs 72) slaves “to the ground” (Jacobs 72) and “a rough box was their coffin, and their internment was a dog’s burial” (Jacobs 72). “Nothing was said” (Jacobs 72) on such murders on Mr. Litch’s plantations and it became a tradition of Mr. Litch’s patriarchal not to speak out, not to comment on the master’s actions.

All these small narratives of other people serve to enhance Linda’s motive for an abolitionist archive. The more Linda collects multiple incidents from the lives of other slaves in different plantations, the more she overthrows perceptions of civilization as a concept belonging to white people. She self-assuredly states that “cruelty is contagious in uncivilized communities” (Jacobs 73) in relation to the boundless violence of the brutal masters. Linda’s narrative discloses that cruelty of one master does not mean that another is merciful: brutality is contagious and is an act that spreads from one neighbor to another in Southern plantation houses. Linda illustrates this fact by setting representative examples to communicate the urgency of abolitionism to her readers. Out of her archive, she recounts Mr. Conant who whipped one of his slaves and tied him to a large tree in “a stormy night in winter” (Jacobs 73) and “terribly flogged” (Jacobs 73) another slave for stealing “a pig from the master” (Jacobs 73). Mrs. Wade is another mistress whose “barn was her particular place of torture” (Jacobs 73). Her house is symbolic of a typical slaveholding premise where there is no “cessation of the lash” (Jacobs 73). Death seems the only escape for slaves to get out of the plantation in these examples. Resistance is futile simply because “if a slave resisted being whipped, the bloodhounds were unpacked, and set upon him, to tear his flesh from his bones”

(Jacobs 77). Though Jacobs identifies that “no pen can give an adequate description of the all-pervading corruption produced by slavery” (Jacobs 79), she expands on details to defy and invalidate the proslavery arguments and to play a role in the abolitionist cause. At a point where she is most outspoken about her will to collect and publicize these incidents against such neighboring archons of slavery, she addresses the reader:

You may believe what I say; for I write only that whereof I know. I was twenty-one years in that cage of obscene birds. I can testify, from my own experience and observation, that slavery is a curse to the whites as well as to the blacks. It makes the white fathers cruel and sensual; the sons violent and licentious; it contaminates the daughters, and makes the wives wretched. And as for the colored race, it needs an abler pen than mine to describe the extremity of their sufferings, the depth of their degradation.

Yet few slaveholders seem to be aware of the widespread moral ruin occasioned by this wicked system. Their talk is of blighted cotton crops—not of the blight on their children's souls.

If you want to be fully convinced of the abominations of slavery, go on a southern plantation, and call yourself a negro trader. Then there will be no concealment; and you will see and hear things that will seem to you impossible among human beings with immortal souls (Jacobs 81).

As literary critic Russ Castronovo claims, Jacobs delineates “socially dead persons like slaves” (10) who “exert recalcitrant materialities that confound the story of

citizenship as a completed category beyond politics” (10). At such parts of social documentation, Jacobs does not even touch on the question of citizenship, as she knows that citizenship is not even a slender chance under these conditions. Even when she questions, she interrogates “not only who gets to be a citizen” but also “the logic of citizenship itself, opening up this by-and-large-uncontested category to questions that defamiliarize cherished assumptions about belonging, membership, and personhood” (Castronovo 10). Words like blight, curse, cruel, wretched, wicked, abomination, or phrases like “extremity of their sufferings” (Jacobs 81) and “the depth of their degradation” (Jacobs 81) all suggest what Castronovo calls an “earthly decay” (12) in the slaves’ body. Such “earthly decay” is not “just a biological event” but also “an ideological operation” (Castronovo 12) that mutilates the slave’s body to maintain its superiority. Directly facing her audience in her view of the tyrannical masters of “this wicked system” (Jacobs 81), Linda leaves room for the reader to participate in the hermeneutics of these facts. As much as she can illustrate and interpret the blight on the slaves’ soul as well as on the slaveholders and their families, Linda invites the reader to pass their judgment on these conditions the black people were unmercifully exposed to.

In the Twelfth and Thirteenth chapters that she respectively entitles “Fear of Insurrection” and “The Church and Slavery”, Linda intensifies slavery’s abominations in a continuing documentary style. Nat Turner’s insurrection is a case in point enhancing Jacobs’s narrative inclination to merge personality and polity in order to unearth how interrelated domestic contentment and social welfare are in a society constructed by slavery. Planned on the national day of independence, the Fourth of July, the rebellion under Turner’s leadership is a key historical moment

with proofs of the complicated nature of slavery and racial relations. Nat Turner's name was pronounced with reference to hatred among Virginians, as he was a slave who caused a great mutiny and then succeeded to flee, which altogether resulted in violence and the death of around sixty-five whites during the mutiny in Virginia in 1831 (Yellin 280). Critic Kenneth S. Greenberg argues that Turner's "position as a slave and his position as a man" threatened the "core values and institutional structures of the antebellum South" (3); since his rebellious act "persuasively undermined the theory of slave docility; intensified the fear of slave revolts" (Kemp Davis 20) and led to "panic throughout Virginia and a number of states Alabama, Delaware, Florida, Kentucky, Maryland, Louisiana, North and South Carolina, and Tennessee" (Kemp Davis 20) and to "the tightening of existing slave codes and the enactment of harsher policies toward slaves and free blacks" (Kemp Davis 20). Though he was later captured and hanged, the aftermath of the event caused great fear and anxiety north and south (Greenberg 3).

In her letter dated August 13, 1860, just before the publication of the text, Jacobs's conscientious editor Lydia Maria Child requested that she should write what she "can recollect of the outrages committed on the colored people, in Nat Turner's time" (Child in Yellin 279). Child asked her to give detailed descriptions as to "What were those inflictions? Were any tortured to make them confess? and how? Where any killed?" (279). Child knew that "fear of other insurrections spread across the South, precipitating a widespread wave of imprisonment, torture, and violence against blacks throughout the region" (Yellin 280). She asked for further elaboration of this part. Child's primary purpose was to raise awareness on "the most striking particulars" of the event so that the manuscript could "do much

service to the Anti-Slavery cause” (Child 279). This is what Jacobs did in her graphic account of how this historical rebellion brings forth the ironical question of slaveholders’ restlessness in view of the “great commotion” (97) felt in every Southern town after the news of the uprising. She highlighted the ironical discrepancy between the masters who prefer to think that their slaves are very “‘content and happy’!” (Jacobs 97), or who prefer to describe slavery as the “beautiful ‘patriarchal institution’” (Jacobs 114) and the “true state” (Jacobs 97) of domestic affairs bothering the Southern states. However, slaveholders’ fake assumption is shattered, as they grew alarmed with the outbreak of Nat Turner’s revolt. The reflections of the insurrection proved in Linda’s account that the aftermath of the mutiny causes great shock, distress and turmoil in Linda’s town, Edenton, North Carolina, too. As Linda conveys, the muster held every year is turned into a hunting occasion for the white to hunt for slaves. That Nat Turner could not be arrested intensified the violence exercised by the white over black people. The houses were searched mostly by “country bullies and the poor whites” (Jacobs 97) or the “wild scouts” (Jacobs 98) who “rushed in every direction, wherever a colored face was to be found” (Jacobs 98). “A motley crowd of soldiers” (Jacobs 98) were playing “martial music” (Jacobs 98) with their drums and fifes, and creating an atmosphere of a battle. The tragic point Linda makes is that these poor whites who “exulted in such a chance to exercise a little brief authority” (Jacobs 98) and showed “their subserviency to the slaveholders” (Jacobs 98) could not “reflect that the power which trampled on the colored people also kept themselves in poverty, ignorance, and moral degradation” (Jacobs 98). None of these white people are aware that they are causing misery and disorder by scourging black people. Men, women, and even children who were not guilty of

any crime or of plotting insurrection were thought so and were whipped “till the blood stood in puddles at their feet” (Jacobs 98). They were tortured and “robbed of clothing and everything else the marauders thought worth carrying away” (Jacobs 99). Linda illustrates in her words that the social scenery at this time was bleak and full of suffering. She recounts that the soldiers are “unfeeling wretches” (Jacobs 99), “terrifying and tormenting the helpless” (Jacobs 99) and “acting out their brutal will” (Jacobs 99). Though Linda says that the “consternation was universal” (Jacobs 99) in expressing the commonality of black folk’s agony and desolation, this universality was definitely not on the part of white marauders and persecutors, but merely felt and experienced by the poor slaves.

Linda reproduces these incidents, subsequently revealing the weakest point in the slaveholders’ strategy to enslave black people. When soldiers come to Linda’s grandmother’s house to search the house, they find out Linda’s letters and that Linda is able to read and write. On receiving a positive reply, the captain “swore, and raved, and tore the paper into bits” (Jacobs 101). Literacy and housing are two basic rights the southern slaves were denied. Both of these fundamental human rights are precious in the eyes of black slaves, as they would grant them with the right to get education and to have a home of their own to be able to live like a human being rather than a chattel. The common idea these archons of slavery share is that slaves must not have any legal right to own any house, or else they know that they will lose their power over their chattels. When Linda comments that “nothing annoyed them so much so as to see colored people living in comfort and respectability” (Jacobs 97), she suggests that houses are strategic spaces where authority takes its source from the Southern social life. When one of the soldiers

discovers the tablecloth on the table in her grandmother's house, he gets furious, exclaiming "Where'd the damned niggers git all dis sheet an' table clarf?" (Jacobs 100) simply because he believes that "white folks oughter have 'em all" (Jacobs 100). And, the punishment the captain finds appropriate for these pseudo crimes is that the grandma's house "ought to be burned to the ground, and each of its inmates receive thirty-nine lashes" (Jacobs 102). Both literacy and ownership of a home are signs of freedom; nevertheless, the slaveholding community fears that they would lose their authority in case of a possible increase in literacy, a condition that Linda exposes at full length. Testifying the masters' or soldiers' way to prove and maintain their authority by burning down houses and torture, Linda gives a graphic account of the social and cultural inconsistencies that are incommensurate with the restrictive and inflexible conventions of domesticity. Contrary to the assumption of coherence at home, Jacobs reworks idealized domestic postulations of the American nation in ways that prove an insiders view with convincing challenges to the cultural norms and conventions.

Corporeal and psychological torture of slave women in the plantations and houses is another horrible fact added to the collective psychosomatic violence exerted on all slaves. Linda mentions the dreadful times in her life beginning with Dr. Flint's advances and attempts to make her his concubine in the Fifth Chapter "Trials of Girlhood" and the Sixth Chapter "The Jealous Mistress". This part is also the initiation of Linda's more personal narrative where her personal life comes to a public light. "A sad epoch in the life of a slave girl" (Jacobs 44), this period chronicles the days when Dr. Flint "began to whisper foul words" (Jacobs 44) in Linda's ear and creates an environment in which "notes were often slipped into my

[her] hand” (Jacobs 50). Dr. Flint “invented” (Jacobs 49) a *house* that is like “a deaf and dumb asylum” (Jacobs 49) where he communicates with Linda only through the exchange of obscene notes. Yet, there was no way out for a slave girl at the age of fifteen no matter how much she is left “trembling” (Jacobs 44) in the face of Dr. Flint’s “stormy moods” (Jacobs 44). Meeting Linda “at every turn” (Jacobs 46) so as to compel her to yield to his “foul words” (Jacobs 44), Dr. Flint makes his house a hellish labyrinth for her. Though her soul “revolted against the mean tyranny” (Jacobs 45), she was “compelled to live under the same roof with him” (Jacobs 44) where she cannot but see “a man forty years my [her] senior daily violating the most sacred commandments of nature” (Jacobs 44-45). Her mistress who is supposed to protect “the helpless victim” has “no other feeling towards her but those of jealousy and rage” (Jacobs 45). To be a woman in slavery doubles the suffering of oppression as it targets the corporeality of the human physiology. Sexual implications in Dr. Flint’s notes bring forth the question of fetishization of the black female body through sexual harassment that devitalizes the soul and body of the slave woman. Dr. Flint valorizes Linda’s body in terms that communicate them as having an object value. However, Linda does not victimize herself and turns Dr. Flint’s notes into another source to support her own archive by not yielding to his advances and by blending her longing for spiritual liberty with corporeal emancipation. Since revealing the master’s mischievous intentions to others is “an offence that never went unpunished” (Jacobs 46), Linda renders her sufferings vocal in inscription.

The most significant move that Linda makes is to flee Dr. Flint’s house of oppression. Her way of escape is strategic as she skillfully undermines the *topo-*

nomology of the southern slave house and plays with the democratic ideals of freedom and equality of the American nation by shattering the ideal representation of white domesticity through a detailed depiction of her experiences as a slave girl. Keeping in her mind the archons of slavery in every slaveholding southern house, Linda stays at different places during her escape, which becomes a substantial symbol through which she critiques both the domestic and political ideology of the American nation. The most problematic obstacle in Linda's struggle for freedom is obviously Dr. Flint, his house as a prison of enslavement and in the larger sense, the nation's laws. However, she finds ways to challenge them by constructing secret places in the course of her long period of escape to freedom. The same houses that imprison Linda as a slave take on an archival identity during the direful time of flight, as Linda reforms the concrete structure of a house into an archival edifice through inscriptions of a slave girl. In this respect, Linda's stay at different houses can be read as a domestic experiment through which she dislocates and subverts the falsehood of secure and blissful domesticity and creates domestic images that help her readers imagine a different polity of selfhood and understanding of domesticity. Linda displays the inhumanity of slavery by rejecting the status quo and the domestic arrangement of the American house. In economic terms, Linda's business as a domestic is to provide domestic order, household duties, and contribute to the master's financial interests. However, each plantation house appears to be a disciplinary regimen contrary to the conventional perception of the house as a shelter from evils. Changing or reorganizing the domestic decorum structured by the master, Linda replaces the idea of flawless domestic order with the experiences of slavery.

In her domestic experiment to overthrow the power of the slavocracy, Linda first hides in her grandmother's attic at the cost of becoming physically motionless. Fearing that escaping to the North with her two children would fail her attempt and raise the chance to get caught, Linda prefers to stay and deceive Dr. Flint into the impression that she is now a fugitive. The tiny garret Linda is forced to live in for almost seven years is a new spatial arrangement designed for Linda's escape; it is an extension to the grandmother's house with very little space and air to maintain a human life. Hiding in this garret or the physicality of her restriction does not mean a retreat for Linda. Instead, she perceives this to be a "Competition in Cunning", as she entitles one of her chapters, where she emphasizes that she needs to be smarter to tackle Dr. Flint's "cunning nature" (Jacobs 193). Flint pursues Linda and still believes that Linda would "come back" (Jacobs 193) and "voluntarily surrender" (Jacobs 193) herself. Dr. Flint is also trying to fool Linda's grandmother into believing the possibility that if Linda comes back, she could be purchased by her relatives or any other person who wishes to buy her (Jacobs 193). Though Dr. Flint perfectly knows that such a thing is ridiculous enough to happen in the southern slave codes, he merely wants to outwit his opponent, Linda.

Linda's narrative takes the form of a *consignation*, as Derrida refers to, of incidents and facts as Linda insists. Linda's archive coded in the form of a slave narrative can be considered a textual outlet from the harsh facts as well as an elaborate portrayal of them. It is a confessional narrative in which every confession is added to the national archive from the storage of personal memory. Her narrative is therefore housed against the *topo-nomology* of the slavocracy to increase awareness for abolitionism and historical literacy as she illustrates in her efforts to

escape slavery. Linda's archival drive rests on the power relation she establishes between herself and Dr. Flint. This power relation is a contest in cunning, as Linda articulates, where the slave is struggling to triumph over the master. Dr. Flint's incessant hunt for Linda continues as he does not give up frequenting New York City, though each time he comes back in rage. The fear and disappointment of losing a slave leads Dr. Flint to destroy Linda's family more severely. He charges Linda's uncle Philip with helping out Linda during her escape. Uncle Philip was accused, put into jail, judged in the court but released on the condition of a bail of five hundred dollars. Dr. Flint is after staring all members of the separated family out of countenance, in other words put them into trouble, and does his best to capitalize every opportunity he himself creates to down them. It is however Mr. Sands who comes and saves uncle Philip without bail just like he previously saved Linda from Dr. Flint's advances by becoming her lover.

The dreadful years of escape within the small garret proves the fact that escape does not alone endow freedom. Since Linda's flight is a reversal of an ordinary escape plot that heads to the North, it proves a "fake" (K. A. Appiah xv) one that crucially centers on the very opposite direction, the Southern slaveholding American home. Linda's false escape also turns Southern houses to secret bases of flight that undermines Dr. Flint's house of confinement. Thus, Linda turns domestic restriction the other way around, rendering southern houses strategic spaces of struggle and perseverance. Intriguingly, the garret becomes an archive of preservation for Linda's memories; Linda creates a new topography, a new settlement where her personal archive positions itself to be energized against Dr. Flint's house of oppression. Still, Linda maintains this archive under arduous

conditions: she is both physically in a paralyzed condition and emotionally overwhelmed by the yearning for her children. The only means to see the outside is a hole that provides Linda with the possibility to see her children from a distance. Linda's refuge also shows that the topographical design of the small den is the very opposite of the well-decorated domestic perception of antebellum houses of the middle class. Though Linda's shelter seems to take place on a fatal threshold, a liminal space between the strict rules of domestic enslavement and freedom, it stands as the step towards freedom since it deciphers the invalidity of the strict formulation of decorative living in antebellum United States.

It is crucial to observe that Harriet Jacobs skillfully introduces various forms of adoption of the topography of the house in order to coordinate the incidents affecting Linda's life, which altogether operate as what Claudia Tate calls the "kitchen politics of abolitionism" (23). The grandmother renders the domestic space and the kitchenette serviceable for the management of incidents and information exchange to keep Linda informed during her years in the garret. For instance, when uncle Philip was arrested, Linda's grandmother walks "back and forth, in the performance of culinary duties, she talked apparently to herself, but with the intention that I [Linda] should hear what was going on" (Jacobs 167). At this very moment, Linda is snatched away by Betty, the housemaid, under the floor so that she can stay closer to the kitchen that serves at such critical moments as the newsroom. The sound of culinary utensils is another medium through which the grandmother can make her words heard by Linda by speaking up. The grandmother thus transforms the kitchen into a strategic site where vital and life-sustaining

information exchange is secured, and where domestic service likewise takes on a life saving identity.

The relation between the notion of house and the idea of the archive can further be worked through the problem Linda faces in the impossibility to found a home for herself and her children throughout the narrative. In line with Derrida's exploration of the archive, one significant recurrent image in *Incidents* is home and different domestic locations in Linda's escape to freedom. In her endless efforts to attain her freedom, Linda offers a polity of selfhood not through the idea of woman as a concubine to the master in a seeming domestic contentment, but as one that is gained by virtue of the struggle for liberty. All of the places Linda inhabits, escapes and visits compile a collection of various inhabitations or homes within the same nation. Jacobs disintegrates the notion of home by introducing a sense of heterogeneity to the secure and romantic suppositions of antebellum homes. She suggests that the American nation has houses entirely dissimilar to the romantic illustrations of the tidy or coquettish interiors and the households of the aristocratic white houses. Linda's often-repeated ultimate aim to have "a hearth-stone" (Jacobs 302) of her own - "however humble" (Jacobs 302) - indicates how hard it is for a slave woman to have a home. By birth already a commodity to be circulated through the generations of a Southern family, Linda sees the only way to have a sense of ontological security through possession of her home in a free land. Linda presents the legal impediments of slavery as the colossal obstacle that handicaps any possibility of ownership of a house for which Linda longs throughout her journey to freedom. Linda's rebuff of ideal domesticity unveils both the eradication of the private and the public dichotomy and a transition from servitude to selfhood.

Such sense of continual dislocation or homelessness also helps her readers imagine a polity of selfhood instead of servitude.

Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl is in a constant process of accommodating slavery's patriarchal under a critical light and in a uniformly productive rebellion against the legal implementations of domestic tyranny. Harriet Jacobs produces these rebellions in her text against all orthodox conceptions of the patriarchal and domesticity with the objective to decompose slavery's topographical placements and legal rules. Analogously, Linda's stay at different southern and northern houses appear as an intent experiment with antebellum domestic structures and can therefore be read to be reflecting and reproducing the nation's divided condition, and is meant to disavow the nation's patriarchal imperialist domestic ideals. Against Dr. Flint's slavocracy and slavery's patriarchal, Linda presents her own observations and offers distinctive spaces of political resistance, a novel sphere of articulation that helps transform the public sphere by subverting the sociopolitical structure of a divided nation during her confinement in the Southern plantation house as a slave girl and in different houses she stayed during her escape to freedom. Linda's passage to freedom further denotes the struggle for becoming a subject from a commodified object by thwarting the master's power to keep her under control. Delineating the subaltern woman, critic Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak argues that "between patriarchy and imperialism, subject-constitution and object-formation, the figure of the woman disappears, not into a pristine nothingness, but into a violent shuttling which is the displaced figuration" (306). Displaced into "a violent shuttling" (306), the figure of woman, Spivak contends, is muted and rendered an object without a sense of self. Spivak's problematization of the

question of the oppressed, subaltern woman, in particular those black or racially othered women, is expressive of Linda's bondage within the institutionalized social construction of slavery. In the first place, during her stay in Dr. Flint's house, Linda is the subaltern who ceases to live and talk freely, only to archive her experiences to be published in the future. When it is high time to put her memories down as impressions onto the page, as she says in the *Preface*, Jacobs rejects her disposition to remain silent by an urge to narrate the unheard voices of the slave women to provide a transition from oppression to expression and a transformation into a speaking subject.

After Linda gains her freedom under the guardianship of Mr. and Ms. Bruce, her northern employees, she continues to collect her memories that would guide her readers about the American slavery. In her visit to England, the country becomes another source for Linda in the consignment of her social archive. Depicting her experiences and acute observations in England, Linda provides the reader with an alternative textual and social archive to be read and circulated through the nation in the abolitionist cause. To accentuate the urgency of abolition, she offers a comparison between slaves in the U.S. and the poor in England. Linda is assured in her visit to England upon her dear mistress Mrs. Bruce's death that race is a meaningless and a ruthless framework shaping people's identities. Her visit as the nurse of little Mary, Mr. and the late Mrs. Bruce's daughter's, opens up undiscovered horizons for her to observe the differences between the burgeoning American nation of equal rights and the poor of England intently. Her happiness in her first stop Liverpool and then in London, and later in Oxford Crescent and in Steventon, Berkshire is occasioned by the welcome treatment she receives in these

locations where Linda is “treated according to my [her] deportment, without reference to my [her] complexion” (Jacobs 275). As Linda’s words illustrate, whatever reigned in these parts of England was beyond comparison with the slave’s condition in the American South. England is imbued with “the tide of life that flowed through the streets” (Jacobs 276), which is altogether in marked contrast with “the stagnation” (Jacobs 276) of the Southern towns. Linda watchfully reports that though the conditions of the workers in “the poorest” (Jacobs 276) town Steventon were tough – as they were working in the fields for “six shillings, and seven shillings, a week, and women for sixpence, and seven pence” (Jacobs 276) and although they lived in “the most primitive manner” (Jacobs 276) yet in their *own* “thatched cottages” (Jacobs 276)-, the condition of “even the meanest and most ignorant among them was vastly superior to the condition of the most favored slaves in America” (Jacobs 276). Paying attention to the feeling of security and belonging the British nation provides for the poor, Linda maintains,

They labored hard; but they were not ordered out to toil while the stars were in the sky, and driven and slashed by an overseer, through heat and cold, till the stars shone out again. Their homes were very humble; but they were protected by law. No insolent patrols could come, in the dead of night, and flog them at their pleasure. The father, when he closed his cottage door, felt safe with his family around him. No master or overseer could come and take from him his wife, or his daughter. They must separate to earn their living; but the parents knew where their children were going, and could communicate with them by letters. The relations of husband and wife, parent and child, were too sacred for

the richest noble in the land to violate with impunity. Much was being done to enlighten these poor people. Schools were established among them, and benevolent societies were active in efforts to ameliorate their condition. There was no law forbidding them to learn to read and write; and if they helped each other in spelling out the Bible, they were in no danger of thirty-nine lashes, as was the case with myself and poor, pious, old uncle Fred. I repeat that the most ignorant and the most destitute of these peasants was a thousand fold better off than the most pampered American slave (Jacobs 277).

A panoramic reflection of the condition of the poor, Linda's description poses the social condition of the poor people, highlighting the fact that these people may live in destitute poverty but their rulers do not oppress them. Her words demonstrate that all Americans are lacking is equality in education, the law, acceptable working conditions, the right of ownership, the right of being a member of one's own family and of security. The poor in England, however, had the right to practise their religion without the contempt of others. Perhaps, the most terrible of all in this comparison emerges in the incongruity between perception of religion by its practitioners: Linda's observations in England reminds her of the Episcopal church in her Southern town where "the buying and selling of the slaves, by the professed ministers of the gospel" (Jacobs 278) take place in a "contemptuous manner in which the communion had been administered to colored people" (Jacobs 278). Linda argues that she does not relinquish her senses to favor the condition of the poor in England in order to criticize slavery, and refers to the English writer the Honorary Miss Murray, who delineated her impressions of slavery in the U.S. in

sympathetic terms in her *Letters from the United States, Cuba and Canada* (1856). Linda consciously refrains from falling into the same trap the Hon. Amelia Matilda Murray had already fallen by perceiving and presenting the conditions on both sides of the Atlantic neutrally. Claiming validity to her own personal and social archive, Linda suggests, “a small portion of my [her] experience would enable her to read her own pages with anointed eyes” (Jacobs 278). Linda offers a justification of the authenticity of her own experience, and remarks that if the Hon. Miss Murray was to leave her title aside and visit the plantations in the South instead of the fashionable society, she would “see and hear things that would make her tell quite a different story” (Jacobs 278). This experience of a foreign country convinces Linda from across the ocean that the American nation looks through the lenses of race and produces incurable prejudices and hostilities for its noncitizen unpaid tortured slaves, and ultimately maintains slavery’s law and order.

It is when Linda steps out of her country of enslavement that her testimony once again proves that race is a synthetic construct in the hands of exploiters, manipulators, or opinionated people. In an archival endeavor to demonstrate and ascertain the hardships of American slaves in a collection of incidents within her text, Linda contests notions of home, religion, citizenship, and nation. While the religious service seems “a mockery and a sham” (Jacobs 278) in the southern church, the clergyman in Steventon was a “true disciple of Jesus” (Jacobs 278). Linda is able to call this place her home where no “slightest symptom of prejudice against color” (Jacobs 278) existed. Nonetheless, her return substantiates the “sad feeling to be afraid of one’s own native country” (Jacobs 279), a gloomy affect magnified in her discovery of her son Benny’s condition in his workplace. Ben is

working as a printer for a printing company in the 1840s in Boston where “African-Americans were barred from employment as printers in Boston” (Viveros 411). Benny is happy in his workplace until it is “accidentally” (Jacobs 279) noticed that he is a mulatto. His complexion does not give away that he is black, but after the discovery, “some of the apprentices” (Jacobs 279) who were Americans and some “American-born Irish” (Jacobs 279) apprentices found it “offensive to their dignity to have a ‘nigger’ among them” (Jacobs 279). Though he was previously “liked by the master” (Jacobs 279) and a “favorite with his fellow-apprentices” (Jacobs 279), this fact “at once transformed him into a different being” (Jacobs 279). Now he is treated with “silent scorn” (Jacobs 279), “insults and abuse” (Jacobs 279). Depicting this incident as a social fact, Jacobs exemplifies that the color line works ruthlessly in the northern states that seem to favor and promote freedom. An African-American abolitionist, Martin R. Delany put this fact down in his 1852 *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States*, emphasizing that it is “unjust, wicked, and cruel, the result of an unnatural prejudice, that debarred them from places of respectability, and that public opinion could and should be corrected upon this subject” (55). The “cause of dissatisfaction” (Delany 54) the colored people feel derives from the fact that they are totally “proscribed, debarred, and shut out from every respectable position, occupying the places of inferiors and menials” (Delany 54) in the northern states.

Linda’s archival compulsion reconstructs information that is lost or displaced in the course of history. As an archival narrator, she elaborates on the events she tells her readers presenting them as first-hand experiences to safeguard the legibility of slavery’s archive that was shunned by the slaveowners. Considering the

fact that Jacobs's own narrative has been published under the pseudonym, *Linda Brent*, all incidents in Linda Brent's life and her struggle to become an invisible public author of a materially published text conceive the idea that every piece of her memories are forms of archival specimens, samplings of her memory's reproduction. This reproduction is a direct reflection of Jacobs's attempt to prove that her memories are archivable for the abolitionist cause. For such reasons, in a narrative like *Incidents*, it is possible to consider material history of the text to be inseparably and intricately linked to its content; since, the history of Linda's text powerfully affiliates its textual analysis with a historical and contextual inquiry. In expressing the value of writing, Linda conveys that there were certain "deficiencies in consideration of circumstances" (Jacobs 5) of writing her personal/social archive "at irregular intervals" (Jacobs 5): when she lives in the North as a free woman after her escape, she has to support herself and her children financially. Jacobs spent five years to compose her narrative while working as a nurse for the Willis family in New York and she wrote it whenever she could "snatch an hour from household duties" (Jacobs 5). Yet, the striking point during this process of inscription is that Linda prefers not "to divulge to the Willis family that she was authoring a slave narrative" (Viveros 387), and attempts to put down her account secretly against juridical impositions for fear of inspection. Though the North is known as a free state, Linda chronicles that freedom is not fully established in the North either. Her anxiety about detection despite the fact that this very house is located in New York, which Linda calls "the City of Iniquity" (Jacobs 299), is due to the active enactment of the Fugitive Slave Law that only further incited slavery's horrors and boundaries up to the North.

The archival passage from “consignation” (Derrida 10) or gathering together to composition and impression on the page denotes the commencement of an institution or a counter-memory. In her archival passage from silence to consignation and then to the act of writing, Linda’s secret act of writing is ironic in a northern house that is thought to be free but is in essence invested with slavery’s law. Similarly, it is Dr. Flint who is able to tell and interpret the incidents using his authority and control over his slaves in his plantation house and renders his ways of interpretation a source and a vehicle of manipulation of slaves. Linda’s process of inscription, lacking all these resources that Dr. Flint has, symbolizes the progress from “impression (*Empfindung*)” (Derrida 12) to materiality, and is so dear to her. Though the word impression is generally known in colloquial language as “an effect, especially a strong effect, produced on the intellect, conscience, or feelings” (OED), it also refers to “the action involved in the pressure of one thing upon or into the surface of another” (OED). This latter meaning denotes the inscription of a material on a surface and its materialization just like Linda did in her transformation of the impressions of the incidents in her mind onto the concrete page. This impression and materialization further determine the true site of Linda’s own archive as an archivist-author. Hence, the archive can be also taken as a clairvoyant entity in the “anticipation of the future” (Derrida 18) because the impression itself constitutes the “very institution of the archivable event” (Derrida 18) and “a pledge” (Derrida 18), “a token of the future” (Derrida 18). If memory-work is a sort of postproduction of an archive, Linda’s work of memory in an act of writing reproduces the patriarchive in a postproduction against the presence of all the threats in the North and the South. As an archivist-author, Jacobs stands up to this abomination of detection in New York, using the radical nature and power of

inscription to portray the social truths.

Harriet Beecher Stowe admits in her *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1853) that her fictional work, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, "is a very inadequate representation of slavery" due to the idea that "slavery, in some of its workings, is too dreadful for the purposes of art" (Stowe 5). Drawing a line between the fact and the fiction, Stowe acknowledges the failure of her work mainly because it is a work of art that fails to depict the horrors of slavery faithfully. Stowe states, "A work which should represent it strictly as it is would be a work which could not be read; and all works which ever mean to give pleasure must draw a veil somewhere, or they cannot succeed" (5). Contrary to Stowe's indication of fiction's pleasure-giving artistic veil, Linda's archival narrative, which combines a set of incidents, events, and real people, is but a "mosaic of facts" (Stowe 5). Linda's desire for self-inscription as well as her will for minute social documentation can well be read as a defiance of a single, manipulative, authoritarian patriarchal practice of slavocracy. An overwhelming force over the law, slavocracy of white superiority, in particular in the first half of the nineteenth century, was the repressive social mechanism that inscribed cultural practices, gendered or racial identities in its own ink by destroying a historical anamnesis for black slaves. By this move, Linda enters into a realm of social narration that is heavily based on her autobiography. Articulation of the self and the social after long years of silence in the oppressive mechanism of slavery gestures an archival documentation that opens up new ways that shake the perception of antebellum American history, and the sociopolitical life.

All these incidents Linda narrates provide a narrative energy to inaugurate an

archival ground on which Jacobs can fashion a politics of interpretations of her social narrative as opposed to the slaveholders' accounts. Hence, she tends to repress a larger part of her own history to voice social facts and to subvert Dr. Flint's and all of slavery's patriarchy so as to build or refashion an archive for the present suffering and the future guidance of slaves. Driven by the archiviolithic force that overwhelms her private life account over the public incidents at frequent times in her narrative, Linda allocates a great deal of share to the social events and other people's stories than her own. Linda's demand on the potential expansion of the antebellum political vision to include the slave narratives and their abolitionist aim corresponds to Sophocles' mythical character Antigone's defiance of the existing norms of politics. In her seminal analysis of Sophocles' *Antigone*, Judith Butler argues that Antigone "as a figure of politics" (2) indicates the "political possibility that emerges when the limits to representation and representability are exposed" (2). Offering a new political resistance through writing down the details of hegemony's limits or immeasurable misuse of power on black people, Harriet Jacobs's narrative similarly undermines the "final authorities of those taboos that stabilize social structure as timeless truth" (Butler 25). Slavery in the antebellum period is characterized as an unquestionable institution that can merely be interpreted by the slaveholders. However, Jacobs is an insider as well as an outsider pushing the private limits of slavery into the public sphere, publicizing its evil taboos, or information kept secret by the masters for the perpetuation of the peculiar institution. In this respect, Jacobs's autobiography is not a naive or unassertive life writing; instead, it presents the ways with which to rewrite life accounts in light of social and political elements.

II. II. An Abolitionist Polity: The Strategy of Affective Address

The pervading abundance of social documentation in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* serves a social purpose: to compensate for the social injustices experienced by all African people in the United States. It can be argued that this is a strong narrative preference which caters to the acknowledgment of thousands of oppressed slaves without allowing for displacement and oppression they face in their daily lives. In the face of the oppressive nature of the institution of slavery, Jacobs develops an affective narrative inclination that aims to establish a bond between the reader and her feelings. This narrative mode, as critic Lauren Berlant contends, points to an organization of foundation and working of “intimacy as a public mode of identification and self-development” (*Intimacy: A Special Issue* 283). Jacobs’s narrative strategy tends to found a form of relationality by way of sharing her feelings of oppression with her readers essentially as a vehicle of distributing her abolitionist ideas, which altogether enhances her text’s archival quality. Significantly, her style functions to seek intimacy and sympathy as part of this relatedness that Jacobs means to achieve through affective addresses that her narrator Linda performs in the text. Linda addresses her readers to ask for their sympathy and public acknowledgement of a slave woman’s sufferings under bondage, resorting to certain emotions such as intimacy, compassion, and sympathy to evoke awareness on abolitionism on the part of the northerners whom she addresses as the target reader. Linda’s purpose takes the shape of an abolitionist argument where abolitionism is to be perceived as a way of feeling.

The influence of affect arises from its power to stimulate a response to the social wrongs and influence to circulate these through readers in order to raise awareness. It is possible to argue that all of Linda's addresses perform a labor of affect that serves to raise the abolitionist feelings in the hearts of the reader. In general terms, affect refers to the way emotions stand for ideas, needs, private and political feelings and opinions as formulated in what is called the affect theory. More specifically, affect theory, a theory of emotions, informs feelings that have political extensions and overtones in the public sphere. Affect becomes a representative word that enables the interpretation of the relationality or forms of relation through emotions mediated between the private world of personal experience and their expression publicly. It accordingly undoes the private and public dichotomy of the antebellum time. Lauren Berlant formulates a theory of affect as a combination of emotions, feelings, intimacy, attachment and belonging in a "dynamics of their circulation" that influence "historical imaginaries, and ordinary practices of sociality" (*Affect is the New Trauma* 131). Thus, Berlant's formulation of affect intertwines the private with the public, rendering emotions an indispensable part of the public life. Based on emotions, affect can hence be charged with polity and different sorts of ideas. As Melissa Gregg and Gregory F. Seigworth broadly explain,

Affect arises in the midst of *in-between-ness*: in the capacities to act and be acted upon. Affect is an impingement or extrusion of a momentary or sometimes more sustained state of relation *as well as* the passage (and the duration of passage) of forces or intensities. That is,

affect is found in those intensities that pass body to body (human, nonhuman, part-body, and otherwise), in those resonances that circulate about, between, and sometimes stick to bodies and worlds, *and* in the very passages or variations between these intensities and resonances themselves. Affect, at its most anthropomorphic, is the name we give to those forces-visceral forces beneath, alongside, or generally *other than* conscious knowing, vital forces insisting beyond emotion-that can serve to drive us toward movement, toward thought and extension, that can likewise suspend us (as if in neutral) across a barely registering accretion of force-relations, or that can even leave us overwhelmed by the world's apparent intractability. Indeed, affect is persistent proof of a body's never less than ongoing immersion in and among the world's obstinacies and rhythms, its refusals as much as its invitations (1).

The “*in-between-ness*” (1) of affect provides the establishment or circulation of social bonds by carrying the private feelings to the public sight. It channels a passage of “forces and intensities” (Gregg and Seigworth 1) from one person to another in a circulatory act. Correspondingly, one issue does not only appear as personal or private but also submerges “in those resonances that circulate about, between, and sometimes stick to bodies and worlds” (Gregg and Seigworth 1). Affect hence reproduces private issues as public concerns so far as it circulates these affective resonances as part of communal life. And, since affect is “synonymous with *force* or *forces of encounter*” (Gregg and Seigworth 2), and because it “marks a body's *belonging* to a world of encounters or; a world's belonging to a body of encounters” (Gregg and Seigworth 3), it persists so long as it

claims a relation to the public sphere. Any lack or loss of relationality denotes a form of “*non-belonging*” (Gregg and Seigworth 3). This relationality gestures the very component and style of Jacobs’s affective address: it is filled with compassion and a yearning for public intimacy in its constant appeal to the northerners.

Affect, in *Incidents*, is materialized with regard to the revelation of specific emotions like sympathy, compassion, or feelings about slavery and abolitionism. Linda’s preoccupation with her emotions centers on a will to transmit to the reader the sufferings of a slave woman, highlighting her search for their sympathies through communicating her emotions. If inscription or writing a narrative matters for both personal and social archivization, and if a whole series of these archival impressions lead to the accumulation of a narrative that becomes vocal in the appeals of a slave woman to the white people, then it can well be claimed for Jacobs’s text that it is embodied in an archival attempt that encapsulates a variety of emotions, political views, events and stories. It can then be discussed that the narrative replaces all orthodox conceptions of the patriarchive with Jacobs’s emphasis on the affective formulation of a slave woman’s emotions in an effort to decompose slavery’s supremacy.

Linda’s emotions claim a political involvement in the abolitionist movement in her addresses, thereby demanding the transformation of personal feelings into public actions. Affect in this sense takes another aim at undoing the private/public distinction by creating a novel realm that can be called affective. Jacobs’s affective address proposes how the personal -in this case, a slave girl’s private feelings- or the domestic sphere as a space of inwardness (feelings or domestic modes of

feeling that are kept from the public sphere) operates as a sort of constitutive outside on the inside of the political. The standard conception of politics or the dichotomy between the private and the public demands that the private sphere is a place that must be archived away; yet, Jacobs insistently goes against this demarcation by demanding public affiliation for her life in order to render it a part of the political world.

Jacobs's narrator Linda Brent addresses the reader directly fourteen times in the course of the narrative. Jacobs opens her autobiography in the *Preface* with her first address in which she says,

READER, be assured this narrative is no fiction. I am aware that some of my adventures may seem incredible; but they are, nevertheless, strictly true. I have not exaggerated the wrongs inflicted by Slavery; on the contrary, my descriptions fall far short of the facts. I have concealed the names of places, and given persons fictitious names. I had no motive for secrecy on my own account, but I deemed it kind and considerate towards others to pursue this course.

I wish I were more competent to the task I have undertaken. But I trust my readers will excuse deficiencies in consideration of circumstances. I was born and reared in Slavery; and I remained in a Slave State twenty-seven years. Since I have been at the North, it has been necessary for me to work diligently for my own support, and the education of my children. This has not left me much leisure to make up for the loss of early opportunities to improve myself; and it has compelled me to write

these pages at irregular intervals, whenever I could snatch an hour from household duties (5).

This very first address of Linda's clarifies the nature of her text, underlining its factual quality and the upcoming confessions about her life. Her introductory words disclose that she is a slave girl who gained her freedom after several years and who now pursues to unveil the secrets behind her life while also working as a domestic in the North. Jacobs prepares her readers for details of antebellum social life and slavery's customs, which lay bare the predicament of slaves in general and blight of a slave girl whose destiny is darkened in the brutal hands of a master. All of the incidents she recounts pose several questions to be answered by Jacobs's targeted readers, the northerners. In another of her address, Linda clearly informs her readers of the slave laws that disable slaves from attaining human rights and human treatment. Referring to her readers self-consciously, she says, "The reader probably knows that no promise or writing given to a slave is legally binding; for, according to Southern laws, a slave, *being* property, can *hold* no property (Jacobs 13). She enlightens her readers about the Southern laws that strip slaves from the right to property by rendering them mere properties. Linda gives critical information for those readers who were only aware of proslavery arguments that praise the institution of slavery, binding such information with her personal feelings as she does in another of her appeal where she accentuates compassion and intimacy as prerequisites of mutual understanding between the slaves and those who would abolish slavery. She expounds her motive clearly when she articulates,

Reader, it is not to *awaken sympathy* for myself that I am telling you

truthfully what I suffered in slavery. I *do it to kindle a flame of compassion in your hearts for my sisters who are still in bondage*, suffering as I once suffered. I once saw two beautiful children playing together. One was a fair white child; the other was her slave, and also her sister. When I saw them embracing each other, and heard their joyous laughter, I turned sadly away from the lovely sight. I foresaw the inevitable blight that would fall on the little slave's heart. I knew how soon her laughter would be changed to sighs (Jacobs 47-48) [italics mine].

It is obvious in this passage that Jacobs's technique is moral persuasion through which she illustrates exemplary figures that allow readers to imagine the sighs of slaves. Linda features sympathy and compassion as forms of affect to which her readers are expected to register. Both sympathy and compassion become feelings that are supposed to act as "*an emotion in operation*" (Berlant 4) that demands the "relation of feeling to practice" (Berlant 4) and the personal to the public. In light of Berlant's expression in her book *Compassion: The Culture and Politics of an Emotion*, it is possible to suggest that sympathy and compassion are crafted as a polity of emotion in Jacobs's narrative against the patriarchal practices of slavery. Nevertheless, Jacobs's aim does not succumb to emotions merely: she is down to earth in her analysis of the slaves' conditions as she enhances the truthfulness of her depictions when she says in another of her address, "Reader, I draw no imaginary pictures of southern homes. I am telling you the plain truth" (56). Jacobs's abolitionist purpose to make compassion operational in the relationship she establishes with the northerners serves to remind them of the presence of the

sufferer and the content of their sufferings. It gives them the direct message, “You, the compassionate one, have a resource that would alleviate someone else’s suffering” (Berlant 4). It is this sort of affect that Jacobs prioritizes over the proslavery arguments and that draws closer to the feeling of compassion in the context of antebellum slavery, for “it implies a social relation between spectators and sufferers, with the emphasis on the spectator’s experience of feeling compassion and its subsequent relation to material practice” (Berlant 1).

Sympathy and compassion help Linda take her readers to a “qualitative experience of the social world, to embodied experience that has the capacity to transform as well as exceed social subjection” (Hemmings 549). Toward the middle of the narrative, Linda articulates her agony in the face of Dr. Flint’s proposal to make her his concubine. Her master’s advances oppress her psychologically and corporally while leaving no room for her to lead a life of her own. To avoid Dr. Flint and his sexual fancies, Linda starts a relationship with a white man who becomes the father of her children. Depicting the horror at the possibility of concubinage, she maintains,

AFTER my lover went away, Dr. Flint contrived a new plan. He seemed to have an idea that my fear of my mistress was his greatest obstacle. In the blandest tones, he told me that he was going to build a small house for me, in a secluded place, four miles away from the town. I shuddered; but I was constrained to listen, while he talked of his intention to give me a home of my own, and to make a lady of me. Hitherto, I had escaped my dreaded fate, by being in the midst of people.

My grandmother had already had high words with my master about me. She had told him pretty plainly what she thought of his character, and there was considerable gossip in the neighborhood about our affairs, to which the open-mouthed jealousy of Mrs. Flint contributed not a little. When my master said he was going to build a house for me, and that he could do it with little trouble and expense, I was in hopes something would happen to frustrate his scheme; but I soon heard that the house was actually begun. I vowed before my Maker that I would never enter it. I had rather toil on the plantation from dawn till dark; I had rather live and die in jail, than drag on, from day to day, through such a living death. I was determined that the master, whom I so hated and loathed, who had blighted the prospects of my youth, and made my life a desert, should not, after my long struggle with him, succeed at last in trampling his victim under his feet. I would do any thing, every thing, for the sake of defeating him. What *could* I do? I thought and thought, till I became desperate, and made a plunge into the abyss (Jacobs 82-83).

She then goes on to compare her miserable condition with those of free women, Linda addresses the reader by making the distinction between slave women's plight and the free women's complacency graphic. The comparison can be regarded as a technique to make sure that the reader understands her point:

And now, reader, I come to a period in my unhappy life, which I would gladly forget if I could. The remembrance fills me with sorrow and shame. It pains me to tell you of it; but I have promised to tell you the

truth, and I will do it honestly, let it cost me what it may. I will not try to screen myself behind the plea of compulsion from a master; for it was not so. Neither can I plead ignorance or thoughtlessness. For years, my master had done his utmost to pollute my mind with foul images, and to destroy the pure principles inculcated by my grandmother, and the good mistress of my childhood. The influences of slavery had had the same effect on me that they had on other young girls; they had made me prematurely knowing, concerning the evil ways of the world. I know what I did, and I did it with deliberate calculation.

But, O, ye happy women, whose purity has been sheltered from childhood, who have been free to choose the objects of your affection, whose homes are protected by law, do not judge the poor desolate slave girl too severely! If slavery had been abolished, I, also, could have married the man of my choice; I could have had a home shielded by the laws; and I should have been spared the painful task of confessing what I am now about to relate; but all my prospects had been blighted by slavery. I wanted to keep myself pure; and, under the most adverse circumstances, I tried hard to preserve my self-respect; but I was struggling alone in the powerful grasp of the demon Slavery; and the monster proved too strong for me. I felt as if I was forsaken by God and man; as if all my efforts must be frustrated; and I became reckless in my despair (Jacobs 83-84).

In these lines, Jacobs is critical of the fact that ideal domesticity as a way of founding a nation in one color and identity excluded the fundamental human rights for the colored people to have a home of their own by making them indentured servants. If homelessness is a stigma of slavery, then the possibility of residing in a house of spiritual and corporeal enslavement is tantamount to conveying this emblem with more shame. Commodification slavery indicts on the human subject is doubled when the body of the slave girl is thought to be a source of pleasure. Since Dr. Flint is aware that such a relationship is neither a part of white sociality nor constitutionally possible (as slaves had no right to get married), he builds the house “in a secluded place, four miles away from the town” (Jacobs 82). Linda knows in advance that she will still be homeless unless this home is established on her own will.

Each and every incident Jacobs details in her narrative becomes Linda’s “emotional labor” (Thrift 171) supported by her will to address the northerners whom Jacobs invites to sympathize with her. As is clear in the above addresses, time and again in her narrative, Linda’s addressee is clearly defined: she names white northern women simply because they are those who are expected to put themselves into the shoes of a slave girl. And, since white people are the only group of American citizens in the nineteenth century United States, then they stand for the whole American nation and its politics that would reconfigure a new political strategy to end slavery. Linda invites white women of the North to inquire the ways of *feeling right* about the problem of slavery, a popular antebellum question that was previously brought into question with the publication of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* in 1852. Stowe’s popularized phrase to “feel right”

(506) inaugurated the discussion of the reader's attitude towards slavery nationwide. In a long address to the northerners, Stowe explicitly argues that

Northern men, northern mothers, northern Christians, have something more to do than denounce their brethren at the South; they have to look to the evil among themselves.

But, what can any individual do? Of that, every individual can judge. There is one thing that every individual can do,—they can see to it that *they feel right*. An atmosphere of sympathetic influence encircles every human being; and the man or woman who *feels* strongly, healthily and justly, on the great interests of humanity, is a constant benefactor to the human race. See, then, to your sympathies in this matter! Are they in harmony with the sympathies of Christ? or are they swayed and perverted by the sophistries of worldly policy (506).

Stowe's statements unfold the "relation of feeling to practice where compassion is concerned" (Berlant 4). Stowe argues that the capacity to *feel right* and to "judge" (506) in a righteous way, in Stowe's words, would provide a focus on the suffering of the oppressed. *Feeling right* in these lines also expresses the vital need to raise a public awareness that could conceive "an atmosphere of sympathetic influence" (506). Linda requests her readers to feel right about slavery and the slaves' condition within this institution, as she states,

O virtuous reader! You never knew what it is to be a slave; to be entirely unprotected by law or custom; to have the laws reduce you to

the condition of a chattel, entirely subject to the will of another. You never exhausted your ingenuity in avoiding the snares, and eluding the power of a hated tyrant; you never shuddered at the sound of his footsteps, and trembled within hearing of his voice. I know I did wrong. No one can feel it more sensibly than I do. The painful and humiliating memory will haunt me to my dying day. Still, in looking back, calmly, on the events of my life, I feel that the slave woman ought not to be judged by the same standard as others (Jacobs 86).

This sentiment of feeling right that Linda expects from her addressee is revived in between her lines and her specific address to the white northern female readers with whom she expects to establish an emotional bond through feelings of compassion and sympathy. Similarly, while recounting New Year's Day, she reminds her audience that the slave's New Year's Day is but a "hiring-day" (Jacobs 179) and a new but miserable life with a new master. "If a slave is unwilling to go with his new master, he is whipped, or locked up in jail" (Jacobs 25) until he promises not to escape. If he ever violates his "extorted promise, woe unto him if he is caught!" (Jacobs 26), for the ensuing punishment would be that "his stiffened limbs are put in chains, to be dragged in the field for days and days!" (Jacobs 26). Right after narrating these details, Linda asks her readers in the expectation that they may sympathize and take due action:

O, you happy free women, contrast *your* New Year's day with that of the poor bond-woman! With you it is a pleasant season, and the light of the day is blessed. Friendly wishes meet you every where, and gifts are

showered upon you. Even hearts that have been estranged from you soften at this season, and lips that have been silent echo back, "I wish you a happy New Year." Children bring their little offerings, and raise their rosy lips for a caress. They are your own, and no hand but that of death can take them from you.

But to the slave mother New Year's Day comes laden with peculiar sorrows. She sits on her cold cabin floor, watching the children who may all be torn from her the next morning; and often does she wish that she and they might die before the day dawns. She may be an ignorant creature, degraded by the system that has brutalized her from childhood; but she has a mother's instincts, and is capable of feeling a mother's agonies (Jacobs 26).

Linda in these paragraphs refers to antebellum notions of motherhood and true womanhood that only white women enjoyed. By referring to the central elements of domesticity such as housekeeping, fashion, and ideal motherhood, Linda in fact illustrates the sharp difference between a white woman's life and slave woman's struggles. Linda wishes her readers to believe that a slave mother feels the same feelings just like a white mother. However, a white woman enjoys her motherhood with pleasurable events whereas a slave mother is deprived of her children by the system of slavery. By proposing that a slave mother "has a mother's instincts, and is capable of feeling a mother's agonies" (Jacobs 26), she requests for their sympathy and reclaim slave women's feelings as mothers. Furthermore, Linda reveals that hate is a sort of sentiment that a slave mother feels once she is faced by a master's

harassments, “Reader, did you ever hate? I hope not. I never did but once; and I trust I never shall again. Somebody has called it ‘the atmosphere of hell;’ and I believe it is so” (Jacobs 63). Though hate seems an ungracious emotion to Linda, she thinks that this feeling holds her captive since it becomes the only emotional reaction of a slave mother while white women freely relish domestic contentment and motherhood. Linda emphasizes her feelings about motherhood in another chapter when Benjamin, her son, appears at the door. She appeals to the reader again and states, “O reader, can you imagine my joy? No, you cannot, unless you have been a slave mother. Benjamin rattled away as fast as his tongue could go” (Jacobs 261). Linda’s eventual happiness reveals that joy immediately replaces hatred as the slave mother joins her child and blissfully enjoys her motherhood. Linda still refers to a domestic notion, motherhood, both stressing the difference and underlining the similarity: the white woman and the slave woman may be different, but they have similar feelings for their kids.

It can well be thought that affect is a “structure of feeling” (Preface to *Film* 23), as Raymond Williams puts it, and in essence another way of looking through the sentimental writing that was popular among the antebellum white women writers and readers. However, the critical point about sentimentalism was that it was dismissed as decadent and melodramatic female sympathy. In a historical period when the sentimental was mostly regarded as cheap consumption of emotions, Jacobs’s self-appointed affective mission to receive sympathy, understanding, and compassion by the masses seems hard to achieve. Since structures of feelings like affect “mediate between the social and the personal that are more ephemeral and transitory than set ideologies or institutions” (Flatley 25)

and because they “have not yet hardened into ideologies (Flatley 25), they may seem rather imperceptible at first. In Jacobs’s hands, rather than a temporary or decadent set of feelings, nineteenth-century sentimentality becomes essentially a sociocultural form of expression with a political agenda and an act of merging the private with the public.

Sentimentality in Jacobs’s text appears on a level that invokes feelings of human worth and compassion about her struggle for freedom. She makes use of the sentimental style not to escape the real world but to face the forces shaping the same world. For instance, Linda ends her story, exclaiming, “Reader, my story ends with freedom; not in the usual way, with marriage” (Jacobs 302), and subverts the usual optimism at the end of the sentimental novel with an indispensable twist of freedom. Freedom could barely be a side issue for Linda; it is rather a matter of life and death, a concern that gives urgency for the acknowledgement of tragedy of the peculiar institution of slavery and its abolition over any romantic engagement. In this respect, the word sentimental or affect should be perceived non-judgmentally and as a tool through which women writers made their voice heard in the best appealing way to their readers. Affect then appears more of a passionate strategy, an instrument not to manipulate readers into unreal events but to convince them about the questionability of the social and political condition of the nation through true-to-life events, scenes, and characters. Such “affective elements of consciousness and relationships” are not to be contemplated as “feeling against thought”, but they are to be viewed as “thought as felt and feeling as thought” (Williams, *Marxism and Literature* 132). Thus, emotions that have mediating power between the addressor and the addressee can mean more than decadent or

dysfunctional; rather, they recalibrate political justice and immoral formations like the institution of slavery.

Thus, affect becomes a term that is unprejudiced, functional and expressive and even political in relation to Jacobs's text. Affect, in Berlant's interpretation, can be defined as raising both sensibility and active awareness of getting to know about the sociopolitical state of affairs. In other words, affect is imagining or formulating a new way of evading evil infrastructures. Berlant argues that

Sentimentality is not just the mawkish, nostalgic, and simpleminded mode with which it's conventionally associated, where people identify with wounds of saturated longing and suffering, and it's not just a synonym for a theatre of empathy: It is a mode of relationality in which people take emotions to express something authentic about themselves that they think the world should welcome and respect; a mode constituted by affective and emotional intelligibility and a kind of generosity, recognition, and solidarity among strangers. Another way to say this is that I am interested in a realist account of fantasy, insofar as the political and the social are floated by complex and historically specific affective investments. How do we learn to attach to (to identify the very sinews of our self-continuity with) abstractions like the nation form, the law, sexual identity, capitalism, and so on? (Berlant, *Depressive Realism*)

Berlant thus formulates affect as a new or alternate expression of sentimentality that

transcends the traditional perception of sentimentality and that adds more to it. By mawkish, Berlant means the degradation of self-pitying in performative acts of identification with the “wounds of saturated longing and suffering” (Berlant, *Depressive Realism*). Affect moves the mawkish representation of the sentimental into the limits of realism and rids itself of its conventional perception. The idea of affect, in Berlant’s theory, is influential in helping to rethink the antebellum American imaginary in relation to domesticity. Berlant’s understanding of publics as an intimate form can then be defined as a conjoint space of collective sharing and identity. Just like the archive’s combination of the private claims on the public or the inside’s on the outside, the intimate asserts an affinity with the public. A personal life narrative in this sense forges ahead in the documentation of the public and even the national political issues. This pattern of alliance of the two sites, the public and the private, may seem dislocated, overthrown and uneven for the antebellum imagination; however, “displacement of the politics to the realm of the feeling both opens a scene for analysis of the operations of the injustice in lived democracy and shows the obstacles to social change that emerge when politics becomes privatized” (Berlant xii). In other words, strict political conventions and even the law itself become liable to amendment for the better and for the advantage of the peoples in a working democracy. Since the political affairs influence the personal, affect is invested in every category of life regardless of how private or public it could be.

Presenting her autobiography as a conspicuous cartography of collective experience, Jacobs’s text configures Berlant’s formulation of the intimacy between the public and the private spheres. Berlant argues, “The personal is the general.

Publics presume intimacy” (Berlant, *The Female Complaint* vii) in her discussion of the influence of the affective experiences of the individual on the public. Even though intimacy itself seems awkward at first glance in the political and judicial public ambit, Berlant expresses that intimacy in a public sphere is an “expectation that the consumers of its particular stuff already share a worldview and emotional knowledge that they derived from a broadly common historical experience” (Berlant, *The Female Complaint* viii). Intimacy based on collective emotions of the public then requires “a certain circularity” (Berlant, *The Female Complaint* viii) and a “commonly lived history” (Berlant, *The Female Complaint* viii). Fulfilling these criteria for the commonly lived history shared by white people and black slaves, the social structure of slavery in antebellum America circulates what is personal in the public by incorporating the slave work and slave families into American homes and the market place owned by white Americans. Both a foreign and a domestic figure at once, the slave fuses the personal into the social, thus achieves an affinity that is alien to each of the separate spheres. For Berlant, this fusion- or more clearly her word combination, the “intimate public” (*The Female Complaint* viii)- is the very “achievement” (*The Female Complaint* viii) that “flourishes as a porous, affective scene of identification among strangers that promises a certain experience of belonging and provides a complex of consolation, confirmation, discipline, and discussion about how to live as an *x*” (*The Female Complaint* viii).

This italicized *x* can be any form of identity that is seen as the other, but it can also be someone who does belong to the same social life although their basic human rights are taken away from them. Linda as the other and enslaved female *x*

is in a constant effort to establish this affective scene of identification with her white northern readers within a novel conception of an intimate public in antebellum America. Berlant suggests that “there is a structure of relevancy, address, and absorption” that allows “the consumers of ‘women’s culture’ to feel that their emotional lives are already shared and have already been raised to a degree of general significance while remaining true to what’s personal” (*The Female Complaint* ix). At a time when public and private spheres are sharply divided in the political imagery, Linda repositions these seemingly separate spheres in ways that prove that they are in fact privately and politically interlocked. The stories Linda told until the end of her narrative pose questions as to how a slave woman feels or what kind of an affective world she has created as a shield and a survival mechanism against the cruelties of slaveholders.

Intimacy as a component of the private self or the emotion of women’s culture in antebellum America manifests itself in Linda’s recurrent use of emotions and affect to relate her desperate condition in the face of the nation’s laws. Intimacy further transforms into a strategic tool in Linda’s hands to justify the authenticity of a slave woman’s feelings. In an effort to convince her readers and affiliate with them intimately, she adds, “Reader, if you have never been a slave, you cannot imagine the acute sensation of suffering at my heart, when I read the names of Mr. and Mrs. Dodge, at a hotel in Courtland Street” (Jacobs 295). Linda reads *the Evening Express* the names of passengers and faces the threat of being captured by her master’s daughter and son-in-law. She gives the exact name of the newspaper to prove the authenticity of her experience, relating that such a feeling of threat is beyond imaginable for a slave woman. Linda’s affective world of distinct personal

and communal stories, in line with Berlant's theoretical proposition, can well be considered an intimate public that is "a space of mediation in which the personal is refracted through the general", which positions its "consumers"- and in Linda's case its readers- in a "place of recognition and reflection" (Berlant viii). Transcending the strict politics of the public sphere, an intimate public flourishes an "emotional contact" (Berlant viii) with the reader, the tool Linda truly owns to fight against the institution of slavery.

Linda also recounts other people's reactions or claims for freedom and equality in support of her own affective appeals. In her eighth chapter entitled "What Slaves are Taught to Think of the North", Linda tells the story of a woman who begs her "to get a newspaper and read it over" (Jacobs 70). Linda narrates that this unnamed woman said, "the black people had sent word to the queen of 'Merica that they were all slaves; that she didn't believe it, and went to Washington city to see the president about it" (Jacobs 70). She further maintains, "They quarrelled; she drew her sword upon him, and swore that he should help her to make them all free" (Jacobs 70). Right after telling the woman's story, Linda comments, "That poor, ignorant woman thought that America was governed by a Queen, to whom the President was subordinate" (Jacobs 70) and adds that "I wish the President was subordinate to Queen Justice" (Jacobs 70). The woman's appeal to the Queen of America revives the critical issue of the nation as an imagined community that transcends the distinctions of race. This woman imagines that black people are to be citizens of the slaveholding nation that is identified as America and the president whom she thinks to be subservient to the imaginary Queen Justice is violating their right to freedom. Joy Viveros in her Notes to *Incidents* indicates that "Queen

Justice may refer to Queen Victoria of England, where slavery was abolished in 1838” (Viveros 393). This “illiterate interlocutor’s” (Berlant, *The Queen of America* 15) belief in the existence of the Queen of America and the president of America as the penumbra of this Queen of Justice exemplifies “the reimagination of collective political life” and new “kinds of invention, innovation and improvisation” (Berlant, *The Queen of America* 15) within the nation. Linda supports her own story with the story of another woman who is illiterate and ignorant yet able to imagine personal and public freedom, a new possibility of cultural formation, a hodgepodge of different racial identities, and a novel construction of national union against social fragmentation, oppression, and racial discrimination on behalf of the whole slave community.

The real evidence Jacobs presents throughout the text is nonetheless so distinct from the resourceful imagination of an illiterate slave woman. The pro-slavery rhetoric of slaveholders was that slavery “was divinely ordained that whites hold blacks as chattel” (Viveros 393). For Linda, this is just a way for slaveholders to “satisfy their consciences with the doctrine that God created the Africans to be slaves” (Jacobs 69). Linda at this point asks a crucial question as to the American nationhood and the African presence in it: “And then who *are* Africans? Who can measure the amount of Anglo-Saxon blood coursing in the veins of American slaves?” (Jacobs 69). In other words, she interrogates the extent to which the American nationhood includes the other, colonized, and enslaved identities on its territory and within the body of white community. Linda believes that it is a “libel upon the heavenly Father, who ‘made of one blood all nations of men!’” (Jacobs 69). Still, instead of the painful knowledge and experience of racial discrimination

and enslavement, the hopeful slaves are “aware that they have many friends in the Free States” (Jacobs 69) or “over in the big north, who were trying to get their freedom for them” (Jacobs 70). Some even “believe that the abolitionists have already made them free, and that it is established by law, but that their masters prevent the law from going into effect” (Jacobs 70). Jacobs’s literary character and mouthpiece Linda takes on this task to remind her readers ceaselessly that there is an affective relation between the slaves in the southern states and the abolitionists in the northern states, and that slaves’ voices must be heard by the northerners. This example enables Jacobs to explicate to her northern readers the question of slavery as a national issue rather than a personal one, introducing the possibility of an imagined free community composed of different identities within the American nationhood.

Jacobs’s specifically emotive address to the reader produces an expressly argumentative and conversational structure that is meticulously linked to her strategic play with the notion of the home and the nation. If nations are imagined sets of unities, as Benedict Anderson argues, then it is possible to read Linda’s affective addresses as an embodiment of a strong will to prioritize and value the emotions of people of different origins or races over ideologies whose function is rather to separate people. Affect in this sense operates as the major constituent of a community who feels the same way together in dire straits. It can well be argued that Jacobs’s affective addresses include a will and a claim for representation, inclusion within a community as citizens, and thus acknowledgement, and the circulation of intimacy and care among all of the people of the United States. Being heard will wash away the trauma of the oppression; to communicate the sorrows to

the reader will reclaim the unvoiced experience. As critic Dana Nelson contends, the narrative “reconfigures the sympathetic model to provide a way of honoring and validating differences of experience and perspective between ‘whites’ and ‘blacks’” and “offers this reformulation of sympathy to challenge its readers by presenting a better means of achieving an end to slavery and racial prejudice” (xi-xii). Accordingly, truly conscious of her purpose and, in accordance with her acute sensibility for the abolitionist cause, Jacobs contextualizes her manuscript in advance by virtue of her choice of epigraphs, covering elements of women’s oppression in national and biblical frameworks. Two epigraphs on the cover of the narrative expose her overt will to go public by publishing her life under dreadful slavocracy. The first one, articulated by “*A Woman of North Carolina*” reads, “Northerners know nothing at all about Slavery. They think it is perpetual bondage only. They have no conception of the depth of *degradation* involved in that word, SLAVERY; if they had, they would never cease their efforts until so horrible a system was overthrown” (3). The epigraph discloses an insider’s view and knowledge of slavery’s degradation, addressing the northerners who are supposed to assist slaves to divulge this disgrace. Placing an emphasis on the potential efforts that would cause this inhumane institution to collapse, Jacobs calls for an immediate support to occasion slavery’s eternal ruin through the statement by “*A Woman of North Carolina*”. The second epigraph Jacobs selects is from the Bible, “Isaiah xxxii, 9.” which reads, “Rise up, ye women that are at ease! Hear my voice, ye careless daughters! Give ear unto my speech” (3). This Biblical quotation in a similar manner serves Jacobs’s principal purpose to disseminate the urgency of the abolitionist sentiment among women, in particular the Northern women. As she addresses throughout the text, Jacobs’s calls for compassion and sympathy mainly

concern northerners in her desperate effort to circulate the slavery's cruelties and distribute the knowledge to abolish it once and for all. Linda in this way also "registers a prediction of the ways in which its [abolitionism's] message might be ignored or misappropriated by its "white" audience" (Nelson xii).

Jacobs's editor Lydia Maria Child also adds an *Appendix* that includes testimonials of other abolitionists who support Linda's accounts. Amy Post, a close abolitionist friend of Harriet Jacobs's, supports the credibility of Jacobs's story in her letter dated October 30th, 1859, stating that the author of this slave narrative has "passed through a baptism of suffering, even in recounting her trials to me, in private confidential conversations" (Post in Jacobs 304). Ousting readers' potential disbelief in Jacobs's book, Post recounts that she urged Jacobs to go public undauntedly by publishing her story, only to "arouse people to a more earnest work for the disenthralment of millions still remaining in that soul-crushing condition, which was so unendurable to her" (304). Though Jacobs's "sensitive spirit shrank from publicity" (Post 304) at first, Post counseled Jacobs and helped her sow the seeds of an abolitionist archive to circulate in print form "a truthful record of her eventual life" (Post 305) that she "traced secretly and wearily, by the midnight lamp" (Post 305). Post expressively maintains:

This Empire State is a shabby place of refuge for the oppressed; but here, through anxiety, turmoil, and despair, the freedom of Linda and her children was finally secured, by the exertions of a generous friend. She was grateful for the boon; but the idea of having been bought was always galling to a spirit that could never acknowledge itself to be a

chattel. She wrote to us thus, soon after the event: 'I thank you for your kind expressions in regard to my freedom; but the freedom I had before the money was paid was dearer to me. God gave me that freedom; but man put God's image in the scales with the paltry sum of three hundred dollars. I served for my liberty as faithfully as Jacob served for Rachel. At the end, he had large possessions; but I was robbed of my victory; I was obliged to resign my crown, to rid myself of a tyrant.'

Her story, as written by herself, cannot fail to interest the reader. It is a sad illustration of the condition of this country, which boasts of its civilization, while it sanctions laws and customs which make the experiences of the present more strange than any fictions of the past (305).

Post calls into question the imperial purposes of the American nation in an abolitionist perspective: the political preference of the United States is acclimatized to an imperial mission by chattel slavery that spurns the solicitude and anguish of the destitute slaves. Chattel slavery by nature victimizes the slave's soul and body through exploiting emotions and casting off corporeal and emotional freedom. Jacobs's concern rests on the commodification of slaves due to legal obligations of the slave trade on her way to freedom. Stressing the dear value of freedom without any bargain or trade inherent in the institution of slavery in the quotation, Jacobs, in her letter to Post as revealed in Post's account, speaks in particular to the Christian beliefs of the slave traders and the nation's democratic principles of natural rights endowed by birth so as to criticize the unequal perception of humanity for all people in the same nation. The example Post gives from the Biblical story of Jacob

and Rachel clarifies her sorrowful rejection of the idea that institutionalized slavery is reconcilable with the spirit of a human soul. Like Jacob who toiled hard to marry Rachel, Jacobs ventured her life and children to win her freedom that is inarguably of greater value than any amount of money. Post discloses that after direful years of labor for freedom, Jacobs still feels bound hand and foot in slavery's clutches. Her articulation of how painful it is when the slaveholder robs her of her dearly gained victory after she gains her freedom, and the ensuing defeat and humiliation confirm her belief in affections that would circulate through the minds of millions to invoke a sociopolitical change in the future of the nation. Jacobs's wish is to strip emotions off slaveholders' money as she identifies freedom as an issue of struggle and a concerted effort, not simply of money. Post's testimony confirms that Jacobs's story is a unique reflection of the nation's miserable conditions and its contradictions between values of equality and the law.

Just like Post's testimonial, Linda requests her readers to *feel right* about a slave woman's conditions and the entire community of slaves at that time. Feeling right is only a first but a crucial step to abolish slavery. In her claim, Linda sets a larger goal that depends on a strategy to destroy the houses of slavery by way of manipulating its archons, masters, lawmakers who build the domestic orderliness on the slaves' tortured souls and bodies. In doing so, she invites her addressees to perceive slavery not as a labor mechanism but as an urgent political question, a wound that is to be cured and relieved nationwide without further injuries. Furthermore, Linda's emotional appeals also highlight the relation between houses and feelings, which was perceived as a social mark in the imagery of antebellum United States. In the traditional social organization of antebellum American life, the

private sphere, home or the domestic ideology operates as an ambit of sentiment, feeling or emotion in contradiction to the world of public or political sphere of strict rules and laws. Affective world of a slave woman undoes this isolation through reconceiving shared feelings and common bonds of society in alliance with its opposition. It breaks down such a synthetic, inauthentic opposition with modes of feeling prevalent in both spaces. The rules or the law of the public sphere and “spaces of everyday life” are assorted in the collective imaginations of society, providing “overlapping contexts for tracking the development of the official and intimate publics in the early U.S. Period” (Berlant, *The Female Complaint* xi).

Throughout the narrative, Linda calls in question the condition of slaves in multiple ways: how does it feel to be black in the antebellum United States? How does it feel to be a black woman when the nation’s laws and social customs such as domesticity do not count slave women as humans, let alone as women? How does it feel to be whipped, tortured to death, and treated inferiorly for no reason (except for unreasonable or groundless racism) at all? And, is there any way to evade, eliminate, and escape these oppressions and oppressors, and found a new home in a country that boasts about its constitutional principles of equality and “unalienable rights” (The Constitution of the United States)?

In conclusion, in its capacity to raise such social interrogations via the emotional world of a slave woman, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* opens the issue of slavery up for discussion, proposing that the nineteenth-century American slavery cannot only be conceived as a simple mechanism of oppression. Jacobs’s presentation of the domestic archive of slavery and her critique of the slavery’s

domestic tyranny characterize her narrative as a site of discussion of public and national issues, including slavery, race, and politics. This presentation draws the reader's attention to the ways in which domestic sphere is fraught with and related to larger social problems and discourses of national identity. In the affective relationality she forms between her readers and herself, Linda constantly reminds her audience that the legal practice of slavery was a huge political and social disruption in the existential ideals of the American nation. A conflict-ridden sociopolitical issue, the peculiar institution of slavery guarded by the law caused the formation of a disciplinary and regulatory social system on power, racial and gender relations and racial interactions. Linda's archive of multifold incidents in this very sense both renders legible what is hidden by the dominant patriarchal of slavocracy and presents this very patriarchal as deceptive, and hence undesirable.

Chapter III. Houses of Slavery and the Miscegenetic Nation in Lydia

Maria Child's *A Romance of the Republic*

Reader, do you complain that I have written fiction?
Believe me, scenes like these are of
no infrequent occurrence at the South.

Lydia Maria Child "The Quadroons" (1847)

The antebellum United States witnessed the terrible exclusion and oppression that black people were exposed to in their enslaved condition. Comparable to Harriet Jacobs's call for a nation based on humanitarian values and freedom for all, the abolitionist and activist Lydia Maria Child illustrates in her 1867 novel *A Romance of the Republic* the ironic discrepancy slavery produced between the egalitarian ideals of the American nation and the loss of these ideals in her depiction of the cruel fact that one's life is not shaped by these ideals but by race. Child carries the argument against slavery onwards through elements of miscegenation (interracial marriage) and interracial couplings or interracial kinship relations that caused painful psychological and social troubles due to practice of racial slavery. Child fully depicts in the novel that bourgeois domesticity in the American south functions in ways that aim to hold slaves as property, perpetuate

slavery to be the sole political institution, and maintain the single line of kinship for the superiority of the white. The novel suggests reconfigurations of the American household whose kinship relations reach beyond monocultural or homogeneous representations of the white race. Child, like Jacobs, sees the idea of home as the foundation and metonymy of the American nation. Accordingly, the novel presents the domestic sphere as a political institution and as a space that could not be set aside from the political realm or national issues, speaking to the popular domestic ideology of the antebellum time. Child further argues against the biased views that see mulattoes as distortions or ghostly figures in the American nation, offering a multicultural and heterogeneous view of American society that can well be reconstructed with the incorporation of nonwhite people.

A Romance of the Republic is a multi-plot novel that concerns the story of two mixed-blood sisters, Rosa and Flora and how they navigate through the maze of enslavement. Abolitionist arguments complement the main plot that composes Rosa and Flora's individual stories. The novel portrays that Rosa and Flora, previously the members of a respectable southern family and the daughters of a wealthy southern man, are sold to slavery after their father's death due to their mother's mixed-race origins. Rosa and Flora's stories are designed in such a way to show the overwhelming rules of slavery in the lives of blacks or mulattoes and the prejudices that objectify slaves or blacks as phantasmatic, ghostly figures who are unsettled within the national imagery and as those who are considered to be constantly unsettling the national identity of white America. In order to delineate this problem, Child draws an analogy between the mixing of different blood and mixing of different flowers throughout the text, and proposes new bonds of kinship

across different races in order to depict multiple constructions of kinship as a strategic Reconstructionist political perspective that may remedy racial prejudice and injustice. The plot of the narrative is also organized in a way that emphasizes the possibility of a harmonious union of different races in marriage and friendship after problematic illustrations of the idea of home that is prone to destruction under the hegemony of slavery. Child presents a fictionalized world of mixed-blood people who can live in harmony within a multiracial nation, pointing to a specific concern for the need to reform the ills of racism and slavery. In accordance with this fictional portrayal, Rosa and Flora's journey to freedom evinces that happy family houses comprised of mixed-race characters can be constructed in real life too. Child's vision and choice of characters offer an allegory of the possibility of a heterogeneous and miscegenetic American nation.

Furthermore, Child structures her narrative into two main parts, in which she organizes the events in line with certain thematic elements. In Part Second, in which the reader moves forward in time, Child stages the unknotting of the problematic events that has been narrated in Part First. She relieves the burden of slavery on the shoulders of the characters through multiple kinship structures instead of monolithic racist superiority of the white race, offering a world of social variety in which the legal and social systems of slavery are all turned upside down. Right from the beginning of her narrative, Child draws the reader's attention to kindredless relationships based on mutual understanding, love, care, and goodness. Child structures adoptive relationships among characters first to display the fact that there is no need for kinship to establish genuine spiritual bonds among characters and secondly to prove that interracial marriage is a historical, political

and social reality of the American nation. In this way, Child “grants all ‘black’ characters dignity and humanity” (Nelson xv) and values “positively the racial Other” (Nelson xv) by pointing to the “inherent unfairness of racial categorization” (Nelson xvi).

Child’s criticism shows that her text is in struggle against both the ongoing political process of the nation building in the nineteenth-century and the ambivalence of the idea of nationhood formed since the inception of the American republic in 1776. This idea of nation or nationhood is of particular significance because of its ambiguous relation to the non-white people who were living under the same roof at the time of issuance of the American Constitution. Child’s novel reveals that this notion of nation is not relevant for non-white communities because of their exclusion, segregation, and enslavement both socio-culturally and via the legal regulations beginning from the early years of the American Republic. Historian Gordon S. Wood clearly explains in his book *The Creation of the American Republic* that the word “equality” in the Constitution of the United States “made slavery an increasing anomaly and drove Southerners into believing that they were an ever more besieged minority” (1998 xiii). Hence, this equality or “liberty, defined as the power held by the people” became “the victim and very antithesis of its despotism” (Wood 23) and rendered the American nation one of the “republics” that “died not from invasions from without but from decay from within” (Wood 53). Child considers the decay the institution of slavery caused to be a venue where a sense of collective identity can be developed among all racial groups in the American nation, and thereby makes critical interventions into “narratives and discourses that signify a sense of ‘nationness’” (Bhabha 2) in order

to question the ways in which a sense of belonging attached to this feeling of “nationness” (2) is shattered by the inhuman practice of slavery.

III. I. Racial Prejudice and Slavery in Unhomely American Homes

Slavery is the most persistent element that complicates domestic life and negates domestic happiness in *A Romance of the Republic*. For Child, the most tenacious conflict both in American homes and in the nation is the patriarchal institution of slavery. Child offers new political visions and alternative social reformations for the problems of race and slavery in American society as part of the policy of her abolitionist writing. In this undertaking, as Bruce Mills suggests, Child employs “abolitionist reform, and the language and emblem of domesticity” (131); evokes “resentment toward undemocratic and unchristian acts” (131), inviting her readers to reflect on “the contradictions between the ideal and real narratives of American life” (131). Child makes subtle use of abolitionist rhetoric and sentimental codes as her political and literary devices in ways that attract readers’ attention to slavery as an issue of national politics. In doing so, she molds her novel into a form that skillfully represents claims of humanity, identity, and kinship disowned by social and legal regulations with a specific emphasis on the possibilities of reconstruction and reformation that were urgent for a divided nation. In this sense, in line with what Bell Hooks writes in her “Representing Whiteness in the Black Imagination” (1992) in her discussion of the nature of fiction, Child’s

novel functions as a substitution, “standing in for what is real” (341) in the nineteenth-century social scenery. It is possible to say that *A Romance of the Republic* portrays a world that is to be perceived as a symbolic scheme of the real world tainted by racism, slavery, patriarchy and their destructive effects on black people.

Child reflects the realities of the American nation by incorporating the critical portrait of racism, slavery, and patriarchy first into a richly furnished Southern house and then into various abodes that reveal the varying forms of slavery’s oppression. Houses in *A Romance of the Republic* are of crucial significance not only because they are the seats of enslavement but also because they are seen as both the constituent part of and the metonymy for the American nation. Emphasizing the gross consequences of the destruction of an American house due to the institution of slavery, Child subverts the domestic ideals of the American nation by juxtaposing the collapse of blissful domestic life with the emergence of slavery as a pathological national issue that exacerbates and is equally exacerbated by racism. By way of subtle illustration of racial slavery and its strong lingering effects of exclusion and oppression in the private and public lives of the characters, Child positions the house and the household of the Royal family at the crux of the narrative and attracts her readers’ attention to the larger issues of nation, race, slavery, miscegenation, and kinship. Child opens the first scene of the novel by shedding a critical light upon the effects of racism and slavery on the characters’ lives. Rosabella and Floracita Royal are described as talented delicate beauties living in a grand southern house full of flowers and flowery decorations.

The interior decoration of the Southern house is portrayed as intact, ornamented, serene, full of flowers of various sorts, and immune to threats.

Despite this sense of order and stability of the house, the very first Chapter suggests that the threat posed by slavery is already within the house itself. Considering this correlation formed between the houses in the novel and the nation, it is important to note how Child shows that slavery infiltrates into American homes through a chain of events, which embodies Child's criticism of principles of domesticity and atrocities of racial slavery in the American nation. Set in the slaveholding New Orleans, Louisiana, and then in the North, the novel centers upon the house and domestic sphere as a locale of public issues in order to critique the contrast between the idealized domestic life and the American republic's failure to incorporate black people into the nation. The novel recounts how Rosa and Flora's lives change after they learn that they are legally slaves due to their mother's Spanish and West Indian origin. Their mother is firstly purchased by their father in the West Indies and then brought to their house in the South not as his legal wife but as a slave. Child reminds her readers that in accordance with "the laws of Louisiana" (*A Romance* 361), "no marriage with a slave is valid" (361) and even though a white and a black person get united, "a child follows the condition of the mother" (361). Having lost their mother years ago, Rosa and Flora live happily in their southern house with their father, Mr. Royal, without any threat posed by slavery. It is only when their father dies that they learn the fact that their mother is a quadroon and is not legally manumitted, and that their father is the owner of their own mother.

The conversation between Rosa and Flora's father, Mr. Royal, and Mr. King, who is the wealthy son of a family acquaintance from Boston, provides the reader with the particulars of the family history, which, according to Carolyn L. Karcher, "recapitulates the history of American slavery" (514). During the conversation, Mr. Royal reveals without reservation that he bought Rosa and Flora's black mother, Eulalia, and led a marital life without legally manumitting her. Since Mr. Royal did not manumit his wife, she remained a slave and he a slave owner in accordance with "the laws of Louisiana" (Child 361). And because the slaves follow the condition of the mother, a slave's offspring automatically becomes a slave, mainly because they have no right to get married and become free. Thus, the fact that their mother was not manumitted directly determines the daughters' legal status as slaves. After Mr. Royal's sudden death and due to his inability to manumit his wife, Rosa and Flora become subjected to slave codes. Mr. Royal's failure to take action in manumission and his desire to keep it a secret reveal a history of enslavement and slavery's geographical routes which Child projects onto the family history. As Child's biographer and critic Carolyn L. Karcher maintains,

Just as the Spaniards introduced slavery into the West Indies and transplanted it into the mainland, with the French following in their wake, so the Spanish grandfather of Rosabella and Flora bought their mulatto grandmother in the French West Indies and took her to St. Augustine. Just as Anglo-Americans inherited slavery from the Spaniards, so the girls' father – a Bostonian merchant settled in New

Orleans—has in turn bought his slave mistress Eulalia from her Spanish father (Karcher 514).

These geographical routes of enslavement are paradoxically the sources of both hostility created by slavery and of mixed-blood racial identities and interracial marriages. For Child, the best opportunity to address racial prejudice and miscegenation is to portray these entangled routes of merging of cultures in the line of the family genealogy. Famously known for her creation of the tragic mulatto character in her short story “The Quadroons” (1843), Child in this novel takes up the same issue of interracial identity that is vague, confusing, and problematic due to racial prejudices and practices. The merging of white blood with black was categorized according to the degree of black blood involved in the mixture, and the terms mulatto, quadroon, and octoroon were given to a person according to this degree. Originating from the 1590s, the word “mulatto” etymologically denotes the “offspring of a European and a black African”, or someone of “mixed breed” (OED). Mulatto is not the only term that refers to the mixed-blood identity. Quadroon is another related term that means the “offspring of a white and a mulatto” (OED) and octoroon means the “offspring of a quadroon and a white; so called for having one-eighth Negro blood” (OED). In Rosa and Flora’s case, their mother is a Spanish slave brought from the West Indies by their father to their house “in the outskirts of the city” (Child 2). In this case, regardless of her national origin, Rosa and Flora’s mother is a woman of black race and a quadroon, and Rosa and Flora are octoroons whose “peculiar complexion” (Child 9) is vague enough to be detected without possessing the knowledge of their family history. In other words, they are light-skinned enough to pass for white.

The conversation between Mr. Royal and Mr. King, which operates as a revelation of the family history and lineage that will determine Rosa and Flora's future life, urges the reader to ponder the meaning of domestic happiness, racial prejudice, and family. In her depiction of Mr. Royal's error in manumission, Child illustrates the multiple wrongs these routes of enslavement caused: first color prejudice led to slavery; slavery inflicted oppression, sexual exploitation and the objectification of women. Mr. Royal's family house is the first place where enslavement and female objectification are manifested due to the legal position of Mr. Royal as the slaveholder and of his wife and daughters as slaves. Etienne Balibar argues in his "Racism and Nationalism" (1991) that "the phenomenon of 'depreciation' and 'racialization'" is [...] a historical system of complementary exclusions and dominations which are mutually interconnected" (49). Balibar contends, "racism and sexism function together and in particular, racism always presupposes sexism" (49). Racism and enslavement thus create sexism that in turn objectifies and devalues the female sex. This objectification brings about the exploitation prevalent in the slaveholding houses in which a master's sexual exploitation of a female slave results in interracial births and creates the "uneven distribution of power across the separate spheres of race and gender" (Nelson ix). Not only does racial slavery concern social practices of the racial abuse of the slave power, but it also makes black women experience a double discrimination through sexual exploitation.

Mr. Royal's house is just one of the houses in which female objectification and bondage deprive women of their liberty in the antebellum period. Reminiscent

of the oriental harems that objectified women as mere sexual objects, Mr. Royal's house is called "the Temple of Flora" (Child 5) because of its various flowers, and walls "papered with bright arabesques of flowers" (Child 4) or objects like the "ottoman" (Child 8) embroidered with flowers. By depicting the decoration of the house as impeccable and foregrounding the "floral appearance of the room" (Child 4) with a particular emphasis on "a variety of natural flowers" (Child 4) and the mystique associations of the oriental furniture, the novel creates the impression of the oriental harems where women are mere sexual objects and points at the same time to the striking similarity of this picture to the flawless interior design on the pages of the popular antebellum women's magazines. Yet unlike any of the idealized pictures of domestic happiness on the magazine pages, the reader is shown that Mr. Royal's house is divided by racial prejudices. Although Mr. Royal was an affectionate father and did not put slavery into practice in their lives in the strictest sense, he could evade neither his own status as a slave owner nor his wife and daughters' status as slaves due to his own failure in manumission. This mistake led his wife to live a life of spiritual bondage, if not physical, without any friends as a secluded captive woman.

As noted above, in *A Romance of the Republic*, Child, like Jacobs, mediates the domestic and the public spheres by connecting the problematic issues embedded in the American homes and the nation. In this sense, it can be argued that Child's novel operates as a nationalist and multiculturalist practice that takes its source from problems in American household. Though the novel can be thought to borrow some motifs from domestic fiction, Child's novel seems nondomestic and the homes she depicts in the novel appear unhomely: the novel brings the Creole, the

African and people from the West Indies together and conveys them into firstly the American homes and secondly the imaginations of the white reader in her configurations of mixed-blood families. Scholar Nancy Armstrong in her influential study *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (1987), elucidates that “from the beginning, domestic fiction actively sought to disentangle the language of sexual relations from the language of the politics” (3) and it “unfolded the operations of the human desire as if they were independent of political history” (9). It goes without saying that Armstrong’s definition of domestic fiction identifies the fundamental separation of the private from the public sphere according to the ideology of domesticity as a characteristic feature of these novels. Domesticity, family, and marriage are all strong elements that emphasize the significance and value of home life throughout *A Romance of the Republic*, as well. However, Child does not disentangle the political issues, which can be considered to be reflecting the parallels between the evil problems in the American home and nation, from the domestic sphere. Child also moves beyond this dichotomy of the domestic and the public, and as critic Dana Nelson indicates, she also parallels the “segregation between the business world of men and the feminized domestic space” (ix) and the “racial segregation that was the hallmark justification for slavery in the United States” (ix). Child introduces a new idea of home whose borders resist ideal and limited interpretations of the domestic sphere and which can truly represent the political history of the time.

The first scene of the novel pursues the questions related to the essence of the anti-slavery argument that is defended throughout the text. The marriage with a stranger, as Mr. Royal puts it, conjures up the question of enslavement of the racial

other. This fact is described to cause a “shadow of embarrassment” (Child 2) cast over Mr. Royal’s face during the conversation. From the initiation of this conversation on, Child poses challenges to the racial biases associated with slavery. Mr. Royal himself defines his late partner as a “stranger” (Child 2), and thus racializes her as the other. The fact that even an affectionate husband like Mr. Royal considers marriage with a black woman to be a problem suggests the haunting social maladies of racism entrenched in the American imaginary, whilst laying bare the discrepancy between the idealized family life and a family based on racial prejudice and bondage of women. That Mr. Royal kept his wife and daughters from public view as though they were captives gives expression to the critical juncture where slavery, sexuality, and the nation building meet. This juncture, as Hortense Spillers famously writes in her seminal essay “Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe: An American Grammar Book” (1987), takes us to the “socio-political order of the New World” that “represents for its African and indigenous peoples a scene of *actual* mutilation, dismemberment, and exile” (67). Although Rosa and Flora’s legal status as slaves is not discovered until Mr. Royal’s death, their captivity at home and complete isolation from the world render them captives in exile. This captivity, as part of slavery, robs them of the control of their body and mind, leaving the entire control to the captor. As Spillers maintains,

1) the captive body becomes the source of an irresistible, destructive sensuality; 2) at the same time – in stunning contradiction – the captive body reduces to a thing, becoming being for the captor; 3) in this absence from a subject position, the captured sexualities provide a physical and biological expression of “otherness” ... (67).

This “socio-political order of the New World” is built on the sensuality of the captive body by the slaveholder. Ironically, it is this captivity that leads to publicly abhorred miscegenation and mixed-blood people. Invariably, interracial sex or marriage is the product of white ideology of captivity and enslavement in a nation when there is only the law of the oppressor for the silenced, the mutilated, the dismembered, the secluded, and the oppressed. The novel establishes this pattern of the captive enslaved woman at the beginning and portrays the double enslavement of black women who are also perceived and treated as sensual objects by the middle class white American men. The mutilation of the black woman’s body through enslavement or captivity in the bourgeois domestic sphere creates a subversive image of home, rendering slaves and mulatto identity as uncanny figures in unhomely American homes.

The sexual objectification and exploitation of black women slaves is an issue that Child documented in her 1833 anti-slavery tract *An Appeal in Favor of that Class of Americans Called Africans* as “another view of this system” (19) of slavery: “The negro woman is unprotected either by law or public opinion. She is the property of her master, and her daughters are his property” (19). Child’s critique of the facts of the American “republic” finds its fictional representation in her *Romance of the Republic*. None of the women of the Royal family, Eulalia, Rosa and Flora is protected either by “law” or “public opinion” (Child 19). They are literally the silenced, the mutilated, the dismembered, and the oppressed group of slaves. By presenting Mr. Royal as an affectionate husband and father on the one hand, and by revealing the gross consequences of the black female slaves’ captivity

in the house on the other hand, the narrative “subtly questions the innocence of Royal’s apparent oversight” (Nelson ix). Mr. Royal confesses to Alfred King that they “gradually withdrew from the few acquaintances” (Child 21) in New Orleans because he could not take Eulalia with him “into society” (Child 21). Instead, Mr. Royal created a world “transformed into a sort of fairy-land” (Child 21) and a “domestic sanctum” (Child 22), in which he allowed no chance of freedom for his wife and daughters. In Mr. Royal’s definition of their house, the domestic sphere that is thought to be protective and homely turns out to be a restrictive confinement for women.

Child portrays an introductory scene of social gathering in which she shows Mr. Royal turning his daughters into objects. Though Mr. Royal does not mean to be unkind, he calls them by belittling adjectives like “mignonne” (Child 3), or “plaything” (Child 6) or by their given names, which are the names of flowers. More significantly, while describing his house to Mr. King, he refers to his daughters and says that “human flowers” (Child 5) exceed all sorts of flowers in the house. By human flowers, Mr. Royal means his daughters, and he calls them the only things “worth seeing” (Child 1) in the town when he gives Mr. King a tour in New Orleans. Mr. Royal objectifies his own daughters as though they were the mere objects of spectacle while Rosa is playing the piano and Flora is dancing before their father, Alfred King and Gerald Fitzgerald. At these moments, Flora’s “floating fairy vision” is met by “her father’s delighted gaze” (Child 8) and gives “such exquisite pleasure, that all had been absorbed in watching its variations” (Child 9). Rosa and Flora’s performance before Mr. Royal, Mr. King, and Mr. Fitzgerald in their home complicates the ideal domestic sphere through the

objectification of women, exemplifying, in Lora Romero's words, the "patriarchal drive to reduce women to mere objects for public display" (Child 21). Rosa and Flora believe that they are free and not in slavery's chains, but, just like in slavery, they are viewed as objects of pleasure by their father and Mr. Fitzgerald. Mr. Fitzgerald's constant gaze fixed upon the sisters is intriguingly revelatory of the nature of female objectification when he boasts that he would have both Rosa and Flora in his "harem" (Child 12) if he were "the Grand Bashaw" (Child 12). Mr. Fitzgerald repeats the same image of the harem and the Grand Bashaw when he arrogantly says, "I don't envy the Grand Bashaw his Circassian beauties" (Child 84). He maintains that he would "give his biggest diamond for such a dancer as Floracita" (Child 84) and he praises Rosa at the same time, stating, "what is the Flower of the World compared to my Rosamunda?" (Child 84). Gerald articulates what Spillers calls the "irresistible, destructive sensuality" (67) of the "captive body" (67) and animates in the imagination of the reader the process of reducing the captive body "to a thing" (67), which is a transition from being a subject to an object. In this "absence from a subject position" (Spillers 67), the "captures sexualities" (Spillers 67) denote a "physical and biological expression of 'otherness'" (Spillers 67), a category Gerald creates in his comparison of the sisters to the "Circassian beauties" (Child 84) of the oriental Grand Bashaw. This scene overtly illustrates that Rosa and Flora's performance is "a sign of their thralldom rather than their freedom" (Romero 21). Though Rosa and Flora may seem independent of the control of patriarchy and slavery in this initial part of the novel, the male gaze already captures them. The visual enslavement by the male gaze signals the fact that they would soon be sold into slavery when Fitzgerald wants to possess both Rosa and Flora after their father's death.

Furthermore, Rosa and Flora's objectification is reinforced by their names, which metaphorically link them to their unlawful status in the American nation. Alfred King describes them as "tropical flowers" (Child 18), which are transplanted from their land of origin. The metaphor of "tropical flowers" (Child 18) refers to Rosa and Flora's uprooted position and is indicative of the routes of enslavement traceable in the lineage. This transplantation of what Mr. Royal calls "the human flowers" shatters the image of a happy family and the delicately decorated house. Rosa and Flora live in a house that seems stable in appearance but in fact unsettled because of the legal regulations of slavery. Despite the beautifully decorated interior of the house, Rosa and Flora's objectification within the confine of the house makes it nothing less than a prison. This specific scene thus shows that Rosa and Flora's family house is not their own; their status is not legitimate; and they are in fact properties soon to be sold and exchanged.

The detailed portrayal of domestic sphere in relation to the legal issues renders *A Romance of the Republic* a text that pushes the limits of ideal domesticity so as to offer a new political vision of the United States free from its racist attitudes. Thus, it is possible to suggest that *A Romance of the Republic* conjures up new insights into the domestic ideals by drawing on domestic and sentimental codes to open the way to construe alternate meanings of home, family, and the nation. Child foregrounds the big well-decorated family house as an example of other houses in the nation, emphasizing the idea that the American houses as reflections of the nation are fraught with problems imposed by racial prejudices and the patriarchal system of slavery. Child's use of impeccable domestic interiority

speaks more to subverting these conventions than asserting their validity. First of all, this beautiful domestic view of the house with beautiful flowers is inherently tainted by the fact that the father is a slave owner who bought his own wife from a colonized community. Secondly, this tragic mistake pushes Rosa and Flora into the system of slavery as objects to be sold in exchange for their father's debts. This revelatory scene illustrates a conversation in an environment that is supposed to be a domestic heaven to underline the invalidity of the domestic ideology through this clash between the interior design and the displaced, dismembered, unhomely residents.

The initial scene of the novel therefore establishes the problematic links between racism, female objectification, and slavery in antebellum American society. The objectification of the black female body reveals the problem of racial prejudice that sees black or mulatto people as uncanny anomalies. During the conversation, it becomes apparent that Alfred King is not exempt from the same racial prejudice which makes Mr. Royal call his wife a stranger. When Mr. King is smitten by Rosa's "superlative and peculiar" (Child 3) beauty and repeatedly thinks of the possibility of a marriage with Rosa, he reminds himself of the fact that his mother also "shares the prejudice" of color (Child 14). Although "a few hours ago" (Child 14), Alfred King did not "know of their [Rosa and Flora's] existence", he as a northerner is struck by the pleasure and the pain of "the scenes of enchantment" (Child 15) and the reality of family history left in his memory:

He had heard of those *quadroon connections*, as one hears of *foreign* customs, without any realizing sense of their consequences. That his

father's friend should be a partner in such an alliance, and that these two graceful and accomplished girls should by that circumstance be excluded from the society they would so greatly *ornament, surprised and bewildered him*. He recalled that tinge in *Rosa's complexion, not golden, but like a faint, luminous reflection of gold, and that slight waviness in the glossy hair, which seemed to him so becoming*. He could not make these peculiarities seem less beautiful to his imagination, now that he knew them as signs of her connection with *a proscribed race*. [...] *Octoroons!* He repeated the word to himself, but it did not disenchant him. It was merely something *foreign and new to his experience, like Spanish or Italian beauty*. Yet he felt painfully the *false position* in which they were placed by *the unreasoning prejudice of society* (Child 14) [italics mine].

Alfred King's expressions foreground the representation of the slaves in the American imaginary and brings to the fore the vital role of racial ideology in the construction of public opinion and American national identity. As cultural theorist Stuart Hall indicates, identities do not derive from a "point of origin and stability" (18) but they are "more the product of the marking of difference and exclusion" (17). Racial slavery is an ideological form of oppression and a "politics of exclusion" (Hall 18) of the black identity that is destabilized within the construction of national identity. Hall contends that identity is also "constructed through, not outside, difference" (17) and "constantly destabilized by what it leaves out" (18). In the face of the stabilized white identity, the black/mulatto identity is fragmented and is "constructed within, not outside, discourse" (Hall 17), the racial discourse

produced since the early American republic. Alfred King's immediate thoughts at the moment of confrontation with Rosa blend the force of racist biases in society with the uncanny attraction the "proscribed race" (Child 14) exerts. For Alfred King, the "quadroon connections" (Child 14) and the "foreign customs" (Child 14) unveil an alliance with the white race that the white young man finds difficult to accept. Noticeably, Child presents Alfred King as a character who goes through a change that enables him to get rid of "the unreasoning prejudice of society" (14). He is able to develop an insight into the unreasonable opinions of racism. As this example demonstrates, Alfred King is also one of the northerners who know very little of the institution of slavery and is representative of those who are brave enough to question the prejudice of color as opposed to the majority of believers in the inferiority of the "proscribed race" (Child 14). He is able to interrogate the "false position" (Child 14) the people of color are placed in society and to see how irrational it is to impose such prejudices on the perception of a race.

As Alfred King's thoughts evince, racism causes dehumanization of black/mulatto people. Witnessing someone who belongs to the "proscribed race" (Child 14) is "merely something foreign and new to his experience" (Child 14). Confrontation with the foreign is a surprising, bewildering, or disenchanting experience, in Alfred King's words. Child portrays characters who represent the confrontation between the foreign, the non-white and the white slave owner. Alfred King's perplexity tallies with the definition of the mulatto identity offered by Judith R. Berzon. Berzon describes the mulatto figure as "an outcast, a wanderer, one alone" (100). Furthermore, the mulatto, representing "the largest marginal group" (Berzon 100) in American society, is the "fictional symbol of marginality" (Berzon

100). In a similar vein, sociologist Edward B. Reuter claims that mulatto identity is perceived as “a discontented and troublesome element in the community” (335). Accordingly, the socio-cultural perception of the mulatto identity is not distinct from that of the pure black identity. Even that one-drop of black blood is enough for the racist ideology to construct the non-white people as *the other* either in the form of sexual objectification or in the embodiment of uncanny figures who are disconcerted, like ghosts, within the white imaginary.

This perception of blackness or mulatto identity as an uncanny element has also a reciprocal relationship with the objectification and racial stereotyping whose roots lie in the dehumanization of black people. Scholar Leonard Cassuto in his book *The Inhuman Race: The Racial Grotesque in American Literature and Culture* points to the idea that “human objectification can result from all kinds of perceived differences, but in American culture it happens most readily to people with dark skin”, and that this human objectification is linked to “racial objectification” which “was institutionalized in the United States in the form of slavery” (3). As Child demonstrates in the above scenes, in slavery, a black person becomes an object, and “a property without undergoing corporeal change”, and therefore this alteration in the eye of the slave owner “involves a figurative rather than a literal and permanent physical transformation” (Cassuto 3). More significantly, Cassuto maintains that the act of transforming a human being into a “thing” is saturated with “deep ambivalence and anxiety” (3). The logic of enslavement produces the objectified and oppressed slave who acknowledges the existence of the enslaving oppressor, and thus creates a relationship that altogether makes the oppressed slave become a reflecting mirror, or the double of the

enslaving oppressor. In return, the oppressor becomes dependent on the oppressed slave for the affirmation of her/his own existence. This self-consciousness of the oppressor also makes him/her disturbed by the feelings of “deep ambivalence and anxiety” (Cassuto 3) that slaves are believed to create. Paradoxically, this disturbance derives from the repression of the dehumanized slaves who are already integrated into the domestic sphere by means of enslavement. This relation between the oppressed slave and the oppressing slaveholder reminds us of the Freudian concept of the uncanny and its connection with the idea of the double. Freud elucidates in his “The Uncanny” (1919) that

[...] the quality of uncanniness can only come from the circumstance of the ‘double’ being a creation dating back to a very early mental stage, long since surmounted- a stage, incidentally, at which it wore a more friendly aspect. The ‘double’ has become *a thing of terror*, just as, after the collapse of their religion the gods turned into demons (236) [italics mine].

Slavery produces this sense of the double for both the slave and the slaveholder. Blackness is dehumanized, objectified, and stereotyped through negative images that label blacks as things alien to the white culture or as alien creatures that are different from whites. Therefore, although blacks or mulattoes are invited into the domestic sphere as servants, they are repressed as things “of terror” (Freud 236), foreign, abhorred, unwelcome, ghostly elements in the collective unconscious of the white people. Within the system of slavery, the presence of the black body in American homes is held equivalent to existence of ghosts. In regard to the mutual

yet repressed recognition between the master and the slave, it is possible to argue that *A Romance of the Republic* heightens the effect of the harsh realities of racial slavery by juxtaposing spectral, uncanny, and gothic appearances of slaves and their sufferings against the white figures and their reactions to them. Thrusting to the forefront the evil practices of slavery, Child fictionalizes these malicious practices that feature the feeling of the uncanny amongst the characters. Since normative American national identity is formulated in relation to whiteness, Child's choice of mixed blood characters points to the racial prejudices, and the tragedy that ensues. The novel takes a tragic turn when Rosa and Flora come face to face with the possibility of being put on the auction block because of Mr. Royal's debts. Gerald Fitzgerald, attracted deeply by Rosa's beauty, makes a plan with Rosa's teachers to rescue Rosa and Flora from Mr. Royal's creditors. The moment their father passes away, Rosa and Flora, are no longer the residents of a Southern bourgeois home, but they become captive slaves. Gerald, intrigued by the sisters' legal status as slaves, entertains the idea of possessing both of the sisters, simply because they are now the racial other, slaves to be suppressed and exploited. He promises Rosa to marry her once they leave New Orleans. Gerald knows that according to the laws of many southern states and "the laws of Louisiana" (Child 361), marriage with a slave is invalid. This vital piece of knowledge strengthens Gerald's hand and intensifies his ill will as he buys the sisters by paying Mr. Royal's debts to the creditors. In every step he takes, Gerald proves that he is a relentless and hypocritical supporter of slavery. By deceiving the sisters into the idea that they are now free from slavery, he appoints himself as their new master.

The “scene of *actual* mutilation, dismemberment, and exile” (67), which Spillers accentuates in relation to the oppression exerted by the racist ideology, is dramatized once again in the novel when Gerald captivates Rosa and Flora on the plea of rescuing them from Mr. Royal’s creditors after his death. Gerald Fitzgerald of Savannah, Georgia, is portrayed as a short-term hero only when he attempts to rescue the sisters from the creditors, but turns into the wicked advocate and practitioner of slavery in the novel. After Mr. Royals’ death, Gerald first creates the impression of a good-natured rescuer, but later he displays his malevolent inclination to exploit the girls as he also tries to put his idea of the harem into practice in the isolated island in Savannah when he first marries Rosa and then makes amorous advances towards Flora. Now in the cottage house in the isolated island, Gerald is the slave owner who enslaves Rosa and Flora under the pretext of protection. Gerald’s deceptive establishment of a small cottage for Rosa and their sham marriage reminds the reader of Mr. Royal’s well-decorated but captivating house. The pattern of the captive enslaved woman that is portrayed at the beginning in Eulalia’s condition again highlights the double enslavement of black women by their masters. It is significant to reiterate that the mutilation of the black/mulatto woman’s body through enslavement or captivity in the bourgeois domestic sphere creates a subversive image of the domestic sphere and the American home, while representing the abhorred, troublesome, disconcerted mulatto identity as an unhomely figure. Given these circumstances, both Mr. Royal’s southern home located in a remote part of New Orleans and Gerald’s cottage in an isolated island in Savannah, Georgia, are all houses of captivity. Thus, the houses in the novel vary from well-decorated, cozy, warm but restricting southern houses to an imprisoning

isolated cottage on a remote island that serves both to hide and oppress black fugitives.

In the novel, all houses that captivate especially female characters in one way or another and the legal impossibility for slaves to settle down in a house of their own are issues raised to challenge the loss of home and rights for black people oppressed by slavery. The question of homemaking for Rosa and Flora becomes a puzzling issue once they are uprooted from their own homes. When Rosa and Flora are totally free of the creditors, they try to decide “where to make a happy home for” (Child 60) themselves. Gerald deceives Rosa into believing that they will get married legally when he completes his business transactions. Yet Gerald’s business is more like a slave owner who wants to make money out of slaves. Lulling Rosa into a sense of security in the first place, Gerald organizes a wedding ceremony for their sham marriage in Nassau before captivating her in the secluded island in Savannah, but this marriage has no legal validity since it is performed outside the country. After the wedding ceremony, Gerald thinks that Rosa’s “misfortunes were his triumph” (Child 67), for he saved her “from such degradation” and “acquired the complete control of her destiny” (Child 67). Entertaining the idea of obtaining the “legal ownership” (Child 67) of Rosa and Flora, Gerald meets the creditors so as to buy Rosa and Flora legally. Since it is not safe to bring Rosa and Flora to the U.S., Gerald seeks ways to obtain legal ownership, as it would be disastrous for him “if his participation in the elopement should ever be discovered, or even suspected” (Child 67). This desire of Gerald’s originates from his selfishness and unwillingness to leave his luxurious home and live in exile in the British West Indies. Still, relocation together with the sisters would be impossible. Like a

predator, Gerald gambles in Rosa and Flora's lives, thinking merely of their material value in the business transaction with the creditors. In exchange for Signor's release from the prison, he makes "a sale of these girls" (Child 73). One of the creditors, Mr. Chandler, remarks that Gerald is "always ready to gamble in anything" (73). Gerald himself says that he is "fond of gambling" (Child 73), as is obvious in the deception he creates for a new home in his illegal marital union with Rosa.

In this web of enslavement, Rosa and Flora's displacement is underlined throughout the text each time they are uprooted from the houses they know as their homes. Though Rosa and Flora seem happy at the beginning because Gerald brought some of their precious personal belongings, as Flora articulates, they know that they have "no home to be sick for" (Child 88). In particular, when they are dislocated from their Southern home in New Orleans, they become uncanny, phantasmatic, spectral figures that belong nowhere. This sense of uncanniness is materialized in the text when Gerald brings the sisters to the island. When they are on their way from Nassau to the sequestered island in Savannah, the impression they receive is that of a magical island far away from the evils of slavery. On arriving at the island they stroll over "a carpet of wild-flowers, through the winding bridle-paths, where glances of bright water here and there gleamed through the dark pines that were singing their sleepy chorus, with its lulling sound of the sea, and filling the air with the romantic breath" (Child 75). Alluding to Shakespeare's *The Midsummer Night's Dream* in Gerald's preference of reading and in the similarity of the scene's romanticized setting to that of *The Midsummer Night's Dream*, Child draws a parallel between her text and Shakespeare's to evoke the possibility

whether this island is also inhabited by “such creatures in the woods as Shakespeare described” (77). This weird sense of the indefinable, uncanny, ghostly creatures in the island is Child’s reference to the fact that the slave community due to their black skin is deemed as such creatures in this island. On the larger level, the dreamy and sublime scenery of the island reminds the reader of the nation’s expanded practice of slavery in the colonized islands. This sense is first aroused when Flora sees an imperceptible spectral image during her walk to her sleeping apartment at night. It is a time when “everything seemed so fearfully still, except the monotonous wash of the waves on the sea-shore!” (Child 76), and when “there was nothing but a thick screen of trees and shrubbery” (Child 76). Flora gets shocked at the image of a “fantastic shadow on the ceiling, like a face with a monstrous nose” (Child 76). In fact, the image that “affected the excitable child like some kind of supernatural presence” (Child 76) is nothing but Thistle, the monkey that Gerald bought for riding the carriage. Thistle, as Flora names it later on, is the “phantom of the night” (Child 78) that blends the unsettling appearances of the monstrous uncanny creatures in the island with the dreamy, fabulous, and romanticized “surroundings of their new abode” (Child 78). These uncanny elements are constantly pushing the boundaries of the real so as to reverse the effects of oppressive racism, which, as the novel presents, is more terrifying than the imputed monstrous spectacle of the animals and black/mulatto people.

Breaking away from the racist prejudices, the novel portrays how black/mulatto people, whose existence persists as spectral images in the white imaginary, are seen and treated as indefinable creatures just like Thistle in the deep darkness. These uncanny motifs, the creepy effect of the image of the shadow and

the monstrous nose of a monkey, can read also like gothic elements. Child's use of elements which are more related to the gothic genre such as darkness, terror, and unexplainable things in a distant, exotic, fabulous location blur the border between the real and the phantasmal, the known and the unknown. In line with the tenets of gothic literature, such elements aim to subvert the binary oppositions created as a means of oppression by the hegemonic discourses. When gothic elements meet race that is already "inherently a fluid idea" (Edwards xi), there appears a "racial gothic discourse that employed striking and metaphoric images to filter and give meaning to the social hierarchies of racial domination and subordination institutionalized through slavery" (Edwards xi). Thus it is possible to read Child's use of subversive romance pattern in a domestic novel along with gothic features as a tool that enables her to "dispel readers' romantic illusions about slavery" (Karcher 521). Obviously, Child poses questions as to the logic of the genre as well by playing with the normative form of domestic novel and romance through rendering her work a narrative of social and antislavery novel in a mode of what Justin Edwards calls "racial gothic" (xi). Likewise, in her short story "The Quadroons" (1847), Child addresses her readers in the last sentence of the story, saying, "Reader, do you complain that I have written fiction? Believe me, scenes like these are of no infrequent occurrence at the South. The world does not afford such materials for tragic romance, as the history of the Quadroons" (12), and thus qualifies her writing not as a regular romance but a "tragic romance" (12) that engage tragic facts within a figurative world. What qualifies the tragic facts is this gothic tinge that Child merges into her sentimental narrative and romance, which helps her form a productive analysis of the social scenery in the novel. As William Veeder states, a "gothic praxis" involves "the interplay of psychological and social forces" (20).

The novel, portraying Thistle the monkey as a monster, which contributes to the creation of such gothic elements, deploys gothic atmosphere to point to the matrix of enslavement specifically for women. Child's domestic novel exposes that Rosa, as one of the female heroines of the novel, may transform into a mixture of tragic mulatto figure and the gothic heroine in her unhomely presence during a period of suffering because of Gerald's betrayal and threats as her master. The sisters contain the traces of blackness in their genealogy that Gerald aims to exclude from his house. Ironically, all houses of slavery maintain the potency of preserving the secret of blackness under their roof. Thus, blackness is a constituent that is both dreadful and unwelcome. This being the case, Gerald is in a constant effort to conceal Rosa and Flora's blackness by charging them to "wear thick veils, and never to raise them when any person was in sight" (Child 79). The monstrous face of Thistle is in this sense likened to the faces of black/mulatto people that are to be covered to shun confrontation with whites. Constriction of concealment is a "drawback" (Child 79) Rosa and Flora find difficult to endure, for it carries off their freedom. Feeling the great burden of submission to Gerald, Flora is "chafed under the restraint" (Child 79). And, because they have no other option for the time being, "this necessity of concealment was a skeleton sitting at her [Rosa's] feast" (Child 79). All of these practices render this new cottage nothing but a slave hut. Though they live, or are imprisoned, in a cottage like many slaves in the island, they are uprooted from their house, and therefore frail and submissive to Gerald's ill will.

Child depicts the experience of being a female slave in the hands of the institution of slavery in the scene that dramatizes the objectification of female slaves through a contrast with white female characters who are also the victimized

by the same master. In her use of the tragic representation of the female characters, Child struggles against “the overlapping issues of national and racial identity that were consuming the Republic” (Raimon 17-18). Drawing attention to the fact that patriarchal slavery does enslave women regardless of race under the cloak of various reasons such as courtship and marriage, Child’s narrative blends her tragic mulatto myth with the gothic female type. The gothic, a prolific mode in its coexistence with the social evocations of the tragic mulatto character, has the capability to confound “traditionally gendered binaries like subject/object, active/passive, and man/woman, threatening patriarchal control and the forms of sexual relations that support it” (Cooper 54).

All of the perplexity posed by uncanny and gothic elements contributes to Child’s narrative strategy of exposing racial prejudices by compelling her nineteenth-century readers to question racial biases and to reconsider the evil nature of slavery and its colossal impact on the psychology of each person and on the social well being of the nation. For Child, all races have “similar virtues and similar flaws” (Kenschaft 58), and racial prejudices, segregation, and enslavement are all terrible dehumanizing and degrading practices. *A Romance of the Republic* dramatizes all of these arguments in the scene in which Rosa as the uncanny mysterious mulatto is juxtaposed against Gerald’s legal blonde wife, Lily. Devastated by Gerald’s legal marriage to a wealthy Bostonian, Lily, Rosa pays a secret “ghostly visit” (Child 175) to Gerald’s plantation, Magnolia Lawn, in order to see Lily. It is revealed that Gerald marries Lily because of his debts, though he still conceals his marriage from Rosa, and though “the chambers of his soul were filled with visions of Rosa” (Child 128). Deceiving Rosa and Lily at the same time, Gerald brings Lily to his mansion as the mistress of the house temporarily to spend

their honeymoon. In this specific case, too, Gerald is a victimizer who is only concerned with his own business, while suppressing and abusing women for his own end. He only hopes that Lily would soon be willing to depart from the island for their home in Boston. However, the moment Lily hears Rosa singing a song called “Nelly, My Dark Virginia Bride”³, she finds her voice hard to define, “exclaiming ‘What a voice! I never heard anything like it’” (Child 130). Lily is spellbound and fascinated by the magical tone of Rosa’s voice. Wishing to see the singer in person, Lily moves “eagerly toward the veranda, but suddenly arrested by her husband” (Child 130). Gerald prevents this possibility of confrontation between Rosa and Lily, and leaves the mystery unsolved for Lily. Rosa sings the story of her life as an illicit dark undead bride from New Orleans, for whom the bells toll in memoriam of “all those happy days” (Child 130) that are over:

"Down in the meadow, 'mong the clover,

I walked with Nelly by my side.

Now all those happy days are over,

Farewell, my dark Virginia bride.

Nelly was a lady;

Last night she died.

Toll the bell for lovely Nell,

My dark Virginia bride" (Child 130).

This song reflects how the nation of romance is inverted and how there is no room for romance in unequal relationships just like Rosa and Gerald’s. Gerald makes

³ Child alludes to the American composer Stephen Collins Foster (1826-1864), who is considered the first professional composer of the nation.

their relationship impossible as he acts Rosa's slave owner. That Nelly, the heroine in the song, is dead corresponds to Rosa's unconscious state. Wandering in Gerald's plantation, Magnolia Lawn, in search of the evidences of Gerald's betrayal at night, Rosa gives the impression of a depressed and grieving tragic mulatto. Though Gerald knows well that this voice belongs to Rosa, he shuns the confrontation by telling Lily that she should not "expose" herself to "the night air" (Child 130). Thus, Rosa still remains as the repressed, uncanny, indefinable creature that Lily would never be aware of. For Gerald, Rosa is just "one of the darkies" who "all have musical gifts" (Child 130). Just like Thistle, Rosa is viewed as another nonhuman and unhomely creature that sings like a human being. Further, Lily's comparison of the place to the Garden of Eden is ironic: she says that it "seems like the Garden of Eden, when Adam and Eve had it all to themselves, before the serpent went there to make mischief" (Child 127). This mischief in this heavenly plantation is human bondage, the original sin of the American nation. Gerald can be considered the serpent, the mischief-maker, who shatters the idyllic atmosphere by turning Rosa and Lily's lives into a living hell. In this sense, Lily is also a "fairy figure" (Child 132), "sylph" (Child 134) trapped in a fake life plotted by her husband. Both women fall prey to the victimizing slaveholder Gerald Fitzgerald's domestic confinement.

Despite Gerald's endeavor to obstruct Lily's encounter with Rosa, Lily attempts to pursue the owner of this voice, feeling "impatient under the prohibition laid upon her" (Child 132). And, finding Gerald's indifference to such a voice "singular" (Child 131), Lily contrives a plan to see this creature by "hiding among the vines" if she sees Gerald coming. Nonetheless, these moments, in which Rosa

and Lily come within a striking distance, are described as eerie and terrifying times. Lily walks among the “grand old trees” that “cast broad shadows on the lawn, and the shrubbery of the garden gleamed in the soft moonlight” (Child 131-132) and sees through one of the “openings” of the veranda lattice the image of a “large, dark eye watching her” (Child 133). The moment she notices these spooky large and dark eyes, which remind the reader of Thistle’s bizarre eyes, she starts to run into the house, but immediately stops, thinking that it might be Gerald. But the moment she turns around in search of Gerald, the eyes disappear; nevertheless, she sees “only a tall shadow gliding away behind the corner of the house” (Child 133). Lily insistently pursues the ghostly figure, but only finds “a tremulous reflection of vines in the moonlight” (Child 133). Lily is now captivated by “the ghostly moonlight, the strange, lonely place” (Child 133), and “the sad, mysterious sounds” make her “a little afraid” (Child 133). Although what Lily sees are ordinary objects and images on the lawn, all of them seem extremely strange and indescribable. Further, the sensation they evoke is that of the uncanny. Lily gets very startled when she hears the beautiful voice singing, “toll the bell” (Child 135) at times. The ghostly figure, Rosa, sings “an air from “Norma,” (Child 135) beginning, ‘O, how his art deceived thee!’” (Child 135)⁴. The song refers to the deception both women are subjected to. The island has become a prison for Rosa and Lily. Romance is also only a counterfeit and manipulation that Gerald performs to avoid going bankrupt. Lily is perplexed by the fact that it is not Gerald who peeps at her through the veranda lattice. Gerald laughs away her concerns and plays “the game of courtship” (Child 129) time and again whenever he is in need of escape from

⁴ Child also alludes to the Italian opera “Norma” by Vincenzo Bellini. The opera concerns the story of the relationship between Pollio and Norma. Like Gerald, Pollio abandons Norma, and prefers Adalgisa. Child’s biographer Carolyn Karcher also states that Child draws the romance pattern on Bellini’s “Norma”.

reality.

This uncanny moment that Lily and Rosa experience recounts in Bhabha's words "the traumatic ambivalences of a personal, psychic history to the wider junctions of political existence" (*Location of Culture* 11). In this sense, this scene can be regarded as a reenactment of the collective unconscious of slavery as well as America's colonial past in a fictive world. Child presents the perceptions about black people as uncanny figures that are contemptible to look at, thereby challenging her white readers to question how restless black people are in society. The novel emphasizes that racial preconceptions construe black people as uncanny specters in the eyes of the whites, and patriarchal slavery captivates and enslaves both black/mulatto and white women. However, the voice singing is in fact once well known, the colonized, and enslaved others that have turned into demons because it has been repressed long ago when whites enslaved blacks. When considered in relation to the historical past of the American nation, this moment of "unhomeliness" experienced between Lily and Rosa is "inherent in that rite of extra-territorial and cross-cultural initiation" (Bhabha, *Location of Culture* 10) that speaks back to the initial meeting of black and white people. Gerald's efforts to repress Rosa reflect the whole nation's efforts to oppress black people only due to their race. Just like Rosa, whose voice is said to evoke "ghosts of the past" (Child 136), all repressed voices of thousands of black people tortured, uprooted from their lands, enslaved, and rendered unhomely and homeless are apparitions of the American nation's history of bondage. In this respect, the novel "insistently rehearses the history that its white audience was so rapidly forgetting" (Karcher 510).

This incident makes clear that the uncanny depiction of Rosa also dissolves the boundaries between the private and the public sphere in this specific case of two women trespassing the lawns strictly banned by Gerald. Saying that he shall be “angry with” (Child 126) Rosa if she goes to Magnolia lawn without him, Gerald intimidates Rosa, restricting her to her private sphere. Gerald warns both Rosa and Lily against walking in the plantation for he is afraid that they would know each other. However, Lily is extremely charmed by the voice of this unknown person. The “enchanted voice” (Child 137) of the mulatto slave is such a “charming novelty” (Child 137) to Lily that it leads her to intrude on the restricted public terrain. Disturbed by the presence of such an uncanny sensation, Lily feels that this imperceptible “charming novelty” “cast a shadow over the first evening in their bridal home” (Child 137). Lily is also dislocated from her new home, which, in Rosa’s opinion, is in fact designed for the prospective legal marriage between Gerald and herself. Neither this grand “bridal home” (Child 137) nor the “lonely cottage” (Child 138) proves any resemblance to the ideals of domesticity where women are (dis)empowered. Thus, Rosa and Lily’s wanderings around the prohibited areas can be read as a resistance to patriarchal slavery’s organization of spheres as well as the double oppression exerted by slavery upon women. These acts of invasions by captive or enslaved women dislocate the culture of ideal domesticity, for this invasion stems from the “displacement”, in which, in Bhabha’s terms, the “borders between home and world become confused; and uncannily, the private and the public become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorienting” (Bhabha 9). For Bhabha, the ““unhomely”” (9) is a “paradigmatic colonial and post-colonial condition, it has a resonance that can be

heard distinctly, if erratically, in fictions that negotiate the powers of cultural difference in a range of transhistorical sites (9). The period of colonization and enslavement of Africans is a process of dislocation and un-homing that is buried deep in American history. However, “to be unhomed is not to be homeless, nor can the ‘unhomely’ be easily accommodated in that familiar division of social life into private and public spheres” (Bhabha 9). Though settling down in one’s own home denotes freedom and is a definitive issue, unhomeliness has no definite space, which altogether upsets the binary oppositions of the patriarchal norms of the separation of spheres. Unhomeliness is a sense that “creeps up” on people as one’s own “shadow” (Bhabha 9), blurring the boundaries between fantasy and reality, and the private/domestic and the public. However, terror occurs at such moments when repressed and uncanny appearances turn into reality, while disorienting all the established social norms. It is possible to state that though Rosa is located in a cottage owned by Gerald and therefore not literally homeless, all of these houses are but homes of oppression and captivity.

In view of this moment of unhomeliness, Bhabha further argues in his seminal article "Of Mimicry and Man" that "Black skin splits under the racist gaze, displaced into signs of bestiality, genitalia, grotesquerie, which reveal the phobic myth of the undifferentiated whole white body" (2002 92). This “phobic myth” (Bhabha 92) developed by the white body reveals that the “undifferentiated whole white body” (Bhabha 92) splits the integrity of the black body, reducing it to a mere animalistic grotesque figure. Bhabha details these elements that draw the line between humanization and dehumanization that is created in relation to higher

institutional and legal aspects of the concept of the nation that is as split as the black body:

the *Heimlich* pleasures of the hearth, the *unheimlich* terror of the space or race of the Other; the comfort of social belonging, the hidden injuries of class; the customs of taste, the powers of political affiliation; the sense of social order, the sensibility of sexuality; the blindness of bureaucracy, the strait insight of institutions; the quality of justice, the common sense of injustice; the *langue* of the law and the *parole* of the people (Bhabha, 1990 2).

The novel juxtaposes the “*Heimlich* pleasures” (2) of ideals of domesticity with the uncanny appearance of tragic mulatto characters. Transforming the popular patriarchal ideology of domesticity into a tool of resistance, Child lays bare the “unhomely world” (Bhabha 14), displacement of enslaved black people within unhomeliness of domestic ideology; in other words, domesticity’s patriarchal practices of enslavement and female objectification. Not only does Child display “the *Heimlich* pleasures” (Bhabha 2) of the American republic as in the case of the big plantations, but she also uncloaks “the *unheimlich* terror” (Bhabha 2) and “race of the Other” (Bhabha 2) within racially coded nation with reference to all its discomforts, blindness, injustices and “the *langue* of the law and the *parole* of the people” (Bhabha 2).

When considered from a nationalist perspective, it should furthermore be kept in mind that this uncanny influence of the other is inherent in “the *langue* of the law

and the *parole* of the people” (Bhabha 2) of the United States, as can be observed in the republican or nationalist policy of the Constitution of the United States. As scholar Walker Connor argues in his article “When is a Nation?” (1990), “the sense of constituting an ancestrally related people” is “central to the sense of nationhood” which has very little connection to the people of different ancestry or race. Connor’s words are illustrative of the idea that when the primary national text of the United States were composed, the Declaration of Independence (1776), it disregarded the geographical, ethnic, and racial features of the American territory, and that the collective national identity were formed through self-awareness of whiteness and exclusion of others. Given the principles of democracy and equality, for instance in the Declaration of Independence (1776), “slavery obviously distorts the ideals of America (Riss 1), and thus the “promise of the Declaration of Independence is in effect an incomplete promise” (Riss 35). It is then possible to state that the collective unconscious of the American nation took shape by the superiority of the white population, who are legally and socioculturally acknowledged as the only group of citizens. In line with this racial constitution of the American nation, it can be argued that the idea of the uncanny, the non-domestic, and the non-national is evoked in the text in the perception and appearance of black/mulatto identity or slaves as the other, while whiteness is reflected to be a congruent homely element in the American imaginary. Thus, as the novel demonstrates, the American republic does not seem like a nation of freedom but of captivity. That the slaves and mulatto characters in the novel are portrayed as uncanny captive figures reveals Child’s heavy criticism of incongruities in the treatment of people in a country boasting of its democracy and equality in its national text of freedom.

Of particular importance in the novel is a series of acts of restrictions, confinement, and oppression exerted by Gerald who can be regarded as one of slavery's patriarchs. Gerald's role is significant in that his actions reverse the romance pattern of the novel in its first half. Child establishes a network of relationships that fail to achieve romance because of the shape these relationships take under the impact of slavery. Romance, in its most basic form, is a subgenre that features courtship and marriage in a work of art. But, beyond any form of love affair, the romance form, as Gregg D. Crane expresses, "designates a wide variety of novels featuring out-of-the-ordinary adventures, mysterious or supernatural circumstances, difficult quests, and miraculous triumphs" (26). Crane maintains that romances "often have an epic or mythic cast and display a marked lack of concern for questions of plausibility" (26). Child's narrative displays that patriarchal and racial slavery distorts reality in slaveholders' efforts to debase slaves who in return become epic, fabulous, dehumanized characters, as they are treated like extra-terrestrial characters. Gerald builds up his empire of slavery by degrading slaves and women in every cruel form he can. He rebukes and tortures his slaves ruthlessly. He calls his black servant Tom "lazy black rascal" (Child 138), gives him "a sharp cut of the whip" (Child 144) whenever he feels the "need of some safety-valve to let off his vexation" (Child 144). As many other slave masters did at the time, Gerald abuses the power he has over the people of color. He does this selfishly by virtue of codes of slavery and his own interpretation of them. He monopolizes Rosa and Lily for his own purposes and thus underscores the romantic tone of the romance pattern intended in the novel. Child in this respect draws attention to the failure of romance in the relationships Gerald forms with

both Rosa and Lily. Rosa “monopolized by one man” (Child 253) has always been “so gentle and submissive” (Child 139), yet she is able to stay firm in the face of Gerald’s betrayal when she first sees him after the walk she took in the plantation at night. Going to the “lonely cottage” (Child 138) to explain his legal marriage to Rosa, Gerald still thinks that Rosa loves him “to distraction” (Child 139), and she is “entirely in my [his] power” and that “it will be strange indeed if I [he] cannot mould her as I [he] will” (Child 139). Confronted by Rosa’s severe reception, Gerald reasons out her behavior as lack of “honor” since Rosa failed to keep her word not to go to the plantation without Gerald’s company. Gerald clarifies that he married Lily because he was “in danger of becoming bankrupt” (Child 140) unless he married a wealthy woman, but he still loves Rosa and will maintain their relationship along with his marriage all at the same time. On Gerald’s explanation of the reason for his marriage, and her rejection of such an offer that would despise her even more, Rosa says that she will reveal herself to Lily and disclose Gerald’s “baseness” (Child 141). In Rosa’s rebellion, Child portrays the possibility for women to dismantle the laws of slavery that objectify women. However, Gerald reminds her of the fact that she is not his legal wife and she is his “slave” (Child 143), and asks for total ignorance while bargaining for Rosa. Rosa seems more empowered when she harkens that she would not consent to sell herself (Child 142). Gerald insistently produces alternative solutions, and asks Rosa to “consent to live with” (Child 142) him as her mother lived with her father (Child 142). Rosa, fed up with Gerald’s one-sided hermeneutics of slave laws, articulates that her mother is “too pure and noble to be dishonored” (Child 142) by Gerald’s “cruel laws” (Child 142). Rosa clarifies that the relationship between his mother and father has never been a deceptive one and her parents loved each other dearly.

Seeing that he will not control her, Gerald admits that his “power over” (Child 143) her is “complete” (Child 143), simply because he bought her from her father’s creditors before he went to Nassau and he can sell her “any day” (Child 143). Gerald interprets the laws of slavery in his best interest, and plagues on the caprices of women (Child 143) when he could find no outlet. For him, Lily and Rosa are to be blamed: Lily is responsible for “taking the silly, romantic whim of coming here [plantation] to spend the honeymoon (Child 143) and Rosa is blamable because, as a “foolish girl” (Child 143), she rejected all of his “offers as if she had been the queen of Spain and all the Americas” (Child 143-144).

Moreover, after his marriage to Lily, Gerald also abuses Flora by making amorous advances towards her, and leads to the separation of sisters and the total dissolution of the Royal family. There is another tragedy that befalls the sisters when Flora abandons the island after Gerald’s advances. Flora is left homeless and Rosa becomes entirely miserable due to Flora’s loss and Gerald’s official marriage with Lily. Flora rejects Gerald and is believed to drown in the sea but she takes refuge in Mrs. Delano as her adoptive mother with whom she goes to Europe in order to escape Gerald. Rosa, devastated by Flora’s loss and Gerald’s marriage with Lily, goes through an unbearable emotional suffering and loneliness. Now she is more like a specter than a human being like suffering gothic females.

With the separation of sisters, the novel’s geographic location extends farther to the North where Flora now lives with Mrs. Delano, the woman who adopted Flora to keep her away from Gerald’s evil treatment. Presenting the two sisters’ lives simultaneously from politically different locations, Child portrays

Rosa as an uncanny and unhomely presence, devastated by Gerald's wickedness in the lonely cottage:

Rosa came out of her swoon in a slow fever accompanied with delirium. Tulee was afraid to leave her long enough to go to the plantation in search of Tom; and having no medicines at hand, she did the best thing that could have been done. She continually moistened the parched tongue with water, and wiped the hot skin with wet cloths. While she was doing this, tears fell on her dear young mistress, lying there so broken and helpless, talking incoherently about her father and Floracita, about being a slave and being sold. This continued eight or ten days, during which she never seemed to recognize Tulee's presence, or to be conscious where she was (171).

In her unconscious state, Rosa is overwhelmed by "fever accompanied with delirium" (Child 171) and shattered into pieces under the weight of enslavement. The "heavy drowsiness" (Child 171) left her in the threshold between this world and the unknown territories without any nourishment. "Racked by the torture of the soul" (Child 171) her "poor weak body" slept as if it would be her last sleep. Meanwhile, Gerald's devotion to Lily makes Lily happy, but the "veiled singing shadow" (Child 172) on the first day of their honeymoon still haunts "the chambers of her [Lily's] soul" (Child 172). The effect this shadow left on Lily's soul is so strong that she is always in expectation of hearing that voice in the pauses of their walks on the lawn. The same impact is also visible in Gerald's fears that "those wandering sounds would come again" (Child 172). Gerald punishes Rosa in his

own way, reasoning out that she was rebellious to his decisions and not willing to lead a sham marriage with him. Rosa has not only crossed the physical boundaries prohibited to her in her wanderings on the lawn, but she trespassed the line between the master and his helpless slave as well. As scholar Nancy Bentley writes, “rebellion is the scandal of domestic poetics” (501) and any form of confusion is to be “excluded to ensure the coherence of domestic ideology” (502). So as not to spoil the family he has founded with Lily, Gerald abandons Rosa to a complete exile in misery. Yet his ideology of white domesticity in his legal marriage is clear of racial involvements through Rosa’s exile, but Rosa’s presence proves that both the plantation house and the secluded cottage are in essence fraught with abuse and agony. Presenting Rosa both in misery and later on in self-possessed mood, Child highlights that racial slavery is a critical issue that oppresses people of color without any consideration of their humanity. Domestic ideology is shaped in the cruel hands of slave masters like Gerald for the benefits of only whites. In this sense, as Raimon suggests, the suffering, “contentious figure of the “tragic mulatto” provides a central literary site for black and white antislavery writers to work through questions raised by the highly charged subject position of mixed-race persons in antebellum society” (4) and becomes a means for Child to challenge the cultural and political ideals.

The figure of the tragic mulatto is, for Child, fundamentally a venue to “interrogate the injustices of slavery” (Bost 60). The tragic mulatto figure is a type of literary character in nineteenth-century American literature and made famous by Child in her short stories “The Quadroons” (1842) and “Slavery’s Pleasant Homes” (1843). Bentley suggests that “by definition, the tragic mulatta is granted her most

pronounced symbolic power by virtue of her worldly suffering – her sexual exploitation and the betrayals and abuse she endures usually finds physical expression in suicide or fatal illness (505). That slavery is a forceful institution is shown every time Gerald turns Rosa into a tragic mulatto and exposes her to extended times of anguish. Still, Gerald egotistically wishes to turn the tables on his side, finding “some food for vanity” (Child 172) in the news of Rosa’s sickness. He audaciously thinks that Rosa has fallen ill because of her love for him, and this is to his advantage because he does not want to “relinquish” (Child 172) her. At this moment of the narrative, the third person omniscient narrator uses the word “creature” (Child 172) for Rosa, who still lies in her bed as a “melancholy wreck” (Child 174). She is no longer a human being but a “creature” (Child 172) whose life has been drained away from her body. Although she is in a desperate condition, Rosa does not yield to Gerald’s hypocritical demonstration of love during his visit. Gerald’s love is hypocritical because the next week he becomes the “gayest of the gay in parties at Savannah, where his pretty little bride was quite the fashion” (Child 174). She asks Gerald to manumit her by giving her freedom and not to get involved with “the bitter significance of the law” (Child 182). Gerald seems to consent but prolongs the process, leaving her helpless many times against all the suffering he caused.

Suzanne Bost contends that the “virtuous mulatta defied racist stereotypes of the overly sexual black woman and gained the attention of readers trained to applaud the literary signals of Christian domesticity” (Bost 60). Rosa is victimized many times psychologically and physically, which makes her an epitome of the figure of the tragic mulatto that became a famous character type in the nineteenth

century. The integration of her soul and body has been shattered: she becomes fatally ill and unconscious of the world around her. She is now in between this world and the torturing domestic sphere of Gerald's cottage. As Tulee informs Gerald, it is her "soul that's sick" (Child 173) and her soul is the incurable part of her body. Rosa, who was once "an affectionate, useful creature, with good voice and ear" (Child 174), remained as an "absent soul" (Child 175) for three months and is now "helpless and unconscious as a new-born babe" (Child 174) and an "invalid" for whose spirit Chloe prays in a combination of "Methodist hymns and negro melodies" (Child 174). Child reflects much of her criticism of the patriarchy in the romantic relationships between the characters: all sorts of patriarchal ideologies such as domesticity, womanhood, slavery, and marriage are but constructs that imprison women with no will power to assert their individual rights. Critic Karen Sánchez-Eppler explains that "the assumed difference between family and slavery" in fact collapses since "the institutions of marriage and slavery are not merely analogous, they are coextensive and indistinguishable" (14). This inevitable amalgamation of marriage (or simply illegal relationship between the master and the slave) and slavery makes it hard for the woman to claim freedom out of bondage. The fact that manumission is constantly procrastinated and evaded in the two examples of Mr. Royal and Eulalia, and Rosa and Gerald makes evident the perpetuation of genealogical lineage of kinship by the normative white superiority. This hegemonic normativity entails sexual exploitation that is recurrent in almost every relationship in the novel. Quite the reverse of the teachings of domestic ideology and true womanhood, neither marriage vows nor "marriage in the nineteenth century" seemed an "egalitarian institution" (Karcher 511). Marriage is like any other institution of the patriarchy that targets the sexual and emotional

exploitation of women.

Just as Rosa's wandering in the plantation disperses the racial restrictions and renders her free enough (at least for a short period of time) to trespass the territories prohibited by Gerald, the sentimental power of her song leaves a liberating and relieving effect on Lily. In this part of the narrative, Child uses the ability of the sentimental fiction to create "sentiment and feeling" (Sánchez-Eppler 26) that refer to "emotion" and "physical sensation" (Sánchez-Eppler 26), which is contrasted with Rosa's senseless status in her sickbed. Child pushes the limits of the domestic novel by dint of playing with its norms in order to make her narrative more effective for the solution of the problem of slavery. Deploying the sentimental codes in the portrayal of patriarchal slavery, Child constructs a sentimental novel of slavery. Foregrounding the affective relation amongst the characters, and between the narrative and the reader, sentimental fiction with its focus on slavery's cruelties has the "ability to translate words into heartbeats and sobs" (Sánchez-Eppler 26) both in characters and readers. Rosa's hunger for love exposes the affect that has the capacity to move the reader. Thus, Child uses the power of emotions as an effective tool to convey to the reader the emotional and physical suffering of the woman slave.

Significantly, Child's choice of octoroon characters critiques the view that regards black or mulatto/quadroon/octoroon people or characters as an abnormality. Child makes it a point to hinge on the mixed-blood characters to defy the patriarchal hegemony of slavery and its practice to objectify women as sexual objects. As Bentley states, mixed-blood people are considered uncanny, and

therefore the unhomely elements of the American home life in the antebellum period:

The Mulatto has a potentially disruptive position in the antebellum American novel, for the biracial person splits apart the imagined synthesis between nature and society in bourgeois domesticity. While U.S. law denied their existence—in legal terms Mulattoes were identical with blacks- white anxiety came from knowing what law and the social order would not recognize: that blood relations bound Africans and Europeans and subverted the idea of a natural boundary between black and white. Repressed in social laws, this knowledge produced in whites a combination of sympathy, revulsion, and fascination for the figure of the Mulatto. The person of mixed black and white parentage stood precisely at the place where nature and culture could come unbound. The Mulatto figure was a scandal—not only a sexual but an intellectual scandal, confounding as it did the racial categories that were as fundamental to social life in the North as in the South (503-504).

In Bentley's discussion, it becomes clear that mulattoes who are not legally different from blacks, is a potential "disruptive" (503) element that poses threats to the "imagined synthesis" (503) and the "natural boundary between black and white" (504). Yet the mixture of bloods weakened all of such "imagined synthesis" (Bentley 503) or the theory of "natural boundary" (Bentley 504) and came into the American history as a scandalous event. Based on the logic of enslavement, the

nineteenth-century American nation, which enslaves blacks or other racial/ethnic groups, paradoxically brings what it perceives as non-domestic or uncanny according to its own political and domestic ideology of white superiority into the domestic sphere. In this way, social and political embodiment of the American nation were constructed on the institutionalization of slavery in both domestic and public spheres. Due to racism, however, black and mulatto people are repressed and thus became “in whites a combination of sympathy, revulsion, and fascination” (Bentley 504), as Child makes plain in the confrontation of Rosa’s voice and Lily’s emotions. Without mulattoes, domestic ideology projected domestic sphere racially untainted and free from any unhomely elements. If unhomeliness is a condition of racial enslavement performed politically by the ideology of white superiority in the early American society, then slaves and mixed blood people, who are “repressed in social laws” (Bentley 504) and denied rights to be housed within the nation, can be thought to be the very product and terror of this prejudiced ideology. Given these circumstances, it can be argued that Child critically fictionalizes the public sentiment that sees the mixed race characters to be the unhomely or displaced figures that not only complicate the ostensible purity of the white domestic ideology but also merge the domestic and public spheres. Rosa and Flora, like thousands of slaves, taken away from their land of origin, are displaced and dismembered from their roots, and are left to remain in the interstices of nationlessness and homelessness. Likewise, these two conditions of homelessness and nationlessness are highlighted in the family genealogy of the Royals and the slaves in the family, which carry the colonized, the foreign, alien Africans and peoples of the West Indies into the enslaving, discreet, silencing and torturing American domestic sphere.

III. II. A New Abolitionist Vision for the American Nation

In light of Child's purpose to disseminate an abolitionist public sentiment in the reconstruction of a harmonious American nation, this part is in particular concerned with the ways in which Child tries to cure racism, slavery, patriarchy, and racial misconceptions through her subversive textual strategies of masquerade, carnivalesque polyphony of races, and a multiple structure of kinship. It is significant to note that "Child saw her fiction as a powerful force for cultural reform" (Mills 5), and accordingly all of these fictional topoi aim to divert the biased public sentiment about blackness to a more logical and humanitarian perception of racial identity. Against all the social ills of racial slavery, Child reveals that there is a façade of moralism of the gentile bourgeois class that support slavery both in the North and the South. One of her key strategies manifests itself as the empowerment of female characters that gain freedom, agency, and selfhood and that present the capability of relieving themselves from slavery's clutches. In the course of this optimistic vision of gaining a new identity, characters go through a passage of events that destabilize the decorum of the racist bourgeois world. Another constructive element that Child employs is the real figures of abolitionist movement in the nineteenth century as minor characters of the novel. In this respect, it is possible to argue that *A Romance of the Republic* progresses as an abolitionist novel with its specific references to the abolitionist discussions and the historical personages such as the Bostonian abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison,

Francis Jackson, Samuel Sewall, Wendell Phillips, and Father Snowden. Child's biographer Carolyn L. Karcher claims that the novel brings some of these characters "on stage for cameo appearances and introducing others in fictional disguise: Wendell Phillips as Mr. Percival, Joseph Carpenter as the Quaker Underground Railroad agent Joseph Houseman; and Ellis Loring as Alfred Royal King" (510). Modeled after real persons, these characters reinforce Child's Reconstructionist realism that aims to dramatize the possibility of reform in the entire nation. Last but not least, this part discusses the ways in which Child offers a new structure of kinship that in essence comes to existence since the enslavement of the black people on American soil. In the newly formed families, intermarriage and mixed-blood identity are assigned national consequence as a Reconstructionist policy. For Child, to imagine a national identity is to move beyond the constrictions of racial identity. Child's idea of the nation is neither a utopic ideal nor a distance from reality. On the contrary, it attacks the reality of "racism of the North and the South during Reconstruction" (Cullen Sizer 165) by holding "up to the nation a model of interracial solidarity for the future" (Karcher 148). Child's vision of an American nation is thus embedded in the imagination of a national identity, which is able to eliminate and discriminative understandings of racial identity.

It is possible to interrogate the forms of masquerade and carnival, and multiple forms of kinship that appear as Child's tools to tackle racial slavery and offer alternative views of social life. Masquerade and carnival forms operate as a challenge to the existing world of bourgeois moralism that holds blacks as slaves. Exposing the social inequalities and incongruities through such devices, Child empowers her female characters so that they can struggle against the evils of

slavery. Though they are depicted as weak and fallible due to illness and threat of rape, as in Rosa and Flora's examples respectively, Rosa and Flora's process of maturation, which is depicted in sentimental terms, from sensitive characters to self-sufficient women signifies a transition from the domestic sphere to publicity. This transition from domestic to public domain serves to temper the bourgeois division of social spheres with female agency and freedom. Rosa and Flora's domestic lives now take a public form as they step into "publicity which their father had so much dreaded" (Child 47) when he was still alive. This process of violation of the private/public dichotomy can be observed in the novel after the death of Mr. Royal and the separation from the family house. It is emphasized that "overwhelming sorrows" (Child 47) of losing their family create "sudden reverses" (Child 47) that mature Rosa and Flora "with wonderful rapidity" (Child 47). However, this is a process for Rosa and Flora to leave their dependence on their father behind and begin to "form plans for future support" (Child 47) and work hard despite their inexperience. From this moment on, all Rosa thinks of is her career as a singer. Likewise, Flora spends hours sitting "patiently at the task of embroidery" (Child 47), pondering on their future lives. Now quotidian domestic preoccupations like singing, dancing and embroidery within the borders of their house have taken on a gloomy dimension in which the hardships of loss of a family become even more visible.

Child highlights Rosa's prolonged suffering to emphasize the tragedy of enslavement, yet she deliberately removes Rosa and Flora away from the fictional patterns of tragic mulatto by virtue of the power they gain in the following chapters. By firstly exposing and then altering the pattern of her famous literary model of the

tragic mulatto, Child reverses the doom of tragedy that views mulattoes as “peoples as a bodily inferiority or a profound loneliness” (Bantum 16). Tragic lives of the mulatto people are seen as “lives that are fashioned in-between, lives that exist perpetually on the precipice of death or in cycles of perpetual performance” (Bantum 16). Yet, Child inverts this tragic downfall of mulattoes with a focus on interracial couplings in the possibility of a harmonious nation, and thus enables her readers to imagine the indispensable nature of the Abolitionist cause. Rosa’s extended period of illness can be deemed a metaphor for slavery itself. Rosa is able to realize that “there is no law to protect a defenceless woman” (Child 184-185) but eventually she has self-control not to yield to the law or social codes of slavery. Gaining her consciousness after months of illness, Rosa becomes decisive about her will to break from Gerald. As Madame and Signor express, Rosa would not “consent to a secondary position where her heart was concerned” (Child 179). Though it is common for “quadroons to accede to such double arrangements” (Child 179) as in Gerald’s double arrangement to remain married to Lily and still be related to Rosa in a counterfeit marriage, Rosa would not “submit to anything she deemed dishonorable” (Child 179). Further, Rosa changes her name into Madame Gonzalez and thus assumes the identity of her quadroon mother. Rosa plainly dissolves her partnership with Gerald and strips herself of Gerald’s sovereignty by regaining the sense of belonging to her roots. Moreover, in the scene where Rosa requests papers of manumission from Gerald after her recovery, she does not act like his slave, and therefore she does not let him act like her master. She expresses with dignity how “painful” it is to have her “life haunted by this dreadful spectre of slavery” (Child 181). When she says that she will establish a new future for herself and repay Gerald the money he spent on herself and her sister, Gerald feels alarmed

and “discomposed by her cool business tone” (Child 182). Having learned “the bitter significance of the law” (Child 182), Rosa feels strange when she feels the power to remove Gerald from her life as an “unprotected” (Child 181), pregnant woman who is in defiance of the principles of domesticity and laws of slavery.

The legal conditions however are more contradictory than Rosa imagines, yet the restrictions in legality gives way to different roads for Rosa to take outside the United States. As weeks pass by without the fulfillment of the promise Gerald gave to Rosa for the manumission, Rosa’s anxiety amounts to distrust. Even if she attains manumission, “there were greater obstacles in the way than she, in her inexperience, was aware of” (Child 186). As the omniscient narrator notifies, “the laws of Georgia restrained humane impulses by forbidding the manumission of a slave” (Child 186). Gerald has to “either incur very undesirable publicity by applying to the legislature for a special exception in this case, or she must be manumitted in another State” (Child 186). When Gerald “promised to send the papers, he intended to satisfy her with a sham certificate, as he had done with a counterfeit marriage [...]” (Child 186). Apparently, Gerald’s act portrays his selfish desire to keep Rosa under his control, though he is still legally married to Lily. The fact that Gerald procrastinates manumission originates from his desire to keep his sham marriage with Rosa a secret and reveals the domestic tragedy of slave women’s oppression and commodification in the slaveholding bourgeois American homes. The reason why Gerald still tortures Rosa lies also in the fact that he is intimidated by Rosa’s will to continue her life on her own with a sense of regeneration. Rosa’s empowerment and her strong will to go out in public and have a career hence unsettle the antebellum social dichotomy of the public and the

private, upsetting the domestic secrets that keep up the appearance of the bourgeois class. Seeing that there will be no outlet from this condition, Rosa plans to go abroad with her stand-in parents, Madame and Signor.

It is significant to note that Child's subversive strategy of masquerade serves to dramatize the hardships of fugitive slaves' struggles to attain freedom only through deliberate passing for white. Racial masquerade or "racial passing is particularly a phenomenon of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century" "though the camouflaging of aspects of one's identity is probably a human universal" (Sollors 247). As Brian Bantum explicates, "passing, in the American context, was the practice of a person of African descent who could be perceived as white "passing" themselves off as white and thus "pass" into white society" (46). Thus, masquerade operates for black people as a significant tool of political resistance to enslavement. In the nineteenth century, masquerade seems the only and an appropriate strategy to create a fake identity to flee from slavery in order to attain freedom. The slaves, especially mulattoes, become masked performers who pass for white in their fashionable clothes or through gender crossing, in particular females assuming the roles of white males who have more mobility in society. On the other hand, however, because black people had to strip themselves of their own black identity to gain freedom and to act in whiteface in the course of racial masquerade, the whole process also meant nothing but perpetuating the racial superiority of whiteness.

Nonetheless, given the sociopolitical circumstances, Child's use of masquerade in her characters' escape addresses this issue of racial masquerade in

her criticism that passing for white becomes the sole means of gaining freedom, - instead of constitutional rights that would grant the same freedom. Since masquerade necessitates the appearance of something else in particular in festive mode, it becomes a carnivalesque practice, a venue to turn the restrictive world of slavery upside down. In this respect, masquerade shows through racial-crossing and cross-dressing that in a possibility of a reversible world neither race nor gender are as fixed as ideologies of racial superiority. Oxford English Dictionary defines masquerade as “To go about in disguise, as at a masquerade; to pass oneself off under a false character or *as* someone else” (OED Online) or “to have or assume the appearance of something else” (OED Online). Then, masquerade can be regarded as a pretense, an imitation, and a disguise. The novel dramatizes that this fake outward show becomes indispensable for the characters to escape human bondage. Slavery’s unbearable weight forces the fugitives to change their identity in different forms of masquerade, which provides readers to evaluate the significance of slavery’s ills from a different perspective. The process of masquerade begins with Madam and Signor’s plan of escape. Convinced in their letter exchange that “there will be no security in this country for this poor girl [Rosa]” (Child 187), Madame and Signor plan to take Rosa to Europe and “bring her out as a singer” (Child 187). The European continent serves to bring different characters together in a race-free atmosphere, helping them form new relations that are beyond bloodlines. In order to take Rosa to Europe without Gerald’s prevention, Madame assumes a diplomatic manner in her letters to Gerald so that he could not begin to suspect their motives of escape. This first step can be considered the first guise they assume in order to evade any potential obstacle Gerald might raise. This guise further paves the way for the air of liberty that Rosa, Madame, and Signor

will breathe in Europe. The promise of freedom is felt even by Rosa, who is so “accustomed to passive endurance” (Child 188), when she “could not help smiling sometimes at the totally different tone of the letters” (Child 188) sent by Madame. It is essential to observe at this point of the story that this attempt operates to turn the patriarchal world of slavery upside-down, in which the patriarch Gerald would be chained down in his own prison. Madame’s plan to provide a “safe asylum” (Child 189) offers a “glimmering light in the future” (Child 189) for Rosa after she gives birth to Gerald’s son. Meanwhile, Rosa also escapes a second sale that Gerald occasions to pay his debts to Mr. Bruteman, one of the former creditors of Mr. Royal. This scene where Gerald sells Rosa to Mr. Bruteman jaggedly in the presence of his servant, Tom, during his visit to New Orleans, is another business transaction of slavery and the commodification of the female slave body, which has already been deprived of its vitality.

Rosa’s stay in New Orleans is short but fraught with the miserable past memories of her house and family. Nevertheless, this brief visit forms the first step of the escape plan, in the second step of which Signor and Rosa leave for New York and then from New York to Marseilles under the name of Signor Balbino and his daughter. Child’s use of distinct forms of masquerade demonstrates that for a slave girl after whom the cruel slaveholders like Mr. Bruteman pursue mercilessly, freedom entails masquerade, a new identity that would not give away the true identity of the fugitive. The escape pattern shows that the escape itself causes “great trouble and expense to obtain” (Child 203) one’s freedom, in particular if this is a woman who is forced to be separated from her new-born baby, - as Madame planned it for the goodness of Rosa and her baby. This intentional alteration in

identity will soon result in another masquerade that happens by pure coincidence. Leaving her baby under Tulee's care, Rosa arrives in New York with Signor after a three-day delay in Philadelphia due to her recurrent physical weakness. Yet this chance element led them to miss the ship, the *Mermaid*, in which they were supposed to sail to Marseilles. This twist of fate later helps Rosa to escape from Mr. Bruteman, as she is believed to have sailed in the *Mermaid*, which is reported to have foundered into the Atlantic Ocean. Though the news of Rosa's flight causes a duel between Mr. Bruteman and Gerald, and a wound on Gerald's shoulder by Mr. Bruteman, Rosa's presumed death endows her with the freedom she longs to attain. Just like the impression of counterfeit death Flora left on Rosa and the others so as to fly from Gerald's advances and slavery, death happens to be another form of masquerade to evade and flee from slavery.

All of these incidents remind the reader of Rosa and Flora's earlier flight attempts through gender crossing or racial passing for white. On hearing the bad news that they are legally slaves after their father's death, the sisters attempt to flee from New Orleans with Franz Blumenthal's and later Gerald's help. During such moments, Child compares well-disposed characters with evil ones. Franz Blumenthal who is a young charitable friend of Mr. Royal's temporarily eases the pain of loss. Since Franz found a job thanks to Mr. Royal's reference letters, he pays his debt to Mr. Royal by helping Rosa and Flora after his death. Franz helps the sisters secretly and only contacts with Madame when he brings clothes, money or a token of memory from their late father. Franz's civility creates the only moment of happiness before the revelation that Rosa and Flora are legally slaves. He brings the posthumous presents of their father, which burst them into

“swimming tears” (Child 49). These “swimming tears” (Child 49) are but harbingers of the tragedy that will soon appear with the revelation of their legal status as slaves. The tragedy, as has been discussed before, manifested itself with the possibility of being sold to the creditors, an event which would change Rosa and Flora’s lives.

Similar to the flight plan Madame arranges to take Rosa to Europe, she has previously plotted against the creditors with the intent of spiriting Rosa and Flora away from them. Madame and the Signor both know very well that the law is on the side of the slaveholders, and feel obliged to disguise the sisters, taking them to the North in order for Rosa and Flora to escape the auction-stand. Child adds a melodramatic theatrical dimension to the parts acted by Madame and Signor. On hearing the bad news, Madame and Signor behave as if they were “rehearsing some very passionate scene in a tragedy” in a “violence” of “emotions” (Child 50). Madame’s determination helps the sisters go out of this “world of trouble” (Child 52) in disguise when they learn that their mother was a slave and their father’s creditors “claim a right to sell” (Child 54) them. In this plan, whiteness is ironically the most important means of disguise that provides the characters with a distinct identity they need to escape from slavery. The disguise further necessitates roleplaying that transforms the realities of daily life into a theatrical performance. Furthermore, experience of cultural relocation that is initiated with the uprooting from the native land is also felt now in the escape from an established home. Madame and Signor are the leading actress and actor respectively in the escape. They instruct Rosa and Flora how to assume a disguise and perform their parts after they are disguised with the clothing Signor Papanti sends them. The escape plan

easily takes shape and the destination is settled as Boston where the abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison is expected to assist them. At this moment, the novel highlights the sisters' desperate condition by blending fact and fiction, making use of real personages like Garrison and incorporating their historical role into the novel. The bonds between Madame and the sisters intensify as Madame does her best in helping them out and securing their future. They have to act quickly because they are face to face with the peeping and prying creditors. Meanwhile, Gerald comes to help in arranging the details of the plan and conceals his own identity from the creditors. Gerald organizes a fake escape plan that is supposed to manipulate the creditors. Pretending to organize a plan whose destination is the North, he tries to manipulate the creditors by not accompanying Rosa, Flora, Madame and Signor in their first voyage. According to the original plan, they will first sail to Nassau at midnight by assuming their new identities.

The image of darkness is highlighted in relation to the collective misconceptions about blackness in the scene of flight. As scholar Peter Schmidt contends, Child's "young heroines" (33), Rosa and Flora, "are described in ways that stress the presence of what Child believes her readers will interpret as indubitable markers of blackness, such as dusky skin or curly black hair or a propensity for singing and dancing" (33). Being black, a quadroon, an octoroon, a mulatto, a slave, in particular, being a helpless black woman, and having a brown skin and black hair are all "indubitable markers of blackness" (Schmidt 33) that compose alleged consequential racist thoughts of the bourgeois class. Rosa and Flora's beauty and talents are marked by their skin and hair color that destabilize the assumed orderly cosmos of bourgeois stability. The novel dramatizes that even

if one is proud of one's ancestry, the would-be world of representations created by the gentlemanly bourgeois class make them feel degraded due to the illogical establishment of racism. Being a quadroon is a circumstance of "degradation" (Child 61) as Flora tells Gerald when she says that she does not want to degrade his reputation in case they are discovered during their escape. Gerald has already acquired the knowledge that they are octoroons and their mother was a quadroon, and guarantees the success of the plan so as to soothe Rosa. However, Gerald's ill will comes to light when he responds to Rosa about the possible failure of the plan. He says, "It *will* succeed, dearest. But even if it should not, you shall never be the property of any man but myself" (Child 61). Gerald, knowing that Mr. Royal "always kept them like wax flowers under a glass cover" (Child 63) and that "they are as timid as hares" (Child 63), proposes to marry Rosa in the hope of making her and Flora his "*property*" (Child 61). The image of heaven in Mr. Royal's house in which the sisters used to take a "sip from the fountain" and "walk round the orange grove" (Child 63) is nothing but an embellished house of oppression. Now the heavenly picture of the house vanishes, for they cannot even go to the house in fear of detection by the creditors.

In this scene of flight, Child introduces a world of masquerade that is mingled with pleasure and jeopardy, opening up a temporary escape from slavery by introducing transformation to the status quo. This transformation the masquerade provides challenges all the system of patriarchal slavery when Madame, Rosa and Flora all assume disguises in a sort of theatrical scene. Gender crossing also appears as an indispensable element to mask real identities. Madame assumes the identity of her cousin, Mr. Duroy, and Rosa and Flora wrap themselves

up as the two boys with whom Mr. Duroy went into Madame's house. Gerald as the organizer of the plot helps them flee as if he knows nothing about the Royal family and the sisters' condition. Gerald's aim is to make Rosa and Flora his own "property" (Child 61). Gerald tells them to "assume their dresses" (Child 59), and he has "assumed this disguise" (Child 59) to avoid the creditors. Rosa and Flora act like boys as they "go out naturally" (Child 59) so as not to leave any trace behind but they are also possessed by the fear of being seized by "some rough hand" (Child 65) at any moment in the street. Child raises the tension at this part in the narrative as they take a carriage and are questioned by the driver. The disguised Madame replies to the questions and dismisses any suspicion. They arrive at a house and exchange their disguises for the second time for the wedding ceremony of Rosa and Gerald. Their "disguises were quickly exchanged for dresses from their carpet-bags" (Child 65) that is followed by Flora's exchange of "a garland of orange-buds for her sister's hair" (Child 65) with "a white gauze scarf" (Child 65). After the ceremony, they all went to ship Victoria in darkness. This ceremony of the sham marriage is one example that a slaveholder held in order to enslave people. This counterfeit arrangement of the marriage ceremony can also be regarded as a form of masquerade that serves the purposes of slavery by an evil, selfish supporter of slavery like Gerald. Unlike Gerald's ill-willed arrangement, Madame has a "talent ... for arranging the truth with variations" (Child 64), as Flora says. Gerald's plan renders service to his best interest. Gerald's actions dramatize that slavery itself is a kind of ideological clothing, a malicious disguise detaching the true self of the individual from the soul and body. On the contrary, Madame's plan serves to distort the harsh realities of slavery for the goodness of the enslaved.

On the other hand, masquerade further takes a more carnivalesque form on the part of Flora when Mrs. Delano takes her to Europe. Flora, adopted by Mrs. Delano due to Gerald's threat of rape, enjoys the ambiance of freedom with her adopted mother in Europe. In this process, the relation between Flora and Mrs. Delano becomes instructive for Mrs. Delano as her bourgeois ideas begin to change. Mrs. Delano becomes Child's mouthpiece as she expresses her dilemmas about her marriage in the past, the make-believe happiness in it and the social codes of propriety. Though she frequently warns Flora about "conventional propriety" (Child 151) and is "a little disturbed" (Child 151) because of Flora's violation of the cult of true womanhood, she checks herself, questioning the genuine meaning of happiness and propriety. Adoption and kinship also functions as a shield for both Flora and Mrs. Delano against the threats of slavery. Even though Mrs. Delano is not regretful and voices her happiness due to the adoption and Flora's companionship, the obligation and the consciousness to keep Flora's identity a secret in Boston makes her feel that she preserves "a secret at war with the conventional rules of society" (Child 146). Mrs. Delano is still under the oppressive influence of the racial biases and social codes of the bourgeois class. She finds it useless to teach the Bostonian manners to Flora after realizing that she is too vivacious, lively for the serious mannerism of both the South and the North. Mrs. Delano herself has the same prejudgments up to a point where she comes to evaluate the true nature of the issue. This war between the secret and the social norms is in fact an articulation of Mrs. Delano's reservations and inner struggle to choose a path free from impositions of society. She realizes that Flora's ceaseless concealment and seclusion from society is one of the oppressions of slavery. She

thinks she has to make a choice between social propriety and Flora's "charming" "naturalness" (Child 151), and she finally opts for her naturalness. Mrs. Delano's reasoning is quite important, as she comes to free her mind from racist thoughts, setting an abolitionist agenda for her future steps. She declares that

One wrong produces another wrong; and thus frightfully may we affect
the destiny of others, while blindly following the lead of selfishness.
But the past, with all its weaknesses and sins, has gone beyond recall;
and I must try to write a better record on the present (Child 150).

Child underscores the chain of errors that led racism to produce slavery and distinct forms of discriminatory ideologies like true womanhood. In this sense, Flora shakes Mrs. Delano's perceptions of true womanhood when she asks whether she finds it "tiresome ... to be always remembering what is the custom". She adds that she is sure she shall never learn them (Child 152). Child is critical of concealment that is needed to mask the real identity of Flora during her stay at Boston with Mrs. Delano. The fear of detection makes Mrs. Delano take further steps. When Flora comes across Gerald in the streets of Boston and is able to remain unrecognized due to her veil, Mrs. Delano immediately dashes a letter off to Mr. Willard Percival to help her off with the situation. On Mr. Percival's timely visit, Mrs. Delano tells Flora's family history and how the two sisters "found themselves claimed as slaves under the Southern law, that 'the child follows the condition of the mother'" (Child 156). Mrs. Delano asks whether it is possible for Gerald to claim Flora as his slave in the Free States. Since Gerald took Rosa and Flora first to Nassau, Bahamas, at their escape from New Orleans, Mr. Percival says, "British soil has the enviable

distinction of making free whosoever touches it” (Child 156). But laws are complicated and northern and southern courts vary in their legal decisions. When she is overwhelmed by the thought of getting involved in Flora’s concealment – since having an “aversion to all sorts of intrigues and mysteries” seems “strange” (Child 147) to her, she ponders and concludes that she would assist her in any case. Having no other choice to make, she accepts Mr. Percival’s suggestion to sail for Europe.

Europe furnishes Flora and Mrs. Delano with freedom that Rosa, Madame, and Signor will soon experience in Rome. In keeping with the contrast between slavery’s oppression in the United States and freedom in European cities, Child’s focus on sceneries of carnival in Flora’s experiences in European cities dislocates the despotic model of racial slavery, and prepares the reader for her vision of reconstruction. Child’s emphasis on carnivalesque scenes suggests that all of these scenes are posed against patriarchal slavery, and against the abusive power of the slaveholders. Carnival is a general word for events or rituals that are associated with forms of parade, celebration, and festivity. All of such practices have a minor position in society, as they are thought to violate the existing system. For this reason, carnivalesque practices are undesired and unwelcome to the authorities or oppressors. On the other hand, carnivals are also registered events that allow people to act distinctly from the times when order is established. Critic Mikhail Bakhtin explains in his *Rabelais and his World* (1984) that carnival “celebrated temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order” (10), and it “marked the suspension of all hierarchical ranks, privileges, norms, and prohibitions” (10). When considered from Bakhtinian perspective, the elements of

masquerade and carnival conjure elements of festivity, change, and liberty, placing them in dialogue with one another in contradistinction to all oppressive forms of ideology. Child's focus on such dialogic world of the carnival refers to her Reconstructionist belief that proposes that all liberating elements are symbolic of "the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change, and renewal" (Bakhtin 10). Ironically enough, all of these signs of renewal take place in European countries, which become destinations of escape from American slavery, and which provide liberty as opposed to the United States, a country that is founded upon the principles of liberty and equality. Against the social and legal ills of the American nation, Child produces a world and a discourse of carnival, which negate the discourse and laws of slavery. Child presents heterogeneity in the diversity of the cultural pluralism and various languages Flora is exposed to in these countries. During Flora and Mrs. Delano's three to six-months residence in England, France, Switzerland, and Italy together with the abolitionist friends, Mr. and Mrs. Percival, Flora "picked up, in her quick way, a good degree of culture from the daily tone of conversation" (Child 206). Child illustrates this in the previous chapters in the "polyglot family" (32) structure of the Royals. Rosa and Flora speak and sing in Spanish and French in their family house that reflect the happiness the harmony of variety brings into the American household. In the scene where Flora speaks in French and Rosa in Spanish, Mr. Royal pats Flora's head "playfully" (Child 32) as he says, "What a polyglot family we are! Your grandfather's Spanish, your grandmother's French, and your father's English, all mixed up in an *olla podrida* (Child 32). In this early part of the novel, Child poses her readers the question "What is polyglot?" (Child 32) through Flora's question. When Mr. Royal calls Flora "ignoramus" (Child 32), he refers to her youth, while Child addresses her

readers' or American society's ignorance in and discredit to cultural diversity and miscegenation. Against this policy of exclusion and discriminative ideological structure of the American nation, Child creates voices of people to emphasize the multiplicity in racial identity.

Child reinforces this idea of heterogeneity also through Madame and Signor, the attendants of the Royals. Madame who is French and Signor who is Italian contribute to the olla podrida in the house, for they have been teaching Rosa and Flora French and Italian since their childhood. Furthermore, Child offers this idea of multiplicity in language, cultural richness in the images of miscellaneous flowers in the novel, as she believes that "a healthy society was one in which human beings were recognized for their diverse origins, interests, and knowledge" (Pratt 93). When Flora explains Mrs. Lila Delano the details about their family history, she says that her mother used to call Franz Blumenthal "Florimond" by making his name a flowery one. Flora adds that it is her late mother's tradition to blend names of different flowers with their "*olla podrida* talk" (Child 149). Child strengthens the image of plurality with the flower names she gives to her characters who are able to appreciate multiplicity. Similarly, Debra J. Rosenthal claims that Child "merges the discourse of race into the discourse of flowers in order to interrogate what is natural about Reconstruction racial ideology" (222). What Child introduces as the diversity and multiracialism to the American domestic sphere in characters' lineages and names as a Reconstruction policy finds a new expression in the characters' transatlantic visits to different European countries, and in the hodgepodge or olla podrida of languages.

This mixing up “in an *olla podrida*” (Child 32), meaning a miscellany or hodgepodge of various cultures, disappears in the novel as Rosa and Flora’s legal position change from free individuals to slaves. The scene in which Rosa and Flora have departed from their family house and are “afraid to go there for a minute” (Child 64) shows the drastic change racial slavery has caused in their lives. Although the homes Flora stays as a child and during her hiding from Gerald “are tasteful and elegant” like those in the popular magazines of the time, they are almost always oppressive, “foreign and strange” with an “unwonted sense of constraint” (Child 145). Flora’s irrepressible suffering from homesickness foregrounds the problem of homelessness, while suggesting the idea that separation from kin that slavery leads to always generates irremediable homesickness. This suffering however transforms Flora from a sentimental lover of refinement to a less romantic realist. Her nostalgia for “*olla-podrida* phrases” (Child 145) reminds her of her southern days and a hodgepodge of tongues like Spanish, French, and Italian spoken in their long lost family mansion. The richness of the Southern repertoire of different racial identities defies the totalizing visions of patriarchy and slavery. Nevertheless, the fact that “nobody to talk *olla podrida* to now” (Child 64) refers once again to the hostility American racial prejudices developed in the minds of the citizens. Child critiques the racist view that regards blackness as an uncanny threat to the American homes. In her critique, she presents the Royal family and Flora’s experiences of cultural pluralism in Europe as epitomes of harmonious coexistence of different cultures under the roof of the same nation.

In Flora’s experiences in Europe, Child restructures American national home through a sense of national regeneration. Her rejuvenation in Rome portrays

that thanks to the carnivalesque atmosphere Flora inhabits a body and soul different from her own, and her free behavior embodies a carnivalesque desire that is quite the reverse of her suppressed state under slavery's oppression. The joy with which carnival is experienced is first conditioned by plurality that the interracial adoption provides in the newly formed kinship between Flora and Mrs. Delano. Child uses sentimental relations between the characters as a tool through which to address the readers' conscience, and lets them recognize that there can be stronger emotional bonds than kinship. The emotional kinship Flora forms with Mrs. Delano, the former lover of her father, and her address as "new Mamita" (Child 206), eliminates the particularizing impositions of monotype kinship structures and prototype racial identity. What binds them so strongly is the strong sentimental nostalgia Flora feels for the loving father and Mrs. Delano for a long lost affectionate lover and a vanished possibility of a happy life with Mr. Royal. Not only is Flora a protégé, she also becomes an "adopted daughter" (Child 146), a member of kinship beyond genealogical codes. Pluralism in kinship is presented as a taboo just like the taboo against blackness and miscegenation in the text. When Mrs. Delano expresses that she could not have thought of entering into "such a relation with one allied to the colored race", or with a "slave" (Child 146), her ignorance as to the true nature of colored people and their condition is exposed. The novel thus portrays the influence of political ideologies on its citizens regarding the geography. Child reminds her audience that geography and ideological borders within the same nation enhance the categorizations of racial identities and perpetuate the misconceptions. Northerners are unfamiliar with most of the practices and laws in the South. Neither are they aware of the abolitionist activities

carried out in the North. The conversations show that northerners are uninformed or ill-informed about the oppressions slave laws inflicted on slaves.

The carnivalesque atmosphere of the European cities plays a vital role in the process of maturation Flora is going through. The elements of carnival and heavenly places help her gain a distinct worldview dissimilar from the oppressive world of slavery in the South. This distinction in the manners and socio-political culture of other people opens up a new revolutionary world in her mind. In essence, carnival is “not only an impediment to revolutionary change, it is revolution itself” (Holquist xviii), and, for Child, this revolutionary effect produces a great disparity with slavery’s punitive practices. All sorts of events Rosa and Flora experience are sure to be viewed as transgression in the slaveholding states in the United States, for carnival is a “world of topsy-turvy, of heteroglot exuberance, of ceaseless overrunning and excess where all is mixed, hybrid, ritually degraded and defiled (Stallybrass and White 8). Bakhtin relates in his *Rabelais and his World* that carnival has the power to disperse the sense of freedom, vivacity, and renewal among the performers as well as the audience watching the carnival:

In fact, carnival does not know footlights, in the sense that it does not acknowledge any distinction between actors and spectators. ... Carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all the people. While carnival lasts, there is no other life outside it. During carnival time life is subject only to its laws, that is, the laws of its own freedom. It has a universal spirit; it is a special condition of the entire world, of the

world's revival and renewal, in which all take part. Such is the essence of carnival, vividly felt by all its participants (7-8).

Thus, Bakhtin's words clarify the sharp discrepancy between a world of oppression and a world of carnival in which the officialized customs and legal implementations are turned upside down. Instead, the carnival startlingly conjures up a realm of joy, regeneration, and revitalization that are vital for survival of those who feel this need to find an outlet from a restricted way of life.

Child presents Flora's characteristic peculiarities as a lively embodiment of a carnivalesque county like Rome. Flora is "herself composed by the same materials of which Italy was made" (Child 207) and this similarity between her disposition and the vivacity of Italy makes her feel at home. Since there seems no restriction or confinement or prejudice, Flora's "vivacity redoubled" (Child 207) when she is walking in the midst of "the gay, impulsive people" (Child 207), witnessing their "bright costumes, the impassioned music, and the flowing language" (Child 207). Child heightens the joyful effect freedom produces by showing Flora seeing especially "features of landscape" (207), "the play of the sunshine on the orange-colored lichens" (207), and the "clear blue sky and the soft outline of the hills" (207) rather than "the ruins of Rome" (207) or the "story of the moldering arches" (207). Child constantly juxtaposes Flora's rejuvenation and liberty in Italy with her melancholia for the Southern home to highlight the disparity between the slaveholding United States and European countries where race is not an ideological determiner of human life and freedom. Flora goes back and forth between the reminiscences of her family house and carnivalesque atmosphere of Albano. After

drowning in her memories, she enjoys an uninterrupted freedom on seeing

The peasants who went dancing by in picturesque costumes, and the finely formed women walking erect with vases of water on their heads, or drawing an even thread from their distaffs, as they went singing along, furnished her memory with subjects for many a picture. Sometimes her exclamations would attract the attention of a group of dancers, who, pleased with an exuberance of spirits akin to their own, and not unmindful of forthcoming coin, would beckon to the driver to stop, while they repeated their dances for the amusement of the Signorina. A succession of pleasant novelties awaited her at Albano. Running about among the ilex-groves in search of bright mosses, she would come suddenly in front of an elegant villa, with garlands in stucco, and balconies gracefully draped with vines. Wandering away from that, she would utter a little cry of joy at the unexpected sight of some reclining marble nymph, over which a little fountain threw a transparent veil of gossamer sparkling with diamonds. Sometimes she stood listening to the gurgling and dripping of unseen waters; and sometimes melodies floated from the distance, which her quick ear caught at once, and her tuneful voice repeated like a mocking-bird. The childlike zest with which she entered into everything, and made herself a part of everything, amused her quiet friend, and gave her even more pleasure than the beauties of the landscape (Child 208).

In carnival, “a second life, a second world of folk culture is thus constructed: it is to

a certain extent a parody of the extracarnival life, a "world inside out," (Bakhtin 11). The novel revives the Bakhtinian "carnavalesque sense of the world" (1998 251) in Flora's celebration of natural beauties and the Italian folk culture where one race or class is not privileged over the other. Flora here is as "happy as souls newly arrived in the Elysian Fields" (Child 210). Child likens the scenery to paradise in her specific reference to Elysian Fields and in the depiction of the heavenly scenery. In Greek mythology, Elysian Fields refer to "originally the paradise to which heroes on whom the gods conferred immortality were sent" (Encyclopedia Britannica, Elysium). Peasants in picturesque costumes, women walking in dignity with vases of water, a group of dancers in high spirits, marble nymphs, fountains, diamonds, elegant villas, garlands, vines, and melodies are all in marked contrast with the tyrannical rule of slavery in the United States, emitting a sense of rejuvenation after the spiritual death in the US. Likewise, when they enter "the Eternal City", Rome, the city is also portrayed as paradise on earth: "girdled by hills that stood out with wonderful distinctness in the luminous atmosphere of that brilliant day, which threw a golden veil over all its churches, statues, and ruins" (210). As they drive away, "all things passed through magical changes" (210) and "the hills were seen in vapory visions, shifting their hues with opaline glances; and over the green, billowy surface of the broad Campagna was settling a prismatic robe of mist, changing from rose to violet" (210). Heaven and earth collaborate in the creation of a divine atmosphere: "earth seemed to be writing, in colored notes, with tenderest modulations, her farewell hymn to the departing God of Light. And the visible music soon took voice in the vibration of vesper-bells, in the midst of which they entered Rome" (Child 210).

All these celestial beauties of the landscape are “extempore” (Child 209) entertainments that prepare Flora for other carnivalesque places she will witness soon. During their visit to Vatican, they hear the “rapid thumps on the tambourine” (Child 215) that indicate “the saltarello was again in rehearsal” (Child 215). Saltarello refers to both the Italian music and the lively dance. This is accompanied by the sound of the piffero that “one of various old Italian wind instruments used by shepherds” (Merriam Webster). All of these carnivalesque elements evoke a blissful atmosphere in the streets of Vatican: “If a *piffero* strolled through the street, the monotonous drone of his bagpipe was reproduced in most comical imitation; and anon there was a gush of bird-songs, as if a whole aviary were in the vicinity. Indeed, no half-hour passed without audible indication that the little recluse was in merry mood.” (Child 215). In a city governed by absolute monarchy and the influence of religion, merriment still pervades, giving joy to the visitors. Child juxtaposes Vatican and the U.S., demonstrating that this contrast between the happy atmosphere and the restrictions the religious authorities might pose is in effect not valid, whereas slavery’s tyrannical rule seems more overwhelming in the United States.

It is also such moments where Child becomes particularly critical of the cult of domesticity and womanhood in the discrepancy she foregrounds between Flora’s spontaneous actions and the so-called cultured behavior of these ideologies. During their visit to the historical “long passages lined with statues” (Child 215) in Vatican, Flora exclaims impulsively, “O Mamita, how lovely!” (Child 215), forgetting the “presence of strangers” (Child 215) when she sees the statue of Cupid. Flora’s impulsive reaction seems unwelcome to the polite society and

embarrasses her. Mrs. Delano and Flora recall the ideals of domesticity and womanhood in southern plantations where positive aspects are only applicable to white middle class women. Flora later invalidates these cultural norms in a system where men are liar slaveholders, like Gerald, by saying that she could not bear Gerald's amorous advances "when he was Rosa's husband" (Child 225). Child uses Flora as her spokesperson by posing her readers the question, in Samuels words, "what romance can be had in a republic in which identity is so easily dislocated" (127). Flora is now aware that slavery is a system in which any idealized form of home life and womanhood lose their validity.

Child implies that American slavery is such an impelling institution that even in a free country and in its free atmosphere, Flora is under the disguise of veils. However, Child eases the pain of slavery through the kinship bonds between Mrs. Delano and Flora. The sense of being kin through adoption is a cure Child offers Flora and Rosa who are desperate. All of Flora's hard experiences mature Mrs. Delano and she grows into a devoted abolitionist, leaving behind her bourgeois views and racial prejudices. Flora and Mrs. Delano are "happy, as all human beings are, to have another heart so dependent on them" (Child 223). Mrs. Delano expresses her commitment to the abolitionist cause openly when she says, "money really seems to me of very little value, except as a means of promoting human happiness. And in this case I might perhaps prevent moral degradation, growing out of misfortune and despair" (Child 222). Likewise, Child expands this sense of mutual understanding between people of different races and social backgrounds by establishing bonds between Flora, Mrs. Delano and the abolitionist crusaders such as Mr. and Mrs. Percival in the novel. Mr. and Mrs. Delano

accompany Flora and Mrs. Delano during their entire visit to European cities, though they know that being a well-known abolitionist can be a huge problem even in Europe. Mrs. Delano fears that Mr. and Mrs. Percival's presence with them during their next passage to Marseilles "would probably cause unpleasant interruptions and delays, and perhaps endanger his [Mr. Percival's] life" (Child 224). Mr. Percival soothes the pain Flora feels for fear of getting caught by slaveholders and Gerald in Vatican by investigating the possible threats and thereby protecting Flora and Mrs. Delano from evils. "When Mr. Percival was informed of Gerald's threatening presence in Vatican, "he sallied forth to examine the lists of arrivals; and before long he returned with the statement that Mr. and Mrs. Fitzgerald were registered among the newcomers" (Child 217). This event initiates Flora's search for Rosa, as she still know that Rosa is Gerald's wife. During the conversation between the abolitionist Mrs. Percival and Mrs. Delano, Mrs. Percival suggests that Mrs. Delano go in search of Rosa and bring her to her sister and be a mother to her (Child 222) as well.

Child presents Mrs. Delano's house as a space of political conversation, saturated with the abolitionist cause. It is also another carnivalesque place in that it brings together people of different political views, creating a carnival of thoughts that are discussed freely. As Mrs. Delano is transforming into a devoted abolitionist, she represents the urgency and validity of the anti-slavery cause. Her growing awareness of the righteousness of the abolitionist cause is portrayed in her conversation with Mr. Percival who tells her of the recent slave hunt and the abolitionists' work. Mr. Percival informs Mrs. Delano about Mr. Brick, the police officer, who tells him that there is "plenty of work" for "Abolitionists nowadays"

because “there are five Southerners at the Tremont, inquiring for runaways, and cursing Garrison” (Child 270). Mr. Brick, a representative of the agents of the Fugitive Slave Law, does his duty as a police officer to hunt fugitive slaves down. Upon this information and hearing Mr. Fitzgerald’s agents’ hunt for Tom, however, Mr. Percival takes precautions and sees Father Snowdon, a former slave and now a staunch abolitionist preacher, who saved numerous slaves in the country. The point that Mr. Percival makes about Mr. Brick is that though the Boston police are not a group of “slave-hunters” (Child 271), there are some police officers that take fire as extinguishers of the fire (Child 271). Mr. Percival reminds Mrs. Delano of the fact that “the Declaration of Independence” is going “out of fashion” in some parts of the country. However, in Boston, Massachusetts, the Declaration of Independence is “still regarded by a majority of the people as a venerable document” (Child 271) that has the capacity to remind the white people of the egalitarian ideals of the American nation. As opposed to the police officers like Mr. Brick, Child in Mr. Percival’s words portrays Bostonians as people in whose ears “Whittier’s Trumpet-tones” (271) are ringing: “No slave hunt in *our* borders! no pirate on *our* strand!/No fetters in the Bay State! no slave upon *our* land!” (271). Child quotes from the poem “Massachusetts to Virginia” (1843) by John Greenleaf Whittier who was a dedicated abolitionist poet. The main idea of Whittier’s poem is to portray the political disagreement between Virginia and Massachusetts. The persona in the poem states that no matter how much the state of Virginia threatens Massachusetts, Massachusetts would not fight against them and will endow every person with freedom and humanity regardless of their race⁵. Child changes the domestic space

⁵ Whittier wrote this poem in response to a real event, the abduction of a black man, George Latimer, in the streets of Boston. In his “Introductory Note” to the poem, Whittier wrote,

into a political venue, where abolitionist articles written in the Abolitionists newspapers are freely discussed. And, with frequent references to William Lloyd Garrison who changed the political agenda of the country via his abolitionist newspaper *The Liberator*, Child keeps her readers up to date with the latest political issues of the nation. In this discussion, Child blends fact into fiction to underscore Tom's serious condition as a fugitive slave in Boston. By help of an analogy between fact and fiction, the novel incorporates a scene of political satire in the domestic sphere that was conventionally thought to be free from politics.

Another incident that reveals Mr. Green's racial biases happens when he tells Mrs. Delano about his wish to marry Flora. However, racial misconceptions appear again as the only obstacle for black/mulatto women to be held in esteem. When Mr. Green, who "was accustomed to consider his wealth and social position a prize that would be eagerly grasped at" (Child 276), asks for Mrs. Delano's permission to marry Flora, Mrs. Delano reveals Flora's family genealogy, enunciating that "on the paternal side, she descends from the French gentry and the Spanish nobility; but her mother was a quadroon slave, and she herself was sold as a slave" (Child 277). Shocked at this new-fangled piece of information, Mr. Green "seemed outwardly calm, though it cost him a pang to relinquish the captivating young creature" (Child 277). He keeps silent and avoids looking at Mrs. Delano in

Written on reading an account of the proceedings of the citizens of Norfolk, Va., in reference to George Latimer, the alleged fugitive slave, who was seized in Boston without warrant at the request of James B. Grey, of Norfolk, claiming to be his master. The case caused great excitement North and South, and led to the presentation of a petition to Congress, signed by more than fifty thousand citizens of Massachusetts, calling for such laws and proposed amendments to the Constitution as should relieve the Commonwealth from all further participation in the crime of oppression. George Latimer himself was finally given free papers for the sum of four hundred dollars.

the face, accusing Mrs. Delano of passing “a counterfeit on society” (Child 277). Mrs. Delano says with dignity that she has no intention of passing counterfeit on society as she has no racial biases and Flora’s “beauty and vivacity captivated” her before she knew anything of her origin. She simply says that because Flora “was alone in the world” and she herself was alone, they “adopted each other” (Child 278). Mr. Green, now a “disenchanted lover” shattered by Flora’s lineage and the fact that she has black blood in her veins, is still doggedly supporting the proslavery arguments, saying that it seems odd for “a lady of your [Mrs. Delano’s] education and refined views of life” (Child 278) to overcome the obstacle of race. Mrs. Delano calmly replies that the education she received in this country is “false” (Child 278) and that she has “learned to estimate people and things according to their real value, not according to any merely external accidents” (Child 278).

Mr. Green still thinks that abolitionism changes the country when he harkens that everything is so “wretchedly new, and so disagreeably fast, in this country!” (Child 278-279). Mr. Green’s attitudes show a great alteration due to the bigotry in his manners. In the face of his hostility, Mrs. Delano’s firm belief in the human value overthrows all of Mr. Green’s bourgeois mannerism and understanding of education, which is “in many respects, false” (Child 278) for Mrs. Delano. Flora also realizes Mr. Green’s demeanors as the “judge of aristocratic manners” (Child 279). In her interrogation as to the change in Mr. Green’s manners, Flora learns from Mrs. Delano that Mrs. Delano told him of Flora’s family genealogy out of duty to clarify any potential problems in the future. When Mrs. Delano tells Mr. Green that Flora is “remotely connected with the colored race” (Child 280), Mr. Green at once resolves to “deny himself the pleasure of calling again” (Child 280).

Upon hearing Mr. Green's response, Flora flares up and accuses Mr. Green and other "aristocratic Bostonians" (Child 280) of being cold. Mrs. Delano however points to the change she is going through when she states that she was once one of them but is now "becoming less cold and aristocratic every day, thanks to a little Cinderella who came to her singing through the woods, two years ago" (Child 281). Mrs. Delano also underlines the idea that it is not suitable to make a generalization for all of the northerners, as she is one of those aristocratic northerners who proved that change for a better understanding of race is also possible among them. Whereas Flora only thinks of character or human nature to be the sole merit of marriage, Mr. Green thinks of race as the sole criterion even for communication. As this conversation displays, prejudice and racism are acts of psychological violence exerted by the ostensibly kind bourgeois class over those who are deemed as the racial other.

Mrs. Delano's transformation from a bourgeois woman to an abolitionist exemplifies the possibility that northerners who are "so ignorant of the laws on this subject [Abolitionism]" (Child 157) can also assist the Abolitionists if they embrace the Abolitionist sentiment just like Mrs. Delano. Mrs. Delano articulates this sentiment when she says, "I rather think I am half an Abolitionist" (Child 261). As her purpose becomes even clearer, Mrs. Delano wants to save Chloe and her children and asks for Mr. Percival's help, saying that she is now "drawn into the vortex of abolition to the extent of helping off four fugitive slaves" (Child 266). Chloe is "another slave case" (Child 266) that Mrs. Delano is involved willingly. Telling of the values of the services Chloe once "rendered to Rosa", Mrs. Delano adds that she will pay any "expenses necessary for conveying this woman to a place

of safety, and supplying all that is necessary for her and her children, until she can support them; but I do not feel as if she were safe here (Child 267). So as to help Tom, Chloe and their two children in their escape to their freedom, Mrs. Delano buys Chloe and the children, and sees in herself the transformation she is going through. Mrs. Delano “was scarcely less surprised at herself. In the midst of her anxiety to have the boat start, she called to mind her former censures upon those who helped servants to escape from Southern masters, and she could not help smiling at the new dilemma in which she found herself” (Child 263). Mrs. Delano becomes a true abolitionist as she rescues Chloe and her children, and prevents the separation of Chloe from her children. She also becomes Child’s mouthpiece in her developing ideas of abolitionism: everything now seems “strange” (Child 268) to her, for she has lived “so many years without thinking of the wrongs of these poor people!” (Child 268).

The newly formed bonds and the dissemination of the abolitionist sentiment regenerate the houses that are formerly cursed by slavery. Gerald’s slave, Tom’s words are explicit enough to show the destruction slavery has done to black people and their families that are set apart by selling of the family members to different houses of slavery. Tom calls Mr. Fitzgerald’s house the “prison-house” (Child 267). Abolitionist actions, however, transform the haunted houses of enslavement into spaces of freedom. Mr. Percival, the abolitionist, takes Chloe and her two children to Francis Jackson’s house in Hollis Street. Since Francis Jackson is an “honest, sturdy friend of freedom” (Child 267), Mr. Percival thinks that under those circumstances they will be safe in that house which is the “depot of various subterranean railroads” (Child 267). Child refers to the Underground Railroad,

which was the web of many routes that carried fugitive slaves to freedom from the South up to the North.

Meanwhile, with Madame and Signor's assistance, Rosa becomes an opera singer in Rome where she feels liberty. After having enjoyed the freedom long after her stay with her father, Rosa feels like a ghost driven away from her home by the unhomely tyrannical world of slavery. She says, "It all seems to me strange and unreal, that, were it not for a few visible links with the past, I should feel as if I had died and passed into another world" (Child 248). Enslavement and Gerald's tyranny made her forget all about her identity, family, and past. She is so full of the dark memories of the dungeon of slavery in the Georgian island. Mr. King's protection and kind affection takes her back to the past, providing her with the memory of her father and happy home. Rosa strongly wishes to escape from the darkness that enslavement created in her psychology, and under the protection of Madame and Signor, she becomes the "new Spanish prima donna, La Senorita Rosita Campaneio" (Child 227), featuring as Norma in Vincenzo Bellini's opera *Norma* (1831). Though Rosa and Flora are in Monte Pincio at the same time, the chance of meeting is eliminated by Gerald's presence and its ensuing threat posed on Flora and Mrs. Delano. Devastated for the second time by the news of her baby and Tulee's death of yellow fever, Rosa sings before a "crowd of strange faces" (Child 228). Child uncovers slavery's masquerade in Rosa's theatrical performance as an opera singer in Rome. The opera scene in Rome provides perfect dissolution of masquerades imposed by slavery, and disseminates the distortion of identity that seemed a necessity to escape slavery. Now the masks are revealed because there is no need to escape from slavery.

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For Rosa's operatic career, Child uses a sentimental narrative style by comparing Rosa's condition to that of Norma's. Rosa tries to "put soul into" (Child 229) the songs "by imagining how she would feel if she would be in Norma's position" (Child 229). Yet, some of the "emotions she knew by her own experience, and those she sang with her deepest" (Child 229). Rosa re-experiences on the stage the anguish she and Norma has experienced because of their lovers. Rosa thus, as the prima donna, performs Norma's sufferings that reflect her own miseries. She is so good at her performance that "the fullness and richness of the tones took everybody by surprise" (Child 230) and led the audience cry as "*Bis! Bis!*" (Child 230). Rosa fully wraps herself up in Norma's character, but when it is her turn to perform a duet with Adalgisa, the woman with whom her husband betrayed Norma, it becomes even more difficult to sing her words in Gerald and Lily's presence as her audience. She re-experiences her agonies on the stage before the perpetrator. She comes face to face with Gerald when Adalgisa says, "Behold him!" (Child 230), and after a shudder, she sings in Italian, reminding Gerald of his misdeeds, "Tremble, perfidious one! Thou knowest the cause is ample!" (Child 231). This moment of confrontation reaches its peak, when with "a wonderful depth of pitying sadness, she sang, "O, how his art deceived thee!" (Child 231). Furthermore, while performing the scene where Norma "is tempted to kill her children, she fixed her indignant gaze full upon Fitzgerald, and there was an indescribable expression of stern resolution in her voice, and of pride in the carriage of her queenly head, while she sang: "Disgrace worse than death awaits them. Slavery? No! Never!" (Child 231). Rosa unmask's Gerald's masks of deception and betrayal when she gives "voice to her own emotions, forgetful of the audience for the time being" (Child

231). Gerald “quailed before” (Child 231) these words and the sin of slavery, growing “pale” (Child 231) and slinking back in his box. Lily, who is uninformed of the love triangle and Gerald’s inhumanity in the business of slavery, disturbs Gerald by drawing an analogy between Rosa’s voice and “the wonderful voice that went wandering round the plantation, like a restless ghost” (Child 232). Rosa on the stage is still agitated as she is going through “a terrible ordeal” (Child 232) of reliving the traumas of the recent past. She oscillates between her own life experience and Norma’s, and between losing herself in her agonies and “recollection of being a performer” (Child 231). The audience accepts her performance “as a remarkable inspiration of theatrical genius” (Child 231); yet hers is nothing more than a well-conceived artistic reenactment of her own life and slavery’s injuries on the theatrical stage. Mr. King’s chivalric instinct to protect Rosa from threat of villainous Gerald reflects another masquerade as well as his good nature and the growing Abolitionist sense in him. As he frequents the opera, his love for Rosa deepens. Rosa, “unconscious of his continual guardianship” (Child 245), is closely guarded by Mr. King who “assumed a dress like the driver’s” (Child 245) against “any rash enterprise” (Child 245) to be potentially made by Mr. Fitzgerald. Mr. King’s masquerade, or “invisible guardianship” (Child 246), functions as a shield against the possible threat of enslavement by Mr. Fitzgerald. Rosa is also legally provided by the police who are informed of this threat as opposed to the enslaving American police who acted in accordance with the Fugitive Slave Law.

Alfred King is another exemplary person who defends the rights of the Abolitionists. Child shows that abolitionist activism is not as easy as it seems to the

northerners. Despite the rational thoughts that Alfred King develops logically to negate racism in the first part of the novel, the novel shows that racism is a persistent notion saturated with prejudices that are hard to keep clear of. Even after a lapse of years, while secretly chasing Rosa to protect her from Gerald and after he is sure that he loves Rosa so much, Alfred King is still doubtful about Rosa's identity as a slave. He continuously thinks of his mother's reaction if she sees him dedicate himself to an opera singer, who "has twice been on the verge of being sold as a slave, and who has been the victim of a sham marriage!" (Child 246). Alfred King's interrogation uncovers the fact that slavery renders domesticity's overvalued institution of marriage a falsehood. Though he recalls that Rosa is exchanged as a slave, he comes to think reasonably and develops a sense of judgment against the prejudices. His "queries jostled against conventional ideas received from education" (Child 246) and always "followed by the thought" (Child 246) of protecting her not only from Gerald but also from the prejudices of the "deceptive world" (Child 246) of racial prejudices.

In the first scene, for instance, the meeting of Mr. Royal and Alfred King proves a "friendly familiarity" (Child 19) that stems from sharing the same belief in the perception of the human race. That Alfred King's father is "free from prejudices of all sorts" (Child 19) strengthens the connection between them. Thus, Child underscores the notion that sharing the ideas that are free from any bias or partiality makes Mr. Royal drawn to Alfred King. Alfred King's feeling of loyalty to Mr. Royal is another proof of how easy it can be to form relations with non-kin people. Child accentuates the possibility of a heterogeneous American nation with a particular emphasis on the harmony of multiplicity of kinship and racial identity

under the same national roof. She structures a network of relationships that eliminates the barriers before racism through adoption and miscegenation. In the novel, cross-cultural adoption becomes a fictive way of forming kinship, and proves as genuine and sympathetic as genealogical bonds. Though certain coincidences play a crucial role in advancing the plot, they operate to foreground a pattern of adoption and kinship that the third person narrator uses to evade negative dynamisms of racial slavery. In a divided society where slavery separates families and dissolves the kinship ties, Child seeks to provide alternative (yet socioculturally existing but legally denied and banned) form of sociality made of emotional friendship or courtship networks that are able to go beyond hierarchical social structures such as race and class superiority. Her critical approach lets readers imagine a nation based on diverse structures of kinship as an alternative to privileged groups in society. Mark Rifkin argues that such “emergent national imaginary”, like Child’s imagination of a heterogeneous American nation and the idea of its sociocultural implementation, “works to displace, or at least to depoliticize, traditional forms of authority and spatiality” (58), which revolves around “kinship networks” (58). Child’s suggestion is that diverse ways of forming intimacy can also be provided by adoption and interracial marriage, all of which prove that personal affairs of love or intimacy have in essence political dimensions that can affect the whole social configuration. For anthropologist E. Povinelli, intimacy or love “is not merely an interpersonal event, nor is it merely the site at which politics has its effects” (235). Love then is both an intimate and a political event, a feeling that has the capacity to arrange sociality biopolitically. Nonetheless, where there is a limited normative system in which relationships are simply seen as “relations of kinship” (Povinelli 100) – as in the example of the racially divided

American nation in which one singular racial line of kinship was thought to be the ideal one- and where there is no other possibility for legitimate or potential system of love except along the same racial lineage, there appears the need, as Child underscores, to acknowledge a world in which people of other racial or ethnic backgrounds can claim intimate sociality. This sociality may seem to racist ideology a sort of “stranger sociality that dependency itself is hard to imagine” (Povinelli 6).

This dependency however also addresses the issue of national belonging. If one is a stranger, homeless, and an illegitimate nonentity in a national unit, then disintegration from this national unit is a problem not only of politics but also of intimacy. The case of black slaves who are denied citizenship and fundamental human rights brings into question the possibility of structuring affective bonds that become one of the strongest components of attachment among racially different groups in relation to the imagination of a harmonious nationhood. As Bruce Dain states, “all sides in slavery and race debates, from the early days of the republic and including African Americans, were addressing the basic issue of whether slaves and ex-slaves were capable of citizenship in a republic” (Dain viii). Thus, Child combines the notions of family and nation through the emotional attachments that make up for the sense of citizenship. Child’s attempt is to recuperate the damages racial prejudice and slavery caused in black community through a harmonious view of social life and integration. Her formula reveals that kinlessness is felt once home, family and kinship is lost, is regained through adoption and genuine emotional attachments of the non-kin relationships. The given names, the family names are betrayed, lost, concealed from the public. This need for concealment evinces how

patriarchal politics regulate homogeneous kinship structure that in turn reproduces the very political system producing itself.

Child's new scheme of relations prove that adoption and miscegenation have the capacity to cure the deep wounds inflicted by the inhuman patriarchal practice of slavery and satisfy the human need to belong to a place. Child gathers the separated family together through alternative models of kinship. An "interval of nineteen years" (Child 285) elapses and Rosa and Flora have now different families and circle of friends. Gerald dies nine years after he sees her performance in Rome and left Lily with miserable memories. Gerald made both Rosa and Lily miserable; Lily "never in any way alluded to her married life, and always dismissed the subject as briefly as possible, if any stranger touched upon it" (Child 285). Flora luckily got rid of Mr. Green and his racist ideas on his learning all about her family genealogy, and married happily with prejudice-free Franz Blumenthal. In this new family, Mrs. Delano's willingness to adopt a son without parting with her daughter "formed one household" (Child 286). "As years passed on, infant faces and lisping voices came into the domestic circle,--fresh little flowers in the floral garland of Mamita Lila's life" (Child 286). Flora and Franz have three children: Alfred Royal, Rosa, and Lila. All of these three children are told that their "grandfather was a rich American merchant in New Orleans, and their grandmother a beautiful and accomplished Spanish lady; that their grandfather failed in business and died poor; that his friend Mrs. Delano adopted their mother; and that they had a very handsome Aunt Rosa, who went to Europe with some good friends, and was lost at sea" (Child 286-287), and they are thus kept from even the tragic family history until they are mature enough to learn the details about it. The bond between Flora and Mrs. Delano

“strengthened with time” (Child 287) and the “affection and gayety of the young folks produced a glowing atmosphere in Mrs. Delano's inner life, as their mother's tropical taste warmed up the interior aspect of her dwelling” (Child 287). This “atmosphere of love” (Child 287) that is descriptive of a new heterogeneous view of domestic life is contrasted with the previous scenes of enslavement and slave women's suffering in the domestic sphere.

Still there are missing parts in this domestic picture. Flora's search for Rosa continues but because Signor and Madame Papanti changed their surname, the search proves unavailing. Both sisters assume that the other one is dead up to a point where Flora learns that Gerald has come to Rome with his wife. Flora assumes that this might be Flora, yet when she learns that Gerald married a Bostonian woman, and that it is impossible to trace where Rosa might be- if she is still alive- due to the imperative alteration in Signor's surname in order not to be caught by Gerald, Rosa “ceases to be anything but a very tender memory to his sister” (Child 287). Still, Flora's search for Rosa and Rosa's search for Flora continues throughout the novel, as they still think that there might be a chance of survival. When Flora goes back to New Orleans, she finds her parrot in a lady's house. The lady informs Flora of the auction that occasioned them to buy the parrot and some of the things that once belonged to the Royal family. The lady also tells her about Signor and Madame Papanti and their journey to Europe. And the lady's husband also says, “a lady named Rosabella Royal had sailed to Europe with Signor and Madame Papanti in the ship *Mermaid*” (Child 266). But the news again hinders their reunion because of the news of the capsizing of the vessel and loss of the passengers. Flora returns to Boston full of sorrow. But Mr. Percival suggests

searching for the validity of this information in “the New York Custom-House for a list of passengers” (Child 266). This search takes place when Flora and Mrs. Delano are in Rome when they are so close to Rosa to get united. The chance element is at work in the failure of their encounter, yet coincidences or chance elements operate to point further to the question of miscegenation.

Child renders the relationships amongst the characters seem more dramatic and sentimental by the replacement of Rosa’s son with Lily’s son in order to draw her reader’s attention to the fact of interracial couplings in the nation. Each woman gives birth to a son when they are in the lonely island, and Gerald Fitzgerald fathers both of the sons. On the eve of Rosa’s escape from the island, Rosa replaces her own son with Lily’s in the hope that her son would not be raised as a slave. Lily raises Rosa’s son Gerald Fitzgerald (II), and Rosa believes to have lost Lily’s son [later named George, but in fact Gerald Fitzgerald (III)] during the shipwreck together with Tulee and Mr. and Mrs. Duroy. Since interracial marriage is banned in many states, Gerald did not marry Rosa, but instead he married Lily for business profits. As this painful separation of the son from her mother exemplifies, it should be noted that slavery in the nineteenth century was not just a moral or legal matter of right or wrong, but it threw into serious crisis structures of kinship by rejecting, abhorring, and denying people of mixed-blood, and promoting instead only singular line of genealogy through racist ideology. For this very reason, as critic George M. Fredrickson puts it, interracial marriages were “discouraged”, mainly because the hegemonic belief was that “the crossing of such diverse types leads to a short-lived and unprolific breed or to a type that, even if permanent, is inferior to the whites in those innate qualities giving Caucasian civilization its progressive and creative

characteristics” (321). Due to this strong belief in black inferiority, marriage between black and white races implied inferiority of identity, danger to the family, ambiguity of kinship, and thus miscegenation was thought to be a threat to the integrity of the American nation. Likewise, in the nineteenth-century American literary imagination, the words white and black were transformed into political terms and were understood in relation to a binary opposition, “an opposition that keeps them together but insists that they cannot mix” (Samuels 113). This conflict between the black and the white is “insistently mapped onto national oppositions by nineteenth-century American writers whose opposition of North and South correlates individual and national bodies” (Samuels 113).

Though the term miscegenation connotes the union of black and white races, it is historically positioned within a negative context, an ideological framework in which it is presented to be introducing an antagonism to the alleged superiority of the white race. According to American political activist H. Rap Brown, “color is the first thing black people in America become aware of” and though “in and of itself, color has no meaning”, “the white world has given it meaning- political, social, economic, historical, physiological and philosophical” (2). The entire social “order is thereby established” upon the meaning of one color (Brown 2). As Edward B. Reuter reiterates, “where race problem has appeared, it has been due in most cases to an *antipathy* toward the Negro and Negro mixtures, or to an effort on the part of these *mixtures* to escape classification with the Negro race” (85) [italics mine]. Race was associated with this sentiment of “antipathy” and inferiority, reinforcing a cultural agreement that disseminated the idea that black race was genetically inferior and therefore was subject to enslavement.

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Within this scope, the novel focuses on how the problem of kinship, interracial marriage, racial slavery and abolitionism intersect in light of the abolitionist arguments developed under the leadership of historical personages whose influences were felt and left remarkable impressions in the nation. As is indicated, Alfred King and some characters are modeled after Child's abolitionist friends. The abolitionists such as William Lloyd Garrison, Francis Jackson, Samuel Sewall, Wendell Phillips, and Father Snowden are incorporated into the fictional atmosphere so as to remind the reader of the nation's huge problem. Furthermore, Child devotes chapters to discussion of fugitive slaves with specific references to the American Constitution and the principles of freedom and equality. Chapter XXVI features the escape of two mulatto slaves, George and Henny, from Mr. Bell's ship "The King Cotton". Mr. Bell is a perfect example of northerners who support slavery and the Fugitive Slave Law for the sake of their own benefit in the business of human bondage. Mr. Bell defends the rights of his friend, the infamous Mr. Bruteman, the owner of George and Henny no matter how much the Abolitionists try to convince him about the inhumanity of slavery. It is important to pay attention to the element of chance at this point in the narrative, as the "Italian"-looking (Child 313) George is the son of Gerald Fitzgerald and Lily, and therefore Mr. Bell's grandson, who was assumed to be dead but in fact alive. Since Chloe exchanged him early in the narrative with Rosa's child, he is raised as a light-skinned slave. Unbeknownst to him, Mr. Bell is in fact chasing his own grandson who "seems to be a white man" (Child 309) and "pass himself for a white man" (Child 309). The novel poses a question as to the consequences of Mr. Bell's actions if he had ever known that the fugitive mulatto slave is in fact his own

grandson. In this incident, the novel informs its readers of the network of friendship the Abolitionists established to rescue slaves who have escaped from the South. On the other hand, this escape becomes representative in portraying the reader that although the North is against slavery, there is still a majority of people who catch the slaves in northern states and give them in to the South. Such people act in accordance with the Fugitive Slave Law in northern states where slavery is not legalized. A crowd of people catches George and Henny, giving them in to the Captain of Mr. Bell's ship, though George cries for help and says he is a slave. Nonetheless, the Abolitionist network proves strong enough to help the fugitives. A free black bystander in the street sees George and Henny on the run and immediately hastens to Mr. Percival's house. Mr. Percival writes "a note to Francis Jackson" (Child 308) and goes to Samuel Sewall "for a writ of *habeas corpus*"⁶ (Child 308). The wealthy merchant Mr. Bell curses the Abolitionists, saying that the Abolitionists "will get wind of it, and be raising a row before morning" (Child 309). Just like a slaveholder, Mr. Bell complains about the Abolitionists' disrespect for "safety for property" (Child 309). By property, Mr. Bell means George and Henny. Child reminds the reader again of the national principles of the American republic in the dialogue between George and Henny. When Henny, who passes for white in boy's dress, tells George that he can leave her behind because he is light skinned enough to pass for white, he responds, "O how I have watched the North Star! thinking always it pointed to a land of freedom. O my God, is there *no* place of refuge for the slave?" (Child 309). George also refers to the fact that interracial couplings were a social fact of the nineteenth century American life, when he says

⁶ *Habeas Corpus* "a writ requiring a person to be brought before a judge or court, especially for investigation of a restraint of the person's liberty, used as a protection against illegal imprisonment".

that he cannot leave Henny behind as freedom would not do any good to him without her. Due to this slave hunt in the midst of Boston, George and Henny are again caught and “pinioned fast, and hustled on board a boat, which urged its swift way through the waters to Castle Island, where they were safely locked up till further orders” (Child 309).

In light of these incidents, Child seeks to provide a distinct aspect of slavery that is more telling about genealogical relations and misconceptions about racial identities, which on the whole constitute the domestic happiness of a nation. As a Reconstructionist policy in *A Romance of the Republic*, Child does not lay emphasis on marriage but considers interracial marriage to be the primary choice for a harmonious nation where every single person can feel at home. In this sense, the idea of romance in the novel does not only refer to love affairs but also kinship relations or bonds that prove stronger than kinship. Rosa’s marriage to her father’s acquaintance Alfred Royal ramifies this new tableau of kinship. The romance between Rosa and Mr. King heals the wounds of slavery. Improving himself as an Abolitionist and getting rid of his family’s Puritan beliefs, Mr. King ascertains that he is a considerate man who looks through “the surface of things to the reality” (Child 251) and who is able to appreciate and help convalesce the sufferings of a slave woman. Her experiences and Mr. King’s assistance help Rosa mature from a “romantic girl” into “the thoughtful and prudent woman” (Child 251), as Mr. King observes. Thus, new bonds are molded against the destructive connections slavery created between the slave and the master.

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“Through the sentimental development” of such scenes, Child “did hope to influence their male compatriots and family to an increased awareness and responsiveness” (Nelson 67). Furthermore, Child engages with the romance pattern as a site of an interrogation of issues of slavery, race, miscegenation, kinship, and raises concern over the idea that discontents within domestic sphere are constituted by and constitutive of political problems and national tribulations. Accordingly, the last part of the novel stages the reunion of Rosa and Flora with their extended families. All of the family members get reunited in Northampton where they spend their holiday. Similarly, all family secrets are revealed: the exchanged sons discover their true roots and the reason for their separation. However, Rosa’s son Gerald does not make any distinction between his two mothers, and states that he considers himself lucky and would call them Rosa-mother and Lily mother, as he cannot act otherwise (Child 364). Child accentuates the idea that kinship relations that are not generated by blood can equally be as natural as those formed by blood. Flora and Franz’s children Alfred Royal, Rosa, and Lila and Rosa and Alfred King’s children Eulalia, Alfred and Flora and Rosa’s son Gerald and Lily’s son Gerald (George, the runaway slave in Boston) with his black wife Henny, Lily Fitzgerald, Mrs. Delano, Tulee, Chloe, and Tom altogether perpetuate the bonds amongst them even stronger than it was in the past. Following this reunion, Child asks her readers whether it makes any sense to think of the entire community to be a nation if part of the United States is still under bondage through a reference to the Civil War. Child highlights once again that as long as slavery remains a sociopolitical force in the country, the “political sky” (403) will grow even darker “with impending clouds, crinkled with lightning, and vocal with growlings of approaching thunder” (403). Though the fictional characters seem to obtain

harmony at the end, America is still shown as an uncomfortable place. The North was decisive in not sending the slaves back to the South; all the cities “became at once cities of refuge” (Child 403) and “men had risen above the letter of the Constitution into the spirit of the Declaration of Independence” (Child 403). Alfred King, Franz Blumenthal, Alfred Blumenthal and Gerald Fitzgerald all fight in the war. Gerald dies and Alfred King loses his leg and arm. The end of the novel announces the disbandment and peace the whole nation has longed for. It is underscored that the possibility of domestic bliss can be occasioned so long as there is peace and harmony in the nation. Child suggests that this reconciliation can only be attained with “the African and French, Spanish, American, and German” (432) under the roof of one nation. In the new family tree Child constructs at the end of the novel, “nations and races have been pretty thoroughly mixed up in the ancestry” (432) of all the children, “all the family, of all ages and colors” (441). The novel draws a merry picture of all of these emotional bonds that Child believes significant in the reconfiguration of the United States.

The genealogical geography of Child’s vision points to the distortion of the separation of the public/private dichotomy and incorporates the problem of race and kinship into what should be the ideal domestic atmosphere of the American nation. Since kinship concerns private family history, it is seen as the opposite of the political, but Child evokes the idea that this separation is itself the foundation of the politics that undermines human rights in the United States. If families grow into nations, then houses that hold a family intact can be regarded as the foundation of a nation. Home is a place that one identifies with the sense of belonging and protection. Similarly, the idea of nation offers a sense of belonging and security

although the idea is imagined in the minds of the citizens. As is put by Benedict Anderson, the nation is “imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (6). The nineteenth century was a time of nation building that increased self-consciousness amongst its citizens about the creation of a previously nonexistent nation. Nonetheless, the institution of slavery disrupted this imagined union and was sure to bring more troubles if politics would not transcend color lines. Child keeps in mind these parallels between the problems in each home and the political troubles within the nation, and presents them as the threats violating the democratic ideals of the American nation. Rather than enhancing the racist, minoritizing, and dehumanizing idea of the nation, Child suggests that a national polity of pluralism in racial identity, kinship structures within the American nation would grant every people, regardless of race and ethnicity, the right to life, liberty, and dignity, reminding her readers constantly the notions of equality and freedom that are constitutive of the national ideals of the United States. As can be observed in her preference of the title, Child in *A Romance of the Republic* reifies the national union and harmony, composing a national romance by attacking racial and patriarchal slavery. The fact that social and legal institutions rob black people of their identities and that slaves do not have the right to citizenship, marriage, and ownership excludes them from an imagined sense of the nation, which Child calls the American Republic. Constituting the parallels between citizens’ houses and Republic as the house for all the citizens of an imagined community, Child attempts to reconstruct an emancipated idea of home as a vital part of cultural and national identity.

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Chapter IV. An Abolitionist Heteroglossia: Racial Reconstruction in Frances

E. W. Harper's *Iola Leroy, or Shadows Uplifted*



There is light beyond the darkness,
Joy beyond the present pain;
There is hope in God's great justice
And the negro's rising brain.
Though the morning seems to linger
O'er the hill-tops far away,
Yet the shadows bear the promise
Of a brighter coming day.

Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, 1892

Like Jacobs and Child, Frances E. W. Harper underlines in her novel *Iola Leroy* the social fact that domestic ideology is functional only for white people whereas slavery and white supremacy dispossess black people of their right to lead a private life in their own houses freely. Comparable to Jacobs and Child's efforts to reveal the popularly idealized but dysfunctional nature of the domestic ideology for black people in the nineteenth-century United States, Harper's novel likewise emphasizes the critical point that neither domestic sphere nor public space has ever been clear and tangible enough for black people to identify themselves with. Harper

contributes to these ideas by further reiterating in her narrative that the distinct separation of gendered domains remained to be a shadowy ideology that did not value black people. Furthermore, it is possible to observe how these texts demonstrate that the separated domains of the private and the public have transformed into rather problematic entities in time as slavery juxtaposed what is homely and what is not for black people. In like manner, *Iola Leroy* underscores the fact that once slaves are sold, their privacy is violated and even wasted in the service of slavery. Thus, not only are their lives deprived of privacy in the hands of cruel masters, but also their individual rights are debased and taken away from them.

Similar to Jacobs and Child's abolitionist approach of confronting human bondage in the U.S. through archival documentation and promotion of miscegenation respectively, Harper's way of dealing with the realities of enslavement introduces her insistence on the expression of plurality of ideas represented by her characters. It is essential to remark that all of these women writers are engaged in policy-making as they employ their own method to explain, critique, and subvert racism and slavery. Harper's style differs from Jacobs and Child's in that she introduces dialogic utterances that highlight and challenge the conflicts of racism and enslavement by composing heteroglossic abolitionist dialogues.

In *Iola Leroy*, all of the abolitionist discussions that serve to connect the characters in a dialogic affinity in venues for sociopolitical discussion on slavery and abolitionism as possible means of Reconstruction can be considered to be

evocative of the Bakhtinian perspective on heteroglossia. Harper accommodates all these arguments in scenes that she calls “*conversazione*” (188), scenes that voice a plurality of opinions and arguments. Such scenes parallel Bakhtin’s belief in dialogism in the plurality of voices. Accordingly, this chapter analyzes how *Iola Leroy* portrays the abolitionist voices that infiltrate into proslavery arguments in light of Bakhtin’s concept of heteroglossia, and hence explores how Harper emancipates her text from authoritarian views by constructing episodes of dialogic relations among the discussions about the need for abolition.

IV. I. Heteroglossic Abolitionism

Iola Leroy concerns the story of Iola and her maturation through a series of troubles after her treacherous uncle sells her into slavery on learning that she is a mulatto. Though Iola seems as light-skinned as a white person, slavery prescribes that the black blood in her veins disqualifies her as black. However, Harper upsets the notion of white supremacy by characterizing Iola as a woman who is proud of her race and identity. Making Iola’s growth and self-discovery central to the plot, Harper focuses on Iola’s character as a capable woman and constitutes the structure of her narrative in accordance with this emphasis. By situating Iola as a woman who favors her black ancestry at the end of the novel, Harper creates the perception in her readers’ mind that remaining on the black side is to be a decisive act for the black people if they want to reform and reconstruct the condition of their race. In fact, Harper draws upon the antebellum ideals of domestic life so as to attract the reader’s attention to the predicaments of a slave girl. Harper, however, moves

beyond the domestic ideals by introducing distinct perspectives for the readers to see in Iola a new idea of an able woman who fights for her freedom and rights in the public sphere. In this respect, *Iola Leroy*, set against the historical background of the Civil War and the period of Reconstruction, can be regarded as a reformist novel that is historically suggestive of the increasing loss of fixity of the antebellum boundary between the domestic and public spheres.

Iola's central position in the novel is also highly functional in that her speeches are fashioned in ways that undermine all the arguments in favor of racial inferiority and righteousness of slavery. As Harper articulates in her seminal speech "Woman's Political Future" (1893) which she delivered one year after the publication of *Iola Leroy* in the *World's Congress of Representative Women* convened in Chicago, in the face of "life's sorrow", "the world has need of all the spiritual aid that woman can give for the social advancement and moral development of the human race" (433). The novel's protagonist Iola Leroy embodies Harper's political vision that she attributes to black women in the era of Reconstruction. She represents a woman who works selflessly for the progress of the black people. In the course of the novel, as this chapter will disclose, it becomes important to observe how Iola becomes a representative woman for the whole black race and black women who are to question their positions in the post-Civil war period and to advance the condition of their race. Harper centralizes women's role by underscoring the racial awareness that they will raise through education and spiritual assistance. Harper renders these two constituents of Iola's objectives that she needs to promote racial uplift for the indigent slaves. That Harper aims to prove through Iola that race is in essence a "fluid idea" (Edwards xi) also parallels her

method in illustrating a diversity of dialogues that construct a free atmosphere of discussion in the solution of the problem of racial slavery. Through a series of dialogues that create a heteroglossic milieu, Harper pictures the tension between pro-slavery ideas and abolitionist views.

Iola Leroy has been widely discussed in relation to the ways in which the novel caters to the ideology of separate spheres that deny and devalue black womanhood in both the antebellum and postbellum United States. In fact, Harper's Reconstructionist views challenge the antebellum organization of social spheres and gender norms that support slavery's punitive practices by participating in the public discussions that compose an abolitionist heteroglossia. Structuring her narrative as a series of dialogues rather than placing a specific focus on the plot line, Harper constructs a dialogic set of relations amidst her characters, assembling the social problems and the question of black womanhood under the single critical roof. The abolitionist discourse developed by minor characters is positioned in close dialogue with Iola's life and abolitionist and reformist discourse. This connection embodies the text not merely as one voice but as a composition of diverse voices. In this respect, though *Iola Leroy* seems to focus on Iola's life, it does far more than picture Iola's maturation and developing self-consciousness; it exposes Iola's growing awareness of her race as a woman who seems perfectly white with her blue eyes and white skin as well as the dysfunctional quality of popular antebellum cultural tropes such as domesticity and true womanhood. On the surface, *Iola Leroy*, with its "simplistic and sincere mimicry of domestic literary conventions" (Foreman 74), seems to conform to the domestic ideals of the antebellum time; yet, as scholar Mary Helen Washington contends, Harper's novel

is a work “frozen into self-consciousness by the need to defend black women and men against the vicious and prevailing stereotypes that mark nineteenth-century American cultural thought” (1987 73).

Harper’s treatment of antebellum ideals of domesticity and true womanhood may seem a conformist one at first glance; however, Iola’s characterization and her choices reveal that Harper refutes the hegemony of the domestic and womanhood principles, taking them merely as popular references only to offer a critical analysis of these dominant literary tropes, whilst also suggesting fresh views of home life and womanhood for black women in the postbellum United States. Introducing an idea of selfhood into her black readers in Iola’s personal growth, Harper critiques white ideology that merits only white women as true women and that disenfranchises black women. This disqualification of black women from any positive association with what was thought to be ideal womanhood reveals Harper’s inexhaustible motivation in restoring Iola’s black womanhood. Iola’s womanhood is constructed in alliance with the public sphere and is linked with the abolitionist activism that is to be carried out in the public areas. This publicity serves to construct a sound public position for black women to gain their domestic comfort that is long lost with the human bondage.

In *Iola Leroy*, Harper places a remarkable emphasis upon the contrast between darkness and light as a powerful symbol of the relation between slavery and abolitionism. As can be observed in her poem above (with which Harper ends her novel), Harper constructs her novel around this conflict by portraying the metaphor of shadow as a menacing element that persists in both the misfortunes in

Iola's life and in other characters' sufferings and miseries caused by slavery. Deployed recurrently in the text, the metaphor of shadow signifies all sorts of darkness, which blights an unbiased perception of race and gender. Shadows in characters' lives appear as the inexorable outcomes of enslavement in the United States. Slavery, portrayed as a constant mental and physical agitation felt by the oppressed, is the most relentless shadow of the "American Civilization" (Harper 67). It is a morbid "annoyance" (Harper 67) ceaselessly overspreading one's face, or a shadow falling upon the houses. It is a "shadow fell upon" (Harper 77) the lives of millions of people, like "shadows of the grave" (Harper 77) or the "shadows of the death" (Harper 87). It is "the deep shadow of sorrow" (Harper 98) and a "shadow of concealment" (Harper 181) under which black people are forced to live. Since Harper's primary purpose is to uplift these shadows through her narrative, she organizes her novel as a reformist one with a specific focus on Reconstructionist social activism, education, and novel reorganizations of racial, civil, and domestic politics in domestic and social milieus. In the novel, Harper explores the problem of racial identity and slavery by fashioning public discussions where black people can freely support their ideas on enslavement, racial prejudice, and possible ways to emancipation and racial reconstruction.

Harper designs her novel to form a text of constructive publicity that will contribute to an amelioration of public opinion along with the welfare of black communities in the postbellum American society. Harper adopts a dialogical approach to language, to borrow Bakhtin's term, as an influential instrument to offer a sphere of public discussion on slavery, racism, and their ensuing tribulations haunting the American nation. Harper blends the overall atmosphere of discussion

created amidst the characters and their quotidian coded language with the abolitionist discourse of her mixed-blood protagonist Iola Leroy who is transformed from a pro-slavery young girl into a zealous abolitionist and reformist woman. Through this combination of the dialogized forms of the quotidian language and black vernacular of the southern slaves and Iola's persuasive anti-slavery arguments, Harper poses, in Bakhtin's terms, "within the arena of almost every utterance an intense interanimation and struggle between one's own and another's world" (354). This is a struggle that Harper portrays in her novel between the abolitionist arguments and the monologic authoritative proslavery opinions. Since dissimilar utterances can neither be uniform nor neutral, Harper prevents her readers from viewing the text as a didactic set of arguments. By constituting a diversity of dialogues and opinions of various characters in black vernacular, Harper renders her text a celebration of an abolitionist heteroglossia against discourses of racism and slavery. With every word and each dialogue spoken out for the freedom and welfare of the black folk, Harper's black characters become defenders of their own race, allowing readers to imagine an amendable world.

Like many other African American novels written in the nineteenth century, as scholar William L. Andrews suggests, Harper's *Iola Leroy* is a text that "came into existence ... in response to a single dominant sociopolitical issue— slavery, and its attendant evils, racism, discrimination based on color" (1992 vii). Addressing the "social concerns of the post-slavery era" and "the cause of antislavery" became an "end in itself for the early African-American novel" (Andrews vii). However, the postwar era still posed many obstacles to the implementation of smooth Reconstructionist reforms for black people. Considering

the political and legislative impediments, the period of Reconstruction (1865-1877) was more a failure than an attempt at the progress of the black race. Though President Lincoln declared in the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863 that “all persons held as slaves within any State ... in rebellion against the United States, shall be ... henceforward, and forever free” (the Emancipation Proclamation, archives.gov), it took “more than a century before genuine equality finally may be realized” (Westwood 15). As Andrews outlines, the era further witnessed constricting impediments presented by the Republican Party and the Supreme Court decisions:

By bringing Reconstruction to an end in the South in 1877, the Republican party in the North and its partners in big business and finance served notice of their willingness to bargain away black civil rights in the South in exchange for a white controlled political system receptive to northern investment. Many white supremacists found federal encouragement in the 1883 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that declared the most far-reaching civil rights legislation passed during Reconstruction to be unconstitutional. During the late 1880s the first laws mandating segregation on railroad transportation swept through the South. The 1890s saw first Mississippi, then South Carolina, and eventually every southern state systematically altering its constitution to deny blacks to vote. When the Supreme Court ruled in 1896 in favor of the South’s ‘separate but equal’ racial doctrine, the federal government put its stamp of approval on state laws requiring cradle-to-grave segregation of the races. An age of reaction, which threatened to reverse

all the political and economic advances black America had earned since Emancipation, settled over the United States (viii).

All of these historical facts led to a disillusionment though quite the contrary was expected of the post-war era. Carla L. Peterson claims that one significant “consequence of Reconstruction for the black community was a deepening of class and gender divisions that had already made themselves felt before the Civil War” (198). Witnessing such catastrophic drawbacks that destroyed the expectations of regaining their self-esteem, selfhood, and long-awaited opportunities to live humanely, black activists, reformists, and authors nurtured a notion of racial uplift as the best and most durable solution to still ongoing racial segregation. Harper portrays a fragmented social atmosphere and appoints Iola as her mouthpiece in her strong arguments against such impediments of the time. Iola articulates this fact in her dialogue with Dr. Gresham, stating, “out of the race must come its own defenders. With them the pen must be mightier than the sword. It is the weapon of civilization, and they must use it in their own defense. We cannot tell what is in them until they express themselves” (Harper 96-97). Harper designs her novel in such a way that words and dialogues that defend black people’s rights appear to be the most resilient means to protect them from sociopolitical inhibitions and to inspire them with positive ideals of their own race.

In line with this textual and contextual objective, Harper establishes in her novel a heterogeneity in dialogue that is comprised of the primacy of speech, reformist organization, and public activism in a combination of Iola’s words, her abolitionist friends’ arguments, and sketches from slaves’ dialogues and lives.

Piecing together the third-person narrative voice, Iola's opinions, and other minor and major characters' speeches in a web of dialogue, Harper develops what Bakhtin calls *heteroglossia* against all sorts of discrimination and subjugation resulting from slavery and racism by engaging her characters in a constant dialogue with one another. Heteroglossia is a term Bakhtin used for a "vision of a language everywhere traversed by the energies of popular protest and instinctual desire" (Norris 332). Bakhtin argues in his *The Dialogic Imagination* (1975) that this vision of heteroglossia can best be observed in the novelistic genre that "can be defined as a diversity of social speech types (sometimes even diversity of languages) and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized" (1981 262). Heteroglossia is an "attempt to disperse the monopoly of meaning" (Lachmann 48), and a "simultaneity of [...] dialogues" as "a particular instance of the larger polyphony of social and discursive forces" (Holquist 67). For Bakhtin, language and novelization are primary effective vehicles with which to critique the "centripetal forces of verbal-ideological life" (Bakhtin 271). It is only through moving away from the central forces that one can achieve heteroglossia in a text and institute "the centrifugal forces of language" that "carry on their uninterrupted work" (Bakhtin 272). In a dialogic world, according to Bakhtin, "alongside verbal-ideological centralization and unification, the uninterrupted processes of decentralization and disunification go forward" (272).

This coexistence of centrifugal and centripetal forces at work in social life calls into question the ongoing and never-ending processes of "decentralization and disunification" (272) that undermine the harsh monologism of restrictive ideologies. "Once realized" this "stratification and heteroglossia" is "not only a

static invariant of linguistic life, but also what insures its dynamics: stratification and heteroglossia widen and deepen as long as language is alive and developing” (Bakhtin 272). Heteroglossia is thus essentially dialogic, for it is based on a diversity of languages, dialogues, speeches that not only produce a linguistic variety but also a social and cultural plurality of interactions against the totality of fixed meanings and relations. As Bakhtin suggests, heterogeneity of the novelistic genre denormalizes such centripetal forces, creating a context within which both centrifugal and centripetal forces collide in an intricate aura of dialogism. As opposed to monologic stylization of other genres, the novel “orchestrates all its themes, the totality of the world of objects and ideas depicted and expressed in it, by means of the social diversity of speech types [raznorecie] and by the differing individual voices that flourish under such conditions” (263). Thus, heteroglossia exists in the novel with the help of such “fundamental compositional unities” as “authorial speech, the speech of narrators, inserted genres, the speech of characters”, each of which “permits a multiplicity of social voices and a wide variety of their links and interrelationships (263).

This combination of “social diversity of speech types” (263), “differing individual voices” (263), and a diversity of their “links and interrelationships” (263) produces a social heteroglossia which enables the author to create new meanings and discussions in the face of authoritarian and monolithic judgments of despotic social and ideological systems. Thus, as dialogues relate to social problems, Bakhtin’s theory of language as a scheme of dialogic words assumes a more sociological identity. Bakhtin predicates his argument on the idea that language is “heteroglot from top to bottom”, and “it represents the co-existence of socio-

ideological contradictions between the present and the past, between differing epochs of the past, between different socio-ideological groups in the present, between tendencies, schools, circles and so forth, all given a bodily form” (Bakhtin 291). Considering this dialogism in the novel in ways that concerns themselves with the intersection of history, politics, culture, and other social forces at work, it can be argued that Harper’s aim can be seen in the way she orchestrates a variety of ideas. Harper multiplies her characters’ speeches as a strategic tool to overcome all tyrannical discourses and social practices that define and dehumanize the oppressed black people. As Bakhtin states, conversations are “the fundamental constitutive element of all novelistic style” (46) and the “novelistic images” are “internally dialogized images—of the languages, styles, world views of another (all of which are inseparable from their concrete linguistic and stylistic embodiment)” (46). Harper turns the novelistic writing into a discourse where social limits and political restrictions are exposed, challenged, and subverted. Her style of novelization becomes a social performance of conjuring up a set of dialogues between both black and white characters of opposing arguments that stage dramas of racial slavery from various perspectives.

This opposition however embraces a multiplicity in the composition of multifarious voices in characters’ anti-slavery claims and conversations. Dialogues in *Iola Leroy* consist of various voices of antislavery and proslavery arguments in close interrelation with one another. The intersection of voices evokes a plurality rather than a monologic unity that restricts the proliferation of dialogues. Harper embodies this heteroglossia or plurality first with black folks’ anti-slavery arguments and then with Iola’s when she grows up. Iola’s personal story is told

along with the stories of the black folk or Iola's family and friends and with the accounts of the "infirmities of the age" (Harper 15), which are materialized in the text as dehumanization, oppression, racial prejudice and slavery. Harper defines slavery as "a system darkened with the shadow of a million crimes" (75), posing it as the gloomiest shadow that casts over the lives of the characters. To better foreground the close relation between the personal and social history of the time, the novel illustrates its arguments against slavery with the help of specific references to slaves' lives, their opinions and discussions about their political condition.

Harper establishes a historical setting and refers to the historical facts about the Civil War time and postbellum United States at the beginning of the novel. In this atmosphere, slave characters create a new coded language to converse about the war. During the time they spend together in the market place, Thomas Anderson, Robert Johnson, and other unnamed slaves produce a mysterious language that is not decipherable by slaveholders. This enigmatic market speech allows these minor characters to refer to butter, eggs or fish as fresh or stale to denote the victories or defeats in the battlefield. Though they are restless in the general state of affairs and though "surely there was nothing in the primeness of the butter or the freshness of the eggs" (Harper 16), a "unanimous report" (Harper 16) of the good condition of the market raises an unusual interest among them, changing "careless looking faces into such expressions of gratification, or to dull light eyes with such gladness" (Harper 16). Coupled with the news of victory, this language captures the social milieu of the time, giving hopeful slaves the opportunity to speak in terms alien to whites' terminology. The market place, a

public space far away from the plantations and domestic spaces of enslavement, endow slaves with the freedom to talk about the war. Nonetheless, the task is shared in the production of this language that is carried over to the market place from the plantations:

During the dark days of the Rebellion, when the bondman was turning his eyes to the American flag, and learning to hail it as an ensign of deliverance, some of the shrewder slaves, coming in contact with their masters and overhearing their conversations, *invented a phraseology to convey in the most unsuspected manner news to each other from the battle-field*. Fragile women and helpless children were left on the plantations while their natural protectors were at the front, and yet these bondmen refrained from violence. Freedom was coming in the wake of the Union army, and while numbers deserted to join their forces, others remained at home, slept in their cabins by night and attended to their work by day; but *under this apparently careless exterior there was an undercurrent of thought which escaped the cognizance of their masters*. In conveying tidings of the war, if they wished to announce a victory of the Union army, they said the butter was fresh, or that the fish and eggs were in good condition. If defeat befell them, then the butter and other produce were rancid or stale (Harper 16) [italics mine].

It is this “undercurrent of thought” (Harper 16) and the invented “phraseology” (Harper 16) that establish a plurality of speech and a plurality of awareness shared commonly by the black folk of the South, even if they are illiterate and uneducated.

This plurality is thus rooted in the power of language and the shrewdness of slaves that create a specific phraseology and a stream of thought as a method of interaction among those who remained at home and produced a communal language as sustenance instead of resorting to violence. The phraseology of the market speech is further enhanced by other means that slaves cultivate, as can be observed in illiterate aunt Linda's reading the battle news from her "ole Missus' face" (Harper 17). In her conversation with Robert, aunt Linda says that her mistress's face is "newspaper enough" (Harper 17) for her. Every morning she examines her Missus' face when she comes into the kitchen, and states: "Ef her face is long an' she walks kine o' droopy en I thinks things is gwine wrong for dem. But ef she comes out yere looking mighty pleased, an' larffin all ober her face, an' steppin' so frisky, den I knows de Secesh is gittin' de bes' ob de Yankees" (Harper 17). Aunt Linda articulates the conflict between the secessionist Confederate (Southern) States' efforts to remain autonomous for the perpetuation of slavery and the Union army that was on its way to bring freedom and a race blind union to all states under the same nation.

As the Civil War goes on and the Union army gains victories at various fronts, aunt Linda turns the kitchen of the slaveholding house to a public space where she celebrates the triumphs against slavery whereas her mistress cries because of the successive defeats of the Confederacy. When Robert reminds aunt Linda that "Dey've fired on Fort Sumter, an' de Norf id boun' to whip" (Harper 18), the kitchen, as one of the domestic places of enslavement, becomes a space of "prayin' an' b'lievin'" (Harper 18), a space where political news are read from the slaveholders' faces, unreservedly discussed and shared. This scene reinforces Aunt

Linda's belief in the abolitionists, as she believes that they "have a heap of friends up there" (Harper 18) in the north. Invention of new phraseologies and analyses of the slaveholders' manners showcase a heteroglossia, an "internal stratification" (Harper 263) of language in black vernacular and the characters' abolitionist thoughts. Harper stresses the polyphony in the text by presenting the black vernacular alongside the Standard English used by other characters. Black folks' language does more than reflect the reality; it deconstructs the language of slavery by reworking the racist ideologies of the slaveholders. Each word of each character amounts to a specific anti-slavery and anti-racist discourse conveyed in a complex dialogic power.

Thus, Harper organizes her novel to present abolitionist activities and ideas developed by characters and thereby forms a heteroglossia based on abolitionist viewpoints. Harper subtly harmonizes the characters' conversations with the public interests of the black folk when "confidential chats" (Harper 19) extend to communal prayer meetings in the woods. Harper illustrates the multiplicity of voices in order to deflate the opinionated racist realm of slavery. This diversity springs to life "by stealth" (Harper 13) but each meeting brings about communal "gatherings where they could mingle their prayers and tears, and lay plans for escaping to the Union army" (Harper 19). Since "the slaves were denied unrestricted travel, and the holding of meetings without the surveillance of a white man" (Harper 19), they outwit "the vigilance of the patrollers and home guards" (Harper 19-20) and assemble "these meetings miles apart, extending into several States" (Harper 20). Tom, Robert, Aunt Linda, and Uncle Daniel meet by stealth again in McCullough's woods and contemplate the current political climate and

problems like separation of families due to slavery, condition of fugitive slaves and sending them to their masters as part of contraband of war. When Tom Anderson explains that a fugitive slave who runs away from “the Secesh⁷ to the Union army” (Harper 22) is called a contraband “as if he were an ox or a horse” (Harper 22), he points to the chance to escape bondage and to attain their freedom. Joining the army seems to be the only way to freedom, but quite the reverse can also happen any moment when a slave is caught from the Union army and given in to the Confederacy or to their masters as if they are lawful prizes of war.

Harper’s focus on the slaves’ discussion over joining the army underlines the fact that some of the slaves are made to believe that slavery is good for them just because they are black or on the condition that their masters treat them well. Upon Uncle Daniel’s statement that Robert does not need to join the army simply because he has a “good owner” (Harper 23), Robert reminds them of his mistress’s sale of his mother to another master, saying that he will never ever forgive his mistress even if she is the “best woman on earth” (Harper 23). Robert unlocks the chain that perplexes the slaves’ mind by emphasizing that he would have his own freedom than belong to his mistress (Harper 23). Similarly, Uncle Daniel is a character that has almost lost his hopes for liberty due to his old age, yet still he has expectations for the young generation. Though Uncle Daniel knows quite well that slavery “got all de marrow out ob dese poor ole bones” (Harper 23), he is equally aware that going to the battlefield is of no use for a man of his age. For Uncle Daniel, his belief in praying for those fighting in the army falls to his share for the benefit of their race. In Robert’s case, on the other hand, the reader is reminded

⁷ The Secessionists.

once again that slavery is a legalized institution that dehumanizes black people and separates them from their families. The conversation implies that slavery destroys a sound sense of selfhood and identity as it takes away one's freedom; on the social level, moreover, it destroys the feeling and consciousness of community of black people. This social heteroglossia forefronts characters' growing sense of urgency of abolitionism, community and awareness that takes precedence over personal interests.

While all these conversations on oppression and servitude are communicatively constructed among the characters, Harper weighs in with her own abolitionist and reformist opinions in the guise of an omniscient narrator who supports the characters' arguments. As Bakhtin argues, heteroglossia is further achieved in a text when a writer is within the dialogue in the novel and is "far from neutral in his relationship to this image: to a certain extent he even polemicizes with this language, argues with it, agrees with it (although with conditions), interrogates it, eavesdrops on it, but also ridicules it, parodically exaggerates it and so forth-in other words, the author is in a dialogical relationship" (46) with the characters' language and "the author is actually conversing" (46) with them. The omniscient narrator's dialogic relationship with the characters' concerns exposes how subtly the narrative voice, in Bakhtin's words, "elevates the social heteroglossia surrounding the objects into an image that has finished contours, an image completely shot through with dialogized overtones" (279).

The third person narrator, in other words the author-narrator, speaking as the spokesperson for Harper's critical views on slavery, introduces the issue of

slavery into a heteroglossia of social and national context. In slaves' speeches, hopes of deliverance stand opposite the realities of bondage as they are ritualized in a blend of "prayers and tears" (Harper 19) in their conventions. The ritualistic aspect of the publicized discussions held secretly by slaves in the woods heals their wounds, whilst allowing Harper's novel to become a public space of dialogue where slaves speak freely and equally. The narrator's function in the dialogue is to keep the readers' spirits up as they read along the lines that are imbued with the pessimism of the war. As the narrator states in simple terms that though this "hope of deliverance" (Harper 20) is "cruelly blighted by hearing of some adventurous soul who, having escaped to the Union army, had been pursued and returned again to bondage" (Harper 20), hope "survived all these disasters which gathered around the fate of their unfortunate brethren, who were remanded to slavery through the undiscerning folly of those who were strengthening the hands which were dealing their deadliest blows at the heart of the Nation" (Harper 20).

Not only does the argument of the narrative voice link the dialogue between the text and the readers, but it also situates the characters' discussions within a national scope, adding a heteroglot observation of slavery as a national question at a time when the American nation is portrayed as shattered and traumatized as its people. The authorial voice behind the omniscient narrator enters into the dialogue, articulating that slavery "had cast such a glamour over the Nation" and so cruelly "warped the consciences of men" that those slaveholders "failed to read aright the legible transcript of Divine retribution which was written upon the shuddering earth, where the blood of God's poor children had been as water freely spilled" (Harper 20). Instead of a governing authorial dominance over the narrative, the

multi-layered stratification of characters' voices intersects with one another's and author's voice in polyphonic dialogues and depictions.

Iola's story begins when Tom Anderson rescues her from "her master's clutches" (Harper 40) during his service for the Union army. She was sold to slavery after her father's death, and led a life of a slave that she had not known up to that time though her father was a slave owner who married a mulatto slave. Although she was "born and raised in the midst of slavery," (Harper 121) she had not "the least idea of its barbarous selfishness" (Harper 121) till she is "forced to pass through it" (Harper 121). Iola's transformation to an abolitionist reformer is an exemplary one in that she is a "Southern girl and a slave-holder's daughter" (Harper 83), and always defended slavery when it was under discussion" (Harper 83) as a schoolgirl. Her ignorance in such a proslavery belief is embedded in her father and mother's nice treatment of their slaves. Being sure that her father never mistreated their slaves, Iola as a little girl who is educated in the North, possesses these ideas because of the domestic happiness in their family house. And, she thinks that she is right as this domestic contentment and a sphere of free discussion in their house is also shared with the slaves. In this sense, Harper creates a household that is not representative but exceptional to show that domestic ideology is not valid or applicable for black people, or even if it seems so, it is only for a temporary period. On the other hand, Iola's family house, which highlights Iola's father and mother's interracial marriage as a harmonious one, becomes a site for dialogue on slavery and possible remedies to abolish it. Characterizing Iola's mother, Marie as a politically conscious woman of the sociopolitical scenery of the time, Harper turns the Leroy family house into a social locale through which to

explore the “shadows in the home” (Harper 65), the impact and aftermath of slavery, the questions of racial discrimination, and racial inferiority. Though Iola’s father Eugene is portrayed as an affectionate husband who cares for his wife, and who gives her every opportunity to claim her rights and individuality, he is shown under the influence of racial prejudices and the “public opinion” (Harper 69) whose “meshes” he “cannot break” (Harper 69) in view of the Southern slaveholders. However, in an atmosphere of free expression and discussion, he bans any use of “the dialect of slavery” (Harper 65) that would “linger upon” (Harper 65) Marie’s “lips” (Harper 65) by further encouraging her to attend anti-slavery meetings during their stay in the North, where she “had learned some of the noblest lessons of freedom and justice, and had become imbued with their sentiments” (Harper 66).

Nevertheless, it is implied that only a few of the southern houses are as free as the Leroy household, a fact that affects Iola’s childhood vision of slavery. When, in a discussion among her schoolmates, one of her friends asks whether she has ever attended “an anti-slavery meeting” (Harper 83) or whether freedom is essential for those “who are coming North on the Underground Railroad” (Harper 84), or about the reason why the Congress passed “the Fugitive Slave Bill” (Harper 84), Iola responds that her abolitionist friends will be cured of their “Abolitionism” (Harper 84) if they come and witness their domestic life in the South. Nevertheless, Iola comes to realize that this is a terrible lie and she is proven wrong when her family and she are remanded to slavery after her father’s death. Yet, upon the removal of the ignorance and arrival of a new shadow of slavery and homelessness after her own racist uncle Alfred Lorraine’s attempt to sell Iola and her family, Iola embraces the Abolitionist cause more than ever.

Harper embodies a formula of public activism for black women in Iola's speeches and preferences. When Dr. Gresham proposes marriage to Iola while she is working as a nurse for the Union army, she tells that there is an "insurmountable barrier between us" (Harper 173). Iola takes pains to clarify that romance without rational thought in an age of racial prejudice and discrimination will be of no use, and that though she looks white enough to pass for white, she has "too much self-respect to enter" (Harper 97). Dr. Gresham's "home under a veil of concealment" (Harper 97). Passing for white is a shadow that would pose many more obstacles in Iola's reformist solutions. Iola strongly rejects Dr. Gresham's offer of passing as white and his proposal of a potential domestic happiness that would be saturated with the Southern racial prejudice. The text offers this debate on racial passing in a house where Iola's racial identity would be "unwelcome" (Harper 97) as a new way to evaluate further solutions that can be taken in the public sphere so as to ameliorate the private lives of black people. Nevertheless, racial passing is essentially a question whether one accepts one's body and identity. If the body is constituted as a series of marks, Iola advocates that these marks should represent her African heritage. Iola's body can be considered to be an archive that both conceals and reveals its own truths. Yet she rejects any disguise or suppression of her African identity. On the contrary, she defends it as her inherent identity, refusing rigorously the act of passing. In essence, in her refusal of Dr. Gresham marriage proposal, Iola holds the hermeneutical authority, or in other words, the control of the interpretation of her own body and inheritance. Since passing is dependent on figures of insiders and outsiders, Iola's rejection of passing can also be regarded as her will to configure her own individual body strategically and

rhetorically as a metonymy for the national body and its secrets. The American national body that is shown as fragmented as the individual bodies conceals its own truths regarding the history of racial colonization and the ensuing racism and slavery as well as the truths related to these facts that are veiled in the individual histories of its people. Iola's revelation of this truth aims to lay bare these realities as self-evident legacies of the American history and national identity.

If passing denotes a state of in-betweenness, Harper turns it into an individual preference and a vehicle for being of help to the black race. Michael Borgstrom indicates that the novel's "thematic rejection of racial passing offers one way to reevaluate its apparent investment in ideologies of racial uplift" (779). Iola is not the only character that rejects racial passing or that claims truth instead of salvation from their oppressors. Similarly, Robert Johnson, a mulatto lieutenant in the Union army, refuses Captain Sybil's suggestion about passing for white and defecting to the Confederacy in a dialogue where he articulates that his place is where he is most needed (Harper 42) and he will readily remain on the black side. Characters' constant rejection of racial passing points at the crucial connection Harper forms between the critical issue of passing and the racial uplift. Harper's locating the practice of passing as white in a negative context in characters' acts and dialogues revives the questions about the potential social practices for the improvement of the black race in the postbellum period.

One indispensable element that Iola adheres to for the amelioration of the black race appears throughout the text is education that is defined as the "best investment" (Harper 65) to be made in the support of black race. In a conversation

with her uncle Robert, Iola develops ideas to heal the wounds of slavery by two main methods; the first is to remedy the social ills through advancing education and public awareness and the second is to wash away “the weakness and inefficiency of women” (Harper 160) by expanding occupational opportunities for them out in the public sphere. Iola’s “theory that every woman ought to know how to earn her own living” (160) by joining “the great rank of bread winners” (Harper 160) represents the collective voices of black women embedded in Iola’s individual utterance. Invariably, this notion also breaks the conventional binary opposition between the public and private spheres that lies in the bottom of ideals of domesticity and womanhood. Yet, Iola knows that though slavery is banned, disenfranchisement is an obstacle to complete freedom.

Iola confronts this still ongoing subjugation most painfully when her coworkers ostracize her in her new post as a saleswoman in the North, the place that is thought to be free from the “cruel prejudice” (Harper 165) of racism, but which is in fact fraught with it. On the revelation of her true identity by help of one of her coworkers who act as a “spy” (Harper 161), her coworkers reach a clear-cut consensus. If Iola is “colored, she should be treated accordingly” (Harper 161). Feeling the “chill in the social atmosphere” (Harper 161), Iola feels determined not to yield to the racist prejudgments and proslavery voices. No matter how much warning she receives from her friends and family about hiding her black lineage or the possibility of passing for white, she does not abandon her dogged perseverance to stick to her genuine identity as a black woman. She rejects any prospect of passing as white and openly admits that she goes to a colored church on Sundays to be with her “own people” (Harper 161), though this costs her another post as a

saleswoman. The racist voices of Iola's coworkers are materialized in their protests, which are approved for consideration by employers like Mr. Cohen. Uncle Robert's enunciation of the fact that this brutal prejudice pursues them "through every avenue of life" (Harper 162) and assigns them "the lowest places" (Harper 162) only tightens Iola's hold on to her "African blood" (Harper 162). Iola once again resists every temptation to deny her identity even if it gives way to social ostracization when she acquires a teaching position in an institution managed by professed Christian women.

In the scene where Iola discloses to the friendly matron that she is a colored woman, she is exposed to a heartbreaking discrimination upon the matron's quick and awkward change in her manners, which she expresses in daunting words, "I must see the board of managers about it" (Harper 163). The matron's words illustrate her approval of segregation. In light of Bakhtin's views, her expressions can be considered to be "populated by intentions" (Bakhtin 293) of segregation, tasting "of the context and contexts" of racial seclusion, a context "in which it has lived its socially charged life" (Bakhtin 293). The matron's words lead Iola to face the ultimate door shut "in her face because of the outcast blood in her veins" (Harper 163). She is shunned, seen like a social pathology due to the groundless racial prejudgments. Iola who supported slavery as a child becomes a woman who is ostracized due to what slaveholders regard as the taint in her blood. Whenever she finds a job, she faces disapproval and exclusion by white employers and coworkers. It is clear that several important issues appear in Iola's life when her identity is even more drastically shaken by the fact that racism and racial prejudices persist equally in the North. She leaves her previous "beautiful day-dreams"

(Harper 93) when she is “rudely awakened by the fate which had dragged her into the depths of slavery” (Harper 93).

Despite all these words and acts of discrimination, racial passing, for Iola, does in no way seem a promising remedy for the ills of slavery; instead, Iola’s willpower to remain loyal to her heritage confirms her belief in the power of racial uplift. Iola’s determinism to unravel the shadows of slavery achieves its target in the last post she is employed by Mr. Cloten. Mr. Cloten’s attitude and words are exemplary in their resilience to negate Iola’s former employers. He immediately lets his workers know about Iola’s heritage, further informing them of sending them away if they object to working with her. Commanding his business in a positive way that may amend the public opinion, Mr. Cloten helps public estimation of black women improve by dealing with the “Southern prejudice” (Harper 165), as he is able to afford “the luxury of a good conscience” (Harper 165). Mr. Cloten contributes to the abolitionist voices by calling both the Northerners and the Southerners to duty and to listen to their consciences, highlighting the idea that the Northerners should “stamp” (Harper 165) themselves on the South, and “not let the South stamp itself on” the Northerners (Harper 165). The North, as said by Mr. Cloten, has so far “learned to treat men according to the complexion of their souls, and not the color of their skins” (Harper 165); and all they need to do now is to make their “best contribution towards the solution of the negro problem” (Harper 165).

The social ostracization to which Iola is subjected epitomizes how “the U.S. race system” is first “conceived in slavery, gestated in racist science, and bred in

Jim Crow segregation,” and is later “calcified into a visual epistemology of racial difference based largely on skin color” (Nerad 813). Furthermore, it is possible to observe that Harper’s construction of Iola further extends this “visual epistemology of racial difference” (Nerad 813) to a subtle subversion of stereotypification of gender norms. *Iola Leroy* frames itself as a response against the ideal womanhood norms created and flourished in the antebellum period. Iola’s white look does not alter her black identity, and her reformist capabilities enable her to form a new idea of able and powerful image of black womanhood. Hence, Iola’s decisions destabilize the figure of the tragic mulatto who falls victim to racial discrimination and the cult of true womanhood that is only definitive of white womanhood that disregards any positive association with black womanhood. Scholar Mary Helen Washington in her analysis of the tragic mulatto myth suggests that Harper reverses “the image of the tragic mulatto heroine” (76), conceiving new routes for her heroine “to become political and social activist” (76), and enlists her fiction “in the battle to counter the negative images of blacks and women” (75).

Harper critiques all these fictional traditions of the antebellum time in order to question and negate their applicability and validity for black women both in the antebellum and postbellum periods. Iola does her utmost to perform her social duties in order to recuperate what Laurie Kaiser calls “the situation of double jeopardy for black females” (1995 97). This “double jeopardy” (97) is the agonizing position in which black women were placed by the marginalizing practices and thoughts of racist societies. Harper’s construction of Iola defies this racist attitude of the white supremacist ideology that banishes black women from American society and national harmony. Thus, Harper’s criticism of the dichotomy

of the public male world against the private female circle and the conventions of domesticity and womanhood extends beyond traditional approaches to such binary oppositions, presenting a more multifarious and complicated cultural levels on which struggles for identity, selfhood, and nationhood are revealed. Thus, Harper subverts all racist arguments and popular antebellum ideals about domesticity and true womanhood, proposing new reforms that replace these quasi ideals with realistic ones, stereotypes with life-like representation of black people, and the notion of black inferiority with conscious characters that strive for equal rights and racial uplift.

IV. II. Reconstructionist Visions

The heteroglossia in *Iola Leroy* exposes a broader range of perspectives on the solution of slavery, racial bigotry, and potential keys to social problems resulting from enslavement in the Reconstruction period. As noted above, in the presentation of such viewpoints, Harper gathers together a multiplicity of perspectives embedded in the contrasts between main and functional characters' ideas, incorporating also her own voice through the narrator and the characters' abolitionist arguments. Organized as a series of episodic dialogues, the novel calls forth the acknowledgment of all these voices in their invaluable contribution to shape a public opinion in the whole nation in the scenes where proslavery arguments of slaveholders are presented as the centripetal forces of American social life. Such dialogues in the text operate as an effective interaction of similar or

counter arguments advocated by different characters, whose voices compose a heteroglossic world in a nation that is depicted as divided into pieces because of the constant devaluation and subjugation of the black race. In this light, the text brings together characters with opposing views to discuss the “negro problem” (Harper 171). In the scene where Dr. Gresham, Dr. Latrobe, the Southerner, and Dr. Latimer invite Iola’s pastor Rev. Carmicle and Iola’s uncle Robert as people who can “do justice to the subject” (Harper 171), all efforts are made to convince the bigoted white-supremacist Dr. Latrobe that the black race is made an inferior race merely because white people left them “ignorant, poor, and clannish” (Harper 173). No matter how convincingly Dr. Gresham pronounces that “ignorance, poverty, and clannishness are more social than racial conditions, which may be outgrown” (Harper 173), Dr. Latrobe considers this statement to be a possible means for the black race to become educated. His argument grows even more monologic as he advocates the constituent tenets of racial slavery when he says “Southerners will never submit to negro supremacy” (Harper 172) and that they will “never abandon their Caucasian civilization to an inferior race” (Harper 172). Dr. Latimer’s statements echo Dr. Gresham’s voice as he comes up with the fact that “it was once a crime to teach him [a black person] to read” (Harper 173) in some parts of the United States, underscoring the idea that if a black person is “poor, for ages he was forced to bend to unrequited toil. If he is clannish, society has segregated him to himself” (Harper 173).

Dr. Latimer is a young physician who wishes to “labor among the colored people” (Harper 172) in the South and whose abolitionist purposes stand in sharp contrast to Dr. Latrobe’s views on slavery, which he thinks has been of

“incalculable value to the negro” (Harper 175). Dr. Latrobe is representative of millions of slaveholders who believe in the idea that slavery “lifted him [the slave] out of barbarism” (Harper 175) and “given him a language of civilization, and introduced him to the world's best religion” (Harper 175). His ideas are so fixed that he sees the South as an unshakable “unit” (Harper 174) that belongs to the “highest race on earth” (Harper 176) whereas black people belong “to the lowest” (Harper 176). Nonetheless, Dr. Gresham contests Dr. Latrobe’s proslavery argument, maintaining that the black race “is not the only branch of the human race which has been low down in the scale of civilization and freedom, and which has outgrown the measure of his chains” (Harper 175). His argument is that “slavery, polygamy, and human sacrifices have been practiced among Europeans in by-gone days; and [...] out of savages unable to count to the number of their fingers and speaking only a language of nouns and verbs, arise at length our Newtons and Shakspeares” (Harper 175). According to Dr. Gresham, it is only the “violence and injustice” (Harper 175) of the slaveholders that caused ages of suffering and bondage, which roused “a spirit of remonstrance” (Harper 175) before the world and shame on the part of the slaveholders. In his appeal to Dr. Latrobe, Rev. Carmicle’s words support these statements when he states, slaveholders “cannot willfully deprive the negro of a single right as a citizen without sending demoralization through your [their] own ranks” (Harper 174). Rev. Carmicle underlines the national principles of “rights of life and liberty” (Harper 174) that are far more precious than the slaveholders’ “rights of property” (Harper 174), and thus voices the fundamental constitutional values that are to be heard nationally. The abolitionist heteroglossia in all these dialogues lies in the way Harper renders

her characters' discussions intelligible, staging the argumentative force of their humanitarian arguments against the inhumane proslavery theories and practices.

Iola's reformist and abolitionist views and the other characters' antislavery opinions coalesce into a similar vein where they ruminate upon the amelioration of the black race in a harmoniously united nation. All characters with an abolitionist vision also address the question of what the American nation should be like so as to embrace its entire people under equal circumstances. A sense of nationhood uniting all its people of different racial or ethnic origin would discard the hegemony of the authoritative Southern "unit" as the slaveholder Dr. Latrobe calls it. Abolitionist characters like Dr. Latimer, Dr. Gresham, and Rev. Carmicle are fully committed to promoting social reform. As Rev. Carmicle suggests, it would be the nation's "grand opportunity to help build up a new South, not on the shifting sands of policy and expediency, but on the broad basis of equal justice and universal freedom" (Harper 176). In a similar fashion, Dr. Gresham's theory of Reconstruction lies in the effort "to create a moral sentiment in the nation, which will consider a wrong done to the weakest of them as a wrong done to the whole community" (Harper 178). "For the true reconstruction of the country", further continues Dr. Gresham, "something more was needed than bayonets and bullets, or the schemes of selfish politicians or plotting demagogues" (Harper 183). Dr. Gresham stresses the vital need for education and conscience for building a nation when he clarifies it in other words: "the South needed the surrender of the best brain and heart of the country to build, above the wastes of war, more stately temples of thought and action" (Harper 183).

The above dialogues about racial slavery and the means to reconstruct a nation by healing the national wounds makes it also quite obvious that Harper's target audience is non-Black audience who may help transform the public opinion about black people. Such dialogues also reveal that another purpose of Harper's is to raise awareness by involving readers in a dialogic relation with the characters' thoughts. As Gabrielle Foreman states, the text further "encourages non-Black readers to extend their own literary and activist horizons by resisting (pseudo) scientific and (extra) legal encroachments against nonwhites, encroachments that the broader American populace and Anglo progressive community were finding increasingly easy to either support or ignore" (74-75).

Harper organizes such scenes of "conversazione" (188) in order to provide a space where slavery and antislavery arguments can enter into a dialogic relationship and where they can form a debate on a specific issue. In a similar scene of conversazione, abolitionist characters who are "deeply interested in the welfare of the race" (Harper 191) are in the act of formulating novel ways of thinking about the Reconstruction. Iola, Dr. Latimer, Professor Gradnor, of North Carolina, Mr. Forest, of New York, Hon. Dugdale, Rev. Carmicle, Rev. Cantnor, Bishop Tunster, Professor Langhorne, of Georgia, Mrs. Watson, Miss Brown and others convene in Mr. Stillman's house and have their say about the Reconstruction. In light of the paper on "Negro Emigration" prepared by Bishop Turner, they discuss whether "self-exilement is the true remedy for the wrongs of the negro" (Harper 191). Professor Gradnor explains that there is no reason for the black people to expatriate themselves because some people are racially biased (Harper 191). Professor Langhorne encourages his friends, affirming that this prejudice impact them

together (Harper 192) and give them “a common cause” and bring their intellect “in contact with the less favored of” (Harper 192) the black race. As Mr. Stillman clarifies, there is also this need in the entire nation “for the best heart and brain to work in unison for justice and righteousness” (Harper 191). Iola reiterates the belief in the arrival of “a brighter day” (Harper 193) if they are able to lift the shadows “not by answering hate with hate, or giving scorn for scorn, but by striving to be more generous, noble, and just” (Harper 193). Miss Delany, like Iola, introduces ways of reparation by reminding them of the pains of being “aliens and outcasts in the land of” birth (Harper 194) for ages and by telling how she teaches her “pupils to do all in their power to make this country worthy of their deepest devotion and loftiest patriotism” (Harper 194). All of these constructive conversations aim to let other characters and the reader discern the shadows in American sociopolitical life. The progress made from secret conversations held by slaves in the “lonely woods and gloomy swamps” (Harper 202) to conversaciones in houses that are open to free discussion paves novel inroads for both characters and the reader in better understanding the plights that darken the American nation.

The abolitionist heteroglossia that characters develop in their conversations is sustained by Iola’s unwavering belief in racial progress. Iola envisions education and constructive means of reparation in sociocultural practices and domains as the primary purpose of the Reconstruction. The text on the whole disseminates the consciousness of “good education” (Harper 72) as the best “investment on which the law can place no attachment” (Harper 72). Education will evade the threats of wars, or Christ-like sacrifices made in the name of survival. Education is also a fundamental means to provide the black people with homes and the essential

process that will allow the progress of the black race. Since homelessness means deprivation just like the rights of citizenship that black people lack constitutionally, Harper places a convincing emphasis on the urgent need for domestic life for black people.

Harper defines black people in her essay “Enlightened Motherhood” as a “homeless race” that are to be “gathered into homes of peaceful security and to be instructed how to plant around their firesides the strongest batteries against sins that degrade and the race vices that demoralize” (1982)⁸. Harper presents this painful condition of homelessness in Tom Anderson’s final scene of death and Iola’s homelessness and search for her scattered family with her uncle Robert after she is released from slavery. When Tom Anderson gets seriously wounded at the battlefield, he considers his death a sacrifice, saying “Someone must die to get us out of this” (Harper 49), and “I’s e ’most home” (Harper 49). Since slavery provides no home, the only place to be called home is the heaven. Tom’s words point to the urgency to bring the nation together through concrete Reconstructionist missions. The other way to build up a harmonious nation appears to reattach the remnants of the scattered family ties. Iola and her uncle Robert achieve their “earnest purpose” (Harper 120) to bring the family back together that binds “anew the ties which slavery had broken” (Harper 120). Furthermore, education will raise racial consciousness that will lead mulattoes to remain on the black side, and help all black people construct new homes and new lives.

⁸ Please see, [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/murray:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(lcrbmrpt1906div0\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/murray:@field(DOCID+@lit(lcrbmrpt1906div0)))

Harper's focus on Iola's refusal to take sides with her white heritage attributes to Iola a significant quality of self-representation without the peril of self-dispossession. It is this power of agency that empowers Iola's activities of racial uplift for both black women and men. Iola's resistance to Dr. Gresham's successive marriage proposals enables her to struggle against the racist supremacy of the white and the ideological formulations of the cult of womanhood. Iola willingly changes this state of in-betweenness that her biracial identity pushed her into a conscious preference where race becomes a clearer definition of identity, not of inferiority or shame. Iola's insistence to stay in the South and to educate the black folk instead of an escape to the North (that she would have preferred if she had married Dr. Gresham) signals her determination to establish blissful domestic lives for the black community through promotion of education. Harper shows that Iola's willingness to marry the abolitionist Dr. Latimer is rooted in their common purpose to do service for the prosperity of their own people.

As Washington contends, "because Iola is black and a race leader, Harper felt greater urgency to allow Iola freedom from the restrictions placed on women in fiction" (1987 77). In this respect, *Iola Leroy* poses questions as to alternative reconfigurations of black selfhood and black womanhood that defy and challenge the dehumanization of the black race and idealized white womanhood norms. Conveying the private lives of black people into a public discussion, Harper remodels Iola as an African-American woman who works actively in the public sphere and who takes an active part in the abolitionist activism. Against all legal and social restrictions, Iola's acts and ideas promote pedagogical instruction and inspiration for social activism, the two key elements that shape the

Reconstructionist purpose of the novel. If slavery is “a fearful cancer eating into the nation's heart, sapping its vitality, and undermining its life” (Harper 168), as Iola asserts, *Iola Leroy* illustrates that an abolitionist heteroglossia can govern the stratification of racist meanings and open up new opportunities for the elevation of black race as part of national consciousness. The dialogic power of the words insures a dynamics of thoughts in public discussions or conversaciones where characters reflect on and articulate the possible means of reparation for the injustices.

Harper's preference for the novel genre and its heteroglossic quality further help readers view the novel as an archival source with which to observe the Civil War period and the postbellum United States within a historical scope. In the final “Note”, Harper states that her work is a combination of fact and fiction (219), a work that is based upon historical facts and their novelistic representation. Accordingly, the novel illustrates that literature and fiction are effective tools of social action that heighten awareness and response to construction and perception of black American identity and the representation of black female self. Thus, by virtue of Harper's abolitionist heteroglossia, the metaphor of shadow comes to serve ultimately as a precursor to the optimistic removal of the hardships of enslavement and cruel racial prejudices. Thus, Harper's abolitionist heteroglossia evinces that plurality of public discussion is a powerful means that could help to eliminate the shadows of misconceptions and mistreatments in the American social life.

CONCLUSION

This study has analyzed the abolitionist women's writings in works that covered a time span from the antebellum to the end of postbellum period. The texts under focus in each chapter address the relation of the nineteenth century American slavery to the conventional ideas of domesticity and domestic space as women's sphere in the context of abolitionism. This dissertation has revealed that Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861), Lydia Maria Child's *A Romance of the Republic* (1867), Frances E. W. Harper's *Iola Leroy, or, Shadows Uplifted* (1892) produce a powerful and effective response to a complex private and social question. Foregrounding the indispensable nature of the abolitionist cause, all the three texts emphasize distinct ways to subvert domestic ideals with reference to the image of home that occupied a central place in the nineteenth century American imaginary. Against the idealized illustrations of the domestic life in the nineteenth century popular magazine culture, these works voice the agonized pleas of slaves for equality and sociopolitical acknowledgement that would grant them human rights and freedom. It is crucial to observe that Jacobs, Harper, and Child all center on the dysfunctional nature of the ideology of domesticity as if they agreed to question and subvert the complicated function of domesticity in relation to the institution of slavery. Their literary and social concerns expose that they all gathered around the same table where domesticity and slavery were inquired as significant historical and social problems.

All three writers stress in their works the fact that racial slavery is a part of the history of the United States and that it is a state of homelessness and dispossession in an era when domestic ideals are gratified by the middle class. One important conclusion that can be derived from this study is that Jacobs, Child and Harper consider domestic sphere inseparable from the public space and the political agenda of their time. Positing the private domain in close analogy to the public arena, these works reveal that problems at home reflect problems of the American nation. Their works are not only autobiographical or fictive accounts of human bondage, but they can also powerfully act as testaments to political, social, and historical crises at a time when notions of racial identity, gender and nationhood are being formed as well. Challenging the rigid boundaries between the private and public spheres as a radical response to the antebellum ideology of separate spheres, these works disclose that the inner workings of these two socially demarcated spaces are inherently enmeshed in each other's territories. They exhibit that domesticity is in essence a public ground where political issues are at work, and that these spaces are essentially traversable as opposed to strict constraints the domestic ideology imposed particularly on women in the nineteenth-century United States. Moving beyond restrictions of domesticity, they forge the parameters of the domestic ideology into social, cultural, and political tropes, thereby attempting to conceive a new domestic poetics with justice and equal human rights for all people in the United States. Viewed in their groundbreaking perspectives, all of the works under scrutiny in this study can well be interpreted as sharing the similar critical venue that problematizes and complicates the question of domesticity within the context of slavery and its representations in the American house and nation, whilst

offering challenging yet potential antidotes to end enslavement of thousands of Africans in the nineteenth-century United States.

In Chapter II, Harriet Jacobs's placing the social incidents next to her life writing to the same degree unveils her resilience to conjure an archive for the abolitionist movement against the already existing patriarchal of American slavery. With a view to exposing the houses of oppression, Jacobs's text not only gives a private life account but also publicizes and politicizes her private experiences to document the social problems in more detail. Her autobiography appears to conform to the nineteenth century bourgeois concepts of physical interiority as it takes place in the domestic interiority whereas its hinge to the public becomes evident through the social events that Linda records in her life. Hence, not only does Jacobs's text underline the significant points of her life in the form of autobiography, it also features the social events shaping the lives of slaves during the period. Harriet Jacobs's autobiography is energized through the critical lens she develops for the analysis of the social precariousness with an archive fever. While the genre of autobiography largely concentrates on the personal, Jacobs takes it also as a social narrative category in order to unearth and probe the social ills that upset the personal lives of thousands of slaves. This inevitability that lies in the intersection of the personal and the public becomes Jacobs's strategy that cements the strict division between the personal and the public in her cautious attempt to criticize the awkward coexistence of human bondage and ideal portrayal of domestic life as popular antebellum cultural forces in American houses.

To illuminate the function of various social incidents that Jacobs pays attention to, Chapter II examined the usefulness of the archival perspective that functions to raise consciousness on the part of the reader. This textual purpose can be thought to operate as an instrument of the political power of citizenship that slaves lack in the American nation. It is possible to argue that the cohabitation of the social histories and autobiography strengthens Jacobs's will to document an archive of the antebellum American slavery as opposed to the historical records that are archived by the slaveholders. Thus, Jacobs renders her text a counter-archive in the Derridean sense, accumulating the social histories in an organized narrative only to be read by those who could not witness them. Sliced in forty-one chapters, Jacobs's narrative is replete with various incidents that can be likened to an archive, the desire to store and interpret personal as well as communal histories. In light of this desire, this chapter analyzed how Jacobs's method of composition of an archive involves a compilation and a need to authenticate materials, persons, locales, and history buried in her text, and how Jacobs's interpretation of crucial incidents chronicling her life as a testimony for her horrible experiences serves a purpose to document them primarily to be published as an abolitionist archive. This archive is precisely composed of each incident textually materialized by Jacobs's narrative and the discursive structure of abolitionism formed by the totality of the incidents.

The labor of memory performed by the publication of Jacobs's autobiography further serves to collect and preserve the remembrances, histories, and the political issues so as to interpret those historical moments and events just like an archivist does to conceive and maintain an archive. If political power does not exist without the control of the archive, as Derrida contends, and if Jacobs's

primary purpose can be claimed to form an archive or to enact a history of black slaves of the United States, then her archival fever denotes the possibility of access to the information readily unavailable to the nineteenth-century readers and to the posterity. Jacobs's textual commitment to collect, store, and interpret her own archival materials based on her memories can be considered to be a prosthesis of Jacobs's memory in the public sphere. In line with Derrida's argument, only the archive fever knows the source and results challenging the status quo. Jacobs's desire for writing her life and the collective history of the American nation can then be equated with her will to make both of these histories the objects of the national archive, rendering them a vigorous force for social change for the better.

If archives aim to create a culture of public memory, as Chapter II has revealed, Jacobs's documentary style of autobiography conjures up a new version of public memory whose primary purpose is to function as a reparative tool. Linda's frequent pleas for recognition and understanding to the reader evince that remembering and archiving her life next to the significant social events is a reparative and reformatory practice. This practice offers an alternative perspective for the reader to evaluate the social conditions through the lens of the oppressed at a time when the abolitionist voices are suppressed. Archiving personal and social histories helps Linda facilitate a detailed account of abundance of affect lying beneath the minds and hearts of slaves who toiled hard for the enactment of abolitionism. It has been argued that Linda's affective addresses are meant to build an abolitionist bond, a connectedness between the sufferer and the audience. Linda's words target to establish a community of feelings that are able to cross the race and gender divisions.

Whilst seeking such a reparative affective attachment between the reader and herself, and while exposing an archival desire in her text, Jacobs also subverts all of the popular implications of domesticity and true womanhood. Her text defies the conventional perception of the antebellum home life and womanhood through problematizing a slave woman's position in a house regulated by slaveholders and a slave woman's feelings within the institution. Considering that Jacobs's writing span of her autobiography coincides with the parade of sentimental writing and white female readership in the first half of the nineteenth century, the idea that *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* conveys elements of the sentimental fiction of the era falls short in expressing the critique of slavery insinuated deep into narratives like Jacobs's. Though most of the popular texts of the time employ sentimental style as a bridge to the reader, this tendency does not wholly eliminate the critical stance such texts take against the social injustices of the time.

Jacobs's difference was fundamentally a consequence of the fact that she was both a black female slave in the antebellum society and that she was able to document her memories and life amidst the atrocities of slavery. In so doing, Jacobs resorts to certain emotions such as intimacy, compassion, and sympathy to evoke abolitionist awareness on the part of the northerners whom she addresses as the target reader. Given the huge circulation of the increasing cultural tradition of sentimentality and its popularly consumed texts in forms of magazines, or fiction, Jacobs's survival as an author of a slave narrative was beyond imagination. At a time when white women of the nascent American nation were meticulously trained in rigid accordance with the ideals of domesticity and womanhood, Harriet Jacobs

was surged back and forth between these ideals and the harsh facts of the country as a slave woman. Nevertheless, in a historical period when the sentimental was mostly regarded as cheap consumption of emotions, Jacobs's self-appointed affective mission to receive sympathy and understanding contained a political mission of abolitionism. Sentimentality was the popular term that circulated through the minds of the bestseller readers: it was dismissed as a form of degenerate and melodramatic female sympathy and an inverse reflection of the sensible public mind. However, conscious of the literary conventions that were germane to decadent sentimentalism, Jacobs organized her text in ways through which the materials in her autobiography continually haunt the pure sentimental apolitical narratives, undo their uncritical sentimentality through a complete exposure of numerous incidents in her life, and by directly addressing the reader and crying for their mercy and acknowledgement in the urgency of the abolitionist cause.

Chapter III has evinced that Child's view on the groundlessness of racial slavery and the reality of miscegenation in the case of the nineteenth century lays bare how intriguing the antebellum domestic sphere essentially is in regard to what and who is perceived to be the uncanny figures in American homes. Child is critical of the general racist perception of the colored people as the undomestic or uncanny elements within the American houses, and of the fact that the idealized descriptions of domestic life in the popular culture of the time effaced black people from its terminology, definition, and spatial existence. This Chapter argued that the illogical nature of racial slavery finds expression in Child's uncanny, spectral portrayal of the mixed-race characters like Rosa or Flora, who fall from grace in their newly enslaved condition. The indescribably ghostly look of the characters in the dreamy

or heavenly sceneries of a remote exotic island or abroad are juxtaposed with the female characters' previous domestic contentment in the South in order to evoke the displacement they are going through as well as the invalidity and falsehood of the happiness attributed to the antebellum domestic interiority. Positing such scenes in a cynical contrast with one another, Child probes the irrationality of racial slavery against which she argues in many scenes of the novel.

It is vital to note that the nineteenth century was viewed as a long period of nation building in the United States where the idea of home functioned as the core of the nation. As is also vividly evident in the magazine culture of the time, the image of home was seen as the metonymy of the nascent American nation that was expanding westward with the hopes of national prosperity and development. It seems a small wonder that this fondness on the domestic interiority as a symbolic part of the whole nation that is to be discovered in guidance of the expansionist ideas took its source from the race-based understanding of home and the nation. In this respect, Child's criticism also refers to the political principles of equality and democracy of the American nation at the time of its inception with the *U. S. Declaration of Independence* in 1776 when she portrays the possibility of a heterogeneous and miscegenetic nation as opposed to a rather tyrannical homogenous social structure. Child's illustration of the domestic sphere urges her readers to imagine heterogeneous families of different racial backgrounds and a nation composed of racial or ethnic varieties. Child's design of characters' relationships suggests that fancying the American nation as such in an anti-racist prospect of the nineteenth century conceives the likelihood of a harmony of cultural diversities. Nevertheless, Child's vision is not a mere fancy: it aims to undo the

false and racist representations of black people who were perceived as the unsettling ghostly figures of American life.

A Romance of the Republic manifests that domestic sphere is a highly political space that speaks out the problems of the country. Child's use of elements of domestic fiction and sentimentalism does not solely reflect a reiteration of domestic scenes of the quotidian American life. On the contrary, in the sentimental domestic settings, the private or domestic concerns of the characters are shown to extend beyond the domestic realm and encompass a polity of race, kinship, and family, which are presented to spread to national politics as a way to criticize and replace the existing lack or confusion of polity in the pre- and post-Civil war era. Sentimentalism and domestic fiction, as explained by critic Shirley Samuels, stick to the ideology of separate spheres with an emphasis on "emotion with domestic plots that spoke to the power of feelings to effect right action" (Sentimentalism and Domestic Fiction). Borrowing from sentimentalism to a certain extent, Child's novel however unsettles this gendered dichotomy to let the readers question slavery within the domestic area. Child invites her readers to ponder on human enslavement as the immoral element posed in a world of sentimental domesticity. Though the romance plot qualifies the sentimental style, Child again subverts the traditional conceptualization of domestic life and marriage by presenting her female characters as strong individuals who can develop ways to get out of slavery's world of torture through their perseverance and selfhood. Child's female protagonists, Rosa and Flora, enact their abolitionist thoughts and actions as much as possible when they regain their freedom. Rosa and Flora's newly attained condition of liberty portrays a world free from human bondage, exemplifying the idea that if people of the

American nation feel and act in the right way in their responses to slavery, the American nation will indeed be a democratic and egalitarian country.

Child aims to make the political issues in characters' private lives visible to connect the problems of slavery to the prospect of a harmonious nation. The legal entrapments caused by slavery foreground the legal and political themes that come into Child's text through their enactment by the characters. Against the destructive consequences of all the political and legal impediments posed by slavery, Child offers the hope of social harmony in her portrayal of carnivalesque and heteroglossic social structure for which the antebellum and postbellum times were thirsty. Child's view of stability in a carnivalesque sense of the world and in a heteroglossic social life where people of color are legally and socially acknowledged positions her text in a way that destabilizes the quasi-social order and the politics of slavery. Her text claims equality, humanity, freedom, and kinship across different races by further questioning how healthy it is to suture the slaves into a coherent linear idea of the nation without granting them humanitarian rights. This being the case, Child accentuates the role and positive outcome of abolitionism in granting slaves their rights as the independent individuals of the American nation.

In Child's Reconstructionist vision lie the urgency of abolitionism and recognition of differences in kinship structures. Child draws the true-to-life kinship pattern of the antebellum American society where the African, the Native American, the German, the Spanish or the French all mixed up. The novel brings together people of different origins into the same families that are pictured within

blissful domestic sceneries. In Child's novel, families are treated to be miscellaneous forms of relations that grow into nations where the American nation comes to be perceived as a colorful combination of distinct races or ethnicities. Creating families of heterogeneous origins, Child lets her readers imagine a nation that enables harmony and security for all its citizens without any discrimination of race and gender. Child compares the problems in domestic spaces to the sociopolitical drawbacks experienced in national affairs in her criticism of the failure of the democratic ideals of the United States. She suggests that the United States should be free from racial prejudice in order to become a fully democratic and egalitarian nation.

Chapter IV has revealed that Frances E. W. Harper's Reconstructionist intentions significantly correspond to her motive in questioning domesticity and womanhood in the context of slavery. The novel evinces that ideologies of domesticity and true womanhood together operate as the agent that leads to the enclosure and sociopolitical paralysis of women rather than act as enabling and emancipatory. Though Harper specifically targets to reveal the invalidity of these ideologies in black women's lives, she points also to the oppressed condition of slave men, women and children alike. Harper believes that the "law of liberty is the law of God, and is antecedent to all human legislation" (3) in her article "Liberty for Slaves" published in the abolitionist newspaper *the National Anti Slavery Standard* on May 23, 1857, and maintains that slavery is "mean" (3), since it "tramples on the feeble and weak" (3). Harper contends that thousands of men, women and newborn babies "are annually added to the victims of slavery; twenty thousands lives are annually sacrificed on plantations of the South" (Harper, 1857

3). Harper calls “the truest and noblest hearts” (Harper, 1857 3) for duty to be “on the side of freedom” (Harper, 1857 3) and to be in the service of the abolitionist cause. In this regard, Harper characterizes Iola as an epitome of such an abolitionist crusader that she voices in her article almost four decades before she wrote her novel. Not only does Iola exemplify an antislavery crusader for the freedom of female slaves, but she comes to the rescue of enslaved men and children as well. Harper elucidates that the women of America should play a specific role in the improvement of the black race to break the chains that domestic confinement, deceptive images of womanhood and slavery have long established in the collective unconscious of the American people.

For Harper, as she overtly reiterates in “Woman’s Political Future”, it is women’s responsibility “to create a healthy public sentiment; to demand justice, simple justice, as the right of every race; to brand with everlasting infamy the lawless and brutal cowardice that lynches, burns, and tortures” (437) their “own countrymen” (437). Iola takes on this task to help ameliorate the condition of her people by first showing how slavery dispossesses black people of their identity and homes, and then by raising awareness about the abolitionist cause and contributing to the educational activities after she gains her freedom. In doing so, Iola trespasses the domestic borders that teach women to remain passively within the boundaries of their homes and takes an active part in the public sphere.

Harper’s concern with the notion of publicity is materialized as a world of heteroglossia that aims to conjure abolitionist dialogues and activities at the time of Reconstruction of the American nation in democratic terms. Public discussions on

abolitionism, the black vernacular used by slaves, and diversities in speeches, and opinions all qualify Harper's text as a heteroglossic one. The discussions that Iola takes the lead as a woman activist and an antislavery advocate decentralize the racial monoglossia in the country, replacing it with a social and abolitionist heteroglossia that would involve a cast of different characters and their diverse opinions. This abolitionist heteroglossia is descriptive of the multiplicity of ideas and beliefs on the urgency of the antislavery cause and the growing consciousness of a sense of community that would help ameliorate the social conditions for the black race throughout the nation. Harper's text achieves such a diversity of opinions in the scenes where dialogues or "*conversazione*" (Harper 188), bands together people of diverse social status, race and thought in public areas which generate the freedom and chance to distribute their ideas to as many people as possible. Thus, Harper plays with the public and private dichotomy through opening up new spaces for abolitionist discussions and by way of enlarging women's sphere in public areas, which would endow them with much more spacious areas of mobility than the domestic sphere. And, to illustrate the symbolic representation of slavery, Harper employs the metaphor of shadow that is emblematic of all restrictive, monoglossic, authoritative practices. For Harper, slavery is the biggest shadow that is to be uplifted in order to found the atmosphere of plurality, democracy, and freedom for all the people of the United States regardless of race in the post-Civil war era.

Harper organizes the abolitionist discussions of the characters in a contingent web of connections where one idea means nothing without the other. Harper's novel substantiates that one single idea, be it an antislavery or a proslavery

argument, cannot stand for or attain the richness that the plurality of a series of ideas can achieve. Thus, Harper avoids any form of isolation that the hegemony of slavery or proslavery ideas rule, and instead suggests the multiplicity of ideas for the proliferation of a more democratic and humanitarian progress of the American social life. In this sense, Harper's way of organization of characters' conversations becomes suggestive of Bakhtinian theorization of the relationality among objects, ideas, people, ... etc., where such elements become discursive, creating the reign of plurality and an atmosphere of liberty over the repressive authorities. In light of Harper's style of novelization and Bakhtin's theory, Harper's novel indicates that repressive social practices can be eliminated so long as a variety of things coexist simultaneously as they communicate with one another in a dialogic relation.

The abolitionist discussions in which Iola and other characters are involved develop strategies to overthrow the patriarchal empowerment of slavery. Harper fashions her characters in a constant dialogue with one another, constructing a state that precipitates the venue of gaining distinct opinions, a plurality of perspectives and insights in contradistinction to the narrow-minded and one-sided ideas of proslavery advocates. Harper designs scenes in a way where all dissimilar voices blend with one another more liberally than in the oppressive atmosphere of slavery. Harper's text heads towards a celebration of various free voices and venues where slavery's patriarchy is replaced with a heteroglossic atmosphere, a diversity of speeches, ideas, and discourses. Furthermore, Bakhtin's emphasis on such a celebratory notion of multiplicity enlightens Harper's purpose to consolidate the abolitionist ideas in the service of progress of the black race during the era of Reconstruction. Education is one major issue that Iola foregrounds in the

dissemination of the idea of racial uplift as part of the antislavery cause. Harper gives Iola the power and capacity to confront racial prejudices as a teacher on her way to educate the black folk for the advancement of the black race. No matter how unkindly some employees or colleagues meet her during her job interviews or work time due to her black origins, Iola renounces neither her black inheritance nor her will to take firm steps forward in the education of black people. Since Harper views education as a prominent reparative element for the advancement of the black race, she believes that “intellect and faith would ensure the success of their continued struggle” (Foster 39). Harper places freedom as the primary struggle of colored people, regarding education as its vital complement. As she states in her essay “Woman’s Political Future” (1893), “no nation can gain its full measure of enlightenment and happiness if one-half of it is free and the other half is fettered” (436) and asserts in her speech “The Great Problem To Be Solved” delivered in the Centennial Anniversary of the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery convened in Philadelphia on April 14, 1875 that the work of colored people in the field of education, which is “grandly constructive”, (221) is to “battle against ignorance, poverty, and low social condition” (221). The novel suggests that freedom and education are the leading conditions for establishing the long lost family attachments and homes of African people in the United States. These two elements, for Harper, would also help black people gain racial consciousness and remain on the black side instead of the possibility of passing for white due to the social pressures related to white supremacy.

All of these three works present proofs of social and political issues about slavery and the miseries of the enslaved people. Jacobs, Child, and Harper expose

social ramifications of the notion of domesticity mainly as a tool of critiquing the condition of female slaves. Yet, their criticism shows that they also make use of domestic conventions in persuading their readers about the urgency and necessity of abolitionism. Though their simultaneous use and critique of the concept of domesticity may seem a contradiction, it can be argued that given their restless conditions and social disorders caused by slavery, the Civil War and the period of Reconstruction at the time, the only method to resort to in the portrayal of slavery and in their appeal to the reader was again domestic ideology that utilized the sentimental narrative style. Since these writers knew well that the reading public of nineteenth century, in particular female readers, were well accustomed to the sentimental style in domestic sceneries, they addressed their private and social concerns in sentimental ways with which their readers can easily sympathize. Harper, Child, and Jacobs construct female characters that prove that domesticity is only a falsehood for female slaves who are persecuted, raped, and sold as chattels. They all dramatize the female slave's escape to freedom, the hardships they face during their journey, their search for home and liberty, their will to establish a home of their own, and the troubles of founding a home in the still-ongoing upheavals of the nineteenth century. Linda in *Incidents*, Rosa and Flora in *A Romance* and Iola in *Iola Leroy* present self-development as they suffer, grow up and reach a point where they are able to crystallize abolitionist solutions to slavery.

Though Jacobs, Child and Harper create similar critical venues for the contemplation and evaluation of personal and social questions, they offer different forms of solutions to the problem of slavery. In *Incidents*, Jacobs assigns the role of a social documenter to Linda in her presentations of the events in her life. Linda is

not only a literary character of Jacobs's autobiography; she is also the vehicle through whose eyes the antebellum social scenery is documented. Furthermore, Linda becomes an effective addresser to tell the white readers the urgency of the abolitionist cause. Linda addresses the reader in the sentimental style, ultimately aiming to create a reparative space where the readers are able to feel compassion and sympathy for slaves. Enslavement has also a tremendous impact in the lives of Rosa and Flora in *A Romance*. However, they gain self-knowledge as they pass through the direful passages of enslavement and become able to see and question the unreasonable nature of racial slavery as former Southerners. Child's creation of a variety in the cast of the novel and her positioning the blacks, octoroons, or mulattoes along with the proslavery defenders help the formation of a carnivalesque atmosphere that defy racial categories and the hegemony of slavery. Child further conjures a fictional world where racial origins lose their racial connotations. Interracial marriage and a heterogeneous social structure become Child's solutions for a unified American nation. Iola in *Iola Leroy* also attains her freedom after a period of enslavement, yet she recuperates her black identity by remaining on the black side. Iola is also a mulatto character that resists passing as white, for she believes that only black people can make the progress of the black race possible through education and belief in the progress of the black race. In her choice of a wide cast for her novel, Harper offers the co-presence of a series of heteroglossic dialogues uttered by antislavery and proslavery people who provide the reader with a vision of plurality of voices and equality within the same nation.

The solutions these writers suggest may not seem valid or possible for all slaves during the nineteenth century. They portray strong, determined, exceptional

women whose peculiarities might fail to represent the capabilities and conditions of all female slaves. Their methods may also appear unbelievable to the nineteenth-century readers who witnessed the challenging conflicts of the nation. Still, given the hardships of the time, Jacobs, Child, and Harper envision what may seem impossible or implausible for the black people, hoping that one day all of the obstacles put by slavery and racism would be raised and eliminated. They all render the oppressed voices vocal by presenting a vivid archive that some readers of the time might have not witnessed. Thus, the point that renders these texts proper for analysis is their common motivation to question and subvert domestic ideals and slavery and to offer a variety of abolitionist perspectives in the solution of the nation's most significant problem, slavery. Furthermore, all of these texts possess similar critical questions that make them representative of the subject of slavery, domesticity and abolitionism in the nineteenth-century United States. These texts additionally exhibit that these issues are also valid and relevant for today's world where injustice takes place in different forms of human life. Considering both the common purposes and the different aspects of these texts, it is possible to argue that these texts enable their readers to question and realize the unvoiced, oppressed, and ignored sufferings of slaves in the nineteenth-century American life.

It has been argued that all of the works under scrutiny in this dissertation offer varied ways of interpreting nineteenth-century American domesticity in relation to the institution of slavery. Besides, contemporary theories like Derrida's concept of the archive, Bakhtin's notions of carnivalesque or heteroglossia, or Bhabha's elaborations on narrative of a nation and the uncanny terror of the other race have provided wider perspectives in the textual analysis of these texts.

Jacobs's *Incidents*, Child's *A Romance*, and Harper's *Iola Leroy* convincingly suggest that the notion of domesticity as a sociocultural element strikingly proves to be a strong literary trope in the fictional and autobiographical treatment of the nineteenth-century American slavery. Harper, Child and Jacobs all explored the ways of rethinking the relation between the domestic ideology and the institution of slavery and of how they are bound intrinsically in the nineteenth-century American quotidian life, culture, laws, and social life. Their rejection of assimilation or conformity, and their plea for equal rights and treatment for all people regardless of race inform their claim to a heterogeneous and multicultural community in the face of racial discrimination and enslavement. Their works consolidated the visibility of the problems that slaves were going through, placing a growing emphasis on the necessity for slaves to be seen and heard publicly in their arduous quest for freedom and social justice. Hence, Jacobs, Child, and Harper's works presented reconfigurations of domesticity and challenges to it in their efforts to make telling contrasts in the graphic portrayal of the dehumanization of a people in the hands of slavery. It is significantly noticeable that Jacobs, Child, and Harper all view their texts as reformative and reparative venues where an equal and reconstructed nation can be envisioned. Their texts provide the reader with the dream of a nation that could be imagined and actualized with the help of abolitionism.

Abstract (Turkish)

Bu tez On Dokuzuncu Yüzyıl Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nde kölelik ve ev hayatı kavramları arasındaki ilişki ile kölelik karşıtı söylemleri Harriet Jacobs'ın *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861), Lydia Maria Child'ın *A Romance of the Republic* and Frances E. W. Harper'ın *Iola Leroy; or Shadows Uplifted* başlıklı eserlerinde incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. On Dokuzuncu Yüzyıl beyaz Amerikalı kadınlar için ev hayatı (domesticity) ve gerçek kadınlık normları gibi birçok sosyal ve kültürel kavramın çıktığı bir dönem olmuştur. Bu tarihsel dönem aynı zamanda git gide büyüyen ırkçı önyargılar ile köleliğin kurumsallaşmasını beraberinde getirmiştir. Bir yandan Amerika Birleşik Devletlerinin kültürel yönden geliştiği ve bir ulus olarak büyüdüğü bu süreç diğer yandan kölelik kurumunun var olması ile büyük sosyal çelişkileri ortaya çıkartmıştır. Çalışmada bu çelişkiler, ev hayatı kavramının ulus kurma hayaliyle eş tutulduğu bu dönemde kadın kölelerin durumuna vurgu yapılarak tartışılmaktadır. Harriet Jacobs *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* adlı otobiyografisinde, Lydia Maria Child *A Romance of the Republic* ve Frances E. W. Harper *Iola Leroy; or Shadows Uplifted* başlıklı romanlarında siyah köle kadın karakterlerinin özgürlüğe doğru yolculuklarında, ev hayatı kavramının işlevini betimlemektedirler. Bu eserlerde yazarlar, ev hayatı kavramının söz konusu dönemde, beyaz Amerikalı kadınlara sunduğu ideal kadın yaşamı anlamının, siyah kadınlar için kölelikten kurtulup, benzer bir ideal yaşama kavuşma anlamı ifade ettiğini ortaya koymaktadırlar. Ancak, bir yandan bu kavramın esaretten kurtulma

yolunda arařsallařtırılabileceęini vurgularken, öte yandan aynı kavramın siyah ya da beyaz kadınların yařamlarında ne denli kısıtlayıcı ve engelleyici bir işleve sahip olduęunu göstermektedirler. Bu alıřma ev hayatı kavramının belirtilen eserlerde nasıl ele alındıęı, vurgulandıęı konusunu incelemekte ve modern kuramlardan yararlanarak, sosyal ve kültürel önemi ve anlamı aısından tartıřmaktadır. alıřmanın Birinci Bölümünde tezin konusu olan eserlerin yazıldıęı On Dokuzuncu Yüzyıl Amerikası tarihsel ve kültürel bağlam oluřturmak amacıyla incelenmiř, kullanılan kavramlar aıklanmıřtır. alıřmanın İkinci Bölümü Harriet Jacobs'ın *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* bařlıklı eserinde Jacobs'ın ev hayatı kavramını hangi yönlerden sorguladıęını ve kölelięin yarattıęı ve dönemi řekillendiren arřiv nitelięindeki sosyal olayları kendi yařam hikayesinin yanı sıra nasıl yer verdięini tartıřmaktadır. Üüncü Bölüm Lydia Maria Child'ın *A Romance of the Republic* adlı romanında sunduęu kölelik, ırksal önyargılar ve ırklar ötesi akrabalık bağları gibi eleřtirel çereveler ışıęında Child'ın eřitli kökenlerden gelen insanların bir arada özgürce yařayabileceęi bir ulus inřası fikrini incelemektedir. Dördüncü Bölüm ise Frances E. W. Harper'ın *Iola Leroy; or Shadows Uplifted* bařlıklı romanında kölelik ve kölelik karřıtlıęı görüşleri hangi yönlerden diyalojik bir iliřki bağlamında sunulduęunu irdelemektedir. alıřmanın Sonuç bölümü ise bu tezde seilen eserlerin ev hayatı kavramının kölelik kurumu bağlamında incelenmesinde güçlü eleřtirel alanlar sunduęunu ortaya koymaktadır.

Abstract (English)

This dissertation aims to analyze the relationship between the concept of domesticity, American slavery as well as abolitionist politics in Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861), Lydia Maria Child's *A Romance of the Republic* and Frances E. W. Harper's *Iola Leroy, or Shadows Uplifted*. While the nineteenth century introduced various social and cultural changes such as domesticity and true womanhood for the middle-class American women, it also presented a growing racial bias and legalization of the institution of slavery that were in marked contrast with the illustrations of ideal domesticity along with the sense of development and expansion of the burgeoning American nation. This study explores the problems rising from the coexistence of this enculturation process and the social turmoil caused by the human bondage with an emphasis on female slaves' condition. The works under analysis disclose the limitations of the popular middle-class ideology of domesticity in relation to the colossal problem of slavery in American houses and social life. They articulate the anxieties about the female slaves' sufferings in their quest for freedom, whilst underscoring the discrepancy between the ideology of domesticity and the state of destitution and homelessness of slaves. These works also pose diverse forms of challenges to the idea of domestic order, revealing the ways in which the strict distinction between the private and the public, personality and polity, subjection and freedom is inherently fused in personal and social affairs of the time. Accordingly, Chapter I offers a detailed analysis of the historical and literary aspects of domesticity, slavery and

abolitionism in the nineteenth-century United States by focusing on a variety of texts. Chapter II explores the significance and representations of subverted domesticity in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861) by Harriet Ann Jacobs. This chapter argues that Jacobs contests the notion of ideal domestic sphere and cultural morals of antebellum home life by exposing slavery's patriarchal and by her subversive experiment with domesticity during her stay in different houses in the course of her escape to freedom. Chapter III offers a critical interpretation of Child's *A Romance of the Republic* by focusing on questions of racial slavery and the taboos against miscegenation and problems of kinship that came into existence as a consequence of racism and slavery in the nineteenth-century United States. Chapter IV examines the abolitionist discussions that serve to connect the characters in a dialogic affinity by creating venues for sociopolitical discussion on slavery and abolitionism as possible means of Reconstruction in *Iola Leroy*. The Conclusion presents that the works studied in this dissertation offer powerful critical venues for the evaluation of the question of domesticity within the context of slavery.

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